

**FDPIR Funding Work Group
March 8, 2007 Conference Call Notes**

Attending	Not Attending
Nancy Egan (Shoshone-Paiute Tribes), representing the NAFDPIR Regional Vice President for the Western Region	Melinda Newport (Chickasaw Nation), representing ONFACT
Gale Dills (Cherokee Tribe of North Carolina), representing the Southeast Region	
Linday Rayon (Muscogee (Creek) Nation), representing the NAFDPIR Regional Vice President for the Southwest Region	
Tony Nertoli (Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians), NAFDPIR President	
Red Gates, NAFDPIR Regional Vice President for the Mountain Plains Region	
Thomas Yellowhair (Navajo Nation), representing WAFDPIR	
Mary Trottier (Spirit Lake), representing the Mountain Plains Region	
Susie Roy (Leech Lake Chippewa), NAFDPIR Regional Vice President for the Midwest Region	
Betty Jo Graveen (Lac Du Flambeau), representing the Midwest Region	
Elvira Jarka, FNS-MWRO	
Chris Hennelly, FNS-SWRO	
Madeline Viens, FNS-WRO	
Don DeBoer, FNS-MPRO	
Cindy Wheeler, FNS-SERO	
Laura Castro, FNS-HQ, FDD	
Nancy Theodore, FNS-HQ (staff support) Melanie Casey, Facilitator	

Review of draft notes from the February 8, 2007 conference call - Nancy Theodore made a final request for changes to the draft notes.

Review of draft notes from February 21, 2007 conference call - Nancy Theodore asked if any of the work group members wanted changes made to the draft notes. No changes were offered.

General comments from work group members on the February 21st conference call – Nancy Theodore asked if any of the work group members had any comments they wanted to make about issues discussed in the February 21, 2007 conference call. No comments were offered.

Follow-up discussion on balance of work group members and introduction of new members – Nancy Theodore reminded the work group members that the Mountain Plains and Midwest Regions were asked to nominate additional members to balance the work group membership. She asked Red Gates and Mary Trottier if Mary’s appointment had been finalized, and requested clarification by email for the record. Red stated that he was following up with the Program Directors in the Mountain Plains Region to

confirm Mary’s appointment. Nancy extended a welcome to Mary Trottier, Betty Jo Graveen who was selected by the Midwest Region, and Cindy Wheeler, who is representing FNS’ Southeast Region. Nancy asked Betty Jo, Cindy, and Mary Trottier to introduce themselves to the work group.

Nancy reported the following on representation by the Tribal/State programs:

Northeast Region	No current representation, although another invitation has been extended to the two ITOs via the Regional Office
Southeast Region	Gail Dills
Midwest Region	Susie Roy and Betty Jo Graveen
Mountain Plains Region	Red Gates and Mary Trottier
Southwest Region	Linday Rayon and Melinda Newport
Western Region	Nancy Egan and Thomas Yellowhair

Tony Nertoli represents all the member ITOs and State agencies of NAFDPIR.

Role of ITO and State Food Distribution Program representatives on the work group – Nancy Theodore stated that when the work group was first formed the ITO and State agency representatives were asked to represent the views of their respective regions, not just their own program. The work group members were expected to report back to the Program Directors in their region on issues discussed by the work group and provide feed back from the Program Directors in their region to the work group. She asked if anyone had comments about their role as a representative of their region. No comments were offered. She also asked if any of the work group members felt they would not be able to perform their duty as a representative of their region. None of the work group members responded that they would not be able to comply.

Follow-up on the issue raised in February 21 conference call regarding the impact of WAFDPIR and NAFDPIR elections on the membership of the work group – Nancy Theodore reminded the work group about the issue raised regarding the impact of the WAFDPIR and NAFDPIR elections on the membership of the work group. She asked for comments/proposals from the work group members.

- It was clarified that:
 - The election for the NAFDPIR Mountain Plains Regional Vice-President position would be conducted at the June 2007 NAFDPIR conference.
 - The election for the NAFDPIR President position would be conducted at the June 2007 NAFDPIR conference.
 - The election for the NAFDPIR Western Regional Vice-President position would be conducted at the end of March 2007 at the WAFDPIR meeting.
 - No other NAFDPIR Regional Vice-President position is up for reelection in the next few months.
- Madeline Viens proposed that a letter go to WAFDPIR prior to the election at the end of March 2007 requesting that the work group member currently representing the NAFDPIR Western Regional Vice-President position continue on the work group after the election.
- Chris Hennelly and Susie Roy supported similar letters for the other positions up for election.
- It was agreed that Nancy Theodore will draft the three letters and forward the draft letters to the work group members via email for comment:
 - Letter to Nancy Egan, President of WAFDPIR, regarding the NAFDPIR Western Regional Vice-President position;
 - Letter to Joe Bluehorse, President of the Mountain Plains Regional Association Executive Board, regarding the NAFDPIR Mountain Plains Regional Vice-President position; and

- Letter to Tony Nertoli, President of NAFDPIR, regarding the NAFDPIR President position.
- The work group will be asked to provide comments on the WAFDPIR letter by email due to the time limitation imposed by the upcoming WAFDPIR meeting.
- The other two letters may be discussed during the next conference call or at the meeting in April.

Follow-up on change in FNS' position on streamlining the funding allocation process – Nancy Theodore reiterated what she reported in the February 21 conference call. At the January 2007 meetings, FNS officials heard many Tribal officials say that they were opposed to the preliminary proposal because a funding formula is not appropriate for FDPIR; a one-size-fits-all formula approach does not take operational differences into account. FNS officials also heard Tribal officials say that they were opposed to the preliminary proposal because they did not want to lose their ability to negotiate their federal funding. FNS believes that there is still an urgent need for a change in the way funds are allocated to the Regional Offices, and has not given up on the goal of an objective and equitable funding allocation process. However, Roberto Salazar, FNS Administrator, is willing to be flexible in order to address the concerns of the Tribal officials. Mr. Salazar would like the work group to find a solution that would provide an objective, equitable and easy to understand funding allocation process while achieving the greatest level of acceptability among the ITOs and State agencies. Nancy asked for comments/questions from the work group members.

- Red Gates asked if written guidance would be provided by Mr. Salazar. Nancy and Laura Castro responded that they expected written guidance to be issued soon.
- Red Gates commented that his Tribal Council wants to know what direction the work group will be taking. His Tribal Council informally expressed opposition to applying the work group's preliminary proposal as the means to allocate funds to the FNS Regional Offices.
- Elvira Jarka requested a definition of "full budget negotiations." She commented that the Midwest Regional Office doesn't conduct "full budget negotiations."
- Madeline Viens also commented that the FNS Western Regional Offices doesn't conduct "full budget negotiations."
- Cindy Wheeler requested a definition of "negotiation."
- Don DeBoer commented that there are two issues—how funds will be allocated to the FNS Regional Offices, and how the Regional Offices will negotiate with the ITOs/State agencies.
- Nancy Theodore pointed out that comments were made at the January 2007 meetings that more administrative funding is needed for FDPIR. She referenced a chart attached to the conference call agenda that shows the additional funds FDPIR received in FY 2006 and FY 2007 and the proposed additional funds that FNS would receive under the FY 2008 President's Budget and the Farm Bill Proposal. For example, under the combined effect of the FY 2008 President's Budget and the Farm Bill Proposal, it is proposed that FDPIR receive nearly \$4 million in additional funding in FY 2008 to ensure that ITOs/State agencies would not experience a reduction in funds under a new funding methodology. The chart indicates that separate funds have been set aside for the implementation of a new program in Alaska in FY 2006 and FY 2007.
- Tony Nertoli commented that a Tribe had recently received federal recognition and may apply to participate in FDPIR.
- Nancy Theodore commented that only about 64% [correction 77%] of the Tribes in the continental United States participate in FDPIR. Some Tribes have inquired about participation in FDPIR but have never submitted an application. Many of the Tribes not participating in FDPIR are not Tribes that have casino revenue and offer large per capita payments. It is not known why those Tribes do not participate in FDPIR.
- Red Gates commented that some of the Tribes may choose to use the Food Stamp Program rather than FDPIR.

- Nancy Egan asked if FNS would request additional funds for new Tribes that applied for participation in FDPIR. Nancy Theodore responded that that was the position taken with Alaska (i.e., additional funds were requested to support the Alaska program so that the funding to currently participating ITOs would not be diminished by the addition of a new program), but she did not know how other situations would be handled by USDA or Congress.
- Thomas Yellowhair asked if FNS would aggressively support the Farm Bill provision for additional funding. Laura Castro responded that the proposal was fully supported by FNS and the Secretary of USDA.
- Tony Nertoli commented that he had read the transcripts and the comments submitted on the preliminary proposal. He asked why some programs are under funded and why some programs did not have access to infrastructure funds. Nancy Theodore responded that the comment letter regarding lack of access to recent infrastructure funds was believed to be a misunderstanding by the commenter. There has been no special appropriation for infrastructure since FY 2004. Also, all of the ITOs were surveyed prior to allocation of the FY 2003-2004 special appropriations for infrastructure funds and some ITOs/State agencies did not respond with requests for funds for that purpose. Nancy also stated that some of the under funding stems from inequities in the way funds are allocated to the Regional Offices. The percentage of funds that some Regional Office receives is not sufficient to meet the needs of the ITOs/State agencies within those regions.
- Red Gates commented that he understands that some ITOs are “hurting” financially. This was discussed at the NAFDPIR annual meeting in Seattle in 2006.
- Chris Hennelly commented that all of the ITOs in the Southwest Region received some of the special appropriation for infrastructure needs in FY 2003-2004, but it still was not enough to cover all of the need.
- Thomas Yellowhair asked how the 25 percent match would fit in with the approach of changing the way funds are allocated to the Regional Offices. He pointed out that some ITOs are not meeting the 25 percent match.
- Chris Hennelly commented that it is part of the Regional Office Management Evaluation process to ensure that ITOs expenses are reasonable and necessary.
- Nancy Egan commented that the work group needs clarification on the direction it should take. Is Mr. Salazar requesting an alternative to the preliminary proposal or an alternative to the current budget process? Is the task to determine how the funding will be allocated from FNS headquarters to the Regional Offices?
- Elvira Jarka and Madeline Viens expressed concerns about Regional Office workload.
- Red Gates commented that the Food Stamp Act eliminated the commodity programs and protest by the Tribes led to the reinstatement of the commodity program in the form of FDPIR. However, the Tribes were “ignored” in the development of the rules for the program.

Preparation for April meeting/Action Plan – Nancy Theodore reminded the work group members to make their travel plans for the meeting in April. She referenced the travel fact sheet and travel voucher forwarded to the work group members with the conference call agenda.

- Mary Trotter reported that she would not be able to participate in the April meeting.
- Thomas Yellowhair reported that his travel request had been denied due to lack of federal funding beyond March 31. Nancy Theodore suggested that he resubmit the travel request when his program receives its remaining FY 2007 funds. FNS is waiting for the Office of Management and Budget to release the funding to FNS.
- Earlier in the call, Betty Jo Graveen asked if there was a time frame for the work group to complete its recommendation. Nancy Theodore responded that the work group had previously developed an action plan but did not currently have an updated action plan. Nancy planned to suggest to the work group that it develop a new action plan during the next conference call or during the April meeting.

Next Conference Call – March 21, 3-4:30pm Eastern Time

- It was suggested that the call be scheduled for 2 hours, since the last two calls had run over and there was a lot of issues to discuss prior to the April meeting.
- Nancy Theodore suggested that the call be scheduled from 2:30 to 4:30. She asked the work group members to contact her if this time frame posed a problem.

Attachments to the conference call agenda:

- Draft summary of February 8, 2007 conference call
- Draft summary of February 21, 2007 conference call
- Melanie Casey's notes about Group Decision-Making Processes
- Chart on actual and proposed increases in administrative funding from FY 2006-2017
- June 2006 Guidelines for Considering Proposed Funding Methodologies
- Interim comment analysis on the written comments received as of March 7, 2007. Nancy will also prepare a comment analysis on the comments in the transcripts from the four January meetings.
- Chart on the Regional Office Budget Negotiation Process
- Write-up by Chris Hennelly on the budget approval process in the Southwest Region
- Travel fact sheet and travel voucher form