



## The Emergency Food Assistance Program: TEFAP

The Emergency Food Assistance Program was first authorized in 1981 and was designed to help reduce federal food inventories and storage costs while helping to feed needy Americans.

Surplus stocks of some foods were depleted by 1988. In response, the Hunger Prevention Act of 1988 authorized funds to be appropriated for the purchase of commodities for the TEFAP program.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture makes commodity foods available to state distributing agencies. The state agencies, in turn, distribute the food to local agencies, usually food banks, which then distribute the commodities to soup kitchens and food pantries serving the public. In South Carolina, the Department of Social Services partners with the South Carolina Food Bank Association to deliver commodities. These organizations either use the commodities to prepare and serve meals in a congregate setting, or they distribute the food for household consumption.

In order to receive commodities for household consumption, the household must meet eligibility criteria established by the state. States also distribute the food to other types of organizations, such as community action agencies, which distribute the foods directly to the needy. TEFAP is administered at the federal level by the Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service. State agencies receive the food and supervise distribution.

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### Who is eligible to get food?

- Public or private nonprofit organizations that provide food and nutrition assistance to the needy through the distribution of food for home use or the preparation of meals.
- Households that meet state eligibility criteria. Income standards may, at the state's discretion, be met through participation in other existing federal, state or local food, health or welfare programs with income-eligibility requirements.

#### What foods are available through TEFAP?

The types of commodity foods USDA purchases for TEFAP vary depending on state preferences and agricultural market conditions. Generally, the following food types are available: canned & dried fruits, nonfat dry milk, canned vegetables, pasta products, fruit juice, peanut butter, dried egg mix, rice/grits/cereal and meat/poultry/fish.

#### RESOURCE

For a complete list of foods available, you can visit the Food Distribution website:

[www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/foods/](http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/foods/)

#### Does the USDA provide information about the commodities?

Yes, the USDA provides fact sheets on commodities. Each fact sheet provides a product description, storage information, nutrition facts, tips for usage and recipes. Organizations distributing commodities can download the various fact sheets and distribute it to the families who receive the commodities. Of course, if the recipient family has Internet access, they can download and print the fact sheets as well.

#### How much does TEFAP cost?

Congress appropriated \$150 million for TEFAP for Fiscal Year 2002—\$100 million to purchase food and another \$50 million for administrative support for state and local agencies. In 2001, Congress provided \$145 million for TEFAP. In addition, \$229 million worth of surplus commodities were donated to TEFAP in fiscal Year 2001.

### Contact Information

TEFAP is administered at the state level. For more information on TEFAP in South Carolina, contact the State Commodities Office at (803) 737-9285 or (803) 734-4165 or visit [www.healthyhelpings.org](http://www.healthyhelpings.org)

Harvest Hope is the distributing agency in Greenville County. For more information, call (830) 254-4432 or visit [www.harvesthope.org](http://www.harvesthope.org).