

Food and Nutrition
Service

June 5, 2020

1320 Braddock Place
Alexandria, VA
22314

SUBJECT: Revised 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 New York State Office of General Services' (New York OGS) request to revise its use of 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. New York OGS requested that USDA revise its approval to use USDA Foods from The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) for disaster household distribution in New York City and increase its estimate to serve a cumulative total, not to exceed, of 859,000 individuals.

The intent of disaster household distribution is to serve as a short-term program to address immediate needs and to bridge the gap to longer-term assistance programs in the aftermath of a Federal disaster or emergency declaration. Although disaster household distribution has been used in an unprecedented way over the last three months in response to the National Emergency, TEFAP is intended to serve longer-term emergency feeding needs. TEFAP provides significant State flexibility and requires minimal burden to demonstrate eligibility, even during times of social distancing. In addition, Congress has provided significant additional resources to TEFAP in response to the pandemic.

Approval is granted for New York OGC to amend their disaster household distribution and serve a cumulative total, not to exceed, of 859,000 individuals during their 30-day approval period beginning May 18, 2020 through June 16, 2020. During this period, it is expected that New York OGS, in conjunction with other State counterparts, will promote the availability of other Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) programs to meet impacted individuals' ongoing needs. Other programs include the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Pandemic EBT (P-EBT), the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP).

In addition to these FNS programs, USDA has established the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) or "Farmers to Families" Food Box Program to help individuals in need, <https://www.ams.usda.gov/publications/content/farmers-families-food-box-program-faqs>. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has also established a food assistance program that will aid communities impacted by COVID-19, <https://www.fema.gov/news-release/2020/04/12/coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic-purchase-and-distribution-food-eligible-public>.

While working with its food bank network and local agencies to begin transitioning to longer-term use of TEFAP rather than disaster household distribution, New York OGS is authorized to use the previously approved disaster household distribution food package to continue providing food assistance to impacted households. New York OGS must also

follow the same Terms of Approval as stated in the approval letter dated April 16, 2020 to include, but not limited to, weekly reporting of:

- 1) the amount of TEFAP inventory used for disaster household distributions, and
- 2) the number of persons served under the disaster household distribution.

Consideration of any further requests to extend disaster household distribution will be dependent on the targeting of the request to specific areas most in need and justification as to why the availability of other programs and resources are not meeting the State's food assistance needs.

Please have New York OGS contact the FNS Northeast Regional Office for more information should they have any questions regarding this approval.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Diane M. Kriviski". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "K".

Diane M. Kriviski
Deputy Administrator
Supplemental Nutrition and Safety Programs