The background of the slide features a large, semi-transparent version of the official seal of the United States Department of Agriculture. The seal is circular with a braided rope border. Inside the border, the words "DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE" are written in a circular path. At the top, it says "UNITED STATES OF AMERICA". The central part of the seal depicts a landscape with a plow, a sheaf of wheat, and a sheaf of corn. Below the landscape, a banner reads "AGRICULTURE IS THE FOUNDATION OF MANUFACTURE AND COMMERCE". The year "1862" is visible on the left side of the seal.

# **USDA FNS Response to COVID-19**

Anne DeCesaro  
Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services  
April 28, 2020

- USDA Mission - “Do Right and Feed Everyone”
- The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) administers 15 nutrition assistance programs, spending over \$100 billion annually, that leverage America’s agricultural abundance to ensure children and low-income individuals and families have nutritious food to eat.
- FNS programs are operated by State and local providers, who are facing unimaginable challenges

- FNS has provided more than 1500 program flexibilities to States across our 15 nutrition programs
- Visit the FNS COVID website for real time updates on guidance, the availability of nation-wide waivers, and state-by-state approvals
- Website: [fns.usda.gov/coronavirus](https://fns.usda.gov/coronavirus)

Highlights include:

- Increasing SNAP purchasing power by 40% and providing maximum benefits to all households
- Providing more than 227 million pounds of food – valued at \$243 million through [The Emergency Food Assistance Program \(TEFAP\)](#), plus another \$850 million in the pipeline
- Launching [Pandemic-EBT \(P-EBT\)](#) to provide the value of school breakfast and lunch to families with children eligible for free and reduce-price lunch
- Issuing [Disaster Household Distributions](#), food targeted to meet specific needs when traditional channels of food are unavailable
- Providing more than [one million meals a week](#) to rural children through public-private partnership [Meals to You](#)
- Allowing states to serve free meals to children in *all* areas across more than [35,000 feeding sites](#) nation-wide
- Increasing access to [online purchasing](#) by expanding the online purchasing pilot to cover [half of all SNAP households](#)

# Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

SNAP provides benefits to low-income, eligible households on an electronic benefit transfer (EBT) card; benefits can then be exchanged for foods at authorized retailers

## **SNAP: Able-Bodied Adult without Dependents**

- Typically limited to 3 months of benefits in a 36 month period
- Issued a self-executing memo on the suspension of the time limit
- **Effective on April 1** for the duration of the public health emergency

# SNAP: Emergency Allotments

- All SNAP households that are eligible to receive less than the [maximum benefit](#) will receive the [emergency allotment supplement](#) to bring them up to the maximum
- Provides nearly **\$2 billion per month**, which is in addition to approximately \$4.5 billion in benefits already provided to SNAP households each month, a **40% increase** in purchasing power

People in HH	Maximum Monthly Allotment
1	\$194
2	\$355
3	\$509
4	\$646
5	\$768
6	\$921
7	\$1,018
8	\$1,164
Each additional person	+\$146

## **SNAP: Flexibilities for Increased Applications**

- Extended Certification Periods and Periodic Reporting
- Allowing telephone interviews instead of face-to face-interviews
- Adjusted the requirement that a household complete an interview prior to approval, provided the applicant's identity can be verified and all other mandatory verifications have been completed

## **SNAP: Online Pilot**

- Allows benefits to be used online for payment
- Responsibility is on state agencies, their third-party processor, and any retailers to properly prepare
- FNS continues to recommend that States utilize other options that retailers may already provide, such as Pay at Pick-up (also known as “Click and Collect”), where SNAP cardholders can shop online and then pay for their purchase using their EBT card at pick-up

## **Pandemic EBT (P-EBT)**

- Allows the value of free breakfast and lunch to be provided to households via electronic benefit transfer using SNAP structure
- Must serve both SNAP and non-SNAP households
- States must submit a plan and be approved

## **Child Nutrition**

Includes National School Lunch (NSLP), School Breakfast, Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), Seamless Summer Option (SSO), Child and Adult Care Feeding Program (CACFP)

# National Child Nutrition Waivers

- **Congregate Meals** allowing meals not to be served in a group setting
- **Meal Times** allowing food to be provided anytime of day
- **Meal Patterns** allowing substitution when certain foods are not available
- **Afterschool Activity** allowing programs that typically require some activity to offer meals without it
- **Parent Pickup** allowing parents to pickup food with a child being present

## CN: Area Eligibility

- Previously open sites (a site where any child could receive a meal) could only be setup in areas where 50% or more of the kids were eligible for free-or reduced lunch
- Sites can be setup based on need and local discretion, open to all children

## CN: Meals to You

- Collaboration with the Baylor Collaborative on Hunger and Poverty, McLane Global, and PepsiCo
- Delivering more than 1,000,000 meals a week to students in a limited number of rural schools closed due to COVID-19
- USDA is open to innovative approaches and encourage others to think creatively



### Emergency

Choose this option if your school is closed in response to COVID-19 and you are interested in Meals-to-You.

# **Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)**

Provides federal grants to states for supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children up to age 5 who are found to be at nutritional risk

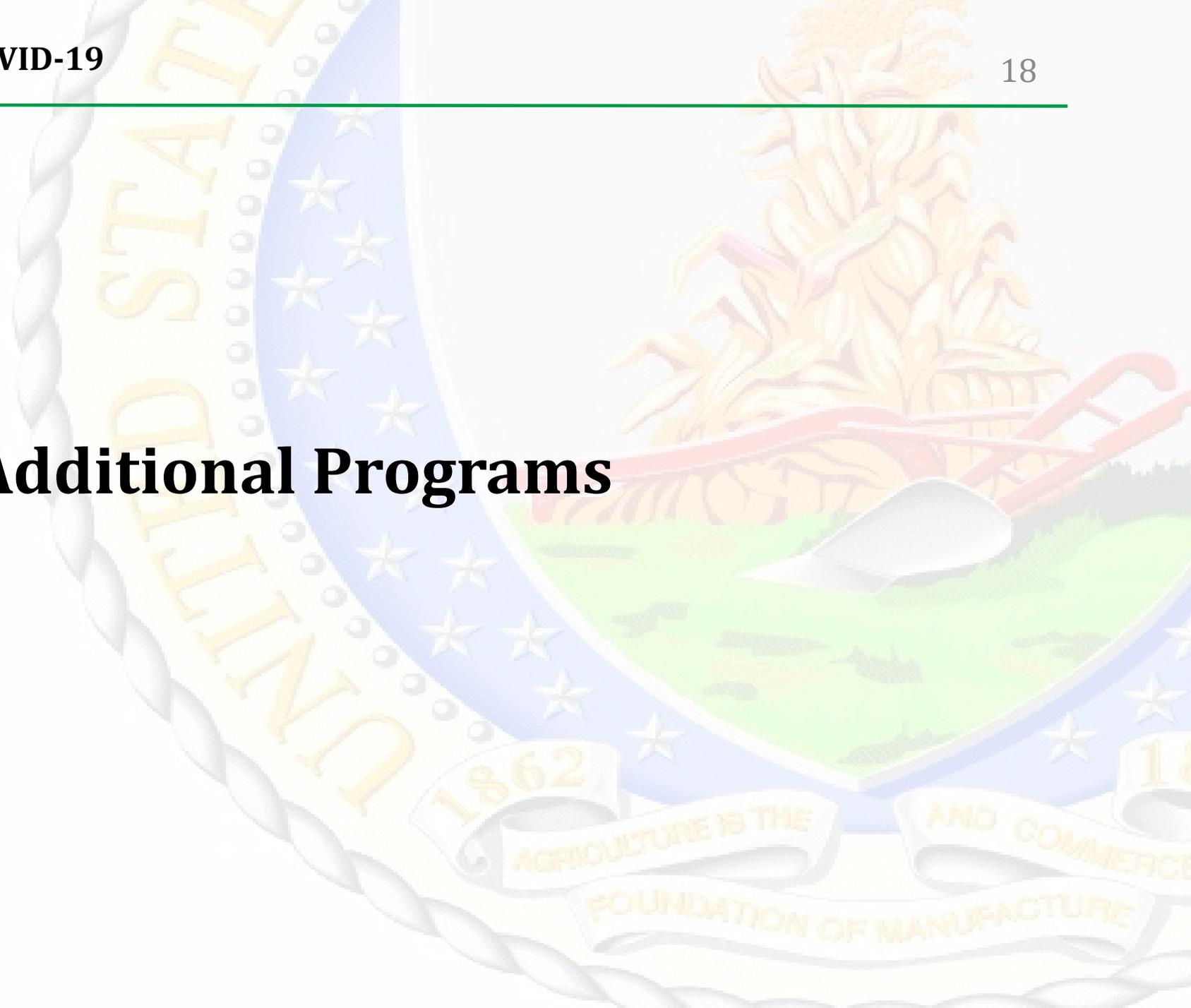
## **WIC: Physical Presence and Remote Issuance**

- Waives the requirement participants and applicants to physically come into the clinic to enroll or re-enroll, including the ability to defer certain requirements used to determine nutritional risk
- Waives the requirement that participants physically come into the clinic to pick up WIC EBT cards and/or paper coupons

## WIC: Food Package Substitutions

- WIC provides access to specific foods based on nutritional needs
- Allowing substitution to nutritionally equivalent foods when the specified WIC items is not available due do supply chain issues
- So far, we have **completed almost 250** food package substitution waivers

# Additional Programs



# The Temporary Food Assistance Program

- TEFAP partners with food banks by providing states with USDA-purchased foods and administrative funds
- Distributing agencies are statutorily required to collect limited eligibility information from recipients such as their name, address, and self-reported income
  - States have broad discretion in setting eligibility limits
  - Encouraged to consider methods to limit person-to-person contact, such as collecting information via telephone, text or other electronic means, or by receiving it in hardcopy via a drop box

## **Disaster Household Distribution (DHD):**

- Provides food directly to households in targeted areas to meet specific needs when traditional channels of food are unavailable and not being replenished on a regular basis
- Comes from existing USDA foods inventories

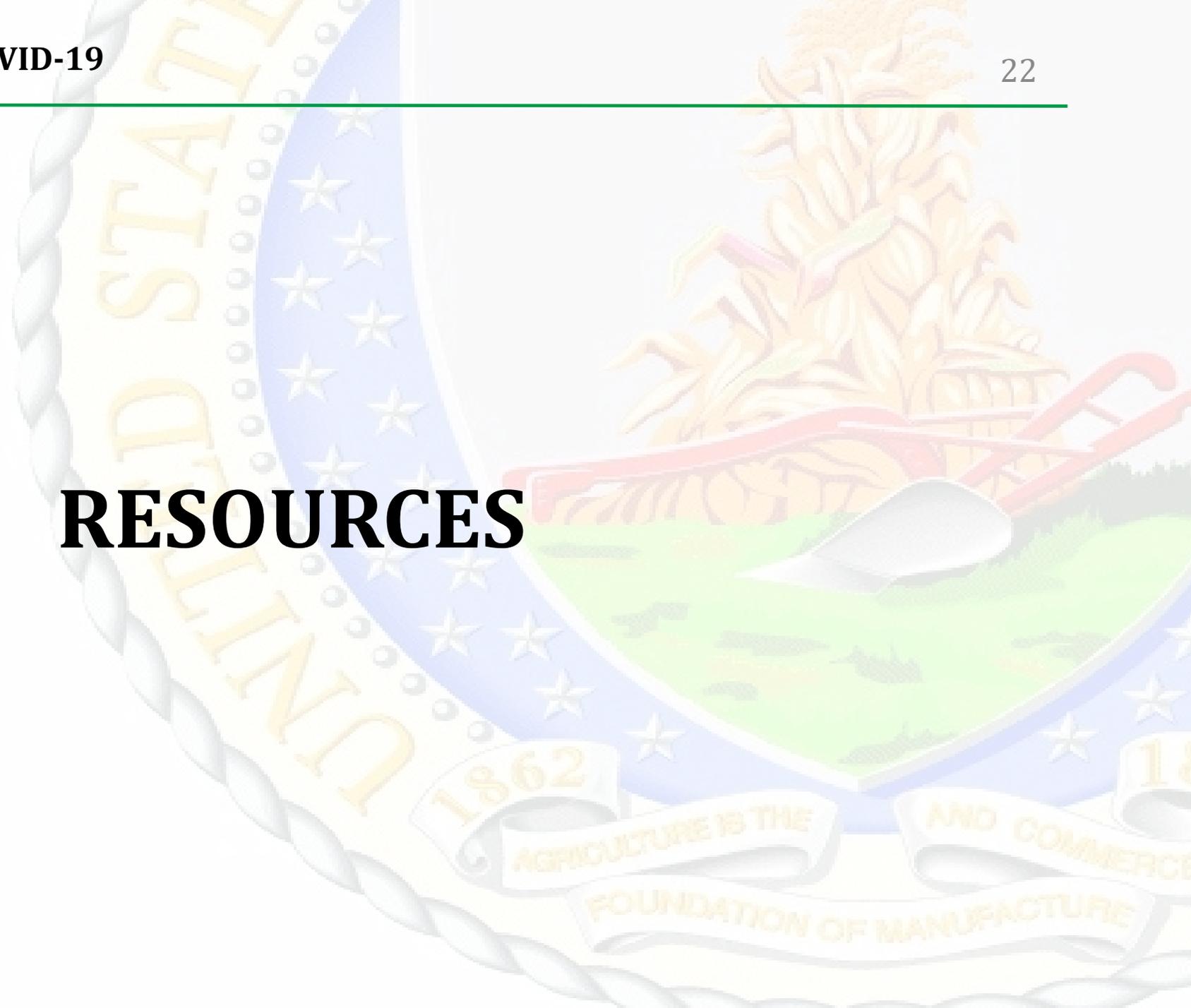
## **FEMA and Major Disaster Declarations (MDD)**

- MDDs can open up additional program flexibilities when there is damage to food or the means of cooking food through “individual assistance,” but that is not the case in this disaster
- FEMA is providing “public assistance”, covering 75% of the cost for States with a plan to increase feeding, contact FEMA regional offices

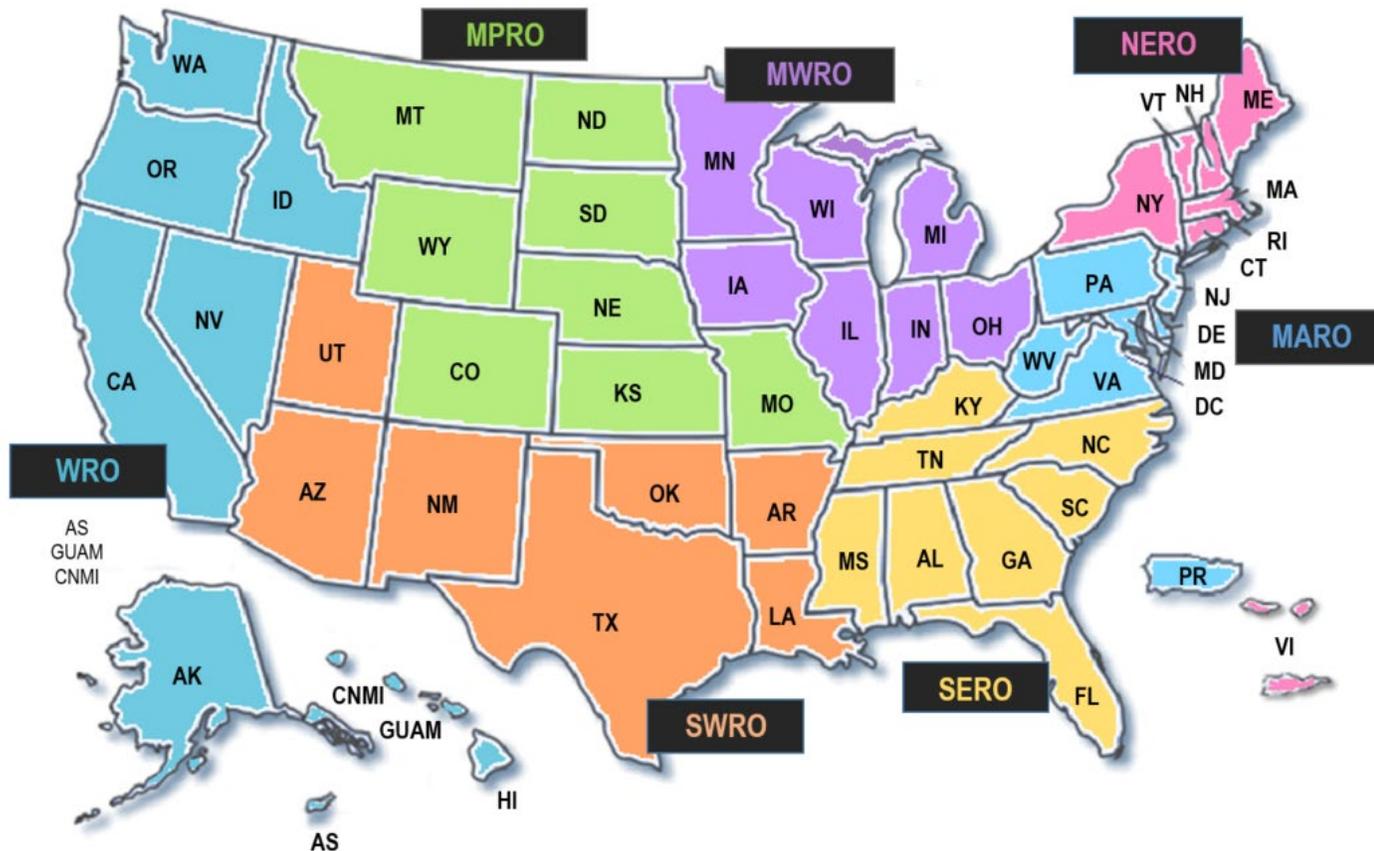
## Food Bank Shortages

- Not USDA Foods, but donated foods
- FNS is in close contact with food banks and will be pushing out additional USDA food as needed for TEFAP
- **There is Plenty of Food!** – Not supply chain issue but stocking issue

# RESOURCES



## FNS Regional Offices: FNS is also organized into **seven** regional areas



### Northeast Regional Office (NERO)

- Admin - Kurt Messner

### Mid-Atlantic Regional Office (MARO)

- Admin - Pat Dombroski

### Southeast Regional Office (SERO)

- Admin - Willie Taylor

### Southwest Regional Office (SWRO)

- Admin - Bill Ludwig

### Midwest Regional Office (MWRO)

- Admin - Tim English

### Mountain Plains Regional Office (MPRO)

- Admin - Cheryl Kennedy

### Western Regional Office (WRO)

- Admin - Jesus Mendoza Jr.

## Resources

- FNS is posting materials and waiver approvals by state and program on [fns.usda.gov/coronavirus](https://fns.usda.gov/coronavirus)
  - Includes interactive state maps with the flexibilities requested by each state and status of requests
  - Includes guidance on new flexibilities and activities permitted under the FFRCA, CARES Act, and more
- “[Meals for Kids](#)” interactive site finder – to help families find meals for children while schools are closed