

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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**NYC OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OPENS DISASTER ASSISTANCE SERVICE CENTER FOR HURRICANE KATRINA EVACUEES**

Today Office of Emergency Management (OEM) Commissioner Joseph F. Bruno, in partnership with the Human Resources Administration, The Department of Homeless Services, and American Red Cross in Greater New York, announced a Disaster Assistance Service Center (DASC) will open in upper Manhattan to better serve Hurricane Katrina evacuees who have relocated to New York City. Staffed by representatives of several City, State and federal agencies and disaster relief organizations, the DASC will address the needs of those displaced by last month's storm, including housing, clothing, and financial recovery.

"Hundreds of victims of Hurricane Katrina have already arrived in New York City to begin the long recovery process. The City is committed to helping them in the coming weeks and months," Commissioner Bruno said. "We have assembled a range of disaster-related resources under one roof to help meet these individuals' needs as soon as possible."

Evacuees who require assistance should first report to the Katrina Welcome Center located at The City College of New York's Great Hall at Convent Avenue and 138 Street to schedule an appointment with a case specialist and fill out initial paperwork. Following a basic case assessment, visitors may also receive counseling and information about City services before they are transferred to the DASC. The Welcome Center will open Thursday, September 15, at 12 p.m., and remain open Monday-Saturday, 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m., and Sundays, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., until evacuees' needs are met. The center may be easily reached by public transportation via the 1 train to 137 Street-City College, A,B,C, or D trains to 145 Street or the BX-19, M4, M5, M18, M100 or M101 buses, and is wheelchair accessible. The City encourages evacuees to bring as much documentation as possible with them to prove their identity and residency in the affected area.

On arrival at the DASC for their scheduled appointments, evacuees can expect to meet with staff from a host of government and voluntary agencies to discuss disaster housing, school enrollment, banking, financial assistance for food, clothing and emergency expenses, and more. Since the DASC offers a wide array of resources, the City encourages evacuees to allow plenty of time for their visit.

The City urges evacuees to register with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) before reporting to the DASC Welcome Center. FEMA estimates it will take at least 20 minutes to complete the registration process via phone (800-621-FEMA; TTY: 800-462-7585) or internet ([www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)).

Opening the DASC is just the latest in the City's string of efforts to help victims of Hurricane Katrina. Requests for resources to support the Katrina recovery continue to pour in, and an OEM task force has been working to meet these requests since the storm's early aftermath.

The City urges New Yorkers who want to help victims of Katrina to make monetary donations to established charities, such as the [American Red Cross](http://www.americanredcross.org) and the [Salvation Army](http://www.salvationarmy.org), or through the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City, which will distribute donations to disaster relief agencies. Call 311 or visit [NYC.gov](http://www.nyc.gov) to learn more about making donations, or send a contribution to Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City, City Hall, New York, NY, 10007, and note on the check that the donation is for hurricane relief. For volunteer opportunities, visit New York Cares' website at [www.nycares.org](http://www.nycares.org).

For more information about the City's efforts to support victims of Hurricane Katrina, call 311 or visit [NYC.gov](http://www.nyc.gov).

- American Red Cross in Greater New York
- Association to Benefit Children
- Disaster Chaplaincy Services - NY
- Federal Emergency Management Agency
- Human Services Council
- Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs
- Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA)
- NYC Administration for Children's Services
- NYC Department for the Aging
- NYC Department of Education
- NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
- NYC Department of Homeless Services
- NYC Human Resources Administration
- NYC Office of Chief Medical Examiner
- NYC Office of Emergency Management
- NYC Police Department
- NYC Taxi and Limousine Commission
- New York State Banking Department
- New York Cares
- Safe Horizon
- Salvation Army
- Social Security Administration

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