

**NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services
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**Few flood-impacted households seek replacement of
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits**
Help may still be available for eligible low-income households

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Human Services today reported that 13 low-income households reported food losses from spring flooding or related power outages and sought Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program replacement benefits under a special waiver. Known previously as the Food Stamp program, the USDA program served 23,637 North Dakota households in March.

“We were surprised that there wasn’t more demand, but many of the people residing in the affected areas around Bismarck and Fargo are not program clients,” said state program administrator Arlene Dura. “Because flooding has become more widespread over the past few days, more clients may be affected statewide. We want Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program clients to know that help is still available, but timing is everything. They must report a food loss within 10 days of the loss.”

In late March, the department received a federal waiver that gave program participants up to 20 days after the March 24, 2009 presidential disaster declaration to request the extra help. On March 27, the department announced, via the media, that program participants could receive dollar for dollar replacement of a month’s worth of benefits if they had a loss, reported it to any county social service office, and signed an affidavit by April 13, 2009. The department also contacted county social service offices providing them with posters and encouraging them to try to identify and contact affected clients.

Dura said replacement benefits are important for clients displaced by flooding who often seek shelter with family and friends. She said the 13 participating households together received a total of \$4,185 in federally-funded replacement benefits. Benefits are issued on the program’s specialized debit card, called an EBT card, and can be used at grocery stores and other retailers to purchase food items only.

Individuals with damaged, destroyed, or misplaced EBT cards can obtain replacement cards from any county social service office. Individuals with questions about their benefits can contact any county social service office or the N.D. Department of Human Services at 800-755-2716.

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