

NEWS RELEASE



Governor Bob Taft

TAFT: OHIO TO WELCOME 1,000 HURRICANE KATRINA EVACUEES

COLUMBUS (September 6, 2005) – Governor Bob Taft announced today that up to 1,000 evacuees from hurricane-damaged areas in the Gulf Coast may begin arriving in Ohio later this week. The evacuees will be divided equally among Cincinnati, Cleveland and Columbus.

“Ohio’s doors are open to the people who have been forced from their homes in the wake of Hurricane Katrina,” Taft said. “The state is mobilizing several state agencies and private relief organizations to provide a warm welcome and ease their transition through this incredibly difficult period in their lives.”

The Ohio Emergency Management Agency is coordinating the resettlement program in conjunction with several state agencies and organizations like the American Red Cross. Evacuees in the Columbus area will be provided with temporary housing at Rickenbacker Air National Guard Base, bed linens and food courtesy of the Ohio Air National Guard. In Cleveland, evacuees will arrive at Hopkins Airport and will be temporarily sheltered at the Greater Cleveland Convention Center. Arrangements in Cincinnati are still being finalized.

Evacuees will also be provided with access to medical care and mental health services as needed, and assistance in registering for federal disaster assistance funds with the Federal Emergency Management Agency. They will be entitled to receive rental assistance for up to eighteen months for housing and furniture. The state is exploring the possibility of making state Temporary Assistance for Needy Families funds available to help evacuees provide for basic necessities while they look for work or make permanent arrangements.

Additionally, relief organizations are coordinating the delivery of countless goods and services that have been pledged from across the state. Faith-based organizations are coordinating counseling for those who seek it. School districts across the state are preparing to welcome evacuees, register new students and ensure they have adequate school supplies.

Taft reminded Ohioans interested in making donation that the best way to provide help is by working with established relief organizations like the American Red Cross (1-800-HELP-NOW) or the Salvation Army (1-800-SAL-ARMY).

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Editor’s Note: Attached is a list of telephone numbers and websites that will be useful to Ohioans interested in assisting victims of Hurricane Katrina.

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