
FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES CERTIFICATION
GENERAL PROCEDURES & REQUIREMENTS
FNS 150 COMMODITIES PROGRAMS

FNS 150 Commodities Program

Change #02-2021

June 1, 2021

150.01 COMMODITIES PROGRAM

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) is a federal program that helps supplement the diets of low-income Americans, including elderly people, by providing them with emergency food and nutrition assistance at no cost.

Under TEFAP, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) makes commodity foods available to the North Carolina Department of Agriculture (NCDA). The NCDA provides the food to local agencies that they have selected. The local agencies are usually food banks.

TEFAP is administered at the Federal level by the Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). FNS also administers the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program at the Federal level. NCDA receives the food and supervises overall distribution.

TEFAP is handled in two different ways in North Carolina. Some counties choose to have the county Department of Social Services (DSS) administer the program while other counties have non-profit organizations administering TEFAP. Regardless of the method of delivery, individuals who are eligible for FNS are also eligible for TEFAP commodities.

150.02 FOODS AVAILABLE THROUGH TEFAP

The types of commodity foods USDA purchases for TEFAP distribution vary depending on the preferences of states and agricultural market conditions. Commodities normally include meat products, dairy products, grains, fruits, and vegetables.

150.03 COUNTY DSS-ADMINISTERED TEFAP COMMODITIES PROGRAMS

The following procedures are in place for counties that participate in the county DSS-administered program.

A DSS-3449, Authorization for USDA Donated Foods, is printed for each FNS unit certified at the time of selection. The card serves as the official application form. Upon receipt of the commodities, the FNS unit member signs the card to acknowledge receipt of the specified foods and quantities. The FNS unit member must present the DSS-3449 and their EBT card or other form of identification. The DSS-3449 contains the name and address of the head of household, county name, North Carolina Families Accessing Services through Technology (NC FAST) case number, household size, month of commodity distribution, authorized foods to be distributed, quantity of food to be distributed (or a blank), and a message.

A. The county DSS is responsible for keying certain information in NC FAST to generate the information that is printed on the DSS-3449. The county DSS must key the following required fields:

1. Month of commodity distribution;
2. Authorized foods;

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3. Quantity selection; **and**
4. Message – The message must include dates, times, and location of the pickup. Include the physical address of the pickup location.

NOTE: All other information printed on the DSS-3449 is system-generated and requires no data entry or action by county DSS.

- B. The cutoff date for commodity distribution entry is the third working day prior to the end of the month. Automation staff may be contacted whenever commodity cards need to be printed earlier or later than the cutoff date. They can be reached at 919-733-8938.
- C. Commodity cards are mailed no later than the fifth calendar day of the distribution month. To ensure that commodity cards are received prior to distribution dates, counties must allow ample time between the fifth calendar day and actual distribution dates.
- D. Advise an individual to self-declare their income when they do not have a commodities card. The commodities distributor will determine their eligibility.
- E. Direct questions concerning commodities automation issues to the Performance Reporting/Automation Unit at 919-733-8938. For questions concerning the commodities program, contact the Food Distribution Division, North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. The phone number is 919-575-4490 or toll free 1-888-498-3449.