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SNAP Policy Update #6 '16-17

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RE: SNAP Tools and Policies for Accessing Replacement Benefits

This policy update provides an overview of the process for requesting SNAP replacement benefits due to household misfortune. Current SNAP recipients who have lost food purchased with SNAP benefits due to storms, flooding, power outages or other misfortunes may be entitled to a replacement issuance.

Included in this policy update is the following:

- Examples of Household Misfortunes
- Directions for Reporting a Loss of Food
- Additional Information About Replacement Benefits
- Help for Your Clients

Examples of Household Misfortunes

Under SNAP regulations, it is always possible for individuals or families who receive SNAP benefits and lose food in a “household misfortune” to obtain replacement benefits as long as they fit the criteria and fulfill the requirements. SNAP recipients can request replacement benefits when they experience any type of household misfortune. For SNAP purposes, a household misfortune can include:

- Extended power outage of four hours or more (perishable food)
- A flood (all food, both perishable and non-perishable food, can be affected)
- An equipment failure (refrigerator/freezer)
- Failure to pay a utility bill
- Such situations may affect large areas or be specific to a single household

Directions for Reporting a Loss of Food Due to Household Misfortune

There are specific reporting requirements that need to be met in order for a SNAP household to receive replacement benefits.

To receive replacement SNAP benefits the household must:

- Report the loss within 10 days of household misfortune by phone, in person or in writing to their local SNAP office and,
- Return a signed and completed Form 2291 “Request for Replacement of Food Purchased with SNAP Benefits” within 10 days of the date of the reported loss to the SNAP office either by mail or in person.

- If the 10th day falls on a weekend or holiday, a statement/form received the day after the weekend or holiday will be considered to be received within the 10-day period and is to be accepted by the SNAP office.
- Families/individuals have an additional 10 days from the day they report the loss to return a signed and completed Form 2291.
- ***Remember that SNAP households can use Form 2291 to fulfill the requirement of both reporting the loss and submitting the form, instead of doing these two things separately, but in this case the form must be submitted within 10 days of the loss.***

Other Things to Note About Replacement SNAP Benefits:

- Replacement benefits should be provided to the family within **two business days** of returning a signed and completed Form 2291.
- The amount of replacement benefits provided depends on each individual household's food loss. However, the benefits can also be impacted by the time of month that the misfortune occurs. The later in the month the misfortune occurs, the lower the replacement amount may be.
- SNAP offices can issue replacement SNAP benefits up to the amount of the most recent SNAP benefit issuance for that current month.
- A family/individual may not be denied replacement SNAP benefits because they have applied for replacement issuances in the past.
- SNAP offices should not require the household to bring in spoiled food as verification of a loss.

Additional Information About Replacement Benefits

- Form 2291 is a legal statement indicating a loss of food due to a household misfortune and the cost of the food lost.
- The SNAP office/HRA center may use available information regarding power outages and flooding to confirm the accuracy of the statement.
- Make sure the form is filled out clearly and the writing is legible.

Attachments:

- Replacement SNAP Benefits Flyer
- Form 2291 with Hunger Solutions New York cover page – English/Spanish versions

Links:

- [OTDA Forms Web Page](#) - to download Form 2291 in additional languages

Help for Your Clients

There are Nutrition Outreach and Education Program (NOEP) Coordinators in many communities across NYS. NOEP Coordinators are available to help potentially eligible individuals and families apply for SNAP benefits by:

- conducting confidential pre-screenings to see if a family may be eligible for SNAP,
- assisting with completing the application, including the online version,
- answering any questions, and/or
- working with current recipients around recertification or other issues with their SNAP case.

NOEP Coordinators can also come to your community site to help your clients.

To find out if there is a NOEP Coordinator in your community, go to: <http://www.foodhelpny.org>.

Visit <http://otda.ny.gov/workingfamilies/dss.asp> for a listing of SNAP offices and contact information outside of NYC or call 1-800-342-3009.

Visit http://www.nyc.gov/html/hra/html/services/snap_centers.shtml for a listing of SNAP offices in New York City or call 311.

For More Information

If you have, any questions about this SNAP update or SNAP in general, please contact Dawn Secor via phone at (518) 436-8757 ext. 112, or by e-mailing dawn.secor@hungersolutionsny.org.