

# TEFAP Overview for Connecticut Foodshare Partners

## What is TEFAP?

[The Emergency Food Assistance Program \(TEFAP\)](#) is a federal program that helps supplement the diets of low-income households by providing emergency food assistance at no cost. In Connecticut, the Department of Social Services (DSS) contracts with Connecticut Foodshare to administer TEFAP. Connecticut Foodshare distributes TEFAP to eligible food assistance programs that directly serve the public.

## What food assistance programs are eligible to receive TEFAP?

Based on USDA and DSS guidance, programs eligible to receive TEFAP include food pantries, emergency shelters, and soup kitchens that are operated by public entities (municipalities) or private 501c3 organizations.

## What foods are available through TEFAP?

Products vary but include canned, frozen, dried, and fresh fruits and vegetables, eggs, meat, poultry, fish, nuts, milk, cheese, and whole-grain and enriched grain products including rice, cereal, and pasta.

## Who is eligible for TEFAP in Connecticut?

- **At food pantries:** any individual who verbally attests to being a Connecticut resident with a household income at or below 300% of the federal poverty level is eligible for TEFAP, regardless of town residency and with no identification or proof required
- **At meal programs:** any individual receiving prepared meals at an emergency shelter or soup kitchen is considered to be low-income and eligible for TEFAP, with no means test or proof required

## How should pantries track client information at intake?

Your Connecticut Foodshare Network Relations Representative is available to help you find a TEFAP intake process that will work best for your program and the people you serve.

- **Pantries with no computer using paper logs** should have guests attest every time they receive food and complete the TEFAP Participation Log at every distribution
- **Pantries with a computer on site and/or the ability to print guest lists for each distribution** should track households served at each distribution using Connecticut Foodshare's approved Excel Spreadsheet. Pantries using their own databases or spreadsheets must get approval from Connecticut Foodshare to ensure all required data is being documented.

## What information is required in monthly statistics reporting?

By the 15<sup>th</sup> of every month TEFAP partners are required to submit statistics for the previous month to Connecticut Foodshare using an online form.

- **Food pantries** report total unduplicated households served, and total unduplicated individuals in those households. Pantries can use a spreadsheet or database to track households served. If using a paper log, pantries can report data from the TEFAP Participation Log for the highest day of the month.
- **Meal programs (soup kitchens and emergency shelters)** report total unduplicated individuals served (not households). Meal programs may calculate this number by reporting the meal with highest attendance in that month or by averaging the meal attendance in that month.

## Are there additional requirements for programs that distribute TEFAP?

Because TEFAP is a federal program, participating partners must follow specific guidelines for handling and distributing TEFAP food. Each year, DSS will randomly select a number of TEFAP partners to visit and monitor for compliance. **The following checklist will help you meet the key areas of TEFAP compliance.** Please contact your Connecticut Foodshare Network Relations Representative with questions. We are here to help.



# TEFAP Checklist for Connecticut Foodshare Partners

## ALL programs that receive TEFAP products must:

- Meet Connecticut Foodshare food safety guidelines
- Have an authorized representative of your organization sign a Connecticut Foodshare TEFAP Agreement
- Keep a copy of the signed TEFAP Agreement on file at your program
- Save Connecticut Foodshare order invoices for 3 years, either in electronic or paper files
- Store TEFAP product in a secure location that has been approved by Connecticut Foodshare
- Distribute TEFAP only in Connecticut
- Make TEFAP available to any eligible household seeking food assistance
- Never share or redistribute TEFAP products with other organizations
- Immediately report any lost or damaged TEFAP to Connecticut Foodshare
- Display a TEFAP "And Justice For All" poster in a location visible to program guests
- Annually, on or after July 1 ensure that all guest-facing staff and volunteers renew their Annual Civil Rights training, either online or using a paper log Documentation of training must be kept on site for 3 years.
- Provide a link to the USDA non-discrimination statement on your website
- Must post the Written Notice of Beneficiary Rights for TEFAP as provided by Connecticut Foodshare. **\*\*NEW 2024\*\***
- Submit monthly statistics to Connecticut Foodshare on the number of unduplicated households and individuals served (due by the 15 of each month)

## If the program is a food pantry:

- Ensure that TEFAP product is made available to any individual who self-attests to eligibility
- Ask guests to self-attest to eligibility using the current TEFAP Self-Declaration Receipt, which is available in multiple languages and revised every July with latest income guidelines
- Ensure that intake forms, procedures and any promotional materials do not require guests to provide more information than is required for TEFAP, see Eligibility Flow Chart
- Every July, start using the new income guidelines provided by Connecticut Foodshare and renew eligibility for all households and provide them with a Self-Declaration Receipt to keep
- At each visit, ask all returning clients if anything has changed and make sure current income guidelines are available
- Use a TEFAP Participation Log or approved database to capture basic information from people served: name, address, number of people in household, and date they verbally attested to eligibility
- Maintain TEFAP Participation Logs for 3 years, either in electronic or paper files

## If the program is faith-based:

- Ensure that religious activity does not take place in the same location or time as TEFAP food distribution

## If the program is a meal program or soup kitchen:

- Ensure that TEFAP product is only utilized in prepared meals, and not distributed as grocery items for individuals to take home

All TEFAP forms and training materials can be found at [ctfoodshare.org/tefap](https://ctfoodshare.org/tefap) OR Scan QR Code.

