



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES
COMMUNITY SERVICES DIVISION
Economic Services Administration
Post Office Box 45440 Olympia WA 98504-5440

January 6, 2026

Dear interested parties and community partners,

When we last reached out on December 24, 2025, it was to share about the issuing of the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) waiver that extended the time limit for reporting food losses caused by flooding and power outages related to the atmospheric river event that began on December 9, 2025. Under that waiver, **people in Benton, Chelan, Clallam, Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, King, Kittitas, Lewis, Mason, Pierce, Skagit, Snohomish, Whatcom, or Yakima counties may file a claim until January 8, 2026.**

New Waiver

Now DSHS is approved for a new waiver by FNS for the major wind and rainstorm that caused widespread power outages affecting hundreds of thousands of customers across Washington from December 17, 2025, through December 19, 2025. As a result, many households experienced prolonged power outages which may have resulted in loss of food which was purchased with food benefits.

In most cases, federal regulations require losses like this to be reported to the department within 10 days of the loss. DSHS has been approved for a waiver to the 10-day time limit by USDA Food and Nutrition Service. **The new FNS waiver extends the time limit for reporting food loss due to the storm for 16 additional counties including: Asotin, Clark, Ferry, Island, Jefferson, Kitsap, Klickitat, Lincoln, Okanogan, Pend Oreille, Skamania, Spokane, Stevens, Thurston, Wahkiakum and Whitman through January 16, 2026.**

Households may report a food loss **verbally or in writing**. To report a food loss, a household member must contact DSHS:

- In person at their local Community Services Office.
- Via telephone at 877-501-2233.
- By mail to P.O. Box 11699, Tacoma, WA 98411.

Prior to replacing food benefits lost in a household disaster DSHS must receive a signed statement attesting to the loss.

The signed statement including the head of household's name, date of birth or client identification number can be:

- The [DSHS Form 12-008](#) *DSHS Claim of Food Lost in a Household Disaster*.
- A written statement which includes the required information from the form.
- A verbal attestation of the loss by phone.

When a loss is reported, benefit replacement will be limited to the amount of the loss of food purchased with food benefits or the benefit issued for December, whichever is less.

If you have any questions, please contact Mike Rybak, Food Assistance Policy Program Manager, at Michael.Rybak1@dshs.wa.gov or (564) 669-8457.

Sincerely,

Brice Montgomery, Director



Community Services Division
Economic Services Administration
**Washington State Department
of Social and Health Services**