

USDA Food & Nutrition Service

Nutrition Assistance Block Grants (NABG):

Quick Facts

Programs

Food Stamp Program
National School Lunch Program
School Breakfast Program
Summer Food Service Program
Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants & Children (WIC)
Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program
Special Milk Program
Child and Adult Care Food Program
Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program
Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations
WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program
Nutrition Assistance Block Grants
Commodity Supplemental Food Program
The Emergency Food Assistance Program
Disaster Assistance

Description

- Provides food assistance to low-income households in the U.S. territories of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), in lieu of the Food Stamp Program (FSP).
- With the authority granted them via the block grants, the U.S. territories establish eligibility and benefit levels for their nutrition assistance programs.
- The Nutrition Assistance Program in Puerto Rico is most similar to the FSP, although there are real differences. For example:
 - ◊ the Commonwealth may use a small portion of its grant money to finance projects that are likely to improve or stimulate agriculture, food production, and food distribution.
 - ◊ Puerto Rico allows 25% of the assistance benefit to be used as cash for the purchase of food. All benefits are distributed via electronic benefit debit cards, or Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT), just like the FSP.
- In the CNMI, 30 percent of the assistance benefits are earmarked for the purchase of local commodities (food and nonfood items such as fishing equipment, garden supplies and livestock). This policy provides work incentives to develop self-sufficiency, and stimulates economic development and local food production.
- The American Samoa Nutrition Assistance Program serves low-income elderly, blind or disabled participants. Coupons are issued to participating households to purchase food.

Background

- In December 1980, USDA was given authority to work with American Samoa and the CNMI to design modified nutrition assistance programs tailored to their unique cultural, social and economic circumstances. Effective July 1, 1982, the FSP in Puerto Rico was replaced with a block grant. USDA and the territories continue to work together to provide access to nutrition assistance benefits.

Participants

- The block grants serve more than 1 million participants each month.
- Low-income individuals and families are eligible for benefits as determined by each territory.

Budget

- In fiscal year 2005, Puerto Rico was granted \$1.495 billion for their program, American Samoa was given \$5.3 million, and CNMI \$8.4 million. In total, the federal government spent \$1.509 billion on nutrition assistance to these U.S. territories.

Contact information

- Yvette Jackson, Regional Administrator, Mid-Atlantic Regional Office, Robbinsville, New Jersey (609) 259-5025.
- Allen Ng, Regional Administrator, Western Regional Office, San Francisco, California. (415) 705-1310.



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