

## Applications being accepted this week for disaster food assistance

Written by Staff Reports

Monday, November 26, 2012 09:36 am

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Beginning Monday, Nov. 26 Atlantic County residents who incurred losses from Superstorm Sandy and who are not enrolled in the state's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (NJ-SNAP) may apply for a one-time disaster food assistance benefit.

Atlantic County is one of 16 counties in the state that was approved for participation in the Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (D-SNAP) for individuals and families who suffered the harshest damages. D-SNAP is a federal program for people who are at risk for hunger because their disaster recovery expenses have left them without money to buy food; it is not a food replacement program for people that lost perishable food items due to power outages.

Applications will be accepted in person on weekdays from Nov. 26 through Dec. 4 at Boardwalk Hall, 2301 Boardwalk, Atlantic City as follows:

Monday, Nov. 26, 10 a.m.-6 p.m., last names A-E

Tuesday, Nov. 27, 9 a.m.-6 p.m., last names F-J

Wednesday, Nov. 28, 9 a.m.-6 p.m., last names K-O

Thursday, Nov. 29, 9 a.m.-6 p.m., last names P-S

Friday, Nov. 30, 9 a.m.-6 p.m., last names T-Z

Monday-Tuesday, Dec. 3-4, make-up days (last names A-Z)

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Application rules and eligibility for D-SNAP have been modified since last year when D-SNAP was implemented following tropical storm Irene. Strict criteria must now be met in order for people to qualify for this current D-SNAP benefit.

Under the new rules, D-SNAP applicants must provide:

Identification and proof of residency – a driver's license, for example, would serve as both.

Pay stubs and bank statements (cash, checking and savings accounts) for the 30 days from Oct. 28 through Nov. 26.

Receipts that show more than \$100 spent on disaster-related expenses between Oct. 28 and Nov. 26. The cost of replacing food cannot be included in the \$100, but restaurant expenses are allowed.

Qualifying disaster expenses may include:

Temporary shelter in a motel

Home/business repairs

Evacuation expenses

Disaster cleanup

Disaster-related vehicle repairs

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Gasoline for a generator

Replacement of personal items such as clothing or household items, appliances, tools, educational materials.

If any of the purchases were charged to a credit card, the resident must be able to document that they paid the credit card bill for these items by Nov. 26.

Under the guidelines, for an individual the disaster period income limit is \$2,268 with a benefit of \$200; a family of two is a \$2,965 limit with a \$367 benefit; a family of three is a \$3,416 limit with a \$526 benefit; a family of four is \$4,034 limit with a \$668 benefit, and a family of five is \$4,452 with a \$793 benefit.

Approved D-SNAP applicants will receive their benefits on an electronic benefits transfer (EBT) card that can only be used for the purchase of grocery food items and some prepared foods.

Current food stamp recipients are not eligible for D-SNAP as they have already received an automatic allocation on their EBT cards for October replacement benefits. An additional supplemental benefit will be allocated by Dec. 7, 2012.

A special Atlantic County D-SNAP hotline number will be activated on Monday, Nov. 26. Call (609) 343-2300 for information and updates.