



Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)

Food Package Review Workgroup Meeting Minutes

February 10, 2026 in Washington, DC

Voting Members

Name	Attendance	Name	Attendance
Mary Greene-Trottier <i>(NAFDPIR President)</i>	X	Vacant <i>(Mountain Plains Nutritionist)</i>	
Rex Hailey <i>(NAFDPIR Parliamentarian)</i>	X	Joe Van Alstine <i>(Midwest Region Vice President)</i>	X
Jaime Prouty <i>(NAFDPIR Treasurer)</i>		Gloria Goodwin <i>(Mid-West Region Representative)</i>	X
Marisa Fuller <i>(NAFDPIR Secretary)</i>	X	Tonya Laurent <i>(Mid-West Nutritionist)</i>	X
Debbie Reyes – Gardipee <i>(Western Region Vice President)</i>	X	Anna Sterner (Connie Martinez) <i>(Southwest Region Vice President)</i>	X
AC Sanchez <i>(Western Region Representative)</i>		Lorraine Davis <i>(Southwest Region Representative)</i>	
Carla Patterson <i>(Western Region Nutritionist)</i>	X	Connie Black <i>(Southwest Region Nutritionist)</i>	X
Blake Garrison <i>(Mountain Plains Vice President)</i>		Janell Conway <i>(USDA Food and Nutrition Service Nutritionist)</i>	X
Nathaniel Brown <i>(Mountain Plains Representative)</i>	X	Reena Oza-Frank <i>(HHS Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Nutritionist)</i>	X

NAFDPIR stands for the National Association of Food Distribution Programs on Indian Reservations.

Non-Voting Attendees

FNS National Office Support Staff	Additional USDA Support Staff
Supplemental Nutrition and Safety Programs (SNAS) Front Office: Claire Brown, Kiley Larson	FNS Regional Offices: Holly Williams, Joseph Geary, Michael Ladd, Monika Lacka, Courtney Coffman
Food Safety and Nutrition Division: Kristin Garcia, Katie O’Donnell, Pia Rose	FNS Tribal Affairs:
Operations Division: Laura Castro, Christina Riley, Daniel Garced, Danielle Lyons, Jerilyn Malliet	Agricultural Marketing Service: Lisa Mays
Policy Division: Farah Ahmad	DLA: Lauren Austin, Michael Szklarski, James Hellings
Funding and Technology Division:	AO/OSEC: Patrick Penn, Dr. Eve Stoodly, Jeffrey Harris
Program Integrity and Monitoring Division: Shenique Bridges, Kathy Staley, Barbara Lopez	

Additional Attendees

- Fred Goodwin and Krista Williams-Sygnal
- James Mountain, Greg Breasher, and Heather Mullens– Native Food and Nutrition Resource Alliance (NFNRA)
- Carly Griffith Hotvedt – Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative (IFAI)
- Carmela Quitugua – Pueblo of Acoma HHSD Executive Director)
- Mallory Moore

I. Welcoming Remarks and Introductions

- a. USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) confirmed attendance and reviewed the agenda.
- b. USDA Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services (FNCS) Deputy Under Secretary Patrick Penn delivered welcoming remarks.

II. Overview of Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025-2030

- a. Dr. Eve Stoody, FNS Senior Policy Advisor, provided an overview of the recently released Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025 – 2030 (DGAs).
- b. The Workgroup inquired about the FDPIR food package’s alignment with the updated DGAs.
- c. Dr. Stoody confirmed the food package is healthy and nutritious and had no immediate recommendations or concerns.
- d. FNS highlighted the food package has a Healthy Eating Index (HEI) score of 84 out of 100 and plans to re-assess it in time for the annual NAFDPIR conference in June 2026, or shortly thereafter.
- e. The Workgroup asked if traditional foods from the FDPIR Self-Determination Demonstration Projects could be factored into the HEI score.
- f. FNS agreed to follow up with research partners at the Economic Research Service (ERS) to determine feasibility.

III. Taste Test: Olive Oil

- a. Workgroup members sampled the extra virgin olive oil that was added to the food package in FY 2024 and provided generally positive feedback.

IV. Review of the FDPIR Food Package

- a. FNS stated the goal was to identify priorities for updating the food package to better meet participant needs and align with the latest DGAs.
- b. FNS reviewed all food package enhancements since FY 2018, to highlight the Workgroup’s ongoing efforts to support a nutritious and culturally relevant food package.
- c. FNS provided an overview of operational updates and considerations, including:
 - i. **Warehouse Transition Overview**
 1. FNS acknowledged past supply chain challenges and shared lessons learned from 2024 national warehouse disruptions.
 2. FNS is transitioning to new warehouse contracts designed to improve delivery reliability and strengthen distribution.
 3. FNS is reviewing inventory and ordering practices to enhance efficiency and better serve FDPIR programs.
 4. FNS invited the Workgroup to provide input on factors influencing USDA Foods management, such as product popularity and shelf-life.
 5. FNS noted ongoing procurement challenges for certain products (e.g., pasta and walleye) and emphasized continued efforts to resolve shortages resulting from increased demand and market conditions.
 - ii. **Participation Trends and Program Dynamics**
 1. FNS acknowledged the importance of monitoring participation trends, including the potential impact of SNAP regulation changes.

2. FNS welcomed Workgroup members sharing real-time observations regarding participation trends to support FNS in responding to dynamic participation changes.
3. The Workgroup noted that seasonal factors (e.g., tax refunds, social impact payments) may temporarily influence participation.
4. FNS agreed these dynamics are important and committed to continued collaboration with the Workgroup to better anticipate and respond to participation changes.

iii. **National and Regional Take Rate Data**

1. FNS reviewed national take rates (FY 2022 – 2025) and regional take rates (FY 2025) noting that cheese, meat/fish/poultry, and vegetables have the highest take rates, while milk, beans, and cornmeal/flour have lower take rates.
2. FNS confirmed that data used to calculate take rates is based on aggregate totals from FNS-152 reports and does not account for household size. At the request of Workgroup members, FNS will explore options to obtain more granular data through IFMS and Sygnal.
3. FNS committed to reviewing system capabilities for household-level analysis, potentially leveraging IFMS data while maintaining data sovereignty.
4. FNS and the Workgroup emphasized the importance of regular data sharing to support informed decision-making.
5. The Workgroup requested quarterly take rate data. FNS agreed to provide data quarterly, aligned with the Workgroup's meeting schedule.

iv. **New Foods**

1. FNS outlined the process for adding new foods to the food package, which included collecting Workgroup feedback, ranking of items, and nutritional review to ensure alignment with program goals.
2. FNS presented take-rate data for the most recent foods added to the food package (frozen strawberries, bison stew meat, frozen vegetable stir-fry blend, turkey deli meat, and olive oil). Most ITOs consistently order these items and make them available to participants.
3. The Workgroup discussed factors influencing take rates, including:
 - a. Seasonal availability of fresh produce.
 - b. Challenges with product packaging (e.g., 2 lb. turkey deli packs may not suit smaller households).
 - c. Participant preferences and cold storage capacity.
4. The Workgroup suggested exploring:
 - a. Additional pack sizes to better serve smaller households (e.g., turkey deli).
 - b. Alternative stir-fry vegetable blend (e.g., peppers, onions, and snow/snap peas).
 - c. Opportunities for bonus, seasonal, or rotating product options to increase variety.
 - d. Additional frozen produce options such as butternut squash and broccoli.
 - e. Additional pre-cut bags of fresh produce such as broccoli florets.
5. FNS emphasized the importance of continued feedback and invited input from FDPIR program operators during the NAFDPIR conference, which was supported by the Workgroup members.
6. The discussion highlighted that while new foods have been generally well-received, ongoing evaluation of product specifications, pack sizes, and participant preferences is essential to improving interest and satisfaction.

v. **Data-Driven Review of Products and Operational Considerations**

1. FNS reviewed take rate data across all food categories and addressed key observations including:
 - a. **Beans:** Dry pinto beans are the most popular item in this category; the overall category take rate is 72%, indicating that participants take fewer units than allowed.
 - b. **Eggs:** Shell eggs are strongly preferred; category take rate is 88%.
 - c. **Fruit & Juice:** Juice dominates the top five items. Fresh produce take rates vary by season and tribe. Frozen and dried fruits have very low take rates, creating inventory challenges.
 - d. **Vegetables:** Frozen vegetables have very low take rates, leading to inventory management issues, while canned vegetables are more consistent.
 - e. **Cornmeal & Flour:** All-purpose flour is most popular; whole wheat flour and blue cornmeal have low take rates and shorter shelf-life, increasing risk of waste.
2. FNS and the Workgroup discussed operational challenges, including:
 - a. Full truckload purchasing requirements and shelf-life limitations which complicate procurement of low-demand items.
 - b. Impact of packaging and branding on participant acceptance.
3. The Workgroup emphasized the need to consider regional preferences, packaging appeal, and product popularity when making procurement decisions.
4. FNS reiterated that demand is the primary driver for product management and invited feedback on strategies to increase acceptance of less popular items, including nutrition education and packaging improvements.

vi. **Procurement Challenges**

1. FNS noted procurement challenges impact product availability but are working closely with AMS to mitigate and ensure adequate inventory.
2. FNS discussed procurement issues with key products, including:
 - a. **Walleye:**
 - i. USDA can no longer procure walleye due to lack of approved vendors and market limitations. Current inventory should support orders through spring 2026.
 - ii. FNS invited the Workgroup to identify alternative fish options. Suggestions included yellow perch.
 - iii. The Workgroup expressed concern about the impact on the tribal vendor and citizens and requested clarity on the vendor qualification processes. AMS committed to following up with more details.
 - iv. USDA confirmed that walleye may still be procured through 638 agreements and committed to exploring other fish options.
 - v. FNS encouraged Workgroup members to gather feedback from participants and program operators on acceptable alternatives and report back at the April meeting.
 - b. **Pasta:**
 - i. USDA has faced significant challenges procuring pasta due to limited vendor participation, sourcing issues, and past performance concerns. Current bids are cost-prohibitive.
 - ii. AMS and FNS are exploring alternatives but noted that resolution is unlikely in the short term.

- iii. FNS requested Workgroup input on potential alternative grain products participants would prefer.
- iv. The Workgroup suggested several alternatives, including couscous, rice pasta, quinoa, barley, farro, bulgur, or vegetable-based options such as spaghetti squash, zucchini noodles, or riced cauliflower.
- v. The Workgroup acknowledged that participant education would be needed for less familiar grain options.
- vi. FNS encouraged Workgroup members to gather feedback from participants and program operators on acceptable alternatives and report back at the April meeting.

V. **USDA DoD Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program**

- a. FNS reviewed the current list of Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) vendors, the produce availability and seasonality chart, and produce fill rates.
- b. The Workgroup asked if ITOs could receive multiple produce deliveries each week.
- c. DLA confirmed current standard is one delivery per week based on previous feedback but noted additional deliveries could be added through contract modifications.
- d. The Workgroup noted frequent issues with unavailable items.
- e. DLA acknowledged that seasonal and weather-related factors may impact availability but encouraged programs to report missing items expected to be available to their respective DLA representatives for support.
- f. The Workgroup reported issues with damaged or poor-quality produce and improper pallet stacking (e.g., heavy items on eggs).
- g. DLA confirmed new contracts include language requiring eggs to be palletized separately and committed to addressing these concerns.
- h. The Workgroup asked about audits and inspection frequency and expressed interest in touring vendor warehouses to better understand operations.
- i. DLA confirmed that produce audits are conducted at vendor warehouses, but on-site inspections are not performed at ITOs. Customer engagement plans are being developed to allow visits to tribal locations and observe deliveries. DLA committed to exploring the possibility of programs touring vendor warehouses.
- j. The Workgroup inquired about the timeframe expected for produce redelivery.
- k. DLA clarified that redelivery is not always guaranteed if vendor does not have the product available but requested programs report ongoing issues.
- l. The Workgroup raised concerns about vendor changes impacting service quality.
- m. DLA encouraged programs to report issues promptly for resolution.
- n. FNS announced upcoming produce training sessions: April 9-10 (Red Cliff), May 19-20 (Spirit Lake), NAFDPIR, and one training tentative for the Southwest region.

VI. **Workgroup Vote: Charter**

- a. The Workgroup reviewed proposed changes to the Workgroup Charter, which were previously shared with program operators in January 2026 and during the NAFDPIR Conference in August 2025. Key discussion points included:
- b. Nutrition Subgroup
 - i. The Workgroup discussed qualifications, including knowledge of the FPDIR food package, FDPIR experience, and nutrition expertise. They also inquired about the frequency of subgroup meetings.
 - ii. FNS confirmed that subgroup meetings are convened between Workgroup meetings. The next Nutrition Subgroup meeting will be held in March 2026.
 - iii. FNS confirmed that the current subgroup includes four nutritionists and one vacancy. FNS Regional Office nutritionists that work on FDPIR are also invited.

- iv. The Workgroup suggested adding individuals recommended by NAFDPIR and allowing non-voting members such as tribal nutrition experts.
- v. FNS updated the language to clarify that the subgroup may include registered dietitians, federal nutritionists, and tribal health experts.
- c. Meeting Frequency and Location
 - i. FNS updated language to state the Workgroup will meet quarterly or as needed, with virtual options available.
 - ii. In-person meetings may occur up to once per year, ideally at an ITO site, subject to USDA travel restrictions. The Workgroup emphasized the value of visiting ITOs for operational insight.
 - iii. FNS adjusted language to allow flexibility in scheduling and hosting in-person meetings.
- d. The Workgroup inquired about ongoing funding for the 638 demonstration projects.
 - i. FNS confirmed funding continuity for existing tribes but noted no additional funds are available for new ITOs at this time. This funding approach is in align with Tribal leader support during recent consultations.
- e. The Workgroup unanimously approved the updated Charter.
- f. FNS agreed to incorporate discussed adjustments, finalize the document, and post it on the FNS website along with meeting minutes and current Workgroup membership.

1. Action Items for FY 2026

- a. FNS committed to the following action items:
 - i. Inquire about adding a second variety of stir fry mix (including peppers, onions and snow or snap peas).
 - ii. Continue monitoring pasta availability. The Workgroup will identify alternative grain options based on participant feedback.
 - iii. Explore feasibility of analyzing take rates based on household size and provide an update by the April meeting, including estimated timelines for implementation.
 - iv. Explore alternatives to walleye based on the Workgroup's input. The Workgroup identified yellow perch as one alternative and will assess additional participant feedback. Assess the feasibility of offering turkey deli meat in a 1 lb. package.
 - v. Explore opportunities for Section 32 (bonus) purchases for FDPIR.
 - vi. Determine if broccoli florets in 1 lb. packages can be added to produce offerings.

VII. Next Workgroup Meeting

- a. FNS confirmed the next Workgroup meeting will be held virtually in April 2026.

VIII. Closing Prayer and Meeting Adjourned