

**DSS ADMINISTRATIVE LETTER NO. ECONOMIC AND FAMILY SERVICES 5-2011
April 2011 Disaster Food and Nutrition Services Benefits (April 27, 2011)**

(Food and Nutrition Services)

TO: County Directors of Social Services
ATTENTION: Food and Nutrition Services Managers and Supervisors
DATE: April 27, 2011
SUBJECT: April 2011 Disaster Food and Nutrition Services Benefits
EFFECTIVE: Upon receipt

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has approved a Disaster Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) Program for 18 North Carolina counties. Individuals and families may be eligible for disaster FNS benefits if they lived in areas that were directly impacted by the severe storms and tornados and suffered one of the following: loss of wages, damage to their home or self-employment property, or food loss due to power outages of eight hours or more. Households not affected by the storms or tornados are not eligible for disaster FNS benefits.

FNS recipients who were certified prior to April 16, 2011, who suffered a food loss due to the disaster can apply for replacement of lost food through the affidavit process. A waiver of timely reporting requirements for household replacement has been extended through May 6, 2011.

FNS recipients who are certified for April 2011 benefits, regardless of issuance date, who suffered a loss of wages or damage to their home or self-employment property can apply for a supplement of benefits up to the full allotment amount for the household size. The time period for households to request this supplement is through May 6, 2011.

This letter provides instructions and procedures that the 18 approved counties must follow while implementing and participating in the Disaster FNS Program. The counties are as follows: Bertie, Bladen, Craven, Cumberland, Currituck, Greene, Halifax, Harnett, Hertford, Hoke, Johnston, Lee, Onslow, Pitt, Robeson, Sampson, Wake and Wilson. This letter contains instructions for both policy and automation procedures.

The above counties will take applications for five **consecutive** days. Begin taking disaster FNS applications on Friday, April 29, 2011 and stop taking applications at close of business on Tuesday, May 3, 2011. **Applications must be taken during regular operating hours. We recommend that your county department extend hours beyond normal business hours to accommodate the households in your county.** We recommend these applications be taken at an alternate site. If this is not possible, counties need to designate a separate area for the disaster applicants as counties must continue to operate their regular FNS program.

The only allowable application for disaster benefits is the DSS-1432 (Rev. 4/11), Application for Disaster Food and Nutrition Services. The Disaster FNS Program rules only apply to disaster applications taken during the five-day time period. Process and key all disaster applications within three days from the date of application.

All employees who are assisting with the application taking process should review the following instructions carefully before the application process begins.

I. POLICY INSTRUCTIONS

A. General Policy Procedures

1. County DSS staff must determine eligibility. Staff from other agencies and approved volunteers can take or key applications.
2. Only county DSS management can interview and determine eligibility for county department of social services employees.
3. Dual participation is not allowed. An individual can only be included on one application. Each individual in each applicant household must be researched through the Common Name Data Service (CNDS) to determine if that individual has an existing Individual ID number and if the household has an existing FSIS case number.
4. If an individual is discovered to be included on more than one application or is included in an active FNS household take the following actions:
 - a. If individual was included in an active FNS household **in the month of April**, approve the application omitting the individual who is already on an existing active case.
 - b. If individual has already been approved on one application, approve second application omitting the individual who is already on an existing active case.
 - c. If individual is discovered on more than one application prior to approval of either application, resolve the discrepancy before approving either application.
5. If a household is temporarily residing in a county that is not operating a Disaster FNS Program, take the following action:
 - a. If the household considers the disaster county his permanent residence and resided there prior to the disaster, the applicant must go to one of the 18 disaster counties to apply. This is necessary due to EBT card delivery procedures.
 - b. If the household has no intent to return to the disaster county and considers the new county his permanent residence, take a regular FNS application.
6. If a household is temporarily residing in a disaster county but permanently resides in a different disaster county, the temporary county will take and process the application. This is necessary due to disaster EBT card delivery procedures.
7. Key **all** denials in FSIS. This will assist in tracking households who may attempt to apply after one application has been denied.
8. Only eligibility factors included on the DSS-1432 will be used to determine eligibility. All other FNS eligibility factors not included on the DSS-1432 are waived and must not be addressed. This includes, but is not limited to eligibility requirements for citizenship/alien, student, substance abuse, required household members and IPV.
9. Verification of identity is mandatory.

Verification of residency and loss of income or inaccessibility of resources should be verified when possible. Verification of household composition and food loss should only

be attempted if questionable. Use county available resources for verification. If verification is not available, do not pend application, accept client's statement.

Accept client statement for the following: total net (take home) income, all expenses, resources and Social Security Numbers, if available.

Applications may only be pended for the household to provide the following: verification of identity, a written request from the head of household for an authorized representative to complete the DSS-1432 and/or use of benefits, or when the applicant is unable to provide a statement of information necessary to complete the application. Use the DSS-8650, FNS Notice of Information Needed, to request verification, allow three calendar days for the applicant to provide verification. Deny the application for failure to provide verification on the fourth calendar day.

- a. **ALL** other verifications are waived.
- b. It is not necessary to complete IEVS matches as this has been waived.

B. Completing the Application

1. Use DSS-1432 to determine eligibility. This form may be partially completed by applicants. All questions must be answered. If the applicant completes the application, the interviewer should review answers for accuracy and completeness. All handwriting should be legible. Only the interviewer or other designated staff should complete the shaded portions, Part F, of the application form.
2. The top half of the front page of the application form includes county, date and case number information. The second part includes household information. Complete the head of household's name, permanent and temporary address information, phone number, county of residence, and authorized representative information.
 - a. Identity – The head of household or authorized representative must provide proof of identity. This can be in the form of a picture I.D. or any other form of identification. This proof may include, but is not limited to, Social Security card, mail, or collateral statement. **Identity is the only eligibility factor that must be verified.**
 - b. Authorized Representative - In order for an authorized representative to complete the application process and/or use the benefits, there must be a written request from the head of household. It is not necessary to complete the DSS-1688 that is used in the regular FNS program.
 - c. Residence – Verification should be attempted. If verification is not possible accept client statement that the applicant and his/her household lived in the disaster area at the time of the disaster.
 - d. Temporary Residence – The applicant should list the address and telephone number of his temporary residence, if applicable.
3. Part A, Household Situation, provides information to assist the agency in determining eligibility.
 - a. Question 1 asks if the household was living in the disaster area at the time of the disaster. If **yes**, proceed with application. If **no**, deny the application.

- (1) If the household was living in a disaster area and receiving regular FNS benefits from a disaster county prior to the disaster, they cannot apply for disaster benefits. They can apply for replacement or supplemental FNS benefits through the affidavit process. Deny the disaster application.
 - (2) If the household was residing in a disaster area prior to the disaster but received regular FNS benefits from a non-disaster county for April 2011, they cannot apply for disaster benefits. They can apply for replacement or supplemental FNS benefits through the affidavit process. Deny the disaster application and fax the affidavit to the non-disaster county for keying.
 - (3) If the household received FNS benefits from another state for the month of April and moved to North Carolina prior to the disaster, the household is eligible to apply for disaster FNS benefits. The household must have received the benefits prior to the disaster.
 - (4) If the household had a regular FNS application approved after April 16, 2011 with an effective date of April they can apply for replacement or supplemental FNS benefits through the affidavit process. Deny the disaster application.
- b. Question 2 asks if any household members are currently receiving FNS benefits. If **yes** and the household lived in the disaster area, the household is not eligible for Disaster FNS benefits. These households may request replacement benefits through the affidavit process. If **no**, proceed with the application.
4. Part B, Household Members, includes information for members of the FNS household. The applicant should only include household members who lived together and ate together prior to the disaster. If the applicant's household is temporarily staying with another household because of the disaster, do not include the other household members on the application. The application should include the following information.
- a. Name – Complete name of each household member
 - b. Social Security Number – Applicant should provide a SSN for every household member, if available.
 - c. Birth Date – Applicant should provide birth dates for all household members.
5. Part C, Income – includes information regarding sources, types and total net (take-home) amount of income received or expected to be received during the period April 16 through May 15, 2011 by each household member. Use actual income, do not round or convert.
- a. Type of Income/Employer – Applicant should list all sources and types of income for each household member. Types of income include, but are not limited to wages, self-employment, child support, SSI, Social Security benefits, Unemployment Insurance Benefits (UIB), Work First, etc.

Note: Please remember to deduct business-related expenses from self-employment income.

- b. Total Income Amount for Disaster Period – Applicant should list the total amount of net income (take-home) received or anticipated to be received from April 16 through May 15, 2011 for each household member.

Note: It is very important to stress that the application must include all sources of income as well as total net income amounts.

6. Part D, Resources, include all cash that is currently available to the household. This is also referred to as “liquid resources.” The household should identify the following available resources and the amounts.
 - a. Cash on hand of every household member;
 - b. Checking accounts and available balances; **and**
 - c. Savings accounts and available balances.

Note: Remember to deduct deposited income that is counted in Part C and outstanding checks from liquid resources.

Determine if resources exceed the limit for the household size. The resource limit is \$3000 if at least one member is disabled or age 60 or older. The resource limit is \$2000 for all other households. Deny the application if resources exceed the applicable limit.

7. Part E, Expenses, include disaster-related expenses. The household should provide accurate amounts for all disaster-related expenses.

For disaster-related expenses, **include expenses that the household paid or will pay from April 16 through May 15, 2011.** Do not include expenses that were paid or will be paid by someone outside the household, such as costs covered or reimbursed by insurance or landlords. **Incurred regular expenses are not allowable.**

EXAMPLE # 1: A household received an insurance claim settlement on April 26, 2011. Do not allow a deduction for items covered by the insurance settlement. It is acceptable to allow a deductible amount as an expense if the deductible amount will be paid within 30 days from the date of the disaster.

EXAMPLE # 2: A household claims a \$50,000 loss because their home was destroyed. The household incurred the expense but it is very doubtful that the household will pay for a new home by May 15, 2011. It is acceptable to allow a deductible amount as an expense if the deductible amount will be paid by May 15, 2011.

The household should provide accurate amounts for the following disaster-related expenses:

- a. Food destroyed in the disaster - List total dollar amount of food lost or destroyed in the disaster that the household has replaced or will replace between April 16 through May 15, 2011;
- b. Dependent care and related mileage due to disaster – List amount paid or amount that will be paid by the household between April 16 through May 15, 2011; this does not include regular dependent care expenses. The cost must be as a result of the disaster.

- c. Funeral/medical expenses due to disaster - List actual expenses that are a result of the disaster and the amount paid or that will be paid by the household between April 16 through May 15, 2011;
 - d. Moving and storage costs - List amount paid or amount that will be paid by the household between April 16 through May 15, 2011;
 - e. Temporary shelter costs - List amount paid or amount that will be paid by the household between April 16 through May 15, 2011. This can include lodging costs.
 - f. Cost to protect property during disaster - List amount paid or amount that will be paid by the household between April 16 through May 15, 2011. This can include, but is not limited to plywood, tape, batteries, and generators.
 - g. Cost to repair or replace items for home or self-employment property - List amount paid or amount that will be paid by the household between April 16 through May 15, 2011;
 - h. Other disaster-related expenses - The household should identify and describe other disaster-related expenses paid or amount that will be paid by the household between April 16 through May 15, 2011.
8. Part F, Eligibility Computation –
- a. Add the total income for the household from Part C and enter in #1.
 - b. Add the total cash resources for the household from Part D and enter in #2.
 - c. Add #1 and #2 and enter total in #3
 - d. Add the total expenses from Part E and enter in #4
 - e. Subtract #4 from #3 and enter total in #5
 - f. Enter the Maximum Gross Income Limit from the Disaster Table in #6
 - g. If the amount is #5 is equal to or less than #6 indicate that the household is eligible in #7
 - h. If the amount in #5 is greater than #6 indicate that the household is ineligible in #8
9. Part G, Penalty Warning - includes penalty warnings that must be explained to the applicant. Review these warnings carefully with every applicant, preferably prior to completing the application process. The applicant's signature on the application is also certification that he understands this information.
10. Part H, Certification and Signature - includes a statement of understanding that the applicant should read before signing the application.
- a. If the applicant signed the application prior to the interview, review the statement during the interview. The application must be signed to be valid. The application must also be dated.

- b. The interviewer and the processor should print his or her name and sign the application. The processor should also date the approval/denial and complete the certification period information, if applicable. The processor should also complete the denial reason section when needed.
- c. The individual keying the application into FSIS should sign and date the application. If the application is keyed in a county other than the household's county of residence, the interviewer should include his name, county, and phone number.

C. REPLACEMENT OF LOST APRIL FNS BENEFITS

Active April 2011 FNS recipients, including Transitional and SNAP recipients, who suffered a food loss due to the disaster can apply for replacement of lost food through the affidavit process. A waiver of timely reporting requirements for household replacement has been extended through May 6, 2011. Follow policy in FNS Certification Manual Section 910. Key all replacement benefits using the "O" code.

NC will provide automated mass supplements up to the maximum allotment for the household size for all households that received replacement benefits. SNAP recipients will be supplemented up to the maximum FNS allotment for a household size of one. The system will identify these supplements with a "Z" code.

D. SUPPLEMENTING BENEFITS

Active April 2011 FNS recipients, including Transitional and SNAP recipients, who suffered a loss of wages or damage to their home or self-employment property can apply for a supplement of benefits up to the full allotment amount for the household size. The time period for households to request this supplement is through May 6, 2011. Use the DSS-1678, Replacement Affidavit, provided to your agency for this process. SNAP recipients will be supplemented up to the maximum FNS allotment for a household size of one.

Key all supplemental benefits using the DSS-8593 and enter the "W" code. It is important to correctly code these supplements to prevent overissuance of benefits.

Questionable information should be verified when possible. If verification is not available, accept client's statement.

II. AUTOMATION INSTRUCTIONS

A. General Automation Procedures

FSIS will be available for keying from 7:00 a.m. until 7:30 p.m. In order for cases keyed to be processed, the system must be brought down for processing at 7:30 p.m. to ensure the system is available at 7:00 a.m. on the next day.

1. These instructions are to be used in conjunction with the DSS-1432 (Rev. 4/11), Application for Disaster Food and Nutrition Services, only. Only those counties designated by USDA as disaster sites will be allowed access to the disaster procedures described in these instructions.
2. The Food Stamp Information System (FSIS) is prepared to handle a Disaster FNS Program with a few modifications from regular on-going FNS procedures. Included with

this letter are instructions for keying applications taken and processed under a Disaster FNS Program.

3. Each individual in each applicant household must be researched through the Common Name Data Service (CNDS) to determine if that individual has an existing Individual ID number and if the household has an existing FSIS case number. Assign an individual ID number to any individual that is to be included on the disaster application if one has not already been assigned.
4. If an individual being researched appears in another FNS household for the month of application, do not include this individual in the disaster FNS household.

Re-evaluate household eligibility prior to approving the application.

All disaster FNS applications must be entered in FSIS as a TC1.

IMPORTANT: When distributing the disaster EBT card and PIN number to the applicant, the top portion of the card carrier **MUST** be **stapled** to the application—do not paper clip or use dog-eared corners.

B. Application Approval

1. All disaster applications must be completed through the SLUP process and use Transaction Code 1, even if there has been a previous Food and Nutrition Services case for the household. This does not apply to Food and Nutrition Services cases that are active as of the time of the disaster. Key all necessary information, including the Disaster Indicator of 'T1' and each individual ID number that is to be included on the FNS.

NOTE: FSIS will not allow a "T1" indicator to be used in a county not designated as a disaster county.

2. When approving the application in FSIS with a Transaction Code 2, key all required fields as in any other FNS application with the following exceptions.
 - a. Applications taken in April will have a **one month certification period** of 04/11 through 04/11.

Applications taken in May will have a **one month certification period** of 05/11 through 05/11.
 - b. Do not enter an 'N' in the No Prorate field. The system will default this field to an 'N'.
 - c. Do not enter a Work Registration Code for any individual. Leave this field blank.
 - d. Do not key deductions or income.
3. Complete the SLUI screen based on the information on the EBT card carrier assigned to the applicant.

C. Disposition of Applications Pending in FSIS Prior to Disaster Application

1. If a pending application is discovered when FSIS is researched for an existing case, a Disaster FNS Application can be entered as a TC1 after the pending FNS application in the system is denied. Use code "53" to deny the pending FNS application, no denial notice will be sent as long as the actions occur the same day.

Reopen the denied application with a TC3/35 using the original date of application; determine eligibility for regular FNS benefits effective after the disaster FNS program has ended. Do not issue duplicate benefits for the disaster certification month. A report will be run to identify all code "53" denied applications.

2. Disaster FNS cases cannot be converted to an ongoing case. If the applicant wishes to receive ongoing benefits, he/she must apply for regular FNS benefits.

D. REPLACEMENT OF DISASTER EBT CARDS

1. If a disaster EBT card has been reported lost/stolen, follow the current EBT card replacement procedures that are used for regular EBT cards.
2. If the disaster EBT card was assigned incorrectly to a disaster case, the worker must:
 - a. Deactivate the incorrect EBT card through the eFunds Administrative Terminal, and
 - b. Use the SLUI screen to issue a new card for the case. A new account is also set up for the case.
 - (1) From the FOOD STAMP UPDATE MENU, key the SLUI transaction item. Press ENTER.
 - (2) A prompt is received to key the FSIS case ID number. Key the disaster FSIS case ID number. Press ENTER. The FSIS/EBTIS DISASTER SUI ENTRY SCREEN is displayed with the SUI and PAN numbers assigned to the case and a prompt to change information.
 - (3) Key the new unused SUI and PAN numbers, 'Y' to continue, and Press ENTER. FSIS checks to ensure the numbers have not already been used. If the numbers have not been used, the information is sent to Citibank in the nightly update and a new account is set up with the case ID and the new SUI and PAN numbers.

NOTE: BECAUSE OF DEACTIVATION OF THE INCORRECT EBT CARD, THE CLIENT CAN NO LONGER ACCESS ANY BENEFITS THAT MAY BE IN THE INCORRECT ACCOUNT. AN SLSE TRANSACTION (DSS-8593) MAY BE COMPLETED TO ISSUE THE BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT AS A SUPPLEMENTAL FOR THE DISASTER CASE ONCE THE NEW ACCOUNT HAS BEEN SET UP.

A daily conference call is scheduled at 3:00 PM for all 18 counties to discuss updates and issues. The number for each day is 919-715-0769.

If you have any questions, contact Economic and Family Services at (919) 334-1224 or by email at DSS.EFSHD@dhhs.nc.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dean Simpson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D".

Dean Simpson, Chief
Economic and Family Services

DS/tb

[Penalty Warning](#)
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