

1030

FOOD STAMP ASSISTANCE IN DISASTERS

1030.05

DISASTER DESIGNATION

REV:08/2006

The Disaster Relief Act of 1974 and the Food Stamp Act of 1977 as amended provides the authority for the issuance of emergency food stamp allotments for victims of a disaster. During a Presidential or an FNS declared disaster where a quick response is needed to meet sudden heavy demand at the food stamp offices and the on-going program cannot meet the food needs of afflicted households, the approach to be used is emergency food stamp issuance.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) will seek approval for authorization to implement emergency food stamp assistance procedures if, after consultation with officials in the disaster area, it is determined that food assistance is necessary.

If FNS approves an emergency disaster assistance designation for the area, the Assistant Administrator for Food Stamps and the Regional Managers for Economic and Social Services are advised and a determination of need for transfer of workers from other District offices to the disaster area made.

Households affected by the disaster are certified by the procedures outlined in this section. FNS will specify the period of authorization which cannot be for no more than one month. If necessary, the State may apply for extension of the one-month period. Staff is notified that the disaster designation is approved by FNS and is advised of the period of authorization.

If the disaster declaration is not approved by FNS, households may be eligible through the ongoing certification procedures using the unusual expense deduction in Section 1008.20.25.

1030.05.05

Certification Agency

REV:02/1978

Certification for emergency food stamp assistance is by the local E&SS and Food Stamp Offices which handle certification for the on-going Food Stamp program in that area. If it is a Presidential-declared disaster, an authorized disaster relief agency such as the Federal Emergency Management Assistance (FEMA) or the Red Cross may aid in this certification by making emergency determinations.

Certification Points

Normally, certification is handled in the local E &SS or Food Stamp offices but, if necessary, to the extent possible, certification locations convenient to disaster victims should be established. In the event of a Presidential-declared disaster, there will be cooperation with FEMA in establishing certification points in Disaster Assistance Centers.

1030.05.10

Household Application

REV:02/1978

An RIFS-1D "Application for Emergency Food Stamp Assistance" has been developed for use in certifications in the event of a disaster. As this is a declaration type application form, no further verification of the applicant's statements is required.

However, certified households should be advised that the accuracy of statements is subject to subsequent reviews and verification by the Quality Control Unit of the Department of Human Services.

1030.10 ELIGIBILITY AND CERTIFICATION

REV:08/2006

The eligibility technician certify the applicant household if it meets the following criteria.

- * The household resides either temporarily or permanently within the geographical limits of the disaster project area.
- * The household has access to cooking facilities.
- * The household is in need of food stamp assistance because of a reduction in or inaccessibility of income or cash.
- * Because of the effect of the disaster on living accommodations, it is common that more than one food stamp household share the same shelter. Therefore, applicant groups or individuals sharing common living quarters may be certified as separate households under these procedures.
- * The fact that a household has previously been authorized to participate in the ongoing Food Stamp Program and has already utilized its food stamp benefits during that month in which the disaster occurs does not preclude a second issuance in accordance with these procedures if it appears that due to the disaster, the household is unable to make the previously authorized purchase or it has lost stocks of food acquired through the use of food stamp program benefits.
- * No emergency food stamp benefit allotment must be authorized or issued after the expiration of the designated period for which such assistance was authorized by FNS.

If the household fails to meet the above eligibility requirements, eligibility for food stamp assistance is determined in accordance with ongoing program requirements.

1030.10.05 Procedures for Processing Applications

REV:08/2006

If the household is determined eligible based on the disaster criteria, the eligibility technician takes the following action:

- * Assign the Social Security number of the Head of Household prefixed by a D the Case Number.

- * Issue a Food Stamp Identification Card.
- * Inform the household where benefits may be obtained.

- * Inform the household of the proper use of food stamp program benefits/EBT card. This includes a list of currently authorized food stores and a quick review of what cannot be bought with food stamp benefits.

If the authorization period is extended beyond the original designation, households who have already received an emergency allotment may be issued the additional allotment for this period if they still meet the eligibility criteria.

1030.10.10 Benefit Issuance

REV:08/2006

Food Stamp benefits may be issued to the head of the household, the spouse, or an authorized representative. If the circumstances which exist as a result of the disaster make it impractical or cause undue delay in receipt of assistance by disaster victims, the agency may, with FNS approval, make temporary arrangements for issuance, including the use of a disaster relief agency.

1030.15 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

REV:02/1978

In every State where emergency food stamp assistance is authorized, emergency food coupon allotments must be reported, and coupons accounted for in the same manner as other authorized issuances. In addition, however, the agency must report on Form FNS-292, Report of Coupon Issuance for Disaster Relief, the number of households and persons receiving emergency food coupon allotments, the total amount of such allotments and the number of persons certified for the ongoing Food Stamp Program who received emergency food stamp assistance. This form must be completed as soon as possible after emergency operations are concluded. If the authorization to issue emergency food coupon allotments is extended beyond the original period, a separate report must be filed for each authorization period.

1030.20 CREDIT FOR LOST BENEFITS

REV:02/1978

The agency should handle cases of households which have had their food coupon allotment wrongfully denied, delayed, or terminated by providing credit for lost benefits in accordance with the applicable Food Stamp regulations and procedures found in Section 1020.

1030.25 QUALITY CONTROL PROVISIONS

REV:09/1997

The agency must establish and maintain a quality control system in accordance with FCS Instructions "Quality Control of Eligibility and Coupon Basis of Issuance Determination". Quality Control is an administrative system for documenting the extent of and reasons for errors in the eligibility and basis of issuance of

participating households receiving federally funded food stamp benefits. Based on this documentation, action must be taken to reduce the incidence of these errors below pre-established tolerance limits.

Cases which are receiving federally funded food stamp benefits continue to be subject to review under normal quality control procedures to determine the accuracy of the federal food stamps.

Those cases classified as receiving state-funded food stamp benefits are not subject to federal Quality Assurance Review.

(See Section 1004.20.10.01.)