



U.S. Nutrition Response to Coronavirus Pandemic

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Timeline

- January 19- A 35-year-old man presented to an urgent care clinic in Snohomish County, Washington, with a 4-day history of cough and subjective fever. Coronavirus is confirmed.
- March 6- The first coronavirus response measure signed into law. It provided about \$8 billion for immediate response efforts to the Health and Human Services Department, State Department, U.S. Agency for International Development, and Small Business Administration.
- March 13- President Trump declared a national emergency and announced several initiatives including waiving student-loan interest, purchasing large quantities of oil, setting up drive-through testing, and authorizing HHS to waive certain hospital regulations.

Timeline

- March 18- Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) signed into law. This bill responds to the COVID-19 outbreak by providing paid sick leave, tax credits, and free COVID-19 testing; expanding food assistance and unemployment benefits; and increasing Medicaid funding.
- March 27- The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) signed into law. This \$2T bill addresses economic impacts of, and otherwise responds to, the COVID-19 (coronavirus) outbreak with emergency loans to distressed industries, forgivable small business bridge loans; tax rebates to individuals and other measures.

U.S. Nutrition Program Response

New State Flexibilities

New Funding

New Programs

New State Flexibilities (Waivers)- National

- Nationwide
 - Child Nutrition (*55ml students impacted by school closures as of today*)
 - Non-Congregate Feeding: Allows meals to be provided outside of a congregate feeding setting.
 - Meal Service Times: Provides flexibility to the meal service time requirements.
 - Activity Requirement in the Afterschool Nutrition Programs: Eliminates the requirement to provide educational or enrichment activities when providing snacks or meals.
 - Parents and Guardians to Pick Up Meals for Children: Allows a parent or guardian to pick up meals and take home to children.
 - Meal Pattern Flexibility: Waives the requirements to serve meals that meet the meal pattern requirements.
 - Other flexibilities: Community Eligibility, Monitoring

New State Flexibilities (Waivers)- National

- Nationwide
 - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
 - Suspension of Time Limit for Able-bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWD):
Temporarily suspends the 3-month time limit for adults under age 50 without children in their home from participation in SNAP.

New State Flexibilities (Waivers)-State

- State by State
 - Child Nutrition
 - Area Eligibility Waiver: Removes the requirement that school districts and community organizations can only operate the Summer Nutrition Programs in areas where at least 50 percent or more of participants are eligible for free or reduced-price meals.
 - WIC
 - Physical Presence Waivers: Waives the requirement that participants and applicants physically come into the clinic to enroll or re-enroll, including the ability to defer certain requirements used to determine nutritional risk.
 - Remote Benefit Issuance Waivers: Waives the requirement that participants physically come into the clinic to pick up WIC EBT cards and/or paper coupons. This ensures participants have what they need to receive continued nutrition assistance.
 - Food Package Substitution Waivers: Allows appropriate substitutes for the types and amounts of certain WIC-prescribed foods if their availability is limited.

New State Flexibilities (Waivers)-State

- State by State
 - SNAP
 - Emergency Allotments: Allows states to request waivers from USDA to provide temporary, emergency SNAP benefits to bring SNAP households up to the maximum monthly benefit amount for their household size.
 - SNAP Program Flexibilities: Allows states to adjust their SNAP operations and procedures to help them manage their workload under current conditions.
 - Extended Certification Periods
 - Waive Periodic Reporting
 - Adjustments to Interview Requirements
 - Flexibility for Quality Control Interviews

New State Flexibilities (Waivers)-State

- State by State
 - Disaster Household Distribution
 - Under a Presidential Declaration of a National Emergency, FNS may approve state requests for Disaster Household Distributions for targeted areas to meet specific needs when traditional channels of food are unavailable and not being replenished on a regular basis. DHD provides boxed foods to households using existing inventories of USDA-purchased foods.
- Resources
 - USDA, FNS Program Guidance on Human Pandemic Response, <https://www.fns.usda.gov/disaster/pandemic>
 - USDA, Child Nutrition Program State by State COVID-19 Waivers, <https://www.fns.usda.gov/disaster/pandemic/covid-19/cn-waivers-flexibilities>
 - (Note, clicking on a specific State will return information for All USDA Waivers granted in that State not just child nutrition programs)

New Funding

- SNAP— \$15.5 billion in a contingency fund to cover the projected increase in applications and the costs of relief authorized in FFCRA.
- WIC—\$500 million to provide access to nutritious foods to low-income pregnant women or mothers with young children who lose their jobs or are laid off due to the COVID-19 emergency.
- The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)—\$850 million to assist local food banks to meet increased demand for low-income Americans during the emergency. Of the total, \$600 million is for the purchase of nutritious foods and \$250 million is to support the storage and distribution of the foods.
- Senior Nutrition—\$250 million for HHS programs that aid elderly Americans, divided as follows: \$160 million for home-delivered nutrition services; \$80 million for congregate nutrition services that provide food in group settings, such as adult day care centers and meal sites; \$10 million for nutrition services for American Indians.
- Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)—\$100 million to support income-eligible households living on reservations and American Indians residing in approved areas.
- Nutrition Assistance for U.S. Territories—\$300 million for USDA to provide nutrition assistance grants to Puerto Rico, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in response to the COVID-19 public health emergency.

New Programs- Pandemic EBT (SNAP)

- FFCRA provides new state authority to provide SNAP benefits to households with children
 - USDA is allowed to approve state plans to provide emergency Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) food assistance to households with children who would otherwise receive free or reduced-price meals if not for their schools being closed due to the COVID-19 emergency (even households not currently receiving SNAP).
 - Families receive replacement value of meals (approx. \$5.25 per child per day).
 - In order to be eligible, the child's school must be closed for no less than 5 consecutive days.
- Resources
 - Food Research & Action Center, Pandemic EBT, <https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/pandemic-ebt-033020.pdf>
 - Hunger Free America, 4 Steps State Leaders Can Take to Advance "Pandemic EBT" Implementation, <https://www.hungerfreeamerica.org/blog/4-steps-state-leaders-can-take-advance-pandemic-ebt-implementation>
 - USDA, State Guidance on Coronavirus Pandemic EBT (P-EBT), <https://www.fns.usda.gov/resource/state-guidance-coronavirus-pandemic-ebt-p-ebt>

New Programs- Rural Child Feeding

- Emergency Meals to You
 - USDA expansion of a pilot program by Baylor Collaborative on Hunger and Poverty, McLane Global, PepsiCo, and others to deliver nearly 1,000,000 meals to students in a limited number of rural schools closed due to COVID-19.
 - Baylor will coordinate with the appropriate state officials to prioritize students who do not currently have access to a Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) site and have an active outbreak of COVID-19.
 - Food boxes will contain five days worth of shelf-stable, nutritious, individually packaged foods that meet USDA's summer food requirements.
- School districts can apply at: <https://mealstoyou.org/emergency-meals-to-you-school-districts/>

Note for State Based Advocates

- Federal Agencies have given permission for unprecedented flexibilities to feed families but States must implement.
- Your advocacy at the State level is needed to make sure State administrators are taking advantage of all options available to feed vulnerable people.

What's Next

- The anti-hunger community will continue to advocate for:
 - Increase household SNAP benefits by 15% above current maximum allowable benefits.
 - Increase the minimum SNAP benefit from \$16 to \$30.
 - Suspend all rulemaking that would limit access to SNAP.

International Response

International Accounts- Title XI, State

- \$674 million for the Department of State
- \$324 million for Diplomatic programs
- \$350 million for Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA)
- \$353 million for USAID
- \$95 million for Operating Expenses
 - This includes support for evacuations and ordered departures of overseas staff, surge support, increased technical support for remote functions, and other needs.
- \$258 million for International Disaster Assistance
 - This includes support for the Disaster Assistance Response Teams through OFDA.

International Accounts- State Continued

- Additional \$1.515 billion for USAID, CDC and the State Department for global disease detection, prevention and response to growing international humanitarian needs.
- \$415 million for the DOD Defense Health Program for RDT&E (R&D money) is included, available until Sept. 30, 2021 to provide support in dealing with the coronavirus outbreak.

International Funds-Title VIII, HHS

- \$4.3 billion for the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention;
- \$500 million for Global Disease Detection and Emergency Response work;
- These are the global health security activities through the Division of Global Health Protection;
 - \$300 million for the Infectious Disease Rapid Response Fund (IDRRF);
- This fund which can be used for (domestic and) global preparedness, detection, and response.
 - \$706 million for National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), which has been working on a vaccine—including work with CEPI.

What's Next

- Advocacy will continue for
 - Additional funding:
 - USAID's global health security program
 - DOD DTRA- Biological Threat Reduction
 - International organizations (such as WHO or UNICEF)
- Authorization language for the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI)

Contact Information

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