



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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More Wisconsin Residents Can Now Qualify for Food Assistance

Income threshold raised for emergency food pantry program during the COVID-19 Pandemic

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) announced today more households will now be able to get food through [The Emergency Food Assistance Program \(TEFAP\)](#).

Households with incomes below 300% of the federal poverty level (FPL) are now eligible to receive a monthly share of locally grown, Grade-A foods that include meat, vegetables, fruit, juice, and more from a TEFAP food pantry. For a household of one, that income threshold is \$38,280. The larger the household, the higher the income threshold. Previously TEFAP's qualifying income threshold was 185% FPL, or \$23,606 for a household of one.

“Good nutrition is foundational, and we want to help ensure families in need of assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic have access,” said DHS Secretary-designee Andrea Palm. “By increasing the income limit for TEFAP, more Wisconsinites can receive or supplement their food supplies without risk of losing the benefits they receive from other programs.”

The new income threshold was proposed by Wisconsin's TEFAP Advisory Council and approved by DHS and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to assist families during the COVID-19 pandemic. The new policy went into effect on June 1 statewide and will affect all pantries from the first day they open this month, since some pantries are only open once or twice a month. Households affected by job losses may be eligible if their income drops below specific levels in any given week.

Enrollment at a participating pantry is confidential and requires only proof of address and identification. Individuals participating in the FoodShare, School Nutrition, WIC, and Senior Meals programs may participate in TEFAP without impacting their ability to qualify for those programs.

Each Wisconsin county has at least one TEFAP food pantry. Households should call 2-1-1, the statewide helpline, to get the address, service hours, and phone number of the nearest food pantry that participates in the TEFAP program.

Wisconsin's pantry volunteers are providing "no contact" food distribution during the COVID-19 pandemic by enrolling households and distributing groceries outdoors to minimize health risks. In many locations, TEFAP applicants and participants remain in their cars for service.

In 2019, volunteers staffing Wisconsin's 265 charitable TEFAP pantries provided more than 800,000 monthly food distributions to households in need of food.

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