

CHAPTER 8

Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services



While some nutrient deficiencies remain, the most pressing dietary problem today is overconsumption of fat, sodium, refined carbohydrates, and calories.

Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion

USDA's Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion (CNPP) was established in 1994 to improve the nutrition and well-being of Americans. Toward this goal, the Center focuses its efforts on two primary objectives—

1. Advance and promote dietary guidance for all Americans, and
2. Conduct applied research and analyses in nutrition and consumer economics.

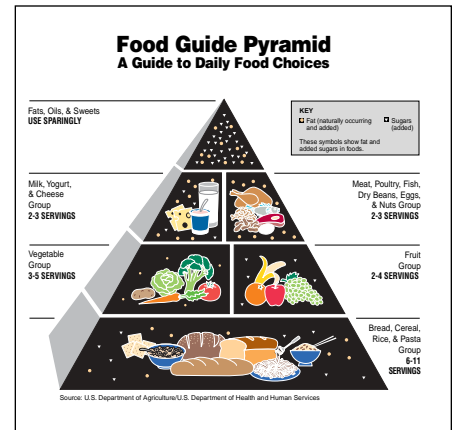
CNPP's core products to support these objectives are the following:

Dietary Guidelines for Americans

The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* are mandated by Congress and issued jointly by USDA and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services at 5-year intervals, based on the recommendations of a non-Federal expert committee. The *Guidelines* are the cornerstone of Federal nutrition policy and nutrition education activities. The Center shares leadership in the review and revision of the *Guidelines*, and conducts the consumer research that guides this process. CNPP leads the design and dissemination of the official *Dietary Guidelines* bulletin and also promotes the *Guidelines* by developing and disseminating additional consumer materials. CNPP chairs the Dietary Guidance Working Group, which reviews Federal nutrition materials for the public to ensure that the guidance is consistent and accurately reflects the *Guidelines*.

Food Guide Pyramid

The Pyramid is one of the most widely recognized nutrition education tools in history. It translates nutritional recommendations into the kinds and amounts of food to eat each day. CNPP maintains and updates the research base for the *Pyramid* to reflect current dietary recommendations and food consumption patterns. CNPP also developed the *Food Guide Pyramid for Young Children* to focus on young children's food preferences and nutritional requirements.

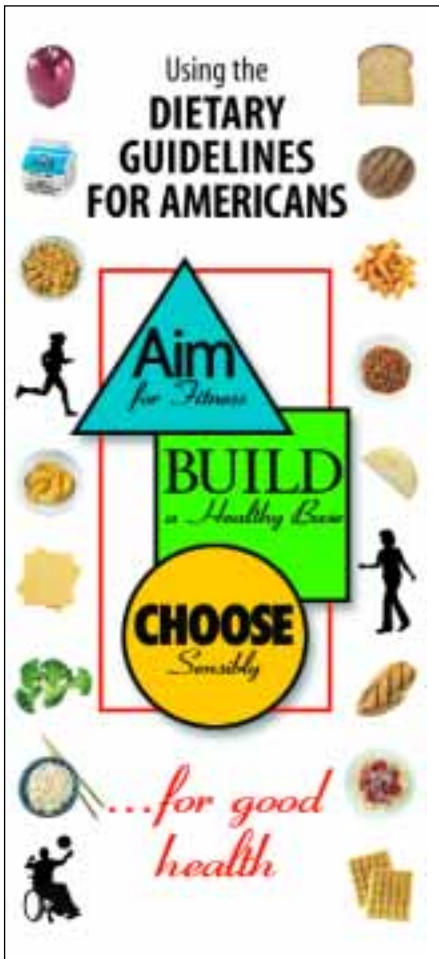


Healthy Eating Index

The *Index* is a summary measure of overall diet quality. It provides a picture of the type and quantity of foods people eat and the degree to which diets comply with specific recommendations in the *Dietary Guidelines* and the *Food Guide Pyramid*. CNPP developed the *Index*, and maintains and updates it. CNPP also developed and maintains the *Interactive Healthy Eating Index*, an on-line, self-assessment tool that provides a quick measure of a person's diet quality: <http://147.208.9.133/>

USDA Food Plans

CNPP develops and maintains the four official USDA Food Plans: the Thrifty, Low Cost, Moderate Cost, and Liberal—all representing a nutritious diet at different costs. The Thrifty Food Plan is the basis for food stamp allotments. A supporting consumer publication, *Recipes*



and *Tips for Healthy, Thrifty Eating*, includes menus and recipes based on the Thrifty Food Plan, along with tips for purchasing and preparing foods.

Nutrient Content of the Food Supply

Each year, CNPP assesses the U.S. food supply and reports the amount of nutrients and *Food Guide Pyramid* servings available for consumption on a per capita per day basis. This historical data series, which began in 1909, is used by policymakers in assessing the capacity of the food supply to meet nutritional needs. CNPP also developed and released the *Interactive Food Supply*, an online tool for nutrition researchers, policymakers, and consumers: <http://147.208.9.134/>

Expenditures on Children by Families

USDA has produced estimates of the cost of raising children from birth to age 17 annually since 1960. These estimates are used in setting State child support guidelines and foster care payments, thereby affecting the economic well-being of millions of children in the United States.

ABCs of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans: Science and Application

This innovative Web-based interactive course is designed to provide education for professionals on the *Dietary Guidelines*. The course can be found at: <http://www.dga2000training.usda.gov/>

Family Economics and Nutrition Review

This peer-reviewed journal has been published since 1943. Scientifically based, the *Journal* provides a wealth of useful information to professionals, policymakers, students, and the news media.

Nutrition Insights

CNPP issues brief research papers on current food and nutrition topics. These

two-page documents are targeted to policymakers, nutrition professionals, and the news media.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Additional information on CNPP can be found at: <http://www.usda.cnpp.gov>

Food and Nutrition Service

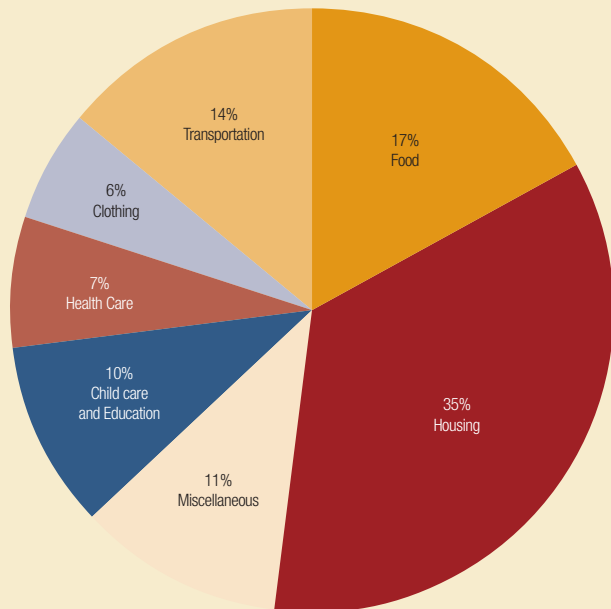
The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is the gateway to the Nation's nutrition safety net. FNS administers USDA's domestic nutrition assistance programs, and for more than 30 years the agency has worked to accomplish a complex mission—reducing hunger and food insecurity by providing children and needy families better access to food, a healthful diet, and nutrition education.

FNS works in partnership with the States to ensure that its programs operate effectively and efficiently. This partnership allows the States to determine most administrative details regarding participant eligibility and distribution of nutrition benefits, and FNS provides funding to cover some of the States' administrative costs.

For fiscal year (FY) 2002, the funding for FNS and its programs was \$38.2 billion. Overall, the nutrition assistance programs reach one out of every six Americans and touch every community in the United States. Most of the programs and

Food and agricultural policy long has sought to ensure that all Americans have access to a healthy and nutritious food supply, regardless of income. This policy has encompassed a wide array of food assistance and nutrition programs that have humanitarian, investment, and agricultural support goals.



Family expenditures on a child through age 17, by budgetary share¹

¹ U.S. average for the younger child in middle-income, husband-wife families with two children.

nutrition education activities are directed at people with low incomes or school-children. They include:

- The Child and Adult Care Food Program
- The Commodity Supplemental Food Program
- The Disaster Food Stamp Program
- Eat Smart. Play Hard™ Campaign
- Team Nutrition
- The Emergency Food Assistance Program
- The Food Distribution Program
- The Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations
- The Food Stamp Program
- The National School Lunch Program
- The Nutrition Assistance Programs in Puerto Rico, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana
- Nutrition Services Incentive Program
- The School Breakfast Program
- The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
- The Special Milk Program
- The Summer Food Service Program
- The WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program

Additional information on FNS and its programs can be found on the World Wide Web at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/>

The Child and Adult Care Food Program

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) provides healthful meals and snacks in child care centers, family day care homes, and adult day care facilities. By reimbursing participating day care operators for their meal costs and providing them with USDA commodity food and nutrition information materials, CACFP helps ensure that children and adults in day care receive healthful meals. Family day care homes must be overseen by sponsoring organizations that also receive reimbursements from USDA for their administrative expenses.

The program generally operates in child care centers, outside-school-hours care centers, family and group day care homes, homeless shelters, and some adult day care centers. In return for Federal support, care providers in CACFP must serve meals that meet Federal nutritional guidelines and must offer free or reduced-price meals to eligible people. After school care centers can also be

reimbursed for snacks served to children through age 18 in after school educational or enrichment programs.

First authorized as part of a larger pilot project in 1968, the program was formerly known as the Child Care Food Program. It was made a permanent program in 1978, and the name was changed in 1989 to reflect the addition of an adult component. CACFP is administered at the Federal level by FNS. State agencies or FNS regional offices oversee the program at the local level.

In FY 2001, CACFP provided 1.68 billion meals to participants.

Eligibility: At child and adult day care centers, participants from families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the Federal poverty level qualify for free meals; those from families with incomes between 130 percent and 185 percent of the poverty level qualify for reduced-price meals; and those from families with incomes above 185 percent of the poverty level pay full price.

For family day care homes, Congress instituted a two-tier system of reimbursements under the Welfare Reform Act of 1996. Under this system, a higher reimbursement rate (tier 1 reimbursement) is paid to providers located in areas where 50 percent of the children are eligible for free and reduced-price meals or where the provider's household meets established income criteria for free or reduced-price meals. All other providers are reimbursed at a lower rate (tier 2 reimbursement) unless they choose to have their sponsoring organizations identify children who are income eligible. Meals served to such income-eligible children are reimbursed at the higher tier 1 level.

After school care centers are eligible for CACFP on the basis of the income in their area. All snacks are reimbursed at the "free" rate of reimbursement.

Benefits: Children and adults who attend day care facilities receive nutritious meals and snacks. Care providers receive reimbursement for eligible meals and

snacks. Family day care sponsoring organizations receive reimbursement for their administrative costs.

Funding: Congress appropriated \$1.8 billion for the CACFP in FY 2002.

The Commodity Supplemental Food Program

The Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) is a program of grants to States, administered by FNS at the Federal level. CSFP provides commodity foods to supplement the diets of low-income; pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women; their infants and children up to the age of 6; and persons 60 years of age and older.

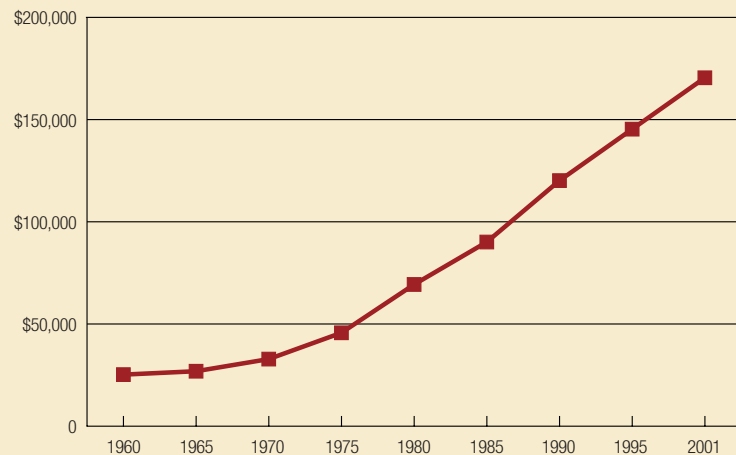
In 1999, CSFP operated at more than 70 sites in 17 States, the District of Columbia, and 2 Indian Tribal Organizations (ITOs). In 2000, the program was expanded to include five new States. USDA donates commodity foods to the State agencies for distribution and provides funds to State and local agencies to cover certain administrative costs. The program served an average of more than 407,000 people each month in FY 2001, including more than 323,000 elderly people and more than 83,000 women, infants, and children.

Eligibility: State agencies that administer CSFP may establish a residency requirement and/or require applicants to be determined to be at nutritional risk in order to be eligible for program participation. To be income eligible, women, infants, and children must be eligible for benefits under existing Federal, State, or local food, health, or welfare programs and must not currently be receiving WIC benefits. Elderly persons must meet a low-income standard.

Benefits: There are six food packages for different categories of participants. The food packages are not intended to provide a complete and balanced diet, but rather they are supplements that are good sources of the nutrients often lacking in participants' diets.

Funding: For FY 2002, Congress appropriated \$92,813,000 for CSFP.

Total expenditures on a child for the first 18 years of life¹



¹ Average expenditures for a middle-income, husband-wife family, not adjusted for inflation.

Disaster Food Stamp Program

When commercial channels of food supply are still operable, or have been restored following a disaster, a State may request approval from the Administrator of the Food and Nutrition Service to operate the Disaster Food Stamp Program.

If approval is granted, FNS may provide on-site guidance for establishing and operating the disaster program. FNS ensures that funding for food stamp benefit issuance is available. State and local officials are responsible for determining the eligibility of households to receive disaster food stamp benefits and for issuance.

Eat. Smart. Play Hard.™ Campaign

The national nutrition education and promotion campaign is designed to convey science-based, behavior-focused, and motivational messages about healthy eating and physical activity. The campaign's primary communication vehicle is Power Panther™, a mascot who conveys nutrition and physical activity messages in a fun and non-threatening way as a peer. The campaign focuses on four basic themes: the importance of breakfast, healthy snacks, physical activity, and balancing what you eat with what you do.

The target audience for this campaign is the diverse population of preschool and school-aged children (ages 2-18 years) participating or eligible to participate in programs and their caregivers. Caregivers include parents, guardians, childcare providers, after school providers and teachers. The campaign is designed to reach the target group where they live, work, learn, and play using multiple communication vehicles, approaches, and channels.

The campaign:

- Encourages families to adopt behaviors that are consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the Food Guide Pyramid,
- Communicates behavioral and motivational nutrition education and physical activity messages to children and caregivers,
- Fosters positive behavior change to promote nutrition and health, and reduce the risk for obesity and chronic diseases.

Team Nutrition

FNS provides nutrition education through Team Nutrition; a multifaceted nutrition education initiative delivered in schools, WIC, and child care sites, with ongoing expansion to encompass all the nutrition assistance programs administered



by USDA. The goal of Team Nutrition is to continuously improve children's life-long eating and physical activity habits through public-private partnerships that promote the health and education of children nationwide in accordance with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the Food Guide Pyramid.

Team Nutrition engages three behavior-oriented strategies:

- Empower school food service professionals through a variety of training and technical assistance to serve meals that meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and that appeal to children.
- Motivate and build skills for children to make food and physical activity choices for a healthy lifestyle through a comprehensive, integrated nutrition education program designed for children, parents, teachers, and school food service professionals.
- Support from school administrators and other school and community partners is vital to the success of Team Nutrition's goal. Persons in these positions can actively support Team Nutrition activities and can help create a healthy school environment.

Six communication channels are involved, and they offer a comprehensive network of delivering consistent nutrition

messages to children and their caretakers that will educate them about the importance of food and physical activity choices for a healthy lifestyle where they live, work, and play. These messages are delivered and reinforced through a variety of sources. They include: (1) food service initiatives, (2) classroom activities, (3) schoolwide events, (4) home activities, (5) community programs and events, and (6) media events and coverage.

Eligibility: All children participating in or eligible to participate in the USDA Child Nutrition Programs may receive nutrition education through Team Nutrition. Professional school food service staffs can also receive training and technical support. There are more than 28,000 Team Nutrition schools across the country.

Funding: In FY 2002, Congress appropriated \$10 million for Team Nutrition.

The Emergency Food Assistance Program

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) provides food assistance to needy people through the distribution of USDA commodities. Under TEFAP, commodities are made available to States for distribution to organizations that provide them to low-income households for home consumption and to organizations that use them in congregate meal service for the needy, including the homeless. Local agencies, usually food banks, shelters, and soup kitchens, are designated by the States to distribute the food.

TEFAP was first authorized in 1981 to distribute surplus commodities to households. Its aim was to help reduce Federal food inventories and storage costs while assisting the needy. The Hunger Prevention Act of 1988 required the Secretary of Agriculture not only to distribute surplus foods but also to purchase additional foods for further distribution to needy households. Funds are also provided for State and local administrative expenses. Foods available vary, depending on market conditions.

Eligibility: Each State sets its own income limits for household eligibility to receive food for home use. States can adjust the

income criteria based on the level of need in order to ensure that assistance is provided only to those most in need.

No income test is applied to people who receive meals at soup kitchens and other congregate feeding sites that make use of TEFAP foods.

Benefits: TEFAP has provided many billions of pounds of food since its beginning. More than 1 billion pounds of food, valued at \$846 million, were distributed at the program's height in 1987. In 1999, more than 311 million pounds of food, valued at more than \$198 million, were distributed.

Funding: Congress appropriated \$150 million for TEFAP in FY 2002.

Food Distribution Program

FNS can provide USDA-donated food assistance through State food distribution agencies. All States have stocks of USDA food on hand for use in their commodity programs for schools or needy people. These stocks can be released immediately for use in a disaster situation.

Upon request from a State, FNS will procure additional food to meet the needs of people affected by a disaster. Nearby States may be asked to release their stocks of USDA food to help feed disaster victims, and USDA will provide replacement of the foods. State agencies then distribute the food to emergency shelters and other mass feeding sites operated by disaster relief agencies such as the American Red Cross.

The State may also request that food be made available for household distribution if commercial channels of food supply are not available because of the disaster.

The Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations

The Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) provides monthly food packages to low-income families living on reservations and to Native American families living near reservations. Many Native Americans participate in FDPIR as an alternative to the Food Stamp Program if their tribe or tribal agency has been authorized to run the

program. An average of 129,000 people received food through FDPIR each month in 1999.

The program is administered at the Federal level by FNS in cooperation with State and tribal agencies. USDA provides food to these agencies, which are responsible for program operations such as storage and distribution, eligibility certification, and nutrition education.

The food packages distributed through FDPIR were updated in 1997 in a cooperative effort by USDA nutritionists, tribal leaders, and health advocates. Changes have made the food packages easier to use and they better serve the health needs and preferences of Native Americans. USDA also provides nutrition information in the monthly food package, along with suggestions for making the most nutritious use of the commodity foods.

Eligibility: To participate in FDPIR, the household must have low income within program requirements, have assets within specified limits, and be located on or near an Indian reservation.

Benefits: USDA donates a variety of foods to help FDPIR participants maintain a balanced diet. These commodities include canned meats and fish products; vegetables, fruits, and juices; dried beans; peanuts or peanut butter; milk, butter, and cheese; pasta, flour, or grains; adult cereals; corn syrup or honey; and vegetable oil and shortening. Frozen chicken and ground beef are increasingly available as tribes are able to store and handle these products safely, and the 1997 review of food packages resulted in the addition of noodles, spaghetti sauce, crackers, reduced-salt soups, and low-fat refried beans.

Each participant receives a monthly package that contains a variety of foods. For FY 2001, the value of the monthly food package was about \$37.39 per person.

Funding: In FY 2002, Congress appropriated \$79.5 million for FDPIR.



The Food Stamp Program

The Food Stamp Program is the cornerstone of USDA's nutrition assistance programs. The program helps low-income households increase their food purchasing power and their choices for a better diet. It is the primary source of nutrition assistance for low-income Americans. The program was initiated as a pilot program in 1961 and made permanent in 1964.

The first line of defense against hunger for millions of families, the Food Stamp Program provides critical support for families making the transition from welfare to work and the elderly and disabled. The program issues monthly allotments of coupons or electronic benefits through Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) that are redeemable at authorized retail food stores, farmers' markets, and certain other providers.

The Federal Government pays for the benefits issued and shares with the States the cost of administrative expenses. An average of 18.2 million people received benefits each month in FY 1999. Participation fell steadily from a high of 28.0 million in March 1994 to 17.3 million in March 2000. In March 2001, participation remained at about 17.3 million people, but then increased to 19 million by March 2002. FNS is also translating several publications into 45 languages to assist non-English speakers at food stamp offices.

To ensure that people potentially eligible for benefits are aware of the program, FNS is working with States on public information campaigns. Publications on the Food Stamp Program are being translated in order to assist non-English speakers.

Most States have converted food stamp issuance to EBT systems. EBT allows food stamp customers, using a magnetic stripe card, to buy groceries by transferring funds directly from a food stamp benefit account to a retailer's account. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 requires all States to convert to EBT issuance by October 2002.



EBT is only one component of FNS' commitment to Food Stamp Program efficiency and integrity. The agency works closely with the States to ensure that they issue benefits in the correct amounts and only to people who are eligible. EBT has enhanced FNS' ability to catch those who abuse the program, and penalties have been increased for people who are caught. In addition, FNS now has broader authority to review the performance of food retailers who participate in the program and to quickly remove those who fail to follow program rules.

USDA also provides educational materials to help States integrate nutrition into the Food Stamp Program. States may use program administrative funds for nutrition education to help food stamp recipients make healthier food choices as they use their benefits.

Eligibility: Eligibility and allotments are based on household size, income, assets, and other factors. In FY 2002, the average household benefit is about \$185.62 per month; and the average per-person benefit is about \$79.68 per month.

Benefits: The level of benefits an eligible household receives is based on its household income and expenses. Households with no countable net income receive the maximum monthly allotment of food stamps. The allotment is based on the cost of the Thrifty Food Plan, a low-cost model food plan. The Federal Government pays for the benefits issued and shares with the States the cost of administrative expenses.

In FY 2001, the Food Stamp Program awarded 14 research grants to improve access to the program. The grants totaled \$3.68 million and were awarded to nonprofit organizations partnering with State and local food stamp offices.

Funding: For FY 2002, the Food Stamp Program appropriation was \$23 billion.

The National School Lunch Program

The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) is a federally assisted meal program operating in nearly 97,000 public and nonprofit private schools and resi-

dential child care institutions. It provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free lunches and after school snacks to about 27 million children each school day.

NSLP is usually administered by State education agencies, which operate the program through agreements with local school districts. FNS administers the program at the Federal level. School districts and independent schools that choose to take part in the lunch program receive cash reimbursement and donated commodity foods from USDA for each meal they serve. In return, they must serve meals that meet Federal nutrition requirements, and they must offer free and reduced-price lunches to eligible children.

The after school snack component of NSLP provides reimbursement for nutritious snacks served to children through age 18 in eligible after school care programs. In order to qualify for these reimbursements, the school districts must operate the lunch component of NSLP and must sponsor or operate an after school care program that provides children with regularly scheduled educational or enrichment activities in an organized, structured, and supervised environment.

Sites in which more than 50 percent of the students qualify for free or reduced-price breakfasts or lunches are referred to as "area eligible," and these sites serve all snacks free. Otherwise, eligibility for free, reduced-price, and full-price snacks is based on income. To qualify for reimbursement, the snacks must meet meal pattern requirements.

USDA's School Meals Initiative for Healthy Children was launched in June 1994 and is a public policy blueprint to ensure that school meals meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans requirements, that we motivate children to make food choices for a healthful diet, and that we support these changes through training and technical assistance for school food service professionals.

In support of this commitment for healthier schoolchildren, Team Nutrition



evolved as the implementation tool for this initiative. Extensive training and technical assistance have been provided to all school food service professionals for preparing meals that meet the new nutrition standards and for educating children about nutrition so they have the knowledge to choose foods that are good for them.

The Department has placed special emphasis on improving the quality of USDA commodity foods donated to NSLP, as well as their consistent and timely availability. The Commodities Improvement Council promotes the health of schoolchildren by improving the nutritional profile of USDA commodities while maintaining USDA's support for domestic agricultural markets. Based on the council's recommendations, USDA has reduced the fat, sodium, and sugar content of commodities and has increased the variety of low-fat and reduced-fat products.

USDA has greatly increased the amount of fresh produce available to schools and is now offering unprecedented amounts and varieties of fresh fruits and vegetables. A cooperative project with the Department of Defense (DOD) has allowed USDA to increase the variety of produce available to schools by utilizing DOD's buying and distribution system. USDA is also exploring ways to connect schools to small-resource farmers in their areas

to help the schools purchase fresh, local produce directly from the producers.

Eligibility: Any child, regardless of family income level, can receive a meal through NSLP. Children from families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the Federal poverty level are eligible to receive free meals. Children from families with incomes between 130 and 185 percent of poverty are eligible for reduced-price meals. Children from families with incomes over 185 percent of poverty pay the full price, which is established by the local school food authority.



Benefits: Children receive meals free or at low cost because of USDA support for the school meals programs. Most of that support comes in the form of cash reimbursements to schools for meals served. USDA's per-meal reimbursement rates for the contiguous United States July 1, 2001, through June 30, 2002, were \$ 2.09 for free meals; \$1.69 for reduced-price meals; and .20 cents for full-price meals. Reimbursement rates are higher in Alaska and Hawaii. Schools may charge no more than 40 cents for a reduced-price meal. They set their own prices for full-price meals, though they must operate their meal services on a nonprofit basis.

After school snacks are served free to all children in programs that operate in areas where at least 50 percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Schools are reimbursed at the free rate for each snack served.

In addition to cash reimbursements, schools are entitled to receive commodity foods, called "entitlement" foods, at an annually adjusted per-meal rate (15.5 cents per meal in School Year 2001-02) for each meal they serve. Schools can receive additional commodities, known as "bonus" commodities, when these are available from surplus stocks purchased by USDA under surplus removal and price support programs. USDA commodities make up approximately 17 percent of the cost of the food served by the average school food authority. The rest of the food served is purchased locally by the school food authority.

Funding: For FY 2002, the projected funding need for the National School Lunch Program is \$6.4 billion.

The Nutrition Assistance Programs in Puerto Rico, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

The Food Stamp Program in Puerto Rico was replaced in 1982 by a block grant program. American Samoa and the Northern Marianas in the Pacific also provide benefits under block grants. The programs provide cash or food benefits in place of food stamps or commodities.

Eligibility: The territories determine eligibility and allotments for their programs based on household size, income, assets, and other factors.

Benefits: The territories provide cash and coupons to participants rather than food stamps or food distribution. The grant can also be used for administrative expenses or in the case of Puerto Rico, for special projects related to food production and distribution.

Funding: In FY 2002, Congress appropriated \$1.35 billion for Puerto Rico, \$5.3 million for American Samoa, and funded \$7.1 million for the Commonwealth of Northern Marianas Islands food program.

Nutrition Services Incentive Program

Nutrition Services Incentive Program (NSIP) is the new name for the program formerly known as the Nutrition Program for the Elderly (NPE). The name change is the result of an amendment to the Older Americans Act (OAA) of 2000. The NSIP is administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service's (DHHS) Administration on Aging, but receives commodity foods and financial support from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS).

NSIP helps provide elderly persons with nutritionally sound meals through Meals-on-Wheels programs or in senior citizen centers and similar settings.

Eligibility: Age is the only factor used in determining eligibility. People age 60 or older and their spouses, regardless of age, are eligible for NSIP benefits. There is no income requirement to receive meals under NSIP, although the program targets lower income areas.

Benefits: Each recipient can contribute as much as he or she wishes toward the cost of the meal, but meals are free to those who cannot make any contribution.

Under NSIP, meals served must meet a specified percentage of the Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDAs) and the Dietary Guidelines for Americans in order to qualify for cash or commodity assistance.

Funding: Congress appropriated \$150 million for NSIP in FY 2002.

The School Breakfast Program

The School Breakfast Program (SBP) provides cash assistance to States to operate nonprofit breakfast programs in schools and residential child care institutions. The program operates in more than 72,000 schools and institutions, serving a daily average of some 7.4 million children. It is administered at the Federal level by FNS. State education agencies administer the SBP at the State level, and local school food authorities operate it in schools.

Eligibility: Any child at a participating school may receive a meal through SBP. Children from families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the Federal poverty level are eligible for free breakfasts. Children from families with incomes between 130 and 185 percent of the poverty level are eligible for reduced-price breakfasts. Children from families with incomes over 185 percent of poverty pay the full, locally established price for their breakfasts.

Benefits: Students receive their meals free or at low cost because USDA supports the School Breakfast Program with cash reimbursements for meals served. For School Year 2001-02, schools in the contiguous United States received reimbursements of \$1.15 for a free meal; 85

cents for a reduced-price meal; and 21 cents for a full-price meal. As with the National School Lunch Program, reimbursements are slightly higher in Alaska and Hawaii. Schools may charge no more than 30 cents for a reduced-price breakfast. Local schools set their own prices for full-price meals, but must operate on a nonprofit basis.

Funding: For FY 2002, Congress appropriated \$1.49 billion for SBP. Program funding for the School Breakfast Program is estimated to be \$1.57 billion.

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, commonly known as the WIC Program, is a grant program for States intended to improve the health of pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women, and infants and children up to 5 years old by providing supplemental foods, nutrition education, including breastfeeding promotion and support, and access to health care. A few State agencies provide food directly to participants, but most States provide WIC vouchers to WIC participants that they can use at authorized food stores for approved foods at no cost to the participant.

WIC provides each State with a grant of funds to serve its most needy eligible population. Because of documented successes of the WIC program in improving the nutritional well-being of participants, it has been expanded to serve more eligible people. In FY 2001, WIC served an average of more than 7.3 million people each month.

Eligibility: To be eligible for WIC, an applicant must be a pregnant, breastfeeding, or postpartum woman, or an infant or child under age 5, and must meet State residency requirements, meet an income standard, and be determined by a health professional to be at nutritional risk. This nutrition evaluation is done at no cost to the applicant.

Benefits: In most States, WIC participants receive vouchers that allow them to pur-





chase a monthly food package especially designed to supplement their diets. The foods provided are high in protein, calcium, iron, and vitamins A and C. WIC foods include iron-fortified infant formula and infant cereal; iron-fortified adult cereal; vitamin C-rich fruit or vegetable juice; eggs, milk, and cheese; and legumes such as peanut butter, dried beans, or peas. Special therapeutic formulas and foods are provided when prescribed by a physician for a specified medical condition.

WIC mothers are encouraged to breast-feed their babies whenever possible. Women who breastfeed their babies receive an enhanced WIC food package that includes tuna, carrots, cheese, legumes, and extra juice. Those who do not breastfeed their babies receive infant formula for the babies and a regular food package for themselves.

Funding: In FY 2002, Congress appropriated \$ 4.387 billion for the WIC Program.

The Special Milk Program

The Special Milk Program (SMP) provides milk to children in schools and child care institutions who do not participate in other Federal meal service programs. The program reimburses schools for the milk they serve.

Schools in the National School Lunch or School Breakfast Programs may also participate in SMP to provide milk to children in half-day pre-kindergarten and kindergarten programs where children do not have access to the school meal programs.

Expansion of the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs, which include milk, and the prohibition against using SMP to fund extra milk for lunch and breakfast program activities, has led to a substantial reduction in SMP since its peak in the late 1960's. In 2001, over 116 million half pints of milk were served through the SMP.

In 2001, nearly 7,000 schools and residential child care institutions participated, along with 1,300 summer camps and over 500 non-residential child care institutions.

Eligibility: Any child at a participating school or kindergarten program can get milk through SMP. Children may buy milk or receive it free, depending on the school's choice of program options. When local officials offer free milk under the program, any child from a family that meets income guidelines for free meals and milk is eligible.

Benefits: Participating schools and institutions receive reimbursement from the Federal Government for each half pint of milk served. They must operate their milk programs on a nonprofit basis and agree to use the Federal reimbursement to reduce the selling price of milk to all children.

Funding: In FY 2002, Congress appropriated \$16.9 million for SMP.

The Summer Food Service Program

The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) provides free meals to low-income children during school vacations.

SFSP was first created as part of a larger pilot program in 1968 and became a separate program in 1975. In the summer of 2001, more than 2.1 million children participated at more than 31,000 summer feeding sites.

The program is administered at the Federal level by FNS. Locally, it is operated by approved sponsors who receive reimbursement from USDA for the meals they serve. Sponsors provide meals at a central site such as a school or community center. All meals are served free.

SFSP operates in low-income areas where half or more of the children are from households with incomes at or below 185 percent of the Federal poverty guideline. Residential children's camps also may get reimbursement through SFSP for meals served to income-eligible children.

Eligibility: Children age 18 and under who participate in a school program for the mentally or physical handicapped and people over age 18 who are determined by a State educational agency to be

mentally or physically handicapped may receive meals through SFSP.

Benefits: At most sites, participants receive either one or two meals a day. Residential camps and sites that primarily serve children from migrant households may be approved to serve up to three meals per day.

Sponsors are reimbursed for documented operating and administrative costs.

Funding: In FY 2002, Congress appropriated \$ 312 million for SFSP.

USDA Disaster Assistance

FNS is the primary agency responsible for providing Federal food assistance in response to domestic disasters such as fires, floods, storms, earthquakes and any other emergencies declared as such by the President. FNS provides assistance through the Food Distribution Program and the Disaster Food Stamp Program.

The WIC Farmers' Market

Nutrition Program

The WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) was established in 1992.

The program has two goals: to provide fresh, nutritious, unprepared food, such as fruits and vegetables, from farmers' markets to WIC participants who are at nutritional risk; and to expand consumers' awareness and use of farmers' markets. This program, operated in conjunction with the regular WIC Program, is operational in 44 State agencies, including 4 Indian Tribes, 1 Territory, and the District of Columbia. During FY 2001, 2.1 million WIC participants received FMNP benefits through 2,500 farmers' markets.

Eligibility: Women, infants over 4 months old, and children who receive WIC program benefits or who are WIC-eligible, may purchase foods at farmers' markets through FMNP.

Benefits: Fresh produce can be purchased with FMNP coupons. State agencies may limit FMNP sales to specific produce that is locally grown to encourage participants to support the farmers in their own State.

Funding: In FY 2002, \$25 million was appropriated for FMNP.

