



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (USDA)

**TRIBAL CONSULTATION ON FOOD DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM ON
INDIAN RESERVATIONS**

APRIL 7, 2025

Hybrid Virtual and In-Person Consultation

FRAMING PAPER

Time and Place.

Monday, April 7, 2025
9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Pacific Time
Tribal Self Governance Conference
Wild Horse Pass Resort
Chandler, Arizona

Registration link:

Please register using the link **HERE**:

https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/4B6_2c0sRTy2L9X4iOhfxw. Select virtual (Zoom) or in-person attendance.

USDA Consulting Officials.

John Walk, Acting Deputy Undersecretary; Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services (FNCS)

Prior FDPIR Consultations.

[Tribal Consultations | USDA](#)

Background.

The Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations, or [FDPIR](#), provides food to approximately 53,000 income-eligible households on tribal reservations and Native American households in approved areas near reservations. FDPIR provides American-grown and produced foods and nutrition education to help reduce food insecurity and support nutritious diets.

The monthly FDPIR food package provides an important source of nutrition and supports nutrition security. Participants receiving the food package may have limited alternatives due to their remote location and/or mobility challenges. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is available as an alternative to FDPIR participants, who may elect to opt in or out of each program on a monthly basis. While SNAP may be a viable alternative for some FDPIR participants, access to a SNAP vendor remains challenging for extremely rural and remote participants, especially those without reliable access to a working vehicle. The emergency feeding network is also available to FDPIR participants. The program is

administered by 107 Indian Tribal Organizations (ITOs) and three State agencies serving approximately 280 federally recognized tribes nationwide.

TOPICS FOR CONSULTATION

I. Presidential Administration & New USDA Leadership

- Discussion between new USDA leadership and Tribal leaders.

II. SNAP and FDPIR Related Studies

- SNAP Tribal Administration
- FDPIR Participant Characteristics and Program Operations (PCPO) Study & 638 Evaluation

SNAP Tribal Administration

- The Developing Models for Tribal Administration of SNAP study was launched in September 2024 to identify potential options for transitioning SNAP from a State-administered to a Tribally administered program for Tribal members or in parts of Indian Country.
- FNS partnered with a contractor, Mathematica, and their subcontractor, Kauffman and Associates, Inc., an indigenous- and woman-owned small-business, to conduct the study.
- In February 2025, USDA terminated this contract.
- We thank the Tribal partners and others for their interest and collaboration.

FDPIR Participant Characteristics and Program Operations (PCPO) Study & 638 Evaluation

- The FDPIR Participant and Program Operations Study was launched in FY 2023 to understand FDPIR participant characteristics and program operations. This study also included an evaluation of the FDPIR Self-Determination Demonstration Projects.
- FNS partnered with Kauffman and Associates, Inc., to conduct the study.
- As of February 19, 2025, USDA has terminated this contract. We thank our Tribal partners and leaders for their continued support, interest, and collaboration.

III. Warehouse Response

- Status Update
- Contract Recompete

Overall Status

- USDA is committed to timely, accurate and high-quality deliveries and to ensuring a strong and resilient food delivery system for FDPIR. We continue to honor that commitment, with deliveries from the national warehouses occurring on time, with a continued focus on the quality and accuracy of all USDA Foods deliveries.
- USDA continues monitoring inventory levels at FDPIR sites nationwide using available data from available inventory systems, along with information from two contracted national warehouses.
- Data shows inventory levels continue to be normal, with an average inventory level showing between one and three months on hand. Program operators can and should order the quantity of food needed to maintain sufficient inventory and provide complete food packages to all participants.
- In addition, staff from the Agricultural Marketing Service, Specialty Crops Inspection team have been onsite at Paris Brothers to inspect orders prior to delivery and continue to provide recommendations. Ultimately, through the support provided by Specialty Crops Inspections and USDA's contractual oversight, we are working to ensure the contracted warehouse is providing deliveries that are of the quality and accuracy we expect.

Contract Recompete

- USDA previously formed a work group consisting of representatives from both FDPIR and the Commodity Supplemental Feeding Programs' AMS and USDA contracting experts to document requirements for the next contract.
- USDA also issued a Request for Information (RFI) on October 4, 2024, to gather feedback, suggestions, and questions in support of a warehousing solution that will strengthen our supply chain resilience and improve the customer experience. The RFI sought information from third-party logistic (3PL) firms specializing in the full spectrum of food logistics functions, including tracking and reporting, quality inspection and monitoring of all work performed, as well as the receipt, storage, handling, transport, and distribution of dry, refrigerated, and frozen packaged food products.
- On January 16, 2025, USDA released a solicitation for the next national multi-food warehouse contract:
<https://sam.gov/opp/76807ea97c2a4f9998d09b9e1481fd9a/view#general>
- The closing date for proposals is March 14, 2025. USDA expects to award a contract later this year.
- USDA would like to thank representatives nominated by NAFDPIR for partnering with us on the solicitation for the next national multi-food warehouse contract. The input was invaluable and supported our goal of strengthening future contract operations.
- Over the next year, USDA will be focused on the award of the new contact and a successful transition (if new vendors are selected), taking lessons learned from this past year to ensure a smooth transition.

IV. Status of FDPIR Management Evaluation Reviews

- Management evaluations (ME) slated to occur in FY 2025 will be scheduled beginning in March 2025.
- Sections of the Inventory Controls and Warehouse Operations section of the ME (Section IV), which are impacted by the warehouse response, will not be evaluated for findings or recommendations.
 - Instead, these sections will be used to provide technical assistance that allows us to get feedback on the temporary options provided during the response, to respond to any outstanding issues, and to ensure local inventory needs are being met and normal program operations have been restored.
- Findings will not be assessed for identified sections and instead will be used for technical assistance only.

V. FDPIR Self-Determination Demonstration Project

- FNS currently has a balance of funds of \$3.0M (FY 2024 funds) for demonstration project activities.
- FNS would like to ensure participating demonstration Tribes in Round 2 (8 Tribes) have sufficient financial resources to support contract activities through June 2026 (e.g., purchase of foods, associated demonstration expenditures such as equipment and extra staff time). FNS received support from Tribal leaders on this approach during the December 2024 consultation.
- FNS is briefing new Departmental leaders on this recommendation.
- Congress has not yet provided an appropriation for FY25.

VI. Food Package Updates

- Food Package Review Work Group Updates
 - The next FDPIR Food Package Review Workgroup meeting is scheduled for March 18, 2025, at 3:00pm. This meeting is virtual and will serve as the annual strategic planning meeting in lieu of the in-person strategic planning meeting that was tentatively scheduled to be held at Prairie Band Nation.
 - During this call, FNS will share national and regional take rate data, provide USDA DoD Fresh updates, and establish a plan to update the Workgroup Charter, which outlines the meeting cadence and the intended goals and responsibilities of the FDPIR Food Package Review Workgroup.
- Produce Training
 - Through a cooperative agreement with USDA FNS, the Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative (IFAI) will host an FDPIR Produce Training pilot at Cherokee Nation the week of April 21, 2025.
 - This two-day pilot training will provide experiential learning opportunities for FDPIR program staff to ensure they have the skills and resources needed to properly assess fresh produce and safely distribute it to program participants

when receiving product through the USDA Department of Defense Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (USDA DoD Fresh).

- A Specialty Crops Inspector from AMS will also provide their technical expertise on quality and condition of fresh produce through hands-on demonstrations utilizing fresh produce commonly ordered in FDPIR.
- This pilot training will include FDPIR program staff from Cherokee Nation and as well as board members from the National Association of Food Distribution Programs on Indian Reservations (NAFDPIR) who represent other programs. Cherokee Nation purchases the most produce and manages several warehouses, making this location ideal to evaluate the curriculum and provide feedback. This feedback will be used to further enhance the curriculum for additional trainings planned for FY 2026.

VII. Integrated Food Management System (IFMS) and Alternative Computer Systems

- FNS continues to meet monthly with the IFMS user group to receive feedback on system and proposed system updates.
- On January 28, 2025, FNS presented the current IFMS Roadmap of upcoming projects. FNS will continue to address items in the backlog and work on regular updates. The IFMS projects include:
 - February 2025 – Issuance Receipt Redesign. Household members can now electronically sign issuance receipt, and the issuance receipt will not be impacted by Salesforce updates (for example, extra spaces on pages).
 - March 2025 – Updated Shelter/Utility Deduction.
 - Summer 2025 – Household member updates. This allows users to move household members from one household to another (or one FDPIR to another) in a more efficient and automatic process.
 - Throughout 2025 – Household certification enhancements, and inventory and material improvements.
 - Fall 2025 – Online Household Certification Portal.
 - Spring 2026 – Online Household Ordering Portal.

VIII. State SNAP-Ed Consultations

- FNS has been continuing to review data reported by State and implementing agencies on SNAP-Ed Tribal consultation plans and activities in the new National Program Evaluation and Reporting System (N-PEARS).
- Following FNS review of the first year of SNAP-Ed State Plan data entered in N-PEARS, FNS identified opportunities to improve the clarity, consistency, and quality of data collected on Tribal consultation efforts. As a result, FNS made some changes in N-PEARS to support improved data collection on past consultation activities and activities that are planned for the upcoming fiscal year.
- On January 13, 2025, FNS provided NAFDPIR with a summary report on SNAP-Ed Tribal consultation activities reported in the FY 2025 State Plans.

IX. Supporting Increased State SNAP Agency Coordination with ITOs

- FNS continues to work on communication to State agencies and ITOs intended to support improved coordination by SNAP and FDPIR administrators related to dual participation and comparable disqualification requirements.
- FNS SNAP shared an updated version of the National Directory of Contacts for Duplicate Participation in June 2024 with FNS FDPIR directors for circulation to FDPIR administrators. FNS will continue to share updated versions of the directory.
- After concerns were raised at the December 2024 Consultation re: SNAP comparable disqualification practices in Idaho, FNS reached out to the State to clarify requirements.