

Food and Nutrition  
Service

April 25, 2020

1320 Braddock Place  
Alexandria, VA  
22314

**SUBJECT:** Approval of Disaster Household Distribution in Response to the National Emergency Declaration Due to COVID-19

**TO:** Kurt Messner  
Regional Administrator  
Northeast Regional Office

This memorandum is in response to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's (DESE) request to use U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Foods to operate disaster household distribution. This request is in response to food assistance needs resulting from the COVID-19 National Emergency declared by the President of the United States on March 13, 2020.

DESE, which administers The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), requested that USDA approve the use of USDA Foods from TEFAP for disaster household distribution. The disaster household distribution food package will be provided to impacted households most in need of food assistance through four regional food banks and 679 food pantries to reach impacted individuals, families, and communities in targeted areas.

**Approval is granted for disaster household distribution beginning April 25, 2020 through May 24, 2020.** This approval allows DESE to serve approximately 345,000 individuals using USDA Foods available on-hand. The following foods are approved for the disaster household distribution food package for a household of one-to-two members: frozen meats, canned vegetables, fruits, and soups, dried and canned beans, rice, cereal, juice, shelf stable milk, fresh apples, oranges, pears, boxed pasta, and canned tomato sauce. Frozen meats and any perishables must be distributed only at agencies that have proper cold and frozen storage facilities.

For larger households, DESE has approval to provide additional disaster household distribution food packages based on household size. For example, a household of four could receive two disaster household distribution food packages.

**Terms of Approval:**

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is approving DESE's request under the following terms:

1. DESE must provide on a weekly basis beginning April 25, 2020 an estimate of: 1) the amount of TEFAP inventory used for the disaster household distributions; and 2) the number of persons served under disaster household distribution.

2. Please conduct outreach and distribution efforts in a manner to ensure that households that are suffering significant economic losses or significant food access challenges due to COVID-19 are served first.
3. Approval for disaster household distribution is granted through May 24, 2020. Existing TEFAP inventories must be utilized to operate a disaster household distribution including orders placed and scheduled for delivery. Please keep in mind that replacement foods may not be available for delivery until July 2020 and beyond.

### **Authority**

The approval of disaster household distribution of USDA Foods is in accordance with FNS regulations at 7 CFR 250.69. DESE must provide a summary report via the FNS-292A form within 45 days following termination of the disaster household distribution. The information reported on the FNS-292A is the location of distribution sites, the number of persons served, and the type and quantity of USDA Foods distributed.



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