The Mississippi Department of Education (distributing agency) receives and responds to requests for food assistance from local government and from non-profit disaster feeding organizations such as the American Red Cross or the Salvation Army through the ESF-6 and ESF-11 leads. The disaster feeding organization may be the Distributing Agency itself in areas where no local relief organization is available to provide a quick response. The first source of USDA donated foods available for donation in many occasions is local inventories in schools and other organizations in the affected area.

**1. Congregate Feeding:** Congregate feeding is the most common form of food assistance provided during disasters, emergencies, and situations of distress. In congregate feeding, the disaster feeding organization prepares meals in large quantities and serves them in a central location, often to people staying in locally designated shelters. Congregate feeding may occur in emergency shelters such as in schools, houses of worship, community centers, etc. Congregate feeding may also be provided by NGOs using mobile kitchens and/or disaster response vehicles.

**a. Congregate Feeding in a Natural Disaster:** Distributing Agencies may approve the use of USDA Foods **in *situations of distress*** to provide congregate feeding for up to 30 days ***only*** if the situation is a natural catastrophe. Examples of natural catastrophes include hurricanes, tornadoes, storms, floods, high water, wind-driven water, tidal waves, tsunamis, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, landslides, mudslides, snow storms, ice storms, droughts, and fires.

The Distributing Agency must submit FNS-292A to FNS afterwards to report the food used. Under these conditions, FNS may replace USDA Foods used for congregate feeding to the extent that funds for replacement are available. Since FNS funds for replacement of USDA Foods used in situations of distress are limited, it is recommended Distributing Agencies **submit a request for replacement of such foods within 24 hours of approving the use of USDA Foods for a situation of distress.**

**b. Approval of Congregate Feeding**—**Presidentially Declared Disasters or Emergencies**:

When a disaster or emergency is ***presidentially declared***, the Distributing Agency is responsible for reviewing and approving the application, and determining the duration of USDA Foods for congregate feeding. In doing so, it must take into consideration the magnitude of the situation. Within 24 hours of approving an application for congregate feeding, the Distributing Agency must report the information contained in the application

to the FNS Regional Office.

**c. Congregate Feeding Caused by Other Events:** Distributing Agencies ***must obtain prior approval via the FNS Regional Office from FNS Headquarters*** to request the use of USDA Foods in ***non-natural catastrophes***. Examples of non-natural catastrophes include man-made explosions, attacks, strikes, man-made fire, and civil disturbances.

**d. Congregate Feeding Inventories:** To expedite preparation, disaster feeding organizations generally prefer foods in institutional size containers, such as #10 cans. Such USDA Foods are usually available from existing ***State/local agency inventories of product purchased for the National School Lunch Program, available in schools or in the State’s warehouse(s***).

**2. Replacement of USDA Foods used during emergencies:**

In accordance with 7 CFR 250.69, FNS guarantees replacement of USDA Foods from Distributing

Agency and local recipient agency (School) inventories that are used during Presidential disasters and

emergencies. 7 CFR 250.70 provides for replacement in situations of distress only to the extent that FNS funds are available.

To identify the total amount of products used that need to be replaced, the Distributing Agency must gather information on the quantity and values of USDA Foods taken from all local agencies, and combine those with the amounts and values withdrawn from its warehouse(s). In some instances, FNS may replace the product that was used with another of the same value, or in the case of school product, credit the Distributing Agency’s entitlement for the value of the items used

**School Districts must submit requests to MDE within 30 days of the termination of assistance because,** USDA requires distributing agencies to submit requests to FNS for replacement of USDA Foods used within 45 days of the termination of assistance. ***(See attached form)***

**3. Recordkeeping in “Single Inventory” Management Systems**

Special documentation is required when a School recipient agency which practices “single inventory” management (commingling of purchased and USDA Foods) uses foods for disaster feeding, and requests USDA Foods replacement.  The Distributing Agency must document that either:

• the foods used for the disaster were USDA Foods or

• the recipient agency received the same types of USDA Foods as those foods used in the disaster feeding during the year preceding the onset of the disaster feeding.

**Inventory of Foods Donated by School Food Service Used During Disasters**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Disaster Type/Event Name: | Date: |
| Your Name: | Your phone #: |
|  | |
| School District  Contact Name: | |
| School District Address  Contact phone 24-hr #: | |
| Location where USDA Foods donated: [ ] Congregate Shelter; [ ] Mobile Kitchen; [ ] **Name of Organization:**  **Address:**  **Contact at location & phone 24-hr#:**  Person’s role: [ ] Mass Care; [ ] Logistics; [ ] Other:  Number of people requiring meals at this location:  Number of meals per day: | |

Period of time (# of days) USDA food support requested:

Inventory of Foods Donated for Congregate Feeding

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| USDA  Code (DO or Material #) | USDA Food Description | Type (dry, frozen, refrigerated) | Case  Contents | Quantity of Cases Donated |
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(Duplicate this form as needed)

Submit this form to the Food Distribution, Office of Child Nutrition, Miss. Dept. of Education;

P.O. Box 771, Jackson, MS 39205; 601-576-4980 (ph) 601-354-7577 (fax), [dstubbs@mde.k12.ms.us](mailto:dstubbs@mde.k12.ms.us)