

**FDPIR BRIEFING PAPER: PROGRAM BACKGROUND**

The Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) provides nutritious USDA Foods to income-eligible households living on Indian reservations and to income-eligible Native American households residing in approved areas near reservations or service areas in Oklahoma. Participation data is currently available through the month of August 2022 and is estimated to be 44,808. In fiscal year (FY) 2022, overall participation levels continued to remain lower than pre-pandemic years; however, in the second half of FY2022, FDPIR participation numbers began to trend upwards.

Each month, participating households receive a food package to help them maintain a nutritionally balanced diet. Participants may select from over 100 products, including a selection of fresh produce and six traditional foods as available: bison, blue cornmeal, wild salmon, traditionally harvested wild rice, catfish, and walleye. The program is authorized through 2023 under the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (the 2018 Farm Bill).

FDPIR Annual Participation Levels – Monthly Average/Person

FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022*
87,216	83,811	74,878	47,983	44,808

*Preliminary data as of August 2022

FDPIR 2022 Participation Levels by Month

April 2022	May 2022	June 2022	July 2022	August 2022
43,888	45,115	47,891	48,950	49,882

FDPIR Funding

Appropriated/PB	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023*
Administrative Expenses	\$57.174M	\$62.669M**	\$63.0M**
USDA Foods	\$104.97M	\$63.331M	\$82.005M
Total	\$162.15M	\$126.0M	\$145.005M
Additional Funding			
Nutrition Education - FDPNE	\$998K	\$998K	\$998K
638 Demonstration Project	\$3.0M	\$3.0M	\$3.0M

*Projected President's Budget for FY 2023

**Includes \$4.0M for nutrition education

Agenda Topics are in **bold**.

VI. 638 Self-determination Contracting

- a. **Update on new round of contracts**
- b. **Update on current contracts**

- The Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (P.L. 115-334, the 2018 Farm Bill) authorized USDA to establish a demonstration project for one or more FDPIR Tribal Organizations to enter into self-determination contracts as defined in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, to purchase USDA Foods for the FDPIR food package for their Tribe. Under normal program operations, all USDA Foods provided in the FDPIR food package are purchased and provided by USDA.

- After finalizing the criteria for participation in the demonstration project in consultation meetings with Tribal leaders held in FY 2019 – FY 2021, FNS published a first solicitation of proposals for participation in the demonstration project in the Federal Register, in January 2021. That notice, referred to as the “Round 1” opportunity, was open for a period of 60 days.
- In response to that first solicitation for proposals, FNS received seven proposals from eight Tribal Organizations interested in participating in the demonstration project, with one proposal submitted as a joint proposal.
- In October 2021, with available FY 2020 and FY 2021 funds, FNS awarded self-determination contracts to all eight Tribal Organizations that submitted a proposal in response to the Round 1 opportunity. Those self-determination projects are ongoing, with some projects expected to last through 2024.
- In FY 2022, FNS received an additional \$3.0 million in funding for the demonstration project and committed (in Tribal consultation meetings held in FY 2022) to use the funding to expand participation in the demonstration project to additional Tribal Organizations.

Update on Upcoming FDPIR Self-Determination Demonstration Projects – Round 2

- On October 18, 2022, FNS published a notice at 87 FR 63023, titled *Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations Self-Determination Demonstration Project: Solicitation of Proposals for Additional Tribal Organizations to Participate*. Through this notice, FNS is soliciting additional Tribal Organization participation in the FDPIR Self-Determination Demonstration Project.
- Round 2 proposals to participate in the demonstration project are due to FNS by 12pm EST on January 31, 2023, and should be submitted via e-mail to FDPIR-RC@usda.gov.
- Since publication of the Federal Register notice, FNS has worked to promote the opportunity in several ways:
 - The week that the notice was published, FNS shared a link to the notice with all FDPIR administering agencies via e-mail, promoted the opportunity during the FDPIR Self Determination Demonstration Project Panel at the annual NAFDPIR conference, and published a [stakeholder notice](#) to alert stakeholders of the opportunity.
 - On November 10, 2022, FNS held a webinar about the opportunity for interested, eligible Tribal Organizations. In the webinar, we provided an overview of the demonstration project, walked through requirements outlined in the Federal Register notice, and addressed questions from participants. A link to the recorded webinar will be shared with all FDPIR administering agencies when available.
 - On November 14, 2022, FNS published a [blog](#) about the NAFDPIR conference and took the opportunity to promote the demonstration project. This is the first of several blogs that will be published over the coming year and that is intended to promote both Round 1 and Round 2 of the project. Also on November 14, Deputy Under Secretary Dean spoke about the opportunity at the White House Tribal Youth Forum.
 - On November 17, 2022, FNS sent out a [special edition of the Nutrition Times newsletter](#) dedicated to Native American Heritage Month. The newsletter featured the first round of self-determination demonstration projects and included information on how to apply for round 2 of the project. The newsletter went out to 102,128 subscribers.
 - Since the last TLCWG meeting, FNS has also published a webpage for the demonstration project which is available at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/fdpi/self-determination>. The Federal Register notice can be found on the webpage and at [this link](#).
- FNS is also responding timely to questions received about the Federal Register notice to support submission of proposals. FNS will also share the list of questions received and answers provided with all FDPIR administering agencies ahead of the January 31, 2023, deadline to submit proposals for participation.

Tribal Leader Feedback Incorporated into Round 2 Opportunity

- Section 4003(b)(3)(A) of the 2018 Farm Bill requires FNS to consult with Indian Tribes to determine the process and criteria under which a Tribal Organization can participate in the FDPIR Self-Determination Demonstration Project.

- During FY 2019 – FY 2021, FNS engaged in six Tribal consultation meetings to receive input and feedback from Tribal leaders on the process and criteria for participation in Round 1 of the demonstration project. This feedback was incorporated into the criteria for the first solicitation of proposals for the demonstration project, which was published on January 14, 2021, at 86 FR 3112.
- During FY 2022, FNS engaged in three additional Tribal consultation meetings with Tribal leaders to receive additional input and feedback on the demonstration project at large and specifically on changes to criteria for FDPIR Tribes to participate in Round 2.
- In the Tribal consultation that was held on August 2, 2022, FNS presented a document titled “Proposed Changes to the Round 2 Solicitation of Proposals for Tribal Organizations to Participate” which outlined specific changes to the criteria for Round 2. FNS walked Tribal leaders through each of the proposed changes to provide an explanation for each and to solicit feedback from Tribal leaders.
- Most of the proposed changes were minor in nature. Overall, the changes were intended to reduce burden on applicant Tribal Organizations, to streamline and standardize participation in the project, and to address inefficiencies identified in the Round 1 application process and in the first year of implementation of the projects.
- FNS did not receive significant feedback on the proposed changes, but the feedback we did receive was incorporated to the extent feasible into the second solicitation of proposals for the demonstration project, which was published on October 18, 2022, at 87 FR 63023.

Update on Current FDPIR Self-Determination Demonstration Projects– Round 1

- The eight currently participating Round 1 Tribal Organizations continue to carry out their planned food distributions, with all Tribal Organizations distributing some or all of their planned foods at this time.
- FNS continues to provide technical assistance to the contract holders as needed. On October 13, 2022, FNS held a third quarterly meeting with the Tribal Organizations to provide updates on project implementation and to facilitate discussion about lessons learned to date. The meeting also included attendance by FNS communications staff who will be working with the Tribal Organizations over the coming year to promote and highlight their demonstration project activities in outward-facing FNS communications.
- FNS staff has also been able to conduct several site visits in calendar year (CY) 2022 to visit Round 1 Tribal Organizations, to see their Tribally procured products, and to meet involved vendors.
- The first financial and narrative progress reports associated with the Round 1 self-determination contracts will be due at the end of this calendar year.

VII. Indigenous Representation in FNS Positions

FNS Tribal-Facing Positions

- FNS shares the values that Tribes have expressed pertaining to having staff with cultural competency and robust experience working with Tribes in its Tribal-facing positions.
- FNS position descriptions for Tribal-facing positions require expertise in Federal and State policies, regulations, treaties, and laws regarding American Indians/Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians, as well as experience in establishing and maintaining working relationships with Tribes, key national and regional organizations representing the nutrition and health interests of American Indian/Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian people. In addition, the job announcement for recent Tribal-facing positions at FNS have included a selective placement factor which requires “Experience working in, with and/or for Tribal governments, Tribal entities, and/or Tribal Organizations.” To meet this requirement, the resume submitted must clearly demonstrate the following experiences: Communicated effectively to demonstrate knowledge of Native American Indian cultures, treaties, and agreements with respect to critical issues facing Native American Indian Tribes; Partnered with Native American Indian Tribal governments who have diverse interests, concerns, issues, and values that are often specific to individual Tribes; and Evaluated the content of new or modified legislation (federal/Tribal/state) for

projected impact upon organizational programs and resources.

- In addition to incorporating a selective placement factor in Tribal-facing position announcements as stated above, this approach for the Tribal Affairs Specialist recruitment announcement resulted in a strong pool of applicants with demonstrated experience in working in Tribal communities. FNS also instituted a remote work option to encourage people who live in Tribal communities and don't want to relocate, to apply. FNS used a robust outreach effort so the Tribal Affairs Specialist recruitment announcement was shared with various Native entities as well as Tribal leaders and FNS Tribal program directors, among others, to ensure potential applicants with experience in Indian Country. FNS commits to using this approach with future Tribal-facing positions. FNS will provide up-to-date information on the status of hiring for specific positions at the December 6, 2022, consultation.
- FNS shares this appreciation of the importance of cultural training for Tribal facing positions and, in fact for all FNS staff, as reflected by the incorporation of activities in our FY23 Agency Priority Plan to conduct leadership and all employee trainings to increase understanding and implementation of Tribal cultural competency and federal-Tribal trust responsibilities. Additional trainings will be conducted for the Tribal Affairs Specialists once all new team members are onboard. We also appreciate suggestions from our Tribal partners on helpful cultural training.

VIII. Food Package Updates

a. Timeliness of additions to food package

Timeliness of additions to food package

- The FDPIR Food Package Review Workgroup voted virtually following the September 2022 meeting to move forward with market research on the feasibility of adding the following five new foods to the food package: frozen strawberries, low-sodium turkey deli meat, olive oil, frozen stir-fry mix, and bison stew meat.
- In its November issue of the *Commodity Chronicles*, the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) initiated market research on the items that do not currently have material codes, specifications, or approved vendors: frozen strawberries (retail vs. commercial pack size), olive oil, and frozen stir-fry mix . AMS will continue its research with outreach to current USDA Foods vendors for bison stew meat, low-sodium turkey deli meat, and frozen strawberries.
- FNS presented an analysis of the FDPIR food package and the Thrifty Food Plan, 2021 Market Basket (TFP) including opportunities for enhancements to the Workgroup during the September 2022 meeting and at a session during the annual NAFDPIR conference in October 2022. The TFP is used to determine SNAP benefits and the analysis indicated the FDPIR food package provides fewer pounds of food than the TFP market basket.
- During the November 2022 Workgroup meeting, FNS presented opportunities to enhance the food package enhancements to better align it with the TFP and FDPIR participant take rates including FDPIR Guide Rate changes to add additional units of vegetables, protein (meat, poultry, and fish), and eggs. This discussion was facilitated by a third-party facilitator recommended by the Workgroup, Mountain + Associated, LLC. Workgroup members voted in favor of the opportunities discussed with the understanding that all the opportunities identified may not be feasible and/or may not be able to occur at the same time.
- FNS is assessing:
 - Product availability and USDA Foods vendors' capacity to support increased demand
 - Projected short- and long-term increases in food costs based on anticipated program participation
 - Required lead time for inventory system updates based on IFMS/AIS software scheduled releases
 - Capacity of National Warehouses and FDPIR programs (i.e., available storage and staff)
- Based on this assessment, FNS will establish, and present to the Workgroup, an implementation plan and timeline.
- USDA is committed to working with the Workgroup to identify and implement changes to the FDPIR food

package that enhance nutrition security in Tribal communities. The next Workgroup meeting is scheduled for February 2023 and FNS has initiated plans to host an in-person strategic planning meeting at a food distribution site in the Phoenix, Arizona area in spring 2023.

Availability and timing of food in the current FDPIR food package

- FNS and AMS work together to purchase food for FDPIR. While there have been supply chain challenges that have caused purchase shortfalls across all of our food distribution programs, USDA is working diligently to mitigate impacts on FDPIR participants. Whenever possible, FDPIR is prioritized to ensure that full food packages can be made with as wide a variety of foods as possible.
- The few, sporadic outages of FDPIR product in the warehouses over the last year have been short in duration, and have not affected FDPIR programs' ability to offer a full food package to participants. In each case, there has been a variety of foods available to order in every food package category.
- Nevertheless, we understand that some FDPIR programs may be frustrated by shortages of individual items. Each month, FNS invites all FDPIR programs to participate in a monthly operations call in which FNS staff review any shortages and explain when product is expected and respond to any questions FDPIR staff may have about product availability. We encourage all FDPIR programs to join these calls.

USDA DoD Fresh Vendor Accountability

- FNS is committed to ensuring the integrity of the DoD Fresh program, and has a number of safeguards in place to promote accountability of involved vendors.
- USDA DoD Fresh vendors are required to source, purchase, store, and deliver a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables items to Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) Troop Support customers (military, schools, and ITOs) on an ongoing basis, while at the same time maintaining acceptable contract fill rates, levels of customer service, and product quality. Contract requirements include maintaining a 98% contract fill rate while providing customer service by way of a customer service representative to maintain contact with ordering customers.
- Quality audits are also conducted in accordance with contract terms whereby the DLA Troop Support Produce Quality Audit Team verifies compliance to the DLA contracts by conducting periodic Produce Quality Audits of vendors, the audits also serve as a quality check for DLA customers.
- A breach and or non-compliance of contract terms results in thorough review by the DLA team and potential inclusion in the Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System (CPARS), which may negatively impact the vendor when being considered and evaluated for Government contracts. The contracting team may take contract actions in addition to CPARS as necessary.
- FNS will provide three technical assistance webinars to FDPIR administering agencies in FY 2023 covering topics about receiving, storing, distributing, and reporting issue with USDA DoD Fresh produce. Webinar titles include:
 - Ordering, Receiving, and Reporting Issues with USDA DoD Fresh Produce
 - Best Practices for Handling, Storing, and Distributing USDA DoD Fresh Produce
 - Seasonal Produce Availability.
- The webinars will build on information provided at NAFDPIR, where FNS presented on USDA DoD Fresh including best practices and the process for reporting issues.

IX. SNAP-Ed Consultation

a. Update on Webinar training

I. feedback from Tribal leaders

Consultation Guidance Memorandum and Best Practices

- On September 13, 2022, FNS issued two new policy memoranda to strengthen State agency Tribal Consultation. The Memorandum on Tribal Consultation Requirements and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) – Tribal Consultation Guiding Principles.

- The development of these memoranda was based upon an identified need by FNS, and specific feedback from Tribes on the need to strengthen consultation on SNAP issues, and to provide a reminder and clarity to SNAP state agencies on consultation requirements to ensure consultation is both occurring as required and is accomplished in a meaningful way.
- In addition, the guiding principles document was developed with established and practical considerations and approaches to help States and Tribes in conducting effective and meaningful consultations.
- In developing the memoranda, FNS worked with USDA's Office of Tribal Relations as well as USDA's Office of General Counsel, and we received input from Tribal leaders, and the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations Tribal Leaders Consultation Work Group. The final versions of the memoranda incorporated this input.
- The issuance of the memoranda and these webinars are being followed by ongoing technical assistance from FNS to State agencies and follow up with and feedback from Tribes on how Tribal consultations are going as we strive for continuous improvement in this area.
- FNS' Regional SNAP staff and Regional Tribal Affairs Specialists are assisting States and Tribes in conducting timely, meaningful, and substantive dialogue through Consultation.

Webinar-based Training on Consultation

- FNS conducted "SNAP Tribal Consultations – Requirements and Best Practices Training" webinars on October 4 and October 24, 2022. The webinars covered the two new policy memoranda issued by the USDA Food and Nutrition Service: Memorandum on Tribal Consultation Requirements and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) – Tribal Consultation Guiding Principles.
- The memoranda serve a reminder to SNAP State agencies of the obligation to engage in ongoing consultation with Tribes and includes guidance and best practices to assist States in adequately engaging with Tribes on those aspects of SNAP operations that impact participant in Tribal communities.
- The webinars featured presentations from USDA Office of Tribal Relations, USDA Food and Nutrition Service, and State agencies and their Tribal partners:

Impact of Federal Indian Policy on Food & Nutrition by Heather Dawn Thompson

- Heather Dawn Thompson, Director of USDA's Office of Tribal Relations, presented on why it is important and legally required for Federal and State governments to consult with Tribes so that their input can be incorporated into policy decisions. Thompson delved into Tribal history, where the lack of consultation with Tribes in creating Federal Government policy has led to drastic failures including:
 - Destruction of Indigenous Foodways (War)
 - Forced Adoption of Western Farming (Assimilation)
 - Lack of Land and Resources to Implement (Allotment)
 - Control & Punishment (Assimilation & Allotment)

Requirements and Guiding Principles for Tribal Consultation by Jess Luna

- Jess Luna, SNAP Program Design Branch Chief for USDA Food and Nutrition Service, presented on the requirements and best practices for States to consult with Tribes. Her presentation covered:
 - Statutory and Regulatory Authorities
 - Requirements of State Agencies
 - FNS's Oversight and Responsibility
 - Best Practices for Consultation
 - Elements of Effective Consultation

Growing SNAP-Ed Partnerships with Tribal Nations in Oklahoma (October 4)

- Presenters Cari Crittenden, AFS SNAP Unit, Oklahoma Human Service, and Stephany Parker, Oklahoma

Tribal Engagement Partners (OKTEP), SNAP-Ed Implementing Agency, discuss how they are engaging with Tribes as they work towards building trust and creating a better process for doing more formal consultation.

Washington State presents on Tribal Consultation and Partnership Best Practices (October 24)

- Presenters Babs Roberts, Community Services Division Director, Washington State Department of Social and Health Services and Stacy Mills, Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe, Continuous Improvement Specialist for the Health Services Department, overview why and how Washington State engages and consults with Tribes. Stacy Mills also discusses Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe's Tribal Eligibility Demonstration project, which provided the Tribe a statutory waiver from USDA Food and Nutrition Service to determine SNAP eligibility on the reservation.

X. Proposed rulemaking on FDPIR/SNAP

a. Parity between programs

b. Discussion of Proposed rules

On November 08, FNS held a first Tribal consultation to receive information and provide feedback on five upcoming rules across multiple programs including FDPIR, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), the Child Nutrition Programs, and SNAP. FNS appreciates the feedback from Tribal leaders received at this consultation and welcomes additional discussion at the December 06 consultation with NAFDPIR and in future consultations about these rulemaking actions.

Proposed rulemaking on USDA Foods programs, including FDPIR

- FNS is proposing regulatory changes to increase access, modernize operations, and incorporate lessons learned from the COVID 19 pandemic in several USDA Foods programs, including the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), USDA Foods in Disasters, and FDPIR. The proposed rulemaking is entitled: [Food Distribution Programs: Improving Parity and Access](#), which is currently scheduled for publication in 2023.
- Revisions to FDPIR (7 CFR Part 253 and 7 CFR Part 254) will focus on aligning eligibility requirements and improving parity with the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Many households participate in FDPIR as an alternative to SNAP, and the proposed changes are intended to better align the programs regarding eligibility and benefits provided.
- Although we cannot discuss the details of pending regulations, we welcome input from Tribal leaders on the above referenced areas, or other parity-related topics that could be addressed with updates to FDPIR program regulations.

SNAP Final Rule: Standard Utility Allowances Based on the Receipt of Energy Assistance Payments:

- FNS is finalizing a rule that incorporates provisions originally proposed in two separate Notices of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM): the October 3, 2019, NPRM titled, *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program: Standardization of State Heating and Cooling Standard Utility Allowances (HCSUA)* ([84 FR 52809](#)), and the April 20, 2016, NPRM titled, *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program: Standard Utility Allowances (SUA) Based on the Based on the Receipt of Energy Assistance Payments Under the Agricultural Act of 2014* ([81 FR 23189](#)).
- While originally published as separate NPRMs, the provisions contained in these rules both relate to determining household shelter expenses, and therefore, the Department is combining each rule into a single final rule.

SNAP Proposed Rule: Reform Provisions for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program's (SNAP) Quality

Control (QC) System

- FNS proposes to revise its regulations for various Quality Control (QC) provisions in subpart C of 7 CFR part 275 to reflect numerous changes to the SNAP QC system. The proposed provisions are based on instruction in the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 that gives the Secretary discretion on how to implement Congress' request to improve the integrity and data quality of information collected in the QC process and in part on comments received to a Request for Information (RFI) published on June 1, 2018.
- This rule applies to the SNAP QC review process only. Its provisions will impact operations for the QC staff in State SNAP administering agencies because they will be required to modify their sampling requirements and other procedures for conducting QC reviews. There will be minimal impact on individual SNAP households since only 0.2% of SNAP households are selected for QC review each year.
- The SNAP QC System measures the accuracy of State agency eligibility and benefit determinations. Data collected by quality control are also used for program improvement and analysis.

XI. Nutrition Education Funding for FDPIR

Update on deployment of funding

- USDA is committed to ensuring Tribes have access to funds to establish nutrition education programs that support the needs of their community.
- Each Tribe has a uniform base allocation of \$17,500 available for them to develop and deliver nutrition education. Tribes can accept or decline the funds, transfer funds to another Tribe to conduct nutrition education activities on their behalf, or take a portion of the allocation.
- The allocation options in the chart below illustrate the amount of funds an ITO would receive through the initial allocation and the amount of funds remaining following the uniform base allocation.
- Tribes that have more robust plans for nutrition education activities can request additional funds non-competitively by working with their FNS Regional Office to submit a nutrition education plan. FNS Regional Offices have been working with Tribes to submit requests for nutrition education funding.

Uniform Base Allocation			
Amount Per ITO	Number of FDPIR Programs	Total Initial Allocation	Amount Remaining Out Of \$4M
\$17,500	114	\$1,995,000	\$2,005,000

Calculation: Amount per ITO x # of FDPIR Programs = Total Initial Allocation

- To date, \$1.097M in nutrition education funds has been requested by 50 Tribes. FNS will allocate the requested funds, which Tribes will use to conduct a variety of activities such as cooking classes, grocery store tours, and hiring nutrition educators. FNS Regional Offices will continue to provide technical assistance to ensure all Tribes understand how to request these funds and encourage them to do so.
- FNS provided examples of nutrition education activities that may be funded by FDPIR administrative funds to help Tribes determine how to utilize nutrition education funds. Tribes were informed that they are not limited by the examples provided and are welcomed to submit nutrition education activities that support the needs of their communities. Examples of potential nutrition education activities that may be funded will also be posted to the FNS website.

Technical Assistance and Future Funding

- USDA is committed to providing technical assistance to FDPIR programs to support efficient and effective implementation of nutrition education activities. FNS will maintain an open line of communication with ITOs to address challenges and necessary changes to improve the process for future rounds of funding.

- FNS requested that Tribes submit funding requests and associated nutrition education plans by November 15; however, FNS Regional Offices are still accepting plans from Tribes that need more time to develop and approve nutrition education plans.
- FNS Regional Offices have been working closely with Tribes to address challenges and identify opportunities to streamline the allocation process in the future.
- FNS will continue to update the allocation and monitoring process as additional feedback is received from Tribes and FNS Regional Offices.

XII. IFMS Alternative Systems

- a. Implementation status for ITOs seeking alternative systems**
- b. Update on FNS draft policy for individual alternative systems**
- c. Update on administrative funds usage and clarification**

Update on Transition from AIS and Transition to IFMS and Alternative Systems

- FNS plans to retire the Automated Inventory System (AIS) within the next year.
- Tribes should plan to transition to an alternative system, options include:
 - The Integrated Food Management System (IFMS) - or -
 - Alternative system, including Sygnal.
- FNS continues to provide technical assistance on the transition from AIS to alternatives systems (i.e., IFMS or an alternative, including Sygnal), and provided in-person technical assistance at the NAFDPIR conference in October.
- FNS developed the “FDPIR Alternative System Transfer Process” checklist (see handout) to help facilitate the process to transfer from AIS to an alternative system, including Sygnal.
- Tribes interested in an alternative system should complete Appendix A of the checklist and submit to their FNS Regional Office.
- FNS will review the checklist and upon request, Regional Office will provide administrative funds for implementation and annual operating costs, including hardware, annual costs for operations and maintenance, and implementation costs to make the transition from AIS.
- FNS partnered with the Omaha Tribe of Nebraska in July 2022 to fill out the checklist and provided administrative funds for the transfer from AIS to Sygnal.

XIII. Follow-up on Outstanding Questions related to Inflation and Income Guidelines

Follow-up on Outstanding Questions related to Inflation and Income Guidelines

- During the August 2, 2022, TLCWG meeting, Tribal leaders inquired if Section 6 of Executive Order (E.O.) 13175 provides FNS with the authority to waive or modify the standard process for income eligibility calculations in FDPIR under 7 CFR 253.6(d)(1).
- The USDA Office of General Counsel (OGC) reviewed the question and confirmed that E.O. 13175, Sec. 6 does not provide waiver authority in FDPIR. FNS shared this legal read with Tribal leaders in November 2022.
- During conversations and consultation held in 2021 and 2022, Tribal leaders and NAFDPIR Board Members also expressed concerns with the Social Security Administration’s (SSA) [announcement](#) of an 8.7 percent increase for Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) in 2023 and how this may impact FDPIR.
- In response to these concerns and related questions submitted to FNS by program stakeholders, FNS reviewed information about the Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) for provided by the Social Security Administration (SSA) and the impact of the changes on FDPIR.
 - To view the Fact Sheet provided by the SSA, please visit <https://www.ssa.gov/cola/>, then scroll down

- and click on link “Read more about the COLA, tax, benefit and earning amounts for 2023.”
- For a summary of effects on FDPIR, please see the handout – “Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Cost of Living Increase (COLA) for 2023 and its Impact on FDPIR.” This information was shared with all FDPIR administering agencies via e-mail in November 2022.