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Somerset County Residents Recovering from Hurricane Sandy Participate in *Food Resource Day*

Disaster-SNAP Benefits Available to Somerset County Residents who Lost Food Due to Hurricane Sandy

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Crisfield – January 11, 2013 – The day after U.S. Senator Ben Cardin (D-Md.) toured Hurricane Sandy affected areas in Crisfield, Somerset County residents came out to the *Food Resource Day* – held from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. on Friday, January 11 at the Disaster Recovery Center in Crisfield – to apply for Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (D-SNAP) benefits and to learn more about additional resources available to them.

Representatives from the Maryland Department of Human Resources assisted Somerset County residents with D-SNAP applications, while Maryland Hunger Solutions - the lead organizer of the event - helped eligible residents with applications for regular Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly called food stamps, and called Food Supplement Program or FSP in Maryland) benefits. At the event, perishable and non-perishable foods donated by the Maryland Food Bank were available to any families or individuals in need, and residents had an opportunity to learn about other benefits for which they may be eligible, including energy assistance, rental assistance, and home repairs.

“Somerset County residents have been deeply affected by Hurricane Sandy, and the D-SNAP program is an important benefit of the Individual Assistance designation that is providing residents with temporary food assistance while they get back on their feet,” said Senator Ben Cardin, after touring affected areas on Thursday. “I want the people of Crisfield and Somerset County to know that I stand with them as they recover from the devastation of the storm, and I am committed to doing all I can to ensure that assistance and recovery efforts go as smoothly as possible.”

Maryland Hunger Solutions led the advocacy efforts to get D-SNAP in Somerset County. In December, U.S. Senators Ben Cardin and Barbara Mikulski and Maryland Governor Martin O’Malley all worked to ensure that Somerset County was eligible for Individual Assistance. The Individual Assistance designation enabled the state to apply for D-SNAP; which the USDA granted in Somerset County.

“Sandy’s wrath had a measurable impact on Marylanders, and especially on the residents of Somerset County. Two months after Sandy, it’s important that those affected know that they have a federal government on their side,” said Senator Barbara Mikulski in a written statement. “That’s why I fought so hard for Individual Assistance for families and businesses in Somerset

County. This critical nutrition assistance will ensure that those who need it most in Somerset County will not have to go to bed hungry.”

Many residents in Somerset County lost power for multiple days after Hurricane Sandy. According to the Maryland Department of Human Resources, more than 1,400 county residents are eligible for D-SNAP. The program works by extending benefits to many households that would not ordinarily be eligible for SNAP but suddenly need food assistance in the wake of a natural disaster. The benefits are delivered via Electronic Benefit Transfer cards, which can expedite and mainstream the relief process for victims.

“D-SNAP is one of those vital programs that you don’t hear that much about until there is a situation where many residents are in need of emergency food benefits. It is a remarkable program that – because of its structure – can help people affected by disasters in an efficient manner,” said Cathy Demeroto, Director of Maryland Hunger Solutions.

Somerset County Residents must apply for D-SNAP between January 7 and January 13, 2013. Applications are accepted at the Disaster Recovery Center from 8 a.m. -7 p.m. Monday-Saturday and from 1 p.m.-5 p.m. on Sundays. Residents can also apply for benefits in the Somerset County DSS office, located at 30397 Mt. Vernon Road, Princess Anne. For more information, the DHR customer service line is 1-800-332-6347.

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