

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

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Media contacts: Heather Steffl at 701-328-4933 or LuWanna Lawrence at 701-328-1892

Help available for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (food stamp) clients who lost food due to power outages from recent 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 storm on June 28-29, 2018. They must report their loss to a county social service office during regular business hours through July 9. All county social service offices will be closed July 4.

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.

“The powerful storm impacted many communities in the state, so we want all SNAP households to know that help is available to replace perishable food items that were lost due to power outages in their area,” said Michele Gee, director of the Economic Assistance Division for the North Dakota Department of Human Services. “Households are encouraged to contact their county social service office and to get the process started as soon as possible.”

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 USDA-approved retailers to purchase food items.

Gee said the program will replace the amount of the loss, up to an amount a household received as a benefit in June. For example, if a household reports a food loss of \$100 and the household received benefits of \$100 in June, \$100 in replacement benefits would be issued once the loss is verified.

Human services officials 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 local county social service office or the department at 800-755-2716 or ND Relay TTY 800-366-6888. County contact information is online at www.nd.gov/dhs/locations/countysocialserv/.

In May 2018, the federally-funded Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program served about 52,700 qualifying low-income North Dakotans. The program tends to serve mainly low-income children, working families, people with disabilities and seniors on fixed incomes.

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