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# STATE PLAN OF PROGRAM OPERATIONS AND ADMINISTRATION OF

# THE COMMODITY SUPPLEMENTAL FOOD PROGRAM

**2021**

This document represents our plan for the administration of the Commodity Supplemental Food Program in the State of Maine in 2021. Under State law, and by agreement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry is the distributing agency in Maine for USDA Donated Foods.

*Last updated 3/17/2021*

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1. **Local Agency Identification**

The following local Agencies have signed an agreement with the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to operate the Commodity Supplemental Food Program in Maine in 2021:

Good Shepherd Food Bank

3121 Hotel Road

Auburn, Maine 04210

Wayside Food Programs

PO Box 1278

Portland, ME 04104

Central Maine Agency on Aging, dba Spectrum Generations

One Weston Court

Augusta, Maine 04338

Eastern Area Agency on Aging

450 Essex Street

Bangor, Maine 04401

Aroostook Area Agency on Aging

PO Box 1288

Presque Isle, Maine 04769

Western Maine Community Action

20 Church Street, PO Box 200

Wilton, Maine 04034

II. CERTIFICATION

1. **Assessment**
2. Eligibility Requirements: To be certified as eligible to receive supplemental foods each applicant must meet the following criteria:

a. Elderly individuals certified on or after September 17, 1986, shall be sixty (60) years old or older with household income at or below One Hundred Thirty percent (130%) of the annually published federal poverty income guideline. Elderly individuals certified prior to September 17, 1986, shall be subject to the terms and conditions in effect on the date of their certification.

c. Income eligibility determinations can be conducted and shall be based on the gross monthly household income of the family unit. The definition of a family is an economic unit which generally means a group of related or non‑related individuals who share all significant income and expenses of its members. The economic units are characterized by the sharing of expenses, such as food, housing, medical costs and household insurance expenses.

(1) Monthly income is defined as gross income before required or voluntary deductions.

(2) Eligibility determinations shall be made based on income received by the household during the month prior to application. If income received during the month prior to application is not representative of current income, the certification staff may consider income received for a longer period of time to more accurately determine current income.

(3) Determination of Monthly Income:

(a) Weekly income times 4.33.

(b) Biweekly income [every two- (2) weeks] times 2.15.

(c) Semi-monthly (twice a month) times 2.

2. There shall not be any nutritional risk requirement or criteria imposed.

3. No fixed residency or duration requirement shall be imposed as a condition for eligibility.

4. Certification site staff may verify and document the income, identification, age, and residency of participants prior to certification if deemed necessary. Sources of verification include, but are not limited to:

a. Driver’s License or other state-issued identification card;

b. Birth certificate;

c. Medicare/ Maine Care card;

d. Check stubs or statement from employer verifying wages;

e. Award letter or other official document, verifying participation in a federal, state, or local program for low-income persons.

5. A Social Security card **IS NOT** an acceptable source of verification.

6. Documentation of verification may be a copy of the information provided, or a notation on the application with an indication of what verification was seen.

**B**. **Eligibility Determination**

The regional distributing agent will supply a unit of food to all clients 60 years of age or older at next monthly distribution after receiving an application. If there is no room on caseload to immediately serve participant, client is placed on a waiting list. The participant must fill out an application and need is self-evident upon application. Participant should update any changing information immediately with regional distributing agent, or during recertification every 3 years. At the time of certification or re-certification participants are given the opportunity to self-identify race and ethnicity. If the participant chooses not to self-identify race and ethnicity, the certifier must record the participant’s race and ethnicity based on visual observation. This information is entered into the computer during certification or re-certification and is submitted to the SDA each year when the racial/ethnic data is due.

Eligible pregnant women shall be referred to the WIC Program since Maine participates in CSFP to serve low income elderly only.

**C.** **Certification Notification**

The local agency shall either certify the applicant, or notify eligible applicants that they have been put on a waiting list, or notify the applicant of eligibility or ineligibility for the program within 10 days of the applicant’s first visit to the local agency to apply for participation in the program. A person who is determined to be eligible shall receive supplemental foods at next monthly distribution if caseload allows, or be put on waiting list.

**D.** **Termination/Ineligibility**

Written notification to participants of termination/ineligibility will be sent 15 days prior to the termination date. This notice will include the reason for termination, ineligibility and the participants’ right to a fair hearing, including the method to request the fair hearing and the right to be represented at the hearing. The documented reasons for ineligibility are held on file by the local agency. Applicants will be advised of their rights, including non‑discrimination, fair hearings, and nutrition education.

#### III. Caseload Management

**A.** There is an inherent need to have a management system to effectively and efficiently control caseload to ensure caseload is not surpassed.

1. The waiting list policy is established when the program has reached maximum caseload.

2. The waiting list will include:

a. Applicant’s name and status,

b. Address

c. Telephone number

d. Date applicant is placed on list.

e. Age

**B.** A maximum certification period of 3 years has been established for all program participants.

**C.** Every effort should be made to provide CSFP benefits to the most needy applicants. When the maximum caseload has been reached, the local agency must keep a list of all potential applicants who contact the agency in person. Applicants should be informed of the income standards, process, and waiting list at the initial contact to avoid later screening effort. Certification from waiting lists will be on a first come, first served basis.

**D.** A form denoting the period of certification will be given to each participant upon approval of the application.

**IV. Outreach**

**A.** The State Agency administering CSFP also administers TEFAP. TEFAP participants 60 and over will be screened for possible eligibility for this program. Criteria of eligibility will be posted at distribution sites and announcements will be made through present communication channels.

**B**. CSFP information will also be made available to Maine Office of Elder Services programs provided by the Local Area Agencies on Aging and the Meals on Wheels food delivery program.

**C.** Coordinate and communicate client information between the Maine Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (known as the Maine Senior Farmshare Program) and CSFP to capture eligible clients.

**V. Nutrition Education**

Nutrition education is a dynamic process through which health and dietary information is exchanged with the individual in a manner which will promote both his/her knowledge and application of the dietary practices required for attaining and maintaining positive nutritional and health status. In order to be effective nutrition education must be tailored to the needs, interests, experiences, capabilities, and life styles of the individuals or groups taking part in this process.

Nutrition education stresses the promotion of the dietary guidelines and reduction of the risks of disease. CSFP Program nutrition education should be integrated into and coordinated with other community nutrition programs.

A. Assessment of Nutrition Education Needs

1. Prior to initiation of nutrition education services, the CSFP staff must determine if the participant is receiving nutrition education services through other community based nutrition programs.

2. CSFP participants who are not receiving nutrition education services from another source must be assessed for:

a. Known risk factors which can be affected by nutritional practices or diet therapy

b. Adequacy of the food supply and other sources of food assistance

c. Usual dietary intake by food frequency, diet recall, or food record

B. CSFP Nutrition Education Services

1. Nutrition education is to be considered a benefit of the program and is to be provided to each participant at no cost. Nutrition education may be provided by another community‑based nutrition program.

2. Participants must be encouraged to participate in nutrition education services, and the long‑term benefits of utilizing such services must be stressed.

3. No participant shall be denied supplemental food for failure to participate in the nutrition education services offered through the CSFP or other community nutrition programs.

4. Nutrition education must be offered to all adult participants and must include:

a. An explanation of the importance of the consumption of the supplemental foods by the participant.

b. Reference to any special nutritional needs of participants and ways to provide an adequate diet.

c. Information on the use and nutritional value of supplemental foods.

d. Referral to other social and health programs when indicated.

5. A nutrition education contact is defined as an activity designed to improve health status, achieve positive change in dietary habits, and/or emphasize relationships between nutrition and health, all in keeping with the individual’s personal, cultural, and socioeconomic preferences.

a. To ensure consistency, the local agency shall have written policies regarding basic nutrition for the elderly. Policies must be consistent with the dietary guidelines where applicable.

b. A nutrition education contact may be provided through either individual or group education.

c. A nutrition education contact may be made during a certification visit, visit for food pick‑up, a home visit, etc. It is desirable to integrate/coordinate nutrition education services with health agency services and other nutrition education services offered in the community.

d. A nutrition education contact will usually involve a face‑to‑face encounter between the educator and the participant. If literature is given out or a film is shown it must be accompanied by discussion.

e. Nutrition education must be easily understood by the participant and practical in terms of the participant’s household situation and cultural food habits.

f. Participants who are known to be at high nutritional risk should receive a level of nutrition intervention that is consistent with their degree of risk. The CSFP contact may refer high nutritional risk participants to the health department.

6. Nutrition education may be provided by:

a. A nutritionist, home economist,

b. Program participants (on voluntary basis)

7. Continuing education and training of local agency staff for the purpose of developing and/or updating the skills and knowledge necessary for the delivery of nutrition education to program participants is to be considered part of the nutrition education services provided through the local and state agencies.

**C. Documentation of Nutrition Intervention**

1. Where nutrition education classes or food demonstrations are offered, activity outlines should be developed. The suggested components of an outline include:

a. Target audience

b. Objectives

c. Outline of the presentation

d. Activities/materials used

Sample class outlines may be obtained through the University of Maine Cooperative Extension Service, EFNEP.

2. Documentation of individual and/or group nutrition education should be an ongoing part of the participant record. Documentation should include, at the least, the following information:

a. A summary of the basic content of the nutrition education provided or the topic of the class attended

b. Date the nutrition education was provided and the signature and title of the person providing the service.

c. A participant’s refusal and/or inability to take part in nutrition education activities must be documented.

**D. Evaluation**

1. A review of CSFP nutrition education services will be conducted by the State Agency during Program ME every other year and will include:

a. A review of local agency written policies and procedures.

b. A review of participant records

2. The local agency will establish an evaluation procedure to obtain the views of CSFP participants or their caretakers concerning nutrition services provided by the local CSFP agency. The purpose of the survey is to assist in program planning at the state and local level.

The procedure should be designed to obtain information regarding, but not limited to:

a. Attitudes on the need for nutrition education

b. Barriers to attendance at nutrition education sessions

c. Topics participants are interested in learning about

d. Preferred methods for delivery of nutrition education

e. Impact of CSFP and CSFP foods on the household food choices

**VI. NUTRITIONAL RISK CRITERIA**

No nutritional risk criteria are imposed at this time.

**VII. Storage/Distribution/Record Keeping**

**A. Distributing Agency:**

The Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry’s Food Assistance Program, 28 State House Station, Augusta, Maine 04333 will be the primary distributing agency. The food storage and production facility, The Good Shepherd Food Bank, has offices in Auburn and production facilities in Hampden, Maine. Commodities ordered from USDA will be delivered to the Hamden warehouse starting January 2021. The Good Shepherd Food Bank will provide storage for these commodities which will protect them from theft, spoilage, damage or destruction or other loss. When the sub-distributing agency places an order for a delivery from Hamden; commodities are taken from the warehouse and shipped to the Local Distributing Agency.

The Good Shepherd Food Bank from its storage facility at Hamden, Maine will make deliveries monthly to the Local Distributing Agencies. When commodities are delivered to a CSFP sub-distributing agency commodities are placed in the existing CSFP inventory.

The LDA will issue a supplemental food package to participants monthly. Participants arrive at designated distribution site, sign monthly sheet to verify he/she received the food package in accordance with the food package guide rate established by FNS.

The State or local CSFP distributing agency will not require any participant to make payment or provide services in connection with receipt of CSFP commodities. The state or local distributing agency will not use the distribution of CSFP commodities as a means for furthering the political interest of any person or party.

Records will be maintained in a suitable place for a minimum of five (5) years following the close of the federal fiscal year to which they pertain. The U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry are authorized to inspect all program operations, including records and reports, at any reasonable time.

Physical inventories are taken monthly at the GSFB warehouse. The SDA has an inventory report which is used each month to complete the FNS 153 report which is sent to NERO. The FNS 153 report combines the ending monthly inventory for the SDA and the LDA.

**VIII. Detection of Dual Participation**

Maine no longer serves WIC applicants through CSFP, no current needs to detect dual participation.

**IX. CLAIMS**

The LDA and contracted vendors are responsible for any improper or negligent issuance of supplemental foods and will make restitution for any improper or negligent authorization. When a loss of food occurs after delivery to the local CSFP agency, a claim determination must be made. If the value of the food loss is more than $100.00 but does not exceed $2500.00, DACF will make a claim determination. If the value of the lost food exceeds $2500.00, documentation must be forward to the USDA Regional Office for concurrence with a claim determination by DACF. If the CSFP agency or contracted vendor is found to be negligent DACF must pursue a claim for the value of the food. All claim payments must be paid by check, payable to Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry. The SDA will not asses any claim against the LDA or a CSFP participant which is less than $100.00. The SDA feels any claim less than $100.00 is not cost effective to pursue.

X. HOMEBOUND

1. Homebound elderly participants are eligible for CSFP by the local distributing agency but it is the participant’s responsibility to have a proxy up the commodities for them.

a. A proxy form signed by the participant, the proxy and a CSFP staff member must be on file for proxy pickup.

b. The CSFP participant is responsible to inform proxy of food distribution schedules.

2. Certain Meals on Wheels participants with a documented need may have a home delivery option if the Local Agency offers this service.

**A. The Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry agrees:**

1. To provide State CSFP Agency regulatory guidance and oversight in administering the Commodity Supplemental Food Program.
2. To order the commodities for the program.
3. To contract with vendors to store and distribute the commodities to the local distributing agencies.
4. To determine caseload needs and submit requests for caseload to the USDA.
5. To allocate administrative funds to the local distributing agencies
6. To provide supplemental foods for the present caseload.
7. To provide technical assistance as needed.
8. To monitor the program through monthly checks and a yearly evaluation.
9. To continue to provide the foods for the eligible recipients. The foods will be furnished in accordance with the regulations. These same foods will be available to use in outreach educational training and for demonstration teaching purposes. The results of the classes will be a more effective and efficient use of these supplemental foods.
10. To utilize current federal poverty guidelines and update CSFP financial criteria for CSFP agencies/clients.

The State CSFP Agency, contracted vendors, and local distributing agencies each agree to be responsible for any misuse of program funds.

Each agency affiliated with this agreement shall assure that they will not discriminate against anyone because of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, or disability.

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(Signature) (Date)

Director, Food Assistance Program

Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

XI. Agreement is between the Good Shepherd Food Bank and the Maine Commodity Supplemental Food Program

The purpose of this agreement is to specify the operational relationship between the Good Shepherd Food Bank (GSFB) and the Maine Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP). All parties agree to comply with all the fiscal and operational requirements prescribed by the State CSFP Agency in accordance with the Commodity Supplemental Food Program regulations as stated in Federal Regulation 7 CFR 250 and 7 CFR 247.

1. **The Good Shepherd Food Bank Agrees to:**
2. Receive the commodities used in the Maine CSFP.
3. Break down the commodities into the Food Packages in accordance with the approved food package guide rate
4. Store the food until delivered.
5. Deliver the packages to the Local Distributing Agencies on a monthly basis.
6. Receive the product into the inventory system and track until a written receipt is obtained upon delivery to the Local Agency distribution site.
7. Be responsible to the State CSFP Agency for any loss resulting from improper storage care or handling of commodities entrusted to the GSFB for oversight.
8. Maintain accurate and complete records with respect to activities under the program and retain such records for a period of five (5) years from the close of the fiscal year to which they pertain, or longer if the records are related to unresolved claims actions, audits or investigations.
9. **The Maine CSFP agrees to:**
10. Order the USDA Foods used in the Program.
11. Provide guidance on the approved food package content.
12. Provide the caseload numbers to GSFB on a monthly basis for packaging purposes.
13. Provide State CSFP Agency regulatory guidance and oversight in administering the Commodity Supplemental Food Program.
14. To allocate administrative funds to GSFB for services rendered as they are available from the USDA.
15. Monitor GSFB for compliance to rules and regulations of the program

Each agency affiliated with this agreement shall assure that they will not discriminate against anyone because of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, or disability.

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Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Date