

Food assistance available for SNAP recipients

Written by Laura Stetser

Sunday, November 11, 2012 10:31 am

EGG HARBOR TOWNSHIP - According to Atlantic County spokesperson Linda Gilmore, several county residents have been inquired about obtaining food assistance from the state. She issued the following news release to help inform the public:

The Christie Administration Friday, Nov. 9 announced the approval of federal waivers that will make food assistance available to recipients of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

The replacement SNAP and prepared food benefits are administered by the United States Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) through New Jersey's Department of Human Services' Division of Family Development and the state's county welfare agencies.

"Hurricane Sandy caused unprecedented destruction and devastation throughout New Jersey," said DHS Commissioner Jennifer Velez. "Many families still have no power making it nearly impossible for them to store perishable items or cook food."

The replacement SNAP benefit is for current recipients, only. It will reimburse 25 percent of their October monthly SNAP allotment, allowing them to replace a portion of the food they may have lost during the power outage. SNAP recipients in 16 counties that experienced a loss of power for at least 50% of their population will receive the replacement automatically within the next few weeks on their EBT cards. They do not need to call or visit their County Welfare Agency.

Those counties are: Atlantic, Bergen, Cape May, Essex, Hudson, Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Morris, Ocean, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex, Union and Warren.

The prepared food waiver also allows these SNAP members - for a limited time - to purchase hot and cold prepared meals from participating stores with their benefits, an exception to the SNAP rules.

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“These are families already at great risk for hunger,” said Commissioner Velez. “The replacement and prepared food benefit will enable SNAP recipients in counties hardest hit by the hurricane to restock their refrigerator if they have power, or purchase ready-to-eat meals.”

Individuals and families on SNAP from the counties of Burlington, Camden, Cumberland, Gloucester and Salem also are eligible for the replacement benefit, but must go to their county welfare office to apply. They are not eligible for the hot food benefit.