

MEMO #5 '09-10

TO: Community Based Organizations

FROM: Dawn Secor, Food Stamp Specialist

DATE: February 26, 2010

RE: Power Outages and Replacement Food Stamp Benefits

This memo describes the criteria and process for current food stamp households, who have experienced food spoilage due to a “household misfortune” (see list below), to obtain replacement food stamp benefits.

Due to the recent snow storms, more than 220,000 households have lost power from New York City to the Mohawk Valley and throughout the Hudson Valley. Food stamp households that have lost power may be eligible for Replacement Food Stamp Benefits. If your county was affected by these power outages, please help get the word out about Replacement Food Stamps.

What you need to know about Replacement Food Stamp Benefits:

1. Under the regular Food Stamp Program regulations it is always possible for individual food stamp recipients who lose perishable food in a “household misfortune” to obtain replacement benefits if the household:
 - **reports the loss within 10 days of losing power either orally (by phone or in person) or in writing**
 - AND**
 - **returns a signed and completed form 2291 “Request For Replacement of Food Purchased with Food Stamp Benefits” within ten days of the date of the reported loss to the LDSS/HRA 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 seen as within the 10 day period and is to be accepted by the LDSS or HRA center.

- Households have an additional 10 days from the day they report the loss to return a signed and completed form 2291.
- Replacement benefits should be provided to a household within 2 business days of returning a signed and completed **Form 2291 “Request for Replacement of Food Purchased with Food Stamp Benefits”**.

2. Examples of Household Misfortune include:

- Extended power outage (4 hours or more)
- A flood
- An equipment failure (refrigerator/freezer)
- Failure to pay a utility bill
- Such situations may affect large areas or be specific to a single household

3. Other Things to Note about Replacement Food Stamps:

- ✓ When food loss is due to a power outage or cutoff (**of 4 hours or more**) the district must provide a replacement issuance of food stamp benefits.
- ✓ Local Districts/HRA can issue replacement FS benefits up to the amount of the most recent food stamp benefit issuance for that current month.

NOTE: Due to the fact that we are currently in the last week of the month; most households eligible for replacement food stamps would receive a prorated portion of their benefit amount for the month of February.

- ✓ A household may not be denied replacement food stamps if it has applied for replacement issuances in the past.
- ✓ Districts should not require the household to bring in spoiled food as verification of a power outage.

Links to GIS and Form

Link to 2008 OTDA GIS concerning Issuing Replacement Food Stamp Benefits and Emergency Food Replacement:

<http://www.otda.state.ny.us/main/gis/2008/08dc031.pdf>

Link to LDSS form 2291 Request for Replacement of Food Purchased with Food Stamp Benefits (in both English and Spanish): <http://www.otda.state.ny.us/main/apps/2291.pdf>

For More Information:

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 food stamp benefits.

For Replacement Food Stamps NOEP coordinators can help families and individuals by:

- Providing the form for households to request Replacement Stamps
- helping households complete this form,
- and answering any questions households may have.

To find out if there is a NOEP coordinator in your community go to:

<http://www.nutritionconsortium.org/FoodHelpNY.htm>

If you have any questions about this memo, or any other food-stamp related question, please contact me at (518) 436-8757, ext. 12, or by e-mailing Dawn.Secor@nutritionconsortium.org