

“Food for Florida” is the Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (D-SNAP) for Florida

Current as of 10/13/16

What is Food for Florida?

Food for Florida is the name of Florida’s Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (D-SNAP). The *Food for Florida* program offers emergency food benefits to victims of hurricanes or other types of disasters, and is only active when there is a presidentially-declared disaster area in the state of Florida. The declaration must be for “individual assistance” and be approved by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services (FNS).

Food for Florida provides benefits to applicants who are not currently receiving food benefits through regular SNAP. There are several income and asset requirements and the applicants must have been living in the declared disaster area at the time of the disaster. If eligible, recipients will receive disaster food assistance benefits that will be accessed using an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card.

D-SNAP Requirements

The Department may request to run a D-SNAP when the number of affected individuals is too great to be served through regular SNAP. The department and FNS have general guidelines to use when determining if a disaster program is warranted, such as widespread power outages that affect more than half of the individuals living in the disaster area.

Households living in the disaster area must meet certain criteria to be eligible to receive D-SNAP benefits such as a loss of income due to the disaster, inaccessible resources, and incurring disaster expenses. The household must have experienced at least one of the following adverse effects to be eligible:

- Damage to or destruction of the household’s home or self-employment business.
- Disaster-related expenses not expected to be reimbursed during the disaster period (such as food loss, home or business repairs, temporary shelter expenses, evacuation expenses, home/business protection, disaster-related personal injury including funeral expenses).
- Lost or inaccessible income, including reduction or termination of income, or a delay in receipt of income during the benefit period.

When can Food for Florida activate?

- No earlier than 1 week after the disaster strikes.
- After preliminary damage assessments, power outage, flood and/or evacuation maps are available to estimate the number of potential applicants and areas where it may be appropriate to establish sites for distribution.
- After it is determined if enough authorized food retailers are open in or around the disaster area that have working point-of-sale (POS) terminals and available telecommunications to process Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) purchases.

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What assistance is available for current SNAP customers?

- **Replacement Benefits** - Current SNAP customers can get a replacement for food destroyed in a household misfortune and purchased with SNAP benefits.
 - The replacement cannot be more than the amount of benefits the household received for the month.
 - The loss must be reported within 10 days with a signed statement of the loss.
 - There must be proof of the household disaster.
 - Replacements are generally done on a case-by-case basis.
- **Early Release of Benefits** - Currently, SNAP benefits are issued to households during the first 28 days of the month. When a disaster occurs, the department may choose to release the staggered schedule and make monthly benefits available all at one time.
- **Maximum Benefits** - When the department implements a *Food for Florida* program, the benefits of current SNAP customers can be increased to the maximum benefit amount for the household size.