

Food Assistance

Mission

To eliminate hunger and malnutrition for low-income children and families in Indiana.

Summary of Activities

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), administered by the **Family and Social Services Administration** (FSSA), is operated contractually with 17 emergency feeding organizations, which in turn contract with approximately 508 food pantries, 154 soup kitchens and 57 separate outlets that provide food to low-income individuals. The soup kitchens and food pantries serve 284,576 meals and 81,500 households each month. Indiana receives food commodities through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). USDA products include fruits, juices, cereals, grains, meat, and vegetables. TEFAP pantries provide this food, as well as paper products, cleaning supplies, health products, diapers, baby food, and other items for household use. There is at least one food pantry in every Indiana county. Volunteers maintain and operate the pantries, which are open to households with an annual income at or below 125% of the federal poverty level.



FSSA Division of Family and Children (DFC) offices in each county administer the Food Stamp program, which is designed to raise the nutritional level of low-income households by supplementing their available food purchasing dollars with coupons that may be used to purchase food. During the past two years, Indiana's food stamp participation has stabilized at approximately 125,000 families, who receive an average monthly benefit of \$170 or \$72 per person. In addition to these benefits, job training and nutrition education programs are available to food stamp recipients. Some food stamp clients also receive supportive services such as transportation and child care.

The **Indiana State Department of Health** (ISDH) administers the federal Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), a short-term intervention program designed to influence lifetime nutrition and health behaviors in a targeted, high-risk population. WIC provides quality nutrition education, breastfeeding education and support, monthly supplemental nutritious foods, and health care and other social service referrals. WIC targets women (pregnant, breastfeeding, or postpartum), infants, and children under the age of six who are at nutritional risk and have incomes at or below 185% of the federal poverty level. The ISDH contracts with 175 clinics to serve 125,000 participants per month.

The **Department of Education** administers the USDA School Lunch program, which subsidizes the cost of providing free and reduced-price breakfast and lunch to lower-income children. Every public school corporation and over 240 private schools and residential institutions participate in the program. During the school year, approximately 580,000 lunches and 105,000 breakfasts are served under this program every day. In addition, the federal Child Adult Care Food program provides meals to 35,000 lower-income children in child care and after-school programs, through 800 child care centers and over 2,200 home child care providers.

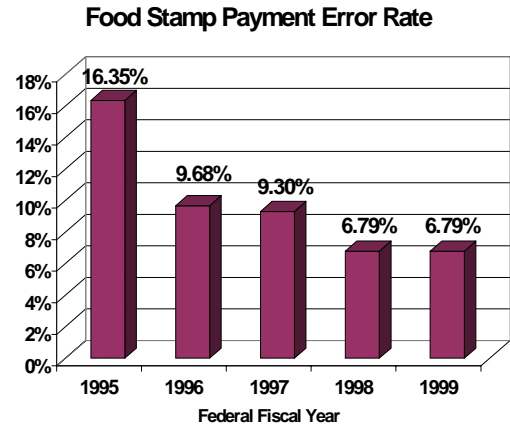
External Factors

TEFAP is primarily dependent on the volunteer force to dispense food items. It is estimated that 10,000 volunteers are needed for TEFAP to function effectively. The food stamp program is subject to ongoing policy and rule revisions by the USDA, which often result in additional state costs for hiring and training staff, software development, and the printing of forms and notices. Because food stamps are an entitlement under federal law, the DFC must process and provide benefits to all eligible families according to federal guidelines.

Evaluation and Accomplishments

Indiana has experienced significant growth in TEFAP, which has gone from a statewide one-day distribution with cheese as the only product to pantries with extensive product choices available to clients. Educators working with food nutrition programs based in county extension offices throughout the state provide cooking demonstrations and one-on-one education in cooking, food safety, and housekeeping skills.

Recently, the food stamp participation rate has dropped faster than the poverty rate, leading to the conclusion that many eligible food stamp recipients are not utilizing the program. To address this problem, the DFC held public meetings to identify barriers to participation and designed a food stamp education plan for low-income families and senior citizens. As a result of this and other initiatives, an increase of 3% to 5% in the number of eligible families is expected in the 2001-2002 biennium.



In a few short years, the food stamp program in Indiana has increased payment accuracy from less than 85% to nearly 94%. Increased training and attention to program improvements has led to national recognition of the DFC as a leader in food stamp administration. The goal for 2001 is an error rate of less than 5%.

Plans for the Biennium

The state will continue to enhance the cooperation among food banks, Community Action Agencies, faith based organizations, and other local service providers in the delivery of USDA food products and non-USDA food and non-food items. The initiative to increase participation among eligible families will also continue.

With the increased need for food and non-food items in the outlets, the state will continue to expand and make changes that will augment the program, including the elimination of very small outlets across Indiana, which will allow remaining emergency food organizations to provide more extensive and comprehensive services to their clients.

<u>Program: 0310</u>	FY 1999	FY 2000	FY 2001	FY 2002	FY 2003
Appropriation (All Funds)	\$255,227,221	\$285,630,362	\$283,905,412	\$311,941,190	\$313,027,164
Expenditures	\$281,403,449	\$288,041,222	\$296,089,994		

**Sources of Funds
FY 2001 (Approp)**

■ General
 ■ Dedicated
 ■ Federal
 ■ Other

86% 12% 2%

**Uses of Funds
FY 2001 (Approp)**

■ Personal Services
 ■ Distributions
 ■ Capital
 ■ Other

77% 12% 11%