

# **Summary of Nutrition Assistance Program - Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands (NAP)**

## **General Information**

In July 1982, The Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) began operating a capped block grant program, called the Nutrition Assistance Program (NAP).

The Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Island group includes the major islands of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota.<sup>1</sup>

The CNMI NAP block grant is authorized by Public Law 96-597. NAP is separate from SNAP.

## **Funding Structure and Participation Levels**

CNMI's block grant pays for 100 percent of benefits to eligible participants and administrative costs. The current block grant for Fiscal Year 2023 is \$30,000,000.<sup>2</sup> The NAP program must set eligibility and benefit levels to stay within the fixed block grant amount. As a result, an increase in NAP participation may result in the decrease of NAP benefits. On average, NAP serves nearly 12,825 participants monthly.

In recent years, Congress has authorized additional funding for nutrition assistance in response to Typhoons Mangkhut and Yutu and COVID-19. As a result of, continuous natural disasters, national emergencies, economic down turns, or other unforeseen events like COVID-19, CNMI established a reserve fund that allows them to rapidly respond to these events.

## **Program Administration and Operations**

CNMI's Department of Community and Cultural Affairs (DCCA) administers the program. FNS provides oversight for NAP, similar to its role of providing oversight for States' and territories' administration of SNAP.

CNMI designs its own set of program rules for its NAP. FNS approves these rules through an annual Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

## **Program-specific Components**

NAP eligibility criteria are similar to SNAP; however, the maximum income and benefit levels are lower. The block grant also allows CNMI to design a program tailored to their unique cultural, social, and economic circumstances. For example, 30 percent of each allotment consists of coupons earmarked for the purchase of local commodities to provide work incentives, develop self-sufficiency, and stimulate economic development and local food production. These local commodities include food and nonfood items such as fishing equipment, garden supplies, and livestock.

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<sup>1</sup> The Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Island group includes the major islands of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota.

<sup>2</sup> This figure does not include temporary authorized funding by Congress in response to the COVID19 Pandemic

CNMI prints its own coupons. CNMI NAP and SNAP benefits are not interoperable, meaning it is not possible for a CNMI coupon to be used outside of CNMI.

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