

THE EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

POLICY AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

INTRODUCTION

The Missouri Department of Social Services, Family Support Division (FSD), through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food Distribution Program, provides food to help improve the nutritional status of children and needy adults.

The program has a twofold purpose:

- To improve the nutritional quality of the diets of participating persons.
- To help strengthen the agricultural market for products produced by American farmers.

To aid American farmers, USDA buys food under price support and surplus-removal legislation and makes this food available to states. In addition, program funds are appropriated by Congress to purchase foods on the open market. USDA pays for the initial processing and packaging of the food and for transporting it to designated points (i.e. food banks) within each state. Food banks are responsible for storing the food and distributing it at the local level to eligible food pantries, soup kitchens, homeless shelters, domestic violence shelters, Kids Cafes and other non-profit organizations serving congregate meals.

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) provides USDA-donated foods to needy households, including low-income/unemployed persons for home consumption and to organizations serving the homeless and other non-profit organizations providing meals in a congregate setting to needy persons.

The commodities distributed through TEFAP vary from time to time depending on agricultural market conditions; preferences and needs of states and distributing agencies; preferences of recipients and the level of federal funding available for food purchases. The purchased foods must be nutritious, of reasonable price, and available in sufficient quantities for nationwide distribution. USDA generally provides these foods in package sizes that are suitable for household use. USDA-donated foods are intended as a supplement to other sources of food. They are not intended to be used as a household's/ agency's sole or even primary food source.

TEFAP first began in late 1981 as the Special Dairy Distribution Program (SDDP). It originated out of a recognition that the federal government was accumulating huge stockpiles of surplus dairy products, while at the same time, significant numbers of Americans were affected by the economic recession. The SDDP began with the

release of surplus butter and cheese to state agencies for distribution to needy households. Upon enactment of the Jobs Bill in March 1983, it became the Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program. In addition to cheese and butter, the authorization also provided for the distribution of nonfat dry milk, flour, cornmeal, rice and honey.

Nationally, through federal fiscal year (FFY) 1988, more than 5 billion pounds of surplus commodities worth over \$5 billion, were distributed to low-income households. These distributions substantially reduced government surpluses to the point where only flour, cornmeal and butter were available for distribution.

In October 1988, Public Law 100-435, the "Hunger Prevention Act of 1988", was signed by the President. This legislation extended the program through September 30, 1990 and made \$120 million available to purchase and process additional TEFAP commodities for household distribution for each of the federal fiscal years 1989 and 1990. In addition, the Hunger Prevention Act established the Soup Kitchen - Food Bank Program (SKFB), authorizing the Secretary of Agriculture to spend \$40 million in both FFY-89 and 90 and \$32 million in FFY-91 to purchase, process and distribute "Soup Kitchen Commodities".

In an effort to be more responsive to our citizens' needs, Missouri's system for distributing TEFAP foods was modified. Instead of quarterly "mass" distributions, foods were made available on an "as needed" basis to persons/households in need of food assistance, through the six Missouri food banks and their food pantry network.

On November 28, 1990 pursuant to sections 1772 and 1774 of Public Law 101-624 Title XVII, the Mickey Leland Memorial Domestic Hunger Relief Act, the TEFAP and SKFB Programs were reauthorized for an additional five years and the term "temporary" was deleted from the title of the TEFAP legislation.

The Agricultural Market Transition Act (i.e. 1996 Farm Bill), P.L. 104-127 reauthorized TEFAP and SKFB for federal fiscal year 1996.

On August 22, 1996, President Clinton signed the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, P.L. 104-193, one of the most far-reaching welfare reform bills in the twentieth century. This legislation reauthorized TEFAP with \$100 million per year in mandatory commodity purchases for federal fiscal years 1997 through 2002. The bill also repealed the Soup Kitchen - Food Bank Program; promoting the distribution of TEFAP foods to soup kitchens and homeless shelters.

The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (i.e. Farm Bill), P.L. 107-171, reauthorized TEFAP for federal fiscal years 2003 – 2007. Signed into law by President George W. Bush on May 13, 2002, this legislation increased mandatory funding for USDA foods purchases to \$140 million and authorized administrative funding of \$60 million per year. Furthermore, the Secretary of Agriculture was directed to use a minimum of \$200 million per year to purchase "bonus" fruits, vegetables and other specialty food crops for domestic feeding programs (including TEFAP).

The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, enacted into law in June 2008, set mandatory funding for TEFAP food purchases at \$190 million for FY 2008 and \$250 million for FY 2009 and authorized increases for food-price inflation for FY 2010-2012.

The Agricultural Act of 2014 signed into law by President Barack Obama on February 7, 2014 reauthorizes TEFAP through 2018. The law contains provisions to increase the mandatory funding available for the purchase of USDA foods for TEFAP by \$50 million in 2015, \$40 million in 2016, \$20 million in 2017, and \$15 million in 2018. Funding for TEFAP administration is contingent on annual Congressional appropriations.

In Missouri, administrative responsibility for TEFAP has been delegated to the Department of Social Services, Family Support Division. FSD has sought to use existing food distribution networks whenever possible and because of the extensive use of volunteers, has kept record keeping requirements to a minimum.

The purpose of this Manual is to establish policies and procedures for food banks, food pantries, soup kitchens, homeless shelters, domestic violence shelters, Kids Cafes and other non-profit organizations to receive, store, distribute and/or use federally-donated foods made available under The Emergency Food Assistance Program.