

Disaster Assistance:

Quick Facts

Programs

- Food Stamp Program
- National School Lunch Program
- School Breakfast Program
- Summer Food Service Program
- Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants & Children (WIC)
- Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program
- Special Milk Program
 - Child and Adult Care Food Program
 - Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program
- Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations
- WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program
- Nutrition Assistance Block Grants
- Commodity Supplemental Food Program
- The Emergency Food Assistance Program
- Disaster Assistance



Description

- The USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) provides food assistance to those in areas affected by a disaster. This Federal assistance is in addition to that provided by State and local governments.
- FNS provides emergency relief in three ways:
 - ◊ Distributes commodity foods to shelters and other mass feeding sites;
 - ◊ Distributes commodity food packages directly to households in need;
 - ◊ Authorizes State agencies to issue emergency food stamp benefits.

Background

- FNS' authority to provide emergency relief exists under the Food Stamp Act of 1977, the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act of 1987, and other authorizing legislation.

Emergency Food Assistance

- Every State and U.S. territory stores commodity foods in warehouses for use in USDA sponsored food programs such as the National School Lunch Program and the Emergency Food Assistance Program.
- Under the Federal Emergency Response Plan, FNS provides foods to disaster relief agencies to feed people at shelters and mass feeding sites. States can also, with FNS approval, release these foods to disaster relief agencies to distribute directly to households that are in need as a result of an emergency. Such direct distribution takes place when normal commercial food supply channels such as grocery stores have been disrupted, damaged or destroyed, or are unable to function.

Emergency Food Stamps

- FNS can authorize the issuance of emergency food stamp benefits when the President declares a major disaster. States must request that FNS allow them to issue emergency benefits in areas affected by a disaster. FNS works closely with States to prepare plans for the Disaster Food Stamp Program.
- People who might not ordinarily qualify for food stamp benefits may be eligible under the disaster food stamp program if they had expenses related to protecting, repairing, or evacuating their homes; or if they have lost income as a result of the disaster.
- People who are already participating in the regular Food Stamp Program may be eligible for additional benefits under the disaster food stamp program.
- Disaster benefits are provided like regular program benefits – through a debit card that can be used at authorized food retailers to buy food. These systems are commonly referred to as Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) systems.

Contact Information

- For complete information, visit www.fns.usda.gov/disasters/disaster.htm or <http://disaster.fsa.usda.gov/fsa.asp>. View specific State agency listings under "State emergency food assistance contacts."