

Commodity Supplemental Food Program Fact Sheet

What is the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)?

CSFP is a federal food program designed to improve the health and nutrition of senior citizens, pregnant women and recent mothers, infants, and children. It is administered by the US Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. Participants receive a free box of commodities up to once a month. The commodities are tailored to the nutritional needs of the participants. They provide nutrients that the participants might not otherwise get.

Who is eligible for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program?

Two groups of people are eligible to participate in the CSFP:

- Seniors, at least 60 years of age, who have income at or below 130% of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines.
- Pregnant and breastfeeding women, new mothers up to one year postpartum, infants, and children up to age six. Income eligibility for this population is determined by each state, but it is typically 185% of the Federal Income Poverty Guidelines. WIC participants are *not* eligible for the CSFP.

Additionally, states can set residency requirements, or other requirements that participants be nutritionally at risk (as determined by height and weight measurements or blood tests).

Who participates in the Commodity Supplemental Food Program?

In FY 2002, an average of 410,719 people received food each month. Of those, 337,448 (82.2%) were elderly, and 73,271 (17.8%) were women, infants, and children.

Because WIC only serves children up to 5 years-old, CSFP can “pick up” 6 year-olds.

How does the Commodity Supplemental Food Program work?

Program administration varies from state to state. State agencies receive administrative money and commodities from the USDA (generally departments of health, education, agriculture, or social services). Typically, the agencies then contract with public and non-profit organizations (such as food banks, hospitals, and other charitable organizations) to, distribute the commodities, determine eligibility, perform outreach, and provide nutritional education. Commodities are generally distributed at warehouses, food pantries, hospitals, or community organizations. Some distribution sites deliver to participants who are unable to pick up the boxes themselves, because of age or disability.

What kind of food is distributed?

CSFP state contacts: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/contacts/csfp-contacts.htm>

FRAC (Food Research and Action Center): www.frac.org