

**Tribal Leaders Consultation Working Group
Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)
August 11, 2021; 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. ET
Virtual Video & Conference Line Meeting**

I. Welcome and Opening Remarks

- Opening Prayer
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 - Tribal Leaders Consultation Working Group Co-Chair: Vice Chair Stella Kay, Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians
 - USDA Deputy Secretary: Jewel Bronaugh
 - USDA Office of Tribal Relations (OTR) Director: Heather Dawn Thompson
- Approval of the minutes from most recent consultation.
- Approval of the agenda.

II. Computer System Updates

- Tribal leaders discussed the new FDPIR computer system, the Integrated Management Food System (IFMS) and the original request from NAFDPIR to have a more flexible system that also included more features than inventory management, such as certification.
- Tribal leaders acknowledged that some Tribes are happy with IFMS, but others have serious concerns resulting in Tribal leaders' previous request to put a pause on further IFMS implementation. Tribal leaders and representatives further shared and provided examples of their concerns with the system and asked who the end user is.
- FNS shared that the FDPIR community are our partners and customers. Sixty-two out of 112 FDPIR programs have migrated over to IFMS. USDA has committed to IFMS and invested money and time into the system. FNS noted that IFMS was never envisioned to be a system that would encompass certification or other functions. It was designed to be an inventory management system
- Tribal leaders reiterated their request that USDA stop adding new users as well as their request that the system scope be expanded to include certification.
- FNS further shared that the FDD Technology team is planning to hold sessions with ITOs to discuss system enhancements and provide information on the capabilities that exist in IFMS.
- Tribal leaders and representatives expressed that ITOs need to have the choice to implement their own technology system to support the program, especially in light of the pandemic, and that certification modules are highly desired. Spirit Lake shared they have purchased their own certification module and that Chickasaw Nation has had their own system for many years.
- Tribal leaders also shared that the Indian Health Service (IHS) has a process where if a Tribe receives an allocation for a service that IHS offers, but does not use it, then

the Tribes receives their corresponding allocation (buy-back service). FNS shared that USDA funding for FDPIR is not set-up in the same manner.

- FNS shared that there is no prohibition for a Tribe to pursue their own technology system using their tribal funds.
- Tribal leaders requested a legal opinion from USDA's Office of General Council (OGC) on the use of administrative funds to support individual system development. Tribal leaders also requested a pause on further IFMS implementation and for a work group to be created to focus on IFMS issues and solutions before continuing further roll-out. Tribal leaders [Chairman Amber Torres] specifically asked for a response on the request to pause further IFMS implementation and the use of federal funds for individual system development. FNS committed to responding within 30-days of the August 11 consultation.

III. President's Budget Request for FY 2022

- FNS shared that the FY 2022 budget request shows less new budget authority for FDPIR for food purchases than in previous years because significant resources are available to carry over into FY 2022. With the significant drop in participation, FNS has built up significant food inventory during FY 2021 that will carry over into FY 2022 as well.
- The national warehouses that store FDPIR foods have a minimum supply of 4 months on hand and a maximum supply of 25 months of FDPIR products through December 31, 2021. A few individual items may not be immediately available, but all food categories are fully stocked.
- FNS also has a cash reserve from FY21 that will carry over and be available on FY 2022. The President's budget request for FDPIR for food is \$62.669M. FNS will carry over approximately \$103.0M from FY 2021 into FY 2022 for food purchases for a total of \$166.0M in available food funding, which is more funding that previously available.
- FNS shared that the amount of funding available and inventory reserve is enough to cover any increases in FDPIR participation in FY 2022 based on program trends.
- FNS also shared the President's budget request also includes \$4.0M in nutrition education as part of the administrative allocation. FNS will collect input from Tribal leaders on the use of those funds.
- CARES Act funds have also been used to support facility and equipment requests from FDPIR programs throughout the year.
- FNS shared information on reprogramming of SNAP funds to meet FDPIR needs, if necessary. Under Section 8 of Public Law 89-106 (modified by Section 716 of the 2021 Consolidated Appropriations Act), FNS has authority to reprogram funds from the SNAP account to FDPIR when a determination has been made that additional funds are necessary for the operation of the program to ensure full benefits are met. Notification to Congress is required in advance. FNS used this authority in FY 2014

when a \$15.5M shortfall in food funds occurred due to a multitude of factors at that time.

Food Package Review Work Group

- NAFDPIR shared that the Food Package Review Work Group was established via resolution with the goal of improving the food package and ensuring cultural appropriateness without increasing the overall food cost.
- NAFDPIR leadership is requesting to have a more active role to include co-developing the agenda and having Mary Greene-Trottier as co-chair of the work group. NAFDPIR leadership also shared concerns with fresh produce and being limited to adding only two choices this year. FNS clarified that four new items were made available to the fresh produce offerings based on feedback from the work group.
- Tribal leaders requested for NAFDPIR to create the agenda first and send it to USDA instead of the other way around.
- FNS clarified that a draft agenda is shared in advance with work group members for feedback and input. FNS also shared that work group members will be revisiting the charter to better address roles and responsibilities. FNS is committed to working together to ensure the needs of program participants are met.
- Tribal leaders and FNS had a discussion on dried eggs and fresh eggs and on requests to offer both products at the same time. There was also discussion on re-evaluating the guide rate associated with frozen blueberries and frozen peas.

IV. Promoting Parity between FDPIR and SNAP

- Tribal leaders requested a breakdown of administrative costs and food costs of SNAP and FDPIR to see a comparison.
- FNS shared the most current costs associated with each program, shown by average monthly benefit per person. Below is the comparison for FY 2020:

SNAP & FDPIR – Benefit and Administrative Costs/Per Person

Fiscal Year	SNAP Average Monthly Benefit Per Person	FDPIR Average Monthly Food Cost Per Person	SNAP Total Admin. Cost Per Person Per Month	FDPIR Total Admin. Costs Per Person Per Month
2020	\$160.39*	\$73.63**	\$16.29	\$58.38

*Includes SNAP increase known as the Emergency Allotment (EA).

**Amount is cost to USDA which receives economies of scale due to its purchasing power. This amount is not reflective of the retail value of FDPIR like it is in SNAP. See chart below for retail comparison.

- For comparison, FNS has calculated the FDPIR Retail Value using industry standards of food retail values (known as IRI Values) for 2017. FNS is currently working on a 2019 analysis.

SNAP & FDPIR – 2017 Average Monthly Benefit

SNAP Benefit	FDPIR – Offered (Retail)
\$125.47	\$127.81

- FNS and Tribal leaders had a discussion on certification periods. FNS further clarified the length of certification periods for Zero Income Households for FDPIR, which can also be reviewed here for reference:
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/fdpir/revised-policy-certification-periods-zero-income-households>.
- Tribal representatives shared perspective on the double-up bucks (GusNIP Grants) opportunities for SNAP participants and on how access to those funds can only be acquired through a State grant. Tribes cannot access the same opportunity through their Tribe for Tribal farmer’s markets, for example. FDPIR participants interested in receiving additional fresh produce are ineligible for the double bucks’ program and would need to switch to SNAP. FNS clarified that Tribes are eligible for the grant, but it is only tied to SNAP participants and not FDPIR.
- Tribal representatives asked for clarification on the match requirement for this grant. FNS clarified that a match is required. Tribal representatives stated that the match requirement prohibits many Tribes from applying. FNS shared that foundations and other similar entities are good sources to explore to help meet the match requirement. Furthermore, FNS would like to share the following additional information:
 - Tribal agencies: Tribal agency applicants may use funds provided to the Indian Tribe or the Tribal agency through a Federal agency (including the Indian Health Service) or other Federal benefit to satisfy all or part of the non-federal share described if such use is otherwise consistent with the purpose of such funds.
 - The National Food and Agriculture Institute (NIFA) also runs a Produce Prescription Program that might be of interest to the ITOs: “The primary purpose of the Produce Prescription Grants is to conduct projects that demonstrate and evaluate the impact of the projects on (1) the improvement of dietary health through increased consumption of fruits and vegetables; (2) the reduction of individual and household food insecurity; and (3) the reduction in healthcare use and associated costs. Produce Prescription Grant applications do not require matching contributions.”
 - For both GusNIP and Produce Prescription, NIFA has contracted with a National Technical Assistance Center that is available to provide TA at no cost to interested potential grant applicants. ITOs can chose to complete a contact form at the following link or contact Chelsea Matzen, Project Manager, directly and she will route them appropriately for technical assistance:

<https://www.ngaftacenter.org/contact-us/>
cmatzen@nationalgrocers.org (Chelsea Matzen, Project Manager)

- Tribal leaders asked how SNAP and FDPIR can better deal with household certification issues. The example provided included members of a SNAP household leaving the household yet SNAP not removing the individuals because removal was not requested by the head of household. Thus, the SNAP household is receiving additional benefits, and the member cannot apply to FDPIR. FNS would like to follow-up on how best to address this issue and improve the communication between both programs. FNS confirmed that any responsible member of the household and not only the head of household can report a change in household circumstances.
- Tribal representatives also shared the example of a child living with the father during summer and receiving SNAP benefits. At the beginning of the school year, the child in this example moved back to live with his mother, who has legal custody, and applied for FPDIR. The SNAP agency would not remove the child until the head of household made the request even with proof of custody. FNS will also follow-up on this issue.
- Tribal leaders asked what guidance and additional steps can FNS take to ensure meaningful dialog occurs on the State SNAP-Ed Plan with Tribes. FNS shared that consultation with Tribes is required for SNAP-Ed and evidence must be provided in the State plan. An attestation and description of the consultation is required by the State. FNS will be providing more technical assistance to States to ensure this requirement is understood and that States understand what the expectation is when hosting a consultation. FNS also shared that FNS Regional Administrators have made it a commitment and priority to attend and listen-in on State SNAP-Ed consultations moving forward, as requested by Tribal leaders. This is now built into FNS' workplan beginning in FY 2022.
- Tribal leaders requested for FDPIR to be included in the State SNAP-Ed consultation meetings and for FNS regional tribal specialists and OTR to be advocates in this area.

V. Closing Prayer

VI. Adjourn

Requested Follow-Up Items

- Tribal leaders requested a legal opinion from USDA's Office of General Council (OGC) on the use of administrative funds to support individual system development.
- Tribal leaders requested for a pause on further IFMS implementation and for a work group to be created to focus on IFMS issues and solutions before continuing further roll-out. Specifically, Chairman Amber Torres requested a response on the request to pause further IFMS implementation and on the use of federal funds for individual system development. FNS committed to responding within 30-days of the August 11 consultation.

- Tribal leaders requested that FNS allow dried eggs and fresh eggs be offered at the same time and that FNS re-evaluate the guide rate associated with frozen blueberries and frozen peas.
- FNS will be reaching out to Tribal leaders for feedback on the use of the \$4M included in the FY 2022 President’s budget request for FDPIR nutrition education.
- FNS will be providing clarification on the double-up bucks (GusNIP Grants) opportunities and match requirements to the FDPIR community.
- FNS will be following-up with SNAP State agencies to provide clarification on removing household members.
- FNS will be following-up on the request that FDPIR regional tribal specialists and OTR be invited to State SNAP-Ed consultations along with FNS Regional Administrators.
- FNS will follow-up on the request to attend, in-person, a consultation meeting in December 2021 during the Inter-Tribal Agricultural Council (IAC) conference in Las Vegas, NV.
- FNS will follow-up on the request to attend three in-person consultation meeting during calendar year 2022: February 2022 (Washington, DC), June 2022 (TBD/NAFDPIR Conference), and December 2022 (IAC/Las Vegas, NV).

ENCLOSURES:

- **List of Attendees (below)**

USDA and Tribal Consulting Officials

Name	Title	Tribe/USDA
Stella Kay	Vice-Chair and Co-Chair	Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians
Stacy Dean	Deputy Under Secretary	FNCS
Cindy Long	Administrator	FNS

Tribal Leaders, Representatives and Other Attendees

August 2021 – Zoom Registration List

Note: Registration was done via a virtual service which only captures the identifying information below.

Participant Name (as entered)
12027165722
12176213389
13037253122

13125055737
13464148996
14045020333
14052345237
15714594807
15719263531
15803104782
15804923327
16175655689
19066354801
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Andrea Gold-O'Connor
Anna Sterner
asterner
Audrey
Audrey Estes
Barbara Lopez
Becky Chandler
Beibhinn Steiner OSEC# FNCS
BL
BMurphy
cgate
Chairman Amber Torres-WRPT
Christina Riley
Cindy Cultee (Cindy C)
Cindy Long
cLAUDEEN
Danya Carroll
Dennis Sullivan
DKriviski
Eddie Longoria
Elizabeth Lober
EnglishT
Eric.Meredith
Erica Antonson
Erin Parker
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Fi Davis
governor

Heather Dawn Thompson
iPhone
Ira Taken Alive
Isabelle Mengesha
James R. Mountain
Janell Conway
Jeffrey Harris
Jerry Tonubbee
Jess Luna (she/her)
Jessica Shahin FNS
Jewel Bronaugh
Jimmy Nguyen
Jocelyn Beard
Joe Van Alstine# Ziibimijwang
Jowan Gonzales
jparker
Julie Skolmowski USDA
Julie.Griffith
Kathleen USDA
Kathy Young
Katie Clifford (Katie Clifford - USDA Attendee)
Kelli Case
Kelli Case
KenneChe
Kiley Larson - USDA
Laura Griffin
Lauren.Casale
leah-duncan
Liz Dawson
LudwigB
Marcie Foster
Margaret.BurnsRath
Maribelle Balbes
Marisa
Marisa Fuller
Mary Greene
mendozaj
Michael Ladd
michael.baker1
Michelle Clarkson

Milton Bluehouse# Jr
Miranda Carman
Monika.Lacka
Nancy Boyd
Natasha Seaforth
Pascale Jean
Rachael Collins
Rachel Schoenian - USDA
RNewsom
S. Bridges
sam spang
santeelewis
Sasha Gersten Paal
Stacy Dean
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