



Department of Human Resources
311 West Saratoga Street
Baltimore MD 21201

FIA INFORMATION MEMO

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**TO: DIRECTORS, LOCAL DEPARTMENTS OF SOCIAL SERVICES
DEPUTY/ASSISTANT DIRECTORS FOR FAMILY INVESTMENT
FAMILY INVESTMENT SUPERVISORS AND ELIGIBILITY STAFF**

FROM: ROSEMARY MALONE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR *K for Rosemary Malone*

**RE: REPLACEMENT FOOD SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM (FSP) BENEFITS
FOR PEOPLE AFFECTED BY SEVERE STORMS**

PROGRAM AFFECTED: FOOD SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM

ORIGINATING OFFICE: OFFICE OF PROGRAMS

SUMMARY

Food Supplement benefits help individuals and families who may need food right away. It is important to ensure that no needy Marylander goes without food. The power outages caused by the recent storm on June 29, 2012 affected hundreds of thousands of Maryland residents and many Food Supplement Program (FSP) recipients will need replacement benefits.

According to the Maryland Emergency Management Administration and utility company websites, Baltimore City, Baltimore, Anne Arundel, Howard, Montgomery and Prince George's counties had power outages in more than 50% of their households. The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) approved our waiver request granting 20% of the June allotment for all FSP recipients in the six jurisdictions. As a result, we are replacing 20% of the value of the June allotments automatically in the **overnight batch July 5, 2012**. These customers are not required to submit a signed affidavit, unless they claim higher losses.

FSP households in all other counties must submit a signed affidavit **no later than Tuesday, July 10, 2012** to receive replacement of some or all of their June benefit.

This information memo contains procedures and reminders for issuing replacement benefits to ensure that all food supplement households who are eligible for replacement food benefits receive them as soon as possible. Case managers must make every effort to process benefits right away for those who lost food.

Who is eligible?

Individuals are eligible for replacement benefits if they:

- Received a Food Supplement Program allotment in June 2012;
- Lost power for four or more hours as a result of the severe thunderstorms that affected the entire State of Maryland on June 29 and June 30, 2012;
- Had refrigerated or frozen food spoil as a result of that power loss; and
- Report their loss to their DSS office no later than Tuesday, July 10, 2012.

What is the policy?

Local department staff should reference section **470.8 Replacement of Food Supplement Program Benefits for Food Lost in a Household Misfortune.**

- Local departments can issue replacement FSP benefits to ongoing recipients when the household reports that food purchased with FSP benefits was destroyed in a household misfortune.
- The replacement FSP benefit is the amount of the household's loss of food, up to the maximum of the household's allotment.
- As a general rule, the household must report the loss within 10 days of the date of the loss of food.
- Prior to issuing the replacement, the local department must get a signed statement from a member of the household attesting to the household's loss. **A copy of the Food Replacement Request form (affidavit) is attached.**

The household may mail, fax, email or send in the required statement if the household member is unable to come to the office because of age, disability, and/or distance from the office or some other hardship reason and cannot appoint an authorized representative.

- The only required verification for Food Supplement benefits is identity. This does not have to be a photo ID. If necessary, the local department may make a collateral contact to verify identity.

A conversion chart that shows 20% replacement values for June allotments of \$25-\$840 is attached in Excel. It is already formatted for printing. Scroll to the far right in the file to see a replacement benefit calculator. Enter the amount of the June allotment in the yellow box, and the 20% replacement value will auto-calculate.

While the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) prevents us from limiting customers to 20% when they claim higher amounts, FNS considered this a fair number when they granted us the waiver. Their assumptions included:

- the timing of the storm – on the last day of the month;
- the fact that not all food purchased is perishable, and power outages, unlike natural disasters, will not destroy non-perishable food; and,
- the amount of time that had elapsed since June benefits were issued. (Issuances for ongoing recipients began on June 5 and ended June 15, so nearly all recipients for the month received benefits 14-24 days prior to the storm.)

CARES Procedures for Issuing FSP Replacements For the Benefit Month of June 2012

All FSP recipients in Baltimore City and Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Howard, Prince George's and Montgomery Counties received an automatic replacement of 20 percent of the June allotment on July 6, 2012. If the customer claims a loss that is higher, then skip to Step 2.

For recipients in all other jurisdictions, complete Step 1.

Step 1 - Calculating a FSP Replacement Amount When Customers Affirm the Percentage of Food Lost:

Identify the FSP allotment amount received for the benefit month of June 2012 from the Benefit History Screen (CARES Main Menu, Option M). If no June benefits were redeemed, then there is no evidence of a need to replace the allotment and the case manager needs to send a manual letter explaining the household did not meet the criteria. Otherwise,

- Use the attached Excel file to calculate 20% of the June 2012 allotment that was received. Example: \$300.00 was the June 2012 FSP allotment X 0.20 = \$60.00 FSP Replacement Amount
- If the household's reported loss is greater than 20% of the June allotment, then process that dollar amount up to the total dollar value of the June allotment but no more.

Step 2 – Processing the FSP Replacement:

- From the CARES Main Menu, enter Option R (Benefit Error)
- Enter Option E (Add Another BEG) on RMEN

- In the Notice Text field, enter the following: **“Food Supplement Program Replacement for the benefit month of June, resulting from the 6/29/12 storm.”**
- In the Issuance Month field, enter: **07 12**
- In the ‘OP/UP’ field, enter: **U**
- In the Benefit Error Amount field, enter the amount that was calculated in **Step-1**.
- In the Benefit Error Reason field, enter: **SN**
- Forward the case to a supervisor or lead worker to approve the Under Issuance BEG in Option H.

Step – 3 Documenting the FSP Replacement

- Enter the AU Number on AMEN Option R
- Enter in the Special Circumstances field on the ADDR screen: **ST**
- Summarize in the narrative that an FSP replacement was processed for the benefit month of June 2012 according to the customer’s signed affidavit.
- Commit the change.

INQUIRIES

Please direct questions to Rick McClendon at (410) 767-7307 or rmcclend@dhr.state.md.us or Stephanie Hawkins at (410) 767-8121 or shawkins@dhr.state.md.us. Direct CARES questions to Fern Hill on 410 767-7064 or fhill@dhr.state.md.us.

Attachments

cc DHR Executive Staff
FIA Management Staff
Constituent Services
DHR Help Desk

For Local Department Use:

For Local Department Use:		Case Number
FS Case Name	Date	Locality
Address	City, State, Zip	

Food Replacement Request

How was food destroyed or damaged?
Value of destroyed perishable food:

I hereby certify, under penalty of perjury, that the household listed above has experienced the destruction of food purchased with Food Supplement Program benefits in the month of June, 2012.

Signature	Date
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Instructions for completing Replacement of Lost Food Affidavit

PURPOSE AND USE OF FORM – This form allows the local agency to assess the value of perishable food destroyed. Depending on the reason for the loss, the local department may provide additional food supplement benefits to cover the value of perishable food destroyed.

USE OF FORM – The agency must provide the form to households that report a household disaster that resulted in the loss of food purchased with food supplement benefits.

NUMBER OF COPIES – Two.

DISPOSITION OF FORM – The local agency must provide a copy of the completed form to the household and file a copy in the case record.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PREPARATION OF FORM – Local agency staff should complete the identifying case information at the top of the form. A household member or an authorized representative must complete or provide information for the bottom section regarding food destroyed. A household member must sign and date the form.