

## **Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)**

### **Overview**

The Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) supplements the diets of older adults, low-income mothers and children up to age six. CSFP is administered by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). USDA purchases the food and makes it available to state agencies. The Wisconsin Division of Public Health (DPH) within the Department of Health and Family Services administers the program for Wisconsin. In turn, DPH contracts with the Hunger Task Force to administer the program locally in Milwaukee and Waukesha counties. CSFP is only available in these two Wisconsin counties due limited federal funding of the program.

### **Eligibility**

Participants include seniors age 60 and over, postpartum women up to 12 months, and children up to age 6. The majority of participants receiving the supplement are seniors (over 96%). Women and children must meet income guidelines that are 185% of the federal poverty limits, and seniors must meet income guidelines that are 130% of the limit.

### **Access/Participation**

Participants pick up a monthly food box at either a food pantry or a residential complex. Food pantries certify clients, keep client records, provide nutrition education and make referrals to other community services. Senior apartment buildings have the ability to distribute boxes to client's on-site.

An average of 5,070 seniors, and 190 mothers and children were served in Milwaukee and Waukesha County in 2006. Nearly 500,000 people received this supplement nationwide in 2006.

### **Benefit Details**

Congress appropriated \$107.202 million in FY 2006. The USDA purchases and distributes CSFP foods to 34 participating states and tribal organizations. Wisconsin received \$287,679 in administrative funds and distributed 2,500,000 pounds of foods in 2006. The food package prescribed by USDA includes canned fruits and vegetables, juice, dry or canned milk, cheese, canned meat, peanut butter or dried beans, cereal and grains, rice, instant potatoes or pasta. The annual value of food packages is \$190 per participant based on USDA costs, not retail prices. Statewide, the annual value of benefits to participants is \$998,000.

### **Program Impact**

CSFP food package provide a good source of nutrients typically lacking in the diets of the target populations. Program participants will hopefully receive adequate food, make healthier food choices, and improve overall health. This is especially important to seniors who are typically reluctant to participate in federal nutrition programs.

## *FSC Topic Paper – Emergency Food*

### **Positive Developments & Trends**

- Eligible individuals can call 211 to find out how and where to apply.
- CSFP is due for Congressional reauthorization in the Farm Bill in 2007. The president's proposed budget eliminated in the program, but House and Senate versions of the Farm Bill are set to restore funding for the next 5 years.

### **Concerns, Problems & Negative Trends**

- Currently, the program is only available in Milwaukee and Waukesha counties. CSFP has a limited caseload in each state, which can result in eligible individuals being placed on waiting lists.
- The Program is only able to serve 15% of the eligible individuals in these two counties.
- More federal funding is needed to meet the need in other Wisconsin counties.

### **CSFP would be more effective if...**

- Funds were adequate to serve the more than 150,000 eligible individuals statewide (WIC graduates and seniors).
- Administrative recordkeeping were streamlined so that staff and volunteers at the local level could focus more time and attention on participant needs.
- USDA inventory requirements are too stringent and should be simplified.