

Dear Chief State School and Institution of Higher Education Officers:

I am pleased to inform you that five new U.S. Department of Education (Department) grant programs for hurricane relief were enacted when President Trump signed the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 on February 9, 2018. The legislation authorizes \$2.7 billion to assist K-12 school districts and schools as well as institutions of higher education (IHEs) in meeting the educational needs of students affected by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria and the 2017 California wildfires. The intent of these programs is to help schools and institutions return to their full capabilities as quickly and effectively as possible.

More specific information, including application details for the five programs and other relevant provisions of the legislation, will be sent to you in the very near future. (For your convenience, I am enclosing a copy of the legislation: Division B, Subdivision 1, Title VIII of P.L. 115-123, the “Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018.”)

The five programs are as follows:

*(1) Immediate Aid to Restart School Operations (Restart)*

Under this program, the Department is authorized to award funds to eligible State educational agencies (SEAs), including those of Georgia, South Carolina, Texas, Florida, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and California. These SEAs, in turn, will provide assistance or services to local educational agencies (LEAs), including public charter schools, and nonpublic schools to help defray expenses related to the restart of operations in, the reopening of, and the re-enrollment of students in elementary and secondary schools that serve an area affected by a covered disaster or emergency.

We know that SEAs, LEAs and charter and nonpublic schools in the affected areas have incurred and continue to incur considerable expenses as they seek to reopen schools and are in urgent need of financial assistance. Consistent with the legislation, in determining allocations, the Department shall consider the number of students enrolled, during the 2016–2017 school year, in elementary schools and secondary schools that were closed as a result of a covered disaster or emergency, as well as other relevant factors.

*(2) Emergency Impact Aid for Displaced Students*

Under this program, the Department will award emergency Impact Aid funding to SEAs, which, in turn, will provide assistance to LEAs for the cost of educating students enrolled in public schools, including charter schools, and nonpublic schools, who were displaced by the hurricanes during the school year 2017-2018 and covered wildfires in 2017.

The Department will make quarterly payments to SEAs based on updated counts of displaced students enrolled in public schools, including charter schools, and nonpublic schools. SEAs will make payments to LEAs for the costs of educating public and nonpublic students, based on the number of covered students served. To receive funding, eligible SEAs will need to provide data and other application information that we will be requesting shortly.

Congress appropriated approximately \$2.5 billion to be used for the Restart and Emergency Impact Aid for Displaced Students programs. Precise amounts for Emergency Impact Aid will be based on demand and specific data received from eligible applicants.

*(3) Assistance for Homeless Children and Youth*

Congress appropriated \$25 million for additional grants to SEAs for LEAs to address the needs of homeless students displaced by the disasters. The Department anticipates using data on displaced public school students collected under the Emergency Impact Aid program to make allocations under the Assistance for Homeless Children and Youths program. SEAs will award subgrants to LEAs on the basis of demonstrated need. LEAs must use the funds awarded under this program to support activities that are allowable under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

*(4) Emergency Assistance to Institutions of Higher Education*

Congress appropriated \$100 million for this program, which will provide emergency assistance to IHEs and their students in areas directly affected by the disasters, for activities authorized under the Higher Education Act of 1965.

*(5) Defraying Costs of Enrolling Displaced Students in Higher Education*

Congress appropriated \$75 million for this program, which will provide payments to IHEs to help defray the unexpected expenses associated with enrolling displaced students from IHEs directly affected by a covered disaster or emergency, in accordance with criteria that will be established and made publicly available.

The Department will be sharing additional information soon, including the application packages and technical assistance, on its webpage, “Hurricane Help,” at <https://www.ed.gov/hurricane-harvey>.

For additional information on the programs for K-12 schools and school districts, please contact David Esquith, Director, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, at [david.esquith@ed.gov](mailto:david.esquith@ed.gov) or at (202) 453-6722. For additional information on the programs for IHEs, please contact Adam Kissel, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Higher Education Programs, Office of Postsecondary Education, at [adam.kissel@ed.gov](mailto:adam.kissel@ed.gov) or at (202) 453-7337.

Sincerely,

Betsy DeVos

Enclosure