



Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

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General Information System (GIS) Message

Section 1

Transmittal:	24DC050 Upstate Only
Date:	August 21, 2024
To:	Subscribers
Suggested Distribution:	Commissioners, SNAP Directors, TA Directors, WMS Coordinators, Medical Directors
From:	Valerie Figueroa, Deputy Commissioner, Employment and Income Support Programs
Subject:	Extension for Households Reporting of Loss of Food and Emergency TA Grants – August 2024 Hurricane Debbie
Effective Date:	Immediately
Contact Information:	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Bureau 518-473-1469 or SNAPBureau@otda.ny.gov ; Temporary Assistance Bureau at: 518-474-9344 or otda.sm.cees.tabureau@otda.ny.gov
Attachments:	N/A

Section 2

Due to the recent severe storm that occurred across Upstate New York on **August 09, 2024**, OTDA is issuing this GIS to provide guidance to select impacted districts on the following:

- The normal time frame for replacement of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits has been extended.
- Meeting the needs of individuals and families who apply for emergency and recurring Temporary Assistance (TA) and applying good cause policy for participants unable to meet program requirements as a result of the storm.

SNAP

Due to the recent severe storm and flooding in St. Lawrence, Steuben and Tompkins counties, the normal time frame for replacement of SNAP benefits has been extended. This applies to any SNAP household that resides in the counties identified below, is in receipt of SNAP benefits and suffered a loss of food due to the storm and resulting power outages.

SNAP recipient households that have lost food purchased with SNAP benefits due to household misfortune such as storm damage or power outages are entitled to a replacement issuance of SNAP benefits, provided that:

- The household reports the loss within 10 days of the date of the misfortune, **and**

- The household returns a signed and completed form [LDSS-2291 Request for Replacement of Food Purchased with SNAP Benefits](#), within 10 days of the date of the report of loss. If the 10th day falls on a weekend or holiday, a statement received the day after the weekend or holiday is acceptable.

Due to the nature of this severe weather event, storm damage, and the number of Upstate households still without electricity, OTDA has received approval from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to extend the normal reporting date beyond the required 10 days. SNAP households in **St. Lawrence, Steuben and Tompkins** counties affected by this severe storm and flooding will now have until **September 9, 2024**, to report the loss of food.

Districts are reminded that this extension applies to the allowable timeframe to report the loss of food. The household has 10 days following the report of the loss to file an affidavit ([LDSS-2291](#)) attesting to the loss, which must be included in the case record. The LDSS-2291 is available on the OTDA website at otda.ny.gov/programs/applications/ in multiple languages.

Temporary Assistance

Due to the severe storm Emergency Assistance for those affected many households have various emergencies. These households may be eligible for emergency grants to help relieve their emergency needs. Types of storm related emergency assistance for which an individual or household may be eligible for include:

- Replacement of food **not** purchased with SNAP benefits that has spoiled due to a power outage or absence caused by relocation.
- Replacement/repair of clothing, furniture, and/or household property/equipment lost or damaged.

Emergency Cash Assistance to Replace Spoiled Food:

Households whose food not purchased with SNAP benefits has spoiled due to a power outage, flood or absence caused by relocation may be issued an emergency cash grant under the following categories of assistance:

- Emergency Assistance to Needy Families (EAF);
- Emergency Safety Net Assistance (ESNA); **or**
- Emergency Assistance to Adults (EAA)

To be eligible for an emergency cash grant for the replacement of food not purchased with SNAP benefits, the households must meet the following criteria:

- Have a documented food emergency stemming from a power outage, absence due to relocation or other storm related disaster;
- Be ineligible for SNAP benefits or ineligible for expedited SNAP service;
- Meet standard income and resource eligibility requirements for EAF, ESNA or EAA.

Households unable to prepare food at home may also be eligible for a restaurant allowance.

Emergency Assistance Grant:

Applicants for emergency assistance must pursue and use all available income and accessible resources to eliminate or reduce the need for direct or indirect assistance. Households currently in receipt of TA may be eligible to receive an additional/emergency allowance. The following guidelines must be used in determining if income is available or a resource is accessible:

- Resources must be readily accessible, liquid or easily converted to cash. For example, if the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is available and provides funds to replace

refrigerators, then a referral and application to FEMA, or any type of homeowner's insurance is appropriate. In the interim, while the claim is pending, if the emergency need is immediate in nature and thus requires same day resolution, an otherwise eligible applicant must be provided with emergency assistance.

- Financial eligibility for EAF is based upon income and resources actually available to meet the emergency need. Income must be actually available and readily accessible at the time of the emergency or immediate need in order to be considered available.
- The income standard for ESNA of 125% of the current federal poverty line does **not** apply if the emergency is the result of a fire, flood, or other like catastrophe in accordance with 18 NYCRR 370.3. Therefore, this gross income limit for ESNA does not apply to those requesting assistance stemming from damage caused by the severe storms occurring on **August 9, 2024**.

Replacement of Furniture, Clothing, or Other Household Property/Equipment:

Households may have suffered losses of furniture, clothing, or other household property/equipment such as stoves or heating equipment. Households may be eligible for an emergency cash assistance grant for the replacement or repair of these items. To be found eligible for these grants, households must:

- Document the loss; **and**
- Meet eligibility requirements for EAF, ESNA, or EAA.

Good Cause:

Districts are reminded that good cause should be granted for a participant's failure to meet program requirements due to the effects of the storm.

Many persons affected by storm may have lost their documents or be unable to retrieve them from their home. Districts are reminded that collateral statements may suffice for documentation in this situation. Please see *Documentation Requirements Form* (LDSS-2642). The delay or inability to meet documentation requirements at application must not interfere with providing needed emergency assistance provided the applicant is cooperating with meeting other TA eligibility requirements.