



**Alabama State Department of Education  
State Plan  
The Emergency Food Assistance Program**



The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE), in its capacity as administering agency for The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) will implement the procedures herein described effective immediately and will be submitted to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) for approval. Once submitted and approved, the State Plan is considered permanent, with amendments submitted at the State agency's initiative, or at FNS's request. All amendments are subject to FNS approval.

The terms "eligible recipient agency (ERA)" and "distribution site" shall have the meaning ascribed by the 7 CFR, Part 251.

**I. General Information:**

The Food Distribution (FD) Program staff is composed of five full-time personnel. TEFAP is a part-time responsibility for four of these personnel. The administrator allocates 15% of his/her time, one surplus commodity administrator allocates 50% of his/her time, two accountants allocate 50% of their time, and the secretary allocates 15% of his/her time for TEFAP.

The state encourages the ERAs to provide newsletters or information flyers outlining the benefits and responsibilities of participation in TEFAP to its non-participating agencies. ERAs are also asked to recruit new members through word of mouth and local community awareness efforts.

The state will work with all ERAs to explore the distribution of TEFAP in rural, remote, and tribal areas within their service regions.

TEFAP will be administered by the ALSDE FD Program section, which is the distributing agency for USDA Foods. The mailing address is 5303 Gordon Persons Building, P. O. Box 302101, Montgomery, AL 36130-2101; the street address is 50 North Ripley Street, Montgomery, AL 36104; the telephone number is (334) 694-4857; the fax number is (334) 694-4955; and the contact is Angelice Lowe, whose email address is [alowe@alsde.edu](mailto:alowe@alsde.edu).

**II. Distribution System – Food Bank:**

ALSDE FD will allocate USDA Foods to four main ERAs (Food Banks), which will receive direct shipments from the USDA. The food banks' allocation percentages will be determined by the number of people determined to be in poverty in their respective service areas according to the poverty information from the 2010 census or more current governmental poverty guideline information as it becomes available. These four food banks are the only ERAs for TEFAP with whom ALSDE will enter into USDA Foods agreements. In order to determine what available USDA Foods works best for each food bank distribution system, the ALSDE FD staff will garner the food bank's program coordinator's interest through several communication methods (i.e., email, survey, and/or poll), whichever deems most appropriate at the time. This process will occur once or twice each calendar year as well as each time there is a bonus offering of TEFAP foods.

### **Allocation System:**

The soup kitchens and the food pantries as well as smaller food banks will all pull USDA Foods from the four main food banks identified in section IV. Each of these sub-agencies must enter into a USDA Foods agreement with one of the four main food banks that receive direct delivery shipments from the USDA.

The soup kitchens and food pantries are required to pay a shared maintenance fee to the food bank on USDA Foods pulled from that food bank.

These ERAs will be allocated and shall accept only the amount of USDA Foods that can be used without waste as well as to prevent excess inventory of 6 months or more.

There is no state-mandated distribution rate of TEFAP USDA Foods per household. Each ERA is responsible for determining the quantity and types of TEFAP USDA Foods and other donated foods issued to a household. Among the factors that may be considered are (1) the amount of food available on inventory, (2) number of persons in the household, (3) number of clients served by the ERA, (4) frequency of distribution, etc. Households will be permitted to refuse any part of an allotment that they do not intend to use.

Records will be maintained by these ERAs for the required period (three years plus current from the close of the Federal Fiscal Year to which they pertain or longer if related to an audit or investigation in progress) and will be examined by the state during the agency review.

### **Eligibility Criteria:**

The state eligibility criteria for the receipt of USDA food by the households are as follows:

1. Proof of eligibility to receive Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) (Formerly Food Stamps), or
2. Proof of eligibility to receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) (Formerly AFDC), or
3. Proof of eligibility to receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI), or
4. Self-Declaration Statement attesting that total household income falls at 185% of the poverty Guideline Index.

Examples of documents that are acceptable for proving eligibility for a means-tested assistance program (eligibility criteria under #1 - #3 above) are a program identification card, an award letter of official benefits statement from the administering agency of the application program, or a benefits check. In the case of SNAP eligibility, an authorization-to-participate (ATP) card or voucher is also sufficient proof.

If the household member does not have such documents with him/her at the time of application, or the household does not participate in any of the above mentioned programs among the state's eligibility criteria, the ERA will be required to provide him/her with an application form that includes a self-declaration statement to sign, attesting that the total amount of household income is 185% the current income poverty guidelines (eligibility criteria, under #4 above), using the income poverty guidelines provided annually by the USDA.

Applicants shall reside in a county served by the ERAs to which the request for benefits is made. Applicants can voluntarily provide an address at the time of application, but it is not required. The applicants will be required to provide a self-declaration of residency.

The state eligibility criteria, as described above, will be specified in the program agreement between the ERA and the ALSDE.

**Complaints:**

The SDA shall be responsible for ensuring that all complaints regarding the emergency food assistance program are resolved appropriately. The following steps shall be taken:

1. Upon receipt of any complaint regarding TEFAP, the ERAs shall document the date the complaint was received, the participant's name, address, and the nature of the complaint.
2. The ERAs shall forward a copy of the complaint to the SDA immediately for a follow-up investigation.
3. The SDA staff assigned to TEFAP shall initiate contact with the participant to determine the validity and seriousness of the complaint.
4. If the complaint is not of a serious nature, the SDA shall work with the ERA and participant to resolve the complaint.
5. Any complaints deemed to be of a serious nature shall be forwarded to the USDA - FNS, Southeast Regional Office within ten (10) days for further investigation and a final disposition.
6. Throughout this process the applicant and/or participant information must be kept confidential by all parties involved.

**III. Financial Management:**

The ALSDE agrees to distribute to the ERAs in accordance with 7 CFR, Parts 250 and 251, and regulations set forth by the USDA, those USDA Foods that are made available from the USDA. The ALSDE will disburse a minimum of 40% of TEFAP administrative grant money to reimburse the ERAs for the payment of actual storage/distribution costs or any other allowable administrative costs, which the agency may incur. The remainder of the administrative grant not used for state or recipient agency administrative purposes will be used for additional food purchases.

**State Matching Requirements:**

As required by PL 99-198, TEFAP administrative funds spent for state-level expenses annually will be matched, dollar for dollar with state funds.

**IV. Monitoring and Review:**

**A. Personnel Staffing:**

Responsibility for monitoring the ERAs lies with the Child Nutrition Programs (CNP) of the ALSDE. CNP personnel will be utilized to accomplish on-site program reviews. Staff coordination and correspondence with the ERAs, as well as reviewer training, will be the responsibility of CNP.

**B. Eligible Recipient Agency Reviews:**

At least 25 percent of the four food banks with whom the state has USDA Foods agreements will be reviewed annually. These food banks are listed below:

**Heart of Alabama Food Bank**

521 Trade Center Street  
Montgomery, AL 36108-2107  
(334) 263-3784  
(800) 768-3784 Toll Free  
(334) 262-6854 FAX

**Community Food Bank of Central Alabama**

107 Walter Davis Drive  
Birmingham, AL 35209  
(205) 942-8911  
(205) 942-8838 FAX

**Food Bank of North Alabama**

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 18607  
Huntsville, AL 35804  
Physical Address: 225 Finney Drive  
Huntsville, AL 35788  
(256) 539-2256  
(256) 539-1437 FAX

**Feeding the Gulf Coast**

5248 Mobile South Street  
Theodore, AL 36582  
(251) 653-1617  
(888) 704-3663 Toll Free  
(251) 653-4208 FAX

The state will also annually review the lesser of one-tenth or twenty of all the ERAs that have commodity agreements with the four main food banks listed above.

**C. Corrective Action Procedures:**

At the completion of each emergency feeding organization review or site review, an exit conference will be held with the ERA director, assistant director, and/or TEFAP coordinator. A confirming letter will be sent to the ERA outlining the following: (1) A description of deficiencies found (as well as program strengths) and factors contributing to each; (2) specific recommendations for corrective action, and (3) the timetable for corrective action. The ERA will be required to respond in writing within a given time period, describing corrective action that has been taken. If necessary, follow-up reviews will be scheduled in order to close the review.

**V. Reporting:**

**ERA List Reporting:**

Starting in December 2024, the state agency will provide the FNS with a comprehensive list of all the ERAs. This list will include ERAs with direct agreements with the state agency, as well as ERAs with agreements with other ERAs, along with statewide income and residency eligibility criteria.

1. The state agency is required to publicly post an annual list of all ERAs, including the name, address, and telephone number of each ERA.
2. The state agency will also report its statewide eligibility criteria to FNS on an annual basis. These criteria must be made publicly available and updated annually.

Additionally, ERAs are required to report the total number of individuals served by each TEFAP distribution site for home consumption on a monthly basis to the state agency. The state agency will then report this data to FNS on a quarterly basis.

**ALABAMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

**FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE**

Angelice S. Lowe  
Angelice Lowe  
Child Nutrition Programs Director

December 10, 2024  
Date

January 6, 2025  
Signature Date

Arthur Watts, Jr.  
Deputy State Superintendent  
Administration and Finance

12-11-24  
Date

Approved by SERO via Email  
Title

Eric G. Mackey  
Eric G. Mackey  
State Superintendent of Education

12-12-2024  
Date