

**N**othing 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. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) makes sure that people have enough to eat. USDA'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 Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (D-SNAP) 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.

## 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 food specifically for disasters.
- In an emergency, disaster organizations may use existing inventories of USDA Foods stored at State, local, and school warehouses.
- USDA Foods include a variety of canned, fresh, frozen and dry products including fruits, vegetables, meats, and whole grains.

### 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.

### 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 inventory intended for The Emergency Food Assistance Program, the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, and the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations.
- States must always get prior 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.

# D-SNAP

## Powerful Benefits



- Through the Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (D-SNAP), FNS is able to quickly offer short-term food assistance benefits to families suffering in the wake of a disaster.
- Eligible households receive one month of benefits, equivalent to the maximum amount of benefits normally issued to a SNAP household of their size. Benefits are issued via an electronic benefit transfer (EBT) card, which can be used to purchase food at authorized grocery stores.
- Through D-SNAP, affected households use a simplified application. D-SNAP benefits are issued to eligible applicants within 72 hours, speeding assistance to disaster survivors and reducing the administrative burden on State agencies operating in post-disaster conditions.
- Households not normally eligible for SNAP may qualify for D-SNAP as a result of their disaster-related expenses, such as loss of income, damage to property, relocation expenses, and, in some cases, loss of food due to power outages.
- When States operate a D-SNAP, ongoing SNAP clients can also receive disaster food assistance. Households with disaster losses whose SNAP benefits are less than the monthly maximum can request a supplement. The supplement brings their benefits up to the maximum for the household size. This provides equity between D-SNAP households and SNAP households eligible for disaster assistance.
- FNS approves D-SNAP operations in an affected area under the authority of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act when the area has received a Presidential disaster declaration of Individual Assistance (IA) from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).
- State agencies request FNS approval to operate a D-SNAP within the disaster area. FNS approves program operations for a limited period of time (typically 7 days) during which the State agency may accept D-SNAP applications.

For more information and resources, please visit the FNS website at:

[www.fns.usda.gov/disaster](http://www.fns.usda.gov/disaster)



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