



Food and Nutrition Service

Disaster Food Assistance Programs

Support You Can Count On!



USDA Disaster Food Assistance Programs: Support You Can Count On



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Nothing is more important than providing food when people find themselves suddenly, and often critically, in need following a storm, earthquake, flood or other disaster emergency. USDA makes sure that people have enough to eat.

The United States Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) coordinates with State, local and voluntary organizations to:

- Provide food for shelters and other mass feeding sites.
- Distribute food packages directly to households in need in limited situations.
- Issue emergency Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits.

As part of the National Response Framework, FNS supplies food to disaster relief organizations such as the Red Cross and the Salvation Army for mass feeding or household distribution. State agencies notify USDA of the types and quantities of food that relief organizations need for emergency feeding operations. FNS also authorizes States to operate a Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (D-SNAP).

For more information and resources, please visit the FNS website at:
www.fns.usda.gov/disasters/disaster.htm

Food Distribution Programs Disaster Assistance:
www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/programs/fd-disasters

USDA Commodity Food Network:
www.commodityfoods.usda.gov

Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Guidance:
www.fns.usda.gov/disasters/response/D-SNAP_Handbook/guide.htm

SNAP Outreach Toolkits:
www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/tool-kits.htm

In addition, the USDA Farm Service Agency provides assistance for natural disaster losses, resulting from drought, flood, fire, freeze, tornadoes, pest infestation, and other calamities.
www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA

The Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (D-SNAP)

Powerful Benefits

- D-SNAP ensures easy access to safe, nutritious foods for disaster survivors.
- D-SNAP benefits are loaded on Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards for use at most grocery stores.
- D-SNAP benefits are calculated to allow households to purchase a nutritious diet for 30 days.



- D-SNAP benefits are available quickly after a disaster – usually after grocery stores open for business.
- D-SNAP benefits are available to households who meet financial eligibility requirements and who have experienced a temporary loss of income, inaccessible resources or high disaster-related expenses – eligibility is not limited to households typically eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

Flexible Delivery

- FNS approves D-SNAP operation in areas with a Presidential disaster declaration for Individual Assistance.
- D-SNAP is operated by State Departments of Human Services in coordination with FNS.
- States can design application and benefit delivery systems to respond to conditions on the ground. Application sites may be operated out of Department of Human Services offices, FEMA Disaster Recovery Centers, mass shelters, stadiums, or other large-capacity venues.
- Benefits may be redeemed for groceries and, in some cases, for hot or prepared foods.
- State Departments of Human Service can contract with non-profit organizations to outreach to the eligible public.

Using USDA Foods During Disasters

- FNS supplies USDA Foods to disaster relief organizations such as the Red Cross and the Salvation Army for mass feeding or household distribution.
- Disaster organizations request food through State agencies. States, in turn, notify USDA of the types and quantities of food that relief organizations need.
- USDA does not set aside stocks of food specifically for disasters.
- In an emergency, existing stocks of USDA Foods stored at State, local, and school warehouses intended for the National School Lunch Program, The Emergency Food Assistance Program, and other USDA food assistance programs are used.
- USDA Foods include a variety of canned and frozen product including fruits, vegetables, and meats.



Disaster Foods For Mass Feeding Sites

- States have authority to release USDA Foods to disaster relief agencies for mass feeding when the President issues a disaster declaration, and in certain other types of emergencies.
- USDA Foods intended for the National School Lunch Program are most often used for mass feeding. School food inventories get lower as the end of the school year approaches which may affect what types of foods are available.

Disaster Foods for Direct Distribution to Households

- Disaster relief organizations sometimes make USDA Foods available in smaller sizes to individual households for preparation and consumption at home.
- USDA Foods for household consumption are most often obtained from State and recipient agency stocks intended for The Emergency Food Assistance Program, the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, and the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations.
- States must always get approval from FNS to distribute USDA Foods from these programs to disaster survivors.
- It is important to note that a household cannot receive both D-SNAP benefits and disaster distribution of USDA Foods at the same time. States must take reasonable steps to prevent households from participating in both programs.



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