



## Volume 6 | Issue 4

### Protecting Our Neighborhoods!

Across the United States the 2024 summer weather has proven to be challenging. Tornadoes, floods and excessive heat have created challenges in many neighborhoods. For California, it has been a scorcher. Whether breaking records with long streaks of higher-than-normal temperatures or burning fires throughout the state, this summer has proven to be hot. In this issue of the CalSAWS Buzz look for information and tips focused on protecting our neighborhoods and those who reside within them.

### In This Issue

Protecting Our Neighborhoods .....	1
CalSAWS Meeting Events .....	2
The Six CalSAWS Regions .....	2
From Customer Engagement.....	2
Congratulations, Laura Chavez.....	3-4
CalSAWS Release Policy Update .....	4
Follow The Wheels.....	5
Region 1 Field Trip .....	6
BenefitsCal.....	7-8
Training Updates .....	9
Letter "To Our Counties" .....	9
Communication Corner .....	9
Preparation is Key! .....	10

Do you have a question or suggestion, Ask Barbara. What would you like to learn or see in the next edition of the Buzz. Send your response to [askcalsaws@calsaws.org](mailto:askcalsaws@calsaws.org).



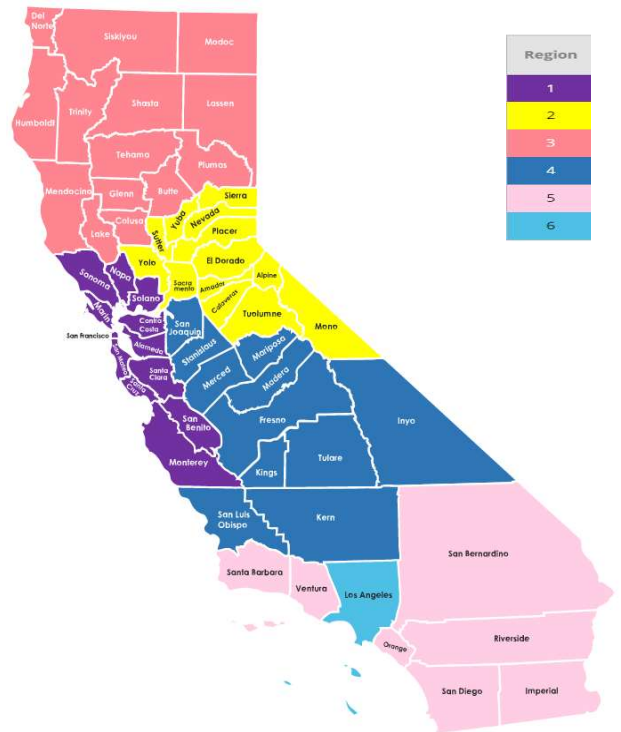
Do you have a question for us?  
'Ask Barbara' at [askcalsaws@calsaws.org](mailto:askcalsaws@calsaws.org) and we will post the Q&A in the next edition of The Buzz.

## Upcoming Meetings & Events



CalSAWS Section Directors	09/04/24
CWDA	09/12/24
Project Steering Committee	09/19/24
R1 Management Site Visit	09/24/24
JPA Board of Directors Meeting	09/27/24
R5 Management Site Visit	10/01/24
Project Steering Committee	10/17/24
JPA Board of Directors Meeting	10/18/24
CWDA	11/14/24
Project Steering Committee	11/21/24
Project Steering Committee	12/12/24
JPA Board of Directors Meeting	12/13/24

## The Six CalSAWS Regions



*From the Customer Engagement Team*

\*\*\*\*\*

### CalSAWS Neighborhood Watch ...

The Customer Engagement team will continue efforts to meet county needs on functionality or environment/tool education. Currently, the team is exploring the idea of Hot Topic Sessions (a collaboration of project teams, RMs, Counties as facilitators). **Do you have feedback as a Neighborhood Suggestion Box?** Counties who have an interest in a specific topic should submit it with details to your Regional Managers. Be sure to indicate whether it has a Low/Medium/High priority for your county.

### Threats to our CalSAWS Neighborhood

Sometimes Mother Nature can bring challenges to our CalSAWS Neighborhoods; meaning our counties can face threats like wildfires, floods, cyber-threats, and sometimes people in crisis who need immediate intervention. At CalSAWS, we are here to assess where we can support our counties and ensure we partner with you to prevent issues where possible or ensure the system is a tool for you to quickly assist your community members in times of need.

Helpful Websites/Mobile Apps to track fires, earthquakes and floods throughout the U.S.

- **Caltrans:** Phone 1-800-427-7623 or Website: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/cgi-bin/roads.cgi>
- **Watch Duty Mobile App:** (downloadable from your Apple or Android devices **or** at their website here: [Watch Duty - Wildfire Maps & Alerts](#) (free versions available. Their phone app is extremely helpful in getting prompt evacuation notices with a loud audible emergency alert and includes evacuation shelter sites for people and pets, and resource updates for specific incidences and evacuation zones.
- **Add your County-specific sites to the list!**

## Congratulations, Laura Chavez!

The CalSAWS Project team sends well wishes as you embark on a new role. Laura, Congratulations! Your hard work, dedication and abilities continue to take you to new heights. We truly appreciate having you as our leader who made visions into reality including evolving LEADER to LRS to the 58 county CalSAWS and modernizing and transforming CalSAWS technology. At the same time, you were always here to support the CalSAWS consortium. Thank you! We will miss you! ~ CalSAWS Consortium DPSS



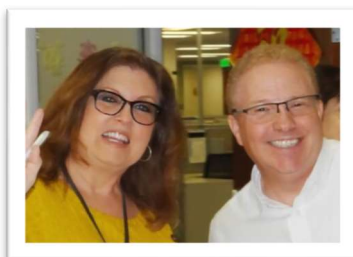
*I met Laura when I came to the LRS back in 2014. I quickly learned that Laura was the one to go to for any technical question I had. She is brilliant, calm at all times and always willing to break things down for a non-technical girl like me. Having Laura's leadership on the project made all of us better and she will be missed. ~ Ayana Alvaraz, R6 RM*

*Laura, Congratulations on your new position. Your new team is lucky to have you as a leader and mentor. You will be missed!!... Thank you for all the mentoring!! GO RAMS!! ~ Pete Quijada*

*Laura! Congratulations on your new position. Thank you for your outstanding leadership and support! Jo Anne Osborn*



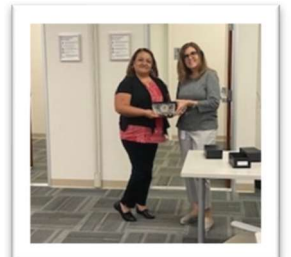
Lulu and Laura at CalSAWS Roseville Open House August



Laura and Don Lunar New Year Celebration



Dorothy, Lulu & Laura 2023 Lunar New Year



Employee Appreciation





Laura and Team - Then (LRS) and Now (CalSAWS)



We appreciate all your hard work and wish you all the best... Your CalSAWS Family

## CalSAWS Release and Policy Update

	8/29/24	9/5/24	9/23/24	10/3/24	TBD	TBD	11/25/24
	◆	◆◆	★	◆	◆	◆	★
	August 2024	September		October	November		
Major Releases		★ <b>R24.09 - 9/23/24</b> <u>Key Highlights</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>ACWDL 24-07 - 2024/2025 Family Members Base Allocation Amount</li><li>ACL 22-74 Add and Automate ABAWD Form CF 886 (11/23)</li><li>CMS Certification Recommendations (OCB/ORR) - e-Verifications Phase I</li><li>MEDIL I 21-31 - CalHEERS eHIT: Alternate Format Options</li><li>ACL 22-55 - WTW Pregnancy Exemption</li></ul>			★ <b>R24.11 - 11/25/24</b> <u>Key Highlights</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>ACL 23-35 - Revisions of ORR-6 Refugee Program Reporting</li><li>ACL 24-07 - Update CW 2186A and CW 2184 to include PFL and WTW pregnancy exemptions</li><li>ACL 23-94 - Family Reunification Funding</li><li>MEDS Alerts – Add Program Prioritization to MEDS Alert Task Configurability</li></ul>		
Minor Releases	◆ <b>R.24.08.29 – 8/29/24</b> <u>Key Highlights</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>ACWDL 24-09 - Update on CHDP Interface</li><li>ACWDL 24-09 - Remove the questions related to CHDP from the Health Care Referral List page</li><li>ACWDL 24-09 - Children's Presumptive Eligibility &amp; The Newborn Gateway</li><li>ACL 23-92 - Update EBT 2259 Transactions Section to be Dynamic - Phase 2</li></ul>	◆ <b>R.24.09.05 – 9/5/24</b> <u>Key Highlights</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>2024 CF COLA, CW MAP &amp; CW IRT Values*</li></ul> ◆ <b>R.24.09.07 – 9/7/24</b> <u>Key Highlights</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>2024 CF COLA, CW MAP &amp; CW IRT Batch*</li></ul> <p><i>* Pending receipt of final numbers. Alt dates – 9/12 and 9/14 respectively.</i></p>	◆ <b>R.24.10.03 – 10/3/24</b> <u>Key Highlights</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>New State Food Benefit Type for CalFresh Replacements Due to Electronic Theft</li></ul> ◆ <b>R.24.10.XX – TBD</b> <u>Key Highlights</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>ACL 24-54 - Resource Limit Increase for CW/RCA</li></ul>	◆ <b>R.24.10.XX – TBD</b> <u>Key Highlights</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>ACIN I-XX-24 - 2025 State Minimum Wage</li></ul>			

*More... From the Customer Engagement Team* 

\*\*\*\*\*

## Follow the Wheels



Trinity County  
California



We have been tailgating Trinity County as they initiated an outreach effort called Follow the Wheels. This exciting opportunity has allowed the county to maximize the overall effectiveness of administering the many programs their customers are eligible to, while making the customer experience respectful, responsive, and made available right in their neighborhoods.

To kickstart this effort, Trinity County Food Bank distributed food commodities to their community at 15 locations. The Follow the Wheels initiative resulted in 71 applications, which is an increase of 35% of overall applications taken in the month.

For those of you that don't know, Trinity County is a large, rugged, and mountainous area with limited cell service. With this in mind, the county was able to establish outreach appointment times and provide appointment letters on the spot. This approach helped to meet the Expedited CalFresh (EXCF) needs and ensured customers knew to be in cell service range at their specific time. As a result, this effort yielded an increase to 80% attendance rates for all appointments.

As the wheels went round and round, they totaled a whopping 919 miles and dedicated 23.3 hours to the outreach efforts.

The benefit from Follow the Wheels comes in many ways such as establishing relationships with Community Leaders and demystifying public assistance. Staff provided information and pamphlets on EBT Edge for skimming/scamming, BenefitsCal, Medi-Cal Transportation services, Medical Deductions for CalFresh, Low-income assistance for local utilities, and much more.

We are happy to share that every contact was provided tailored information for their needs. One of the phrases that was widely shared was that Trinity County was "humanizing" Health and Human Services. This mobile effort was truly an amazing morale booster for the team, as it personalized the mission.

Trinity will not be pumping the brakes any time soon, staff are super excited for this outreach platform that they plan to continue providing through the winter months (as mountain weather allows) and are looking for more growth and partnership collaborations, as they are in discussion with Public Health to participate in their Mobile Immunization clinics this Fall.

Honk, Honk! See you all on the road!!

R3 Regional Manager Melissa Thomas



## Region 1 County Field Trips

In early July, Project Staff had an opportunity to visit Santa Cruz and San Benito County offices to meet County Worker Staff and observe how the CalSAWS System is being used on a day-to-day basis. This was an opportunity to show our project staff a day in the life of a worker and show them how the automation and county processes work in action. The visits were very successful and a big thank you to San Benito and Santa Cruz Counties!



**Santa Cruz**



**San Benito**





## BenefitsCal Document Upload Feature Update!

**JULY HIGHLIGHTS (RELEASE 24.07 )**  
Deployed on July 25th

### A Unique Confirmation Code added in the BenefitsCal Document Confirmation Receipt.

To enhance customer assurance and improve document tracking, customers now receive a unique confirmation code upon submitting documents through BenefitsCal. If customers have any questions on uploaded document, they can use this confirmation code to receive support from our help desk or Tier3 support.

BenefitsCal maintained a consistent positive trend in terms of overall usage and since go -live exceeded 5.15M Applications in July 2024.

**Customer Accounts Created**

**4.53M** (as of 07/28/24)

Customers created accounts to apply for and manage their benefits on BenefitsCal.

**Total Applications Submitted**

**5.15M** (as of 07/28/24)

households took the first step to receive food, cash, and/or medical assistance.

**CBO Accounts Created**

**12,217** (as of 07/28/24)

CBOs are now equipped to assist customers on BenefitsCal.

**Daily Logins**

As high as **200k** daily

Between **150k – 200k** on weekdays

### BenefitsCal Activity as a percentage of Submissions from All Other Channels

Applications		
<b>68%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>39%</b>
CalFresh	CalWORKs	Medi-Cal

Renewals		
<b>*32%</b>	<b>*36%</b>	<b>31%</b>
CalFresh	CalWORKs	Medi-Cal

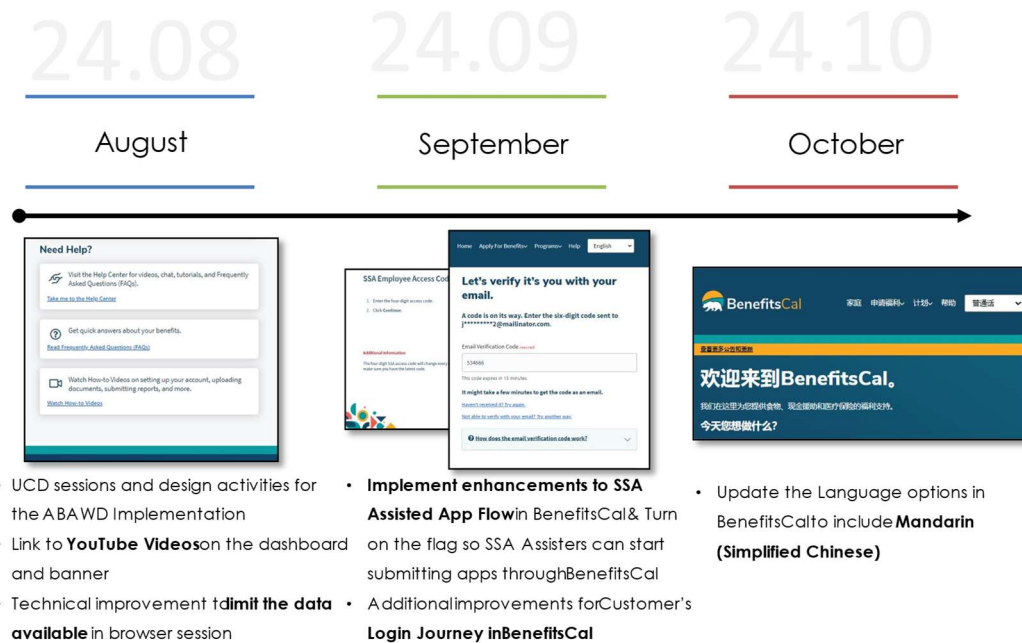
\*includes CW/CFRE combo submissions.

### Periodic Report

**39%**  
SAR 7

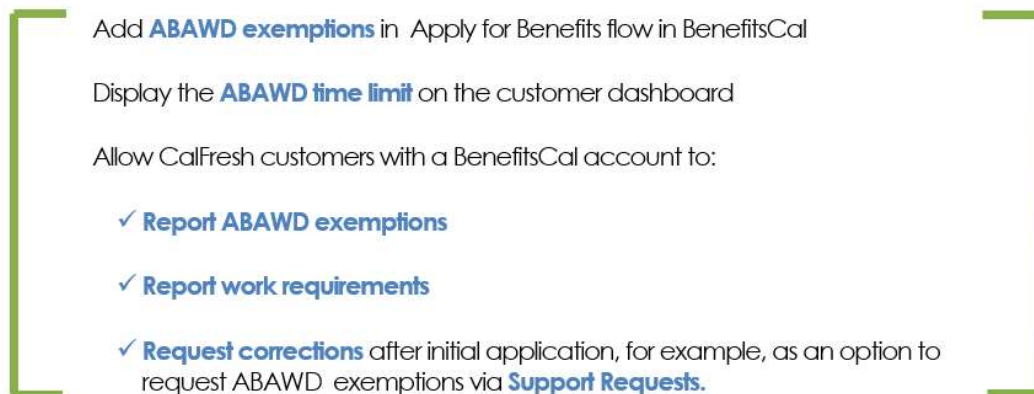
## BenefitsCal

### Key Release Highlights and Upcoming Enhancements



## CalFresh Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) Implementation Update

The ABAWD waiver is expected to expire in October. The scope on BenefitsCal :







## Training Updates

🐝 New CalSAWS Functional Presentation (CFP) on the Disaster CalFresh Program, currently available in LMS.

🐝 Disaster CalFresh job aid will be updated in the 24.11 release to add information on DCF e-Applications, Negative Action, Running EDBC for DCF and accessing Reports.)



## TO OUR COUNTIES...

We want to send our sympathies to all our counties currently experiencing wildfires and note that we are here for you. We are grateful that Disaster CalFresh was implemented some time back to make things a little less painful when the need is great. The Project staff monitor the state and federal disaster declarations carefully to collaborate with our counties in the event CF mass replacements are needed or to help you navigate the CF replacement process at other levels of reissuance. Our Fiscal team is well-versed in these interactions, and they are a great support if you have questions. There are various WBTs and Job Aids that are useful in these emergent situations as well, it is a good practice to keep them handy to act quickly if you have to relocate your office staff or just want the information more readily available to respond quickly to your communities. Check LMS for the new CalSAWS Functional Presentation (CFP) on the Disaster CalFresh Program, "Application of Disaster CalFresh CFP." 🐝

"We cannot stop natural disasters, but we can arm ourselves with knowledge" Petra Nemcova

## Communication Corner

- 🐝 **CIT 0073-24** CAPI Consortium Counties Instructions
- 🐝 **CIT 0074-24** CalSAWS Case Data Removal Schedule For 2024; Case Data Removal May Reports Completed
- 🐝 **CIT 0081-24** BenefitsCal Fact Sheet: Case Linking and Case Linking Verification
- 🐝 **CIT 0082-24** CalSAWS Regional Call Center Refresher Training
- 🐝 **CIT 0083-24** CalSAWS Quick Guides – Duplicate Persons & Linking and Unlinking Self-Service Portal Accounts
- 🐝 **CIT 0086-24** CalSAWS Project County Reallocations SFY 2023-24 v5
- 🐝 **CIT 0087-24** CalSAWS County Cost Summary – June 2024 Update
- 🐝 **CIT 0088-24** Webinar Announcement – Utilizing Reports to Manage Skipped Issuances
- 🐝 **CIT 0089-24** BenefitsCal-Account Reactivation E-Mail Campaigns
- 🐝 **CIT 0090-24** Training Updates Preview Document
- 🐝 **CIT 0091-24** CalSAWS Prepopulated Medi-Cal Redetermination Forms County Reallocations SFY 2023-24
- 🐝 **CIT 0092-24** CalSAWS Case Data Removal Schedule For 2024; Case Data Removal June Reports Completed
- 🐝 **CIT 0093-24** CalSAWS Baseline Release Webcast Schedule - 2024
- 🐝 **CIT 0096-24** CalSAWS Prepopulated Medi-Cal Redetermination Forms County Allocations SFY 2024-25
- 🐝 **CIT 0098-24** Policy Review and Training (PRT) Environment for General Assistance /General Relief (GA/GR) Automate Solution Administrative Eligibility Rule Configuration Usage
- 🐝 **CIT 0099-24** CalSAWS Baseline Release Webcast Schedule - 2024
- 🐝 **CIT 0100-24** Fact Sheet – Utilizing Reports to Manage Skipped Issuances
- 🐝 **CIT 0102-24** Skipped Issuances Job Aid
- 🐝 **CIT 0103-24** Process for requesting CalSAWS Contact Center Changes
- 🐝 **CIT 0107-24** CalSAWS Imaging Optical Character Recognition (OCR) Recommendations
- 🐝 **CIT 0108-24** CalSAWS SFY 23-24 Third Quarter County Share Adjustment
- 🐝 **CIT 0110-24** Change in eGain Scheduled Reports for eGain R21
- 🐝 **CIT 0112-24** CalSAWS Training Manuals Updates
- 🐝 **CIT 0114-24** CA-257182 FC KG - CA-257181 AAP 2024 CNI Lists Revised
- 🐝 **CIT 0116-24** SCR CA-276499 Spousal Support Agreement Modification Date
- 🐝 **CIT 0117-24** CalSAWS Project SFY 2024-25 v1 County Allocations
- 🐝 **CIT 0118-24** CalSAWS Project County Claim Form and Claiming Instructions for SFY 2024-25
- 🐝 **CIT 0119-24** Lists for CA-245051 CF Cases With IHSS Income
- 🐝 **CIT 0120-24** CalSAWS Prepop. MC Forms County Claim Form and Claiming Instructions SFY 2024-25
- 🐝 **CIT 0123-24** Lists for CA-241626 ACL 22-46 Update Student Exemptions
- 🐝 **CIT 0125-24** BenefitsCal Public Facing Changes-CER vs ER Updated
- 🐝 **CIT 0128-24** CalSAWS Ad Budget Year End Statement FY23-24
- 🐝 **CIT 0129-24** FY24-25 Administrative Invoices for the CalSAWS JPA Administrative Budget
- 🐝 **CIT 0131-24** Removal of Child Health and Disability Prevention (CHDP) Program References
- 🐝 **CIT 0132-24** Automation of e-Application Status, Updates and Reminders
- 🐝 **CIT 0135-24** CalWORKs-CalFresh COLA FFY 2025 Batch Memorandum
- 🐝 **CIT 0136-24** CalSAWS County Cost Summary – August 2024 Update
- 🐝 **CIT 0138-24** CalSAWS Quick Guides - Skipped Issuances Non-Needy Caretaker Relative ICT Recovery Accounts Duplicate Persons

## **PREPERATION IS KEY!**

County staff wear multiple hats. We are happy to help you with reminders for fire and heavy storm seasons, so you are as prepared as possible if a disaster hits. These tips will help you too quickly pivot to assist your respective communities.

**For our work to assist any customers and staff in emergency situations it is a good practice to:**

1. Ensure your Emergency Checklists are in the appropriate locations (on computers and on paper) and are up to date and are aligned!
2. Run Emergency Drills for your Managers or other personnel who are on point to lead staff/clients to safety and ensure staff know where to meet/lead customers in the event of an emergency being called by County Disaster Leads.
3. Prepare/print out Emergency Resources in the community for your customers; noting the following: numbers to call in the event of downed trees, power lines and/or signals down and road obstructions, etc. are good to include. Ex. 211, 311, etc.
4. Use County social media to post preparedness reminders for your community, providing any links, etc. that may be useful.
5. Print portable telephone lists of county/emergency contacts for staff to have on hand at shelters. You may want to access your region's Master Contact List in the event you need to borrow laptops or other resources from a sister county. These lists are found in your regional folders on the CalSAWS Web Portal
  - CalSAWS Web Portal > Meetings > Regions > Region X (replace your Region # for the 'X', and surf the folders to get to your Region's contact list)
6. **Charge all mobile devices** (cells, iPads, etc.) and back up cell phone battery packs (home and office).
7. Locate your emergency laptops to charge the batteries up, bring software and virus protections up to date and note if air cards or wireless products can be enabled on the devices quickly. *Pack an extension cord in the laptop bag, as not all shelters or homes have nearby outlets!*
  - Work with your RMs to have them find out which Counties may have loaner laptops if you need one or more.
  - Note: The Project may be able to secure laptops for use during emergencies. Please notify your RM to get connected with the correct technical person to assist you, if possible.
8. **Fully gas up all your county (and personal!) cars; have car seats ready for any minors on site who may need to be transported.**
9. Check, service, and fuel up your generators; keep long, sturdy extension cords next to your generators for easy access.
10. Stock up on batteries and know flashlight/extra battery locations.
11. Place some flashlights (with full batteries) and battery powered lanterns strategically throughout your offices (and homes!).
12. Stock up your office's first aid kits.
13. Locate your office's portable heaters or fans and designate someone to bring them out to local office/shelters, if needed.
14. Check that your office's clothing and emergency item closets (batteries, diapers, formula, jackets, blankets, etc.) are organized and your checklists handy as well. We have found in the past that placing flashlights and battery powered lamps around the office was a good idea just in case!
15. Know the address and telephone number of any facilities who stock sand and/or sandbags; know that you may have to 'bring your own sandbags'
16. Clear the leaves from around your building, nearby driveways, and curb/corner areas to avoid blockage of nearby storm drains.
17. Have plenty of bottled water on hand.
18. Consider stocking up on non-refrigerated food that doesn't require cooking (more for your home; but it can't hurt at work for those of you in snowy/tree-ridden locations!)

**Remember the 5P's of evacuation...** People, Prescriptions, Papers, Pets, Pictures 🐝