

## **The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) in California**

### **Key Actions:**

- The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is providing help to food banks through TEFAP. To date in this fiscal year, USDA has made approximately \$60 million available to food banks in the State of California to help families in need put food on the table.
- Deliveries of this critically-needed food are already underway and will continue to take place throughout the spring and summer.

### **What is TEFAP?**

TEFAP is a Federal program that helps supplement the diets of low-income Americans, including elderly people, by providing them with emergency food at no cost primarily through soup kitchens and food banks.

### **How does TEFAP work?**

Through TEFAP, USDA purchases USDA Foods, including processing and packaging, and makes it available to State Distributing Agencies. The amount of food each State receives out of the total amount of food provided is based on the number of unemployed persons and the number of people with incomes below the poverty level in the State. States provide the food to local agencies that they have selected, usually food banks, which in turn distribute the food to local organizations, such as soup kitchens and food pantries that directly serve the public.

States also provide the food to other types of local organizations, such as community action agencies, which distribute the foods directly to low-income households. These local organizations distribute USDA Foods to eligible recipients for household consumption, or use them to prepare and serve meals in a congregate setting.

### **Who is eligible to get food?**

Households that meet State eligibility criteria may receive food for home use. 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 are considered to be low-income and are not subject to a means test.

### **Are homeless people eligible for TEFAP food?**

Yes. Homeless people can benefit from TEFAP through organizations like soup kitchens which provide prepared meals, or food pantries which distribute foods to individuals.

Homeless people do not have to complete an application to receive prepared meals served in a congregate setting. However, they must meet State eligibility requirements to receive TEFAP food that is not served in prepared meals.

### **What foods are available through TEFAP?**

The types of foods USDA purchases for TEFAP vary depending on the preferences of States and agricultural market conditions. Nearly 90 products are available for 2014, including:

- canned vegetables
- fruit juice
- dried eggs
- meat/poultry/fish
- pasta products
- milk
- rice/grits/cereal
- soups

### **What other food and nutrition assistance can TEFAP recipients get?**

TEFAP households may be eligible for other FNS programs, including:

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- National School Lunch Program (NSLP)
- Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)
- Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
- Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)
- Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)

### **Who should I contact for more information about TEFAP in California?**

Please contact the California Department of Social Services <http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/efap/>

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