



FAQs about The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) - federal program

CATEGORY: General

Question:	Answer:	TEFAP Procedures Manual:
What does TEFAP stand for? (In language for non food bank folks). What is the difference between EFAP and TEFAP?	TEFAP is a federally-funded program that provides federal commodities to food pantries and meal programs. TEFAP originally stood for the Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program and then changed when it moved to a permanent USDA program. It now stands for "The Emergency Food Assistance Program." EFAP is a state funded program that provides state funding to support food pantries. EFAP stands for "Emergency Food Assistance Program."	<i>TEFAP Description & History</i>
How are the amounts of TEFAP products distributed to food banks determined?	At the state level, we receive fair share amounts as determined by county poverty (60%) and unemployment levels (40%). The state issues food to contractors based on county poverty data. Contractors typically issue food to subcontractors based on TEFAP client numbers.	<i>TEFAP Allocation Process</i>

CATEGORY: Food

Question:	Answer:	TEFAP Procedures Manual:
Why are 10 lb. packages of frozen chicken provided instead of smaller sizes?	This is the only pack size available from the USDA. This free bonus product is not counted against our entitlement. WSDA is seeking sources to break these down into smaller pack sizes, but has not yet found a feasible, affordable option.	N/A
How do products get chosen?	Entitlement products are chosen with the goal of providing a balanced overall food package that food pantries can build on with their own donations. Feedback on entitlement orders is gathered via the food order work group. Contact James Scovel at JScovel@agr.wa.gov to participate in this group. Bonus products are selected by the USDA. WSDA has no direct input into bonus products provided to this program, but does not refuse any bonus product offered by USDA. For more information on what food is anticipated visit: agr.wa.gov/FoodProg/FoodOrderInfo.aspx .	<i>Food Acquisition Process; USDA Bonus Commodities</i>

What determines the timing of product allocations?	TEFAP entitlement products are ordered quarterly. Orders are spread out based on statewide capacity and the ability of food banks and pantries to use the products. WSDA has no control of bonus items. USDA provides WSDA a timeframe for loads to arrive and our staff will try to spread out bonus deliveries to avoid overloading our warehouses.	<i>Food Acquisition Process; USDA Bonus Commodities</i>
Why does WSDA order instant potato flakes, but particularly during harvest season?	Entitlement orders are created with the help of the food order work group. If instant potatoes are on the order, it's because we received feedback that it was something that was wanted. Bonus products are selected by the USDA. WSDA has no direct input into bonus products provided to this program, but does not refuse any bonus product offered by USDA. In the case of an item coming in when food banks may get the item fresh from other sources, we often have very short windows to take delivery of bonus items. If we have a choice we try and not overlap with other sources of the same or similar items but it's not always avoidable.	<i>Food Acquisition Process; USDA Bonus Commodities</i>
Can food banks and/or food pantries have a larger role in determining what food is ordered for the state?	Food banks and pantries are welcome to participate in the food order work group. We send out emails for feedback on orders before placing them. Contact James Scovel at JScovel@agr.wa.gov if you are interested in participating in the work group.	<i>Food Acquisition Process; USDA Bonus Commodities</i>
Can we carry over TEFAP products until next month?	Items should be distributed to clients as they are received. You may have a need to keep an item on your shelves for longer; however, you shouldn't have more than a three-month supply of any item on your shelves. Products should always be moved within three months, or before its "best when used by" date, if shorter than three months.	<i>Inventory Control System</i>
How long can we keep TEFAP products onsite, and then return to VOA or regional distributor?	Typically no more than three months. If an item is not moving, contact your lead contractor as soon as possible. They may have ideas on how to move that item which may include moving it to another food pantry or meal program that can use it.	<i>Inventory Control System</i>
Why do we get cranberry sauce? I'd rather have any other item that has come through TEFAP.	WSDA has no control of bonus items. USDA provides WSDA a timeframe for loads to arrive and our staff will try to spread out bonus deliveries to avoid overloading our warehouses.	<i>USDA Bonus Commodities</i>
Where do products come from?	All TEFAP products are American made and grown.	<i>N/A</i>
How do I redistribute TEFAP products?	If an item is not moving, contact your lead contractor as soon as possible. They may have ideas on how to move that item which may include moving it to another food pantry or meal program that can use it.	<i>Inventory Control System</i>

Can my food bank give TEFAP commodities to clients living outside service zip codes?	To receive TEFAP commodities, the client should be in the service area, although exceptions can be made for homeless clients and/or individuals who may have a valid reason for receiving food in a different service area, due to work, scheduling, travel, or faith-based referral.	<i>Client Eligibility & Data Collection; FS-138 Written Notice & Referral Requirements</i>
Is there a mechanism in place to collect feedback from food bank managers (on products)?	Feedback on food orders are collected via the food order work group. Please contact James Scovel at JScovel@agr.wa.gov if you would like to participate in the group.	<i>Food Acquisition Process</i>
CATEGORY: Food Safety		
Question:	Answer:	TEFAP Procedures Manual:
Can TEFAP products be distributed past the expiration date?	No, TEFAP (and CSFP) products should not be distributed past the expiration date or the “best when used by” date. Contractors and their subcontractors must consider these dates when managing their TEFAP inventories and distribute foods in a manner that allows the food to be consumed prior to the expiration or “best when used by” date.	<i>Storage Requirements</i>
CATEGORY: Program		
Question:	Answer:	TEFAP Procedures Manual:
How long should I keep records on file? Is it okay to keep electronic versions rather than paper?	TEFAP requires 6 years of records retention following the date of final payment of federal funds. They can be electronic or paper.	<i>FA Combined Contract - 41.4 Recordkeeping & Reports</i>
Why must all volunteers dealing with clients take civil rights “training”?	Civil rights training is a federal requirement for all agencies that receive federal financial assistance, including food. If you have suggestions on improvements, please contact WSDA Food Assistance programs.	<i>Civil Rights Policy, FNS Policy Memo FD-113</i>
Why does TEFAP still want us to retain signed pieces of paper from clients stating they are eligible to receive TEFAP?	It is a federal requirement that the TEFAP program track client eligibility. There are several different types of “tracking” systems that could replace the traditional client log. Many pantries have switched to an intake form that the client completes and signs on a yearly basis, then all the client typically needs to do is initial and date the intake form when they pick up the food. Please make sure to contact your TEFAP contractor before making any changes to your intake process as they may have additional requirements.	<i>Client Eligibility & Data Collection</i>
Can the insurance requirements be revisited?	Yes. WSDA is in the process of working with Washington Food Coalition (WFC) to clarify insurance requirements and options.	<i>N/A</i>

<p>How should we handle multiple families in a single household, such as four families living in a single family home?</p> <p><i>Example: I rent a bedroom, my sister rents a bedroom, another relative rents a third bedroom and my brother rents the basement. We all use the same cooking facilities. Should each person get their own box of food?</i></p>	<p>They would be considered four separate families if the foods are not “consolidated” to then make shared meals. If the food is shared, then they would be considered a family of four and served accordingly.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>A person with no address says they can cook at a friend’s house. Should they get a box of perishable food or a bag of food that needs no cooking? OR If homeless, does a person or family qualify for TEFAP products?</p>	<p>If the person is income eligible, then they should receive TEFAP food regardless of being homeless or not. TEFAP specifically allows and supports serving homeless clients. As to the types of food, if that is an option, let the client choose what would work best for their situation.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>For a client to receive TEFAP do they have to be from the city the food pantry is in?</p>	<p>To receive TEFAP food, the client should be in the food pantry’s “service area” which may not be specific to a city. This does not apply to the homeless as their “food pantry” will change depending on where they are living at the moment.</p>	<p><i>Client Eligibility & Data Collection</i></p>
<p>If a client states they are homeless but they are staying with a friend in the evening, do they still qualify as a homeless client to receive TEFAP?</p>	<p>Yes, they qualify as homeless and are eligible to receive TEFAP.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Can we provide TEFAP to all clients, or just low income?</p>	<p>The guidelines require a self declaration from the client receiving TEFAP that their income is at or below 185% of the federal poverty rate.</p>	<p><i>Client Eligibility & Data Collection</i></p>
<p>As a customer, if I don’t want to go to my official TEFAP agency, can I choose to go to another food bank and collect TEFAP items there instead?</p>	<p>In most cases the answer is no, a client should go to their “official TEFAP agency.” However, there are exceptions due to work, scheduling, FD-138 faith-based referral or travel and must include agreement between the two food pantries and their contractor. This exception is used in rare cases and has a series of factors that must be considered. Contact your contractor for clarification.</p>	<p><i>Client Eligibility & Data Collection; FD-138 Written Notice & Referral Requirements</i></p>
<p>Clarify what inventory looks like or means?</p>	<p>An inventory report will be a sheet that lists the beginning, received, distributed and ending balance of each TEFAP item in possession of your food bank or pantry The inventory report is to be completed every month and sent to your lead contractor.</p>	<p><i>Client Eligibility & Data Collection; FD-138 Written Notice & Referral Requirements</i></p>
<p>Can TEFAP products be used in backpack programs?</p>	<p>Yes, this is an allowable use of TEFAP.</p>	<p><i>Additional TEFAP Guidelines & Best Practice</i></p>

How many TEFAP sites are allowed per area code service area?	There are no limits to the number of sites per area code service area. The contractor determines service needs for their areas and may limit duplication of service.	N/A
CATEGORY: Reimbursement		
Question:	Answer:	TEFAP Procedures Manual:
For TEFAP reimbursement, we own our space, so the rent reimbursement doesn't apply to us. Can we request reimbursement for other facility related costs based on the proportion of TEFAP food vs. other food?	Yes. These reimbursements should be documented by a cost allocation plan.	<i>Allowable Operational Activities & Expenses</i>
Would TEFAP reimbursement cover marketing costs (signage and banners) or fuel costs?	Yes, these are all allowable TEFAP expenses	<i>Allowable Administrative Activities & Expenses; Allowable Operational Activities & Expenses</i>
Can you provide an improved or clarifying description for calculating quarterly TEFAP reimbursements from Food Lifeline?	WSDA encourages but does not require contractors, including Food Lifeline, to pass TEFAP funding down to the pantry or meal program level. Contractors who pass funding down may limit how funding is utilized by implementing a priority system (fuel costs, warehousing costs etc.)	<i>POL - 400.4</i>