

**NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services  
600 E. Boulevard Ave., Bismarck ND 58505**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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Contacts: LuWanna Lawrence at 701-328-1892 or Heather Steffl at 701-328-4933

**Help available for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (food stamp) clients who lost food due to power outages from Christmas storm**

BISMARCK, N.D. – North Dakotans who receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits have 10 calendar days to seek replacement benefits if they lost food purchased with benefits due to power outages from the Christmas Day storm. They must report their loss to a county social service office during regular business hours through Jan. 3, 2017.

Replacement benefits are available to any SNAP household who experienced a power outage of four hours or more and lost food purchased with SNAP benefits.

“This blizzard impacted a large portion of the state, so we want all SNAP households in North Dakota to know that help is available to replace perishable food items that were lost due to power outages in their area,” said Michele Gee, SNAP policy director for the North Dakota Department of Human Services. “Households are encouraged to act quickly if they experienced a food loss.”

After a county social service office verifies a food loss, replacement SNAP benefits are issued to affected clients’ debit cards, called EBT cards. Clients use EBT cards at participating grocery stores, farmers markets, and other approved retailers to purchase food items.

Gee said the program will replace the amount of the loss, up to a household’s December 2016 benefit amount. A household that reports a food loss of \$100 and received a \$100 SNAP benefit in December 2016 would receive \$100 in replacement benefits once a loss is verified.

Human Services officials work with county social service offices to issue replacement SNAP benefits if households have their food supplies damaged or destroyed due to power outages or other disaster situations.

People with questions can contact their county social service office or call the department at 800-755-2716. County information is online at [www.nd.gov/dhs/locations/countysocialserv/](http://www.nd.gov/dhs/locations/countysocialserv/).

In November 2016, the SNAP served about 54,000 qualifying low-income North Dakotans. The federally-funded program tends to serve mainly low-income children, working families, people with disabilities and seniors on fixed incomes.

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