

Food and Nutrition
Service

July 6, 2020

1320 Braddock Place
Alexandria, VA
22314

SUBJECT: Extension 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 Vermont Agency of Education's (VTAOE) request to extend its use of U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Foods to operate disaster household distribution beyond its approved end date of June 30, 2020. 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. VTAOE requested that USDA extend its approval to use USDA Foods from The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) for disaster household distribution and continue to use the same distribution methods to provide food assistance to approximately 20,000 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.

An extension is granted for VTAOE to provide disaster household distribution and serve a cumulative total, not to exceed, 20,000 individuals during the approval period beginning July 6, 2020 through July 20, 2020. During this period, it is expected that VTAOE, 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, VTAOE is authorized to use the previously approved disaster household distribution food package to continue providing food assistance to impacted households. VTAOE must also follow the same Terms

of Approval as stated in the approval letter dated May 29, 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 VTAOE 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 the first name being the most prominent.

Diane M. Kriviski
Deputy Administrator
Supplemental Nutrition and Safety Programs