



FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE DISASTER RESPONSE SUMMARY

FY2017

INTRODUCTION

Food is an essential part of disaster response and recovery. The United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) can play a vital role in providing supplemental nutrition assistance when disasters occur by coordinating with State, local, and voluntary organizations to:

- provide food for shelters and other mass feeding sites,
- distribute food packages directly to households in certain situations,
- offer flexibility in nutrition assistance programs’ design and administration to continue providing benefits to participants in need, and
- approve eligible States’ requests to operate a Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (D-SNAP).

As part of initial disaster response, USDA can provide local disaster relief organizations with USDA Foods—nutritious, 100% American-grown and produced foods that are already being stored at schools and State Distributing Agency warehouses in the area — to provide food to shelters or people who are sheltering in place and in need of food. FNS can also provide infant formula and baby food after a Presidential Disaster Declaration for Individual Assistance and at the request of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) or a State agency.

Once retail food stores have reopened, State agencies may request to operate a D-SNAP if the disaster area has received a Presidential Disaster Declaration for Individual Assistance and survivors are still in need of nutrition assistance. D-SNAP provides temporary nutrition assistance benefits to eligible disaster survivors and disaster supplements to households already participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Replacement benefits may also be provided to SNAP households that lose food purchased with SNAP benefits due to the emergency or disaster.

At the Federal level, FNS disaster nutrition assistance is part of FEMA’s National Response Framework under Emergency Support Function (ESF) #11, Agriculture and Natural Resources. FNS trains and organizes a cadre of National and Regional Office staff to participate in exercises and activations of ESF #11 at FEMA’s National Response Coordination Center, Regional Response Coordination Centers, and Joint Field Offices.

2017 ATLANTIC HURRICANES

The 2017 Atlantic hurricane season was among the top 10 most active seasons on record. Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, each Category 4, all made landfall in less than a month between August and September 2017. These three hurricanes affected approximately 25.8 million people, resulted in more

FNS DISASTER RESPONSES IN FISCAL YEAR 2017



18

Severe Storms causing flooding and power outages



4

Hurricanes (Matthew, Harvey, Irma, and Maria)



2

Wildfires



1

Severe Drought



1

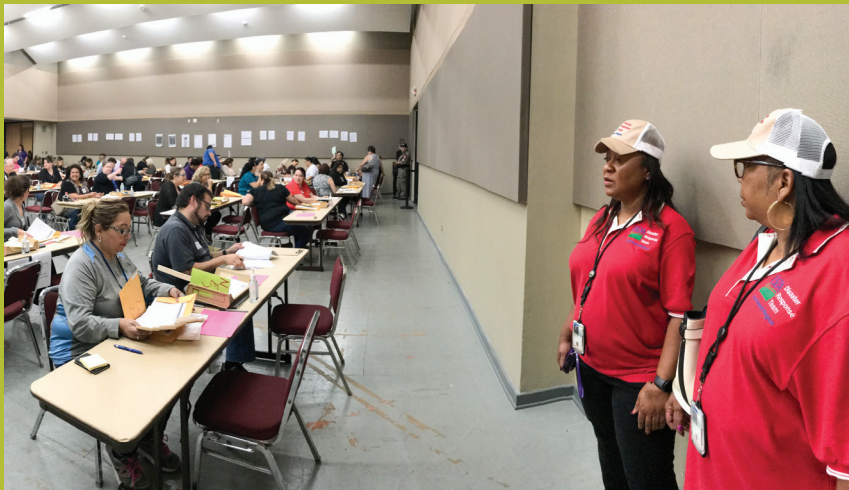
Lead Water Contamination

than 200 casualties, and caused billions of dollars in damages. Each hurricane presented different threats and challenges: Harvey caused disastrous flooding in Texas; Irma, with winds peaking at 185 miles per hour, impacted the Caribbean and Florida and remained a hurricane for 11 days; and in Puerto Rico, Maria resulted in the longest sustained air mission of food and water assistance in FEMA's history. FNS' disaster nutrition assistance programs played a vital role in feeding those most in need following these catastrophic hurricanes.

A CLOSER LOOK AT FNS' RESPONSES TO THE 2017 HURRICANES

"FNS worked with affected States and territories on a daily and sometimes hourly basis to ensure that agency programs responded to needs in their area, as they unfolded," said USDA's Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services Acting Deputy

Under Secretary Brandon Lipps. Due to the combined and unprecedented impacts of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, FNS served over 3.2 million households throughout Texas, Florida, and the U.S. Virgin Islands through D-SNAP and supplemental benefits. In response to Hurricanes Harvey and Irma, FNS issued SNAP replacement benefits to more than 2.4 million households. FNS also provided hundreds of thousands of pounds of USDA Foods to voluntary organizations that served hot meals in shelters and other community locations. In some areas, boxes of USDA Foods were distributed to households for home consumption, benefitting over 292,000 households in Puerto Rico alone. In Texas, Florida, Georgia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, FNS approved disaster-related flexibilities in child nutrition programs, such as the National School Lunch Program and the Summer Food Service Program, that benefited nearly 5 million children.



Response to Hurricane Harvey

Food and Nutrition Service Vernzel Byrd and Tonjulla Davis monitor the Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program application center in Corpus Christi, Texas, on September 19, 2017.



Response to Hurricane Harvey

Pallets of USDA Foods at the Houston Food Bank warehouse in Houston, Texas, are ready for delivery or distribution to those in need following Hurricane Harvey on September 22, 2017.

