



**COMPLIANCE UPDATE**  
**By Kim Slote, policy analyst**

**DISASTER ASSISTANCE**

Major disasters were declared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency in August and September as a result of Hurricane Harvey and Hurricane Irma. It is important for affected parties to act quickly and appropriately after any disaster. To ensure everyone has the information needed in your area, I am providing links to important guidance and resources to remind everyone of the relief available for Title IV student financial aid participants.

A major disaster must be federally declared to warrant assistance and is defined in The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5122(2)) as:

...any natural catastrophe (including any hurricane, tornado, storm, high water, winddriven water, tidal wave, tsunami, earthquake, volcanic eruption, landslide, mudslide, snowstorm, or drought), or, regardless of cause, any fire, flood, or explosion, in any part of the United States, which in the determination of the President causes damage of sufficient severity and magnitude to warrant major disaster assistance under this chapter to supplement the efforts and available resources of States, local governments, and disaster relief organizations in alleviating the damage, loss, hardship, or suffering caused thereby.

Regulatory relief is provided to students, institutions, lenders, guaranty agencies and their servicers in administering the federal student financial aid programs authorized by the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended. Relief applies to all recipients of Title IV aid and their families who at the time of the disaster were residing in, employed in or attending an institution located in a federally declared disaster area in the United States. Keep in mind that only the subset of disasters designated for “Individual Assistance” on FEMA’s website are eligible for the relief intended. For more information on what type of relief is available, review the following guidance and resources.

- <https://ifap.ed.gov/eannouncements/082917Guidancerelated2TitleIVparticipantsaffectedbyHurricaneHarvey.html>
- <https://ifap.ed.gov/eannouncements/091317GuidanceRelated2TitleIVParticipantsAffectedHurricaneIrma.html>



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- <https://www.ed.gov/hurricane-help>
- <https://ifap.ed.gov/dpcletters/GEN1708.html>
- [34 CFR 675.18\(i\) Flexibility in the event of a major disaster](#)
- [Federal Student Aid Natural Disaster Information page on IFAP](#)
- [Disaster Information for Students or Parents on Federal Student Aid Website](#)
- <https://ifap.ed.gov/presentations/091317DisasterReliefWebinar.html>