



USDA Food and Nutrition Service

Fighting Hunger & Improving Nutrition for Over 40 Years

IMPORTANT DATES IN FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE (FNS) HISTORY

- 1862 USDA is established by President Lincoln.
- 1889 USDA becomes a cabinet level office.
- 1894 The first organized school food service program is started in Philadelphia.
- 1935 Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1935, Section 32, PL 74-320 establishes surplus commodity donation programs.
- 1939 First Food Stamp Program begins and Mabel McFiggin of Rochester, New York makes the first coupon transaction.
- 1946 The National School Lunch Act is signed by President Truman establishing the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). The legislation came in response to claims that many American men had been rejected for World War II military service because of diet-related health problems.
- 1949 Agriculture Appropriation Act, Section 416, establishes the price support program to provide commodities to schools. (Grains, Dairy and Peanuts)
- 1955 The Special Milk Program (SMP) is established.
- 1961 The Food Stamp Program (FSP) is established as a pilot.
- 1962 Section 11 of the National School Lunch Act authorizes reimbursement for meals served free or at substantially reduced prices to needy children.
- 1964 The modern Food Stamp Program is made permanent.
- 1966 School Breakfast Program (SBP) is established as a pilot.
- 1969 The Food and Nutrition Service is established.
- 1972 The Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) is established as a pilot.

- 1973 Direct appropriations are provided for the supplemental food program (precursor to CSFP) to serve the needs of recipients who cannot participate in WIC.
- 1974 The Food Stamp Program begins to operate nationwide.
- 1975 The WIC program is made permanent.
- 1975 The School Breakfast Program becomes permanent.
- 1977 The Food Stamp Act authorizes the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) as an alternative to the FSP.
- 1977 CSFP is permanently authorized and administrative funds are provided to States under the 1977 Farm Bill.
- 1981 The Omnibus Reconciliation Act reduces paid meal reimbursement, causing a significant drop in participation in the National School Lunch Program.
- 1983 The “Temporary” Emergency Assistance Program, known as “TEFAP,” is created to provide structured food distribution and provide administrative funding to help distribute foods.
- 1984 The first Food Stamp Program Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) transaction takes place in Reading, PA.
- 1988 The Hunger Prevention Act of 1988 authorizes pilot projects to test the efficiency and effectiveness of FSP Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT). This act also authorizes the WIC Farmers’ Market pilot projects.
- 1989 CCFP becomes the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).
- 1990 “Temporary” is removed from the TEFAP name, recognizing the ongoing need for the program. The program is renamed The Emergency Food Assistance Program.
- 1992 The WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) is established to provide WIC participants access to more fresh fruits and vegetables to recipients through farmers’ markets.
- 1996 Most legal immigrants are made ineligible for Food Stamp benefits and a time limit is imposed on able-bodied adults in welfare reform.
- 2001 The Senior Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) is established as a pilot program to provide low-income seniors access to fresh fruits and vegetables through farmers’ markets, roadside stands, and community-supported agriculture programs.

- 2002 Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program pilot is authorized for four states and an Indian Tribal Organization (ITO); program provides fresh fruits and vegetables outside the meals programs to selected schools to promote healthier food choices.
- 2002 The Farm Bill restores Food Stamp eligibility for legal permanent residents. This act also establishes the SFMNP as a permanent program.
- 2004 Implementation of Electronic Benefits Transfer systems (begun in the 1990s) is completed nationwide.
- 2008 Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program authority is consolidated in the National School Lunch Act for selected schools in all States and provides \$40 million beginning in Fiscal Year 2009.
- 2008 As of October 1, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) becomes the new name for the Food Stamp Program.
- 2008 SNAP participation surpasses 30 million persons in September, an all-time high.
- 2009 Paper Food Stamp paper coupons expire on June 17, 2009.
- Today Food and Nutrition Service programs now serve one in five Americans.