

**DSS ADMINISTRATIVE LETTER ECONOMIC AND FAMILY SERVICES
EFS_FNS_AL 13-2018**

Hurricane Florence 2018, Automated Mass Replacement Waiver

September 26, 2018

Food and Nutrition Services

TO: County Directors of Social Services

ATTENTION: Food and Nutrition Services Managers and Supervisors

DATE: September 26, 2018

SUBJECT: **Amended** Hurricane Florence Automated Mass Replacement Waiver

EFFECTIVE: September 26, 2018

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

On September 14, 2018, Hurricane Florence caused severe flooding and power outages throughout North Carolina. To assist current Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) recipients adversely effected by this disaster, North Carolina requested a waiver to provide mass replacement of benefits, without requiring households to report loss of food or provide verification of the loss. Counties that experienced power outages of four hours or more or effected by flooding in 50% of the county, are eligible for this waiver. The waiver will allow for more timely and efficient replacement of benefits via an automated process. The following counties were approved in the waiver:

Bladen, Brunswick, Carteret, Columbus, Craven, Duplin, Harnett, Hoke, Hyde, Jones, Lee, Moore, New Hanover, Onslow, Pamlico, Pender, Richmond, Robeson, Sampson and Scotland

Estimating the portion of the food purchased with monthly benefits that had not yet been consumed at the time of the disaster, and was therefore subject to loss, is relevant to making this determination. USDA derives a benefit replacement estimate by assuming a reasonable usage of benefits and consumption of food over the course of the month, and estimates how much food may have been lost by the average household. This estimate considers whether loss is limited to perishables due to a power outage, or perishables and non-perishables due to structural or flood damage.

North Carolina provided USDA with available documentation on power outages and flooding for all 27 Individual Assistance counties. The State proposed to automatically replace 100% of all September 2018 FNS benefits.

II. POLICY PROCEDURES

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has approved an Automated Mass Replacement Waiver for FNS recipients who suffered a food loss as result of the disaster in the in the above mentioned 20 counties. This waiver allows for an automated mass replacement of 60% of the September 2018 benefit.

FNS recipients in counties not approved for Automated Mass Replacement, including the other 7 Individual Assistance counties, Beaufort, Cumberland, Johnston, Lenoir, Pitt, Wilson and Wayne, can request manual replacement of benefits until October 15, 2018. See [Admin Letter 8-2018 Hurricane Florence Timely Household Reporting of Food Loss](#)

If a household requested and was approved for a manual September replacement they will not be included in the mass replacement batch. If the amount they received is less than the 60% mass replacement, they will be issued a second manual replacement to take the household up to the 60% mass replacement amount.

Example: Household of one receives monthly allotment of \$192.00. They reported a food loss of half their benefit amount and were manually issued \$96.00. The 60% mass replacement qualifies this household for a total replacement of \$115.00. This household will not be in the mass replacement batch and would therefore need a second manual replacement of \$19.00.

NC FAST will generate a report to identify these households and the remaining amount of the replacement that needs to be issued.

If the household requested and was approved for a manual replacement amount that was for 60% or more of their September monthly benefit amount, the household would not qualify for the mass replacement.

Replacement benefits cannot exceed the monthly allotment for the household.

III. IMPLEMENTATION INSTRUCTIONS

**** Implementation Instructions below apply only to the 20 counties listed above. ****

NCFast will automatically issue the replacements via a batch process on September 26, 2018.

Manual replacements for loss of September benefits:

There will be a report titled "List of FNS cases with Manual replacement issued less than 60%" located in Fast Help that includes the list of cases that were issued a manual

replacement for September, but the amount was less than 60% of the household's regular benefit amount. The report will provide the additional manual replacement amount the county needs to issue to the household.

Affidavits received and will be keyed by September 26, 2018:

Counties need to determine if the requested replacement amount equals 60% or more of the household's benefit.

- If it is less than, note on the affidavit that the client is in one of the above mentioned 20 counties and is eligible for 60% mass replacement. Take no further action.
- If the amount on the affidavit is more than 60% issue the requested amount not to exceed the household's regular benefit amount.

These cases will not be picked in the mass replacement batch.

Affidavits received on or after September 27, 2018 for September replacements:

Counties must evaluate affidavits to determine if reported food loss for September 2018 is greater than the 60% automated replacement.

- If the reported loss is equal or less than the 60% automated replacement, take no further action.
- If the reported loss is more than the 60% automated replacement, calculate the difference in the amount claimed on the affidavit (not to exceed the households' allotment amount) and the actual replacement issued. Issue a replacement for the difference. Do not key cents, use standard rounding rules.

Example: Household allotment is \$200. The household filed an affidavit claiming a loss of \$125. NC FAST issues automated replacement of 60% or \$120. Another replacement of \$5 (\$125-\$120) must be given to the household. Do not key cents, use standard rounding rules.

Manual Replacement Affidavits for loss of September benefits:

All affidavits for loss of September 2018 benefits must be evaluated and keyed according to policy outlined in FNS Manual Section 910.

Submit any questions regarding this information to the Operational Support Team (OST) at DSS.Policy.Questions@dhhs.nc.gov. Include "Disaster FNS" in the subject line of the email.

Sincerely,



David Locklear, Deputy Director
Economic and Family Services