







## The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) and The State Food Purchase Program (SFPP)

Government distribution of surplus commodities (especially cheese) began in 1981. In 1988 Congress expanded the program and required the USDA to purchase additional commodities for low-income households and local emergency feeding organizations. TEFAP is USDA-purchased high quality food, consisting of canned fruits, juices, beef and pork, and dry pasta to name just a few things. It is stored in four distribution centers across the state, ready for counties to accept delivery. The counties then distribute the product to food pantries and soup kitchens.

The SFPP is a state-funded program to augment the foods available for distribution within the charitable food network. It was created during the economic recession of the early 1980s as a complement to the federally funded TEFAP program. SFPP provides grants to be used by county governments or their designated "lead agencies" to purchase, process, repackage, transport or store food products, and to distribute that food to soup kitchens, food pantries, homeless shelters, and other charitable food programs.

 <p>Who can provide the service?</p>	<p>Churches, community groups, civic groups, and other non-profit organizations can distribute these foods. Interested programs should call the "lead agency" in their county and ask how to begin receiving these commodities. To obtain the name of the lead agency in your county, call the PA Department of Agriculture at 717-787-2940 or call the PA Hunger Action Center at 717-525-9807.</p>
 <p>How is it financed?</p>	<p>The SFPP is a line item in the state budget for \$17.338 million; the money is distributed to the counties. TEFAP food comes to PA from the U.S. Department of Agriculture via an annual Congressional appropriation. About \$7.5 million in food was purchased in 2010-11. Additional "bonus commodities" are made available to PA by the USDA from time to time through purchases it makes to support commodity prices. The value of bonus commodities coming to PA was \$13.3 million in 2010-11.</p>
 <p>Who can receive this service?</p>	<p>In Pennsylvania, recipients must be at or below 150% of poverty to receive TEFAP and SFPP food. Over 300,000 households receive food assistance from either SFPP or TEFAP each quarter.</p>
 <p>What is provided?</p>	<p>A variety of nutritious foods including meat, poultry, dairy, vegetables, fruits, and grains are part of this program. Products include perishable, non-perishable, and frozen goods. Pantries distribute foods by the bag (a few days' supply) at weekly distributions, or in boxes for less frequent distributions.</p>
 <p>Contact</p>	<p>To inquire about the SFPP or the TEFAP lead agency in your county, call the PA Department of Agriculture at 717-787-2940 or the PA Hunger Action Center at 717-525-9807.</p> <p>Local charitable food programs that serve people up to and including 150% of poverty are chosen by the county's lead agency. To identify the charitable food programs in your area, call the Community Action Agency in your county; the number can be found in the Blue Pages of the phonebook.</p>
 <p>Suggestions for advocacy</p>	<p>Let your state representatives know how much SFPP and your federal representatives how much TEFAP are needed and that funding levels need to be increased so that they can meet rising demand and food costs.</p>