



The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)

Description

- Provides emergency nutrition assistance to low-income Americans, including the elderly and homeless.
- Supplies food to the States, which distribute it to local agencies. Local agencies – which typically include food banks, food pantries, and soup kitchens – then provide the food to the public, either for household consumption or through congregate feeding sites. States also receive administrative funds to help store and distribute donated commodities.
- The amount of food received by each State depends on its population of unemployed persons and persons with incomes below the poverty level.

Background

- The program was first authorized as the Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program in 1981 to distribute surplus commodities to households.
- The Hunger Prevention Act of 1988 authorized funding for the Secretary of Agriculture not only to distribute surplus foods, but also to purchase additional foods needed for distribution.
- The name was changed to The Emergency Food Assistance Program under the 1990 Farm Bill.

Participants

- Each State sets its own income limits for household eligibility. No income test is applied to people who receive meals at congregate feeding sites such as soup kitchens or homeless shelters.
- 653 million pounds of food (including bonus food) was distributed through food pantries, emergency kitchens, and other emergency food providers in FY 2009.

Budget

- \$190 million for food and \$49.65 million for administrative costs appropriated in FY 2008.
- \$250 million for food and \$49.5 million for administrative costs appropriated in FY 2009.

Contact Information

For more information, visit www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/programs/tefap or contact your State agency that administers the TEFAP. View Agency listings under “State DA Contacts.”