DCF, USDA TO LAUNCH DISASTER FOOD STAMP PROGRAM
IN ESCAMBIA, OKALOOSA AND SANTA ROSA COUNTIES
The three counties to also receive replacement food stamp benefits

TALLAHASSEE – The Department of Children & Families, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, will implement a Disaster Food Stamp (DFS) program in Escambia, Okaloosa and Santa Rosa counties to assist victims of Hurricane Dennis.

Residents who suffered Dennis-related losses in the three counties may apply for DFS benefits beginning Tuesday, July 19, through Saturday, July 23, at locations to be announced soon.

“Along with the loss of or damage to their homes and belongings, residents of these three counties lost food,” DCF Secretary Lucy Hadi said. “This program will ensure storm victims will not go hungry as they get back on their feet. We are grateful to the U.S.D.A. for its role in making these benefits available.”

To qualify for benefits applicants must have suffered damage to their homes or self-employment property or have experienced a loss of income or additional expenses as a result of the storm. Applicants also must not exceed income limits. Benefits are based on family size. One person is eligible for $149 in Disaster Food Stamp benefits. A family of four is eligible for $499.
Eligible individuals and families will be mailed Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards to use at authorized U.S.D.A. food retailers. DFS benefits are good for 90 days from the date of issuance and must be used during that time.

In addition to the DFS program, the Department has received permission from the U.S.D.A. to replace benefits for regular food stamp recipients in the three counties. More than 17,000 households will receive replacements of their regular July benefit amounts. Benefits will be automatically loaded into each household’s EBT account.

Regular food stamp recipients and those eligible for the DFS program in the three counties may use their benefits to purchase hot prepared foods through August 31. This rule change will help those who lost their homes and cooking equipment as a result of Dennis.

More information on the Disaster Food Stamp program is available at 1-866-762-2237.

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