

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs): Household Program Operation During COVID-19 Outbreak

1. Is Disaster Household Distribution (DHD) an option for the state of Texas?

USDA is accepting applications for the Disaster Household Distribution Program (DHD). TDA will submit a State Plan for DHD. TDA will utilize food bank requests and information from the State Operations Center to determine where program resources will be focused in the state and incorporate those factors and counties in TDA's State Plan to USDA. Requests may be sent to Jaclyn.Cantu@TexasAgriculture.gov.

TDA will ensure that the plan submitted to USDA contains the mandatory requirements:

- Specific counties to be served
- Number of affected households expected to participate
- Explanation/justification for why DHD is warranted in the requested counties
- Anticipated distribution period
- Quantities and types of foods planned to be utilized (please specify the programs these inventories will be pulled from)
- Method of distribution to include number and location of distribution sites. This should include the food bank's capability to logistically accomplish the plan outlined in their request (volunteers, food, trucks, etc..)

USDA has communicated that approvals for DHD will be for 30 days.

2. Are applications or intake procedures required for TEFAP and CSFP distribution?

USDA does not have waiver authority for program regulations under a Presidentially-Declared Emergency Declaration for TEFAP and CSFP. Specifically, federal eligibility requirements for these programs cannot be waived.

State TEFAP flexibilities granted:

- Signatures are temporarily NOT required from participants/proxies. Site Coordinators must still obtain other federally required intake criteria to document eligibility.
- Allowable distribution models for TEFAP:
 - drive through
 - home deliveries
 - utilize proxies – no limit for # of individuals per proxy
 - mobile distributions
 - soup kitchens may provide “take-out” meals

CSFP flexibilities within regulation:

- USDA is encouraging bi-monthly distributions allowed by current regulations

3. Should CSFP CEs continue to distribute within their base caseload assignment or can they exceed that limit due to COVID-19?

Food banks should continue to distribute CSFP food packages within their base caseload assignment to ensure inventories are properly maintained and eligible seniors can continue to receive their food package each month. CEs may need to utilize waitlists during COVID-19 to meet their base caseloads if participants do not pick up their food package.

4. Is it possible to reallocate National School Lunch Program (NSLP) inventory to other programs?

USDA allows State Agencies to reallocate NSLP foods to other programs. TDA is currently developing methods to implement this within the state. TDA is most interested in reallocating foods with limited shelf life first. Entitlement will not be replaced in instances where food is reallocated to an alternate program.

5. Is it possible to expedite TEFAP deliveries?

Expediting is dependent on vendor abilities. Please submit requests for expedited orders to matt.mcelhaney@TexasAgriculture.gov. TDA will consult with FNS/AMS to see if expediting is possible. All such requests must include the sales order numbers for the shipments.

6. Is the Pandemic EBT Program (P-EBT) an option?

The Pandemic EBT Program would provide P-EBT benefits to SNAP and non-SNAP households with children who have temporarily lost access to free or reduced-price school meals due to pandemic-related school closures. USDA is currently accepting application from states for P-EBT in any case in which a school is closed for at least 5 consecutive days during a public health emergency designation during which the school would otherwise be in session. The Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) and TDA would work together to implement the program.

7. In what situation is retroactive distribution allowed in CSFP?

USDA has approved TDA's waiver request for retroactive CSFP distribution for sites that had to close in March. CEs can apply for this waiver on <http://squaremeals.org/FandNResources/CoronavirusUpdateforContractingEntities/FoodBankResources.aspx>. Local agencies should make every effort to provide an alternate way for participants to receive their food packages in March. For example, encourage participants or their proxies to pick up boxes at an alternate location or provide by delivery, when possible. If this is not feasible, local agencies may distribute March CSFP food packages in April as retroactive benefits. Local agencies should make every effort to offer the March food boxes to recipients as soon as possible in April.

For sites issuing two-months of food packages bi-monthly, please note that retroactive distribution for March in April will count as a two-month distribution if provided with the April distribution. Therefore, the retroactive distribution could not be combined with a two-month distribution for April and May. However, if the March distribution is provided in early April, then the two-month distribution for April and May may be provided later in April.

8. Is TDA continuing to conduct administrative reviews?

TDA has temporarily postponed all administrative reviews.