



| Leveraging Nutrition Programs in Disasters

Agenda

- **Introduction**

Ellen Vollinger, FRAC Legal/Food Stamp Director

Meg Buckley, FRAC Congressional Hunger Center Emerson Hunger Fellow

- **General Overview: SNAP, D-SNAP and other Nutrition Program Resources**

Meg Buckley

- **Puerto Rico Disaster Response**

Meg Buckley

- **Lessons Learned from Hurricane Harvey**

Celia Cole, Feeding Texas CEO

- **Lessons Learned from California Wildfires**

Stephanie Nishio, CA Association of Food Banks Director of Programs

- **Use of Phone Calls to Qualify for D-SNAP**

Cindy Huddleston, Florida Legal Services Attorney

Introduction

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and other federal nutrition program resources can help individuals and communities recovering from natural or man-made disasters
- FRAC's Advocate's Guide to the Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (D-SNAP)(updated July 2018)
 - <http://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/d-snap-advocates-guide.pdf>
- U.S. Hunger Solutions: Best Practices for Getting SNAP to Disaster Victims
 - <http://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/best-practice-getting-snap-to-disaster-victims.pdf>

SNAP Overview

- SNAP is America's largest anti-hunger program
 - Funded through USDA's Food and Nutrition Service and administered through state SNAP agencies
- SNAP is highly responsive to the highs and lows of the economy, accommodating for food access/supply shocks
 - Recessions
 - Natural Disasters
 - Individual Misfortune
- Each \$1 of federally-funded SNAP benefits stimulates \$1.79 in economic activity

Serving SNAP Households

- SNAP households may request replacement benefits on individual basis for misfortune
- States may request authority to issue replacement benefits for all ongoing SNAP households in zip code areas with power outages (mass auto replacement)
- States may also request authority to issue supplemental benefits to bring SNAP benefits to maximum benefit for household size

D-SNAP

- Disaster SNAP (D-SNAP) is a primary disaster nutrition relief program
 - Can be run after a presidential authorization of Individual Assistance
 - Available only if state requests authority from USDA
 - Operates under streamlined procedures
 - Participants may deduct disaster-related damage or food loss from eligible income.
- D-SNAP extends benefits to households that are not already participating in SNAP
- Waivers allow replacement and supplemental benefits for SNAP households

Child Nutrition and Other Program Resources

- Federal nutrition programs also can be tapped to serve disaster victims
- WIC
- Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
- Summer Nutrition Program
- School Meals Programs
- Commodity Distribution

WIC in Disasters

- WIC is not a disaster program, but it is essential to support pregnant women, infants, young children, and new months in times after disaster
- States can employ alternative procedures to continue WIC services in a disaster, including:
 1. Modifying WIC food package components to accommodate disaster conditions
 2. Replace lost unredeemed WIC food vouchers
 3. Establish temporary WIC clinics and utilize mobile equipment
 4. Expand eligibility by allowing disaster impacted families to qualify for WIC by signing a “self-declaration” form rather than demonstrating that they are income eligible.
 5. Simplifying and expanding eligibility procedures
 6. Shortening or lengthening WIC eligibility certification periods
 7. Modify nutrition education requirements

Child Nutrition in Disasters

- If a household with children receives D-SNAP or is certified as homeless, the children are eligible for free school meals for the remainder of the school year and up to 30 days the following school year.
- USDA can waive certain child nutrition program rules, such as meal pattern requirements that may be unavailable after disasters
- USDA encourages state child nutrition agencies to prepare and plan before a disaster strikes so the response can be as swift as possible.

Puerto Rico Disaster Response

- Puerto Rico's Nutrition Assistance Program (NAP) structured differently
- NAP is a capped block grant with a set amount of funding annually that **cannot expand** to meet an increased need, whether due to a disaster or economic downturn

Puerto Rico Disaster Response

- Evacuee NAP participants could receive SNAP benefits for up to 2 months
- D-SNAP was not available for Puerto Rico storm victims, however:
 - Received waiver to use NAP benefits for hot prepared meals
 - Flexibilities for WIC participants and school meals
 - Disaster Household Distribution for food boxes to approx. 500,000 households

D-SNAP + DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

POLICIES RECOMMENDED FOR FUTURE DISASTERS

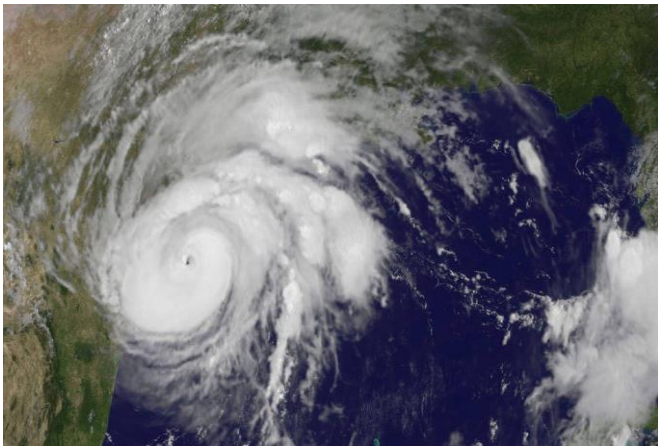


Celia Cole
ccole@feedingtexas.org

POLICIES RECOMMENDED FOR FUTURE DISASTERS

1 Texans should be able to pre-register for D-SNAP to expedite registration if a disaster occurs

- As in Louisiana and Florida, pre-registration can significantly reduce waiting times at in-person registration sites.



2 The application period for D-SNAP should be 30 days long

- After Hurricane Harvey, the application period was 7 days. High demand combined with a short application period caused people to wait for hours just to apply.

POLICIES RECOMMENDED FOR FUTURE DISASTERS

3

Potential D-SNAP application sites should be identified in advance and MOUs should be developed

- A key component to preparedness is identifying appropriate application facilities in advance and entering into MOUs with facility management.

4

D-SNAP benefits should last longer than one month for major disasters

- D-SNAP is a critical component of recovering from a disaster because it not only provides nutritional food to recipients, but it also helps them devote more household resources to other aspects of recovery including home and automobile repairs. In disasters that cause significant damage to the housing stock and displace people for long periods of time, HHSC should request a longer benefit period as early as possible.

POLICIES RECOMMENDED FOR FUTURE DISASTERS

5

D-SNAP should be available to people employed in the impacted area in addition to residents

- When businesses are closed because of damage, transportation problems, or lack of electricity, workers lose wages. D-SNAP should be available to those suffering an economic loss due to a disaster regardless of the county they live in.

6

All food banks should be deputized to process D-SNAP applications following the current Community Partner Interviewing model

- Currently five food banks have the ability to conduct SNAP interviews, but all network food banks should be deputized to process D-SNAP applications in an effort to increase capacity after a disaster.

POLICIES RECOMMENDED FOR FUTURE DISASTERS

7

Impacted residents should be able to apply for D-SNAP online

- Online application would reduce travel and wait times for applicants and allow them to apply at a date and time that is convenient.

8

Evacuees in shelters should be first priority for D-SNAP enrollment

- When a D-SNAP program is implemented, HHSC should prioritize evacuees, those likely impacted most by a disaster, when making programmatic decisions.



POLICIES RECOMMENDED FOR FUTURE DISASTERS

9

Food banks should be allowed to provide assistance to D-SNAP applicants via call centers in the event that shelter staff are overwhelmed

- Food bank staff who are knowledgeable about D-SNAP can help reduce the burden on agency staff and can make sure that the correct information gets to peoples as quickly as possible.

10

A process for enrolling impacted residents who are eligible for SNAP upon exhaustion of D-SNAP benefits should be developed

- HHSC should develop a process for identifying those D-SNAP recipients who may be eligible for SNAP, outreaching those households, and enrolling them in SNAP.

POLICIES RECOMMENDED FOR FUTURE DISASTERS

Work requirements should be temporarily lifted for all adult recipients of SNAP

- For ABAWDs, meeting the work requirements after a disaster can be particularly difficult. Due to instability in local labor markets after disasters, HHSC should request a waiver from work requirements for a limited time after a disaster.

Verification requirements for SNAP should be reduced

- Applicants that are applying for SNAP for the first time following a disaster were likely among the ones most affected and they may have a hard time producing all the required documentation. Verification requirements should be reduced to allow these families to begin receiving benefits quickly



POLICIES RECOMMENDED FOR FUTURE DISASTERS

13

TDA should be encouraged to establish a threshold above which it begins the process to request the release of TEFAP and other USDA foods for household

- TDA is responsible for submitting a request to FNS to release USDA foods for use in a disaster household distribution program. A threshold should be determined that provides a clear trigger for TDA to begin preparing a waiver request because food insecurity is increasing after of a disaster. This threshold can be defined as a food bank in or near a disaster area distributing a certain amount of food above its normal level (calculated a percentage of average daily distribution).



Disaster SNAP Outreach

STEPHANIE NISHIO, CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF
FOOD BANKS

JULY 24, 2018

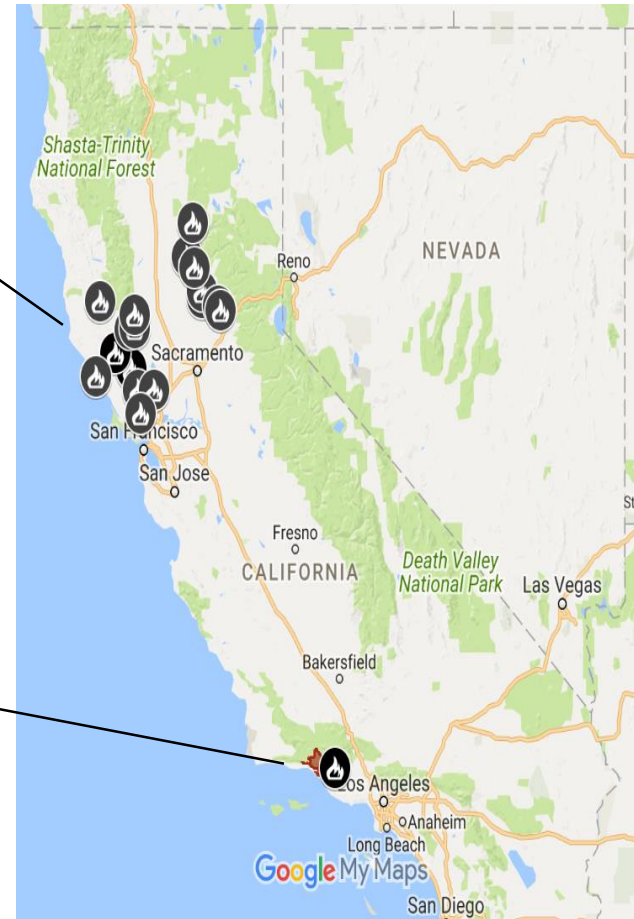
Wildfires & Mudslides

October 2017

- Wildfires
- D-SNAP in 7 counties

December 2017 – January 2018

- Wildfires followed by mudslides
- D-SNAP in 2 counties in February



D-SNAP Outreach

Sonoma County (Northern CA)

- Partnered with SNAP outreach providers in the county
- Coordinated with state partners
- Recruited, trained 50 SNAP outreach workers from neighboring counties

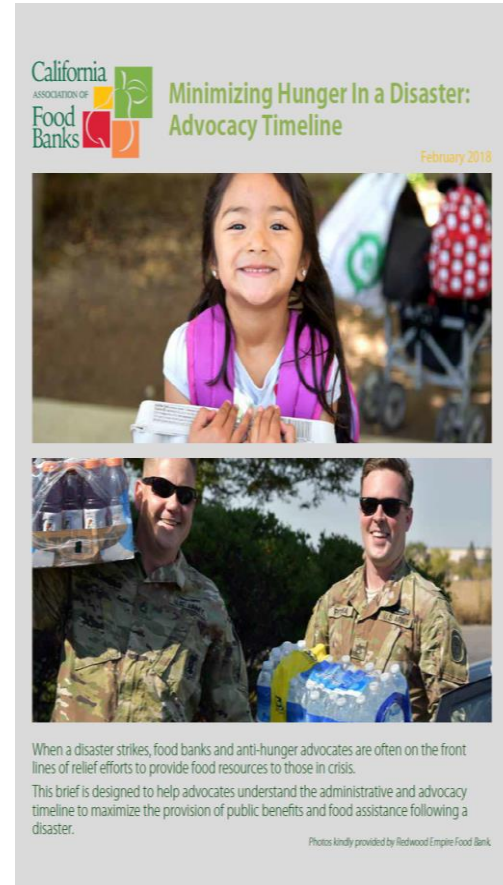
Ventura County (Southern CA)

- Partnered with county, coordinated with state
- Recruited, trained 6 outreach workers



Lessons Learned

- Plan ahead
- Encourage regional response
- Engage local expert(s)
- Combine on-the-ground outreach with remote support



THANK YOU!

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510-350-9905

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Hurricane Irma D-SNAP

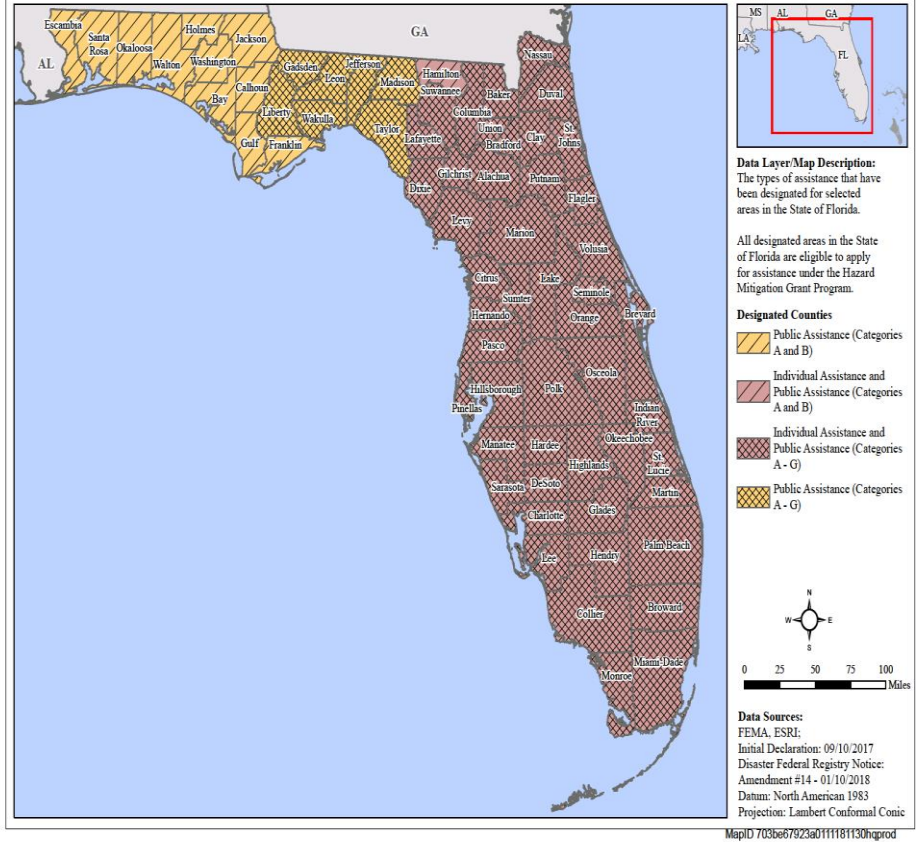
Challenges & Solutions

Cindy Huddleston, Esq.
Florida Legal Services. Inc.
July 2017

Unprecedented Scope of Hurricane Irma

Of Florida's 67 counties,
48 qualified for D-SNAP

FEMA-4337-DR, Florida Disaster Declaration as of 01/10/2018



Pre-Registration

Challenges

- Optional
 - Access to computer
 - Computer literacy
 - Web site crashes
 - Florida ID or Florida Drivers License Required

In-Person Interviews

Challenges

- In-person interviews required
 - Only other possible options
 - Designate an authorized rep. payee
 - Satellite application sites
 - Special transport
 - Home visits
 - Skype

problem

To apply for Irma D-SNAP, DCF required all applicants to travel in person to the designated application site to be interviewed (“in-person requirement”) on specific days. No exceptions in FL except auth. rep.

Application sites were only open for specific days and times, depending on the county.

DCF’s in-person requirement and limited availability of site openings resulted in lines as long as 50,000 persons or more at application sites, prompting chaos and early closures of locations by orders of police due to safety and health concerns.

Floridians whose disability prevented them from traveling to an application site or standing in line were barred from eligibility.



ROAD WORK
PROGRAM
CANCELED

W 9000 ST
WEST TOWN

S

LAW SUIT FILED

On 11/2/17, Fulgencio Gallo and Richard Caldas filed a state-wide class action in federal court on behalf of persons with disabilities who, like them, were unable, due to their disabilities, to go in-person and stand in line at an application site.



OUTCOME?

Because of the lawsuit, USDA for the first time ever allowed a state to conduct phone interviews of persons who were unable to go in person to a D-SNAP site due to their disability.

AND...?

- Phone interviews were held on December 2 and 3, 2017, for persons who had pre-registered for benefits but had disabilities that prevented them traveling to or from lining up and waiting at a D-SNAP location to be interviewed in person.
- In May 2018, phone interviews for persons who attempted but did not complete registration were held if disabilities prevented them from traveling to or lining up and waiting at a D-SNAP location to be interviewed in person.

How important were phone interviews?

- More than **4,572 disabled persons** were awarded disaster food assistance in December through a first-ever telephonic interview process for benefits.
- **Estimated more than 3 million dollars** in Irma D-SNAP provided.

Take away

- Talk now to your state agency and/or law-makers about administration of D-SNAP program.
- Each disaster is different, but early discussion about phone interviews and other alternatives to in-person interviews is important.



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Q&A?

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