

Frequently Asked Questions

Food & Nutrition and SquareMeals.org Overview

Document Purpose

The SquareMeals.org website contains a great deal of information pertaining to the 12 federal child and special nutrition programs administered by the Texas Department of Agriculture Food & Nutrition division (F&N). This FAQ resource is designed to provide non-Program operators and other members of the public with an overview of F&N and its programs as well as direct the public to the most pertinent links and resources available on the SquareMeals.org website.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Overview

1. What does the Food & Nutrition (F&N) division of the Texas Department of Agriculture do?
2. How do I know which individual programs may benefit me and my family?
3. Does F&N have information on other programs and nutrition-related opportunities?
4. How do I contact F&N?
5. How do I request data, statistics, or other public information about the child and special nutrition programs?

School Nutrition Programs

6. Who do the School Nutrition Programs Serve?
7. What resources are available on SquareMeals that provide more information on the School Nutrition Programs?
8. Where can I find information on whether my children are eligible for no cost or reduced-price meals through their school?



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Food and Nutrition Division
Nutrition Assistance Programs

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Child and Adult Care Food Programs

9. Who does the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) serve?
10. What resources are available on SquareMeals that provide more information on the CACFP Program?
11. How do I locate an afterschool program that serves CACFP snacks and/or suppers?

Summer Meal Programs

12. Who do the Summer Meal Programs serve?
13. What resources are available on SquareMeals that provide more information on the Summer Feeding Programs?
14. How do I locate a summer feeding site?

Household Programs – CSFP and TEFAP

15. Who does the Commodity Supplement Food Program (CSFP) serve?
16. Who does the The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) serve?
17. What resources are available on SquareMeals that provide more information on CSFP and TEFAP?
18. Where can I find a local Food Bank?

Farmers' Market and Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs

19. Who does the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program serve?
20. Who does the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) serve?
21. How do I know which local farmers' markets are participating in FMNP and/or SFMNP?

Overview

1. What does the Food & Nutrition (F&N) division of the Texas Department of Agriculture do?

The Texas Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Division administers 12 federal child and special nutrition programs and more than \$2.5 billion in federal money annually used to fund the programs for the State of Texas.

These nutrition programs exemplify "eating right" for Texans of every age and background and help them build a bridge to success. Everyone plays a role in teaching children the 3E's of Healthy Living - Education, Exercise and Eating Right.

TDA supports providers of nutrition assistance by helping ensure accountability and the efficient use of taxpayer dollars to nourish Texans in need. By striving to put Texans on the path to wellness through TDA nutrition programs and ensuring those programs operate with efficiency and accuracy, Food and Nutrition works to fulfill its mission — To advance compliant USDA nutrition programs through effective partnerships and educational resources.

2. How do I know which individual programs may benefit me and my family?

See below for the list of child and special nutrition programs administered by F&N. Click on the links below or scroll down to see more information about these programs:

- [School Nutrition Programs \(including the National School Lunch Program \(NSLP\), School Breakfast Program \(SBP\), Special Milk Program \(SMP\), and Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program \(FFVP\)\)](#)
- [Child and Adult Care Food Program \(CACFP\)](#)
- [Summer Meal Programs \(including Summer Food Service Program \(SFSP\) and Seamless Summer Option \(SSO\)\)](#)
- [Household Programs \(including Commodity Supplemental Food Program \(CSFP\) and The Emergency Food Assistance Program \(TEFAP\)\)](#)
- [Farmers' Market and Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs \(FMNP and SFMNP\)](#)

For more information on these programs, visit this [Programs at a Glance](#)ⁱ resource, also located on SquareMeals.org (Click the Public Resources drop-down menu at the top of the page and select [What Programs Am I Eligible For?](#)).ⁱⁱ

3. Does F&N have information on other programs and nutrition-related opportunities?

Yes, under the Public Resources drop-down menu at the top of every SquareMeals page, there are links to the following programs:

- [Health Ambassadors for a Ready Texas \(HART\)](#)ⁱⁱⁱ - HART aims to inspire and recognize exceptional Texas high school students as they champion healthy choices. HART ambassadors work with your school's nutrition team to promote school lunches, healthy eating and the importance of Texas agriculture and locally grown food to your classmates and peers. HART encourages students who are passionate about making a difference at their school to apply.
- [The Healthy Community Network \(HCN\)](#)^{iv} - HCN provides local elected officials opportunities to enhance the positive impacts these programs can bring to schools, Food Banks, child care centers and community organizations to build a healthier community and state. Local elected officials receive a bi-annual bulletin with information on how to ensure their communities are not left behind in bringing these programs to citizens.
- [Texas Farm Fresh](#)^v – The Farm Fresh movement attempts to connect local schools with Texas agriculture, cultivating an enduring mindset among new generations in which foods are chosen with the knowledge that those choices positively impact not only their own health, but the health of the community at large. On this page, using the left-side menu, there are a wealth of resources to explore for schools, child care centers, community centers, farmers, producers, and all members of the community eager to get involved.
- You Art What You Eat - TDA's You Art What You Eat statewide student art contest engages K-12 students in learning about good nutrition by encouraging them to use their imagination and illustrate healthy school meals while incorporating TDA's provided theme. The winning entries inspire designs for cafeteria posters, social media ads, flyers and other resources that schools across Texas will use for celebrating National School Lunch Week and School Breakfast Week.

4. How do I contact F&N?

At the top of every SquareMeals page, under the About drop-down menu, there is a link labeled [Contact F&N](#),^{vi} which provides links, phone numbers, and contact information to our central Austin location as well as TDA's regional offices across the state.

5. How do I request data, statistics, or other public information about the child and special nutrition programs?

SquareMeals has a dedicated page for the public to request this information. Under the Public Resources drop-down menu at the top of the page, select the [Public Information Requests and Program Data page](#).^{vii}

School Nutrition Programs

6. Who do the School Nutrition Programs Serve?

The programs provide supplemental reimbursement for nutritious meals or snacks served to eligible children at public, charter, and nonprofit private schools as well as residential child-care institutions. Low-income children may qualify for the programs if household income is within the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines, which are based on federal poverty guidelines, or if the household participates in other eligible financial assistance programs.

7. What resources are available on SquareMeals that provide more information on the School Nutrition Programs?

Each School Nutrition Program has its own Program homepage on SquareMeals.org with numerous resources accessed via a menu on the left side:

- [National School Lunch Program page](#)^{viii}
- [School Breakfast Program page](#)^{ix}
- [Special Milk Program page](#)^x
- [Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program](#)^{xi}

While most of the resources on these pages are for school districts operating the program, the public can access policy handbooks and latest news pertaining to the Programs. For a high level overview of the programs, please download [F&N's Quick Reference Guide on NSLP and SBP](#).^{xii} This guide is also accessed on the SquareMeals NSLP and SBP homepages linked above.

More information on FFVP can be found in USDA's [FFVP Fact Sheet](#),^{xiii} also available on the SquareMeals FFVP homepage.

8. Where can I find information on whether my children are eligible for no cost or reduced-price meals through their school?

F&N provides an overview of eligibility and FAQs on its [School Nutrition Eligibility for Households page](#),^{xiv} accessed via the Public Resources drop-down menu at the top of each SquareMeals page. Additionally, households can use F&N's [Income Eligibility Calculator](#)^{xv} (also accessed via the Public Resources menu) to determine if children in the household will qualify.

Child and Adult Care Food Programs

9. Who does the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) serve?

The CACFP serves eligible children 18 and younger and adults who are functionally impaired, or aged 60 or older at participating child-care centers, day care home providers, adult day care centers, and afterschool at-risk programs.

10. What resources are available on SquareMeals that provide more information on the School Nutrition Programs?

CACFP has its own Program homepage on SquareMeals.org with numerous resources accessed via a menu on the left side:

- [CACFP Program page](#)^{xvi}

While most of the resources on this page are for CACFP Program operators, the public can access policy handbooks and latest news pertaining to the Programs. For a high level overview of the programs, please download [F&N's Quick Reference Guide on CACFP](#).^{xvii} This guide is also accessed on the SquareMeals CACFP homepage linked above.

11. How do I locate an afterschool program that serves CACFP snacks and/or suppers?

F&N provides a CACFP At-risk Afterschool Site map that shows eligible sites. Under the Public Resources drop-down menu at the top of each SquareMeals page, select [CACFP At-Risk Site Map](#).^{xviii}

Summer Meal Programs

12. Who do the Summer Meal Programs serve?

The Summer Meal Programs feed children and teens ages 18 and younger and enrolled students with disabilities up to 21 years old at no cost at any participating meal site.

13. What resources are available on SquareMeals that provide more information on the Summer Feeding Programs?

The Summer Feeding Programs have their own Program homepage on SquareMeals.org with numerous resources accessed via a menu on the left side:

- [Summer Meal Programs page](#)^{xix}

While most of the resources on this page are for Summer Meal Program operators, the public can access policy handbooks and latest news pertaining to the Programs. For a high level overview of the programs, please download [F&N's Quick Reference Guide on the Summer Food Service Program \(SFSP\)](#).^{xx} This guide is also accessed on the SquareMeals Summer Meals Program homepage linked above.

14. How do I locate a summer feeding site?

F&N provides a Summer Meal Site map that provides identify eligible sites participating in a summer program. Under the Public Resources drop-down menu at the top of each SquareMeals page, select [Summer Meal Site Map](#).^{xxi}

Household Programs – CSFP and TEFAP

15. Who does the Commodity Supplement Food Program (CSFP) serve?

The purpose of the CSFP is to improve the health and nutritional status of low-income elderly persons through nutrition education activities and the donation of supplemental foods.

Low-income persons sixty years old and older may apply to participate in the CSFP. A proxy may apply for the applicant. To establish eligibility, applicants must provide their name, age, address, and gross household income for all household members. This form must be filled out completely to certify and document the eligibility of CSFP applicants for CSFP benefits. There are no citizenship requirements for participation in the CSFP, but applicants must reside within a designated CSFP service area on the day of certification to be eligible to participate in the CSFP.

On the day of certification, applicants must meet income eligibility guidelines:

- Household income must meet income eligibility guidelines on [Income Eligibility Guidelines for the Elderly](#).^{xxii} For Income Eligibility Guidelines for CSFP, click on the CSFP Homepage and select Income Eligibility Guidelines from the left-side menu.
- Note that participants who meet the income eligibility requirements for CSFP also meet the income requirements for the [Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program](#).

16. Who does the The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) serve?

TEFAP is a federal program that helps supplement the diets of low-income Americans, including elderly people, by providing them with emergency food assistance at no cost.

Participants seeking to eat congregate meals onsite are assumed eligible simply because they are seeking a meal. In other words, there are no eligibility requirements for congregate meals. This includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Residency,
- Identity,
- Income, and
- Citizenship.

Households that wish to receive meals for home consumption must meet TEFAP [Income Eligibility Guidelines](#).^{xxiii} For Income Eligibility Guidelines for TEFAP, click on the TEFAP Homepage and select Income Eligibility Guidelines from the left-side menu.

A household is automatically (or categorically) eligible for food via TEFAP if it currently receives assistance from one of the following programs:

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly Food Stamps
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- National School Lunch Program (NSLP) free or reduced-price meals
- Non-institutional Medicaid

At the time of application, households must have established residency within the service area.

17. What resources are available on SquareMeals that provide more information on CSFP and TEFAP?

CSFP and TEFAP have their own Program homepages on SquareMeals.org with numerous resources accessed via a menu on the left side:

- [CSFP page](#)^{xxiv}
- [TEFAP page](#)^{xxv}

While most of the resources on these pages are for CSFP and/or TEFAP operators, the public can access policy handbooks and latest news pertaining to the Programs. You may also contact a Food Bank in your area for more information on these programs. [See below.](#)

18. Where can I find a local Food Bank?

TDA partners with food banks across the Lone Star State to help them feed Texans who do not always have enough food for an active, healthy life. The contact information can be found under the [Public Resources drop-down menu](#)^{xxvi} at the top of every SquareMeals page. Click on [Texas Food Banks](#).^{xxvii}

Farmers' Market and Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs

19. Who does the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program serve?

TDA provides eligible farmers' markets with vouchers that are redeemable by the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) participants at local farmers' markets. FMNP program operators will distribute vouchers to eligible WIC participants, to be used between January and November. Each participant receives five vouchers valued at \$30.00 in increments of \$6.00 per voucher.

20. Who does the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) serve?

Participants must be at least 60 or more years of age and reside in the farmers' market service area. The participant's income must be at or below the maximum gross household income of 185% of the annual poverty [income guidelines](#). For Income Eligibility Guidelines for SFMNP, click on the SFMNP Homepage and select Income Eligibility Guidelines from the left-side menu.

Participants 60 years of age or older also qualify for the SFMNP if they take part in the [Commodity Supplemental Food Program \(CSFP\)](#), receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI), or meet a means test for the 185% poverty income level.

Each participant receives five vouchers valued at \$20.00 in increments of \$4.00 per voucher. SFMNP participants may redeem vouchers at participating farmers' markets on February 1 through no later than October 31 of each program year.

21. How do I know which local farmers' markets are participating in FMNP and/or SFMNP?

For a list of eligible farmers' markets participating in these programs, select the applicable Farmers' Market Maps from the Public Resources drop-down menu at the top of each SquareMeals.org page:

- [FMNP Farmers' Market Map](#)^{xxviii}
- [SFMNP Farmers' Market Map](#)^{xxix}

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Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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- i <https://squaremeals.org/Portals/8/files/TDA-Programs-at-a-Glance-EngSpa.pdf>
 - ii <https://squaremeals.org/Public-Resources/What-Programs-Am-I-Eligible-For>
 - iii <https://squaremeals.org/Public-Resources/Health-Ambassadors-for-a-Ready-Texas>
 - iv <https://squaremeals.org/Public-Resources/Healthy-Community-Network>
 - v <https://squaremeals.org/FandN-Resources/Texas-Farm-Fresh>
 - vi <https://squaremeals.org/About/Contact-Food-and-Nutrition>
 - vii <https://squaremeals.org/About/Public-Information-Requests>
 - viii <https://squaremeals.org/Programs/National-School-Lunch-Program>
 - ix <https://squaremeals.org/Programs/School-Breakfast-Program>
 - x <https://squaremeals.org/Programs/Special-Milk-Program>
 - xi <https://squaremeals.org/Programs/Fresh-Fruit-and-Vegetable-Program>
 - xii https://squaremeals.org/Portals/8/files/NSLP/Resources/NSLP_SBP_Quick%20Reference%206.12.22.pdf
 - xiii <https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/FFVPFactSheet.pdf>
 - xiv <https://squaremeals.org/Public-Resources/School-Nutrition-Eligibility>
 - xv <https://squaremeals.org/Public-Resources/Income-Eligibility-Calculator>
 - xvi <https://squaremeals.org/Programs/Child-and-Adult-Care-Food-Program>
 - xvii <https://squaremeals.org/Portals/8/files/CACFP%20Resources/CACFP%20Quick%20Reference.pdf>
 - xviii <https://squaremeals.org/Programs/Child-and-Adult-Care-Food-Program/At-Risk-Site-Map>
 - xix <https://squaremeals.org/Programs/Summer-Meal-Programs>
 - xx https://squaremeals.org/Portals/8/files/SFSP/SFSP-Quick_Reference-2021-Final%206.12.22.pdf
 - xxi <https://squaremeals.org/Programs/Summer-Meal-Programs/Summer-Meal-Site-Map>
 - xxii <https://squaremeals.org/FandN-Resources/Income-Eligibility-Guidelines>
 - xxiii <https://squaremeals.org/FandN-Resources/Income-Eligibility-Guidelines>
 - xxiv <https://squaremeals.org/Programs/Commodity-Supplemental-Food-Program>
 - xxv <https://squaremeals.org/Programs/The-Emergency-Food-Assistance-Program>
 - xxvi <https://squaremeals.org/Public-Resources>
 - xxvii <https://squaremeals.org/Public-Resources/Texas-Food-Banks>
 - xxviii <https://squaremeals.org/Programs/Farmers-Market-Nutrition-Program/Farmers-Markets-Map>
 - xxix <https://squaremeals.org/Programs/Senior-Farmers-Market-Nutrition-Program/Farmers-Markets-Map>