In Wake of Disaster: WIC & SNAP Matter

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Disaster Planning – Considerations for Program Manager
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Putting WIC in Context

Disasters can exacerbate hunger struggles for low-income people.

WIC operates in disaster situations within its program context & funding.

Unlike distribution of commodities or emergency issuance of SNAP, WIC does not have legislatively mandated role for disaster relief; WIC is not “first line of defense” in responding to nutritional needs of disaster victims.

But WIC is crucial for vulnerable mothers, infants & children affected by disaster.
Making a Difference with WIC in Wake of Disaster

WIC can respond effectively by:
--Running an effective program that reaches WIC eligible people
--Being prepared for disasters
--Continuing operations post-disaster
--Helping existing WIC client disaster victims replace food benefits &/or food instruments
--Modifying some rules and procedures re: certification, recertification, nutrition assessment, nutrition education, food package, food instrument issuance, & vendors
--Conducting WIC outreach to eligible population affected by disaster
--Getting out info re: D-SNAP & other disaster aid for which WIC clients might be eligible
Being Prepared

Enroll WIC eligible people prior to disaster
--clients stock food/have better nutritional status
--agency better able to reach w/post-disaster aid

Develop WIC Disaster Plan:
--Anticipate variety of potential scenarios affecting agency’s ability to respond w/adequate staffing
--Allow range of approaches to meet potential changed circumstances of WIC eligible population (those currently enrolled as well as eligible nonparticipants)

Texas Plan: http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/wichd/gi/administrative.shtm
Expedited Policies/Procedures

- Evacuees/homeless persons
- Prioritization
- Waiver of physical presence
- Proof of residence/id & income
- Nutrition assessment/nutrition education
- Shorter certification periods
- WIC CAs
Replacing Food Benefits &/or Food Instruments

- Replacing WIC food benefits redeemed but lost in isolated personal misfortune

- Replacing WIC food instruments lost in disasters

- Current clients—in state; out of state

- Mail options
Food Package

- Medical documentation for exempt infant formulas and WIC-eligible foods
- FNS waivers
- WIC vendor accommodations
- Contact with stakeholders, including vendors
WIC & SNAP Disaster Resources


SNAP, D-SNAP & SNAP Waivers

- **Regular rules:**
  - SNAP recipients who lose food due to misfortune can request replacement benefits
  - Replacements normally sought within 10 days and approved case by case
  - After disaster, some people not on SNAP may be eligible for regular SNAP benefits

- **Waivers:**
  - Extended time limit to request individual replacement benefits
  - Hot and prepared food waiver
  - Automatic mass replacement of benefits via EBT cards
  - D-SNAP provides supplemental benefits to SNAP HHs
  - D-SNAP extends benefits to disaster survivor HHs not already participating in SNAP

- **Background:**
  - EBT industry and retailers play roles
  - Presidential Declaration for Individual Assistance needed
  - FEMA’s website posts declarations See [http://www.fema.gov/disasters](http://www.fema.gov/disasters)
  - FNS website section has D-SNAP Guidance
  - FRAC website disaster aid section
Outreach Matters—Case Study

NYS & partners have active SNAP outreach projects

After Sandy, Food Bank For NYC:
--Created multi-language D-SNAP flyer
--Disseminated D-SNAP information via e-newsletter
--Reached out to former Tax Clients
--Distributed over 3k D-SNAP outreach materials throughout NYC
--Developed D-SNAP webinar training/delivered to 57 CBOs
--Created & distributed D-SNAP prescreening tool to NYC SNAP TF
--Presented on AARP NY-hosted teletown hall to 17k AARP members residing in 12 D-SNAP zip codes
--Provided D-SNAP application assistance via call center
Top Ten Checklist

1) Develop a WIC Disaster Plan
2) Form relationships w/ stakeholders: USDA, non-profits, electeds, food retailers, EBT processors
3) Do WIC outreach in non-disaster & post-disaster times
4) Get word out via media, social media, EBT call center, help lines
5) Help WIC clients replace lost food &/or lost benefit instruments
6) Modify policies & procedures
7) Help connect WIC clients w/D-SNAP & other aid
8) Let public know WIC helps recovery, including economic recovery
9) Congratulate partners & workers
10) Evaluate & learn lessons for future
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