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FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE

# FNS 101 Fact Sheets

USDA’s Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) works to end hunger and promote nutrition through the administration of 15 federal nutrition assistance programs including WIC, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and school meals. In partnership with State and Tribal governments, FNS’ programs serve one in four Americans during the course of a typical year. Working with our public, private, and non-profit partners, our mission is to 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.

The FNS 101 fact sheets provide a basic overview of FNS’ programs and activities. Please contact the FNS Division of External and Governmental Affairs at [fmsgovaffairs@usda.gov](mailto:fmsgovaffairs@usda.gov) with questions or for more information.

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# Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

## What Is the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program?

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides nutrition assistance to eligible, low-income individuals and households via a monthly benefit on an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card, similar to a debit card, which can be used at authorized retailer stores to purchase food. SNAP is the largest Federal nutrition assistance program.

## Who Administers SNAP?

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) administers SNAP at the Federal level. USDA also authorizes and monitors retailer stores that redeem SNAP benefits. States operate the Program at the local level, determining eligibility and issuing benefits to eligible households.

## How Does SNAP Work?

Households apply for SNAP by completing an application and providing information about their household finances and other circumstances. A face-to-face or phone interview is also required. If determined eligible by the local office, the household is issued an EBT card with a monthly allotment of benefits for the duration of their certification period—typically 3, 6, or 12 months—after which the household must be recertified to continue receiving benefits.

Households use their card to purchase food at authorized retailers. SNAP benefits are also accepted at thousands of farmers markets nationwide. Participating households must report changes in their circumstances, including their income, on a periodic basis. Some individuals may have to meet work requirements to continue receiving benefits. SNAP participants may also receive employment and training services to help them move to stable long-term employment.

Retailers that wish to become a SNAP-authorized store must meet minimum stocking requirements and apply for a SNAP license from FNS. Questions can be directed to the SNAP Retailer Service Center at 1-877-823-4369.

## How Can People Participate in SNAP?

Households that meet the eligibility requirements are eligible to receive benefits. This includes certain resource and income tests.

## Where Can I Go To Learn More About SNAP?

For more information about SNAP, contact your SNAP State agency. You can also visit the SNAP website at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap>.

## Whom at FNS Can I Contact To Discuss SNAP?

Please contact the FNS Division of External and Governmental Affairs at [fns.govaffairs@usda.gov](mailto:fns.govaffairs@usda.gov).

Key Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Data	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019 (estimate)
Average participation (in thousands)	45,767	44,220	42,317	40,776	35,703
Benefit cost (in millions)	\$69,645.1	\$66,539.2	\$63,711	\$60,916.8	\$55,621.8
Federal other costs (in millions)	\$4,301	\$4,374.2	\$4,463.6	\$4,529.5	\$4,744.3
Total Federal cost (in millions)	\$73,946.1	\$70,913.5	\$68,174.7	\$65,466.4	\$60,366.2

FY = Fiscal Year



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# Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed)

## What Is SNAP-Ed?

SNAP-Ed is an evidence-based program that promotes healthy food choices, obesity prevention, and physical activity. SNAP-Ed teaches participants about good nutrition and how to make their food dollars stretch further.

## Who Administers SNAP-Ed?

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) administers SNAP-Ed at the Federal level. States receive funding to administer and implement the program at the local level. State SNAP-Ed grant funding allocations are defined in statute, through a formula that is used on each State’s SNAP participation rates, as well as its share of SNAP-Ed funding from base year 2009.

## How Does SNAP-Ed Work?

State agencies deliver SNAP-Ed by coordinating with local community partners such as universities, food banks, or other providers that serve low-income individuals. In order to receive funds, States must submit an annual plan to FNS. State plans must include a description of how SNAP-Ed programming will coordinate with other Federal nutrition programs such as the USDA National Institute for Food and Agriculture’s (NIFA) Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP). States have flexibility to deliver SNAP-Ed through a variety of approaches to meet their local nutrition education and obesity prevention needs.

The community partners are required to use interventions that combine traditional approaches such as individual and group nutrition classes with public health and environmental change approaches that help participants make healthy choices.

The SNAP-Ed Interventions Toolkit is a collection of evidence-based nutrition and physical activity interventions that is

publicly available to help SNAP-Ed implementing agencies select appropriate interventions for their communities. The SNAP-Ed Toolkit also houses the interactive SNAP-Ed Evaluation Framework, which provides SNAP-Ed partners with 51 evidence-based behavior change indicators to choose from to evaluate the success of their activities.

The SNAP-Ed Connection website acts as an information clearinghouse for SNAP-Ed State agencies, program partners, researchers, and the public. The SNAP-Ed Connection contains program guidance, training, and educational resources in an easily navigable website. Success Stories highlight effective best practices such as partnering with other FNS programs, like Farm to School, and engaging stakeholders such as food banks and retailers in low-income communities.

## Who Participates in SNAP-Ed?

SNAP-Ed’s target audience is SNAP participants and low-income individuals eligible to receive SNAP benefits or other means-tested Federal assistance programs, such as Medicaid or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), as well as individuals residing in communities with a significant low-income population.

## Where Can I Go To Learn More About SNAP-Ed?

For more information you can visit the SNAP-Ed Connection website at <https://snaped.fns.usda.gov/>. To find SNAP-Ed providers near you, you can visit <https://snaped.fns.usda.gov/state-snap-ed-programs> and click on your State.

## Whom at FNS Can I Contact To Discuss SNAP-Ed?

Please contact the FNS Division of External and Governmental Affairs at [fns.govaffairs@usda.gov](mailto:fns.govaffairs@usda.gov).

SNAP-Ed Allocations	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019
Allocations (millions)	\$401	\$407	\$408	\$414	\$421	\$433



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# Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T)

## What Is SNAP E&T?

SNAP E&T transforms lives of SNAP participants by connecting them to employment. It can help participants gain the skills, training, and work experience needed to obtain and maintain regular employment. SNAP E&T includes participant assessments, case management, education and training activities, and supportive services.

## Who Administers SNAP E&T?

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) administers SNAP E&T at the Federal level and provides funds to States to operate programs at the local level. States are required to operate SNAP E&T programs and must submit a SNAP E&T plan to FNS for review and approval.

## How Does SNAP E&T Work?

At the local level, SNAP E&T is offered by local private and nonprofit partners, such as community colleges, organizations, or American Job Centers. Some employment and training activities offered might include on-the-job training; educational programs, such as those that lead to professional certificates or licenses; and supervised job search. Supportive services may include assistance with transportation, dependent care costs, supplies, and books.

## Who Participates in SNAP E&T?

The target audience for SNAP E&T is SNAP participants who are able to work.

## Where Can I Go To Learn More About SNAP E&T?

For more information, you can visit the USDA SNAP to Skills website at <https://snaptoskills.fns.usda.gov>.

## Whom at FNS Can I Contact To Discuss SNAP E&T?

Please contact the FNS Division of External and Governmental Affairs at [fns.govaffairs@usda.gov](mailto:fns.govaffairs@usda.gov).

SNAP E&T Expenditures	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019 (preliminary)
<b>Total Federal Expenditures</b>	\$296	\$312	\$322	\$324	\$326	\$363
<b>Total State Expenditures</b>	\$199	\$201	\$207	\$218	\$219	\$247



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# National School Lunch Program

## What Is the National School Lunch Program?

The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or no-cost lunches to children each school day in public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions (RCCIs). The NSLP was established under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, signed into law in 1946.

## Who Administers NSLP?

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) administers the Program at the Federal level. At the State level, NSLP is administered by State agencies, which operate NSLP through agreements with school food authorities.

## How Does NSLP Work?

The NSLP is operated by public or nonprofit private schools at the high school level or below. Public or nonprofit RCCIs may also participate in NSLP, and charter schools may participate as public schools. Participating schools receive cash subsidies as well as nutritious, 100 percent domestic foods known as USDA Foods for each reimbursable meal they serve. In exchange, schools and institutions must serve lunches that meet the Federal meal pattern requirements and offer them at a free or reduced price to all eligible children. School food authorities can also be reimbursed through NSLP for snacks served to children who participate in an approved afterschool program.

## How Can Children Participate in Free or Reduced-Price School Lunch?

Children may be determined “categorically eligible” for free meals through participation in certain Federal assistance programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or based on their status as a homeless, migrant, runaway, or foster child. Children enrolled in a federally funded Head Start Program or a comparable State-funded pre-kindergarten program are also categorically eligible for free meals.

Children can also qualify for free or reduced-price school meals based on their household income and family size. Children from families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the Federal poverty level are eligible for free meals. Those from families with incomes between 130 and 185 percent of the Federal poverty level are eligible for reduced-price meals. Schools may not charge children more than 40 cents for a reduced-price lunch. To see the current Income Eligibility Guidelines, please visit: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/income-eligibility-guidelines>.

## Where Can I Go To Learn More About NSLP?

For more information, please contact the State agency responsible for administering NSLP in your State: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/contacts>.

## Whom at FNS Can I Contact To Discuss NSLP?

Please contact the FNS Division of External and Governmental Affairs at [fmsgovaffairs@usda.gov](mailto:fmsgovaffairs@usda.gov).

Key National School Lunch Program Data	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019 (estimate)
Average participation (in millions)	30.5	30.4	30.0	29.6	29.6
Lunches served (in millions)	5,005.4	5,052.9	4,891.5	4,865.7	4,866.4

FY = Fiscal Year



# School Breakfast Program

## What Is the School Breakfast Program?

The School Breakfast Program (SBP) provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or no-cost breakfasts to children each school day in public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions. The SBP started in 1966 as a pilot project and was made a permanent entitlement program by Congress in 1975.

## Who Administers SBP?

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) administers SBP at the Federal level. At the State level, SBP is administered by State agencies, which operate through agreements with local school food authorities.

## How Does SBP Work?

The SBP is operated by public or nonprofit private schools at the high school level or below. Public or nonprofit private residential child care institutions and charter schools may also participate in SBP as public schools. Schools and institutions that choose to participate in SBP must serve breakfasts that meet the Federal nutrition requirements and offer them at a free or reduced price to all eligible children. In exchange, participating institutions receive cash subsidies from USDA for each reimbursable meal served.

## How Can Children Participate in Free or Reduced-Price School Breakfast?

Children may be determined “categorically eligible” for free meals through participation in certain Federal assistance programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or based on their status as a homeless, migrant, runaway, or foster child. Children enrolled in a federally funded Head Start Program or a comparable State-funded pre-kindergarten program are also categorically eligible for free meals.

Children can also qualify for free or reduced-price school meals based on their household income and family size. Children from families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the Federal poverty level are eligible for free meals. Those from families with incomes between 130 and 185 percent of the Federal poverty level are eligible for reduced-price meals. Schools may not charge children more than 30 cents for a reduced-price breakfast. To see the current Income Eligibility Guidelines, please visit: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/income-eligibility-guidelines>.

## Where Can I Go To Learn More About SBP?

For more information, please contact the State agency responsible for administration of SBP in your State: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/contacts>.

## Whom at FNS Can I Contact To Discuss SBP?

Please contact the FNS Division of External and Governmental Affairs at [fmsgovaffairs@usda.gov](mailto:fmsgovaffairs@usda.gov).

Key School Breakfast Program Data	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019 (estimate)
Average participation (in millions)	14.0	14.6	14.7	14.7	14.8
Breakfasts served (in millions)	2,334.1	2,448.3	2,412.9	2,422.4	2,450.9



# Summer Food Service Program

## What Is the Summer Food Service Program?

The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) is a federally funded, State-administered program that reimburses providers who serve free, nutritious meals and snacks to children and teens in low-income areas when school is not in session.

## Who Administers SFSP?

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) administers SFSP at the Federal level. State education agencies administer SFSP in most States. In some areas, however, the State health, agriculture, or social service departments may administer SFSP. Locally, SFSP is run by approved sponsors, including school districts, local government agencies, camps, or private nonprofit organizations.

Sponsors provide free meals and snacks to children who come to eat at a central site, such as a school or a community center. They receive payments from USDA for the meals and snacks they serve through their State agencies.

## How Does SFSP Work?

Sponsors enter into agreements with State agencies to serve reimbursable meals and snacks through SFSP. Schools, local government agencies, camps, and faith-based and other nonprofit community organizations that have the ability to manage a food service program may be SFSP sponsors. Sponsors may manage one or more sites.

Sites are places in low-income communities where children can come to receive meals at no cost in a safe and supervised environment. Sites may be located in a variety of settings, including schools, parks, community centers, libraries, farmers’ markets, apartment complexes, churches, and migrant centers. Sites may also choose to offer enrichment opportunities for children, such as reading, physical activity, or nutrition education.

## How Can Children and Teens Participate in SFSP?

Children 18 and younger may receive free meals and snacks at any open SFSP site. Meals and snacks are also available through SFSP to persons with disabilities who are over age 18 and participate in school programs for people with mental or physical disabilities.

## Where Can I Go To Learn More About SFSP?

To learn more: <https://www.summerfood.usda.gov>.

To contact your State agency: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/contacts>.

To find a summer meals site close to you: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/summerfoodrocks>.

## Whom at FNS Can I Contact To Discuss SFSP?

Please contact the FNS Division of External and Governmental Affairs at [fmsgovaffairs@usda.gov](mailto:fmsgovaffairs@usda.gov).

Key Summer Food Service Program Data	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019 (estimate)
Meals served (in millions)	163.4	154.2	152.2	145.8	142.1
Expenditures (in millions)	\$487.8	\$477.7	\$482.7	\$473.4	\$476.4





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# Child and Adult Care Food Program

## What Is the Child and Adult Care Food Program?

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) helps child and adult care institutions and family or group day care homes provide nutritious foods to young children, at-risk youth, and adults who are chronically impaired.

## Who Administers CACFP?

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) administers CACFP through grants to States. State agencies administer CACFP through agreements with child and adult care institutions.

## How Does CACFP Work?

Child care centers, adult day care centers, family day care homes, afterschool care centers, and emergency shelters receive cash reimbursement for serving meals and snacks that meet Federal nutritional guidelines to eligible children and adult participants. In general, centers and day care homes may be approved to claim reimbursement for serving up to two meals and one snack, or two snacks and one meal, per day to each eligible child or adult participant.

Meals served to children in centers are reimbursed at rates based upon a child’s eligibility for free, reduced-price, or paid meals.

In day care homes, all meals are served free. Day care home providers who serve children in low-income areas or meet low-income eligibility requirements themselves receive higher levels of reimbursement.

## How Can Children and Adults Participate in CACFP?

Infants and children through age 12 in child care centers and day care homes are eligible to participate in CACFP. Adults who are 60 years or older, or are physically or mentally impaired, and enrolled in adult day care are also eligible for CACFP.

In afterschool care centers and emergency shelters, children through age 18 are eligible for free meals and snacks.

## Where Can I Go To Learn More About CACFP?

To learn more, please visit CACFP website: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/child-and-adult-care-food-program>. For reimbursement rates, visit: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/reimbursement-rates>.

For more information about participating in CACFP, please contact your State agency: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/contacts>.

## Whom at FNS Can I Contact To Discuss CACFP?

Please contact the FNS Division of External and Governmental Affairs at [fmsgovaffairs@usda.gov](mailto:fmsgovaffairs@usda.gov).

Key Child and Adult Care Food Program Data	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019 (estimate)
Average participation (in thousands)	4,181	4,407	4,530	4,629	4,439
Meals served (in millions)	2,019	2,082	2,049	2,041	2,050

FY = Fiscal Year



# Special Milk Program

## What Is the Special Milk Program?

The Special Milk Program (SMP) provides milk to children in schools, child care institutions, and eligible camps that do not participate in other Federal child nutrition meal service programs. The SMP reimburses schools and institutions for the milk they serve. Schools participating in the National School Lunch or School Breakfast Programs may serve milk through SMP to children enrolled in half-day pre-kindergarten and kindergarten programs if those children do not have access to the breakfast or lunch meal service.

## Who Administers SMP?

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) administers SMP at the Federal level. At the State level, SMP is usually administered by State education agencies, which operate SMP through agreements with school food authorities.

## How Does SMP Work?

Participating schools and institutions receive reimbursement from USDA for each half-pint of milk served. They must operate SMP on a nonprofit basis and must agree to use the Federal reimbursement to reduce the selling price of milk for all children. Participating entities may also choose to serve milk at no cost to all children, regardless of income.

## How Can Participants Qualify for SMP?

Any child from a family that meets the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines for free meals is eligible to receive milk at no cost and may not be charged for milk. There is no reduced-price rate in SMP. To see the current Income Eligibility Guidelines, please visit: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/income-eligibility-guidelines>.

## Where Can I Go To Learn More About SMP?

For more information, please contact the State agency responsible for administering SMP in your State: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/contacts>.

## Whom at FNS Can I Contact To Discuss SMP?

Please contact the FNS Division of External and Governmental Affairs at [fns.govaffairs@usda.gov](mailto:fns.govaffairs@usda.gov).

Key Special Milk Program Data	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019 (estimate)
Half-Pints served (in millions)	47	45	41	38	35
Federal expenditures (in millions)	\$11	\$9	\$8	\$8	\$7



# Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program

## What Is the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program?

The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) provides free, fresh fruits and vegetables to children at eligible elementary schools during the school day. The goal of FFVP is to introduce children to new fresh fruits and vegetables and increase overall their acceptance and consumption of fresh, unprocessed produce. The FFVP also incorporates nutrition education.

## Who Administers FFVP?

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) administers FFVP at the Federal level. At the State level, FFVP is administered by State agencies, which operate FFVP through agreements with local school food authorities.

## How Does FFVP Work?

FNS encourages schools to serve a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables. Because the intent of FFVP is to introduce children to new and different fresh fruits and vegetables, the produce must be served in a way that is easily identifiable, encouraging children to enjoy fruits and vegetables “as they are.” Participant schools must serve the fresh fruits and vegetables outside the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program meal service times. Beyond these requirements, schools have flexibility in determining their implementation plans. Schools may decide the type of produce served, the number of days per week to serve the produce (though schools are strongly encouraged to serve it a minimum of 2 days per week), and the time of day they serve it, outside of the breakfast and lunch meal service.

## How Can Schools Qualify for FFVP?

Elementary schools in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and the territories of Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands are eligible to participate. Schools must operate the National School Lunch Program in order to operate FFVP. Importantly, FFVP prioritizes schools with the highest percentage of children certified as eligible for free and reduced-price meals. This is because children from low-income families generally have fewer opportunities to consume fresh produce on a regular basis.

## Where Can I Go To Learn More About FFVP?

For more information, please contact the State agency responsible for administering FFVP in your State: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/contacts>.

## Whom at FNS Can I Contact To Discuss FFVP?

Please contact the FNS Division of External and Governmental Affairs at [fmsgovaffairs@usda.gov](mailto:fmsgovaffairs@usda.gov).

Key Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program Data	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020
<b>Total transfer (in millions)</b>	\$157	\$164	\$168	\$172	\$176



# USDA Foods for Child Nutrition Programs

## What Is USDA Foods for Child Nutrition Programs?

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) provides nutritious, domestically sourced and produced foods, known as USDA Foods, to Child Nutrition Programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), and the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). Foods include high-quality vegetables, fruits, dairy products, whole grains, lean meats, and other protein options.

## Who Administers USDA Foods for Child Nutrition Programs?

FNS administers this program at the Federal level. State distributing agencies administer the program at the State level. This may or may not be the same State agency that administers the Child Nutrition Programs.

## How Does USDA Foods for Child Nutrition Programs Work?

FNS coordinates the distribution of USDA Foods to States to support the approximately 100,000 public and private nonprofit schools that participate in programs that provide meals to students. States receive a certain value of USDA Foods, or USDA Foods entitlement funds, based on a statutory formula that multiplies the number of lunches served in the State by a per-meal rate. USDA Foods entitlement funds vary from year to year based on an annual adjustment that reflects changes in the Bureau of Labor Statistics’ Price Index of Foods used in Schools and Institutions. USDA uses these funds to purchase food on behalf of State agencies to support Child Nutrition Programs.

FNS also distributes USDA Foods to day care centers that serve meals through CACFP. CACFP institutions have the option of receiving USDA Foods or cash-in-lieu. Approximately 20 percent of child care centers participating in CACFP currently request USDA Foods.

FNS also distributes USDA Foods to SFSP sites serving children during school breaks. Providers are eligible to receive 1.5 cents per meal in USDA Foods entitlement funds. USDA Foods ordered for NSLP may also be used in SFSP.

## Where Can I Go To Learn More About USDA Foods for Child Nutrition Programs?

For more information about the USDA Foods for Child Nutrition Programs, please visit: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/usda-fis>. A list of State distributing agency contacts can be found here: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/contacts>.

## Whom at FNS Can I Contact To Discuss USDA Foods for Child Nutrition Programs?

Please contact the FNS Division of External and Governmental Affairs at [fnsgovaffairs@usda.gov](mailto:fnsgovaffairs@usda.gov).

### Key USDA Foods for Child Nutrition Programs Data

	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019 (estimate)
<b>Cost (in millions)</b>	\$1,493	\$1,312	\$1,376	\$1,809	\$1,709



# Commodity Supplemental Food Program

## What Is the Commodity Supplemental Food Program?

The Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) works to improve the health of low-income elderly persons at least 60 years of age by supplementing their diets with nutritious, domestically sourced and produced food, known as USDA Foods.

## Who Administers CSFP?

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) administers CSFP at the Federal level. Through CSFP, the USDA distributes both food and administrative funds to participating States and Indian Tribal Organizations.

The State agencies that administer CSFP are typically departments of health, social services, education, or agriculture.

## How Does CSFP Work?

State agencies store CSFP food ordered from USDA’s Foods Available List and distribute the food to public and private nonprofit local agencies.

Local agencies then determine the eligibility of applicants, distribute the food to CSFP participants, and provide nutrition education services. Foods provided to participants are based on a guide rate that defines the specific types and amounts of food that make up their food package. Local agencies may also provide referrals to other welfare, nutrition, and healthcare programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid, and Medicare.

## How Can People Participate in CSFP?

CSFP participants must be at least 60 years of age and reside in a State or on an Indian reservation that participates in CSFP. States establish income limits that are at or below 130 percent of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines. States may also establish other eligibility criteria, such as residency and nutritional risk.

## Where Can I Go To Learn More About CSFP?

For more information, please contact your CSFP State Agency. A list of State contacts may be found at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/contacts>.

## Whom at FNS Can I Contact To Discuss CSFP?

Please contact the FNS Division of External and Governmental Affairs at [fnsgovaffairs@usda.gov](mailto:fnsgovaffairs@usda.gov).

Key Commodity Supplemental Food Program Data	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019
<b>Total participation (in thousands)</b>	572.0	585.3	629.8	676.0	702.6
<b>Total Federal cost (in millions)</b>	\$150.3	\$173.2	\$155.3	\$187.1	\$201.3

FY = Fiscal Year



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# Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations

## What Is the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations?

The Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) provides nutritious, domestically sourced and produced food, known as USDA Foods, to income-eligible households living on Indian reservations and to American Indian households residing in approved areas near reservations or in Oklahoma. Many households participate in FDPIR as an alternative to USDA’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) because they have limited access to SNAP offices or authorized food stores. Individuals cannot receive SNAP and FDPIR benefits in the same month.

## Who Administers FDPIR?

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) administers FDPIR at the Federal level. FDPIR is administered locally by either an Indian Tribal Organization (ITO) or a State agency. As of May 2020, there were approximately 276 Tribes receiving FDPIR benefits through 102 ITOs and 3 State agencies.

## How Does FDPIR Work?

The USDA purchases and ships USDA Foods, selected by States and ITOs from a list of available foods, to ITOs and State agencies. These administering agencies store the foods, determine applicant eligibility, distribute the foods to FDPIR participants, and provide nutrition education to recipients. Foods provided to participants are based on a guide rate that defines the specific types and amounts of food that make up their food package. USDA provides administering agencies with funds for FDPIR administrative costs.

## How Can People Participate in FDPIR?

Income-eligible American Indian and non-Indian households that reside on a reservation are eligible to participate in FDPIR. In addition, households living in approved areas near a reservation or in Oklahoma that contain at least one person who is a member of a federally recognized Tribe are also eligible to participate.

Households are certified based on income standards set by USDA and must be recertified at least every 12 months.

## Where Can I Go To Learn More About FDPIR?

Please contact your State agency at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/contacts> or your FNS regional office.

## Whom at FNS Can I Contact To Discuss FDPIR?

Please contact the FNS Division of External and Governmental Affairs at [fns.govaffairs@usda.gov](mailto:fns.govaffairs@usda.gov).

Key Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations Data	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019 (estimate)
Participation (in thousands)	88.6	93.0	90.0	87.2	83.8
Cost (in millions)	\$102.2	\$97.6	\$91.2	\$95.2	\$78.1



# The Emergency Food Assistance Program

## What Is The Emergency Food Assistance Program?

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) is a program that helps supplement the diets of low-income Americans including elderly people by providing them with emergency food assistance at no cost.

## Who Administers TEFAP?

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) administers TEFAP at the Federal level. At the State level, TEFAP is administered by State distributing agencies that then work with local agencies to provide food to participants.

## How Does TEFAP Work?

Through TEFAP, USDA purchases a variety of nutritious, domestically sourced and produced food, known as USDA Foods, and makes them available to State distributing agencies. States provide the food to their local agency partners, such as food banks, which in turn distribute the food directly to the public or to local organizations such as soup kitchens and food pantries. TEFAP receives food funding through a statutory funding formula to support TEFAP entitlement food. TEFAP also receives food from market support purchases (also known as bonus food or Section 32 purchases) and Food Purchase and Distribution Program food purchases.

## How Can Participants Qualify for TEFAP?

Households that meet State-defined eligibility criteria may receive food for home use through TEFAP. States set income standards, which may, at the State’s discretion, be met through participation in other existing Federal, State, or local food, health, or welfare programs for which eligibility is based on income. States can adjust eligibility criteria to ensure that assistance is provided only to those households most in need.

Recipients of prepared meals, such as those served at a soup kitchen, are considered to be low income and are not subject to a means test.

## Where Can I Go To Learn More About TEFAP?

Contact your State distributing agency for more information about TEFAP. A list of State contacts can be found at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/contacts>.

## Whom at FNS Can I Contact To Discuss TEFAP?

Please contact the FNS Division of External and Governmental Affairs at [fnsgovaffairs@usda.gov](mailto:fnsgovaffairs@usda.gov).

Key Emergency Food Assistance Program Data	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019
Entitlement Food Value (in millions)	\$296.6	\$296.4	\$289.7	\$260.3	\$254.5
Bonus Food Value (in millions)	\$302.9	\$305.5	\$268.6	\$308.9	\$403.2



FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE

# Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children

## What Is the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children?

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) serves low-income pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women, infants, and children up to age 5 who are at nutritional risk. WIC provides participants with nutritious foods to supplement participant diets, nutrition education, and referrals to health and other social services.

## Who Administers WIC?

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) administers WIC at the Federal level.

At the State level, WIC is administered by 89 State agencies, including all 50 States, 33 Indian Tribal Organizations, American Samoa, the District of Columbia, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. Services are provided at a variety of local clinic locations including, but not limited to, county health departments, hospitals, schools, and Indian Health Service facilities.

## How Does WIC Work?

WIC participants receive benefits to purchase items from a food package tailored to their specific nutritional needs. They also receive nutrition education, including breastfeeding support, and referrals to other health care services as needed through their local WIC clinic.

In some WIC State agencies, participants receive benefits via paper checks or vouchers. Other State agencies issue benefits via a debit-type card known as electronic benefit transfer (EBT). However, all WIC State agencies have been mandated to implement WIC EBT statewide by October 1, 2020.

WIC benefits are generally utilized at retailers such as authorized grocery stores or WIC-only stores. However, in some rural or remote locations, such as Alaska, food may be delivered to a participant’s home.

## How Can People Participate in WIC?

Pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women, infants, and children up to age 5 who meet certain requirements are eligible. These requirements include income eligibility and State residency. Additionally, the applicant must be individually determined to be at “nutritional risk” by a health professional or a trained health official.

## Where Can I Go To Learn More About WIC?

To learn more, visit: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic>. To find the WIC offices serving your area, go to: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/contacts>.

## Whom at FNS Can I Contact To Discuss WIC?

Please contact the FNS Division of External and Governmental Affairs at [fnsgovaffairs@usda.gov](mailto:fnsgovaffairs@usda.gov).

### Key Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children Data

	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019 (estimate)
<b>Participation (in thousands)</b>	8,024	7,696	7,286	6,870	6,396
<b>Total cost (in millions)</b>	\$6,241	\$6,023	\$6,023	\$5,463	\$5,217





# WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program

## What Is the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program?

The WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) is associated with the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, generally known as WIC. FMNP provides women, infants, and children certified to receive WIC benefits with coupons that can be utilized for eligible foods (fruits, vegetables, honey, and fresh-cut herbs) at farmers' markets, roadside stands, and community-supported agriculture programs.

## Who Administers FMNP?

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) administers FMNP through a Federal/State partnership in which FNS provides cash grants to State agencies. FMNP is operated by State agencies such as State Agriculture Departments, State Health Departments, or Indian Tribal Organizations (ITOs).

## How Does FMNP Work?

Eligible WIC participants are issued FMNP checks or coupons in addition to their regular WIC benefits. These checks or coupons are used to buy eligible foods at farmers' markets and/or roadside stands that have been approved by the State agency to accept FMNP coupons. The farmers or farmers' market managers then submit the redeemed FMNP checks or coupons to the bank or State agency for reimbursement.

## How Can People Participate in FMNP?

Low-income pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women, infants (over 4 months old), and children up to age 5 who have been certified to receive WIC benefits or who are on a waiting list for WIC certification are eligible to participate in FMNP. State agencies may choose to serve some or all of these categories through FMNP.

## Where Can I Go To Learn More About FMNP?

The FMNP point of contact for each State agency can be found at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/contacts>.

For further information, please visit our website at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/fmnp/wic-farmers-market-nutrition-program>.

## Whom at FNS Can I Contact To Discuss FMNP?

Please contact the FNS Division of External and Governmental Affairs at [fmsgovaffairs@usda.gov](mailto:fmsgovaffairs@usda.gov).

Key WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program Data	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019 (estimate)
Total U.S. grant amounts (in thousands)	\$19,666.9	\$21,043.3	\$22,291.1	\$22,950.5	\$22,308.9



# Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program

## What Is the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program?

The Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) awards grants to States, U.S. Territories, and federally recognized Indian Tribal Organizations (ITOs) to provide low-income seniors with coupons that can be exchanged for eligible foods (fruits, vegetables, honey, and fresh-cut herbs) at farmers' markets, roadside stands, and Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs.

## Who Administers SFMNP?

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) administers SFMNP at the Federal level. State agencies, such as the State Departments of Agriculture or Agencies on Aging, administer the program at the State level.

## How Does SFMNP Work?

Coupons are issued to SFMNP participants to buy eligible foods from farmers, farmers' markets, roadside stands, or CSAs that have been approved by the State agency to accept SFMNP coupons. The farmers, farmers' markets, roadside stands, or CSAs then submit the redeemed SFMNP coupons to the State agency or the State agency's bank for reimbursement.

## How Can People Participate in SFMNP?

Low-income seniors, generally defined as individuals who are at least 60 years old and have household incomes of not more than 185 percent of the Federal poverty income guidelines, may be eligible for SFMNP benefits. Some State agencies accept proof of participation or enrollment in another means-tested program, such as the Commodity Supplemental Food Program or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, for SFMNP eligibility.

## Where Can I Go To Learn More About SFMNP?

The SFMNP contact person for each State agency can be found at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/contacts>.

For further information about the program, please visit: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/sfmnp/senior-farmers-market-nutrition-program>.

## Whom at FNS Can I Contact To Discuss SFMNP?

Please contact the FNS Division of External and Governmental Affairs at [fns.govaffairs@usda.gov](mailto:fns.govaffairs@usda.gov).

### Key Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program Data

	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019 (estimate)
<b>Grant awards (in thousands)</b>	\$20,617.3	\$20,283.8	\$20,419.1	\$20,912.2	\$20,991.9



# Program Integrity

## Why is integrity a priority for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS)?

Stewardship of Federal funds is a basic expectation of American taxpayers and is critical to the ongoing success of nutrition assistance programs. FNS continuously works to detect, prevent, and minimize errors and improper payments, as well as fraud, waste, or abuse. In this way, FNS preserves public trust, enhances partner relationships, and provides excellent customer service to program participants.

## How does FNS ensure integrity in its programs?

To maximize effectiveness, integrity efforts require ongoing vigilance and a multipronged strategy. To keep these efforts robust and up to date with emerging problems and threats, FNS uses:

- Training to increase State agency and partner skills and knowledge in the administration of nutrition assistance programs and recent updated training for its own staff to ensure effective oversight.
- Technical assistance to clarify, expand, explain, or provide support to program operators.
- Technology to prevent and detect fraudulent activities, including data analytics, trend analysis and business process improvement strategies. Systems are used to track and monitor State administration of Agency programs and retailer activities.
- Management Evaluations conducted every year of State agencies administering the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs; Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC); and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

## What program integrity measures has FNS recently instituted or improved?

Though integrity has long been a key responsibility under the law, FNS has more recently developed or enhanced the

following innovative strategies to anticipate and respond to new program risks:

### SNAP Fraud Framework

Released in May 2018, the Framework is a toolkit designed to help State agencies detect and prevent fraud and to sharpen their investigative techniques. Based on an initial partnership with 10 State agencies, the Framework was developed as a collection of flexible tools including innovations in data analytics that will help States' efforts in supporting program integrity. In 2019, FNS expects to award SNAP Fraud Framework Implementation Grants to State agencies enabling them to improve and expand recipient fraud prevention, detection, and investigation efforts based on the practices in the toolkit.

### SNAP Quality Control Error Rate Modernization

After identifying data quality issues that impacted FNS' ability to properly identify error in the calculation of SNAP benefits, FNS undertook a process to improve error rate calculations. This included revising instructions to States, enhanced training for State and Federal reviewers, and a more pronounced attention to data quality in general. The error rates for Fiscal Year 2017, released in June 2018, were the first rates announced since these reforms were implemented.

### SNAP Retailer Integrity

FNS is directly responsible for the authorization and monitoring of more than 250,000 participating SNAP retailers. Program compliance for SNAP retailers begins at the application phase. At this time, FNS collects and analyzes information to identify potentially fraudulent retailers before they are SNAP authorized. FNS uses a fraud detection system to monitor and track retail transactions by SNAP recipients at authorized retailers. The system creates an audit trail of approximately 6 million daily SNAP transactions, allowing FNS to use analytics to detect behavior indicative of fraud and to support FNS decisions related to ensuring retailer compliance and program integrity. The system is continually enhanced to improve FNS' ability to prevent and detect fraud.

## PROGRAM INTEGRITY

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### **Focal Point**

To ensure that integrity lessons are shared across programs and to provide a focal point for integrity at the highest level of the Agency, FNS designated a Chief Integrity Officer.

### **Technology Supporting School Programs**

FNS implemented a suite of technology-based tools that support schools including:

- The Verification Toolkit which provides schools with the resources and strategies to streamline the school meal application verification process, improve household response rates, and achieve greater accuracy in serving meals to eligible children.
- A Database of Professional Standards Trainings and Professional Standards Training Tracker Tool 2.0. This tool provides school nutrition professionals with over 500 options for training on improving preparation, service, counting, and claiming of school meals.

- A Web-based Application Model that allows school districts and their software vendors to use its open-source code to design their own user-friendly, integrity-focused school meal applications. The application's open source code is available for re-use, modification, and further development by State agencies, school districts, and software developers.
- A Data Validation Service prototype cloud-based option designed to lessen the burden of administrative data validation on State agencies while increasing the value of program data for agency research.

### **Partnership with the USDA Office of Inspector General (OIG)**

FNS and USDA's OIG each play critical roles in protecting program integrity. OIG conducts investigations of criminal wrongdoing while SNAP takes expeditious administrative actions to remove violators and prevent misuse of benefits. FNS and OIG recently collaborated on an updated Memorandum of Understanding clarifying responsibilities for investigations with the goal of more expeditiously addressing suspected program violations.



# Disaster Assistance

## What Role Does the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Play in Disaster Response?

FNS plays a vital role in providing supplemental nutrition assistance when disasters occur by coordinating with States, Tribes, and local voluntary organizations to:

- provide food for shelters and other mass feeding sites,
- distribute food packages directly to households in specific situations,
- offer flexibility in nutrition assistance programs' design and administration to continue providing benefits to participants in need, and
- approve eligible States' requests to operate a Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (D-SNAP).

## How Does USDA Provide Food During Disasters?

FNS coordinates closely with State agencies, Tribes, and their local voluntary organization partners as they develop a plan to respond to and recover from disasters using the most appropriate strategies for each situation. This may include:

### USDA Foods for Disaster Assistance

State agencies and local organizations may use USDA Foods—nutritious, domestically sourced and produced foods—for mass feeding and/or household distribution during a Presidentially-Declared Disaster or emergency situation.

USDA Foods intended for school meal programs are often used for mass feeding when the President issues a disaster declaration and in certain other emergencies. These foods are typically supplied by the State agency to disaster relief organizations to provide meals for those in need.

With formal FNS approval, States can distribute packages of USDA Foods intended for household distribution programs, such as The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), directly to households in need. Disaster organizations may request USDA Foods through State agencies.

Existing inventories of USDA Foods stored at State, local, and school warehouses that are utilized during a Presidentially Declared Disaster or emergency are replaced by USDA. States must track the use of these foods and provide a report to USDA.

USDA does not set aside or pre-position food specifically for disasters.

### Disaster - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (D-SNAP)

State agencies may request D-SNAP after an area has received a Presidential Disaster Declaration for Individual Assistance. D-SNAP is designed to operate once retailers have reopened and power is restored. After FNS approves the State's request for D-SNAP, disaster-impacted households may apply using a simplified application, and eligible households receive 1 month of benefits equal to the maximum allotment for a SNAP household of their size. As in regular SNAP, D-SNAP provides benefits on an electronic benefits transfer (EBT) card for use at SNAP-authorized retailers.

### Are Other Nutrition Assistance Programs Available During Disaster Response?

Yes, regular nutrition assistance programs that can still operate under disaster conditions may do so. Upon request, FNS may also provide flexibility to make the programs easier to administer during a disaster.

### Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

At the request of a State and in the event of a Presidential Disaster Declaration for Individual Assistance, FNS may approve a waiver that allows SNAP households to purchase hot, prepared foods for immediate consumption. Existing SNAP households affected by the disaster may have their regular program benefits replaced if food purchased with SNAP was destroyed, or they may receive supplemental benefits, at the request of a State. FNS may approve additional disaster waivers in order to assist households currently enrolled in SNAP after a disaster occurs.

## DISASTER ASSISTANCE

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### **Child Nutrition Programs**

FNS may provide States with flexibility in administering Child Nutrition Programs in a disaster situation. For example, FNS may allow schools and child care institutions to serve meals that do not meet regular menu planning or meal pattern requirements, or provide meals to all children at no charge and be reimbursed at the free reimbursement rate during the disaster waiver period.

### **Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)**

In the event of a Presidentially-Declared Disaster, FNS may provide States with flexibility in administering the WIC program. For example, FNS may approve a State to allow substitutions in the WIC food package when inventories of approved food items are low due to disaster impacts.

### **Infant Formula and Food**

FNS may also make emergency procurements of infant formula and food within 96 hours on request from a State agency or the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) following a Presidential Disaster Declaration for Individual Assistance.

### **Where Can I Go To Learn More About Food Assistance During Disasters?**

For more information and resources, please visit FNS website at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/disaster/disaster-assistance>.

### **Whom at FNS Can I Contact To Discuss USDA's Disaster Nutrition Assistance Efforts?**

Please contact the FNS Division of External and Governmental Affairs at [fns.govaffairs@usda.gov](mailto:fns.govaffairs@usda.gov).