



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

ROY COOPER • Governor

KODY H. KINSLEY • Secretary

YVONNE COPELAND • Director, Division of Child and Family Well
Being

October 14, 2024

Dear County Directors of Social Services

Attention: Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) Income Maintenance Caseworkers, Managers and Supervisors

Subject: Hurricane Helene – Timely Household Reporting of Food Loss Waiver

Priority: Information and Action Required

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

On September 26, 2024, Hurricane Helene impacted several areas of the state causing severe flooding and reported power outages of four hours or more due to the hurricane that impacted western North Carolina. At its peak, approximately 908,862 households in North Carolina were without power. Many households may have challenges contacting the county DSS office to request replacement benefits due to being displaced from homes, washed out highways or other hardships. Many areas in the western part of North Carolina have been flooded, and numerous routes are impassable due to high water and road damage caused by Hurricane Helene.

Power outages were reported for four or more hours for the following counties across North Carolina: **Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Cherokee, Clay, Cleveland, Gaston, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Lincoln, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mecklenburg, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Swain, Transylvania, Watauga, Wilkes, and Yancey.**

II. POLICY PROCEDURES

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has approved a waiver that allows current FNS recipients residing in the counties listed above who suffered food loss to report their food loss beyond the normal 10-day timeframe and receive replacement benefits if eligible. USDA has approved for FNS households in the counties listed above to report food loss and request replacement benefits for thirty (30) days from the date of the storm (September 26, 2024), through **October 26, 2024.**

III. IMPLEMENTATION INSTRUCTIONS

NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES • DIVISION OF CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING

LOCATION 5601 Six Forks Rd, Building 2, Raleigh, NC 27609

MAILING ADDRESS: 2416 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-2420

www.ncdhs.gov • TEL: 919-707-5800 • FAX: 919-870-4819

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY / AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

Per FNS policy section 910, a DSS-1678 Replacement Affidavit must be completed, signed, and retained in the record. The replacement amount must not exceed one month's allotment for the FNS unit. Households must be allowed to request replacement benefits in their county of residence or the county where they may be residing temporarily. Since most households could have potentially consumed the food purchased with their September benefits, careful consideration should be taken in determining the amount of the replacement. Counties should accept signed affidavits from FNS households unless questionable.

Example: The replacement amount must not exceed the monthly allotment for the FNS unit. If a FNS unit with 4 people receives \$325 in their monthly allotment, the manual replacement amount must not exceed over \$325.

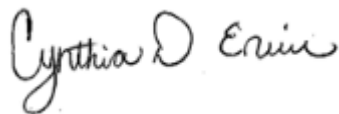
Refer to the NC FAST Job Aid: First click link to [FAST Help](#) and then click the link [Issuing Replacement Manual Benefits](#).

NC FAST has added Hurricane Helene Reason Code to the benefits replacement reason drop down menu and it will be available for selection when an FNS client requests a manual replacement due to the disaster. Workers must select Hurricane Helene, when appropriate, to ensure the correct tracking and reporting of disaster-related replacements. **All manual replacements must be keyed and completed by October 31, 2024, for the counties listed above.**

IV. EFFECTIVE DATE

This policy is effective upon receipt, and FNS households who have experienced food loss due to Hurricane Helene in the counties listed above can report food loss through October 31, 2024. If you have any questions, please submit them to the Continuous Quality Improvement Specialist (CQIS) dss.policy.questions@dhhs.nc.gov.

Sincerely,



CE/vb

EFS-FNSEP-25-2024