

USDA Foods Disaster Household Distribution

- Through Disaster Household Distribution (DHD), **when traditional channels of food are unavailable or disrupted as a result of a disaster or emergency**, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is able to offer States and Indian Tribal Organizations (ITOs) the option to quickly provide **short-term food assistance to persons in need**.
- **FNS approves DHD in an affected area under the authority of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act** when the area has been impacted by a disaster or emergency.
- After the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) addresses immediate feeding needs, the intent of DHD is to bridge the gap to a longer-term assistance programs in the aftermath of a disaster or emergency, such as:
 - [The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(SNAP\)](#)
 - [The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children \(WIC\)](#)
 - [The Emergency Food Assistance Program \(TEFAP\)](#)
 - [The Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations \(FDPIR\)](#)
 - [The Commodity Supplemental Food Program \(CSFP\)](#)
- Income verification and other program eligibility requirements are not required to permit timely issuance of DHD benefits as a short-term response. This allows households not normally eligible for food assistance programs to access DHD food resources during an emergency or disaster.
- **States and ITOs provide food to organizations for disaster response by diverting locally available inventories of USDA Foods**, originally intended for use in other USDA Foods nutrition assistance programs, for emergency distribution.
- **FNS typically approves DHDs for two-week or one-month time periods as time-limited emergency assistance.** Proper direction to longer-term programs makes DHD unnecessary. Further, prolonged use of USDA Foods resources places a strain on existing program inventories and the ability of State, Tribal, and local partners to continue to operate TEFAP, FDPIR, and/or other USDA Foods programs.
- During DHD, States are encouraged to also refer households eligible for income-based assistance to appropriate programs. Programs like TEFAP are intended to serve emergency food needs and allow for significant State flexibility and minimal burden to demonstrate eligibility.

Flexibilities Currently Available in TEFAP, CSFP, and FDPIR

Many flexibilities currently exist that allow States and ITOs to make appropriate adjustments to program operations to accommodate their needs and circumstances in disaster or emergency situations. All flexibilities that a State or ITO would like to make should be discussed with the Regional Office in advance, as some require FNS approval. Flexibilities can include adjustments to **application processing, income verification, signature requirements, distribution methods, and certification periods**, depending on the program.