



*Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Transitional Assistance*

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**Online Guide Transmittal 2020-62
August 28, 2020**

To: Department of Transitional Assistance Staff
From: Sarah Stuart, Associate Commissioner for Change Management
Re: SNAP: Mass Replacements Due to Tropical Storm Isaias

Overview

Given the high number of SNAP households that suffered food loss due to Tropical Storm Isaias, FNS has approved the Department's request to **automatically** replace SNAP benefits issued between July 5 and August 4 to eligible households in affected towns. This waiver will enable eligible households to receive the replacement benefits without providing verbal or written attestation to food loss. The Department will issue the mass replacements during the last week of August 2020.

Pursuant to the FNS waiver, households eligible for mass replacement will receive different replacement amounts based on their respective household sizes and benefit issuance dates. The varying replacement amounts are derived from FNS's estimate of the average monthly amount of food consumed per household and the average amount of food per household lost due to Isaias, which equated to larger amounts for households whose benefits were issued between August 1 and August 4.

However, all eligible households can request additional replacement benefits if they believe that the mass replacement amount is less than the amount of their actual loss.

Purpose

The purpose of this Online Guide Transmittal is to advise staff of the policies and procedures pertinent to the FNS waiver for mass replacement benefits.

**Eligibility
Criteria**

To qualify for mass replacement benefits, a household must be residing (or if homeless, have a mailing address) in one of the following towns:

Qualifying Towns	Becket	Hubbardston	Sheffield
	Belchertown	Lanesborough	Shutesbury
	Brimfield	Longmeadow	Spencer
	Brookfield	Middlefield	Stockbridge
	Chesterfield	Monson	Sutton
	East Brookfield	Monterey	Wales
	East Longmeadow	Mount Washington	Wendell
	Grafton	New Marlboro	West Stockbridge
	Hardwick	Northborough	Westminster
	Hinsdale	Rehoboth	Wilbraham
	Holland	Seekonk	Worthington

**Additional
Criteria**

Additionally, a household will not qualify for a mass replacement benefit if they:

- have a SNAP case that closed after August 5, 2020;
- received a FSP Household Disaster supplement after August 5, 2020; **or**
- have a pending SNAP application and received expedited benefits.

**Mass
Replacement
Benefit
Amounts**

For eligible households with grantees whose SSN ends in 0 through 2, the Department will issue replacement benefits for August 2020 equal to 60 percent of the maximum allotment for their respective household size.

Example: George, whose SSN ends in 0, resides in Grafton as a household of 1. George's mass replacement amount will be \$116 (or \$194 x 60%).

For eligible households with grantees whose SSN ends in 3 through 9, the Department will issue replacement benefits for July 2020 equal to 20 percent of the maximum allotment for their respective household size.

Example: Julie, whose SSN ends in 4, resides in Brimfield in a household of 4 people. Julie's mass replacement amount will be \$129 (or \$646 x 20%).

Mass Replacement Benefit Amounts (continued)

Although replacement benefits ordinarily cannot exceed the value of the household's actual benefit allotment per month, the mass replacement benefit calculation considers the household's maximum allotment—even if it differs from the household's actual monthly allotment—to factor in the Emergency Allotment the household would have received per Online Guide Transmittal 2020-30.

When calculating the mass replacement amount based on household size, the Department will only consider the federal household size; the calculation will not consider ineligible household members (e.g., undetermined noncitizens, clients disqualified due to committing an IPV).

BEACON will issue mass replacement benefits under the Related Benefit Type: *FSP Household Disaster*.

Additional Replacements

If a household contacts the Department after receiving a mass replacement benefit and states that their food loss equated to a higher dollar amount than the mass replacement amount, the case manager must issue another replacement benefit. The additional replacement benefit shall be equal to the difference between the household's requested amount and the mass replacement amount.

Example: After automatically receiving \$129 in mass replacement benefits, Julie calls the DTA Assistance Line and tells the FAW that her loss was actually \$200. The FAW must issue another replacement benefit equal to \$71 (or \$200 - \$129).

Deadline

Households may request additional replacement benefits verbally or in writing by September 3, 2020, which is an extended deadline under a previous waiver approval.

Communication

The Department will mail a notice to all eligible households stating that they have been issued a replacement benefit due to the impact of Tropical Storm Isaias.

The Department will also update its public-facing website with pertinent information about the mass replacement benefits.

Upon issuance of the mass replacement benefit, BEACON will enter the following batch narrative:

Due to tropical storm Isaias, a mass replacement benefit was issued.

Questions

If you have any policy or procedural questions, after conferring with the appropriate TAO personnel, please have your Systems Information Specialists or TAO management email them to DTA.Procedural Issues.

Systems issues should be directed to the Systems Support Help Desk.
