



DEC 1 2008

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food and
Nutrition
Service

3101 Park
Center Drive

Alexandria, VA
22302-1500

SUBJECT: SNAP - Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (D-SNAP)
Approval Authority

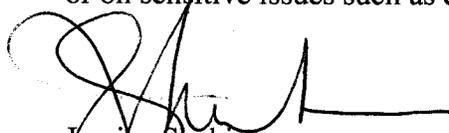
TO: E. Enrique Gomez
Acting Administrator
Food and Nutrition Service

As you are aware, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) experienced a particularly active year operating food assistance programs to aid victims of disasters. In Fiscal Year 2008, FNS authorized the operation of 17 D-SNAP operations to aid victims of floods, tornados, and hurricanes in 13 States.

Approval of a single D-SNAP operation generally requires review and processing of multiple authorizing letters, as States often modify their programs during operation to add counties, extend application periods, and waive certification policies for ongoing SNAP cases or for benefit issuance and redemption purposes. In FY 2008, the Program Development Division alone sent 72 D-SNAP approval letters to the Administrator for approval.

However, FNS determination of a State agency's eligibility to operate D-SNAP is subject to little discretion and is based entirely upon a jurisdiction's designation as a major disaster area authorized for individual assistance. FNS automatically approves D-SNAP operations and administrative waivers for maintenance of ongoing cases when authorization to offer individual assistance has been obtained. Most State requests to operate D-SNAP or waive certification rules for ongoing households are simple and straightforward and based on program design features that have previously been approved by FNS.

For these reasons, we are proposing to locate signature authority for D-SNAP operations with the Associate Administrator. We believe that locating signature authority at the Associate Administrator level will relieve the Administrator from having to review and approve numerous routine and non-discretionary requests, especially considering the volume of D-SNAP requests FNS has experienced in recent years. Should signature authority be moved to the Associate Administrator level, SNAP would continue to inform the Administrator's office and the Under Secretary of all D-SNAP approvals and would consult with the Administrator on waivers for States experiencing catastrophic disasters or on sensitive issues such as denials or authorizing benefits beyond one month.



Jessica Shahin
Acting Associate Administrator
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

The contents of this guidance document do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way. This document is intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies.

