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Georgia extends deadline for SNAP recipients to report food lost in Hurricane Michael

ATLANTA – Georgia residents who receive food stamps now have additional time to report food lost due to power outages during Hurricane Michael.

Recipients of the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) who were affected by Hurricane Michael have until Oct. 31 to file forms requesting a replacement for food lost during storm-related power outages.

The Georgia Division of Family and Children Services sought the deadline extension to help low-income families, many of whom were displaced from their homes for several days, feed their families as they recover from the effects of the storm. The USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), which oversees the food stamp program in Georgia, approved the state's request early this week to allow families additional time to report losses.

Approximately 1.6 million Georgians rely on SNAP assistance to feed their families. SNAP benefits are generally released over a 19-day cycle between the fifth day and 23rd day of each month.

"We know families affected by Hurricane Michael are facing significant challenges, and we want to help those who have suffered damage and loss," said Tom Rawlings, Interim Director of the Division of Family and Children Services. "We are also grateful for the USDA's support in our efforts to aid Georgia families. Extending the deadline to report food losses, we hope, will at least relieve families of the anxiety they are experiencing as they continue to recover from this storm."

The deadline extension is part of an ongoing effort by Georgia DFCS and FNS to support families affected by the hurricane.

Ahead of the storm's arrival, the Division worked with FNS to release all food stamp benefits for the month of October, which was an early release for most recipients in the state.

Georgia DFCS has also worked to ease administrative burdens on families and allow utility companies to focus on efforts to restore residents' power. The Division has temporarily eliminated the need for recipients to go to utility companies to verify individual outages related to Hurricane Michael.

In most situations where power outages cause food purchased with SNAP funds to perish, SNAP policy requires recipients to report the loss of food via a Food Loss Replacement Form (Form 841). Customers typically have 10 days after the loss to submit the form, which includes a verification of the outage by the recipient's electricity provider, to their local DFCS office.

Recipients whose food was lost in Hurricane Michael must submit the Food Loss Replacement Form (Form 841) in person or by mail to the local DFCS office no later than Oct. 31; the form does not need to be accompanied with verification from the utility company.

To locate a county DFCS office, visit: <https://dfcs.georgia.gov/locations>. To download Form 841, visit <https://dfcs.georgia.gov/food-stamp-benefits-replacement>.

DFCS will post ongoing updates, including information on how to replace food purchased with SNAP benefits following a power outage and storm-related office closures at www.dfcs.ga.gov. For additional information and updates, please visit <https://dhs.georgia.gov/blog/2018-10-10/update-replacement-snap> or visit the DFCS Facebook page at www.facebook.com/gadfcs.

About Georgia DFCS

DFCS administers The Georgia Food Stamp Program (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)), a federally-funded program that provides monthly benefits to low-income households to help pay for the cost of food. DFCS is responsible for issuance of SNAP, Medicaid, TANF and childcare assistance to low-income families; assistance for out-of-work parents to help them get back on their feet as well as multiple support services and programs to help families in need.