

Understanding Nutrition: **Primer Module on TEFAP**

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) provides nutrition assistance to low-income individuals in the form of USDA Foods.^a These foods may be distributed for household consumption through organizations such as food banks or used to prepare meals at congregate feeding sites, such as soup kitchens and homeless shelters.

Federal Role

TEFAP was first authorized as the Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program in 1981 and continues to be administered federally by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). TEFAP does not have federal entitlement status; funding for the program is determined by an annual Congressional appropriation. Funding for USDA TEFAP foods is reauthorized through the federal Farm Bill every five years, and is currently funded at \$250 million annually, indexed for inflation. Storage and distribution of USDA TEFAP Foods are determined through an *annual* appropriation (with a maximum of \$100 million under the current reauthorizing legislation).

TEFAP funds – and the USDA Foods purchased with those funds – are distributed to each state according to a formula that accounts for the number of low-income and unemployed individuals in residence. States participating in TEFAP receive USDA Foods and administrative funds to store and distribute those foods.^b

EFAP in California

In federal fiscal year (FFY) 2009, over 100 million pounds of food^{1, c} valued at \$72 million^{2, d} were distributed through TEFAP in California, where the program is known as EFAP (the Emergency Food Assistance Program).

At the state level, the program is administered by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS). Locally, the program is administered in the state's 58 counties through 48 Eligible Recipient Agencies (ERAs), which include county food banks and county organizations that operate food banks.

^a A variety of USDA Foods are available through TEFAP, including canned produce, peanut butter, dried beans, meats, poultry, and grain products. A full list of USDA Foods available through TEFAP in 2011 is available at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/foods/tefapfoods.pdf>

^b Surplus USDA Foods purchased with funds other than the federal TEFAP appropriation may also be distributed through the program.

^c In FFY 2009, the total pounds of food distributed by EFAP included TEFAP commodities, USDA bonus commodities, produce surplus from the California Emergency Foodlink's Donate-Don't-Dump program, and food purchased with funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

^d The value of foods distributed through TEFAP includes USDA Foods purchased with the federal TEFAP appropriations and "bonus" commodities resulting from agricultural surpluses.

Through CDSS, each ERA in California receives an allotment of federally funded USDA Foods to be distributed to participants through county food banks and feeding sites. CDSS also provides a portion of federal EFAP funding to each ERA in the state, designated for storage and distribution.

The amount of funding allocated to each ERA is based on a formula that accounts for the number of low-income and unemployed individuals within each ERA's service area. In FFY 2011, California received \$31.3 million in federal EFAP funds.³

Eligibility Criteria for Participants

Individuals may receive EFAP commodities for household consumption if they:

- Reside within the ERA service area, and
- Have income at or below 150 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.⁴

For more information on EFAP, visit:

- CDSS' EFAP page: <http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/efap/Default.htm>
- USDA's TEFAP page: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/programs/tefap/>

END NOTES

¹ CDSS. (September 2010). *Emergency Food Assistance Program Policy and Procedure Manual* [PDF document]. Retrieved from <http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/efap/res/pdf/ProcedureManual.pdf>

² USDA FNS. (September 2011). *The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP): Total Food Cost* [Data file]. Retrieved from <http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/22tefap.htm>

³ USDA FNS. (February 2011). *Fiscal Year (FY) 2011 Funding for The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)* [PDF document]. Retrieved from http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/programs/tefap/FY11_Funding_for_TEFAP_and_Worksheets.pdf

⁴ CDSS. (2007). *Find a Food Bank* [Web page]. Retrieved from <http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/efap/PG1904.htm>

FOR MORE INFORMATION

This module on TEFAP is one component of *Understanding Nutrition: A Primer on Programs and Policies in California*. Go to www.ccrwf.org to access additional modules.

The primer program modules were produced by the California Center for Research on Women and Families (CCRWF), in partnership with California Food Policy Advocates and the California Department of Public Health's *Network for a Healthy California (Network)*, a public health effort working with hundreds of partners and organizations to empower low-income Californians to live healthier lives through good nutrition and physical activity.

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RECOMMENDED CITATION

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