

DSS ADMINISTRATIVE LETTER ECONOMIC AND FAMILY SERVICES EFS_FNS_AL 12-2016
Hurricane Matthew 2016, Automatic Mass Replacement Waiver

(October 23, 2016)

(Food and Nutrition Services)

TO: County Directors of Social Services

ATTENTION: Food and Nutrition Services Managers and Supervisors

DATE: October 23, 2016

SUBJECT: Hurricane Matthew Automatic Mass Replacement Waiver

EFFECTIVE: October 23, 2016

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Rather than require SNAP households to report their food losses through an affidavit process, North Carolina submitted a request to The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for approval to issue automatic mass replacements for residents that suffered food losses resulting from Hurricane Matthew. The affected counties were **Beaufort, Bladen, Columbus, Cumberland, Dare, Duplin, Greene, Harnett, Hoke, Hyde, Johnston, Jones, Lenoir, Pender, Robeson, Sampson, Tyrrell and Wayne.**

Estimating the portion of the food purchased with monthly benefits that had not yet been consumed at the time of the disaster, and was therefore subject to loss, is relevant to making this determination. USDA derives a benefit replacement estimate by assuming a reasonable usage of benefits and consumption of food over the course of the month, and estimates how much food may have been lost by the average household. This estimate takes into account whether loss is limited to perishables due to a power outage, or perishables and non-perishables due to structural or flood damage.

North Carolina provided USDA with all available documentation on power outages and flooding for the 18 counties included in the waiver. The State proposed to automatically replace 70 percent of the September 2016 benefit amount for households across all 18 counties. The 70 percent recommendation was based on the average amount of manual replacements that had been keyed prior to October 20, 2016. The data revealed that 50 percent of all households in the following seven counties met requirements based on documented power outages as a result of the hurricane: **Beaufort, Columbus, Dare, Hoke, Hyde, Jones and Sampson.** NC also provided flood documentation that met the 50 percent threshold for the remaining 11 counties, **Bladen, Cumberland, Duplin, Greene, Harnett, Johnston, Lenoir, Pender, Robeson, Tyrrell and Wayne.**

II. POLICY PROCEDURES

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has approved a waiver for the Automatic Mass Replacement of Food Loss for Food and Nutrition Services. This waiver allows the automatic replacement of FNS benefits without requiring the recipient to appear at the local DSS office to sign an affidavit attesting to food loss.

Based on power outages and flooding, USDA has approved an automatic replacement waiver to allow FNS recipients in **Beaufort, Columbus, Dare, Hoke, Hyde, Jones and Sampson County** to receive a replacement of **30%** of their September 2016 allotment and recipients in **Bladen, Cumberland, Duplin, Greene, Harnett, Johnston, Lenoir, Pender, Robeson, Tyrrell and Wayne County** to receive a replacement of **50%** of their September 2016 allotment.

If a household submits an affidavit before and/or after receiving a mass replacement and requests an amount greater than the replacement amount received, the household is only entitled to receive the difference between the requested amount and the amounts automatically replaced. **Replacement benefits cannot exceed the monthly allotment for the household.**

III. IMPLEMENTATION INSTRUCTIONS

NCFAST will automatically issue the replacements via a batch process on 10/23/2016.

Affidavits for loss of September benefits:

Affidavits keyed prior to 10/24/2016:

A report titled "September Manual Replacements" will be made available in Fast Help. This report lists all households that a manual replacement for September was keyed by the county prior to 10/24/2016 and the amount of the replacement is less than the 30% or 50% automatic replacement. Counties must evaluate and issue another replacement for the difference if applicable.

Affidavits received, but not keyed, prior to 10/24/2016 and affidavits received after 10/23/2016 for September replacements:

Counties must evaluate affidavits to determine if reported food loss for September 2016 is greater than the 30% or 50% automated replacement (**dependent upon the approved rate as noted under Policy Procedures**).

- If the reported loss is equal or less than the 30% or 50% automated replacement, take no further action.
- If the reported loss is more than the 30% or 50% automated replacement, calculate the difference in the amount claimed on the affidavit (not to exceed the households' allotment amount) and the actual replacement issued. Issue a replacement for the difference.

Example: Household allotment is \$200.

- 10/21/2016 the household filed an affidavit claiming a loss of \$125
- 10/23/2016 NC FAST issues automated replacement of 30% or \$60
- Must issue another replacement of \$65 (\$125-\$60)
- Do not key cents, use standard rounding rules

Affidavits for loss of October benefits:

All affidavits for loss of October 2016 benefits must be evaluated and keyed according to policy outlined in FNS Manual Section 910.

Submit any questions regarding this information to the DHHS Operational Support Team (OST) at ost.policy.questions@dhhs.nc.gov. Include "Disaster FNS" in the subject line of the email.

Sincerely,



David Locklear, Chief
Economic and Family Services