



## **Georgia Guidelines for Handling and Distributing USDA Food**

JANUARY 1, 2019

## **Program History**

USDA's - The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) is designed to provide the state with a variety of food commodities for use by programs which serve low-income people.

### **Who can receive USDA/TEFAP**

Recipients meet specific income guidelines. Currently, families whose income is 130% of the federal poverty level or less can receive USDA/TEFAP foods. Must follow TEFAP Household Eligibility Form 832 (Current Year Date on Form).

### **Who can distribute USDA/TEFAP**

Emergency feeding organizations (EFO) including food banks, food pantries and soup kitchens are classified as Tier 1 agencies and have priority over other eligible recipient agencies in the distribution of TEFAP commodities pursuant to §251.4(h). **Because of the demand for emergency feeding by Tier 1 agencies, TEFAP is rarely available to other Tiers of eligible agencies and can only be distributed to other Tiers with approval by the State Agency.**

Tier 2 agencies are Charitable Institutions (including hospitals and retirement homes);

Tier 3 agencies include Summer camps for children, or child nutrition programs providing food service;

Tier 4 agencies include nutrition projects operating under the Older Americans Act of 1965 (Nutrition Program for the Elderly), including projects that operate congregate nutrition sites and projects that provide home-delivered meals;

Tier 5 Disaster relief programs may distribute TEFAP only after every Tier 1 agency in the state of Georgia has received TEFAP.

## **BASIC GUIDELINES**

- 1. Georgians are to receive USDA/ TEFAP food products without requiring identification, utility bills or any other form of verification. A USDA/TEFAP application form 832 is available in English and Spanish. Georgia's eligibility process for household receipt of USDA/TEFAP foods consists of the following:**
  - Signed self-declaration of total household income,
  - Residency within service area of EFO (emergency feeding organizations) ,
  - Name of household member receiving commodities,
  - Number of persons in the household, and

- Address of the household to the extent practicable.

Emergency Feeding Organizations cannot require that recipients provide a social security number or any other form of identification in order to receive USDA. USDA/TEFAP forms should be kept separate from files for other services or programs if those programs require identification, utility bills or other forms of verification.

2. All USDA/TEFAP records, forms and invoices must be kept on file (paper or electronic format) by the member agency for three (3) years plus the current year. Records may be stored on site or in another location, but should be available during a monitoring visit by Feeding The Valley staff or State of Georgia USDA/TEFAP program. If your records are stored in another location, notify the reviewer so you can arrange to have the records brought to the agency site or the reviewer may go to where the records are stored.
3. Feeding The Valley staff will review all your agency's USDA forms, records and invoices during the regular monitoring visit.
4. Representatives from the State of Georgia's USDA/TEFAP program may visit your agency or the Feeding The Valley Food Bank – at any time. Failure to comply with this request to see records and storage will remove your organization from the USDA/TEFAP eligible list.
5. Remember, no food lasts indefinitely. Refer to the Best if Used by Dates for guidance on the shelf life of the item.
6. Damaged or spoiled foods must be returned to the Feeding The Valley as soon as possible.
7. If your agency orders more food than can be distributed and the food gets out of date and must be discarded, your agency may be required to reimburse the State of Georgia for the cost of that product.
8. Label USDA/TEFAP must be stored and labeled separate from other products, so that it is not confused with other product.

### **EMERGENCY FEEDING ORGANIZATIONS REPORTING**

The USDA/TEFAP monthly report must be submitted each month by the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month for the previous month. For example, March's report is due by April 5<sup>th</sup>. Submit a report even if you do not have activity. Failure to submit reports can result in the suspension of USDA/TEFAP eligibility.

### **DISTRIBUTION AND STORAGE REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL USDA/TEFAP AGENCIES**

- Yearly Civil Rights training for everyone who interacts with clients (staff and regular volunteers), must be conducted as well as a log maintained of those trained.
- Post in a public area easily visible to clients the Nondiscrimination "And Justice for All" statement/poster.

- Keep thermometers in pantry where USDA product is stored and maintain a temperature range of 50-70 degrees F.
- Keep thermometers for freezers and refrigerators with USDA products.
  - maintain a daily temperature log for freezers 0 degrees F
  - maintain a daily temperature log for refrigerators 36–40 degrees F. Agencies that are not open every day should maintain a log for every day they are open.
- Keep all food bank invoices.
- Form 832 the TEFAP application is available in English and Spanish and may not be altered in any manner. All 832's must be maintained for 3 years plus the current year.
- Store food off the ground (on pallets or shelves, for example) in a sanitary environment.
- Control for pests through regular spraying and maintain a log of dates of service.
- Keep records on pest control. A log or calendar notation or receipts for chemicals may be kept to document in-house spraying. If using a professional service, a copy of the contract and records of their visits will document this.

**For Food Pantries:**

- Distribute TEFAP to a given household no more than once a month.
- Complete a Household Record Distribution Form each day you distribute TEFAP. That form lists what you are giving out to each family.
- Establish distribution ranges of food for different household sizes and distribute food in a fair and equitable manner. Clients may refuse items they do not want. A max of 6 items of one product, maybe given to each household.
- Keep records of the distribution ranges for household sizes for your agency and note when changes are made to those ranges.

**For On Premise Use of USDA (soup kitchens and other emergency feeding sites):**

- Be able to provide verifiable data regarding number of meals using USDA food as ingredients (keep internal records).