

**DSS ADMINISTRATIVE LETTER ECONOMIC AND FAMILY SERVICES 36-2020
EFS_FNS_AL-36-2020**

Food and Nutrition Services

TO: County Directors of Social Services

ATTENTION: Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) Administrators, Managers and Supervisors

DATE: September 8, 2020

SUBJECT: Hurricane Isaias Automated Mass Replacements Waiver

EFFECTIVE DATE: September 9, 2020

PRIORITY: For Information and Action

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

On August 4, 2020, Hurricane Isaias brought power outages to several eastern counties in 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 FNS benefits, without requiring households to report loss of food or provide verification of the loss. Counties where 50% of the entire population experienced power outages of four or more hours 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:

Bertie, Brunswick, Camden, Gates, Jones, Martin, New Hanover, Onslow, Pamlico, Pender and Washington

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. The United States Department of Agriculture (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 of power outages for the 11 affected counties. The State proposed to automatically replace 50% of all July 2020 FNS benefits issued on or before August 4, 2020 for the above counties, however USDA only approved a 40% replacement.

II. POLICY PROCEDURES

NC FAST will bring the system down at 6 pm on September 9, 2020 to automatically issue the replacements via a batch process, these benefits will be available to households on Thursday September 10, 2020. If a household already requested and was approved for a manual July 2020 replacement, they will not be included in the mass replacement batch. In addition, July 2020 FNS benefits issued after August 4, 2020 will not be included in the mass replacement batch as those benefits could not have been lost due to the disaster.

III. IMPLEMENTATION INSTRUCTIONS

Counties must key all completed manual affidavits received prior to close of business on Wednesday September 9, 2020.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David Locklear".

David Locklear, Deputy Director
Economic and Family Services Section

DL/rc