March 27, 2020

SUBJECT: Approval of Disaster Household Distribution in Response to the National Emergency Declaration Due to COVID-19

TO: Pat Dombroski
Regional Administrator
Mid-Atlantic Regional Office

This memorandum is in response to Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services’ (VDACS) request to use 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.

VDACS, which administers The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), requested that USDA approve the use of USDA Foods from TEFAP for disaster household distribution. VDACS has an agreement with the Federation of Virginia Foodbanks to distribute USDA Foods. The seven Virginia Foodbanks will be distributing the disaster household distributions to approximately 200,000 individuals in need of food assistance. Existing TEFAP sites and mobile sites will be used to reach households most in need.

Approval is granted for disaster household distribution beginning March 28, 2020 through April 26, 2020. VDACS is approved to use the following foods for the disaster household distribution food package to serve approximately 200,000 individuals: frozen meats, canned vegetables, fruits, and soups, dried and canned beans, rice, cereal, juice, shelf stable milk, fresh apples, oranges, pears, grapes, boxed pasta, and canned tomato sauce. Only shelf stable items may be distributed at mobile pantries to ensure product safety. Frozen meats and any perishables must be distributed only at agencies that have proper cold and frozen storage facilities.

For larger households, VDACS has approval to provide additional disaster household distribution food packages based on household size. For example, a household of four could receive two disaster household distribution food packages.

Terms of Approval:

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is approving VDACS’s request under the following terms:

1. VDACS must provide on a weekly basis beginning the week of March 30, 2020 an estimate of: 1) the amount of TEFAP inventory used for the disaster household distributions; and 2) the number of persons served under disaster household distribution.
2. Please conduct outreach and distribution efforts in a manner to ensure that households that are suffering significant economic losses or significant food access challenges due to COVID-19 are served first.

3. Approval for disaster household distribution is granted through April 26, 2020. Existing TEFAP inventories must be utilized to operate a disaster household distribution including orders placed and scheduled for delivery. Please keep in mind that replacement foods may not be available for delivery until July 2020 and beyond.

Authority

The approval of disaster household distribution of USDA Foods is in accordance with FNS regulations at 7 CFR 250.69. VDACS must provide a summary report via the FNS-292A form within 45 days following termination of the disaster household distribution. The information reported on the FNS-292A is the location of distribution sites, the number of persons served, and the type and quantity of USDA Foods distributed.

Diane M. Kriviski
Deputy Administrator
Supplemental Nutrition and Safety Programs