



# The Emergency Food Assistance Program

## WHAT IS TEFAP?

TEFAP is a federal nutrition program that moves food from farms to food banks to individuals and families facing hunger.

## How does TEFAP work?

Through TEFAP, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) purchases healthy foods—fruits, vegetables and other staples—from U.S. growers and producers. Feeding America network food banks (and other food-distributing organizations) then partner with states to distribute these USDA foods to people facing hunger.

TEFAP funding for food purchases is set by the farm bill every five years and, in emergencies, through other legislation. The purchases provide a win-win for food banks, farmers, and individuals and families facing hunger.

In fiscal year 2022, TEFAP provided \$399 million in food purchases nationwide. USDA also provided \$516 million in bonus commodity food purchases during the same period, distributed through TEFAP.

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## How much food does TEFAP provide to food banks?

TEFAP is a cornerstone of the Feeding America network's food supply. The program provides about 30% of the food distributed through Feeding America food banks and local hunger-relief programs.

Between July 2021 and June 2022, the Feeding America food bank network received 1.24 billion pounds of food from TEFAP, providing over 1 billion meals to people facing hunger.

TEFAP is hunger lifeline for rural communities, in particular. In 2020, 96% of rural counties received TEFAP food items distributed by a food bank within the Feeding America network.

## What types of food does TEFAP provide?

TEFAP offers more than 120 nutritious foods, including fruits, vegetables, eggs, meat, poultry, fish, nuts, milk, cheese, and whole-grain and enriched-grain products, such as rice, cereal and pasta.



TEFAP provides over  
**20%**  
of the food distributed  
through the Feeding  
America network.

# How can Congress keep TEFAP strong to help end hunger and support U.S. agriculture?

**IN THE 2023 FARM BILL, FEEDING AMERICA CALLS ON CONGRESS TO:**

## Reauthorize and increase to **\$500 million per year** mandatory funding for TEFAP food purchases, adjusted for inflation.

This would double the annual amount of funding for TEFAP entitlement commodities set by the farm bill. Strong investments in TEFAP and other federal nutrition programs will help individuals and families facing hunger put food on the table. Increased TEFAP funding will also support the U.S. agricultural economy.

## Reauthorize and increase to **\$200 million per year** discretionary funding for TEFAP storage and distribution.

## Reauthorize **\$15 million per year** in discretionary funding for TEFAP infrastructure grants.

These funds will help food banks offset the cost of storing and transporting USDA foods, especially in rural communities. They will help cover expenses like refrigeration and fuel.



**LEARN MORE**  
[FeedingAmericaAction.org](https://FeedingAmericaAction.org)

If you have questions,  
email the Feeding America  
Government Relations Team.

**QUESTIONS**  
[policy@feedingamerica.org](mailto:policy@feedingamerica.org)



**Support Feeding America and help end hunger. Donate. Volunteer. Advocate. Educate.**

Feeding America is the largest hunger-relief organization in the United States. Through a network of more than 200 food banks, 21 statewide food bank associations, and over 60,000 faith-based and charitable partner agencies, food pantries and meal programs, we helped provide 5.2 billion meals to tens of millions of people in need last year. [FeedingAmerica.org](https://FeedingAmerica.org)