SECTION 1: FA PROGRAM INFORMATION

Full version of this manual is available online: AGR PUB-484 (R/6/21)
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Introduction

Welcome to the Food Assistance (FA) programs updated procedures manual for the Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP) - Tribal Voucher Program. This manual includes both policies and procedures and is written to assist contracting agencies and their respective subcontractors. The effective date of this manual is July 1, 2021.

The Revised Code of Washington (RCW) Title 43.23.290 designates the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) to be the State agency responsible for the distribution of federal commodities and administrative funds of The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), the state-funded Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP), and the Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP) - Tribal. If any procedure or guideline is found to be in conflict with the RCW, the RCW will prevail.

These policies and procedures shall be adjusted, as necessary, during the course of the program period. These policies and procedures are specific to EFAP-Tribal Voucher Program and shall be followed by the contractors and subcontractors receiving assistance under EFAP. Compliance with subsequent modification to this manual is also mandatory for all contractors and subcontractors.

Please take the time to thoroughly review the manual with your staff working with the WSDA Food Assistance programs. If changes are made, contractors shall receive notice of changes through program update emails.

If you have questions, suggestions, changes or corrections regarding this manual, please contact your WSDA regional representative.

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This manual is available on our website at: https://agr.wa.gov/services/food-access/hunger-relief-agency-hub/state-food-assistance-programs/emergency-food-assistance-program-(efap)-tribal. This manual is a work in progress and we encourage your involvement to make this manual a tool that is valuable to you as a WSDA contractor.

With Appreciation,

The Food Assistance Team
Vision and Mission

**VISION STATEMENT:**
We are trusted partners who anticipate and respond to the evolving needs of the food system by focusing on the intersection, viability, and success of agricultural producers and hunger relief agencies. Together, we ensure access to healthy food and sustain vibrant communities for all Washingtonians.

**MISSION STATEMENT:**
Food Assistance serves communities and lower-income families by improving access to safe and nutritious foods. We honor our connections with agriculture and strengthen the emergency food system by providing food, funding, logistical support, and outreach to hunger relief providers and tribes.
Overview

The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) provides service to the people of Washington by supporting the agricultural community and promoting consumer and environmental protection. Food Assistance is part of the Food Safety and Consumer Services Division, which plays an active role in defending the availability, safety, and integrity of our food system.

WSDA’s Food Assistance programs serve food insecure families by providing food, funding, logistics services and outreach to hunger relief providers and tribes. Through active engagement and strong partnerships, we strengthen the emergency food system, improve access to nutritious and safe foods, and ensure regulatory compliance, while honoring our connections with agriculture. Our goals are to develop key partnerships and data-driven strategies to alleviate hunger and increase access to healthier food options available in the emergency food system while supporting the agricultural community. WSDA has made significant strides in reducing client access barriers by clarifying that client intake requirements are primarily based on client self-declaration (not documentation), removing service area restrictions, and actively engaging in stakeholder discussions that identify additional improvements in this area.

WSDA’s Food Assistance programs provide about $40 million worth of state and federal food and funding annually to support 500 food banks, food pantries, meal programs, tribes and tribal organizations. With increased state and federal support, WSDA was able to respond to COVID-19 by expanding its’ role to include purchasing food and personal protective equipment, securing reserve warehouses, providing emergency food boxes for mass distribution, National Guard coordination, and providing capacity grant funding to fill gaps in the emergency food system. We anticipate that many of these strategies will be on-going and critical in addressing the impacts of a long-term recovery.

Annually, one in six Washingtonians (1.1 million people) received food from emergency food providers that were supported with resources from our programs. Due to COVID-19, the number of people relying on our services has increased to 1.8 million.

CORE FUNCTIONS INCLUDE:

- Distributing U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) federal commodities.
- Providing state and federal funds to support food banks, food pantries, meal programs, tribes and tribal organizations.
- Helping partners leverage existing resources to create a collaborative statewide food assistance network.
- Providing technical assistance and information to community programs that deliver emergency food and services to hungry people.
- Providing the necessary framework to keep food assistance distributions flexible and responsive to client needs.
**PROGRAMS INCLUDE:**

**Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)**

A federally funded USDA program that provides nutritious food “packages” designated specifically for the needs of lower-income elderly people at least 60 years of age. CSFP provides food and limited operational funding for distribution to nonprofit organizations, such as community action councils, food banks, and food pantries. (Limited availability)

**Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP)**

A state-funded program that supports local emergency food providers with funding to help alleviate hunger for lower-income children, adults, working poor, elderly and the homeless. The funding is flexible and may be used for the purchase of food, operational costs, nutrition training and equipment or repairs.

**Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP) - Tribal**

A state-funded program that supports tribal organizations with funding to help alleviate hunger for lower-income Washingtonians, including the homeless, receiving services from a food pantry or receiving a tribal food voucher. The funding is flexible and may be used for the purchase of food or food vouchers, operational costs, nutrition training and equipment or repairs.

**The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)**

A federally funded USDA program that helps supplement the diets of lower-income Washingtonians, including the homeless. TEFAP provides food and limited operational funding for distribution to nonprofit organizations, such as community action councils, food banks, food pantries, shelters and meal programs.

**Farm to Food Pantry (F2FP) Initiative**

The initiative, established in 2014, is a partnership with Rotary First Harvest. It helps bridge gaps between agriculture and hunger relief agencies, connects farmers to their communities and increases access to healthier food options for lower-income families. (Limited availability)

**TEFAP Farm to Food Bank (FTFB)**

TEFAP Farm to Food Bank (FTFB) is a federally funded (USDA) program that's purpose is to reduce food waste by capturing donated food; build relationships between hunger relief organizations and agricultural producers, processors and distributors; and to provide food to those who need it. (Limited availability)

**WSDA Fresh Produce Box Program**

This program was initially developed to offset food supply chain issues caused by COVID-19. This has become an essential part of our services, provided increased nutrition for clients, and direct funding support for local farmers. (Limited availability)
EFAP-TRIBAL VOUCHER PROGRAM FLOW CHART

The WSDA Food Assistance (FA) Advisory Committee, which is part of the Washington Food Coalition (WFC), plays an important role in shaping how WSDA Food Assistance programs can provide the most value to the food assistance provider network and to those whom they serve.

The FA Advisory Committee is comprised of a chair, vice chair, provider members, the WFC executive director, WSDA staff and other interested parties. The Advisory Committee works on making recommendations for program policy and emergency food system improvements, and streamlining program processes. Subcommittees are established and comprised of provider members, subject matter experts, stakeholders, and WSDA staff.

The WFC has set up a page on their website where notes and information from Committee meetings are posted for anyone interested in staying informed. Please visit wafoodcoalition.org/food-assistance-advisory-committee for more details.
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