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Wednesday, June 18, 2008

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## **Governor Doyle Announces Emergency Food Assistance Available for Flood Victims**

***Residents Urged to Sign Up Between June 19-27, 2008***

MADISON – Governor Jim Doyle today announced the Department of Health and Family Services will make available emergency food assistance for residents of Columbia, Crawford, Milwaukee, Racine, Richland, Sauk and Vernon counties, which were affected by severe weather and flooding.

“Recent floods and severe weather have devastated the lives of so many families across the state,” Governor Doyle said. “I am working with federal and state agencies to provide immediate aid to affected communities.”

Residents of these counties will have from Thursday, June 19 through Friday, June 27 to apply for food assistance at their local county or tribal agency. If residents are temporarily staying or living in a different county, they can apply in that county instead. The State’s FoodShare Program will help flood victims purchase food.

The amount of food assistance residents of these counties may be eligible for varies depending on family size. A family of three might be able to receive as much as \$426 in Disaster FoodShare benefits if their home, belongings or place of employment was damaged or destroyed; if they have disaster-related expenses; or if they have lost income, food or money as a result of the floods and severe weather.

Even if a person would not normally qualify for FoodShare, they should go to the local county or tribal agency where they are currently living or staying to fill out the simple, two page application to see if they are eligible for emergency food assistance. Individuals applying for benefits should bring materials that can verify their identity and residency, if possible. An application and information on all local county or tribal agencies, including address and hours, can be found at <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov>.

Once a person qualifies for benefits, they will receive a Wisconsin QUEST debit card that can be used at any grocery store that accepts the QUEST card. People who qualify for emergency food assistance will receive a one-time benefit, but people can also apply for ongoing FoodShare benefits at this time.

Flood victims who currently receive FoodShare benefits should also contact their local county or tribal agency if they have lost their FoodShare card, if the food they purchased with FoodShare benefits was damaged by the flooding or a power outage, or to see if they can receive supplemental benefits.

On June 9<sup>th</sup>, Governor Doyle declared a State of Emergency in 30 counties. On June 14, President Bush

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declared a state of disaster in Columbia, Crawford, Milwaukee, Racine, Richland, Sauk and Vernon Counties, making federal assistance available to individuals and businesses affected by the severe storms and floods. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is conducting ongoing damage assessments in the remaining 23 counties to make disaster declarations. As disaster declarations are made by FEMA, more residents may be able to receive disaster food assistance.