



June 21, 2011

Storm Assistance in Hampden and Worcester Counties

Dear Community Partner:

On June 15, 2011, President Barack Obama declared a federal emergency in Hampden and Worcester Counties. The Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) is now issuing several kinds of benefits that may assist your clients. *Because you have a relationship with people in your community who may be eligible for assistance, we are reaching out to you to spread the word.* Access to benefits is time limited, so please note the expiration dates and notify clients and other community providers as soon as possible.

Communities eligible for DTA benefits

If a household's home or business was affected by the June 1, 2011 tornadoes and storms, they may be able to get special Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (D-SNAP), "replacement" and/or "supplemental" benefits if they live or work in one of these areas:

Agawam	Monson*	Sturbridge
Brimfield*	Palmer	West Springfield
Charlton	Southbridge	Westfield
Chicopee	Springfield	Wilbraham*

*Because of the level of devastation in these three communities, households who live in them will receive "supplemental" and limited "replacement" benefits described below automatically.

D-SNAP benefits: for households who do not currently receive SNAP

Households who do not currently receive SNAP benefits from DTA may be eligible for a one-time benefit to buy food. To qualify, households must live in one of the towns listed above and:

- Have had damage to their home or business;
- Have disaster-related expenses that are not reimbursed (loss of food alone does not qualify); or
- Have lost income between June 1 and June 30, 2011.
- Apply for D-SNAP between June 18 and June 24, 2011.

Verification of identity and residency is required in order to be eligible for D-SNAP benefits. Other eligibility factors include income, liquid resources, expenses and household composition. If households have suffered extreme loss and all of their documents were destroyed, DTA case managers will work with them to see if they are eligible.

SNAP replacement benefits: for current SNAP households

Current SNAP clients are not eligible for D-SNAP. However, those who lost food due to the tornadoes and storms may be eligible to receive “replacement” SNAP benefits up to the amount of their May SNAP regular benefit. Households who have not already received replacement SNAP benefits for the month of May can apply for replacement benefits until **June 22**. They should do so by visiting one of the sites listed at the end of this notice.

Because of the number of power outages in Brimfield, Brookfield, Monson, and Wilbraham, current SNAP clients in these communities automatically received limited replacement benefits in their EBT accounts. They received 20% or 40% of their May SNAP benefit. However, they may also be eligible for an additional replacement benefit equal to the difference between their automatic replacement benefit amount and their May SNAP regular benefit. To receive this differential payment, households must apply in person at one of the disaster relief sites listed by **June 22**.

SNAP supplemental benefits: for current SNAP households

While current SNAP clients are not eligible for D-SNAP, they may be eligible for “supplemental” SNAP benefits. Clients may receive the difference between their June SNAP regular payment and the maximum SNAP payment for a household of their size. Clients can apply for this benefit until **June 24** by visiting one of the sites listed at the end of this notice.

Similar to the automatic replacement payment, current SNAP clients who live in Brimfield, Monson, and Wilbraham (however, not Brookfield) will automatically receive supplemental benefits in their EBT accounts by **June 23**. Clients living in one of these three communities do not need to do anything to receive the supplemental payment.

Applying for benefits

Households may apply for SNAP-related benefits in the three DTA offices and Monson/Palmer center listed below.

Springfield: Department of Transitional Assistance Office

95 Liberty Street, Springfield, 413-858-1000

Springfield: Department of Transitional Assistance Office

310 State Street, Springfield, 413-858-1300

Southbridge: Department of Transitional Assistance Office

1 North Street, Southbridge, 508-765-2400

Monson/Palmer: Department of Developmental Service Regional Office

171 State Avenue, Palmer, 413-284-1563, 413-284-5090, 413-284-5091 (8am-6pm), 1-800-328-3123 (8:30am-4:30pm)

These offices will accept D-SNAP and supplemental benefit requests through Friday, June 24 from 8:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Households should receive D-SNAP, replacement and supplemental benefits within 48 hours after they apply.

Purchasing hot foods with SNAP

D-SNAP and regular SNAP clients may purchase hot foods with their SNAP benefits from food retailers in Hampden and Worcester counties through June 30. However, not all food retailers will participate. *Please inform clients that before they try to purchase hot foods, they should ask the food retailer if they will accept SNAP/EBT for hot foods.*

For more information

Residents may only apply for D-SNAP and supplemental SNAP payments between June 18 and June 24, 2011. To find out if they qualify, residents should call 1-800-445-6604.

After applying for D-SNAP, supplemental or replacement benefits, applicants should call 1-800-997-2555 to find out if benefits have been put onto their EBT card.

Please note: applying for D-SNAP, replacement and supplemental SNAP payments is separate from registering for assistance through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Those seeking FEMA disaster assistance must register with FEMA by calling 1-800-621-3362 (TTY 1-800-462-7585) or by applying online at www.disasterassistance.gov.

Thank you

Please help share this information with clients and other agencies in the area. We thank you for helping get the word out and for assisting those in need.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Brown
Assistant Commissioner for Policy, Program and External Relations

Attachments:

- Summary chart of storm assistance in Hampden and Worcester counties
- D-SNAP frequently asked questions

Summary of Storm Assistance in Hampden and Worcester Counties

June 21, 2011

Benefit	Who's eligible	Community	Apply by date
Disaster SNAP	do not currently receive SNAP	all 12 communities	Friday, June 24
Supplemental SNAP: manual application	existing SNAP households	9 communities (see below for other 3)	Friday, June 24
Supplemental SNAP: automatic	existing SNAP households	Brimfield, Monson, and Wilbraham	payments will be received by Thursday, June 23
Replacement SNAP: manual application	existing SNAP households	all 12 communities	Wednesday, June 22
Replacement SNAP: automatic	existing SNAP households	Brimfield, Brookfield, Monson, and Wilbraham	payments have already been received; may be entitled to remaining replacement amount, but must apply in person
Hot foods	D-SNAP and regular SNAP recipients	Hampden and Worcester counties	Thursday, June 30



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSITIONAL ASSISTANCE

Massachusetts Tornado and Storm Assistance Frequently Asked Questions

On June 1, 2011, several tornadoes and severe thunderstorms struck Central and Western Massachusetts resulting in loss of power, destruction of property, and homelessness. Multiple state and federal agencies are working assist individuals and families who were affected by the storms.

President Barack Obama declared a federal emergency in Hampden and Worcester County on June 15, 2011. Because of this declaration, additional assistance for tornado and storm survivors is available.

How can I get help from FEMA?

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provides assistance and relief before, during, and after a disaster. FEMA will establish Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs) in each of the nine communities hit hardest by the June 1 storm system. FEMA staff at each of these centers will work to help individuals and businesses in their recovery from the impacts of the severe storms and tornadoes. In addition to FEMA staff, several state agencies will also have representatives at the DRCs to help provide any state assistance that may be available. We expect the DRCs to be operational within 24-48 hours of the President’s Major Federal Disaster Declaration.

IMPORTANT NOTE: individuals and families seeking FEMA disaster assistance must register with FEMA by calling 1-800-621-3362 (TTY 1-800-462-7585) or by applying online at www.disasterassistance.gov. People without phone or Internet access are encouraged to visit their local library to make use of this technology.

What is Disaster SNAP (D-SNAP) and who can get it?

Disaster SNAP is a one-time food assistance benefit that is provided on an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card. These cards are used in the same manner as a debit or ATM card at a supermarket, grocer, or farmers’ market that accepts SNAP.

PLEASE NOTE: applying for Disaster SNAP is separate from registering for assistance through FEMA. To find out if you qualify for Disaster SNAP, please call 1-800-445-6604.

Disaster SNAP will be available for eligible households in the following 12 communities:

- | | |
|-----------|------------------|
| Agawam | Southbridge |
| Brimfield | Springfield |
| Charlton | Sturbridge |
| Chicopee | West Springfield |
| Monson | Westfield |
| Palmer | Wilbraham |





Massachusetts Tornado and Storm Assistance Frequently Asked Questions

- **If you DO NOT receive SNAP/Food Stamps already**
 - You are likely to be eligible for D-SNAP if you:
 - Live in one of the 12 communities listed above, or live in Massachusetts and work in one of the 12 communities
 - Lost income in June 2011 as a result of the tornadoes and storms
 - Have little or no liquid assets (for example, money in the bank)
 - Have disaster-related expenses (for example, damage to your home).
 - If approved, you will be given a special Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card. A case manager will give you a brochure explaining how to use your card. If you are not approved for Disaster SNAP benefits, your card will not be activated.
 - You must use your Disaster SNAP benefits within 90 days. After 90 days, your Disaster SNAP EBT card will no longer work.
 - For example, a two-person household in one of the 12 listed towns has less than \$1,815 in income and liquid assets after paying for disaster-related expenses in June 2011. This household would receive \$367 in Disaster SNAP, on a special Disaster SNAP EBT card.

- **If you DO receive SNAP/Food Stamps already**
 - If you live in one of the 12 listed towns, lost food due to the tornadoes and storms and have not received replacement SNAP benefits for the month of May, you can still apply for replacement benefits until June 22nd by visiting a DTA office in Springfield, Southbridge or Monson.

D-SNAP benefits will be provided to families based on total income and assets available to a household during the disaster. Non-reimbursed disaster-related expenses are allowed as a deduction from income and assets. The test used is:

Total net (take-home) income received or expected to be received during June 2011, plus accessible liquid resources, minus eligible disaster-related expenses. This total may not exceed the “disaster gross income limit.” The disaster gross income limits and maximum D-SNAP benefit amounts appear in the chart below.

D-SNAP Income Eligibility Standards and Allotments

October 1, 2010 – September 30, 2011

Household Size	Disaster Gross Income Limit	Maximum Allotment
1	\$1503	\$200
2	\$1815	\$367
3	\$2126	\$526
4	\$2449	\$668
5	\$2787	\$793
6	\$3124	\$952
7	\$3436	\$1,052
8	\$3748	\$1,202

Each Additional Member +\$312 +\$150





DEPARTMENT OF TRANSITIONAL ASSISTANCE

Massachusetts Tornado and Storm Assistance Frequently Asked Questions

How can I get information about D-SNAP?

For general information about Disaster SNAP and tornado-related assistance, please call DTA's hotline at 1-800-445-6604. Please note: severe weather and high demand can impact telephone service on our hotlines and in our offices. DTA will make every effort to ensure responsiveness. Please note: you must apply for D-SNAP separately from applying for FEMA assistance.

Where can I apply for D-SNAP?

To apply for D-SNAP, individuals and families who do not currently receive SNAP should visit one of the following locations between 8:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., including Saturday and Sunday, between June 18 and June 24, 2011. D-SNAP applications will not be accepted after June 24, 2011.

Current SNAP clients who have not received May replacement benefits due to household misfortune may also visit the locations below to request replacement SNAP benefits.

Springfield: Department of Transitional Assistance Office

95 Liberty Street, Springfield
413-858-1000

Springfield: Department of Transitional Assistance Office

310 State Street, Springfield
413-858-1300

Southbridge: Department of Transitional Assistance Office

1 North Street, Southbridge
508-765-2400

Monson/Palmer: Department of Developmental Service Central/West Regional Office

171 State Avenue, Palmer
413-284-1563, 413-284-5090, 413-284-5091 (8am-6pm)
1-800-328-3123 (8:30am-4:30pm)

What is the deadline to apply for D-SNAP?

USDA allows a period of seven business days for people to apply for D-SNAP. Residents in the 12 communities listed above who were impacted by the June 1st storms must apply between June 18 and June 24, 2011. D-SNAP applications will not be accepted after June 24, 2011.

What should I bring to apply for D-SNAP?

Applicants must bring proof of identity (such as a photo ID) and proof showing their home address is in area impacted by the June 1st storms (such as a driver's license or utility bill).





DEPARTMENT OF TRANSITIONAL ASSISTANCE

Massachusetts Tornado and Storm Assistance Frequently Asked Questions

Other eligibility factors include income, liquid resources, expenses, Social Security numbers and household composition. If you have suffered extreme loss and all of your documents were destroyed, a case manager will work with you to see if you are eligible. To ensure that fraud is not committed, DTA staff will verify that only eligible households receive Disaster SNAP benefits. It is illegal to receive Disaster SNAP twice for the same disaster. If you receive benefits that you are not entitled to, you will have to pay them back.

How long does it take to get D-SNAP?

If eligible, you should have D-SNAP benefits available within 48 hours of application, in most cases.

What can I buy with D-SNAP?

D-SNAP benefits can be used to purchase any food that can be purchased with SNAP.

Households **CAN** use SNAP benefits to buy:

- Foods for the household to eat, such as:
 - Infant formula
 - Dairy products
 - Breads and cereals
 - Fruits and vegetables
 - Meats, fish and poultry
- Prepared cold sandwiches and salad bar items to be consumed outside of the store
- Seeds and plants that produce food for the household to eat.

Households **CANNOT** use SNAP benefits to buy:

- Beer, wine, liquor, cigarettes, or tobacco
- Any non-food items such as:
 - Pet food
 - Soap
 - Paper products
 - Household supplies
 - Vitamins and medicines
 - Prepared hot foods
 - Prepared cold foods to be consumed inside the store

Where can I use my D-SNAP benefits?

Hundreds of area retailers accept D-SNAP benefits on EBT cards. Many display a window sign if they take EBT cards.

