

**2025 MONTANA STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS
FOR
THE EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (TEFAP)**

1) The State Agency responsible for distributing USDA Foods and administrative funds:

Montana Department of Public Health & Human Services (DPHHS)
Human & Community Services Division
Inter-Governmental Human Services Bureau
PO Box 202956
Helena, MT, 59620-2956.
Physical address: 1400 Carter Drive, Helena, MT 59601

2) State Plan to distribute TEFAP USDA Foods to the following agencies as defined in regulation @ 7 CFR 251.3 “Definitions” subparts (f & i), (j) and (b) respectively and under the president’s faith-based initiative:

a) Food Banks and Food Pantries: The state agency will contract with the Montana Food Bank Network (MFBN) who will enter into agreements with local food banks and food pantries. The MFBN will provide storage and transportation of TEFAP USDA Foods to contracted ERA's and provide general program oversite at no cost to the local agency. THE MFBN must not use TEFAP administrative funds to promote SNAP as required under USDA Policy FD-143; Prohibition of SNAP Recruitment and Promotion Activities by FDPIR and TEFAP Administering Agencies

b) Soup Kitchens/On Site Feeding: Contract directly with the state agency

c) Faith-based Organizations: Faith-based organizations are currently and continue to be accepted under this program, contracting directly with the state if a soup kitchen/charitable institution and contracting with the MFBN if a food bank/pantry. Faith-based Organizations must comply with USDA Policy FD-142.

3) a) All Eligible Recipient Agencies (ERA's) are required to:

- i) Provide food assistance exclusively to needy persons for household consumption or predominantly to needy persons in the form of prepared meals
- ii) Have an established agreement with the state agency or another ERA
- iii) Maintain adequate and appropriate storage facilities
- iv) Maintain adequate insurance to cover any reasonably preventable USDA food loss that results in a claim for reimbursement for the replacement value.
- v) Comply with all civil rights, equal opportunity, and non-discrimination requirements
- vi) Comply with participant confidentiality requirements
- vii) Report the number of persons served by each TEFAP distribution site providing USDA Foods for home consumption per month.
- viii) Comply with all other TEFAP requirements as detailed in each ERA agreement.

b) **New Agency Applications:** Montana accepts applications for new facilities at all times throughout the year whether through the MFBN or directly to the State. New facilities are directed to send an email expressing interest in becoming a TEFAP ERA. The potential new facility is emailed an application packet. When returned the application package is reviewed and if approved the facilities are inspected. New facilities passing inspection are issued a contract which must be signed by both parties. Upon successful contract signing and return to the state agency, the ERA is sent an availability list/order form.

Beginning in FFY2015 in compliance with Montana law all new TEFAP ERA Congregate Feeding Site contracts are written for seven years replacing previous

one year with 2 one-year contract renewals which totaled three years. To ensure current agency information each contracted ERA is required to complete an annual self-evaluation form and where applicable submit its current work comp insurance statement. Prior to the expiration of the seven year contract each ERA is required to complete a new application process. (EFO Application FD-013)

4) Eligibility criteria for recipients of USDA Foods for household use:

Upon applying, the applicant is required to self-declare

1. Household members
2. Residency information
 - a. Residency in the State of Montana is required for participation
 - b. Households are not required to provide an address or identification to demonstrate residency. ERAs are no longer required to collect and maintain household addresses on file
3. Incomes
 - a. Household income must be below 300% of the current federal poverty guidelines.

A food pantry/food bank representative attests as witness to the self-declared information. If the household is TEFAP eligible they immediately receive USDA Foods in an amount and frequency as allowed by each food pantry/food bank board. Upon issuance, the recipient self-attests for receipt of each food issuance and reviews household, residency and income, making any necessary changes; a food pantry/food bank representative attests as witness to the self-declared information. Montana DPHHS has waived the requirement to sign for the applicant for certification and food issuance. (Application Form No. FD-904)

5) TEFAP entitlement purchased USDA Foods and bonus USDA Foods allocations

Entitlement purchased USDA Foods will be allocated approximately 85-90% to food banks/pantries and 10-15% for soup kitchens. Adjustments to allocations will be made based on quantities available. The percentage will be adjusted annually in January.

6) State and ERA agencies receiving TEFAP administrative funds are prohibited from using said funds for the purposes of promoting SNAP

TEFAP administrative funds will not be used to promote SNAP under USDA FNS Policy 143 "Prohibition of SNAP Recruitment and Promotion Activities by FDPIR and TEFAP Administering Agencies"

7) State agency will conduct a survey for ERA agencies to provide input on USDA Food preferences and needs.

State agency will conduct a survey with all ERA agencies in the summer months prior to the federal fiscal year. This survey will provide emergency feeding organizations and eligible recipient agencies within the State an opportunity to provide input on the USDA Foods preferences and needs of the emergency feeding organization or eligible recipient agency. State agencies will use survey results to prioritize items to be purchased through TEFAP funding for ERA agencies.

8) Types of ERA's operating in Montana as outlined in 7 CFR Part 251.6(a)

- a) Emergency Feeding Organizations
 - i. Soup Kitchens
 - ii. Homeless Shelter
 - iii. Domestic Violence Shelter