



NC DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH AND  
HUMAN SERVICES**

**ROY COOPER** • Governor

**KODY H. KINSLEY** • Secretary

**YVONNE COPELAND** • Director, Division of Child and Family Well  
Being

October 10, 2024

**Dear County Directors of Social Services**

**Attention:** Food and Nutrition Services Managers and Supervisors

**Subject:** Hurricane Helene – Statewide Hot Foods Waiver for FNS and SUN Bucks (S-EBT)  
Households

**Priority:** Information Only

**I. GENERAL INFORMATION**

On September 26, 2024, Hurricane Helene caused severe flooding and power outages in the western part of North Carolina. The need for hot prepared food products is critical for households most adversely impacted and who are unable to prepare hot foods due to damage to their homes, extended power outage, lack of water, need to relocate, or other conditions preventing households from returning to their homes. North Carolina requested a statewide federal waiver to temporarily allow hot foods and hot food products prepared for immediate consumption to be considered “eligible foods” as long as they are purchased in FNS-authorized retail food stores for both households currently receiving FNS benefits as well as households that received SUN Bucks (also known as Summer EBT) benefits in 2024. This will ensure families who are not able to prepare food at home due to displacement or power outages still have access to warm meals. Customers do not have to apply for this benefit but should inquire first with the store to see if they can process hot food purchases with their FNS benefits. A map of FNS-authorized retailers is available [here](#).

**II. POLICY PROCEDURES**

This waiver allows FNS and SUN Bucks recipients statewide to purchase hot prepared food from FNS-authorized retailers anywhere in North Carolina. FNS and SUN Bucks recipients cannot use FNS benefits to purchase food at restaurants or other retailers that are not FNS-authorized. The Department has communicated with the North Carolina Retail Merchants Association to ensure FNS-authorized retailers are aware of this waiver and reprogram their systems to accept hot foods with FNS and SUN Bucks benefits. NCDHHS has issued a [press release](#) and is sharing communications with partners and other media outlets to notify FNS and SUN Bucks recipients of this waiver.

**III. IMPLEMENTATION INSTRUCTIONS**

The Hot Foods Waiver is effective for households currently receiving FNS benefits and for households that have received SUN Bucks or Summer EBT benefits from October 4, 2024 and will end on November 03, 2024. If you have any questions regarding this information, please send them to the Continuous Quality Improvement Specialist (CQIS) [dss.policy.questions@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:dss.policy.questions@dhhs.nc.gov).

**NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES • DIVISION OF CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING**

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AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY / AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

Sincerely,

*Cynthia D. Erwin*

CE/vb

**EFS-FNSEP-21-2024**