

Eligibility Criteria

Recipient Agency Eligibility: TDA's pool of eligible recipient agencies consists of Food Banks affiliated with Feeding America National Organization. A recipient agency must have a service area that is sufficient for large volumes of food to be received at one time.

All Food Banks must meet all state and federal requirements for participation in TEFAP, be a 501(c)(3) organization pursuant to 7 CFR 251.5(a)(3) and IRC §170 Code 501(c)(3). Once a determination has been made that the prospective agency is tax-exempt and is not listed on the IRS Revocation of Exemption Listing, the Food Banks will maintain a record of all their ERA's tax-exemption status in each respective agency file. Additionally, the Food Bank is required to verify the tax exemption status of each of their participating ERAs on an annual basis. This procedure will ensure that no participating ERA is listed on the IRS Revocation of Exemption List. The Food Bank must maintain a spreadsheet of this annual verification report in their files for SDA's review during annual inspections.

All ERAS must utilize the eligibility criteria and methods established by TDA and cannot add additional criteria or methods to that which has already been established.

Recipient Eligibility: The agencies will distribute food only to eligible needy households. Agencies may choose to conduct eligibility determinations prior to the distribution date or may conduct determinations at the distribution site. Regardless of the methods chosen, *completion of the intake form is required prior to the applicant receiving food.*

ERAs must ascertain that previously eligible households continue to be eligible prior to giving out foods. Notices informing participants is to be displayed alerting them that they must complete a new intake form should any of their information change since previously been filled out.

Income Eligibility: TDA does not require applicants to provide verification of income eligibility. Eligibility may be established in one of two ways:

- (1) The recipient may show proof of eligibility of income from one of the following means-tested programs:

- a. SNAP
 - b. Families First,
 - c. Supplemental Security Income,
 - d. Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, or
 - e. Residence in Public Housing; or
- (2) The agency may allow applicants to verbally disclose the household’s income, by showing the applicant the current income eligibility chart. The recipient may verbally confirm total household income is below the dollar amount shown for 185% of the current federal poverty income level.

2025-26 Income Eligibility 185%

Persons in family/household

1 – \$28,953	5 – \$69,653
2 – 39,128	6 – 79,828
3 – 49,303	7 – 90,003
4 – 59,478	8 – 100,178

Residency Eligibility: The recipient must be a resident of the State of Tennessee, but the length of residency is not to be used to determine eligibility. TDA does not require households to provide an address or identification to confirm residency. TDA will allow self-declaration of residency which requires households to declare that they reside in TN by providing the county, state, and zip code in which they reside in. Documentation is not allowed to be requested or collected to determine residency when an applicant is applying for eligibility to received TEFAP Foods.