

VALENCIA COLLEGE: SERVING HURRICANE ARRIVALS FROM PUERTO RICO & THE U.S.VIRGIN ISLANDS, OCT. 2017

WHAT IS THE EXPECTED IMPACT IN CENTRAL FLORIDA?

Valencia College staff have been in touch with elected officials to understand the expected impact and coordinate services as community partners.

It is projected that as many as 200,000 new residents may move to Central Florida due to the storms, most from Puerto Rico. The City of Orlando has reported that over 10,000 people have arrived through Orlando International Airport.

The feedback to Valencia's decision to waive out of state tuition for impacted students has been very appreciated by the elected officials and in turn they have informed key communities serving those arriving from the affected islands.

WHAT IS THE CENTRAL FLORIDA COMMUNITY RESPONSE?

There is a Disaster Relief Center at the Orlando International Airport and an Osceola County Hurricane Maria Welcome Center at Heritage Page (Exhibition Building) in Kissimmee. OIA reported last week that they had served 7,452 clients in the previous 2 weeks. Osceola County's Center is projected to be open for 90-180 days.

Orange County Public Schools has staff at the OIA Welcome Center and is providing information about school registration and employment opportunities. As of Oct. 20, 1,054 new students had registered in OCPS, 782 from Puerto Rico. At a press conference on Oct. 10, Chairman Sublette shared that most new registrations were at Colonial, Lake Nona and Oakridge High Schools, and their corresponding feeder middle school and elementary schools. Employment opportunities ranged from teachers to bus drivers. OCPS Foundation has organized donations of funds and materials (school supplies, kids clothing) to Houston School District, to local families affected by Irma, and to new arrivals from Hurricane Maria.

School District of Osceola County has staff at the Osceola County Welcome Center. As of Oct. 20, 615 new students had registered from Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria; 516 students were from Puerto Rico. SDOC has bilingual Spanish/English staff in every school and is providing additional staff training to respond to the new student and their families' needs. All teachers in SDOC are either English as a Second Language (ESOL) endorsed or are currently taking classes for the ESOL endorsement. SDOC is also welcoming adults relocating to apply for teacher, support staff, and bus driver positions.

University of Central Florida has set up a web site and response network through the UCF Connect call center for transfer and new college students. They have also established a UCF Puerto Rico Educational Relief Center to provide a network of care for current and prospective students. They currently have 120 students enrolled at UCF from Puerto Rico. Information for current and prospective students is posted on the UCF web site <http://www.sdes.ucf.edu/puerto-rico-educational-relief/>

WHAT IS VALENCIA'S RESPONSE?

Valencia has created a **special web site** for new arrivals that includes basic information and frequently asked questions, and other sources for support and information (in English, Spanish, Portuguese);

https://net1.valenciacollege.edu/future-students/hurricane-response%20resources/?utm_source=HOMEPAGE&utm_medium=SPOTLIGHT&utm_content=NOTIFICATION&utm_campaign=HURRICANE-RESPONSE&_ga=2.201591955.322591184.1508760192-557507387.1461103720

Valencia staff are present at the OIA Disaster Relief Center and the Osceola County Hurricane Maria Welcome Center to provide general information and collect contact cards from which personal follow up is provided from a Valencia staff member who speaks Spanish and English. More than 50 contact cards were collected in Osceola County in the first week it was open.

Valencia FAQ cards have been printed (in English and in Spanish) and are available at the OIA Welcome Center, the Osceola County Welcome Center, and at all Valencia campus locations.

Valencia Student Affairs staff have organized a response network that provides support needed for each individual student. Enrollment Services Call Center provides the phone and web based response, and coordinates person-to-person services through designated, advisors at each Valencia campus who are English/Spanish speakers. Student Affairs has anticipated the questions that students may have and have worked out procedures to address each, such as:

Is Valencia providing in state tuition to students from Puerto Rico and US Virgin Islands? (Yes)

How long can I enroll at Valencia and pay Florida tuition rates? (As long as you want to)

When can I start? (Start enrolling now. Some classes start this semester, Spring semester begins Jan. 8)

Do I have to pay the \$35 application fee? (No, we will waive that fee for you.)

Can I get Federal Financial Aid? (Yes)

Can I apply if I don't have my transcripts from Puerto Rico? (Yes, advisors will assist you to plan your courses.)

How do I get started? (Call Enrollment Services at 407-582-1507 or complete short form online and we will follow up.)

Valencia Continuing Education Language Programs and industry specific Accelerated Skills Training programs are ready to help students enroll in courses and start classes this Fall term and will be offered at reduced rates. They are also providing support at both the Orange County and Osceola County welcome centers. **Valencia's International Student Services** are prepared to respond to non-U.S. Citizens who are impacted by the hurricanes.

Valencia Student Development has initiated an ongoing items and monetary collection drive through the end of October is underway at different campuses and a special fund account has been set up to collect monetary donations from faculty and staff to assist individuals impacted or relocating to the area.

Valencia Human Resources has partnered with the Student Affairs & Academic divisions at the Osceola County Welcome Center to provide general information on available college wide employment opportunities. Additionally, current partnerships with regional career centers (CareerSource) are being expanded to explore additional ways to promote employment opportunities at their various Central Florida centers via on site hiring events, and educational workshops (resume building and interviewing skills) geared to aid impacted individuals finding gainful employment in the area. The Talent Acquisition area is also exploring new connections with STEM related organizations in Puerto Rico for faculty talent search for individuals planning to relocate to Central Florida.