



## Food Distribution National Policy Memorandum

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United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Food and  
Nutrition  
Service

3101 Park  
Center Drive

Alexandria, VA  
22302-1500

**DATE:** November 12, 2008

**POLICY NO.:** FD-079: Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)

**SUBJECT:** Retroactive Food Package Distributions Not Permitted

The purpose of this memorandum is to clarify Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) policy regarding CSFP retroactive food package distributions. Per CSFP regulations at 7 CFR Part 247.10(a), the local agency must distribute a food package to participants each month, or a two month supply of food to participants every other month. These food packages must be distributed in accordance with established guide rates. **CSFP food packages may not be distributed retroactively.** CSFP local agencies may only distribute food packages to participants for the current and subsequent months.

CSFP regulations provide flexibility to ensure that participants may receive food packages in instances when they cannot get to a distribution center. State and local agencies should review current policies and procedures to ensure, to the greatest extent possible, continued service to participants who are unable to pick up food packages. Per program regulations at § 247.6(c), CSFP State agencies must include in their State Plans a description of the means by which the State will meet the needs of homebound seniors. Per CSFP regulations at § 247.5(c), local agencies must, to the extent possible, meet the special needs of these individuals. These requirements extend to those individuals who may be temporarily homebound. Both State and local agencies should, to the extent possible, extend similar consideration to women, infants, and children participants who are homebound as well.

CSFP State agencies may permit the use of proxies, particularly when participants are unable to pick up food packages in a given month. Proxy designations must be in writing, must indicate the period of time such designations are intended to cover, and must be maintained on file by the local agency. A designated proxy must provide some form of identification prior to picking up a CSFP food package (see CSFP Policy Memorandum FD-044, "Use of Proxies in Certification, Recertification, and Distribution of Food Packages").

During a month in which a major disaster, emergency, or situation of distress occurs, local agencies may be unable to distribute CSFP food packages, or participants may be unable to pick up such food packages. This could be due to a variety of circumstances including road closures, lack of electricity, staff shortages, or unsafe conditions. However, assistance is available to individuals in need, including individuals accustomed to receiving CSFP benefits. Depending on the situation, FNS may approve the provision of emergency Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly the Food Stamp Program) benefits, and the release of U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) foods for shelters and other mass feeding sites. In certain limited circumstances, FNS may approve the release of USDA foods for distribution directly to

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households. These types of assistance are intended to meet the immediate nutritional needs of individuals in these situations.

Additional information regarding Food Distribution Division disaster policies and procedures may be found online at <http://www.commodityfoods.usda.gov/>, by selecting the “Disaster Assistance” link.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cathie McCullough". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'C'.

Cathie McCullough  
Director  
Food Distribution Division