



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Transitional Assistance
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Operations Memo 2011-26
June 21, 2011

To: Transitional Assistance Office Staff

From:  Stephanie Brown, Assistant Commissioner for Policy, Program and External Relations

Re: SSI Special Benefits: Disaster

Purpose of Memo

Operations Memo 2011-23 detailed procedures for issuing disaster SNAP benefits as a result of the June 1, 2011 storm that included several tornadoes. This Operations Memo reminds TAO staff about Disaster benefits for certain SSI clients. This Operations Memo also gives procedures for administering the benefits. These benefits are considered noncountable income for SNAP.

SSI Special Disaster Benefits: Eligibility

In instances of natural disaster (including a tornado), the Department may authorize payment to SSI clients for replacement of certain items (including furniture) lost due to a natural disaster.

The following SSI clients may be eligible for these benefits:

- Age 65 years old or older; or
 - Disabled (clients who meet the SSI disability standard); and
 - Have damage to certain personal property as a result of the natural disasters of flood, hurricane, tornado or earthquake *or* a fire in the client's dwelling which is beyond the control of the client.
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**SSI Special
Disaster
Benefits:
Determining
Eligibility**

The case manager must verify the extent of damage to basic items such as furniture, household equipment, clothing and food. Verification must be in the form of a FEMA report where possible or an affidavit or a report from the Red Cross. This information must be documented in the case record.

Note: Fire damage must be verified with a report from the local fire department.

All available resources (e.g., insurance and disaster relief payments from other organizations such as the Red Cross or the Federal Emergency Management Agency) must be used for replacement of such items before the Department may authorize payment.

**SSI Special
Disaster
Benefits:
Benefits
Provided and
Benefit Levels**

The following benefits (and benefit levels) in the form of vendor payments may be made on behalf of SSI clients who meet the eligibility requirements:

Kitchen Furniture:

1 Table and 4 Chairs	\$107
Refrigerator*	\$224
Stove*	\$229 (plus installation cost when necessary)

Other:

Hot Water Heater*	\$191 (installed)
Parlor Heater (No central heating)	Cost as stated by local gas company.

*When not furnished by landlord

Bedroom Furniture:

Bed (full or twin)	
Metal Frame	\$22
Box spring	\$54
Mattress	\$54
Total:	\$130

Dresser (when no other storage space available) \$ 89

Living Room Furniture:

Hardwood Frame Chairs (2 per home)	\$52 each
Lamps (1 per room only when no other means of lighting)	\$16 each

**SSI Special
Disaster
Benefits:
Benefits
Provided and
Benefit Levels
(continued)**

Household Equipment and Supplies:
Utensils, Linen, Pillows, Small Appliances \$114 for the first member
\$40 for each additional
family member on SSI

Food \$50
Clothing \$103 per eligible SSI family member

Moving:
\$150

An SSPS invoice must be completed for each service provided whether the service is from the same store or not.

If the client is eligible, an invoice for payment must be issued within 21 calendar days of the date of request, provided the Department receives required verification within 12 calendar days of the date of notification to the client about verification requirements. TAO managers must review these payments before they are issued.

Note: Case managers must contact the vendor to ensure the vendor accepts the SSPS invoice.

**SSI Special
Disaster
Benefits: Issuing
Benefits**

Payments for these benefits will be made using the Special Services Payment System (SSPS). The invoices need to be completed to particular vendors for the specified item and amount. To issue and authorize benefits, the case manager must fill out the SSPS Invoice for Special Services as follows:

- enter the vendor information in the “Vendor Invoice Section II” portion of the invoice;
 - in the “Authorization Section III” portion of the invoice, enter the client name, address and SSN;
 - in the “Category” block enter “1” for 65 and over “3” for under 65;
 - in the “Benefit” block enter “S” for SSI Special Benefits;
 - in the “Situation” block, enter “D” for Natural Disaster (except for “Moving” which is “Z”);
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**SSI Special
Disaster
Benefits: Issuing
Benefits
(continued)**

- in the “Procedure Code” block, enter:
 - ✓ “702” for Bedroom Furniture;
 - ✓ “703” for Household Equipment;
 - ✓ “704” for Refrigerator;
 - ✓ “705” for Stove;
 - ✓ “707” for Heater;
 - ✓ “708” for Living Room Furniture;
 - ✓ “711” for Clothing;
 - ✓ “713” for Food and Groceries;
 - ✓ “744” for Moving.

- in block 9, enter what service is being provided by the vendor from the list above;

- in block 17-20, enter the current date; and

- in blocks 35-38, enter in the TAO information.

Once completed, the invoice must be data entered and the control number entered in Block 1: “Control Number” field.

The invoice is ready for the client to take to the vendor for purchase of services authorized. An SSPS invoice must be completed for each service given.

Questions

If you have any questions, please have your Hotline designee call the Policy Hotline.
