

FEDERAL NUTRITION PROGRAMS & THE COVID-19 EMERGENCY



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USDA Food and Nutrition responded to the COVID-19 emergency by creating **new programs**, **providing flexibilities to existing programs**, and other actions. In this session, you'll learn how the agency and programs responded to the emergency.



Agenda

- ▶ Overview of USDA Food & Nutrition Service
- ▶ SNAP & COVID-19
- ▶ School Meal & related programs & COVID-19
- ▶ Questions



USDA's Food & Nutrition Service

Our Vision:

To End Hunger and Improve Nutrition in America

Food Nutrition Service Mission:

Increase food security and reduce hunger by providing children and low-income people access to food, a healthful diet and nutrition education in a way that supports American agriculture and inspires public confidence.



About FNS

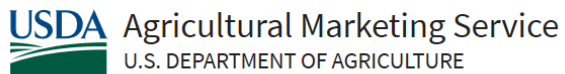
15 Programs

- ▶ SNAP
- ▶ School Meals (breakfast, lunch)
- ▶ TEFAP (emergency food assistance)
- ▶ WIC
- ▶ Child & Adult Care Food
- ▶ Food Distribution on Indian Reservations
- ▶ Summer Food Service
- ▶ Farmers Market (WIC & Seniors)



Farmers to Families Food Box Program

www.ams.usda.gov/selling-food-to-usda/farmers-to-families-food-box



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USDA Farmers to Families Food Box

SNAP Response

Is disaster SNAP the answer?

Key Flexibilities:

- ▶ Emergency Allotments
- ▶ On-line Purchasing
- ▶ Pandemic EBT or P-EBT

Additional Flexibilities

- ▶ ABAWD time limit suspension
- ▶ Application Processing (interviews, extended certification periods, simplified periodic reports)
- ▶ Quality Control
- ▶ Claims
- ▶ Fair Hearings
- ▶ Card Replacement Notices
- ▶ Use of Vendors/private contracted staff
- ▶ Block Grants for Puerto Rico and the territories

P-EBT

- ▶ Spring 2020 response - benefits for students eligible for F/RP meals impacted by school closure
- ▶ Early School Year 2021 (August/September)- benefits for students eligible for F/RP meals impacted by full time or part time virtual learning
- ▶ FY 21 (October 2020-September 2021) - New Legislation expands benefits for SY 21, including pre-school age children.

School Meals - Feeding During School Closures

- ▶ In March, communities faced statewide mandated school closures
- ▶ P-EBT implementation
- ▶ On March 20, FNS released several waivers authorizing non-congregate feeding in the CN programs, meals to be served outside of required mealtimes, and afterschool snacks to be served without enrichment activity
- ▶ Additional waivers immediately followed:
 - ▶ Allow parent pick-up without child
 - ▶ Allow deviation from meal patterns to address food supply chain disruptions
 - ▶ Allow Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program alternate site distribution and parent pick-up

Since March, 70 nationwide waivers have been issued by FNS and another 120 individual state waiver have been submitted to the region for review to address program access during COVID-19

Disaster Household Distributions

- ▶ Approved DHDs in 4 States, varying durations
- ▶ Provided select foods from the TEFAP program (The Emergency Food Assistance Program)
- ▶ Food package varied by state and needs
- ▶ Based on specific needs
 - ▶ High risk populations/areas
 - ▶ High unemployment areas

Existing USDA programs best equipped to provide long-term food needs

Food Distribution Flexibilities

- ▶ Proxy pick-up
- ▶ Signature elimination/Verbal attestation
- ▶ Creative food distribution models
- ▶ Retroactive food distributions - CSFP

Additional Food Distribution Relief

- ▶ CARES Act - Relief for the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)
 - ▶ \$22 million in administrative funds
 - ▶ \$51 million in food funds
- ▶ CARES Act - Relief for the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations
 - ▶ \$1.7 million for equipment and infrastructure for 16 tribes
- ▶ Families First Coronavirus Relief Act - Relief for TEFAP
 - ▶ \$14.5 million in administrative funds
 - ▶ \$50.5 million in food funds

FNS Responds to COVID-19

USDA's Food and Nutrition Service is using all flexibilities to ensure children and those in need receive nutrition assistance in response to COVID-19

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/coronavirus>

Questions?

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Contact us!

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