**Maryland Department of Human Resources**

**Somerset County Disaster Nutrition Assistance Initiative**

**Frequently Asked Questions – Active Maryland Food Supplement Program Participants**

Q. I am currently enrolled in the Maryland Food Supplement Program (FSP). How do I know if I qualify for these restored benefits?

A. Not everyone is eligible for these supplemental benefits. Here are some questions that can help you determine if you are eligible for Disaster assistance:

1. Are you a resident of Somerset County?
2. Were you either receiving FSP benefits or *eligible* to receive FSP benefits as of October 2012?
3. Did you *apply* for FSP benefits in October but didn’t receive approval until November?
4. Did you receive *less than* the maximum benefit amount for the FSP program? (*See attached chart to determine if this is the case.*)

If you were a Somerset County resident when Sandy made landfall and answered yes to question two or three, there is a chance that you are eligible to receive your October benefit supplement *if* you received less than the maximum benefit amount for your household size.

Q. Hurricane Sandy was months ago. Why are nutrition benefits coming out now?

A. The work of recovering from a natural disaster or similar catastrophic event takes months, if not years. While the immediate response many times includes food, water, shelter, for victims in the immediate wake of an event, the work of rebuilding communities and, “making people whole,” is painstaking. Maryland Department of Human Resources (DHR) has received approval from the Federal government to restore a percentage of nutrition benefits to FSP customers as a means of helping the communities of Somerset County continue making progress towards normalcy. DHR has already issued benefits to counties similarly impacted by Sandy in prior months.

Q. I applied for FSP in November and am currently enrolled in the program. Can I get restored benefits?

A. If you lived in Somerset County in October and would have been eligible for FSP if you had applied, then you may be eligible if you experienced losses or incurred expenses due to Hurricane Sandy. However, if you were not living in Somerset County or you were not eligible for FSP benefits in October, you will not be eligible for disaster related FSP benefits.

Q. I have had an Independence card issued to me since before Hurricane Sandy. Do I have to come into my local office to get my restored benefits?

A. If you were enrolled in Maryland’s FSP program in October and were already issued an Independence card and you were receiving less than the maximum benefit amount for your household size there is nothing further you have to do. If you were living Somerset County and had an Independence card prior to Sandy, your balance should reflect the benefit supplement. There is nothing further you have to do.

Q. I think I am eligible for disaster food benefits but I have not received any. What am I supposed to do?

A. If you are eligible and have not received your supplement, you will need to fill out an application attesting that you are a resident of Somerset, that you suffered financial loss because of the hurricane and that you meet the resource and income test to be eligible to receive disaster FSP assistance. The application process requires an in person interview with a Maryland staff worker at one of the two intake offices that will be processing these requests between January 7 and January 13, 2013. Please make sure you bring proof of identity, residence and proof of disaster related expenses or loss of income to your application interview. Having these documents available will help speed up the process.

Q. Can I apply for supplemental benefits after January 13, 2013?

A. No. The period for disaster food benefits is only open for a limited time. If your situation requires an application you must come in during this window. We cannot process your application after January 13, 2013.

*If you have further questions or need additional assistance call our toll free Help-Line for more information.*

*1-800-332-6347*

*Applications will be accepted at the following locations January 7 – January 13, 2013*

*Somerset County Department of Social Services*

*30397 Mt. Vernon Road*

*Princess Anne, MD 21853*

*Phone: (410) 677-4200*

*Disaster Recovery Center*

*The Lower Somerset County Ambulance & Rescue Squad Building*

*#2 Mill Lane*

*Crisfield, MD 21817*