



Department of
Job and Family Services

John R. Kasich, Governor
Michael B. Colbert, Director

Family Assistance Letter # 117
OFFICE OF FAMILY ASSISTANCE
July 6, 2012

TO: Directors, County Departments of Job and Family Services

FROM: Trudie J. Bormann, Deputy Director 
Office of Family Assistance

SUBJECT: **Mass Food Assistance Replacements**

As a result of the June 29, 2012 storms the Office of Family Assistance requested and received approval for a waiver to issue mass replacement food assistance benefits from the United States Department of Agriculture – Food Nutrition Service (USDA/FNS). The waiver was requested for counties who had 20% or more of their population without power as of July 1, 2012 at 12:30pm as reported through Ohio Emergency Management.

Based on discussion with USDA/FNS and information given to us at that time, the Office of Family Assistance notified the affected county agencies of the waiver request and required them to provide their intentions of accepting the mass replacement option. Eleven county agencies opted out of the mass replacement issuance. On July 5, 2012 USDA/FNS requested additional information for the identified counties in the 20.1%-30% outage range. Based on additional information provided, FNS then approved all of the requested counties. The following county agencies had food assistance benefits issued via mass replacement:

Allen	Greene	Monroe	Ross
Athens	Guernsey	Montgomery	Shelby
Auglaize	Hancock	Morgan	Van Wert
Belmont	Highland	Muskingum	Vinton
Brown	Hocking	Noble	Warren
Clinton	Jackson	Paulding	Washington
Coshocton	Lawrence	Pike	Wyandot
Franklin	Licking	Preble	
Gallia	Mercer	Putnam	

Mass Replacement Benefits

The mass replacement benefits were issued through CRIS-E on July 5, 2012. Recipients receiving June 2012 benefits in the above counties received 13.3% of their June 2012 benefits as a replacement.

30 East Broad Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215
jfs.ohio.gov

JFS 7222 "Statement Requesting Replacement Food Assistance Benefits"

Prior to requesting the mass replacement waiver, we requested confirmation from USDA/FNS that we would not have to act on individual replacement requests (JFS 7222). Upon receiving that confirmation we submitted our waiver request. In situations where power outages affect a larger number of people, it was our belief that mass replacements would be a much more efficient method than processing individual requests.

Our preliminary approval for automated mass replacement was received July 3, 2012. From this approval ODJFS was instructed to proceed with issuing mass replacement of benefits. This preliminary approval noted that only counties not approved for the waiver must take individual affidavits (i.e. JFS 7222).

On July 5, 2012, we received official approval to issue mass replacement benefits for the 34 counties that we requested. However, through subsequent conversations with both our USDA/FNS regional representatives and USDA/FNS headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia they have now expressed that **all requests for replacement (JFS 7222), regardless of when received, must be processed. USDA/FNS has indicated they cannot provide a waiver that would lessen benefits to a recipient. We have requested formal written guidance to resolve this issue with USDA/FNS as we believe this is contradictory to our initial discussion/guidance and understanding of the waiver. Additionally, for any individual who requests a replacement amount greater than the mass replacement benefit, we have been instructed by USDA/FNS that the household is entitled to receive the difference.**

Because this additional requirement was not evident in any of our communications with USDA/FNS up until this point, we are seeking additional clarification and written resolution of this issue. Until we can come to final resolution, all waiver approved counties should continue to accept (through the 10 day acceptance period) and hold all JFS 7222 requests received.

Questions can be sent to Program Policy Services either by email at TANF-FSTA@jfs.ohio.gov or by calling 1-866-886-3537 (option 6).

c: Michael Colbert, Director
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