

AR Department of Human Services
Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education
Commodity Distribution Unit



This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Introduction

The Commodity Distribution Unit is primarily a logistics operation for distributing nutritious USDA foods for various programs throughout the State of Arkansas:

- **National School Lunch Program (NSLP)**
 - **Department of Defense Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (DoD FFV)**
 - **USDA Food Processing**
- **Child and Adult Care Feeding Program (CACFP)**
- **Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)**
- **The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)**
 - **Farm to Food Bank Program**
- **Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)**
- **Food Distribution Disaster Assistance Program**



National School Lunch Program (NSLP)

USDA provides nutritious foods to public and private schools within the State of Arkansas. USDA works to maintain healthy meals for children by providing many nutritious food items available for states to order. Products are formulated with less sodium and sugar as well as portion sizes being maintained to allow children to have the energy and brain power for optimal learning.

Within NSLP, schools have the option to place entitlement dollars into two additional resources for food. DoD Fresh Fruits and Vegetables program allows schools to receive these fresh items on a weekly basis directly from the contracted fruit and vegetable broker.

Processing allows for schools to contract with commercial food processors to further process bulk USDA foods into more convenient, ready to use end products. These Processors are on USDA's National Approved Processor list and are further approved by States based on demand. For example, a school may wish to purchase Chicken Nuggets from a processor. Our Unit places the order for bulk chicken to be delivered to the processor who will then process the chicken into chicken nuggets. The price charged the school by the processor is reduced by the value of the bulk USDA chicken used to make the nuggets also known as the Donated Food Value.

Entitlement dollars for the 2021 School Year are as follows:

Entitlement:	\$16,856,413.00
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Bonus Orders:	\$ 1,035,991.91
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Entitlement used for DoD FFV:	\$5,330,521.00
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Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) is a USDA program which provides food for nutritious meals and snacks to eligible children and adults who are enrolled for care at participating child care centers, day care homes, and adult day care centers. CACFP also provides food for meals served to children and youth participating in afterschool care programs, children residing in emergency shelters,

and adults over the age of 60 or living with a disability and enrolled in day care facilities. CACFP contributes to the wellness, healthy growth, and development of young children and adults in the United States.

Entitlement dollars for 2021:

Entitlement: \$53,527.00

Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)

This USDA program ensures that children have access to nutritious meals and snacks when school is not in session. Currently, the Commodity Distribution Unit is taking part in a pilot program where DoD Fresh Fruits and Vegetables are utilized for this program during the summers.

Entitlement dollars for 2021:

Entitlement: \$26,118.00

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)

This program provides nutritious USDA foods for household use to low-income families throughout the State utilizing contracted agencies such as food banks and community action agencies. Eligibility is income based at 130% of the poverty rate. The State has the flexibility to raise or lower the rate based on need and availability of food.

In the past, food items consisted of shelf stable items such as canned meats, fruits, and vegetables. Many people knew this program as where they received Government cheese. Today the food available for distribution not only includes shelf stable items, but also fresh fruits and vegetables, meats such as beef, pork, chicken, and fish, fresh milk and dairy items, dry beans, nuts, eggs, etc. The most popular item has been the pre-boxed produce where a local broker packages individual boxes with 5 – 6 different fruits and vegetables of 2- 3 of each item.

TEFAP Entitlement dollars 2021:

Entitlement:	\$ 4,984,064.32
TEFAP Bonus Food Orders:	\$10,678,299.94
CARES Act Orders:	\$ 341,408.72
FFCRA Act Orders:	\$ 1,375,165.97
COSUP Act Orders:	<u>\$ 3,050,925.65</u>
Total	\$20,459,864.60

Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)

The Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) is a USDA program designed to improve the health and well being of low-income persons at least 60 years of age by supplementing their diets with nutritious foods. What started out as a programming combining seniors and women with infants and children, has now become a senior only program.

Funding to purchase foods works differently from the other food distribution programs within USDA. Instead of receiving Entitlement dollars to purchase foods, CSFP works on a caseload basis where each senior equals a caseload.

USDA determines a state's caseload based on funding available and the ability for the State to distribute their caseload effectively and efficiently. In Arkansas the current caseload is 8,360. Arkansas was on a waiting list for 7 years prior to being granted the opportunity to participate in the program. Since implementing the program approximately 12 years ago, Arkansas' caseload has almost doubled in size.

Each year, Arkansas requests an increase in caseload sufficient to handle seniors on agencies waiting lists as well as opening distribution sites in new counties of the State. Once Congress passes the budget, USDA determines whether additional caseloads can be granted states or if a reduction in caseload is needed. Thankfully

since Arkansas has been administering the program, there has only been one year that we faced a reduction which was nationwide.

As long as a senior remains eligible for the program, they can be guaranteed packages of food each month. These foods are designed by USDA to be lower in sodium and sugar content and less likely to have negative interaction with medication.



A monthly package of food will contain the following items:

Category	Food Item	Amount Each Month
Fruits and Juice	Canned Fruit (15.5 oz) Juice (64 oz) Raisins (15 oz)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1 juice and 3 cans of fruit; or ○ 2 juices and 2 cans of fruit; or ○ 1 package raisins, 1 juice, and 2 cans of fruit; or ○ 1 package raisins, 2 juices and 1 can fruit.
Vegetables	Canned Vegetables or Soup (10.5 to 15.5 oz) Dehydrated Potatoes (1 lb)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 8 cans of vegetables or soup; or ○ 7 cans of vegetables or soup, and 1 package of dehydrated potatoes.
Cheese	Cheese (2 lb)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1 package cheese
Milk	UHT Fluid Milk 1% (32 oz) Instant Nonfat Dry Milk (12.8 oz)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 2 UHT Milk; or ○ 1 UHT Milk and 1 Instant Nonfat Dry Milk <p>Note: UHT Milk is a shelf stable milk</p>
Meat, Poultry, and Fish	Canned Beef, Beef Stew, or Chili (24 oz) Canned Chicken (10 to 15 oz) Beef Chili with Beans (15 oz) Tuna (12 oz) Salmon (14.75 oz)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1 (24 oz) pkg meat and 1 (10-15 oz) pkg beef, poultry, or fish; or ○ 3 (10-15 oz) pkgs beef, poultry, and/or fish of any combination.
Plant-Based Protein	Canned Beans (15.5 oz) Dry Beans or Lentils (1 – 2 lb) Peanut Butter (16-18 oz)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 3 units of any combination (1 lb) dry beans or lentils, and peanut butter; or ○ 1 (2 lb) pkg dry beans or lentils and 1 can of beans, peanut butter, or (1 lb) dry beans or lentils.
Cereals	Cereal, Dry Ready-to-Eat, (12-18 oz) Farina (18 oz) Rolled Oats (18 – 48 oz) Grits (2-5 lb)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 2 pkgs of any combination of cereal, farina, (18 oz) rolled oats, and (2 lb) grits; or ○ 1 (42-48 oz) pkg rolled oats; or

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1 (5 lb) pkg of grits (every other month).
Pasta and Rice	Pasta (1 lb) Rice (1-2 lb)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 2 pkgs of any combination of (1 lb) rice or pasta; or ○ 1 (2 lb) pkg of rice.

Agencies may order many different types of foods within these categories based on client preferences. Since the State does not receive entitlement dollars to order food, inventory levels within each food category must be maintained at 2.5 months of inventory on hand.

Agencies must also provide information on other programs/assistance available to seniors as well as providing them with Nutrition Education monthly.

Disaster Feeding

Whether the disaster is a Presidentially declared disaster a Governor's declared disaster or a time of distress. The Commodity Distribution Unit is standing by to assist. We work directly with voluntary agencies such as the Red Cross, Salvation Army, Baptist Convention, to provide them food to prepare in a congregate feeding setting. We utilize the NSLP foods for this purpose as they are larger package sizes, easier to store and prepare meals with. We also utilize TEFAP foods for additional household distributions.

The only difference between the type of disaster is whether we will be reimbursed the value of the food used and expenses associated with distribution:

- Presidentially Declared Disaster: The Unit will be reimbursed for the food and expenses used during the disaster.
- Governor's Declared Disaster: The Unit will be reimbursed for the food and expenses used during the disaster if funds are available.
- Time of Distress: The Unit will be reimbursed for the food and expenses used during the disaster if funds are available.

Whichever category the disaster falls under, the Commodity Distribution Unit is available 24/7 to assist the citizens of Arkansas.

Other Information of Interest

- Food orders are placed by the Unit 3 months to over a year in advance of delivery depending on the type of orders being made. This is before growing seasons where supply may be affected by weather conditions. The final price of an item is unknown until received as USDA requests bids from vendors based on our orders.
- Over the past year, supply chain issues have caused many cancellations of orders and late deliveries. We anticipate this to continue over the next year along with rising prices due to rising fuel costs.
- Food Safety is a major concern. We are responsible that our recipients in all programs receive the most nutritious meals possible. Whether it's the delivery of food from the vendor, the storage practices at our State contracted warehouse, proper storage, and handling at our recipient agencies, focus is on food safety. Many times, we read of food recalls in the paper, but often those recalls begin with the agencies we work with.
- Our current State contracted warehouse is: Tankersley Food Service, Van Buren, Arkansas.
- The Unit has a refrigerated truck used for monthly deliveries of the CSFP program and used during disasters.
- The Unit is writing 3 grants aimed at distributing more food to underserved areas of the State along with purchasing foods from local socially disadvantaged farmers to provide to those underserved areas. Another grant is pairing those same socially disadvantaged farmers with purchasing foods for schools. The desired outcome is that food banks and schools become more aware of local farmers/producers for purchases in the future.
- Outreach to underserved areas is a priority for the Unit. Identifying those areas and working with agencies to fill those gaps in service will be our focus.