

Education Department Activates Emergency Response Contact Center

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WASHINGTON—The U.S. Department of Education today activated its emergency response contact center in response to the devastating impacts of Hurricane Harvey. The Department's K-12 and Higher Education stakeholders who are seeking informational resources as well as those seeking relief from Department-based administrative requirements should contact the Department toll free at 1-844-348-4082 or by email at HarveyRelief@ed.gov.

The Department of Education's primary role in natural disasters is to assist school districts and institutions of higher education in their recovery efforts. In addition to internal agency briefings, the Department is participating in daily interagency briefings led by the Department of Homeland Security and FEMA in order to understand the extent of the damage to educational infrastructure and the needs of its education stakeholders in the wake of Harvey. The Department's interagency work will inform and enhance the resources and relief that it will make available to school districts and institutions of higher education as the recovery work begins.

In addition to its Federal partners, the Department has reached out to the Texas Education Agency, the Louisiana Department of Education and institutions of higher learning in the impacted areas and will be coordinating its recovery activities through these agencies and institutions. The full extent of the Hurricane's impact will not be known for some time but we will stay in close contact with our partners.

Last week, the Department began contacting more than 200 colleges and universities located in areas likely impacted by Harvey and will provide administrative flexibilities related to federal student aid rules.

The Department has also directed federal student loan servicers to provide impacted borrowers flexibility in managing their loan payments during this time. Borrowers can contact their student loan servicer for more information or call 1-800-4FED-AID (1-800-433-3243) to find out their servicer's contact information.