THE EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (TEFAP)

STRENGTHENING THE NATION’S NUTRITION SAFETY NET AND SUPPORTING AMERICAN AGRICULTURE

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WHAT IS THE EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM?

TEFAP is a federal program that helps supplement the diets of low-income Americans by providing them with emergency food assistance at no cost. USDA provides 100% American-grown USDA Foods and administrative funds to states to operate TEFAP.
HOW DOES TEFAP HELP PARTICIPANTS?

Agency staff and volunteers at our food pantries and soup kitchens provide participants with emergency food and nutrition assistance at no cost.
WHAT IS AN ERA?

Eligible Recipient Agencies (ERA) are public or nonprofit organizations that distribute TEFAP commodities as meals or for household consumption. ERAs work in partnership with food banks and must have:

- Experience in needy feeding programs
- Adequate storage
- Regular hours of operation
- Utilize USDA and Non-USDA foods

USDA Priority System

- **1st Priority – Emergency Feeding Organizations (EFO)**
- **2nd Priority – Non EFOs**
ELIGIBILITY

Applicants Must
1. Complete an application – an agency worker may complete on behalf of the recipient
2. Must be a resident of the county
3. Must automatically qualify or fall within the income guidelines

Automatic Qualifiers
Food Stamps/SNAP  |  TANF  |  SSI

Income must be at or below 150% of Federal Poverty Income Guidelines for the household and it is self-declared.

County residency is also self-declared

Only the applicant’s identity is verified
The **TEFAP Issuance Log** is provided to serve as a sign-in sheet for agencies, as well as assisting agency managers to categorize household information for reporting purposes. Agency managers are encouraged to utilize this form but are welcome to use their own form to sign-in participants.

Every visit must be recorded. An agency worker may sign for the recipient.
What if Mr. Smith and his family need food immediately, but they do not live within the county limits?

Part of the reason agencies are required to purchase non-USDA foods is to be able to assist individuals who do not categorically qualify for the program. Anyone who does not qualify for the program for any reason (income or outside of the county) should be served using non-USDA foods.

**TIP:** Network with agencies in surrounding counties to be a resource in those instances. Be able to provide contact information and hours of operation.
What should we do if there are other events going on at our church during that time?

Participating organizations serving as ERAs are prohibited from requiring participation in religious activities in order to receive USDA food. It is required that the Written Notice of Beneficiary Rights be posted in a prominent location, preferably along side other required posters such as the And Justice For All poster and the income guidelines.
STORAGE & PEST CONTROL

- Storage facilities must be sanitary and free from rodent, insect, and other animal infestation; best achieved by contracting with a professional service for effective pest control. If pest control is done in house, a log should be kept to keep track of frequency.

- Safeguards must be in place to prevent theft, spoilage, and other loss. Thermostats in storage areas.

- Follow First In, First Out (FIFO) principles.

- Commodities should be stored off of the floor.

- Maintain foods at proper temperatures. Utilize freezer and refrigerator thermometers. Recommended temperature levels:
  - 50° to 70° for dry storage areas
  - 36° to 40° for refrigerated storage areas
  - -10° to 0° for frozen storage areas
Why so many garbanzo beans?

Entitlement Commodities
Foods ordered by the state with allotted funds.

Bonus Commodities
Foods offered to the state for TEFAP as no cost.

Trade Mitigation Offerings
The U.S. Secretary of Agriculture launched a trade mitigation package to assist farmers suffering from damage due to unjustified trade retaliation by foreign nations.

As a result, we will receive an influx of bonus commodities (blueberries, juice, apples, rice, cheese, pork, beef, beans, etc.).
AND JUSTICE FOR ALL AND CIVIL RIGHTS TRAINING

Annual Civil Rights Training is required for agency operations. To ensure all staff and volunteers are trained, agency managers may:

- Conduct training during regularly scheduled meetings
- Train new staff and volunteers as they come aboard
- Create a review station with an acknowledgment form

A log or sign-in sheet must be completed and retained in order to receive credit for conducting the training.
CIVIL RIGHTS TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Training must include the following:

**How to assist participants with language barriers?** Phone interpreter line, Deaf/hard of hearing, Visually impaired, etc. Failure to provide meaningful access can be considered discrimination.

**How to assist individuals with disabilities?** Volunteer assistance, wheelchair ramp, etc. Failure to provide reasonable accommodations may subject agency to discrimination claim.

**How to differentiate between program complaints and Civil Rights complaints?** Different treatment due to protected classes versus dissatisfaction with program rules.

**Conflict resolution** - Identification of the issue and calmly communicate with participants on program guidelines

**Noncompliance resolution** - Corrective actions made to address findings

**Customer service expectations** - Friendly staff, offering assistance in other areas, develop good listening skills, identify stressors, etc.

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**Discrimination**

All staff and volunteers must know how to assist participants in any of these matters and/or whom to refer questions and concerns to.

Racial/Ethnic Data must be collected at the point of application and reported to determine the effectiveness of the program. It does not affect eligibility.

**Protected Classes**

- Race
- Color
- National Origin
- Age
- Sex
- Disability
PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

Each agency is required to provide some form of public notification each year. The full nondiscrimination statement must be included on all public notification materials. Public notification should include agency name, address, contact information, and days and times of operation.

Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs, are prohibited from discriminating against any person on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, marital status, religion, or economic status (which includes special need for food assistance). Large print, Braille, sign language, and other means for people who are deaf to communicate with USDA are available. All requests for information or complaints should be directed to your local USDA program office or to USDA Region IV, 1110 West Peachtree Street, Suite 700 Detroit, MI 48226-4000, (313) 525-0224.  (This institution is an equal opportunity provider.)

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: https://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed Form or Letter to USDA by:

(1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture / Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights / 1400 Independence Avenue, SW / Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
(2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
(3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.
WHAT WILL WE LOOK FOR DURING AN ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW?

SCDA conducts reviews to ensure agencies are compliant with federal and state regulations. The reviewer will review paperwork, storage area, and may discuss some requirements and recommendations for program operation. Following the review, agency managers should expect to receive a Review Letter detailing any findings, instructions for corrective actions, additional requests, and/or recommendations for more efficient operation.

A response to corrective actions are due within 30 days of receiving the Review Letter. Failure to respond may result in suspension from the program. Unless otherwise noted, all corrective actions must be addressed.
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