



Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) Food Package Review Workgroup: Goals, Structure, and Review Process

BACKGROUND

In 1997, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) convened a committee by resolution request from the National Association of Food Distribution Programs on Indian Reservations (NAFDPIR) Board to conduct a comprehensive review of the FDPIR food package. Based on the recommendations of that committee, FNS implemented many improvements. In 2000, at the NAFDPIR annual meeting, a resolution was passed by the NAFDPIR membership requesting activation of the FDPIR Food Package Review Workgroup for the purpose of reviewing the food package on an ongoing basis for quality, customer appeal, cultural appropriateness, nutritional integrity, and recommending appropriate food package improvements. In 2002, at the request of NAFDPIR, the FDPIR Food Package Review Workgroup (the Workgroup) was formed.

PURPOSE

The Workgroup brings together stakeholders that provide the necessary perspective and expertise on Native American health and nutrition issues, participant food preferences, and the Federal procurement and delivery process for USDA Foods. These experts include Federal and Tribal health professionals, NAFDPIR officials, and other representatives from the Indian Tribal Organizations (ITOs) and State agencies that administer FDPIR. NAFDPIR was instrumental in nominating the Tribal health professionals and FDPIR representatives on the Workgroup.

The Workgroup meets on an ongoing basis to periodically review the FDPIR food package. Its goal is to consider revisions to the food package to better meet the nutritional needs and food preferences of program participants without significantly increasing overall food costs. All food package revisions must be consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. The types of changes considered by the Workgroup include:

- Adding new products,
- Increasing the choices in a particular food category,
- Improving product packaging,
- Changing the pack size of products,
- Eliminating a product,
- Revising the guide rate for a product, and
- Improving the quality and nutrient profile of USDA Foods provided by FDPIR.

The Workgroup prioritizes a list of proposed changes to the food package, rather than review the entire food package at each meeting/teleconference. Every prospective change is considered in terms of its impact on the people being served, the nutrient profile and the cost of the entire food package.



MEMBERSHIP

The FDPIR Food Package Review Workgroup consists of 18 voting members and non-voting Resource Representatives. Some of the membership will change every two years. The change in membership coincides with the election of the NAFDPIR Board. This rotation of members allows a continual flow of new ideas and perspective into the Workgroup. Each NAFDPIR Region will choose ITO Representatives and ITO Regional Nutritionists and Health Expert members assigned to the Workgroup. Membership positions not designated for biennial rotation will change on an as needed basis.

Voting Members –18

Eight FDPIR Program Staff (selected by NAFDPIR)

- NAFDPIR Board including
- 4 NAFDPIR Regional Vice Presidents

Four ITO Representatives (selected by NAFDPIR Regional Vice Presidents and may serve as alternates or proxies for NAFDPIR Regional Vice Presidents)

Four ITO Nutrition and Health Experts (selected by respective Regions)

Two Federal Nutritionists

- 1 Representative from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- 1 Representative from the Food and Nutrition Service

Non-voting Resource Representatives

USDA staff – including procurement specialists, nutritionist, and program analysts from the FNS National and Regional Offices and the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) – attend Workgroup meetings to provide supplemental information to support and inform food package recommendations.

Nutrition Subgroup

The FDPIR Food Package Review Nutrition Subgroup (Nutrition Subgroup) is comprised of individuals with a background in FDPIR and food and nutrition including registered dietitians, federal nutritionists, and tribal nutrition and health experts. The purpose of the Nutrition Subgroup is to discuss nutritional implications for proposed food package changes and nutrition-related food package themes by using data and anecdotal information from FDPIR staff and site visits. Nutrition Subgroup members meet as needed, to support these efforts and provide nutrition recommendations for the Workgroup to consider.

REVIEW PROCEDURES

FDPIR participants and Program Directors are encouraged to bring ideas, concerns, and questions about the food package to their associated Regional NAFDPIR Vice President or Representative. Their input is a very important part of this process. Workgroup members are responsible for communicating feedback to the larger Workgroup and also for advising Program Directors in their Region of Workgroup progress.

The Workgroup will meet quarterly, or more frequently as needed. At least one in-person meeting will be held each calendar year at an Indian Tribal Organization location. In-person meetings require at least three



months' advance notice to ensure Workgroup members are able to attend and will include a virtual attendance option for voting and non-voting members, including USDA staff, who cannot attend. The Workgroup will identify the host site for each in-person meeting scheduled.

The review process is as follows:

- FNS provides the Workgroup with background information on FDPIR and the review process.
- The Workgroup begins discussions on proposed changes. The proposals for change may be obtained from several sources, including:
 - Reports on product acceptability,
 - Written or verbal suggestions/complaints submitted to FNS by participants,
 - Input from individual FDPIR Program Directors,
 - Resolutions passed by NAFDPIR,
 - Input from FNS headquarters, regional and field office staff,
 - Input from the USDA Department of Defense Fruit and Vegetable Program (USDA DoD Fresh) staff, and
 - Input from other interested parties (e.g., others from within IHS, CDC, etc.).
- The Nutrition Subgroup provides input to the Workgroup on proposed changes from a nutritional standpoint, if applicable.
- FNS and AMS staff begin gathering preliminary information to determine the feasibility of proposed changes in terms of cost, package sizes, and national availability. This information will include a cost and nutritional analyses to determine the impact of the recommended changes on the cost and nutritional profile of the food package as a whole.
- The Workgroup finalizes discussions, votes on the proposed changes, and submits its recommendations to FNS.
- FNS staff advise FNS leadership of the Workgroup's recommendation(s) and a final Agency decision is made based on cost and nutrition analyses.
- USDA officials consult with FDPIR Tribal Leaders Working Group on its decision prior to implementation of changes.

AMENDING THE CHARTER

This document outlines the collaborative efforts between USDA, NAFDPIR, and FDPIR stakeholders to review the FDPIR food package for nutritional quality and participant acceptability. The Workgroup will review the Charter biennially to incorporate any changes that may impact the Workgroup's activities. FNS will coordinate revisions and publish the Charter on the FNS website.