

Overview

At some point during the year, about one in four Americans participate in at least one of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) 15 domestic food and nutrition assistance programs. About three-quarters of USDA's annual budget goes to these programs, which vary by size, target population, and type of benefits provided. Together these programs form a nutritional safety net for millions of children and low-income adults.ⁱ U.S. domestic food assistance programs have a historical, and in most respects, ongoing relationship with farming and agriculture. Since the 1930s, congress has been interested in issues of hunger and allocating federal resources to alleviate food insecurity and prevent the physical and psychological outcomes—such as low birth weights, chronic illnesses, and anxiety—associated with being undernourished.

To that end, evaluating trends in hunger is critical to understand the impact of efforts to prevent hunger and in recognizing needs in the community. Because hunger is a challenging concept to measure, the terms “food security” and “food insecurity” are the prevailing terms used as opposed to “hunger,” to describe the ability to access adequate food. The two terms focus on those economic and other access-related reasons associated with an individual's ability to purchase or otherwise obtain enough to eat. They are also terms that can be objectively measured. Each year, the [USDA Economic Research Service \(USDA-ERS\)](#)ⁱⁱ conducts an [analysis](#)ⁱⁱⁱ based on Current Population Survey (CPS)^{iv} data to measure food security in the U.S.

Federal Nutrition Assistance Programs

Federal expenditures for USDA's domestic food and nutrition assistance programs totaled \$103.6 billion in fiscal 2014 or five percent less than the previous fiscal year. This was the first decrease in food and nutrition assistance expenditures in 15 years. Food and nutrition assistance programs vary by size, by type of benefit provided, and by target population and generally fall within four categories of service: food distribution; child nutrition; women, infants and children (WIC); and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) The five largest programs which accounted for 96 percent of total USDA expenditures for domestic food and nutrition assistance^v in fiscal 2014 were:

1. SNAP,
2. the National School Lunch Program,
3. the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and
4. the School Breakfast Program; and the Child and Adult Care Food Program.

Administrative authority for federal food assistance programs has been dispersed throughout three federal departments—the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

Congressional Authorization for Domestic Food Assistance Programs

The *Agriculture Act of 2014 (P.L. 113-79)* commonly referred to as the “*farm bill*” is an omnibus reauthorization and extension of dozens of farm, food, and nutrition laws which congress last approved February 7, 2014. The farm bill contained 12 titles on topics ranging from conservation, rural development, and research to horticulture. The

nutrition title, Title IV, included authorizing language for SNAP, the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), Food Distribution for Child Nutrition Programs, Senior Farmers Market Program, Community Food Projects, Fresh Fruits and Vegetable Program, and Hunger-free Community Grants^{vi}

The *Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010*, which authorized funds for USDA's school meal and child nutrition programs—including the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), the National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, and the Child and Adult Care Food Program. These programs are generally reauthorized for five-year periods which is set to expire on September 30, 2015.

The *Older Americans Act (OAA) Nutrition Programs*, part of the Administration on Aging (AOA) within the Administration for Community Living (ACL), provides grants to states to help support nutrition services for older people throughout the country. The OAA Nutrition Programs include the Congregate Nutrition Program and the Home-Delivered Nutrition Program. The Older Americans Act Title III Grants Authorize programs for state and community programs on aging; and the Title VI Grants authorize programs for American Indians, Alaskan Natives, and Native Hawaiians. The purposes of these programs are to: 1) reduce hunger and food insecurity, 2) promote socialization, 3) promote health and well-being, and 4) delay adverse health conditions. In the 114th congress, the senate introduced a bipartisan bill to reauthorize the OAA for a three-year period. The *Older Americans Act Reauthorization Act of 2015 (S. 192)* was introduced January 20, 2015, and would authorize appropriations for most OAA programs through FY2018.

AUTHORIZING LEGISLATION/ FEDERAL ADMINISTRATIVE ENTITY	PROGRAM NAME	SUMMARY OF SELECTED PROGRAM GOALS
DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY (DHS) FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (FEMA)		
Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1987, as amended, Title III, Sections 301-316, Public Law 100-77, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 11331-11346. ^{vii}	Emergency Food and Shelter National Board Program (EFSP) ^{viii}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide shelter, food, and supportive services to homeless individuals and to help them access other services. ▪ Provide funding to help create more effective and innovative local programs. ▪ Do minor rehabilitation to mass shelter and mass feeding facilities to make them safe, sanitary, and to bring them into compliance with local building codes. ▪ Provide emergency food and shelter to needy individuals through private organizations and local governments. ▪ Formula Grants ▪ FEMA Fact Sheet^{ix}
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES (HHS) ADMINISTRATION ON AGING PROGRAMS		
Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended in 2006, Section 311, 42 U.S.C. 303a, Section 604, 42 U.S.C. 3057. ^x	Elderly Nutrition Program (Fact Sheet) ^{xi} <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Congregate Nutrition Program^{xii}, ▪ Home Delivered Nutrition Program^{xiii} 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduce hunger and food insecurity. ▪ Promote socialization of older individuals. ▪ Promote the health and well-being of older individuals by assisting such individuals to gain access to nutrition and other disease prevention and health promotion services to delay the onset of adverse health conditions resulting from poor nutritional health or sedentary behavior.
	Grants to American Indians, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian Organizations for Nutrition and Supportive Service ^{xiv}	Promote the delivery of supportive services, including nutrition services to American Indians, Alaskan Natives, and Native Hawaiians
	The Nutrition Services Incentive Program (NSIP) ^{xv}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provides grants to states, territories and eligible tribal organizations to support the Congregate and Home-Delivered Nutrition Programs by providing an incentive to serve more meals. States, territories and eligible tribal organizations can choose to receive their grant as cash, commodities (food) or a combination of cash and commodities. ▪ NSIP Fact Sheet^{xvi}



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USDA–FNS PROGRAMS		
<p>The Agricultural Act of 2014 (P.L. 113-79)^{xvii} Reauthorized 2/7/2014</p>	<p>Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)^{xviii}</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Raise the level of nutrition among low-income households. ▪ Alleviate hunger and malnutrition in low-income households. ▪ Increase food purchasing power for eligible households. ▪ Strengthen the U.S. agricultural sector. ▪ More orderly marketing and distribution of food. ▪ Permit low-income households to obtain a more nutritious diet through normal channels of trade. ▪ SNAP Fact Sheet^{xix}
	<p>Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)^{xx}</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Make maximum use of the nation’s agricultural abundance. ▪ Expand and improve the domestic distribution of price-supported commodities. ▪ Make excess agricultural commodities available without charge, for use by eligible recipient agencies for food assistance. ▪ TEFP Fact Sheet^{xxi}
	<p>Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)^{xxii}</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide food to help meet the nutritional needs of the target population. ▪ CSFP Fact Sheet^{xxiii}
	<p>Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program^{xxiv}</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Make fresh fruits and vegetables available in elementary schools. ▪ Fact Sheet^{xxv}
	<p>The Senior Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program^{xxvi}</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide fresh, nutritious, unprepared produce to low-income seniors from farmers’ markets and roadside stands, and community supported agriculture. ▪ Increase the consumption of agricultural commodities. ▪ Expand or aid the expansion of farmers’ markets, roadside stands, and community supported agriculture programs. ▪ Develop or aid in the development of new farmers’ markets, roadside stands, and community supported agriculture programs. ▪ Fact Sheet^{xxvii}
<p>Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-296)^{xxviii}</p>	<p>Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)^{xxix}</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve the mental and physical health of low-income pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women, infants, and young children. ▪ Prevent the occurrence of health problems, including drug abuse, and improve the health status of the target population. ▪ Provide supplemental foods and nutrition education to target population. ▪ WIC Program Fact Sheet^{xxx}
	<p>WIC Farmer’s Market Nutrition Program (FMNP)^{xxxi}</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide fresh nutritious unprepared foods from farmers’ markets to women, infants, and children at nutritional risk. ▪ Increase awareness and use of farmers’ markets and sales at such markets. ▪ Fact Sheet^{xxxii}



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USDA–FNS PROGRAMS		
Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-296)	<p>Child Nutrition Programs including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School Breakfast Program (SBP)^{xxxiii} ▪ National School Lunch Program (NSLP)^{xxxv} ▪ Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)^{xxxvii} ▪ Special Milk Program^{xxxix} 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Safeguard the health and well-being of the nation’s children. ▪ Encourage the domestic consumption of agricultural and other foods by assisting states to more effectively meet the nutritional needs of children. ▪ Assist the states and the Department of Defense to initiate, maintain, or expand nonprofit breakfast programs in all schools that apply for assistance and agree to carry out a nonprofit breakfast program. ▪ SBP Fact Sheet^{xxxiv} ▪ Safeguard the health and well-being of the nation’s children. ▪ Encourage the domestic consumption of nutritious agricultural commodities and other foods. ▪ NSLP Fact Sheet^{xxxvi} ▪ Provide food service to children from needy areas during periods when area schools are closed for vacation. ▪ Assist states to initiate and maintain nonprofit food service programs for children in service institutions. ▪ SFSP Fact Sheet^{xxxviii} ▪ Encourage consumption of fluid milk by U.S. children in nonprofit schools, high school grade and under, that don’t participate in federal meal service programs. ▪ Encourage consumption of fluid milk by U.S. children in nonprofit institutions devoted to the care and training of children, such as nursery schools and child care centers, that don’t participate in federal meal service programs. ▪ Safeguard the health and well-being of the nation’s children. ▪ Encourage the domestic consumption of agricultural and other foods by assisting states to more effectively meet the nutritional needs of children. ▪ Fact Sheet^{xl}
	<p>Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)^{xli}</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assist states to initiate, maintain, and expand nonprofit food service programs for children or adults in nonresidential institutions which provide care. ▪ Enable nonresidential institutions to provide nutritious food service to participants. ▪ Improve the quality of meals or level of services provided or increase participation in the program at adult day care centers. ▪ CACFP Program Information and Fact Sheets <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adult Day Care Resources for the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program^{xlii} 2. At-risk Afterschool Care Centers^{xliii} 3. Child Care Centers^{xliv} 4. Emergency Shelters^{xlv}



WIC AND CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES

March 31, 2015—The USDA released income and eligibility guidelines for the [Child Nutrition](#)^{xlvi} and [Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children \(WIC\) Programs](#)^{xlvii} in the Federal Register. The guidelines are to be used in determining eligibility for each program for the period from July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FOR STATE AND LOCAL SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMS PERSONNEL AS REQUIRED BY THE HUNGER-FREE KIDS ACT OF 2010

February 27, 2015—The USDA made available \$4 million in funding to states to support implementation of new standards for all school nutrition employees who manage and operate the National school Breakfast Programs (SBPs). The new standards were published March 4, 2015 in [final rules](#)^{xlviii} issued by the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). USDA will competitively-award Fiscal Year 2015 funds to help state agencies comply with the professional standards rule through education and training of the school nutrition personnel.

The rule requires a minimum amount of annual training hours for all new and current state school nutrition directors, state distributing agency directors, school nutrition directors, managers, and staff. Required topic areas will vary according to position and job requirements. These changes are effective beginning July 1, 2015, with several built in flexibilities intended to facilitate the first year of implementation and address the challenges faced by smaller school districts.

[FNS has a web page](#)^{xlix} which addresses implementation of the final rule and offers additional tools for school districts related to the new training standards.

NCSL ACTIVITY

NCSL HUNGER PARTNERSHIP

The NCSL Foundation for State Legislatures launched the Hunger Partnership to raise the visibility of hunger in America and highlight innovative and lasting solutions. The goal of the project is to connect the public and private sectors to improve the availability of healthy food for hungry families.

The Hunger Partnership links legislators, legislative staff and interested businesses to identify innovative and successful programs and develop bipartisan, balanced and concise materials and mechanisms to support legislators in their efforts to reduce hunger in America. For more information, go to www.ncsl.org/hunger.

The NCSL Hunger Partnership has resources available on the web on the following programs:

- [Child and Adult Care Food Program](#)
- [Hunger Among Older Americans](#)
- [Revisions in the WIC Food Package Final Rule](#)
- [WIC Fact Sheet](#)

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ⁱ Victor Oliveira, USDA Economic Research Service, The Food Assistance Landscape: FY 2014 Annual Report, (<http://www.ers.usda.gov/media/1806461/eib137.pdf>), March 2015.

ⁱⁱ <http://www.ers.usda.gov/>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us/readings.aspx#reports>

^{iv} The Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement (CPS-FSS) is the source of national and State-level statistics on food insecurity used in [USDA's annual reports on household food security](#). The CPS is a monthly labor force survey of about 50,000 households conducted by the Census Bureau for the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Once each year, after answering the labor force questions, the same households are asked a



series of questions (the Food Security Supplement) about food security, food expenditures, and use of food and nutrition assistance programs. Food security data have been collected by the CPS-FSS each year since 1995.

^v The Food Assistance Landscape: FY 2014 Annual Report, EIB-137, Economic Research Service/USDA,

[<http://www.ers.usda.gov/media/1806461/eib137.pdf>]

^{vi} For a summary of all titles of the 2014 farm bill, see CRS Report R43076, *The 2014 Farm Bill (P.L. 113-79): Summary and Side-by-Side*, coordinated by Ralph M. Chite. [http://www.farmlandinfo.org/sites/default/files/2014_0213_CRS_FarmBillSummary.pdf]

^{vii} <https://www.cfda.gov/index?s=program&mode=form&tab=step1&id=df1a732b9eac56312e75254c4075908>

^{viii} <https://www.cfda.gov/?s=program&mode=form&tab=step1&id=20b66b6c4631df7a391396012f7191d6>

^{ix} http://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1400100226157-9d8929bd1ac8d465c643da765d89020c/Fact%20Sheet-Emerg%20Food%20Shelter%20Prog-April%202014_clean.pdf

^x http://www.acl.gov/NewsRoom/Publications/docs/Older_%20Americans_Act%20Nutrition_Programs2014.pdf

^{xi} http://www.acl.gov/NewsRoom/Publications/docs/Elderly_Nutrition_Programs_1.pdf

^{xii} http://www.aoa.acl.gov/AoA_Programs/HPW/Nutrition_Services/index.aspx#congregate

^{xiii} http://www.aoa.acl.gov/AoA_Programs/HPW/Nutrition_Services/index.aspx#home

^{xiv} http://www.aoa.acl.gov/AoA_Programs/HCLTC/Native_Americans/index.aspx#data

^{xv} <http://www.fns.usda.gov/nsip/nutrition-services-incentive-program-nsip>

^{xvi} <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/pfs-nsip.pdf>

^{xvii} <http://www.usda.gov/documents/usda-2014-farm-bill-highlights.pdf>

^{xviii} <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap>

^{xix} http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/SNAP_Quick_Facts_0_0.pdf

^{xx} <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tefap/emergency-food-assistance-program-tefap>

^{xxi} <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/pfs-tefap.pdf>

^{xxii} <http://www.fns.usda.gov/csfp/commodity-supplemental-food-program-csfp>

^{xxiii} <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/pfs-csfp.pdf>

^{xxiv} <http://www.fns.usda.gov/ffvp/fresh-fruit-and-vegetable-program>

^{xxv} <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/FFVPFactSheet.pdf>

^{xxvi} <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sfmnp/senior-farmers-market-nutrition-program-sfmnp>

^{xxvii} <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/SFMNP-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

^{xxviii} http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/2011_hhfka.pdf

^{xxix} <http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/women-infants-and-children-wic>

^{xxx} <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/wic/WIC-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

^{xxxi} <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fmnp/wic-farmers-market-nutrition-program-fmnp>

^{xxxii} <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/WIC-FMNP-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

^{xxxiii} <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sbp/school-breakfast-program-sbp>

^{xxxiv} <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/SBPfactsheet.pdf>

^{xxxv} <http://www.fns.usda.gov/nslp/national-school-lunch-program-nslp>

^{xxxvi} <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/NSLPFactSheet.pdf>

^{xxxvii} <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/summer-food-service-program-sfsp>

^{xxxviii} <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/sfsp/SFSP-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

^{xxxix} <http://www.fns.usda.gov/smp/special-milk-program>

^{xl} http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/SMP_Quick_Facts_0.pdf

^{xli} <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/child-and-adult-care-food-program>

^{xlii} <http://www.nfsmi.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=37>

^{xliii} http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/At-Risk_Afterschool_Meals.pdf

^{xliiv} <http://www.nfsmi.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=268>

^{xli v} <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/emergency-shelters>

^{xli vi} <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2015-03-31/pdf/2015-07358.pdf>

^{xli vii} <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2015-03-31/pdf/2015-07359.pdf>

^{xli viii} <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2015-03-02/pdf/2015-04234.pdf>

^{xli x} <http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/professional-standards>

