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Title 7 —Agriculture

Subtitle B —Regulations of the Department of Agriculture

Chapter II —Food and Nutrition Service, Department of Agriculture

Subchapter B —General Regulations and Policies—Food Distribution

Part 251 The Emergency Food Assistance Program

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PART 251—THE EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

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§ 251.1 General purpose and scope.

This part announces the policies and prescribes the regulations necessary to carry out certain provisions of the Emergency Food Assistance Act of 1983, (7 U.S.C. 612c note).

[51 FR 12823, Apr. 16, 1986, as amended at 64 FR 72902, Dec. 29, 1999]

§ 251.2 Administration.

- (a) **Food and Nutrition Service.** Within the United States Department of Agriculture (the "Department"), the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) shall have responsibility for the distribution of USDA Foods and allocation of funds under the part.
- (b) **State agencies.** Within the States, distribution to eligible recipient agencies and receipt of payments for storage and distribution shall be the responsibility of the State agency which has:
 - (1) Been designated for such responsibility by the Governor or other appropriate State executive authority; and
 - (2) entered into an agreement with the Department for such distribution and receipt in accordance with paragraph (c) of this section.
- (c) **Agreements —**
 - (1) **Agreements between Department and States.** Each State agency that distributes USDA Foods to eligible recipient agencies or receives payments for storage and distribution costs in accordance with § 251.8 must perform those functions pursuant to an agreement entered into with the Department. This agreement will be considered permanent, with amendments initiated by State agencies, or submitted by them at the Department's request, all of which will be subject to approval by the Department.
 - (2) **Agreements between State agencies and eligible recipient agencies, and between eligible recipient agencies.** Prior to making USDA Foods or administrative funds available, State agencies must enter into a written agreement with eligible recipient agencies to which they plan to distribute USDA Foods and/or administrative funds. State agencies must ensure that eligible recipient agencies in turn enter into a written agreement with any eligible recipient agencies to which they plan to distribute USDA Foods and/or administrative funds before USDA Foods or administrative funds are transferred between any two eligible recipient agencies. All agreements entered into must contain the information specified in paragraph (d) of this section, and be considered permanent, with amendments to be made as necessary, except that agreements must specify that they may be terminated by either party upon 30 days' written notice. State agencies must ensure that eligible recipient agencies provide, on a timely basis, by amendment to the agreement, or other written documents incorporated into the agreement by reference if permitted under paragraph (d) of this section, any information on changes in program administration, including any changes resulting from amendments to Federal regulations or policy.
- (d) **Contents of agreements between State agencies and eligible recipient agencies and between eligible recipient agencies.**
 - (1) Agreements between State agencies and eligible recipient agencies and between eligible recipient agencies must provide:
 - (i) That eligible recipient agencies agree to operate the program in accordance with the requirements of this part, and, as applicable, part 250 of this chapter; and
 - (ii) The name and address of the eligible recipient agency receiving USDA Foods and/or administrative funds under the agreement.
 - (2) The following information must also be identified, either in the agreement or other written documents incorporated by reference in the agreement:

- (i) If the State agency delegates the responsibility for any aspect of the program to an eligible recipient agency, each function for which the eligible recipient agency will be held responsible; except that in no case may State agencies delegate responsibility for establishing eligibility criteria for organizations in accordance with § 251.5(a), establishing eligibility criteria for recipients in accordance with § 251.5(b), or conducting reviews of eligible recipient agencies in accordance with § 251.10(e);
- (ii) If the receiving eligible recipient agency is to be allowed to further distribute USDA Foods and/or administrative funds to other eligible recipient agencies, the specific terms and conditions for doing so, including, if applicable, a list of specific organizations or types of organizations eligible to receive USDA Foods or administrative funds;
- (iii) If the use of administrative funds is restricted to certain types of expenses pursuant to § 251.8(e)(2), the specific types of administrative expenses eligible recipient agencies are permitted to incur;
- (iv) Any other conditions set forth by the State agency.

[51 FR 12823, Apr. 16, 1986, as amended at 52 FR 17933, May 13, 1987; 59 FR 16974, Apr. 11, 1994; 62 FR 53731, Oct. 16, 1997; 64 FR 72902, 72903, Dec. 29, 1999; 89 FR 87249, Oct. 31, 2024]

§ 251.3 Definitions.

- (a) The terms used in this part that are defined in part 250 of this chapter have the meanings ascribed to them therein, unless a different meaning for such a term is defined herein.
- (b) **Charitable institution** (which is defined differently in this part than in part 250 of this chapter) means an organization which—
 - (1) Is public, or
 - (2) Is private, possessing tax exempt status pursuant to § 251.5(a)(3); and
 - (3) Is not a penal institution (this exclusion also applies to correctional institutions which conduct rehabilitation programs); and
 - (4) Provides food assistance to needy persons.
- (c) **Distribution site** means a location where the eligible recipient agency actually distributes USDA Foods to needy persons for household consumption or serves prepared meals to needy persons under this part.
- (d) **Eligible recipient agency** means an organization which—
 - (1) Is public, or
 - (2) Is private, possessing tax exempt status pursuant to § 251.5(a)(3); and
 - (3) Is not a penal institution; and
 - (4) Provides food assistance—
 - (i) Exclusively to needy persons for household consumption, pursuant to a means test established pursuant to § 251.5 (b), or
 - (ii) Predominantly to needy persons in the form of prepared meals pursuant to § 251.5(a)(2); and

- (5) Has entered into an agreement with the designated State agency pursuant to § 251.2(c) for the receipt of USDA Foods or administrative funds, or receives USDA Foods or administrative funds under an agreement with another eligible recipient agency which has signed such an agreement with the State agency or another eligible recipient agency within the State pursuant to § 251.2(c); and
- (6) Falls into one of the following categories:
 - (i) Emergency feeding organizations (including food banks, food pantries and soup kitchens);
 - (ii) Charitable institutions (including hospitals and retirement homes);
 - (iii) Summer camps for children, or child nutrition programs providing food service;
 - (iv) Nutrition projects operating under the Older Americans Act of 1965 (Nutrition Program for the Elderly), including projects that operate congregate Nutrition sites and projects that provide home-delivered meals; and
 - (v) Disaster relief programs.
- (e) **Emergency feeding organization** means an eligible recipient agency which provides nutrition assistance to relieve situations of emergency and distress through the provision of food to needy persons, including low-income and unemployed persons. Emergency feeding organizations have priority over other eligible recipient agencies in the distribution of USDA Foods pursuant to § 251.4(h).
- (f) **Food bank** means a public or charitable institution that maintains an established operation involving the provision of food to food pantries, soup kitchens, hunger relief centers, or other food or feeding centers that, as an integral part of their normal activities, provide meals or food to feed needy persons on a regular basis.
- (g) **Food pantry** means a public or private nonprofit organization that distributes food to low-income and unemployed households, including food from sources other than the Department of Agriculture, to relieve situations of emergency and distress.
- (h) **Formula** means the formula used by the Department to allocate among States the USDA Foods and funding available under this part. The amount of such USDA Foods and funds to be provided to each State will be based on each State's population of low-income and unemployed persons, as compared to national statistics. Each State's share of USDA Foods and funds shall be based 60 percent on the number of persons in households within the State having incomes below the poverty level and 40 percent on the number of unemployed persons within the State. The surplus USDA Foods will be allocated to States on the basis of their weight (pounds), and the USDA Foods purchased under section 214 of the Emergency Food Assistance Act of 1983 will be allocated on the basis of their value (dollars). In instances in which a State determines that it will not accept the full amount of its allocation of USDA Foods purchased under section 214 of the Emergency Food Assistance Act of 1983, the Department will reallocate the USDA Foods to other States on the basis of the same formula used for the initial allocation.
- (i) **State agency** means the State government unit designated by the Governor or other appropriate State executive authority which has entered into an agreement with the United States Department of Agriculture under § 251.2(c).
- (j) **Soup kitchen** means a public or charitable institution that, as an integral part of the normal activities of the institution, maintains an established feeding operation to provide food to needy homeless persons on a regular basis.

- (k) **Value of USDA Foods distributed** means the Department's cost of acquiring USDA Foods for distribution under this part.

[64 FR 72903, Dec. 29, 1999, as amended at 89 FR 87250, Oct. 31, 2024]

§ 251.4 Availability of USDA Foods.

- (a) **General.** The Department shall make USDA Foods available for distribution and use in accordance with the provisions of this part and also in accordance with the terms and conditions of part 250 of this chapter to the extent that the part 250 terms and conditions are not inconsistent with this part.
- (b) **Displacement.** State agencies shall require that eligible recipient agencies receiving USDA Foods under this part shall not diminish their normal expenditures for food because of receipt of USDA Foods. Additionally, the Secretary shall withhold USDA Foods from distribution if it is determined that the USDA Foods would substitute for the same or a similar product that would otherwise be purchased in the market.
- (c) **Allocations.**
- (1) Allocations of USDA Foods shall be made to State agencies on the basis of the formula defined in § 251.3(h).
 - (2) FNS shall promptly notify State agencies regarding their allocation of USDA Foods to be made available under this part.
 - (3) State agencies shall notify the appropriate FNSRO of the amount of the USDA Foods they will accept not later than 30 days prior to the beginning of the shipping period.
 - (4) FNS will make allocations of USDA Foods or food funding available to State agencies for two fiscal years. States will be allowed to carry over unexpended balances of USDA Foods funding from one fiscal year into the next fiscal year.
 - (5) A State's USDA Foods funding allocation remaining at the end of the fiscal year after the fiscal year in which it was initially appropriated will expire and will be unavailable to the State.
- (d) **Quantities requested.** State agencies shall:
- (1) Request USDA Foods only in quantities which can be utilized without waste in providing food assistance to needy persons under this part;
 - (2) Ensure that no eligible recipient agency receives USDA Foods in excess of anticipated use, based on inventory records and controls, or in excess of its ability to accept and store such USDA Foods; and
- (e) **Initial processing and packaging.** The Department will furnish USDA Foods to be distributed to institutions and to needy persons in households in forms and units suitable for institutional and home use.
- (f) **Bulk processing by States.** USDA Foods may be made available to a State agency or, at the direction of the State agency, directly to private companies for processing bulk USDA Foods for use by eligible recipient agencies.
- (1) The Department will reimburse the State agency at the current flat rate for such processing.
 - (2) Minimum yields and product specifications established by the Department shall be met by the processor.

(3) The State shall require the processor to meet Federal, State, and local health standards.

(4) Processors and State agencies shall also meet the basic minimum requirements of § 250.30.

(g) ***Distribution and control of USDA Foods.*** The State agency must ensure that the distribution, control, and use of USDA Foods are in accordance with the requirements in this part, and with the requirements in 7 CFR part 250, to the extent that requirements in 7 CFR part 250 are not inconsistent with the requirements in this part. Transfers of USDA Foods must comply with requirements in §§ 250.12(e) and 250.14(d), as applicable. In accordance with § 250.16, the State agency must ensure that restitution is made for the loss of USDA Foods, or for the loss or improper use of funds provided for, or obtained as an incidence of, the distribution of USDA Foods. The State agency is also subject to claims for such losses for which it is responsible, or for its failure to initiate or pursue claims against other parties responsible for such losses.

(h) ***Distribution to eligible recipient agencies—priority system and advisory boards.***

(1) State agencies must distribute USDA Foods made available under this part to eligible recipient agencies in accordance with the following priorities:

(i) ***First priority.*** When a State agency cannot meet all eligible recipient agencies' requests for USDA Foods, the State agency must give priority in the distribution of such USDA Foods to emergency feeding organizations as defined under § 251.3(e). A State agency may, at its discretion, concentrate USDA Foods resources upon a certain type or types of such organizations, to the exclusion of others.

(ii) ***Second priority.*** After a State agency has distributed USDA Foods sufficient to meet the needs of all emergency feeding organizations, the State agency must distribute any remaining program USDA Foods to other eligible recipient agencies which serve needy people, but do not relieve situations of emergency and distress. A State agency may, at its discretion, concentrate USDA Foods resources upon a certain type or types of such organizations, to the exclusion of others.

(2) ***Delegation.*** When a State agency has delegated to an eligible recipient agency the authority to select other eligible recipient agencies, the eligible recipient agency exercising this authority must ensure that any USDA Foods are distributed in accordance with the priority system set forth in paragraphs (h)(1)(i) and (h)(1)(ii) of this section. State agencies and eligible recipient agencies will be deemed to be in compliance with the priority system when eligible recipient agencies distribute USDA Foods to meet the needs of all emergency feeding organizations under their jurisdiction prior to making USDA Foods available to eligible recipient agencies which are not emergency feeding organizations.

(3) ***Existing networks.*** Subject to the constraints of paragraphs (h)(1)(i) and (h)(1)(ii) of this section, State agencies may give priority in the distribution of USDA Foods to existing food bank networks and other organizations whose ongoing primary function is to facilitate the distribution of food to low-income households, including food from sources other than the Department.

(4) ***State advisory boards.*** Each State agency receiving USDA Foods is encouraged to establish a State advisory board representing all types of entities in the State, both public and private, interested in the distribution of such USDA Foods. Such advisory boards can provide valuable advice on how resources should be allocated among various eligible outlet types, what areas have the greatest need for food assistance, and other important issues that will help States to use their program resources in the most efficient and effective manner possible. A State agency may expend TEFAP administrative funds to support the activities of an advisory board in accordance with § 251.8 of this part.

- (i) **Distribution of non-USDA foods.** Eligible recipient agencies may incorporate the distribution of foods which have been donated by charitable organizations or other entities with the distribution of USDA Foods or distribute them separately.
- (j) **Interstate cooperation.** State agencies may enter into interagency cooperative agreements to provide jointly or to transfer USDA Foods to an eligible recipient agency that has signed an agreement with the respective State agencies when such organization serves needy persons in a contiguous area which crosses States' borders.
- (k) **Distribution in rural and Tribal areas.** FNS encourages State agencies and eligible recipient agencies to implement or expand USDA Foods distributions in rural, remote, and Tribal areas of the State wherever possible.
- (l) **Public posting of availability of USDA Foods.** State agencies must make publicly available the list of eligible recipient agencies that have an agreement with the State agency and the State's uniform Statewide eligibility criteria to receive USDA Foods for household consumption as per § 251.5(b), to ensure that eligible populations understand eligibility criteria and are able to identify where they may access USDA Foods. At minimum, State agencies must publicly post the names, addresses, and contact telephone numbers for all eligible recipient agencies that have an agreement with the State agency. The information must be posted on a publicly available internet web page and be updated on an annual basis or whenever changes to eligibility criteria are made.

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 0584-0313 and 0584-0341)

[51 FR 12823, Apr. 16, 1986, as amended at 52 FR 17933, May 13, 1987; 52 FR 42634, Nov. 6, 1987; 59 FR 16974, Apr. 11, 1994; 64 FR 72904, Dec. 29, 1999; 81 FR 23115, Apr. 19, 2016; 89 FR 87250, Oct. 31, 2024; 89 FR 104393, Dec. 23, 2024]

§ 251.5 Eligibility determinations.

- (a) **Criteria for determining eligibility of organizations.** Prior to making USDA Foods or administrative funds available, State agencies, or eligible recipient agencies to which the State agency has delegated responsibility for the distribution of USDA Foods or administrative funds, must ensure that an organization applying for participation in the program meets the definition of an "eligible recipient agency" under § 251.3(d). In addition, applicant organizations must meet the following criteria:
 - (1) **Agencies distributing USDA Foods to households for home consumption.** Organizations distributing USDA Foods to households for home consumption must limit the distribution of USDA Foods provided under this part to those households which meet the eligibility criteria established by the State agency in accordance with paragraph (b) of this section.
 - (2) **Agencies providing prepared meals.** Organizations providing prepared meals must demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the State agency, or eligible recipient agency to which they have applied for the receipt of USDA Foods or administrative funds, that they serve predominantly needy persons. State agencies may establish a higher standard than "predominantly" and may determine whether organizations meet the applicable standard by considering socioeconomic data of the area in which the organization is located, or from which it draws its clientele. State agencies may not, however, require organizations to employ a means test to determine that recipients are needy, or to keep records solely for the purpose of demonstrating that its recipients are needy.
 - (3) **Tax-exempt status.** Private organizations must—

- (i) Be currently operating another Federal program requiring tax-exempt status under the Internal Revenue Code (IRC), or
 - (ii) Possess documentation from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) recognizing tax-exempt status under the IRC, or
 - (iii) If not in possession of such documentation, be automatically tax exempt as “organized or operated exclusively for religious purposes” under the IRC, or
 - (iv) If not in possession of such documentation, but required to file an application under the IRC to obtain tax-exempt status, have made application for recognition of such status and be moving toward compliance with the requirements for recognition of tax-exempt status. If the IRS denies a participating organization's application for recognition of tax-exempt status, the organization must immediately notify the State agency or the eligible recipient agency, whichever is appropriate, of such denial, and that agency will terminate the organization's agreement and participation immediately upon receipt of such notification. If documentation of IRS recognition of tax-exempt status has not been obtained and forwarded to the appropriate agency within 180 days of the effective date of the organization's approval for participation in TEFAP, the State agency or eligible recipient agency must terminate the organization's participation until such time as recognition of tax-exempt status is actually obtained, except that the State agency or eligible recipient agency may grant a single extension not to exceed 90 days if the organization can demonstrate, to the State agency's or eligible recipient agency's satisfaction, that its inability to obtain tax-exempt status within the 180 day period is due to circumstances beyond its control. It is the responsibility of the organization to document that it has complied with all IRS requirements and has provided all information requested by IRS in a timely manner.
- (b) **Criteria for determining recipient eligibility.** Each State agency must establish uniform Statewide criteria for determining the eligibility of households to receive USDA Foods provided under this part for home consumption and must make these criteria publicly available as per § 251.4(l). The criteria must:
- (1) Enable the State agency to ensure only households that need food assistance because of inadequate household income receive USDA Foods;
 - (2) Include income-based standards and the methods by which households may demonstrate eligibility under such standards. Income-based standards must include a maximum income eligibility threshold at or between 185 percent to 300 percent of the U.S. Federal Poverty Guidelines published annually by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). States may propose alternative income-based eligibility standards above this threshold with supporting rationale, subject to approval by FNS; and
 - (3) Include a requirement that the household reside in the geographic location served by the State agency at the time of applying for assistance, and the method for how residency will be determined. Length of residency, address, or identification documents shall not be used as an eligibility criterion.
- (c) **Delegation of authority.** A State agency may delegate to one or more eligible recipient agencies with which the State agency enters into an agreement the responsibility for the distribution of USDA Foods and administrative funds made available under this part. State agencies may also delegate the authority for selecting eligible recipient agencies and for determining the eligibility of such organizations to receive USDA Foods and administrative funds. However, responsibility for establishing eligibility criteria for organizations in accordance with paragraph (a) of this section, and for establishing recipient eligibility criteria in accordance with paragraph (b) of this section, may not be delegated. In instances in which State agencies delegate authority to eligible recipient agencies to determine the eligibility of

organizations to receive USDA Foods and administrative funds, eligibility must be determined in accordance with the provisions contained in this part and the State plan. State agencies will remain responsible for ensuring that USDA Foods and administrative funds are distributed in accordance with the provisions contained in this part.

[64 FR 72904, Dec. 29, 1999, as amended at 89 FR 87250, Oct. 31, 2024]

§ 251.6 Distribution plan.

- (a) **Contents of the plan.** The State agency must submit for approval by the appropriate FNS Regional Office a plan which contains:
 - (1) A designation of the State agency responsible for distributing USDA Foods and administrative funds provided under this part, and the address of such agency;
 - (2) A plan of operation and administration to expeditiously distribute USDA Foods received under this part;
 - (3) A description of the standards of eligibility for recipient agencies, including any subpriorities within the two-tier priority system;
 - (4) A description of the criteria established in accordance with § 251.5(b) which must be used by eligible recipient agencies in determining the eligibility of households to receive USDA Foods for home consumption;
 - (5) At the option of the State agency, a plan of operation for one or more Farm to Food Bank Projects in partnership with one or more emergency feeding organizations located in the State, as described in § 251.13. The plan must include all items listed at § 251.13(e); and
 - (6) A plan, which may include the use of a State advisory board established under § 251.4(h)(4), that provides emergency feeding organizations or eligible recipient agencies within the State an opportunity to provide input on the USDA Foods preferences and needs of the emergency feeding organization or eligible recipient agency.
- (b) **Plan submission and amendments.** Once approved, State plans are permanent. State agencies must submit amendments to the distribution plan when necessary to reflect any changes in program operations or administration as described in the plan, or at the request of FNS, to the appropriate FNS Regional Office.
- (c) **Amendments.** State agencies must submit amendments to the distribution plan to the extent that such amendments are necessary to reflect any changes in program operations or administration as described in the plan, or at the request of FNS, to the appropriate FNS Regional Office.

[64 FR 72905, Dec. 29, 1999, as amended at 74 FR 62474, Nov. 30, 2009; 84 FR 53002, Oct. 4, 2019; 89 FR 87251, Oct. 31, 2024]

§ 251.7 Formula adjustments.

- (a) **Commodity adjustments.** The Department will make annual adjustments to the USDA Foods allocation for each State, based on updated unemployment statistics. These adjusted allocations will be effective for the entire fiscal year, subject to reallocation or transfer in accordance with this part.

- (b) **Funds adjustments.** The Department will make annual adjustments of the funds allocation for each State based on updated unemployment statistics. These adjusted allocations will be effective for the entire fiscal year unless funds are recovered, withheld, or reallocated by FNS in accordance with § 251.8(f).

[64 FR 72905, Dec. 29, 1999, as amended at 89 FR 87251, Oct. 31, 2024]

§ 251.8 Payment of funds for administrative costs.

- (a) **Availability and allocation of funds.** Funds made available to the Department for State and local costs associated with the distribution of USDA Foods under this part shall, in any fiscal year, be distributed to each State agency on the basis of the funding formula defined in § 251.3(h).
- (b) **Uniform Federal Assistance regulations.** Funds provided under this section shall be subject to the regulations issued under 2 CFR part 200, and USDA implementing regulations at 2 CFR parts 400 and 416, as applicable.
- (c) **Payment to States.**
 - (1) Funds under this section shall be made available by means of letters of credit in favor of the State agency. The State agency shall use any funds received without delay in accordance with paragraph (d) of this section.
 - (2) Upon notification by the FNS Regional Office that an agreement has been entered into in accordance with § 251.2(c) of this part, FNS shall issue a grant award pursuant to procedures established by FNS, and promptly make funds available to each State agency within the State's allocation through issuance of a letter of credit. To the extent funds are available and subject to the provisions of paragraph (f) of this section, funds will be made available to State agencies on an advance basis.
 - (3) Each State agency shall return to FNS any funds made available under this section either through the original allocation or through subsequent reallocations which are unobligated as of the end of the fiscal year for which they were made available. Such return shall be made as soon as practicable but in no event later than 30 days following demand made by FNS.
- (d) **Priority for eligible recipient agencies distributing USDA Foods.** State agencies and eligible recipient agencies distributing administrative funds must ensure that the administrative funding needs of eligible recipient agencies which receive USDA Foods are met, relative to both USDA Foods and any non-USDA foods they may receive before such funding is made available to eligible recipient agencies which distribute only non-USDA foods.
- (e) **Use of funds —**
 - (1) **Allowable administrative costs.** State agencies and eligible recipient agencies may use funds made available under this part to pay the direct expenses associated with the distribution of USDA Foods and foods secured from other sources to the extent that the foods are ultimately distributed by eligible recipient agencies which have entered into agreements in accordance with § 251.2. Direct expenses include the following, regardless of whether they are charged to TEFAP as direct or indirect costs:
 - (i) The intrastate and interstate transport, storing, handling, repackaging, processing, and distribution of foods (including donated wild game); except that for interstate expenditures to be allowable, the foods must have been specifically earmarked for the particular State or eligible recipient agency which incurs the cost;

- (ii) Costs associated with determinations of eligibility, verification, and documentation;
 - (iii) Costs of providing information to persons receiving USDA Foods concerning the appropriate storage and preparation of such foods;
 - (iv) Costs involved in publishing announcements of times and locations of distribution; and
 - (v) Costs of recordkeeping, auditing, and other administrative procedures required for program participation.
- (2) **State restriction of administrative costs.** A State agency may restrict the use of TEFAP administrative funds by eligible recipient agencies by disallowing one or more types of expenses expressly allowed in paragraph (e)(1) of this section. If a State agency so restricts the use of administrative funds, the specific types of expenses the State will allow eligible recipient agencies to incur must be identified in the State agency's agreements with its eligible recipient agencies, or set forth by other written notification, incorporated into such agreements by reference.
- (3) **Agreements.** In order to be eligible for funds under paragraph (e)(1) of this section, eligible recipient agencies must have entered into an agreement with the State agency or another eligible recipient agency pursuant to § 251.2(c).
- (4) **Pass-through requirement-local support to emergency feeding organizations.**
- (i) Not less than 40 percent of the Federal Emergency Food Assistance Program administrative funds allocated to the State agency in accordance with paragraph (a) of this section must be:
 - (A) Provided by the State agency to emergency feeding organizations that have signed an agreement with the State agency as either reimbursement or advance payment for administrative costs incurred by emergency feeding organizations in accordance with paragraph (e)(1) of this section, except that such emergency feeding organizations may retain advance payments only to the extent that they actually incur such costs; or
 - (B) Directly expended by the State agency to cover administrative costs incurred by, or on behalf of, emergency feeding organizations in accordance with paragraph (e)(1) of this section.
 - (ii) Any funds allocated to or expended by the State agency to cover costs incurred by eligible recipient agencies which are not emergency feeding organizations shall not count toward meeting the pass-through requirement.
 - (iii) State agencies must not charge for USDA Foods made available under this part to eligible recipient agencies.
- (f) **Recovery and reallocation.** If, during the course of the fiscal year, the Department determines that a State agency is unable to use all of the funds allocated to it during the fiscal year, the Department shall recover or withhold and reallocate such unused funds among other States.

[51 FR 12823, Apr. 16, 1986, as amended at 59 FR 16974, Apr. 11, 1994; 64 FR 72906, Dec. 29, 1999; 74 FR 62474, Nov. 30, 2009; 81 FR 23115, Apr. 19, 2016; 89 FR 87251, Oct. 31, 2024]

§ 251.9 Matching of funds.

- (a) **State matching requirement.** The State must provide a cash or in-kind contribution equal to the amount of TEFAP administrative funds received under § 251.8 and retained by the State agency for State-level costs or made available by the State agency directly to eligible recipient agencies that are not emergency feeding organizations as defined in § 251.3(e). The State agency will not be required to match any portion of the Federal grant passed through for administrative costs incurred by emergency feeding organizations or directly expended by the State agency for such costs in accordance with § 251.8(e)(4) of this part.
- (b) **Exceptions.** In accordance with the provisions of 48 U.S.C. 1469a, American Samoa, Guam, the Virgin Islands and the Northern Mariana Islands shall be exempt from the matching requirements of paragraph (a) of this section if their respective matching requirements are under \$200,000.
- (c) **Applicable contributions.** States shall meet the requirements of paragraph (a) of this section through cash or in-kind contributions from sources other than Federal funds which are prohibited by law from being used to meet a Federally mandated State matching requirement. Such contributions shall meet the requirements set forth in 2 CFR part 200, subpart D, and USDA implementing regulations at 2 CFR part 400. In accordance with the aforementioned regulations, as applicable, the matching requirement shall not be met by contributions for costs supported by another Federal grant, except as provided by Federal statute. Allowable contributions are only those contributions for costs which would otherwise be allowable as State or local-level administrative costs.
 - (1) **Cash.** An allowable cash contribution is any cash outlay of the State agency for a specifically identifiable allowable State- or local-level administrative cost, including the outlay of money contributed to the State agency by other public agencies and institutions, and private organizations and individuals. Examples of cash contributions include, but are not limited to, expenditures for office supplies, storage space, transportation, loading facilities and equipment, employees' salaries, and other goods and services specifically identifiable as State- or local-level administrative costs for which there has been a cash outlay by the State agency.
 - (2) **In-kind.**
 - (i) Allowable in-kind contributions are any contributions, which are non-cash outlays, of real property and non-expendable personal property and the value of goods and services specifically identifiable with allowable State administrative costs or, when contributed by the State agency to an eligible recipient agency, allowable local-level administrative costs. Examples of in-kind contributions include, but are not limited to, the donation of office supplies, storage space, vehicles to transport the USDA Foods, loading facilities and equipment such as pallets and forklifts, and other non-cash goods or services specifically identifiable with allowable State-level administrative costs or, when contributed by the State agency to an eligible recipient agency, allowable local-level administrative costs. In-kind contributions shall be valued in accordance with 2 CFR part 200, subpart D, and USDA implementing regulations at 2 CFR part 400, as applicable.
 - (ii) In order for a third-party in-kind contribution to qualify as a State-level administrative cost for purposes of meeting the match, all of the following criteria shall be met:
 - (A) In its administration of food assistance programs, the State has performed this type of function over a sustained period of time in the past;
 - (B) The function was not previously performed by the State on behalf of eligible recipient agencies; and

- (C) The State would normally perform the function as part of its responsibility in administering TEFAP or related food assistance programs if it were not provided as an in-kind contribution.
- (d) **Assessment fees.** States shall not assess any fees for the distribution of USDA Foods to eligible recipient agencies.
- (e) **Reporting requirements.** State agencies must identify their matching contribution on the FNS-667, Report of TEFAP Administrative Costs, in accordance with § 251.10(b)(1).
- (f) **Failure to match.** If, during the course of the fiscal year, the quarterly FNS-667 indicates that the State is or will be unable to meet the matching requirements in whole or in part, the Department shall suspend or disallow the unmatched portion of Federal funds subject to the provisions of paragraph (a) of this section. If, upon submission of the final FNS-667 for the fiscal year, the Department determines that the State has not met the requirements of paragraph (a) of this section in whole or in part, the unmatched portion of Federal funds subject to the requirements of paragraph (a) of this section shall be subject to disallowance by FNS.

[52 FR 17934, May 13, 1987, as amended at 59 FR 16975, Apr. 11, 1994; 64 FR 72906, Dec. 29, 1999; 81 FR 23115, Apr. 19, 2016; 89 FR 87251, Oct. 31, 2024]

§ 251.10 Reports and recordkeeping.

- (a) **Records —**
 - (1) **USDA Foods.** State agencies, subdistributing agencies (as defined in § 250.3 of this chapter), and eligible recipient agencies must maintain records to document the receipt, disposal, and inventory of USDA Foods received under this part that they, in turn, distribute to eligible recipient agencies. Such records must be maintained in accordance with the requirements set forth in § 250.16 of this chapter. Eligible recipient agencies must sign a receipt for USDA Foods which they receive under this part for distribution to households or for use in preparing meals, and records of all such receipts must be maintained.
 - (2) **Administrative funds.** In addition to maintaining financial records in accordance with 2 CFR part 200, subpart D, and USDA implementing regulations at 2 CFR part 400, State agencies must maintain records to document the amount of funds received under this part and paid to eligible recipient agencies for allowable administrative costs incurred by such eligible recipient agencies. State agencies must also ensure that eligible recipient agencies maintain such records.
 - (3) **Eligible recipient agency list.** State agencies must maintain a list of eligible recipient agencies, including eligible recipient agencies that have agreements with the State agency and eligible recipient agencies that have agreements with another eligible recipient agency. The list must include eligible recipient agencies that distribute USDA Foods for home consumption and those that distribute USDA Foods in the form of prepared meals.
 - (4) **Information about households receiving USDA Foods for home consumption.** Each distribution site must collect and maintain on record for each household receiving USDA Foods for home consumption, the name of the household member receiving USDA Foods, the number of persons in the household, and the basis for determining that the household is eligible to receive USDA Foods for home consumption.

- (5) **Record retention.** All records required by this section must be retained for a period of 3 years from the close of the Federal Fiscal Year to which they pertain, or longer if related to an audit or investigation in progress. State agencies may take physical possession of such records on behalf of their eligible recipient agencies. However, such records must be reasonably accessible at all times for use during management evaluation reviews, audits or investigations.

(b) **Reports —**

- (1) **Submission of Form FNS-667.** Designated State agencies must identify funds obligated and disbursed to cover the costs associated with the program at the State and local level. State and local costs must be identified separately. The data must be identified on Form FNS-667, Report of Administrative Costs (TEFAP) and submitted to the appropriate FNS Regional Office on a quarterly basis. The quarterly report must be submitted no later than 30 calendar days after the end of the quarter to which it pertains. The final report must be submitted no later than 90 calendar days after the end of the fiscal year to which it pertains.
- (2) **Reports of excessive inventory.** Each State agency must complete and submit to the FNS Regional Office reports to ensure that excessive inventories of USDA Foods are not maintained, in accordance with the requirements of § 250.18(a) of this chapter.
- (3) **Report of eligible recipient agency list.** On an annual basis, each State agency must provide the list of eligible recipient agencies and statewide eligibility criteria, as described in paragraph (a)(3) of this section, to FNS. The report should specify whether each eligible recipient agency has an agreement with the State agency or with another eligible recipient agency.
- (4) **Recipients of USDA Foods for home consumption.** State agencies must report the total number of persons served by each distribution site for home consumption as collected in paragraph (a)(4) of this section to FNS on a quarterly basis. This report must capture the total number of persons in all households which participated in each calendar month within the quarter.

(c) **Confidentiality of applicants and participants —**

- (1) **Confidential applicant and participant information.** Confidential applicant and participant information is any information about an applicant or participant, whether it is obtained from the applicant or participant, another source, or generated as a result of TEFAP application, certification, or participation, that individually identifies an applicant or participant and/or family member(s). Applicant or participant information is confidential, regardless of the original source and exclusive of previously applicable confidentiality provided in accordance with other Federal, State, or local law.
- (2) **Limits on disclosure of information obtained from applicants or participants.** State and local agencies must restrict the use or disclosure of information obtained from TEFAP applicants or participants to persons directly connected with the administration or enforcement of the program. With the consent of the participant, the State or local agency may share information obtained with other health or welfare programs for use in determining eligibility for those programs, or for program outreach. However, the State agency must sign an agreement with the administering agencies for these programs to ensure that the information will be used only for the specified purposes, and that agencies receiving such information will not further share it.

- (3) *Limits on disclosing the identity of persons making a complaint or allegation against an individual participating in or administering the program.* The State and local agency must protect the confidentiality, and other rights, of any person making allegations or complaints against another individual participating in, or administering TEFAP, except as necessary to conduct an investigation, hearing, or judicial proceeding, as applicable.

[89 FR 87251, Oct. 31, 2024]

§ 251.11 State monitoring system.

- (a) Each State agency must monitor the operation of the program to ensure that it is being administered in accordance with Federal and State requirements. State agencies may not delegate this responsibility.
- (b) Unless specific exceptions are approved in writing by FNS, the State agency monitoring system must include:
 - (1) An annual review of at least 25 percent of all eligible recipient agencies which have signed an agreement with the State agency pursuant to § 251.2(c), provided each such agency must be reviewed no less frequently than once every four years; and
 - (2) An annual review of one-tenth or 20, whichever is fewer, of all eligible recipient agencies which receive USDA Foods and/or administrative funds pursuant to an agreement with another eligible recipient agency. Reviews must be conducted, to the maximum extent feasible, simultaneously with actual distribution of USDA Foods and/or meal service, and eligibility determinations, if applicable. State agencies must develop a system for selecting eligible recipient agencies for review that ensures deficiencies in program administration are detected and resolved in an effective and efficient manner.
- (c) Each review must encompass, as applicable, eligibility determinations, food ordering procedures, storage and warehousing practices, inventory controls, approval of distribution sites, reporting and recordkeeping requirements, and civil rights.
- (d) Upon concurrence by FNS, reviews of eligible recipient agencies which have been conducted by FNS Regional Office personnel may be incorporated into the minimum coverage required by paragraph (b) of this section.
- (e) If deficiencies are disclosed through the review of an eligible recipient agency, the State agency must submit a report of the review findings to the eligible recipient agency and ensure that corrective action is taken to eliminate the deficiencies identified.

[89 FR 87252, Oct. 31, 2024]

§ 251.12 Limitation on unrelated activities.

- (a) Activities unrelated to the distribution of USDA Foods or meal service may be conducted at distribution sites as long as:
 - (1) The person(s) conducting the activity makes clear that the activity is not part of TEFAP and is not endorsed by the Department. Nutrition education materials, such as recipes or other information about USDA Foods, dates of future distributions, hours of operations, or information about other Federal, State, or local government programs or services for the needy may be distributed without a clarification that the information is not endorsed by the Department;

- (2) The person(s) conducting the activity makes clear that cooperation is not a condition of the receipt of USDA Foods for home consumption or prepared meals containing USDA Foods (cooperation includes contributing money, signing petitions, or conversing with the person(s));
 - (3) The activity is not conducted in a manner that disrupts the distribution of USDA Foods or meal service, and;
 - (4) The activity does not involve information unrelated to TEFAP being placed in or printed on bags, boxes, or other containers in which USDA Foods are distributed.
- (b) Eligible recipient agencies and distribution sites shall ensure that activities unrelated to the distribution of USDA Foods or meal service are conducted in a manner consistent with paragraph (a) of this section.
 - (c) Except as provided in paragraph (d) of this section, State agencies shall immediately terminate from further participation in TEFAP operations any eligible recipient agency that distributes or permits distribution of materials in a manner inconsistent with the provisions of paragraph (a) of this section.
 - (d) The State agency may withhold termination of an eligible recipient agency's or distribution site's TEFAP participation if the State agency cannot find another eligible recipient agency to operate the distribution in the area served by the violating organization. In such circumstances, the State agency shall monitor the violating organization to ensure that no further violations occur.

[89 FR 87252, Oct. 31, 2024]

§ 251.13 Farm to Food Bank Projects.

- (a) **Definition of project.** Farm to Food Bank Projects are the harvesting, processing, packaging, or transportation of unharvested, unprocessed, or unpackaged foods donated by agricultural producers, processors, or distributors for use by emergency feeding organizations under section 203D of the Emergency Food Assistance Act of 1983.
- (b) **Availability and allocation of funds.** Funds for the costs of carrying out a Farm to Food Bank Project will be allocated to State agencies as follows:
 - (1) Funds made available to the Department for Farm to Food Bank Projects will be distributed to State agencies that have submitted an approved amendment to their State plan. The amendment must describe a plan of operation for a Farm to Food Bank Project and include all elements listed in paragraph (e) of this section. The plan of operation must be updated and resubmitted on an annual basis by the dates requested by FNS.
 - (2) Funds for Farm to Food Bank Projects will be distributed each fiscal year to State agencies using the funding formula defined in § 251.3(h).
 - (3) Funds will be available to State agencies for one year from the date of allocation.
- (c) **Purpose and use of funds.** State agencies may only use funds made available under this section for the costs of carrying out a Farm to Food Bank Project.
 - (1) Farm to Food Bank Projects must have a purpose of:
 - (i) Reducing food waste at the agricultural production, processing, or distribution level through the donation of food;
 - (ii) Providing food to individuals in need; and

(iii) Building relationships between agricultural producers, processors, and distributors and emergency feeding organizations through the donation of food.

(2) Project funds may only be used for costs associated with harvesting, processing, packaging, or transportation of unharvested, unprocessed, or unpackaged foods donated by agricultural producers, processors, or distributors for use by emergency feeding organizations.

(3) Project funds cannot be used to purchase foods or for agricultural production activities such as purchasing seeds or planting crops.

(d) **Matching of funds** —

(1) **State matching requirement.** The State agency must provide a cash or in-kind contribution at least equal to the amount of funding received under this section for a Farm to Food Bank Project.

(2) **Allowable contributions.** State agencies shall meet the match requirement in paragraph (d) of this section by providing allowable contributions as described at § 251.9(c); contributions must only be for costs which would otherwise be allowable as a Farm to Food Bank Project cost.

(3) **Emergency feeding organization contributions.** Cash or in-kind contributions from emergency feeding organizations that partner with the State agency to administer the Farm to Food Bank Project are allowable.

(4) **Food donations.** Donations of foods, including the value of foods donated as a part of a Farm to Food Bank Project, cannot count toward the match requirement in paragraph (d) of this section.

(e) **Plans of Operation for Farm to Food Bank Projects.** A plan of operation for a Farm to Food Bank Project must include:

(1) A high-level summary of the Farm to Food Bank Project.

(2) A description of the types of foods expected to be donated through the Project.

(3) A list of emergency feeding organizations within the State that will operate the Project in partnership with the State agency.

(4) A list of any State agencies that will operate the Project as a part of a cooperative agreement.

(5) A description of the Project that includes how the Project will:

(i) Reduce food waste at the agricultural production, processing, or distribution level through the donation of food;

(ii) Provide food to individuals in need; and

(iii) Build relationships between agricultural producers, processors, and distributors and emergency feeding organizations through the donation of food.

(6) The fiscal year in which the Project will begin operating; and

(7) A description of how the match requirement will be met.

(f) **Reallocation of funds.** If, during the course of the fiscal year, the Department determines that a State agency will not expend all of the funds allocated to the State agency for a fiscal year under this section, the Department shall reallocate the unexpended funds to other State agencies that have an approved State Plan describing a plan of operation for a Farm to Food Bank Project during that fiscal year or the subsequent fiscal year.

- (g) **Reporting requirements.** Each State agency to which Farm to Food Bank Project funds are allocated for a fiscal year must submit a report describing use of the funds. The data must be identified on Form SF-425, Federal Financial Report, and submitted to the appropriate FNS Regional Office on a semiannual basis. The reports, including a final report, must be submitted by the dates requested by FNS.
- (h) **Cooperative agreements.** State agencies that carry out a Farm to Food Bank Project may enter into cooperative agreements with State agencies of other States to maximize the use of foods donated under the project.

[89 FR 87252, Oct. 31, 2024]

§ 251.14 Miscellaneous.

- (a) **USDA Foods not income.** In accordance with section 206 of Public Law 98-8, as amended, and notwithstanding any other provision of law, USDA Foods distributed for home consumption and meals prepared from USDA Foods distributed under this part shall not be considered income or resources for any purposes under any Federal, State, or local law.
- (b) **Nondiscrimination.** There shall be no discrimination in the distribution of USDA Foods for home consumption or availability of meals prepared from USDA Foods donated under this part because of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or handicap.
- (c) **Use of volunteer workers and non-USDA foods.** In the operation of The Emergency Food Assistance Program, State agencies and eligible recipient agencies shall, to the maximum extent practicable, use volunteer workers and foods which have been donated by charitable and other types of organizations.
- (d) **Maintenance of effort.** The State may not reduce the expenditure of its own funds to provide USDA Foods or services to organizations receiving funds or services under the Emergency Food Assistance Act of 1983 below the level of such expenditure existing in the fiscal year when the State first began administering TEFAP, or Fiscal Year 1988, which is the fiscal year in which the maintenance-of-effort requirement became effective, whichever is later.
- (e) **Recruitment activities related to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).** Any entity that receives USDA Foods identified in this section must adhere to regulations set forth under § 277.4(b)(6) of this chapter.

[89 FR 87252, Oct. 31, 2024]