

Minnesota Food Distribution Program Overview

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) manages the Food Distribution Program (FDP). The Food Distribution Program distributes United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Foods to Minnesota schools participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and/or the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). The program provides nutritious foods to school-age children attending public and private schools, residential child care institutions, juvenile correctional institutions, boarding schools and summer camps. FDP offers USDA Foods to participating sponsors twice a year, in the spring and fall, through preference surveys that are published on CLiCS 1. MDE-FNS surveys sponsors to determine demand and orders and coordinates the distribution of USDA Foods to sponsors.

Cyber-Linked Interactive Child Nutrition System 1 (CLiCS 1) MDE-FNS manages the FDP through the Cyber-Linked Interactive Child Nutrition System 1 (CLiCS 1). MDE utilizes CLiCS 1 to collect order preferences from RA's and then aggregates the amounts to base purchase quantities of the USDA Foods. The system allows RA's to survey, track and release rebate claims.

Commodity Entitlement: The goal of the Minnesota FDP is to enable sponsors to effectively and efficiently utilize their Commodity Entitlement. Commodity Entitlement is calculated by multiplying the total number of reimbursable meals served during the previous school year by the mandated national level of commodity assistance. In order to utilize Minnesota's annual Commodity Entitlement, a variety of commodities are offered, purchased and delivered to Minnesota schools. MDE-FNS is responsible for allocating commodity entitlement to all of the schools participating in FDP.

USDA Foods Available: Minnesota offers a wide variety of entitlement foods to schools from a list of products including fresh or canned fruits and vegetables, meats (beef, pork, and poultry), fruit juices, vegetable oil, peanut products, rice, cheese, pasta, flour and other grain products.

Once the commodity entitlement has been allocated, MDE-FNS enables customers to receive their Commodity Entitlement and/or Bonus Commodities by utilizing one or more of our food distribution models. Minnesota offers four distinct demand-driven food distribution models. There are no limitations to the distribution models a sponsor chooses to utilize Commodity Entitlement.

Distribution Models: Available in Minnesota are:

1. Regular (USDA Foods)
2. Fee-For-Service (Beef and Pork) and
3. Minnesota Rebate Program (commercial products that utilizes USDA foods)
4. DoD Fresh Produce

USDA Foods

In the “Regular” USDA Foods distribution model, a variety of more than 100 types of dry, canned and frozen USDA Foods (Previously known as “Brown Box”) are offered to sponsors through a CLiCS 1 Commodity Preference Survey using Commodity Entitlement. Once the survey is completed by Sponsors and summarized by the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) Food Distribution Program (FDP) Team the USDA Foods are ordered based on demand through USDA by MDE –FDP and delivered to the State Contracted Warehouse (presently Newport Cold Storage). USDA Foods may be packaged with a generic USDA label and or with commercial label at this time. Once the USDA Foods are available at the warehouse sponsor selected USDA Approved Distributors pickup and deliver allocations on their behalf to each respective sponsor. Sponsors can also monitor and track their USDA Foods allocations throughout the school year using the CLiCS 1 Order Summary Screen. There is a warehouse fee and distributor shipping and handling charge to receive USDA Foods that is negotiated between the distributor and respective sponsor.

Fee-For-Service

The “Fee-For-Service” distribution model in Minnesota offers RAs the opportunity to divert non-substitutable USDA foods such as Beef and Pork to MDE-FNS approved processors. The intent is to convert a specific USDA food into more usable end products for school menus. RAs work directly with their approved processor and/or broker to determine the desired end products, the quantity of raw pounds to divert, the “Fee-For-Service” charge and shipping and handling fees to acquire the product. RAs enter requested total quantity of pounds in CLiCS 1 system for fee-for-service survey. MDE-FNS will summarize and collect demand information at end of the survey. RAs track and coordinate the receipt of the desired end products with the processor.

Minnesota Rebate Program (MRP)

The “Minnesota Rebate Program” (MRP) is an alternate pass-through model approved only for Minnesota by USDA. This distribution model offers a rebate to RAs through a state-administered rebate system where RAs are able to utilize their commodity entitlement with approved commercial foodservice products (from approved USDA manufacturers accepting USDA Foods) available through their foodservice distributors. RAs participate in the MRP by submitting requested purchase quantities of approved Rebate groups offered on Minnesota CLiCS 1 Product Surveys for the school year. MDE-FNS will summarize demand information from survey. RAs are able to monitor, track and submit MRP rebate claims

through CLiCS 1 and eligible rebates are paid by MDE-FNS when full value payment of commodity is received per manufacturer.

Bonus Commodities: They are offered in addition to commodity entitlement. Bonus Commodities are considered over and above Commodity Entitlement foods. They are offered periodically, but only as they become available through agricultural surpluses. When available, the Bonus Commodities are offered to Minnesota commodity customers and the ordered quantity does not draw down Commodity Entitlement dollars. The type and quantity of Bonus Commodities distributed by USDA in a given year is dictated by agricultural surpluses and market conditions.

DoD Fresh Produce

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Defense Logistics Agency Troop Support in Philadelphia, commonly referred to as "DoD," have partnered together to increase the availability of fresh fruits and vegetables. DoD Fresh allows for the distribution of a wide variety of domestically-grown fresh produce directly to schools. The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) has currently opened an additional Cyber-Linked Interactive Child Nutrition System (CLiCS) 1 Preference Survey allowing Recipient Agencies (RAs) in Minnesota the option to enter requests and participate in the DoD Fresh program using USDA entitlement dollars.

**Please contact the Minnesota Food Distribution team with any
questions at FNS.FDP@state.mn.us**

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