



FY 2024 NAP

State Plan of Operations

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

TABLE OF CONTENT



STATE DESIGNATION 03



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 05



AGREEMENTS & MOUs 08



GOALS & OBJECTIVES 10



NEEDS ASSESSMENT & STATISTICS 14



PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS 23



NAP ADMINISTRATION 43



PROPOSED STRATEGIES 68



BUDGET 101



FEDERAL & STATE AGREEMENT 103



State Designation

FY 2024 State Plan of Operations
Socioeconomic Development Administration(ADSEF)
PR Department of the Family

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Designation of State Agency

The Puerto Rico Department of Social Services (DSS) was established on June 30th, 1968 by P.L. 171, as amended. Twenty-seven (27) years later, on July 27th, 1995, was included in a group of state agencies that went through an administrative reorganization established in the “*Administrative Reorganization Plan #1*”. As part of the major restructuring, the DSS was separated into four (4) administrations comprising all children, adults and family social services programs. The legislation changed the DSS legal name to the **PR Department of the Family (DF)**.

The four (4) Administrations established are: The Administration for the Socioeconomic Development of the Family (**ADSEF**-Spanish acronym), The Administration for Children and Families (**ADFAN**-Spanish acronym), The Child Care and Integral Development Administration (**ACUDEN**-Spanish acronym), and the Administration for Child Support (**ASUME**-Spanish acronym).

The Administration for the Socioeconomic Development of the Family (ADSEF) is the designated agency within the PR Department of the Family responsible of administrating the federal and state welfare nutrition programs, including the **Nutrition Assistance Program (NAP)**. **ADSEF has eighty-eight local offices (88)**, at least one (1) in each municipality, and shares with the other three (3) Administrations, ten **(10) Regional offices**.

ADSEF’s contact information is:

Physical Address:

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Executive Summary

FY 2024 State Plan of Operations
Socioeconomic Development Administration(ADSEF)
PR Department of the Family

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Executive Summary

Food insecurity in Puerto Rico has increased significantly during the last decade. The urge of families and individuals for reaching out for food support has escalated, as a result of eighteen (18) months of a COVID-19 pandemic, three (3) major hurricanes, and an economic instability that has shaken Puerto Rican's social and economic wellbeing for seven (7) consecutive years.

Two (2) category 5 Hurricanes (Irma and Maria) in September 2017, several destructive earthquakes at the south region of the Island in January 2020, the COVID 19 pandemic from 2020 to 2022, and a category four (4) hurricane on September 14, 2022 (Fiona) have wedged Puerto Rican's families from all social-economic levels, triggering a food insecurity, island wide.

Notes:

Food insecurity has increased over the past seven (7) years due to Government's bankruptcy, three (3) major hurricanes, and two (2) years of COVID-19 pandemic

To attend the affected population's demand for food nutrition support, ADSEF's 2024 State Plan of Operations (SPO) includes solutions and the implementation of strategies to address eligible families and individual's food insecurity. In addition, we will continue developing, updating, and improving NAP program's services delivery, according to the availability of funds, and program regulations as established by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). Furthermore, ADSEF will be assisting NAP ABAWDS in their program's face-out, transitioning from welfare dependency to work and training opportunities. This last activity has been coordinated with the PR Department of Economic Development (DDEC), the PR Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Program (WIOA), WIOA local area of Carolina, among others.

In addition, this 2024 NAP-SPO includes Puerto Rico's economic characteristics and trends data; such as the unemployment rate, personal and family income distribution, NAP participant's socioeconomic-demographic characteristics, and families' basic cost of living besides, Puerto Rico's need for distributing nutrition assistance benefits.

The following is a brief description of the agency's NAP continuation and/or new initiatives proposed for FY 2024.

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Executive Summary (cont.)

FY 2024 CONTINUATION AND/OR NEW PROPOSED INITIATIVES

FAMILY MARKETS:

ADSEF will continue the development of the **Family Markets**, by extending the collaborative agreement between ADSEF, the Department of Agriculture, and the Administration for Agricultural Businesses Development (ADEA).

ADSEF DIGITAL:

Continue with the development and improvement of “**ADSEF DIGITAL**”. This tool was improved and implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic to provide contactless NAP application and case review processes to those with food insecurity. After the emergency declaration ended, the agency determined to continue using ADSEF Digital as the main application and case review system. One of the main feature is the coordinated appointments system through the **TURNOS.PR** application which provides for requesting online certification appointments with NAP caseworkers, household's changes, and other services.

NAP RESTAURANT MEALS PROGRAM:

ADSEF will continue with the development and implementation process of a Restaurant Meals Program for NAP participants with special needs

NAP MOBILE UNIT-EMERGENCY SERVICES:

The PR Department of Health transferred ADSEF a 4-year-old mobile unit, in great conditions, so there is no need to purchase a new unit. ADSEF has already started working on the structure's modifications needed.

PURCHASES ONLINE:

ADSEF will continue developing the NAP Purchases online program. Currently, NAP participants can order their food purchases online, however, cannot complete the payment transaction through the system yet. They are required to assist in person to the food retailer in order to finalized the purchase.

NAP CALL CENTER:

The ADSEF will continue with the selection process and establishment of a NAP call center.

WORK REQUIREMENT/E&T:

ADSEF will continue with the implementation of the NAP Work Requirement for abled-bodies without dependents participants (ABAWDS). As part of this initiative, an MOU was signed between the PR DDEC, PR DOL and ADSEF to provide eligible participants employment and education services.

EBT RFP :

The RFP/bid process for selecting Puerto Rico's new EBT provider is currently conducted by PR General Services Administration.

NAP DIGITALIZATION:

ADSEF will continue with the first phase which consists of selecting the company that will be responsible of the digitalization of NAP program's documents. The bidding process will be conducted by PR-GSA.

PURCHASES ONLINE

ADSEF will continue developing the program in collaboration with FNS.



Agreements Memorandum of Understanding

FY 2024 State Plan of Operations
Socioeconomic Development Administration(ADSEF)
PR Department of the Family

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Agreements

The following table provides details of the active, in progress or draft memorandums of understanding (MOUs), between ADSEF and other state /federal agencies related to NAP operations or projects.

AGREEMENTS/MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOUs)				
AGENCY	DESCRIPTION	STATUS		PERIOD
		SIGNED	PENDING	
PR DOL,DDEC & ADSEF	MOU to provide ABWDs E&T collaborative services.	x		6/30/23-6/30/24
PR Dept. Agriculture ADSEF (Family Markets)	MOU to coordinate monthly family markets for NAP participants.	x		12/31/22-12/31/23
Homeland Security	MOU (SAVE)	x		9/30/22 -9/30/23
Social Security Administration (SSA)	MOU with SSA for data Exchange files on Death participants. An amendment was made to include PRIS as the host to receive and send the data files.		x	Pending
PR Demographic Registry (DR)	MOU with the PR-DR for data exchange on death files.		x	Pending
PR Department of Corrections & Rehabilitation Services (DCR)	MOU with the PR-DCR for establishing monthly data exchanges on convicted felons. The draft was sent to the PR-DCR for review.		x	Pending
PR Lottery/Treasury Dept.	MOU with the PR Lottery for establishing monthly data exchanges on participants that have received additional income due to lottery draw.		x	Pending



Goals & Objectives

FY 2024 State Plan of Operations
Socioeconomic Development Administration(ADSEF)
PR Department of the Family

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Statement of Goals and Objectives

The Food Stamp Act of 1977, as amended, and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, authorizes the participation of Puerto Rico in the Nutrition Assistance Program (NAP) in order to provide food assistance to households and individuals who live under Puerto Rico's poverty levels. The program not only helps the eligible populations to overcome food insecurity by allocating benefits to purchase food, but it is also designed to raise the nutrition levels, promote healthy food habits and increase and safeguard the health and wellbeing of the participants.

Since the Puerto Rico Department of Family is responsible to watch and improve the overall health and well-being of our children and families; and to assist individuals, families, and communities on their transition to an economic self-sufficiency, is the agency designated to administrate the NAP.

The Department of the Family's fundamental commitments are:

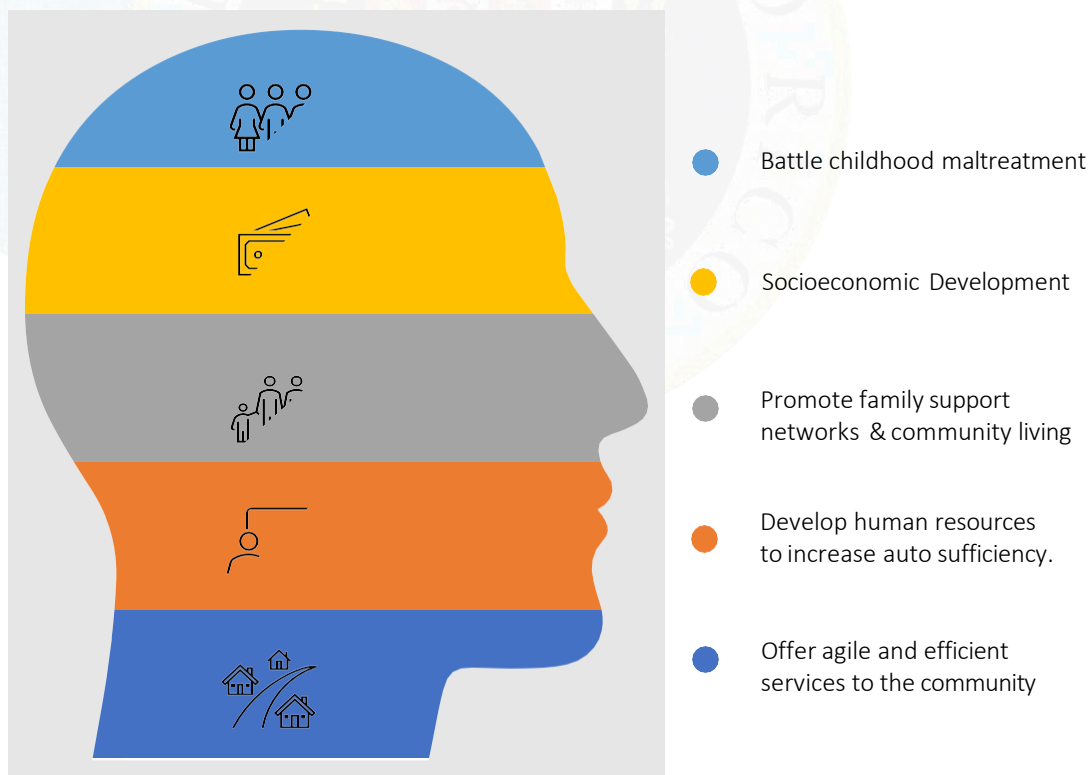
1. Family Violence Prevention, particularly children and adolescents' abuse.
2. Strengthening families and preventing child abuse and neglect
3. Protecting children when abuse or neglect has occurred
4. Ensuring that every child and youth has a permanent family or family connection.
5. Safety—Preventing and responding to child abuse.
6. Permanency—Stabilizing children's living situations and preserving family relationships and connections.
7. Well-Being—Enhancing families' capacity to meet their children's physical, mental health, and educational needs.
8. Support Families to promote self-reliance and development.
9. Dignifying life for seniors and people with special needs.
10. Empower individuals, families, and communities.
11. Support homeless.
12. Developing opportunities for women heads of family and domestic violence survivors.
13. Developing transparency in management of all finances.
14. Using technology for efficiency and effectiveness of processes and services given to the community.
15. Promoting fair and adequate alimony.
16. Making a fair Puerto Rico with equal opportunities for all.
17. Assist Able Bodies without dependents to transition from welfare to work.

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Statement of Goals and Objectives (cont.)

ADSEF's vision is to assist low-income families and individuals to improve their quality of life and access to social justice. The agency's mission is to provide social and economic development opportunities to disadvantaged families by providing them opportunities to achieve society's self-sufficiency and integration.

The following diagram represents ADSEF'S main priorities .



PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Statement of Goals and Objectives (cont.)

The Department of the Family's approach for delivering services has changed significantly during the last couple of years. The social distance and mitigation efforts implemented to prevent the spread of the COVID-19, from year 2020 to 2022 has impelled ADSEF to modify and re-structure NAP services' delivery approach. As a result, the agency developed the "ADSEF Online ", a virtual application to provide NAP participants an alternative to receive accessible and convenient remote online services, without the inconvenience of visiting a local office. In addition, it facilitates the agency's staff work by preventing swarming offices and faster feats resulting in program's goals compliance. Even though this system has increased staff's productivity, there is still much to do. Therefore, the administration is working on complementary systems to improve its performance.

For this fiscal year 2024 NAP's State Plan of Operations (SPO), ADSEF has established the following goals:

1. Continue improving "ADSEF Digital" by reinforcing the system's modules.
2. Increase Turnos.PR online services tools capacity.
3. Start the NAP files digitalization process, at local areas with highest number of participants.
4. Continue coordinating and expanding the Family Markets in collaboration with the PR Department of Agriculture.
5. Complete NAP's ABAWDs participants' recertification process.
6. Start Employment and Training pilot project in the Carolina Local area.
7. Continue with the Workforce Requirement personnel's trainings and Implementation process.
8. Complete the EBT-RFP to select the new provider.
9. Continue improving NAP Nutrition Education Program.
10. Continue with the implementation of the NAP Online Purchases Program.
11. Reach the Measurement of Efforts and Results System (MER) goal, on annual reports' error rate as required by FNS.
12. Complete the RFP process and Implement the NAP Call center.
13. Establish the PR NAP Imaging Center.
14. Develop and implement the NAP Restaurants' Meal Program (RMP).
15. Complete refurbishing and preparing the mobile vehicle unit, donated by the PR Health Department.
16. Monitor all NAP food retailers.
17. Continue with the caseworkers and staff's hiring process.
18. Develop a robust outreach campaign to inform participants on benefits changes, new and current services, re-certification and certification processes, Family Markets locations, eligibility for work requirement, among other NAP related services and improvements.



Needs Assessment & Statistics

FY 2024 State Plan of Operations
Socioeconomic Development Administration(ADSEF)
PR Department of the Family

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Needs Assessment & Current Statistics

Puerto Rico's Economic Situation

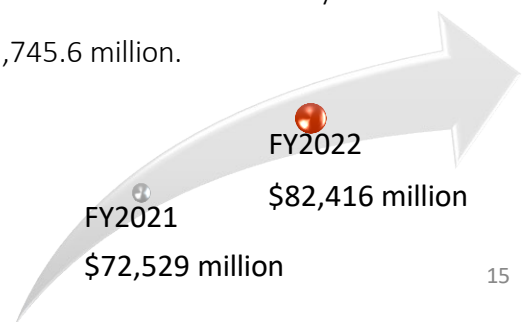
Puerto Rico's economy has been experiencing a significant slowdown for almost a decade. The origins of this recession started with the constant increase on oil prices, reduced personal consumption, the financial and fiscal adjustments implemented by the Financial Oversight and Management Board (FOMB) to reduce the public debt, a deterioration in the labor market, the lack of manpower in the aftermath of the COVID 19 pandemic.

Substantial operational changes in government and businesses services delivery have become an important challenge today. The need to invest in new mechanisms, as advance technology and applications to continue operating, has led to an increased in the cost of services, products, and living, affecting all economic sectors of our society.

In the fiscal year 2022, Puerto Rico's economy, measured through constant gross product (GDP) (eliminating the effects of inflation), showed an increase of 3.7 percent. This reflected a change of 2.8 percentage points between fiscal year 2022 and fiscal year 2021.

The growth was mainly due to increases in the following variables: personal consumption expenditures, 8.5 percent; exports of goods and services, 4.8 per cent; and total domestic fixed capital investment, 12.6 percent.

The GDP components on the expenditure side registered significant increases for the fiscal year 2022. Personal consumption expenditures are the market value of final purchases by individuals and non-profit institutions in goods and services for their own use and the value of food, clothing, housing, and other goods, or in-kind services. Personal consumption expenditures on the Island, for fiscal year 2022 total was \$82,415.5 million, representing an increase of 13.6 percent, in comparison with fiscal year 2021 where personal consumption expenses totaled \$72,528.9. The total consumption expenditures in Puerto Rico by residents and non-residents for fiscal year 2022 was \$85,745.6 million.



PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Needs Assessment & Current Statistics

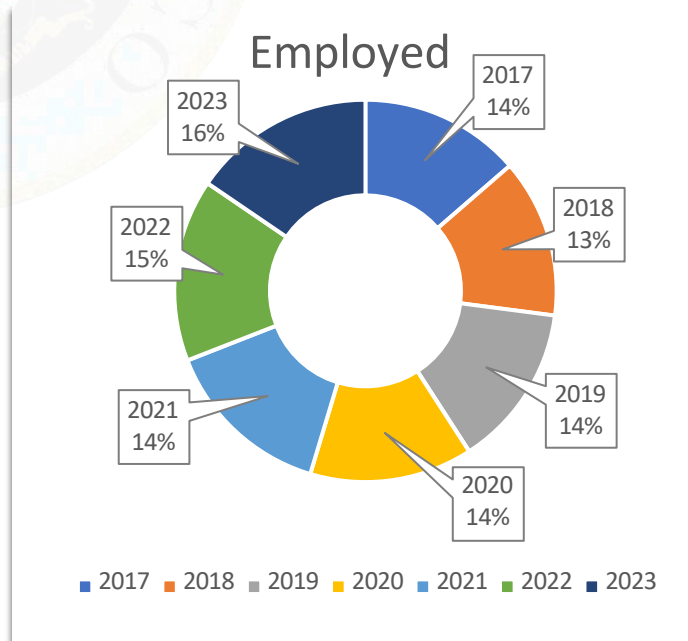
Employment and Unemployment

The Department of Labor and Human Resources (DTRH) Worker Group Survey reported that the non-institutional civilian population aged 16 and over in April 2023 totaled 2,736,000 people. This represented a reduction of 0.7 percent, compared to April 2022 (2,743,000 people). The DTRH reported that the estimate of seasonally adjusted employment in April 2023 was 1,126,000 people, compared to the April 2022 estimate (1,121,000 people). This reflected an increase in the number of people employed, compared to April 2022. In the cumulative period from July to April of fiscal year 2023, seasonally adjusted average total employment increased 0.1 percent from the July-April period of fiscal year 2022 when it was 1,116,000 people employed.

If we compare the employment and unemployment behavior in Puerto Rico for the last six (6) years, these numbers clearly represent how the Island recovers from a severe economic crisis and austerity.

For Fiscal year 2017, in the aftermath of two (2) major hurricanes, the PR Department of Labor reported 128,000 unemployed people, which represented a 11.5% unemployment rate. In year 2022, six (6) years later, there were 82,000 people unemployed, which represents a 6.9% unemployment rate. This denotes a reduction of 4.6% since 2017.

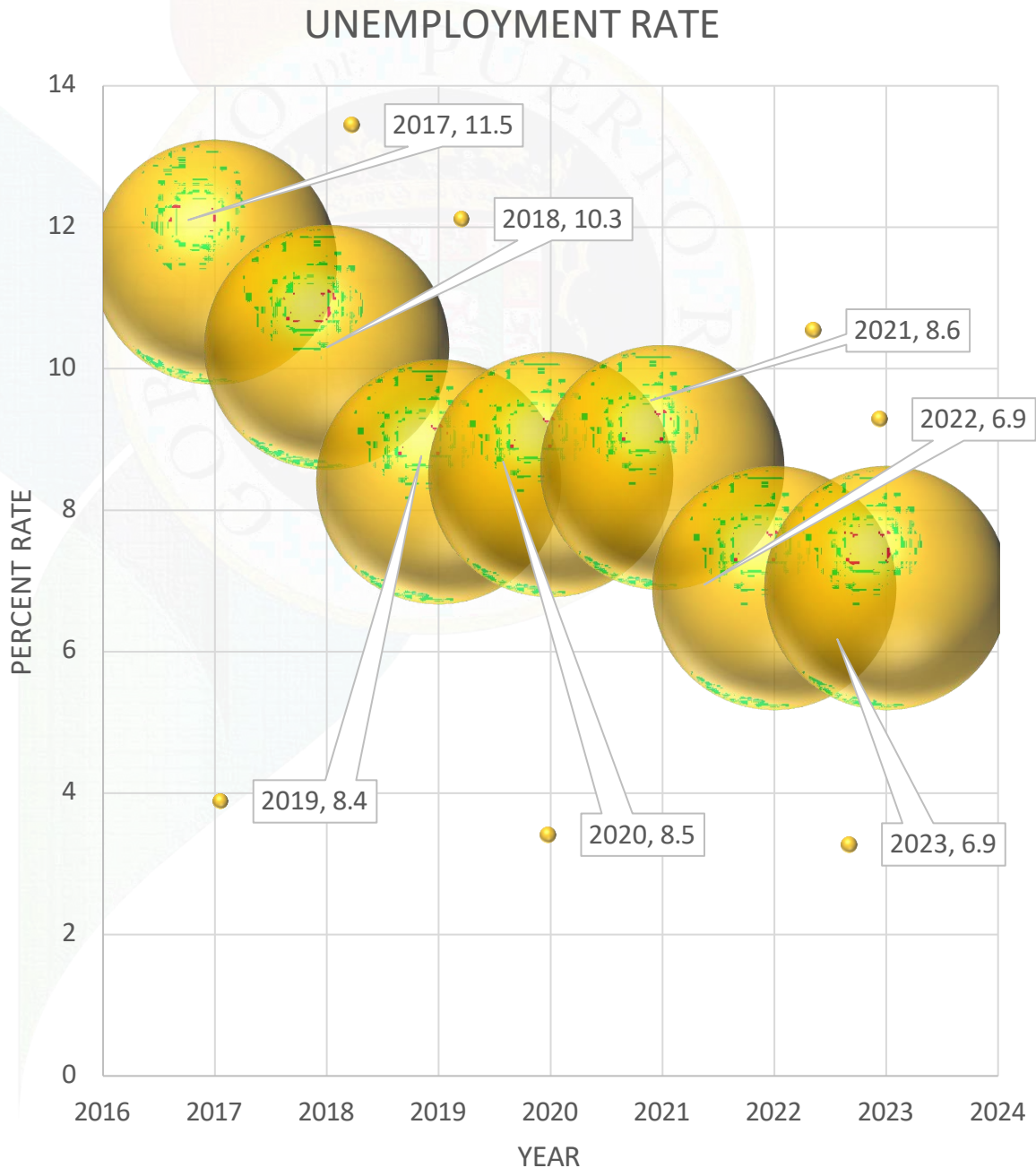
The two following charts represents the changes in employment and unemployment for the last six (6) years.



PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Needs Assessment & Current Statistics

The chart below represents how the unemployment rate has been reduced since fiscal year 2017 until 2023.



PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Needs Assessment & Current Statistics

POPULATION

Even though our economy has been recovering during the last couple of years, the Island's population continues decreasing significantly every year. There are many reasons that could trigger this migration, however, the most important lies in the search of better opportunities for youth and young families. The urge of economic mobility and self sufficiency has impacted Puerto Rico's economic and social structures given rise to an older population.

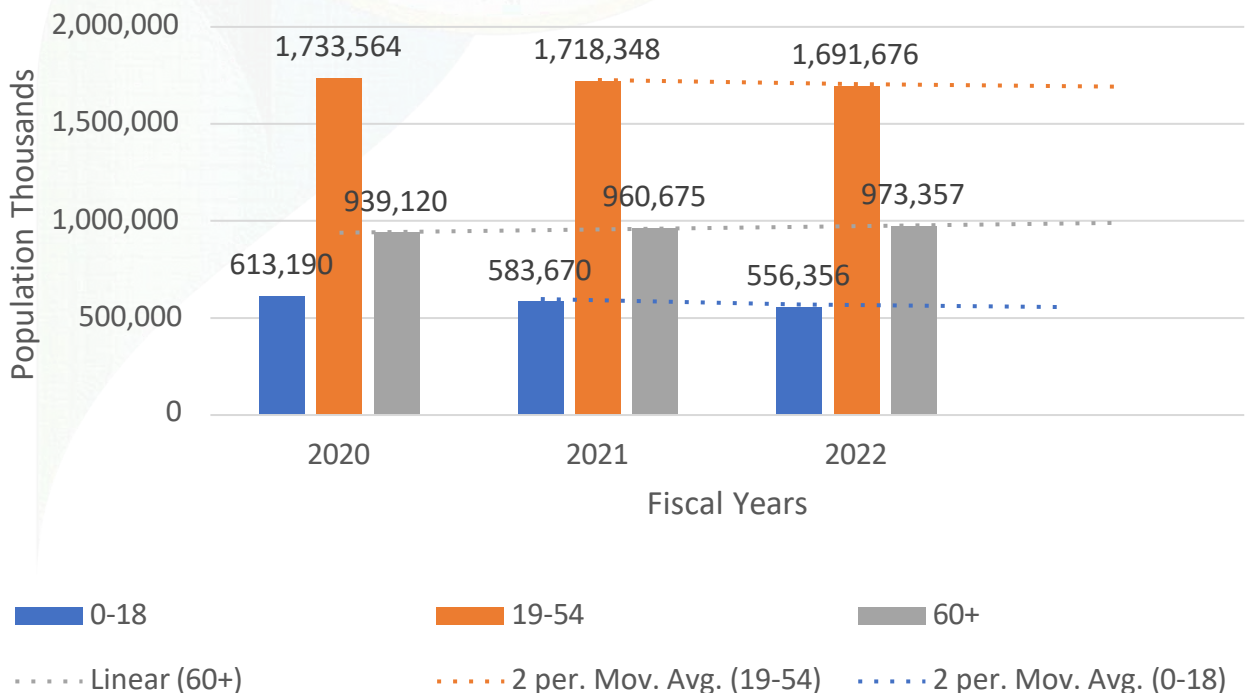
The group age most affected during these last three (3) years are those between 19 and 59 years old and the youth between 0 and 18 years old. During year 2020, there were a total of 613,190 individuals between ages 0-18.

In year 2021, that same population group had 583,670 individuals between 0-18 years old. By year 2022 this age group was reduced to 556,356. This represents 56,834 individuals less than in year 2020.

The other age group that has been impacted are those between 19 and 59 years old. In year 2020 there were 1,733,564 individuals in Puerto Rico between 19 and 59 years old. When we compare FY 2020 with FY 2022 there is a fall of 41,888 people under the category of 19-59 years old, which totals 1,691,676 for this year.

The last group is those aged 60 plus. Different from the other two groups, these reflect an increase of 34,637 older adults between FY 2020 and FY 2022.

Population Growth FY 2020-FY 2022

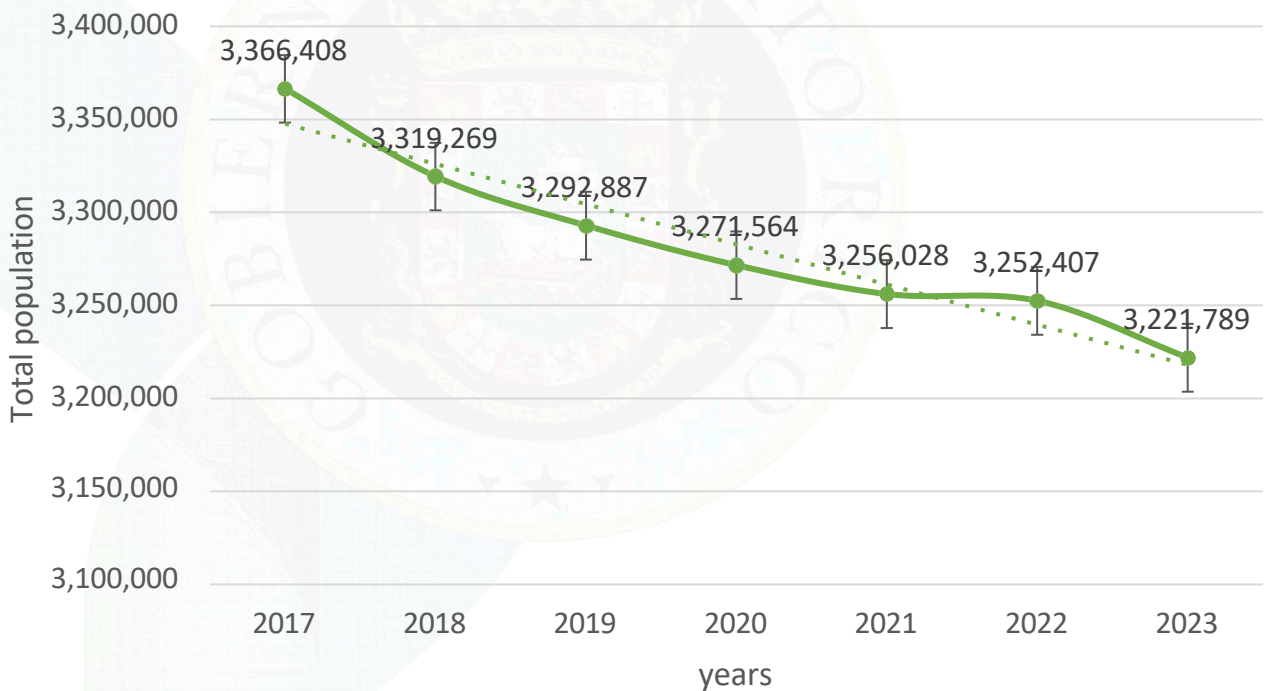


PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Needs Assessment & Current Statistics

In terms of the general population, statistics confirm a continuous decrease for more than seven (7) years. The table below marks a reduction tendency from year 2017 until 2023.

PUERTO RICO'S POPULATION 2017 - 2023



There are several reasons that have contributed to this significant migration:

- ☐ High unemployment rate
- ☐ Less economic assistance when compared with the rest of the states or territories
- ☐ Government's Bankruptcy
- ☐ Fiscal Oversight and Management Board
- ☐ Three major hurricanes in a other natural disasters occurred afterwards
- ☐ COVID 19 Pandemic

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Needs Assessment & Current Statistics

POPULATION AND POVERTY

NAP plays an important role in the government's goal of reducing hunger and food insecurity in Puerto Rico. Even though the cost of living has increased significantly, in the aftermath of COVID-19, NAP provides not only food assistance for low-moderate income individuals and working families, but access to a healthy diet too.

Puerto Rico territory covers 13,790 km² (5,324 square miles) of land and water, has a coastline of 501 km (311 miles) and a population of approximately 3,221,789 (Census – Annual Estimates for 2022). This is broken down as 52.74% women and 47.26% men. From these 17.6% are under 18 years old and 30.22% of the population is over 60 years old. The population density reflects 323 people per square kilometer. Puerto Rico's population density is among the ten (10) highest in the United States, above states such as Florida and New York. Current estimates show a decrease of approximately 0.11% of the population. For more than 50 years, Puerto Ricans have been migrating mostly to the United States due to the low job wages, disparity in federal benefits and very low food support benefits, among others.

42.7% of Puerto Rico's population is currently receiving NAP benefits. From this total, ninety point five per cent (90.5%) of the females' head of families depend on TANF and NAP benefits as their main sources of income.

From the total of NAP participants (1,375,723):

1. There are 783,589 families.
2. 101,240 are women head of households.
3. 403,284 are age 60+
4. 85,196 have some type of disability
5. 3,401 are homeless.



These numbers demonstrate that Puerto Rico's older adults are the population most affected by the food insecurity and live under the poverty levels. Followed by women head of households.

Even though the total number of participants decreased from last year 2021-22, food insecurity is still a major problem in Puerto Rico.

Puerto Rican families, living under poverty levels, have less than a four hundred eighty dollars (\$480.00) monthly income, this includes any government's support. What follows is a table which compares states and territories income.

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Needs Assessment & Current Statistics

POPULATION AND POVERTY (cont.)

Even though the total number of participants decreased from last year 2022-23, food insecurity is still a major problem in Puerto Rico.

Puerto Rican families, living under poverty levels, have less than a four hundred eighty dollars (\$480.00) monthly income, this includes any government's support. **What follows is a table which compares states and territories NAP and SNAP participants' income.**

Persons in Family or Household	48 Contiguous States, D.C., Guam & Virgin Island	Alaska	Hawaii	Puerto Rico After Relief
1	\$13,596	\$16,900	\$15,636	\$7,428
2	\$18,312	\$22,896	\$21,060	\$14,148
3	\$23,040	\$28,800	\$26,496	\$20,472
4	\$27,756	\$34,692	\$31,920	\$26,472
5	\$32,472	\$40,596	\$37,356	\$31,992
6	\$37,200	\$46,500	\$42,780	\$38,388
7	\$441,916	\$52,392	\$48,216	\$43,188
8	\$46,632	\$58,296	\$53,640	\$49,344
For each additional person add:	\$4,728	\$5,904	\$5,436	Eligibility Poverty guideline not use

The maximum NAP allotment for an individual in Puerto Rico is \$165.00 monthly. For each family member 60 years old and over, they receive an additional 20% in benefits up to the maximum allotment per month, which adds to \$198.00. For Vieques and Culebra municipality the maximum allotment is \$198 monthly for individual and \$231 for elderly.

Participants might receive a slight increase in benefits per month, depending on the monthly percentage adjustment.

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Needs Assessment & Current Statistics

ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVE

Puerto Rico continues to face increasing economic pressures. A weak labor market together with fiscal constraints, remain the main causes affecting the local economy recovery. However, the devastation caused by Hurricanes Irma and María, the several earthquakes which stroked the Islands' south region, several tropical storms and the COVID-19 Pandemic has given us the opportunity to redesign major components of the Island's critical infrastructure, invest in the quality and resiliency of public and private buildings, restructure and modernize systems and reevaluate service delivery.

The Diagram below illustrates Puerto Rico Government's Economic priorities.



OBJECTIVE 01

Develop and protect human capital.



OBJECTIVE 02

Correct structural issues, bolster economic growth efforts, and utilize areas of opportunity.



OBJECTIVE 03

Improve Puerto Rico's competitiveness through less regulation, energy reform and other various structural reforms.



OBJECTIVE 04

Increase labor force flexibility and create high quality jobs.



OBJECTIVE 07

Develop a safe, educated, healthy and sustainable society



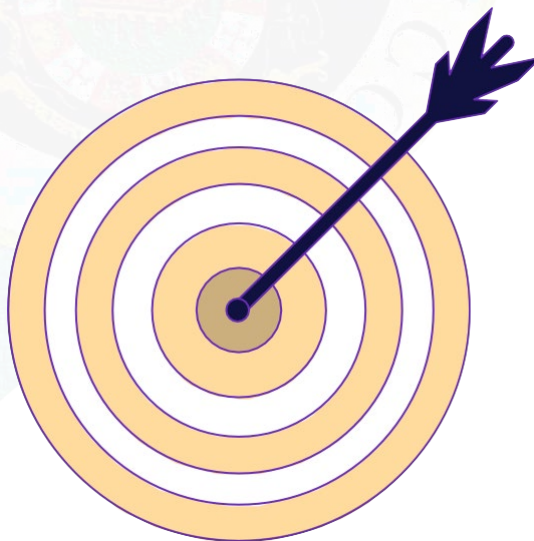
OBJECTIVE 06

Position Puerto Rico as a global investment destination.



OBJECTIVE 05

Upgrade policies of public private partnership investment in energy, water, waste management, and other infrastructure projects.





Program Participants

FY 2024 State Plan of Operations
Socioeconomic Development Administration(ADSEF)
PR Department of the Family

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Program Participants

Nutrition Assistance Program Participants

The following table represents the average number of household units, household members, and monthly benefits distributed from October 2022 to June 2023.

Month	Household Units	Household Members	Benefits
October 2022	811,723	1,432,377	\$188,906,258
November 2022	812,466	1,432,863	\$232,949,944
December 2022	813,281	1,433,477	\$232,729,357
January 2023	813,924	1,433,854	\$232,207,902
February 2023	815,108	1,434,420	\$233,323,892
March 2023	780,788	1,372,088	\$234,084,925
April 2023	783,589	1,375,723	\$230,895,696
May 2023	774,851	1,360,813	\$236,916,711
June 2023	766,614	1,342,515	\$231,344,177

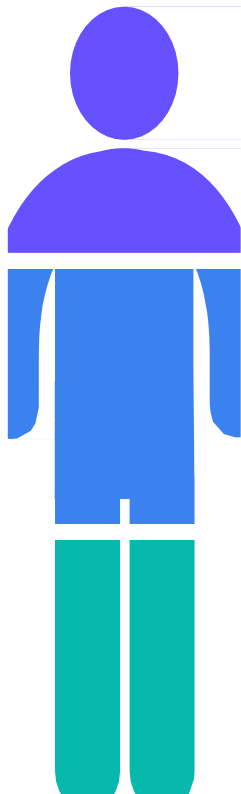
The NAP 2024 State Plan of Operations (SPO) establishes participants' basic needs and criteria for the nutrition assistance funds distribution and administration. The Plan describes the Administration's policies and general procedures used to determine eligibility, benefits distribution and calculation methods, organization, and administrative control systems for the operation and administration of an effective program. Most of the eligibility requirements, fully described in this SPO are validated through the Automated Case Management System (SAIC, Spanish acronym). This substantially improves, the quality of the eligibility determination process, therefore, reducing the percent of errors and fraud.

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Program Participants

NAP PARTICIPANTS BY GENDER AS OF JUNE 2023

The graphic below demonstrates the percent of NAP participants by gender. Females are the leading group with 58% (774,922) of the total participants, and males represent the 42% (568,287) of NAP participants.



MALES

42 % OF ALL NAP
PARTICIPANTS ARE
MALES



FEMALES

58 % OF ALL NAP
PARTICIPANTS ARE
FEMALES

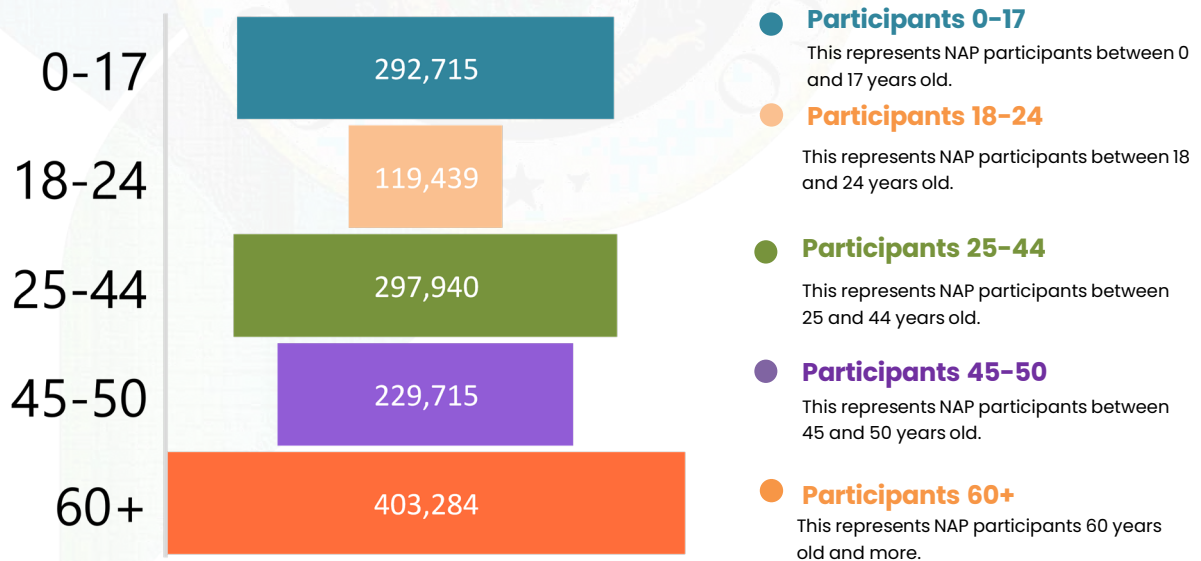
PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Program Participants

NAP PARTICIPANTS AGE GROUPS

As shown in the graphic below, the biggest NAP participation group are older adults 60 + years old 30.2% (403,284). Followed by individuals between 25 and 44 years old with 21.6% (297,940). The third group are participants between ages 0 and 17 years old with 21.3% (292,715), and the last group, which is the smallest representation within NAP participants are participants between 18 and 24 years old with 8.7% (119,439).

TOTAL NAP PARTICIPANTS BY AGE GROUP





Criteria for Funding Distribution

FY 2024 State Plan of Operations
Socioeconomic Development Administration(ADSEF)
PR Department of the Family

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Criteria for Funding Distribution

ADSEF Digital is a web application and primary tool to prequalify and submit NAP and other programs' applications. Once the participant is prequalified the participant may submit the application and coordinate an appointment for the ADSEF Social and Family Assistance Technician interview, for eligibility review of NAP and other programs.

The system was developed during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic (2020) to serve as a contactless method to apply for benefits, to keep the social distance and prevent the spread of the virus, as requested and mandated by the Government of Puerto Rico during the first year of the COVID 19 pandemic.

ADSEF has continued revising the agency's eligibility process guidelines (PR Regulation No. 8684, dated December 28, 2015 - Rules for Determining Applicants Eligibility for the NAP Benefits).

Criteria for funding distribution includes the following:



Requirements for eligibility are determined mainly by participants' income level and resources, with slight variations aimed at simplifying eligibility requirements and reducing fraud as much as possible. Eligibility parameters are determined through the SAIC. The specific eligibility requirements are described below.

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Criteria for Funding Distribution

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

NON-FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS

The following diagram demonstrates the non-financial requirements for NAP benefits Eligibility.

SAIC Eligibility Requirements



FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS

Financial eligibility for NAP benefits is based on the household's size and net income. Applicable income deductions are employed before final benefit determination, in accordance with Regulation No. 8684. On September 2018, ADSEF incorporated special deductions for unemployment and earned incomes, and 50% for retirement, veterans, and Social Security pensions, as approved by FNS in August 2018.

SPECIAL DEDUCTIONS

Child Support Deduction

The Child Support Deduction allows Households to deduct the costs of legally-obligated child support payments paid by a household member to or for a non-household member, including payments made to a third party on behalf of the non-household member. Amounts paid toward arrearages are also deductible. However, alimony payments made to or for a non-household member are not included when applying the Child Support Deduction.

A parent informally pays child support without a court order; however, those payments are not deducted when calculating income.

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Criteria for Funding Distribution

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA (cont.)

The table below details the participants' eligible deductions. Changes as of July 2023 due to the increase of the minimum wage from \$8.50 to \$9.50. Maximum Deduction of 50%, salary increases from \$900 to \$1,100 Maximum Net Income, and Standard Deduction from \$184 to \$198.

SOURCE	DEDUCTIONS
Earned Income: Wages/Salaries/Trainings/ Self-employment/unemployed	50% up to \$100 or maximum \$1,100 (new July 2023) or Fixed \$100 if 50% is less than \$100
Income from agriculture (bonafide farmers and farm workers)	\$760
Income from approved products during harvest (coffee, tomatoes, plantains, bananas, green bananas, cassava, orange, watermelon, mango and pineapple)	100% of income
Retirements and Social Security: Retirement, Veterans, Social Security	50%
Other Income:	\$100

Since FY 2015, ADSEF has been qualifying college students with at least one parent sixty years old or more (60 +) or disabled for NAP benefits. There are considered economically independent therefore eligible for benefits. This was approved by FNS on September 1st, 2015.

SOURCE	DEDUCTION
Student	\$100
Dependent for each child 2 years or less	\$225
Dependent: each child / adult 2 or older	\$200
Elderly (60 years and older)	\$100*
Totally Disabled	\$100*
Recurrent Medical Expenses (Elder and/or Disabled or Children)	\$100
Terminally ill	\$100
Standard Deduction	\$100

* Cannot take both Elderly and Disabled deductions

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Criteria for Funding Distribution

RESOURCES AND NAP MAXIMUM BASIC BENEFITS

The maximum allowable resources for a household is \$5,000 except for households with a 60+ year-old member, in which that case can go up to \$15,000. Disability benefits under the Social Security Act, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or disability retirement benefits from a governmental agency will not be included for eligibility determination purposes.

The following table represents a comparison between Puerto Rico's allowable income per household to be eligible to receive NAP benefits and the US continental, Hawaii, Alaska's SNAP allowable income to receive SNAP benefits per household's composition.

Household	Puerto Rico	Continental States and DC	Alaska	Hawaii	Guam	Virgin Islands
1	\$165	\$281	\$545	\$538	\$415	\$362
2	\$302	\$516	\$1,000	\$987	\$761	\$664
3	\$434	\$740	\$1,432	\$1,413	\$1,090	\$951
4	\$551	\$939	\$1,819	\$1,794	\$1,385	\$1,208
5	\$654	\$1,116	\$2,160	\$2,131	\$1,644	\$1,434
6	\$785	\$1,339	\$2,592	\$2,557	\$1,973	\$1,721
7	\$868	\$1,480	\$2,865	\$2,826	\$2,181	\$1,903
8	\$1,017	\$1,691	\$3,274	\$3,230	\$2,493	\$2,175
9	\$1,166	\$1,902	\$3,683	\$3,634	\$2,805	\$2,447
10	\$1,316	\$2,113	\$4,092	\$4,038	\$3,117	\$2,719
11	\$1,465	\$2,324	\$4,501	\$4,442	\$3,429	\$2,991
12	\$1,614	\$2,535	\$4,910	\$4,846	\$3,741	\$3,263
13	\$1,763	\$2,746	\$5,319	\$5,250	\$4,053	\$3,535
14	\$1,912	\$2,957	\$5,728	\$5,654	\$4,365	\$3,807
15	\$2,061	\$3,168	\$6,137	\$6,058	\$4,677	\$4,079
16	\$2,211	\$3,379	\$6,546	\$6,462	\$4,989	\$4,351
17	\$2,360	\$3,590	\$6,955	\$6,866	\$5,301	\$4,623
18	\$2,509	\$3,801	\$7,364	\$7,270	\$5,613	\$4,895

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Criteria for Funding Distribution

RESOURCES AND NAP MAXIMUM BASIC BENEFITS

The Table bellow details PR Maximum Monthly benefits levels by household's composition (effective date October 2023)

Household	Puerto Rico	Continental USA, DC, Guam, & VI	Alaska	Hawaii
1	\$619	\$1,133	\$1,416	\$1,303
2	\$1,179	\$1,526	\$1,908	\$1,755
3	\$1,706	\$1,920	\$2,400	\$2,208
4	\$2,206	\$2,313	\$2,891	\$2,660
5	\$2,666	\$2,706	\$3,383	\$3,113
6	\$3,199	\$3,100	\$3,875	\$3,565
7	\$3,599	\$3,493	\$4,366	\$4,018
8	\$4,112	\$3,886	\$4,858	\$4,470
9	\$4,632	\$4,280	\$5,350	\$4,923
10	\$5,152	\$4,674	\$5,824	\$5,376
11	\$5,666	\$5,068	\$6,298	\$5,829
12	\$6,186	\$5,462	\$6,772	\$6,282
13	\$6,699	\$5,856	\$7,246	\$6,735
14	\$7,219	\$6,250	\$7,720	\$7,188
15	\$7,732	\$6,644	\$8,194	\$7,641
16	\$8,252	\$7,038	\$8,668	\$8,094
17	\$8,766	\$7,432	\$9,142	\$8,547
18	\$9,286	\$7,826	\$9,616	\$9,000

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Criteria for Funding Distribution

INCOME ELIGIBILITY

Electronic Benefits are issued once a month and distributed in a staggered manner between the 4th and 22nd of the month, according to the last digit of the participants' Social Security Number. The 100% of benefits are issued for eligible food purchases and they are assigned according to the Table of Benefits.

A cut-off date is established for the local offices by the Office of Technology Information (OTI) to process benefits issuance for the next month. OTI executes the programs to obtain the total monthly number of eligible households, persons, benefits, retroactive payments, and claims deductions. This program also calculates the 20% increase for the elderly persons (60 years and older).

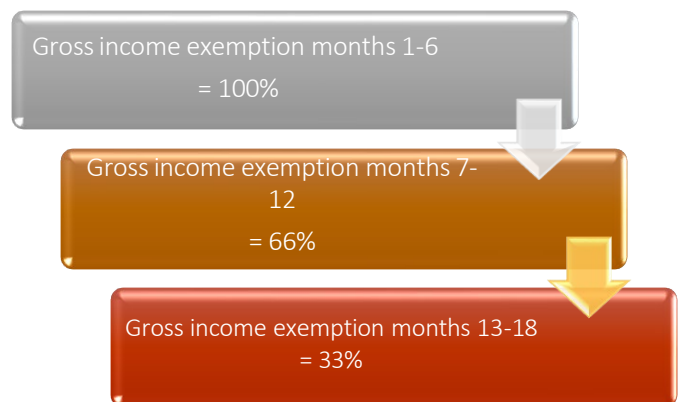
BENEFIT CALCULATION METHOD

The method for calculating benefits under the NAP takes into consideration the number of household unit members and their net income. The method is as follows:

Net income is used to determine eligibility of all household units.

If the household monthly net income is less than or equal to the established limits, the benefits corresponding to the household unit is determined.

As approved by FNS the schedule exemption of income for NAP recipients who start a new job has been extended. Their schedule of benefit is now for 18 months as follows:



PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Criteria for Funding Distribution

CERTIFICATION PROCESS

ADSEF has been working to improve, facilitate, and agile the NAP participants' certification process by implementing a digital-online system. In March 2020, the agency was forced to change the mechanisms available for individuals and households to apply for food support benefits under the Nutrition Assistance Program (NAP) without leaving their homes due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.

To continue providing NAP applicants and participants non-stop services, the agency implemented ADSEF Digital. This online platform allows applicants to submit their application for food assistance online without visiting a local office. ADSEF Digital is supported by "Turnos PR", an online system that coordinates NAP participants' appointments with program caseworkers to work with their re-certification process, report household's changes, among others.

ADSEF started the recertification process at the beginning of 2022, however, had some situations related to the electric power and communications system that affected the online system's performance.

Therefore, FNS granted ADSEF a two (2) months waiver (with an additional 1-month extension) to put a halt on the certification process until the glitch was fixed.



Older Adults Recertification Process

ADSEF keeps working with the recertification and certification process throughout all the regions.

In last year's NAP SPO (2023), FNS approved ADSEF a 24-month waiver for excluding the older adult's population, receiving social security benefits or retirement pensions from the certification.

The waiver will enter in its last 12 months, during this FY SPO 2024.

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Criteria for Funding Distribution

DISASTER/EMERGENCY

Special benefits are provided to applicants and participants who have an immediate need for food due to disasters such as, hurricanes, storms, flooding, earthquakes, landslides, Pandemic, fire, or lack of energy because of a disaster, and if no other public or private entity has provided the same aid.

These Benefits must be issued no later than five (5) days from the date of the application. The amount to be received will be prorated according to the date the application has been filed. If the household applies between the 1st and the 15th of the month, will be entitled to receive up to 100% of the benefits. If the household applies between the 16th and the 31st of the month will be entitled to receive up to 50% of the benefits. If a household was already participating at the time of the disaster and already received its regular benefits but needs immediate food, it is entitled to receive an additional 50% of the regular benefit amount. Benefits are effective the month following the eligibility determination. ADSEF will only issue NAP-Disaster benefits once a Presidential Disaster Declaration has been signed. In addition, ADSEF will request FNS budget approval prior to any D-NAP issuing of benefits. ADSEF will be presenting an updated disaster plan with the SPO. (Emergency Plan Included)

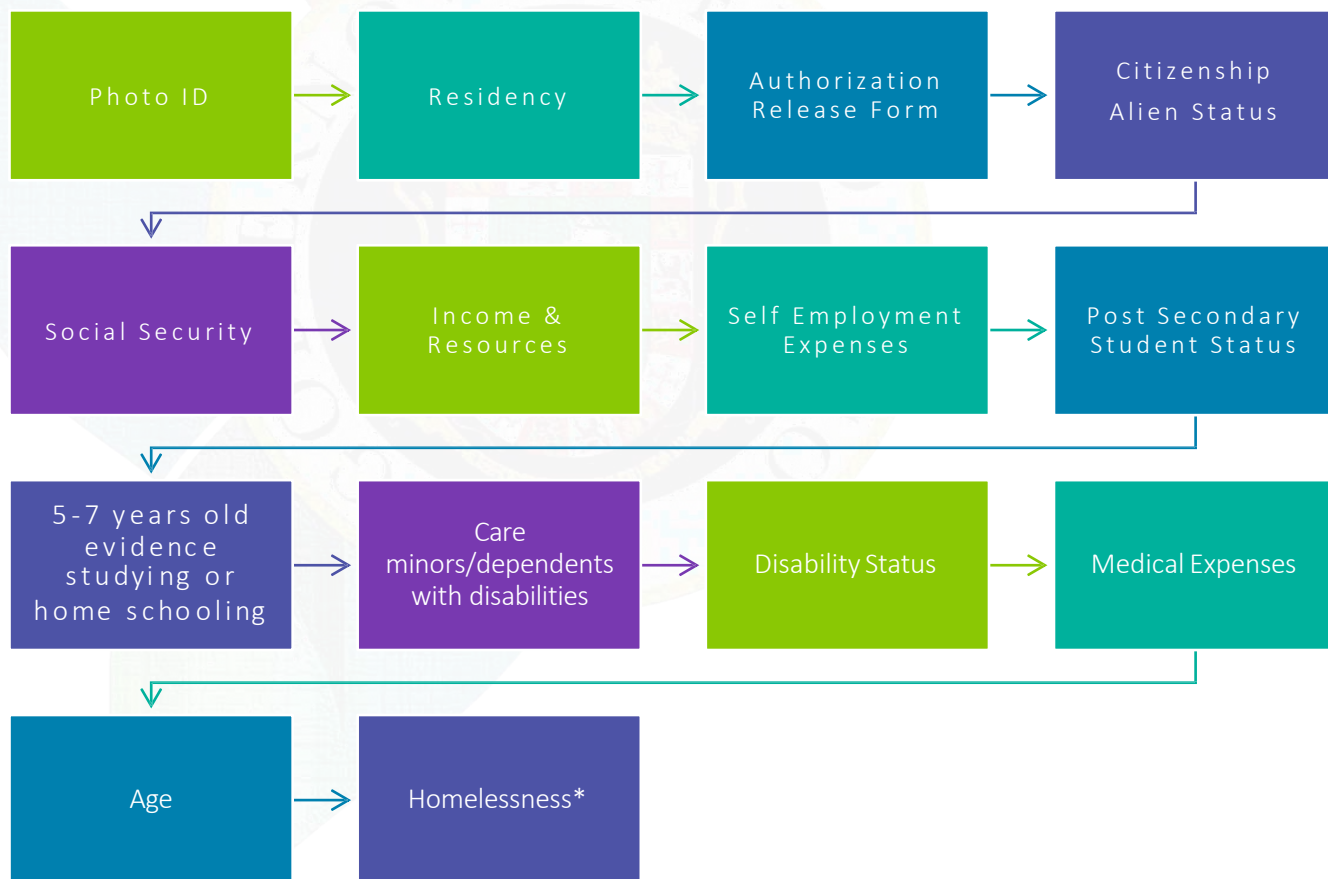


PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Criteria for Funding Distribution

VERIFICATION

ADSEF will require participants to provide necessary documentation in order to verify applicant/participants identity, income, address, and family composition, among others. The following is the list of documents required for the regular verification process:



* If the homeless person does not have the social security card, it can be verified through other official documents such as: checks, official letters, Medicare card or a referral requesting social security card. Under this circumstance, the homeless person is referred to the Administration of Children and Families (ADFAN by acronyms in Spanish). Nevertheless, ADSEF will provide that person 30-days to present social security evidence, as described above. Their identity and residence will be verified with any source of identification available, such as an official letter of an institution offering other services. Residence can be an emergency shelter, welfare hotel, hall, park, plaza, shelter and transitional housing programs, and a home visit is not a requirement for granting aid.

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Criteria for Funding Distribution

VERIFICATION

ADSEF will continue to evaluate and incorporate collaborative agreements to assist in the verification of client information throughout the NAP certification process.

- ☐ Agreement with the PR Health Department Demographic Registry. This agreement permits the exchange of information regarding death certificates. Current status: the agreement was signed ADSEF is waiting for the Health Department's data exchange.
- ☐ Social Security Administration – Social Security Number Verification System (currently we are waiting for response to a request for meeting for program updates to do the exchange). This agreement is under evaluation.
- ☐ Beneficiary and Earnings Data Exchange with the Department of Labor. This agreement is under evaluation.
- ☐ Referral of fraud investigations to Internal Revenue Service, Department of Justice and Department of Treasury of Puerto Rico. ADSEF is in the process of negotiating with the federal agencies an MOU to include fraud investigations.

APPEAL PROCESS

The Administration will provide applicants/participants, who have been adversely affected by an action, the opportunity to be heard in an administrative or appellate process, which must be ruled by the terms and procedures included on the Regulation Number 7757, titled: "Regulation for the Establishment of Procedures for the Adjudication of Controversies before the Adjudicative Board of the Department of the Family".

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Criteria for Funding Distribution

APPEAL PROCESS (cont.)

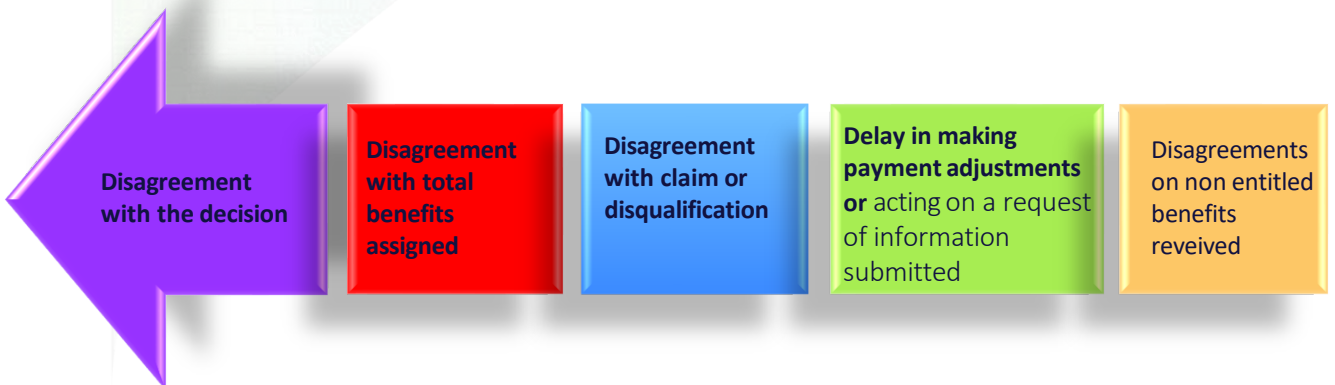
The Administration will provide applicants/participants, who have been adversely affected by an action, the opportunity to be heard in an administrative or appellate process, which must be ruled by the terms and procedures included on the Regulation Number 7757, titled: "Regulation for the Establishment of Procedures for the Adjudication of Controversies before the Adjudicative Board of the Department of the Family". In this case recipients have the right to appeal any action or inaction affecting eligibility, benefits' determination, or condition of payment, within fifteen (15) days of the adverse notification date.

Applicants, participants, or their authorized representatives shall be entitled to file an appeal when any of the following occurs:

Applicants



Participants



PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Criteria for Funding Distribution

Filing an Appeal Application

The applicant, participant or an authorized representative may file the appeal application. The agency shall accept any verbal or written expression of the applicant or participant indicating the desire to appeal the determination of the agency within fifteen (15) calendar days after the date of the written notice of action taken.

1. The applicant shall be given the opportunity to express if he/she wants to continue receiving the benefits without changes until the appeal action is taken. The corresponding office shall proceed according to the appellant's preference.
 - a. The participant shall be informed that if decides to continue receiving the benefits without any adjustment and the Board of Appeals confirms the action, he/she shall have to reimburse the ADSEF for any benefits received during the appeals process.
 - b. The appellant shall be informed that if accepts that the recommended action and the decision are in favor, all benefits not issued during the process shall be restored to him/her.
1. Once the appeal application has been received, the Board Director or the Examiner will have thirty (30) days to select a date and send a notification to all concerned parties indicating the date, time and place where the adjudicative hearing would take place. The notification must be sent at least fifteen (15) days prior to the date selected.
 - a. Usually, as an informal process, the hearings will be celebrated at the regional offices, but also can be arranged at the Department of the Family Headquarters, or at any other place chosen near the local office depending upon participants' or location availability.

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Criteria for Funding Distribution

Filing an Appeal Application

- c. Once the hearing process is concluded the Examiner officer will have thirty (30) days to prepare a resolution draft or a written report with recommendations, facts determinations and legal conclusions for the Board members consideration.
- d. The members of the Adjudicative Board can approve or deny the recommendations and conclusions included in the draft resolution and expose another opinion about the matter. The final decision should be made within ninety (90) days of the initial hearing.
- e. Any reconsideration petitions on the Board decisions must be presented within twenty (20) days from the Board's resolution notification. The Board shall consider any petitions within fifteen (15) days of filed.
- f. As stated before, the final resolution must be presented and filed within ninety (90) days of the reconsideration petition filed.

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Criteria for Funding Distribution

ELECTRONIC BENEFIT TRANSFER (EBT) – FAMILY CARD (FC)

Benefits are issued and deposited electronically into an EBT account. The EBT service is provided by EVERTEC Group, LLC. NAP benefits deposited in the EBT account can only be accessed by using the Family Card (FC) issued to the head of household or another authorized representative. It is important to state that the Family Card cannot be used outside of Puerto Rico. This contract is currently under its last extension. Even though ADSEF is working on a new RFP to select the next provider, will have to extend EVERTEC a new contract until the process is completed.

Transactions made at authorized retailers involving eligible food purchases are free of charge or additional fees. Each authorized cardholder selects a personal identification number (PIN) at the Point of Sale (POS) terminal in the local office. A single card and PIN are required to access remaining benefits in EBT accounts. The FC is mailed to the participant's address, and the PIN number is mailed separately with the activation instruction. Recipient orientation includes the use of an audio response unit (ARU) and access to a Customer Service Representative (CSR) using a 1-877-467-4832; available 7 days a week, 24 hours a day.

The guidance provides:

- How to report a stolen or lost card.
- How to inquire about account balances.
- How to obtain information about previous transactions.
- The participant can change the pin number by calling our customer services representative.

Homeless participants are given a NAP benefits Family Card and PIN number, when they visit a local office to apply for the benefits.

As part of the NAP benefits assignment process, the Article 51(G) of NAP Regulation Number 8684, (as amended) states that if a participant's NAP account has been inactive for a period of six (6) months, from the day of its deposit, the funds in the account will expire and returned to NAP Program.

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Criteria for Funding Distribution

STATUS NEW RFP EBT PROVIDER

The RFP is ADSEF has completed the RFP document to select a new EBT provider and has been approved by the FNS. The agency is waiting for the PR Department of the treasury and the Administration for General Services schedule to open the bidding process.

Milestone	Responsibility	Date
Issue RFP; Manage EBT and EFT Services Procurement	ASG	August 15, 2023
Conduct Mandatory Bidders' Conference	ASG	October 3, 2023
Q/A	ASG - Treasury/EBT Agencies/ EVERTEC	November 7, 2023
Proposals Due	ASG	January 9, 2024
Oral Presentations (Optional)	ASG	January 30, 2024
Complete Proposal Evaluation and Bidder Selection	ASG - EBT Agencies - Evaluation Team Members	March 5, 2024
Award Core Services Contract	ASG	March 12, 2024
Execute Core Services Contract	ASG, Treasury	April 2, 2024
Obtain USDA/FNS Contract Approval of ADSEF EBT/EFT Services Addendum (Core Services Contract)	ADSEF	June 24, 2024
Execute EBT/EFT Addenda - ADSEF/FNS EBT and Cash	ADSEF	July 1, 2024
Execute EBT Agency/Program EBT/EFT Addenda - Non-USDA/FNS EBTand Cash	EBT Agencies	April 9, 2024 - Ongoing
Milestone	Responsibility	Date
Issue RFP; Manage EBT and EFT Services Procurement	ASG	August 15, 2023
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Execute EBT Agency/Program EBT/EFT Addenda - Non-USDA/FNS EBTand Cash	EBT Agencies	April 9, 2024 - Ongoing

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Criteria for Funding Distribution

FAMILY MARKETS

In terms of the Family Markets benefits, if the set aside benefits (usually a 4%) are not used within a 180 days period, these funds will expire and will be withdrawn from the participant's account and transferred back to the NAP program.

ADSEF will continue supporting the Family Markets by setting aside a 4% of benefits exclusively to purchase nutritious fresh food at the Family Markets in participating regions and municipalities. The 4 % portion is included in the monthly adjustment as an “electronic voucher” and is calculated by applying the formula of the monthly adjustment.

What follows is an example of how the formula is determined:

1. The monthly percentage adjustment amount is calculated and 4% of the Family Market portion is subtracted from that number. If the total percentage adjustment is 10%, a 4% will be part of the Family Market portion and the remaining 6 % is given as regular benefits among all the participants during that month.
2. If a participant does not reside in a region with Family Market, will receive their regular benefit (base) plus a 10% of monthly percentage adjustment as his regular benefit; but if the participant lives in a region with Family Market, will receive the regular benefit (base) plus 4% for the Family Market portion and 6% of monthly percentage adjustment.



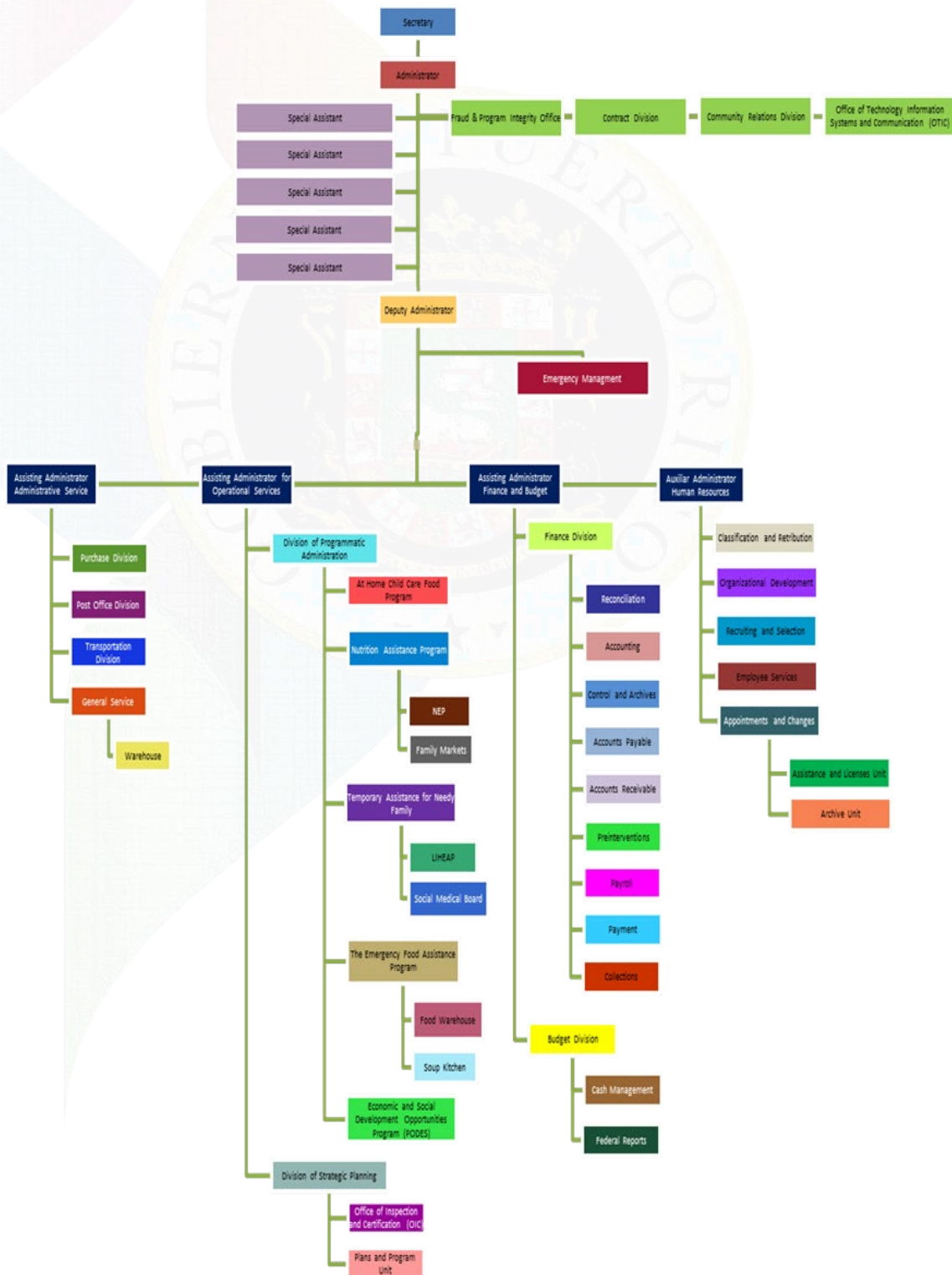
ADSEF NAP

Administration

FY 2024 State Plan of Operations
Socioeconomic Development Administration(ADSEF)
PR Department of the Family

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

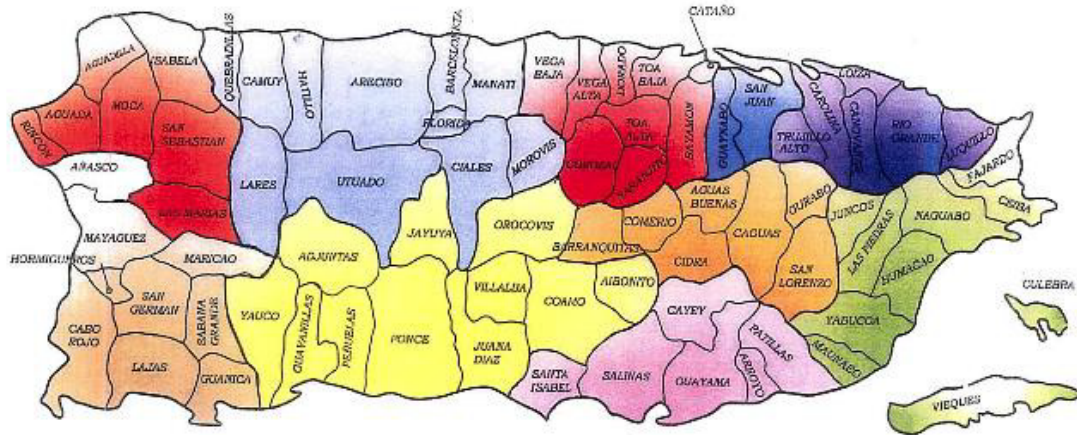
Agency's Organizational Chart



PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Local Offices Geographical Distribution

10 Regions & 88 Local Offices



Aguadilla

- Aguada
- Aguadilla I
- Aguadilla II
- Isabela
- Las Marías
- Moca
- Rincón
- San Sebastián

Arecibo

- Arecibo I
- Arecibo III
- Barceloneta
- Camuy
- Ciales
- Florida
- Hatillo
- Lares
- Manatí
- Morovis
- Quebradillas
- Utuado I

Bayamón

- Bayamón I
- Bayamón II
- Cataño
- Corozal
- Dorado
- Naranjito
- Toa Alta
- Toa Baja I
- Vega Alta
- Vega Baja I

Caguas

- Aguas Buenas
- Barranquitas
- Caguas I
- Cidra
- Comerío
- Gurabo
- San Lorenzo

Carolina

- Canóvanas
- Carolina I
- Loíza
- Luquillo
- Río Grande I
- Trujillo Alto I

Guayama

- Arroyo
- Cayey
- Guayama
- Patillas
- Salinas
- Santa Isabel

Humacao

- Ceiba
- Culebra
- Fajardo
- Humacao
- Juncos I
- Las Piedras
- Maunabo
- Naguabo
- Vieques
- Yabucoa

Mayaguez

- Añasco
- Cabo Rojo
- Guánica
- Hormigueros
- Lajas
- Maricao
- Mayaguez I
- Sábana Grande
- San Germán

Ponce

- Adjuntas
- Aibonito
- Castañer
- Coamo
- Guayanilla
- Jayuya
- Juana Díaz
- Orocovis
- Peñuelas
- Ponce I
- Ponce II
- Ponce III
- Villalba
- Yauco

San Juan

- Cupey
- Guaynabo I
- Río Piedras I
- Río Piedras II
- Río Piedras III
- Río Piedras IV
- San Juan I

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

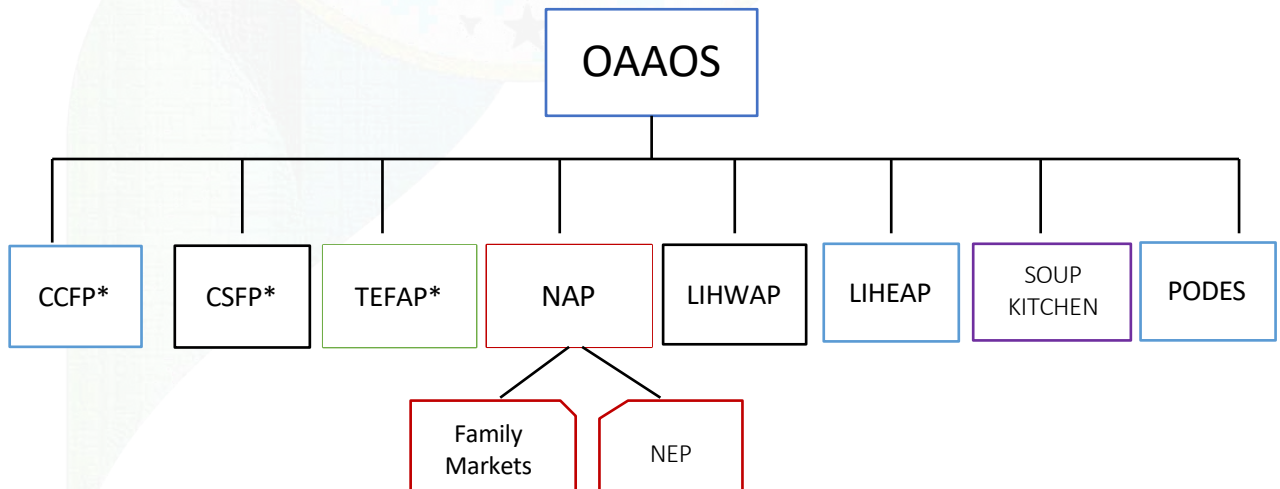
Administration

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

ADSEF Administrates the Nutrition Assistance Program (NAP) for the Department of the Family. (Please refer to the previous two pages for the organizational chart and regional and local offices distribution).

A. Office of the Assisting Administrator for Operational Services (OAAOS).

The office of the Assisting Administrator for Operational Services (OAAOS) is responsible for the planning coordination, organization, direction, supervision, and evaluation of the administrative, operational, and programmatic performance of all the activities related. OAAOS consist of two (2) Divisions, Program Administration and Strategic Planning. The Assisting Administrator for Operational Services participates actively with the Administrator in the formulation of public policies and is responsible for the State Plan of Operations. The Division is responsible of implementing any policy changes and for developing regulations and procedures required for the state plan operation. The following are the Programmatic and Administrative units assigned to this division:



- CCFP- Child Care Food Program
- CSFP – Commodities Senior Food Program
- TEFAP –Temporary Emergency Assistance Program
- Child Care Food Program
- NEP- Nutrition Education Program
- Low Income Household Water Assistance Program
- Low Income Household Energy Assistance Program

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Administration

OAAOS-Programs and Planning Unit

This Unit responds directly to the Assisting Administrator of Operational Services and has the responsibility of planning, evaluating, measuring, and producing the programs' statistics of the Office of the Assisting Administrator for Operational Services and any other Administrative units within ADSEF. Some of the responsibilities of the Planning and Programs Unit are:

1. Ensures the compliance with the execution standards as established in the work plans of each area.
2. Administers the Measures of Efforts and Results System (MER).
3. Identifies the areas that must be improved to request the Program Directors
4. the preparation of strategies and Corrective Action Plans (CAP's).
5. Develops evaluation strategies to measure quality and quantity of ADSEF's services.
6. Administers the Random Moment Sampling System (RMS) for Cost Allocation.
7. Evaluates the application of the Federal Regulations, Instructions and Procedures of NAP.
8. ADSEF is responsible for compliance at the sub-grantee level. In addition, it is responsible
9. of informing the sub-grantee of the applicable federal requirements and any administrative requirement.

Measures of Efforts and Results System (MER)

The MER System is used to evaluate the accessibility, accuracy, and timeliness of services provided by the NAP through case reviews conducted by the ADSEF.

The objectives of the reviews are to provide a:

1. Systematic measuring method plus the accuracy and timeliness of eligibility and benefits determinations.
2. Basis for determining a payment error rate of active and negative cases.

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Administration

PROGRAMS' ADMINISTRATION (Cont.)

The ADSEF is responsible for conducting quality control reviews of NAP cases. The focus of this review depends on the selection of a sample. MER results are used to assess the accessibility, accuracy and timeliness of the services offered by the NAP case reviews.

The Office of Technology and Information (OTI) selects a sample of all the nucleus of service centers that are participating in the NAP. The sample consists of 1,800 cases; 1,200 of those are active cases and 600 negative cases. The total sample is divided into number of 450 cases per quarter four times in the FY (December, March, June, and September). The sample of active cases is reviewed to determine if the nucleus of service is eligible and is receiving the correct total of benefits. The negative cases are reviewed to determine whether the decision to deny or terminate the services was correct. The budget month is used as the basis to verify all elements of eligibility resulting in the sample month. For example, we use monthly samples of December and budget month of October. The data obtained from the research is shared with the regional and local offices through the ADSEF MER-01-C and 01-D for reporting detected errors.

The local office prepares a corrective action plan to address the mistakes and reports the actions taken through the ADSEF-213. The Regional Office follows up on the findings by checking the MER Findings Control Sheet.

The reviews include the examination and verification of eligibility elements (examples: resources, income, identity, address, household composition, citizenship/residency, social security number, work registration and school attendance). The benefit calculation is reviewed (examples: deductions and household composition) through contacts with collateral sources of information, face-to-face interviews to all clients and data exchanges with other agencies.

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Administration

PROGRAMS' ADMINISTRATION (Cont.)

The percent of error established on the tolerance level is 4.5% for positive samples (active cases) and 6% for negative cases. Certification of the error percent obtained is sent to FNS, 6 months after the end of the federal Fiscal Year. MERS's annual report findings are submitted 90 days after the error's percent is certified.

The local office prepares a corrective action plan to address the mistakes and reports the actions taken through the ADSEF-213. The Regional Office follows up on the findings by checking the MER Findings Control Sheet.

The reviews include the examination and verification of eligibility elements (examples: resources, income, identity, address, household composition, citizenship/residency, social security number, work registration and school attendance). The benefit calculation is reviewed (examples: deductions and household composition) through contacts with collateral sources of information, face-to-face interviews to all clients and data exchanges with other agencies.

The percent error established on the tolerance level is from 4.5% to 6.0% for positive samples (active cases) and from 20% to 6% for negative cases. Certification of the error percent obtained is sent to FNS, 6 months after the end of the federal Fiscal Year. MERS's annual report findings are submitted 90 days after the error's percent is certified.

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Administration

PROGRAMS' ADMINISTRATION (cont.)

Random Moment Sampling (RMS)

The Random Moment Sampling System (RMS) is a procedure that scientifically gathers information to distribute costs among assistance programs administered by ADSEF. The number of samples required for RMS are 3,300 distributed between the ten (10) Regions.

The Office of Technology Information Systems (OTI Spanish, Acronym) provides digital samples divided by four (4) quarters in the year. Hence, it is necessary to keep the system functioning efficiently in order to obtain exact and real results that make it possible to distribute the operating expenses of programs financed with federal funds, since all the activities are concentrated on the Social and Family Assistance Technicians, who carry out the task for all the programs.

The fact that this system is available at the Central Offices helps expedite the management, collection, distribution, and tabulation of data samples through RMS. The improvements achieved helped to improve significantly the required efforts to manually prepare and classify the hand-written forms by means of eliminating the information interchange between case workers and Central ADSEF.

To guarantee that the process is performed according to the RMS Procedures Manual, we conduct local offices reviews with the RMS Coordinator at the agency's headquarters. The responsibility of the RMS is assigned to the RMS Headquarters Coordinator. This employee evaluates results, provides follow up on the sample cases response process and periodically evaluates that the RMS is has been applied accordingly by checking the data entry, among other responsibilities.

The Random Moment Sample for ADSEF's central office started in January 2020. Currently the agency has completed 3,300 samples.

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Administration

PROGRAMS' ADMINISTRATION (CONT.)

Office of Inspection and Certification

The Office of Inspection and Certification (OIC) is responsible for developing, implementing, and managing systems, procedures, and personnel to enable retailer and wholesaler control and inspection functions. OIC accomplishes its mission mainly carrying out two main activities: education and orientation, and on-site inspections.

OIC is responsible of preparing the agency's monthly reports to FNS. The reports will be sent on the 15 day of the following month. The following reports are included:

1. Monthly Retailers-SDEC and NAP Family markets Reports
2. Non-Redeeming Report (also known as Zero Redeemers)
3. Complaints Report (complaints against retailers)
4. NAP Retailer Status Report
5. NAP Family Markets

The OIC 2024 state plan is included with this SPO in the attachments.

Education and Orientation

OIC is focus on keeping retailers, wholesalers, and beneficiaries informed of the NAP's objectives and requirements. The fraud prevention education is provided through on-site visits and at special workshops.

During the on-site monitoring reviews, OIC personnel ensures that all personnel working at the establishment are aware of NAP rules and regulations. New retailers and wholesalers must sign a certification that they have received and understand Regulation Number 8857, dated November 23, 2016, for the Commercial Establishments certification, which will give them authorization to debit NAP Program Funds from the participants Family Card.

On-site Authorizations, Reauthorizations and Monitoring Regulation Number 8857 establish that the agency must provide an inspection visit as a requirement for the initial authorization and bi- annual recertification.

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Administration

PROGRAMS' ADMINISTRATION/ Education & Orientation (Cont.)

OIC visits and evaluates all new retailers and wholesalers, to verify that the information provided on the application is accurate. Also, ensures that the food inventory is adequate and compatible with the Program goals. Periodically, the OIC personnel visits retailers and wholesalers randomly to verify that the Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) management process is in accordance with procedures.

At the same time, the OIC employees or contractors will verify through the establishments on-site visits, that the Authorization Certificate and orientation/informative posters are visible to the public. During the visit, OIC verifies NAP redemptions for at least a 12-month period prior to the visit. This will demonstrate if the redemptions comply with program requirements. OIC personnel are required to take pictures of food inventory and facilities during their visits.

ADSEF might disqualify an authorized food retailer if by any instance a violation occurs as a result of an on-site investigation, findings on inconsistent redemption data, evidence obtained through an EBT system transactions report, or a retailer's disqualification from the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), based on 7 CFR 278.6.

As part of the Regulation 8857 penalties, ADSEF could fine or disqualify a retailer if it does not comply with NAP policies. Sanctions could fluctuate, starting with an initial fine and could end with the revocation of the retailer's NAP certification, in the case that fraud is proven or persists. Decisions will be subject to a full analysis and interpretation of the program's regulation. In case of re-occurrence the penalties will be as follows:

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Administration

PROGRAMS' ADMINISTRATION/ Education & Orientation

- a. For one (1) previous determination of regulation's violation, the suspension will be extended up to six (6) months and a fine will be applied.
- b. For two (2) previous determinations of regulations' violation, the suspension will be extended for up to twelve (12) months and a fine will be applied.
- c. For three (3) or more previous determinations of regulation's violation, the suspension will permanent and a fine will be applied.

ADSEF has developed a system to determine merchants' eligibility and case management for those interested on NAP funds. The Commerce Eligibility Determination System (acronyms in Spanish as SDEC). This application provides filters for any information displayed on the monitor, shows case numbers and authorizations, the persons that have been recently working at a retailer, retailers integration as ADSEF's merchants and print any information needed. ADSEF will continue monitoring the institutions (group homes/rehabs, etc.) that have been certified by OIC.

The following are the requirements for the Debit Nutrition Assistance Program (NAP) Funds Family Card (FC)

- i. Any owner or operator of an eligible business, as established in Regulation Number 8857 that requests authorization to debit Nutrition Assistance Program (NAP) funds from the Family Card (FC), will have the obligation to request a certification for such purposes. Certification is issued by ADSEF.
- ii. Any establishment that wants to participate or renew its certification must file an application. ADSEF has the authority to approve or deny the application or request additional information within thirty (30) days of the application's receipt. ADSEF will visit the retailers/wholesale at least once a year to confirm that the establishment complies with Article 13(B) and 15(C) from the Regulation Number 8857.

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Administration

PROGRAMS' ADMINISTRATION / Education & Orientation

Retailer with an expired certification could have its EBT cards privilege removed at ADSEF at anytime.

Subsection 3. Sale of ineligible items, as defined in Article 5 (6) of this regulation and collected from the NAP beneficiary's Department of the Family EBT card. This practice will be penalized with a minimum fine of five hundred dollars (\$500.00) and a maximum fine of three thousand dollars (\$3,000.00) for each item sold.

Subsection 11. In the case of certified institutions, use all or part of the funds for the purchase of products that are not eligible food or for any other purpose other than the purchase of eligible items. This practice will be penalized with a minimum fine of five hundred dollars (\$500.00) and a maximum fine of three thousand dollars (\$3,000.00).

Subsection 12. In the case of farmers, use the POS to carry out transactions other than the Family Markets. This practice will be penalized with a minimum fine of two hundred fifty dollars (\$250.00) and a maximum fine of five hundred dollars (\$ 500.00).

Legal Affairs Office ADSEF

The Legal Division Office is responsible for matters concerning legal claims; contracts; agreements; investigations of complaints concerning retailers and employees; meetings with retailers because of investigations; community relations; and fraud cases.

Contracts and Agreements

The Legal Division Office is responsible for preparing the contracts and agreements related to ADSEF. The office's responsibilities include contracts/agreements drafts; request funds and authorization to the Office of Management and Budget; and ensure that the contracts or agreements comply with all federal and state laws, as well as with any Administrative Orders that may exist; among others.

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Administration

ADMINISTRATION/LegalAffairsDivision (cont.)

Investigation, Meetings and Sanctions of Authorized Retailers

The Legal Affairs Office evaluates complaints regarding possible violations to Regulation Number 8857, received by phone, letter, and/or email, among other ways, and investigates them (undercover visits, transaction analysis, and other information on the retailers file). If as a result of an investigation a meeting with the retailer is needed to explain findings, applicable fines and disqualification, notifications will be sent and meeting held with the legal counselors of the ADSEF, specifically contracted for evaluated that type of cases and to make sure that all the investigation it's been done with due process of law. Afterwards, the Legal Office makes a recommendation to the Administrator about the imposition of monetary penalties and/or disqualification. The Administrator's decision is duly notified to retailers who may: accept and pay the fine, accept the disqualification or request a review before the Adjudicative Board of the Department of the Family, ADSEF's legal counselors act on behalf of the Agency during the appeal process. A monthly retailer's meetings, fines, sanctions, and collection report is issued to MARO-FNS.

Investigation, Meetings and Sanctions of Authorized Retailers

The criteria for determining that a retailer is in breach of the provisions of the Regulation are settled on the Article 21:

- 1) Not to notify in writing to the ICO, on or before fifteen (15) days of occurrence any change related to the data of the commercial establishment or institution.
- 2) Do not keep items eligible with the selling price properly adhered or labeled.
- 3) Sale of ineligible items, as defined in Article 5 (6) of this regulation and collected with NAP funds from the holder of the Family Card (FC).
- 4) Failure to deliver the cash register and/or POS (fixed or wireless) receipt that reflects the transaction made to the person holding the FC.

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Administration

ADMINISTRATION/Legal Affairs Division(cont.)

- 5) Collection of sales and use tax (IVU) on transactions with the Family Card.
- 6) Credit purchase to the person holding the FC. Any transaction made with NAP funds must reflect the sale at the date and time the eligible food was purchased.
- 7) Sales of alcoholic beverages, and tobacco in any of its forms of consumption, pornographic material and / or electronic games or lottery tickets with NAP funds to the person in possession of the FC.
- 8) Hold the Family Card for any reason.
- 9) In the case of certified institutions, allow the use of all or part of the NAP funds to purchase non eligible foods or any other transaction not related to the purchase of eligible items.
- 10) In the case of farmers, use the POS to conduct transactions outside the Family Markets.
- 11) Commit fraud, as defined in Article 5 (15) of the Regulation.
- 12) Failure to comply with any other obligation or duty set forth in Article 18, which is not specifically contemplated in this Article 21.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS OFFICE

The office staff provides guidance on NAP's eligibility, policies, and procedures to citizens and program participants. In addition, assists regional and local offices with participants' inquiries and complaints, received at the office via phone, letter or email. In addition, responds to the any information requested by subpoenas and court orders.

Interagency Cases: this is a subdivision within the office which offers support in PARIS Match processing, by answering states/territories requests, and any other issue related to matching a participant's information in Puerto Rico. Also, verifies TANF time participation for category C - applicants.

Immigration Status: This office Staff is responsible of using the SAVE application to verify benefits status for immigrants.

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Administration

ADMINISTRATION (Cont.)

Programmatic Integrity Division

The Programmatic Integrity Division (“DIP” Spanish acronym) within the Legal Affairs Office is responsible for monitoring EBT transactions and redemption by using the data warehouse as a tool to identify and prevent participants and retailers’ possible fraud. This Division is responsible for analyzing and processing participants, retailers or institutions violations to NAP regulations in coordination with local and regional offices. For FY 2022, we intend to continue strengthening the headquarters and regional offices’ DIP.

The NAP claims process indicates that in all cases where it is determined that a household or the institution received and/or used benefits to which it was not entitled, a claim shall be made. Once the claim is presented, the Department of the Family will start a collection process, against the household’s person responsible. A notification including the following information will be sent or delivered:

1. Reasons for the claim and the period covered.
2. Classification of the claim.
3. Amount owed.
4. Compensation for retroactive benefits that reduced or paid off the debt, if applicable.
5. Right to file an appeal with the Department's Adjudicating Board and term.

This office will also investigate the cases to determine Intentional Program Violations and will with claim’s collections that result from the investigation. A potential intentional violation is a claim in which the person responsible for the household, his/her spouse or an authorized representative, or the authorized representative of the institution intentionally with a misleading intent and voluntarily, incurs in one or more of the following:

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Administration

PROGRAMS' ADMINISTRATION

Program Integrity (cont.)

- ☐ Presents a false or incorrect written statement about the circumstances of the service core.
- ☐ Hides information about changes, as established in these Regulations, for a period exceeding thirty (30) days as of the date of the change.
- ☐ It presents altered documents.
- ☐ Makes a false representation.
- ☐ The amount of the claim is \$ 500.01 or more.

The DIP is also responsible of preparing monthly reports to FNS on: Participant Claims (monthly and annual reports) and Retailer Actions (actions against retailers for NAP Program violations).

As part of this 2024 SPO ADSEF developed a DIP State Plan, which is included in the attachments of this document.

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTING ADMINISTRATOR FOR FINANCE AND BUDGET

FINANCEDIVISION

The Office of the Assisting Administrator for Finance and Budget offers part of the administrative support for the programs. In coordination with the EVERTEC, Group LLC, is responsible for implementing and operating the required systems to process payment to beneficiaries. It prepares the annual budget to be submitted to local, federal agencies and as well as the Legislature. The office responds directly to the Administrator.

☐ Reconciliation Method used with EBT Systems (EBT)

The EBT services provider makes payments to authorized retailers, network, third party providers, and financial institutions on behalf of the Government of Puerto Rico for benefits accessed and distributed to recipients daily. The EBT services provider is reimbursed as authorized by the Banco Popular de Puerto Rico (BPPR).

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Administration

ADMINISTRATION/ Finance Division

- ☐ Payments are recorded and compared to the Daily Activity File and Daily Payments Summary File prepared by the EBT services provider for the Department of the Family. EBT system reports provide these and other standardized computer reports as well as ad hoc access to EBT system data to perform the following key reconciliation:
 1. Benefits authorized= benefits posted.
 2. Benefits accessed by recipients (net EBT account debits/credits) = benefit amount transactions approved by the EBT services provider.
 3. Net EBT account debits/credits = amount paid to merchants and financial institutions, “+/-” authorized adjustments.
 4. Amount paid to merchants and financial institutions = funds requested by the EBT services provider, “+/-” authorized adjustments.

Collections Section

- ☐ Receive, review, analyze and register the deposits of all monies collected from claims corresponding to NAP by the Assistant Collector at the local offices. The Assistant Collector collects claimed monies from local offices weekly.
- ☐ Receive monies collected at the Department of Justice corresponding to NAP claims.
- ☐ Prepare and submit the deposits, for accounting purposes, to the Department of Treasury, which has an exclusive account called NAP Coll (one account is opened for each fiscal year). When the account reaches certain quantity, all funds are transferred back into the NAP participants benefit account so it can be funneled back to the participants. This quantifies the account needs before benefits are reverted. The claims are made daily or weekly depending on the local office and the available Assistant Collector.

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Administration

ADMINISTRATION/Collections

- ☐ The assistant collector is designated directly by the Treasury Department. The official definition for Assistant Collector is staff in a regular, transitory or by contractor position in any agency of the government, designated by the Treasury Department Secretary, to act as a substitute for the Official Collector when this person is absent because of vacation, sickness, or other short terms.
- ☐ The official collector is the person that deposit the money recovered from the claims all Mondays. If Monday is a holiday the deposit will be on Tuesday. Money is kept in a safety deposit box. ADSEF has established policies and procedures at the Central Office regarding the safety of the money and its deposits and follows the Department of Treasury policies and procedures regarding deposits.
- ☐ Review and submits to the Department of the Treasury, the documents related to the persons nominated for official, assistant, and Assisting collector.
- ☐ Reconcile the deposit forms after their accounting to ensure correctness.
- ☐ Distribute official receipts and deposit forms to regional and local offices.
- ☐ Review and consolidate island-wide data, which includes reports submitted by local and regional offices for collection. This is the data ADSEF uses to feed FNS-209-PR.

Accounts Payable

The Accounts Payable Section of the Finance Division generates and maintains control of the obligations of payments for contracted and non-contracted services. Prepares payment vouchers for disbursements of all programs attached to the agency. Among other things, it assigns the number of travel orders and application and authorization for private car use (Models SC 1231 and 1232). The application for admission to the register of suppliers is received through form SC 730 and refers to Accounting in the Department of the Treasury. The accounts payable section records the payment vouchers and obligations in the PRIFAS system of the Department of the Treasury.

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Administration

ADMINISTRATION/Budget Division

- ☐ Prepares the annual budget to be submitted to local, federal agencies and the Legislature.
- ☐ Prepares fiscal reports.
- ☐ Evaluates the availability of funds for the acquisition of goods and services for the operation of the program.
- ☐ Prepares the Monthly Operational Cost Budget for the NEP.
- ☐ Managing the Operational Cost

The Monthly Operational Cost is based on current expenditures for those items that apply to the operation of the NAP as submitted to Puerto Rico's Budget and Management Office, for FY 2020-21. A description of those operational costs follows:

1. Salaries: Included Regular Employees, Transitory Employees, Irregular Employees, Professional, and Consultant Services Government's contribution to Social Security, Retirement Plan, and Christmas Bonuses.
2. Travel expense estimates and out-of-the country official travel.
3. Unemployment Insurance is based on procedures established by the Department of Labor of the Government of Puerto Rico.
4. State Insurance Premiums are those related to work compensation insurance for employees.
5. Insurance for employees in travel status.
6. Medical Plans are the government's participation of the employees' medical plan premiums.
7. Public Building Rent.
8. Rent of non-public building and other equipment.

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Administration

ADMINISTRATION/Budget (cont.)

9. Postage – includes mailing of communication related to the Program.
10. Printing of all forms required for NAP.
11. Electricity for central, regional, and local offices.
12. Building repairs and conservation.
13. Miscellaneous services.
14. Material, supplies, and parts.
15. Telephone services.
16. Equipment includes the purchase of replacement of furniture or additional equipment.
17. Water and sewer services.

Cash Management

The Cash Management Section is responsible for claiming daily disbursements corresponding to Federal Programs activities managed by ADSEF. These funds request is based and ruled by the Cash Management Improvement Act and is issued by the United States Treasury Department.

Once the funds are requested, Cash Management Section is responsible of submitting the financial documents that allow the proper accountability of fund on the federal accounts created on the State Treasury Department. Cash Management is also responsible for preparing and submitting to the Treasury Department, U.S Department of Health and Human Services and Federal Reports Section, the required reports detailing all the requests of funds made.

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Administration

ADMINISTRATION/Budget Division (cont.)

Federal Reports

1. 7 CFR 3016.25 (b) = Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments.
2. Program Income: Program income means gross income received by the grantee or sub-grantee directly generated by a grant-supported activity or earned only because of the grant agreement during the grant period.
3. Benefit cash collections will be deposited back into NAP benefit account and reissued as benefits and be reported as program income on the SF-425/778, Financial Status Report.
4. In the SF – 425/778 (Financial Report for NAP), ADSEF submits quarterly (December, March, June and September) the information to FNS. Submits claim reports (FNS-209-PR) to the USDA, Food and Nutrition Service and to the Federal Reports Section.
5. Prepares the actual operating cost reports on a quarterly basis to allow management to compare against the budgeted cost to take the proper corrective actions. The USDA, Food and Nutrition Service authorize the portion of funds from the Block Grant used to cover the fifty percent (50%) of the allowable administrative cost of the program.
6. The Federal Reports Division performs the following duties:
 - ☐ Prepare and execute reports about the use of funds as required by Federal Government Agencies.
 - ☐ Review considered transactions to verify that they have been coded correctly.
 - ☐ Calculate the amount claimed to Federal Agencies relating to indirect costs and the Random Moment Sampling (RMS) application. This federal indirect cost rate is negotiated through the Department of the Family and is submitted to the Department of Health and Human Services Division of Cost Allocation using their guidelines.
 - ☐ FNS-209-PR, Monthly Claims Report to be reported quarterly on FPRS. The purpose of this report is to notify the number of claims and recoveries recovered by the claims of the Nutrition Assistance Program (cash, check, money order, reduction of benefits, retroactive benefits). Must be submitted and certified in the system on or before 30 days after the end of the quarter of which it is being reported.

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Administration

ADMINISTRATION

Federal Reports

- ❑ SF-425/778, Financial Status Report. As of October 1st, 2013 will be reported on Food Program Reporting System (FPRS), which will allow the data to be on the National Data Bank (NDB). The report includes the administrative and benefits expenses incurred by the ADSEF. It is sent 30 days after the end of the quarter during the fiscal year and a closing report, 120 days after the end of the fiscal year.
- ❑ FNS-388 PR Monthly Participation and Benefits Report that is reported on Food Program Reporting System (FPRS), which will allow the data to be on the National Data Bank (NDB). This Report summarizes the total of cases, persons and benefits issued by ADSEF every single month, including the regular and complementary payments.

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTING ADMINISTRATOR FOR HUMAN RESOURCES

The Office of the Assisting Administrator for Human Resources is responsible for the administrative support of the Program's personnel and human resources. This office handles the headquarters, regional and local offices personnel matters, including personnel requests. It also evaluates staffing needs and provides recommendations on staffing situations.

The office is also in charge of supporting the coordination of trainings to all staff, and to provide information regarding any amendments and new proposals to implement. The Assisting Administrator for Human Resources responds directly to the Administrator.

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Administration

Office of the Assisting Administrator for Administration Services

The Administration Services area provides support for the agency and its programs. It is responsible for ensuring compliance with the administrative rules and procedures for each of the locations. It is also responsible for the planning, organization, management, and control of administrative services, and recommendations to optimize its performance. The office participates in the development and actualization of the administrative procedures' manuals.

The office handles supplies requisitions petitions for goods and services generated by the Department of the Family's headquarters, regional and local levels. It also reproduces agency's forms and distributes materials requested through requisition's orders to all its offices. It is responsible for the distribution of all mail sent to ADSEF's divisions, the Office of the Secretary, regional and local offices as well as other government agencies. Provides and oversees the personnel's official visits transportation to regional and local offices, as well as vehicle fleet maintenance. It is responsible for ADSEF's headquarters' property management and prepares the inventory reports required by the PR Treasury Department.

The Assisting Administrator monitors and maintains ADSEF's food assistance supply from other FNS programs and works in coordination with the PR Emergency Management Services and the Census, in case of natural disasters. Also, oversees ADSEF documents' Warehouse and the entire process for documents and computers disposal. In the same way, is responsible of managing issues related to facilities maintenance in coordination with the building manager.

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Administration

ADMINISTRATION/Office of Information and Technology (OTI- Spanish acronym))

This office provides ADSEF's programs the input data verification which includes benefits calculation, payments issuance, computer matching, participant's master files/database updates, transfers electronically the benefit file to the EBT System, preparation of the operation and detailed cost management, such as the amount of benefits certified by local offices, and the total amount of benefits island-wide. In addition, is responsible for maintaining the technology information and communications infrastructure, developing the programming, and maintaining the Automated Case Management System (SAIC, Spanish acronym). This system needs to be updated gradually, since it was created in the 1980 and contains NAP participants' database.

The ADSEF implemented an alternative recovery data center (DRC) to ensure service continuity at the Department's Headquarters, it consists of several servers with updates of our database and applications that would be activated and available for our users in case of an emergency. This backup system will be available to the users that have access to a live communications line. The servers are located at the "Minillas" facilities, so ADSEF closely monitors this facility's data center and Network. OTI is also responsible for reading, analyzing, processing, and answering requests of information related to NAP participants, including those made within ADSEF, by other state and federal government agencies, and federal courts.

The OTI issues the PARIS list to local offices four (4) times a year (February, May, August, and November) and matches the beneficiaries' information of Puerto Rico with the United States, making it easier to detect improper participation in NAP and TANF Programs.

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Administration

ADMINISTRATION/ OTI(cont.)

The information provided in the list will appear in the case numerical order as follows:

Region-Municipality- Office	It indicates where the case is active in Puerto Rico
SSN MUF/JUF PR	Social Security Number is verified to enter accurate information with the participants' eligibility documents, name, and date of birth of the person.
SSN JUF/ENC	Social Security and Name of Head of Household or Service Manager.
Type of Service	Nutrition Assistance Program or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.
Beginning and Closing Dates	Year-Month-Day.
Social Security	Social Security, name, and date of birth.
State	Name of the State where it is reflected to receiving benefits, case, and contact phone number.
Address	Address in the United States.
Type of Service	Indicates the type of benefit received in the United States (Example: SNAP, TANF, Medicaid).

To review and update the information above, the participant requests an appointment through TURNOS.PR which will be scheduled with their local office staff to review the participants' information. The local office will contact the participant and schedule a virtual or in-person appointment, in case that there is a hit on PARIS to review and update the information above. If the participant does not respond or attend the appointment, the Social and Family Assistance Technician proceeds to close the case and completes form: Action Taken (ADSEF-109) in the NAP.

The seal of the Government of Puerto Rico is centered in the upper half of the page. It features a circular design with a gold border. Inside the border, the words "GOBIERNO DE PUERTO RICO" are written in a serif font. The center of the seal contains the coat of arms of Puerto Rico, which includes a shield with various symbols, a crown on top, and a banner below. Three stars are positioned at the bottom of the seal.

2024 *Proposed Strategies*

FY 2024 State Plan of Operations
Socioeconomic Development Administration(ADSEF)
PR Department of the Family



2024 STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS

Family Markets

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Proposed Strategies- Family Markets

The Family Market were approved by FNS as a permanent project on April 15, 2016. Family Markets are product of a collaborative agreement between the Department of Agriculture and the Administration for Agricultural Business Development (ADEA) with the Department of Family and the ADSEF. The Family Market resides in the Regulation Number 8775, "Regulation for the Organization and Development of Agricultural Family Markets in Puerto Rico", of July 22, 2016. The Regulation 8775 is a regulation of the Administration of Agricultural Business Development (ADEA) of the Department of Agriculture. ADEA responsible of the Family Market operation authorizing eligible products, selecting farmers, and promoting the markets.

ADSEF certifies the eligible farmers for the acceptance of NAP benefit payments and sets aside a portion of the NAP grant administrative costs for the ADEA to cover part of their operational expenses. The ADEA will provide documentation to support their state match of 50% mainly from self-generated revenues. This agreement is included in the new collaborative agreement between the ADSEF and ADEA.



For the fiscal year ended, ADSEF increased the Family Markets from 390 during 2022, to 474 during 2023.

FY 2024 ADSEF goal is to reach 521 family markets island wide. In addition, will continue reimbursing ADEA's 50% portion which is approximately \$350,000. For this, ADSEF will use part of NAP's administrative budget's Operation Costs (FMNP) to cover this expense. To calculate FY 2023 Family Markets total expenses, ADEA used as reference Family Market's FY 2023 expenses.

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Proposed Strategies- Family Markets

Currently, the Family Market is operating at the 10 regions with a total of the Island's 78 Municipalities. ADSEF coordinates with the Department of Agriculture to cover all 78 municipalities every three (3) months.

ADSEF will continue working with municipal governments to coordinate transportation for disabled, elderly, and homeless participants. The Department of Agriculture selects accessible locations for the entire population and communities. As a regular procedure, persons with disabilities may assign an "authorized representative" to make their purchases and carry out transactions on their behalf, as defined in NAP Regulation Number 8684.



Picture taken during the Family Market 2023

Farmers who participate in the Family Market are authorized by the Department of Agriculture, accordingly to the regulations of the ADEA and are certified by ADSEF as required by Regulation Number 8857. The ADEA has been meeting with participating farmers regarding these requirements.

To be certified farmers, they must comply with requirements established in the OIC regulations covering certification.

Participants can purchase fresh agricultural products at the Family Market venues through an "electronic voucher" in the Family Card which equals 4% of the monthly adjustment.

To ensure the proper use of the program benefits, the Family Markets transactions are monitored by ADSEF's Office of Inspection and Control (OIC).

This office focuses on the use of the EBT system, provides program oversight, and conducts on site monitoring visits to markets. The OIC also certifies the Farmers' EBT card transactions to verify compliance.

NAP Participants receive a communication which includes Family Markets information, the additional benefits received and the Family Markets schedule. In addition, Family Market's partners collaborate with program's informative posters, local and national media (written and radio press), banners, speakers, and social networks posts, among others.

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Proposed Strategies- Family Markets

Some of the markets' advantages are to increase contact between farmers and the NAP participants; provide nutritional benefits for participants when they purchase food; acquired locally grown products, access to quality products and food with high nutritional value; ensure marketing opportunities for farmers, maintenance and creation of agricultural jobs, and establish new agriculture business opportunities for the Island's economy.

Participants have up to six (6) months (expunge) to use their Family Market NAP benefits, once deposited in their EBT benefits card, before they expired. If the funds reach the 6 months, they will be retrieved from the participants' benefits and returned to the agency's NAP accounts.



Picture taken at Family Market 2023

FY 2023 Family Market Achievements

1. Increased the participation of NAP participants and the public.
2. Improved coordination with municipalities (calendars, facilities, promotion, and security).
3. Held Simultaneous Family Markets are achieved in the same municipality (Hiram Bithorn Stadium and G8 Community the Triangle, San Juan).

Goals for FY 2024 Family Market

1. From January 2024: Increase the frequency of visits (monthly) in the towns with the largest number of PAN participants and Market attendance Family: Bayamón, San Juan, Arecibo, Mayagüez, Ponce, Aguadilla, Guayama, Humacao, Carolina and Caguas.
2. Increase the number of simultaneous Family Markets in the municipalities.



PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Proposed Strategies- Family Markets

For Family Markets Calendars from October 2023 to September 2024 Please refer to the Excel document attached.





2024 STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS
Nutrition Education Program

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Proposed Projects-Nutrition Education (cont.)

For FY 2024 the Department of Family (ADSEF) will continue providing NAP recipients with a Nutrition Education Program (NEP) for fiscal year (FY) 2024. This statewide NEP promotes nutritional education to NAP participants to prevent obesity in Puerto Rico through interventions, specifically, among low-income adult-aged communities. ADSEF's program principal goal is continued outreach for eligible individuals for NAP benefits; to teach them how to make healthy food choices within a limited budget and choose physically active lifestyles consistent with the "Dietary Guidelines for Americans for 2020-2025" (DGA, 9th edition), "Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Guide for Puerto Rico" and the objectives set in "Action Plan for the Prevention of Obesity in Puerto Rico", reviewed recently. With human and educational material resources, NEP is designed with the goal of promoting good health, the improvement of nutritional status, and therefore, the quality of life of the population.

To support and reinforce nutritional education messages for fiscal year 2023-2024, ADSEF will continue to bring information to NAP participants through the NEP components in community-oriented activities to promote healthy habits. NEP will take this message to the communities by using mass public media, social networks, information booths and through conferences.



NEP educators' goals are related with the following objectives:

- ✓ Make half your plate fruits and vegetables, at least half your grains whole grains and switch to fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products as shown My Plate for Healthy Puerto Rico.
- ✓ Maintain appropriate calorie balance during each stage of life, limiting simple sugars and high sodium products.
- ✓ Help recipients stretch their benefits and prepare low cost easy, nutritious, and tasty meals, and take advantage of seasonal foods.
- ✓ Make the communities aware of proper nutrition can help prevent and manage chronic and acute condition in Puerto Rico though NEP.

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Proposed Projects-Nutrition Education (cont.)

NEP component goals during their activities are related to the following objectives:

1. Help beneficiaries make a list and stretch benefits by taking advantage of planning tasty meals, drawing up a food shopping list, and selecting seasonal food products.
2. Include at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables every day, consume half of your grains from “whole grain sources” and the remainder from enriched grains, and switch to fat free or low-fat dairy products as shown “Dietary Guidelines for Americans for 2020-2025” (DGA) (9th edition).
3. Reduce the time spent in sedentary behavior as part of healthy lifestyle, promoting physical activity in outdoor spaces.
4. Promote limiting simple sugars and high sodium products.
5. Making the communities aware of proper nutrition can help prevent and manage chronic and acute diseases in Puerto Rico.

Target Population Needs Assessment

Since the target population is NAP recipients, the characteristics described in the NAP State Plan of Operation remain the same. Nevertheless, as a nutrition education program, other factors that are explained below are considered.

Dietary Patterns

Despite the increased public awareness of the vital role that food consumption and physical activity have on health, most of Puerto Ricans do not meet with the recommendations of DGA. On the other hand, many Puerto Ricans do not meet the Recommended Daily Allowances (RDA) for key nutrients, yet they exceed their caloric requirements, leading to an increasingly overweight population. NEP educators provide conferences, orientations, and informative sheets to give nutritional health tools and empowerment to participants.



There's a need to educate people on how they can do a menu plan, food selection on markets, know the cooking options that they have with the same food product, select the fresh seasonal food products, and how to consume a diet low in refined sugars, fats, and sodium. The menu selection must change a bit to stretch the money without putting the person and family at nutritional risk. The lack of nutritional education may contribute to the higher incidence of obesity among low-income families. One of Puerto Rico's greatest challenges is the lack of information collected regarding our population's obesity problem and the situation worsens when we consider our culture and information sources requested. Parallel to a healthy and balanced diet, physical activity is an essential component in health and human wellness. Physical activity is defined as any body movement produced by skeletal muscles resulting in energy expenditure. Regular physical activity at any stage and age makes an important contribution to one's health, as it gives a sense of well-being and maintenance of a healthy body weight.

Obesity Trends

In the past century, most people kept a healthy weight. Kids walked to and from school, used bicycles, walked more during the day, meals were home-cooked with reasonable portion sizes, and they always included vegetables and fruits on the plate. Previously, eating out was rare and snacking was an occasional treat

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Proposed Projects-Nutrition Education (cont.)

Unfortunately, portion sizes are now two to five times larger than they were in past years. Beverage portion sizes have grown as well. In the mid 70's the average size of a sugar-sweetened beverage was 13.6 ounces, compared to today with an average of 20 ounces. Good practices are no longer in place, and today continues being a challenge regarding current habits that allows us to plan and develop new and different strategies.

Health Consequences

People who are overweight or obese, compared to those who are a healthy weight, are at an increased risk for many serious diseases and health conditions, such as:

1. High blood pressure (hypertension).
2. Dyslipidemia (High LDL cholesterol, low HDL cholesterol, or high levels of triglycerides).
3. Type 2 diabetes.
4. Coronary Heart Disease.
5. Stroke.
6. Gallbladder disease.
7. Osteoarthritis (a breakdown of cartilage and bone within a joint).
8. Sleep apnea and breathing problems.
9. Many types of cancer.
10. Low quality of life.
11. Mental illness such as clinical depression, anxiety, and other mental disorders.
12. Body pain and difficulty with physical functioning.

To be overweight or obese could mean a predisposition to develop diseases. Therefore, it is important to educate the importance of adopting daily nutritional habits and physical activities, that are not necessarily restricted to specific skills of sports.

Nutrition Education

Nutrition education is the process of teaching or communicating the science of nutrition to an individual or group. Health professionals have a different role in educating an individual in the clinic, community, or long-term healthcare facility



In addition, nutrition education can be defined as any set of learning experiences designed to facilitate the voluntary adoption of eating and other nutrition-related behaviors conducive to health and well-being. The relationship among diet, health, and disease prevention has become clearer, nutrition education and the promotion of healthy eating behaviors and lifestyles continues to receive increased attention. Nutrition education providers must conduct nutrition education activities, consistent with the goals and content described below, at a minimum of two times per calendar year at each site. Providers are encouraged to use existing nutrition education resources from the "Dietary Guidelines for Americans for 2020-2025" (DGA, 9th edition), "Guía de Sana Alimentación y Actividad Física para-Puerto Rico: Guía Alimentaria" and My Plate. Nutrition education is delivered through different settings and involves activities geared at the individual, community, and public policy levels.

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Proposed Projects-Nutrition Education (cont.)

Methodology

The NEP will use different methods of creation and dissemination, one to one, interactive groups, informative capsules, and use of food customs are among approaches used to deliver nutrition education to NAP recipients. All the interventions will be previously coordinated between ADSEF administration and NAP to prevent any inconvenience.

Nutritionist will work most of the time creating and/or developing methods and materials for NEP. On the other hand, they will visit different municipalities through PR to learn and observe nutritional behaviors during family markets and food boxes distributions of TEFAP.

Additionally, consider starting weight control clinics at the agency's local offices and older adults daily care centers. Home economists used to travel island wide to provide nutrition lectures and presentations in different work sites such as local offices, senior care centers, schools, supermarkets, family markets, etc. A nutrition education wellness campaign helps recipients integrate better habits and physical activities. This site visits will reiterate a message easily understood by all ages, taking into consideration the poor writing, and reading skills of some participants. Orientations will focus on reinforcing the good use of benefits to achieve adequate eating habits and the managing of economic resources.

In addition, resources evaluations and questionnaires will be given to the participants to focus strategies and evaluate knowledge.

NEP home economist and nutritionist encourage their efforts on the following behaviors associated with the reduction of the risk of obesity tendencies and chronic diseases:

- Related to 4 food groups: Eat 5 fruits and vegetables; whole grains; and fat-free or low-fat milk products every day using DGA's.
- Be physically active every day as part of a healthy lifestyle based on "Guía de Sana Alimentación y Actividad Física para PR" from Commission of Food and Nutrition of PR (Department of Health).
- Decrease sugar consumption from early stages and control food portions served at any stage of life.
- Educate NAP recipients to use their benefits in nutrient dense foods acquisitions and to take advantage of seasonal foods.
- Make people and communities aware that proper nutrition can help prevent and manage chronic diseases in PR.

The NEP has one nutritionist and one home economist to plan and travel island wide to provide presentations and nutritional information.

Strategies for FY 2023-2024

After the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions and the future behavior of the virus in PR, NEP interventions can be group based and individually. Education services can be a direct intervention and use health promotions strategies through in-person interventions. Research demonstrates that programs targeted to offer nutrition education must be lively, entertaining, enjoyable, and simple, to better capture the attention of all age groups. Nutrition education focuses on teaching the person and/or family the empowerment of good eating habits, specifically good eating habits for adults and the adequate development of good eating habits in children. The message needs constant reiteration and must exploit all means of public broadcasting.

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Proposed Projects-Nutrition Education (cont.)

The goal of nutrition education is to improve the nutritional status of individuals through positive behavior change, and to prevent nutritional deficiencies and development of chronic diseases, and therefore, improve the quality of life. The NEP provides NAP recipients education and promotion strategies that help maximize food resources and make healthy food choices to support and promote good health within a limited budget.

Nutrition education consists of activities which provide visual and verbal information and directions to NAP participants and/or caregivers in a group or individual setting. The presentations or activities may be led by home economists and in occasions by the nutritionist, or someone else overseen by an RD or an individual with comparable expertise (ICE; see definition under Section VIIB Staffing). The minimum length of a one-to-one nutrition education presentation is five minutes. Examples of nutrition education one to one activities include questions/answer and information booths. Planning and evaluating menus, recipes guides, and the use of food models as a healthy meal promotion are another example.

The NEP aims to facilitate the voluntary adoption of good eating and other nutrition related behaviors conducive to good health. Through DGA, 9th edition and the "Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Guide for-Puerto Rico: Dietary Guide" created by the Department of Health / Food and Nutrition Commission of Puerto Rico.

For fiscal year 2023-2024 our work plan includes the following:

- ADSEF will continue the disposition to training of the NEP components through continued education to maintain actualized knowledge in nutrition themes.
- Site visits to several certified supermarkets to provide food purchases alternatives, promote weekly menu plans and making and taking a grocery shopping list.
- Site visits to the Family Markets to reach NAP participants and provide nutritional information about nutritional benefits of local food products purchases.
- Provide alternative print recipes and nutritional information to the TEFAP participants of food distribution box.
- Continue the annual support to the Child Care Home Food Program in ADSEF with the menu and education of care providers.
- The use of food customs to communicate nutritional information and captivate the audience, specifically children, during field activities.
- The use of technology to promote nutritional information in PR through social networks to reach NAP participants. A goal this year includes a QR Code for nutritional and physical activity information that participants can scan during site visits or as the agency determines and a nutrition video for projection all throughout tv's in government offices.
- Continue preparing important nutritional information brochures about specific themes for the program.
- Administrate a questionnaire to know food practices of NAP participants and special communities.
- Establishment of collaborative efforts between ADSEF, Recreation and Sport Department, and Department of Agriculture of PR to promote good nutritional and physical activities through the communities.

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Proposed Projects-Nutrition Education (cont.)

Calendar for FY 2024	
October 2023	NEP Annual Impact Report and Questionnaire administrated report; Different sites and PR municipalities visits to continue nutritional educations
November 2023	Site visits to family markets, supermarkets; local offices for weight control clinics; information prints in distribution boxes and questionnaire administration of: Planning and food selection practices on the food distribution sites
December 2023	Review the needs of educational materials
January 2024	Site visits to continue nutritional education
February 2024	Child Care Home Food Program (ADSEF) menu review; Site visits to continue nutritional educations
March 2024	Nutrition Month; Nutritional trainings for NEP staff
April 2024	Site visits to family markets, supermarkets; local offices for weight control clinics; information prints in distribution boxes and questionnaire administration of: Planning and food selection practices on the food distribution sites
May 2024	Site visits to family markets, supermarkets; local offices for weight control clinics; information prints in distribution boxes and questionnaire administration of: Planning and food selection practices on the food distribution sites
June 2024	Nutritional training for program staff and a presentation for employees to promote health in ADSEF
July 2024	Child Care Home Food Program (ADSEF) Teams presentation and Nutritional trainings for NEP staff
August 2024	Site visits to continue nutritional educations
September 2024	Site visits to continue nutritional educations

Media Campaign

Efforts for an educational campaign will include mixed strategies, using paid and non-paid media, through radio, television, billboards, and a different social media, focusing on educating families on how to best use their benefits, nutritional choices and staying physically active. The year 2022 brought on the creation of new nutritional characters called Paneco y los Nutripanas, with costumes of bread, a tomato, a carrot, and a banana to take nutrition promotion to different places. On the other hand, participants with technological tools can use them to manage their benefits and information, while also reinforcing nutritional messages through mixed media alternatives efforts will promote their general wellbeing.

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Proposed Projects-Nutrition Education (cont.)

Educational information also includes other key elements such as: promotional items, posters, standing banners, brochures, and coloring books, to increase the reach and impact of the messages. Educational items can include information of the different food groups, placemats, table cutters, measuring cups and shopping bags with the ADSEF Nutrition Education Program logo. This tool will be used and extended to local offices, schools, supermarkets, Family Markets, special presentations that impact low moderate-income communities and other official events. All developed items will have a direct connection to nutrition education and general wellbeing.

Web Sites

The ADSEF portal will have a section solely dedicated to nutrition education accessible to NAP participants and non-participants. This section will include educational videos, recipes, nutritional information, in pdf, promoting healthy choices and active lifestyles for a better wellbeing. The information shared in the portal will have updated nutritional information for all family members with a link to other relevant sites. This link will also be available through a mobile application, that will be developed for those that do not have access to a computer but have a mobile phone.

Nutrition Capsules

Educational capsules are an online tutoring platform with qualified tutors, that uses professionals in the nutrition field, chefs, and trainers to reinforce positive messages and lifestyles. The capsule is targeted to all the population and uses social media. The educational campaign will also use a multimedia approach with paid media strategies in radio, television and digital media intended to promote the proper use of NAP benefits and promote healthy choices. Themes used are from USDA and CANPR.

Recipes cards, calendar, and food purchasing planning notebook

The nutrition educational efforts use print handbook recipes and card recipes with a variety of healthy Puerto Rican plates to be shared through events of social impact and social media to be distributed among the NAP recipients. In addition, a calendar promoting Family Markets, seasonal products, harvest, and public nutritional habits will be recommended to give healthy alternatives and motivation.

Educational Structure and Activities

In FY 2023 the NEP resources will continue giving orientations to the NAP recipients, taking advantage of digital media.

Nutritionists and home economics will use methods like oral presentations with PowerPoint, posters, food planning notebooks, recipes of easy and nutritional plates, food model presentations, child coloring books etc. All these ideas are to invite family members to eat healthier foods and be physically active every day.

The materials will be used as a guide for the NEP educators to train NAP recipients, this includes take home handouts designed to help recipients commit to healthy eating habits and physical activities. It will be distributed during food distributions to low-income communities, certified supermarkets, and retailers, schools and summer camps, daycare centers for elderly people and institutions that have NAP recipients described below. Hand-printed materials use nutrition-based information from the USDA and CANPR.

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Proposed Projects-Nutrition Education (cont.)

- ❑ Food distributions (The Emergency Food Assistance Program): The NEP educators will participate in creations of recipes and planning the menu of the box for TEFAP, to provide educational material and the contact reference in case of additional information needed.
- ❑ Low-income communities: The NEP educators will visit communities during social support fairs, coordinated with The Department of Family and other state agencies and non-profit organizations.
- ❑ Certified supermarkets and Retailers: The NEP educators will visit the certified supermarkets and retailers to guide the NAP recipients to the correct use of the EBT card, to purchase healthy foods and use the nutrition facts as a tool to make an informed decision on better food choices.
- ❑ TANF Program (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families): The NEP educators will distribute educational and promotional materials to the participants. The NEP educators have the responsibility to promote educational lectures to reach the participants, provide a Q&A, and the improvement of nutritional strategies.
- ❑ Schools: Each semester and summer NEP will develop nutritional presentations so the information regarding nutritious and healthy eating habits gets to the scholar NAP community.
- ❑ Day care centers for elderly population: The NEP educators will visit these centers. Visits will be coordinated as needed.
- ❑ Family Markets: As farmers and seasonal products are available, the NEP educators will visit the markets island wide to distribute educational materials, promotions and short orientations to the people present that receive NAP benefits for the purchase of fresh products directly from Puerto Rican farmers.
- ❑ Other Agencies: The NEP will work with other State and Local Agencies as the Department of Family and ADSEF determines it.

NEP Program Structure

Nutritionist and Home Economist

Responsible for the supervision of the education program that currently consists of one nutritionist that responds directly to the NAP Director and, currently, one Home Economist. Both the nutritionist and the home economist receive general instructions from the supervisor who, in turn, receives common directions of the Auxiliar Administrator and Agency Administrator.

The nutritionist shall exercise the duties with initiative and independence in accordance with rules, regulations, techniques, and procedures already established. Their work will be evaluated by verifying the results accomplished in the program.

In this process, they will review resources and materials presented to direct the efforts to the more vulnerable people like elderly and adults with children.

ADSEF will be hiring the professional services of 3 household economists to cover the 10 PR regions and impact more NAP participants considering the prevalence of overweight and obesity.

Assessment of Effectiveness of Nutrition Education

ADSEF acknowledges the importance of establishing evaluation procedures for accountability, planning, and learning how to improve nutrition education for low-income families. Due to the lack of the NEP components and COVID, the FY 2023 activities, like outfield visits, have been limited.

The efforts listed in this document and subsequent projects described within PR NAP-NEP State Plan are designed to achieve both the desired behavioral outcomes and physical and social environment outcomes of the statewide NAP-NEP goals and objectives:

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Proposed Projects-Nutrition Education (cont.)

Evaluation

Community change is a multilevel strategy approach effective in advancing the statewide goals of PR's NEP. NEP evaluation activities address state-level goals and objectives and satisfy the reporting requirements of USDA-FNS. In FY 2023, PR's NEP evaluation will be streamlined to provide meaningful and impactful data information and guide future decision-making and NAP-NEP service delivery.

Regular employees and professional services

The nutritionist dedicates 60% of their time to in-office and administrative work, and 40% to outfield visits with public-private alliance services. In terms of hours per week, two days out in the field and three days in-office. The home economist dedicates 75% of their time to direct delivery of the services and 25% of their time to in-office work. In terms of hours per week this is approximately two days of office work and three days of direct service in the outfield.

Travel:

To meet the goals and objectives of the NEP, the attendance of the Nutritionist and Home economist or Consumer of Nutrition and Food Sciences professional is very important, and they must travel island-wide to provide orientations at the ADSEF local offices, supermarkets, food distributions, schools, senior citizen centers, health fairs, and community activities where NAP recipients gather and other places where our services are requested.

1. Justification for travel: The NEP representatives can use their own vehicles to meet the goals and objectives of the program, subject to previous authorization by a supervisor. ADSEF covers the expenses related to per diem and car allowance when applicable.
2. Travel destination: The NEP representatives travel to different municipalities of Puerto Rico to visit and impact communities.
 - a. Number of staff travelling: one (1) Representative (Nutritionist and Home economist or Consumer of Nutrition and Food Sciences professional)
 - b. Cost of travel for this purpose: We have budgeted approximately \$333.00 for each staff member, each month at \$20,000.00 for FY 2022.



2024 STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS

Call Center

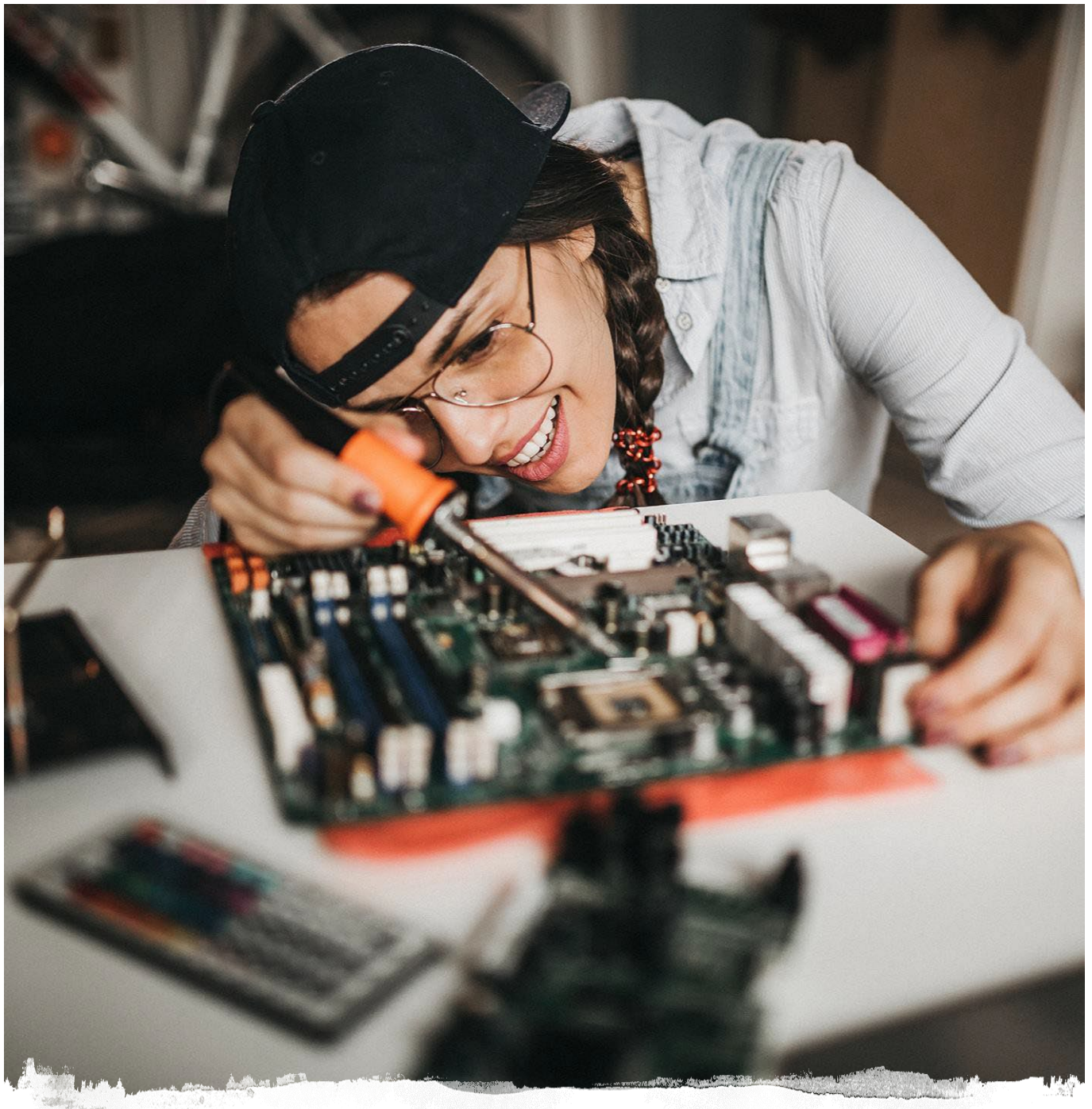
PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Proposed Projects-Call Center

CALLCENTER

STATUS: Currently the process was challenged by one of the bidders. Therefore, the PR General Services Administration (in Spanish-ASG) is in the process of receiving recommendations to launch again the RFP.

The call center's staff will be prepared to provide orientation on eligibility requirements, respond to program inquiries, general guidance on certification services, seek assistance with the ADSEF Digital system; request assistance if the caller does not have access to a computer or other technology to fill out an application for food assistance, and attend complaints regarding possible violations to Regulation 8684 (NAP Regulation) and 8857 (NAP Retailers Regulation). In addition, the call center could be used to report client and retailer fraud. Once the call center's representative receives the complaint, they will refer it to the Director of the Programmatic Integrity Division (Spanish acronym, DIP). In terms of the eligibility process, the operators will have access to ADSEF Digital to determine eligibility through the Family and Individual Benefit System (SIBIF, Spanish Acronym). After the pre-determination of eligibility, an appointment will be scheduled through TURNOS.PR not later than ten (10) working days for completing the application process. The call center's operational hours will be from 8:00 am to 5:00 PM, Monday to Friday. All calls to the center will be free of charge.



2024 STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS

Work Requirement E & T

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

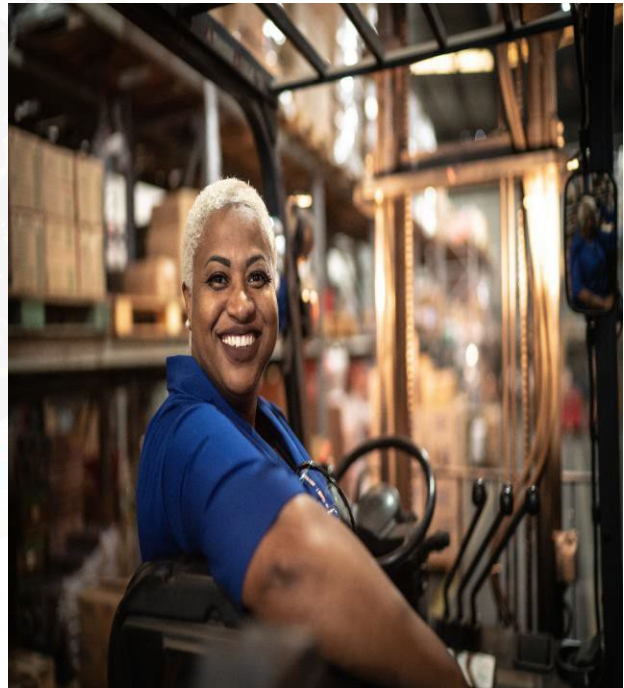
Proposed Projects - Work Requirement

ADSEF has been working towards the implementation of a Work Requirement and E & T program for NAP participants ABAWDS. Currently, the Department of the Family has established an agreement with the PR Economic Development and Commerce Department (DDEC) to provide employment, education and training services.

A plan was submitted to FNS and was approved. (See attachments).

In addition, staff has been meeting with FNS Technical Assistance for trainings, on a monthly basis.

The agency has established a multiagency working group which is responsible of the development and implementation of the program.





2024 STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS

ADSEF *Digital*

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Proposed Projects - ADSEF Digital

ADSEF will continue the implementation and trainings for this application. This is an improved and updated version of SIBIF.

The system is overgoing some modifications to improve its performance (refer to presentation Included in the attachments) some of those changes are:

1. Include question in demographic to comply with Law 61 of 2019, confined close to completing their sentence.
2. Improvement in the prequalification process.
3. Maintenance to allow 311 personnel to view the status of Review/Change and LIHEAP requests.
4. Include Birth Certificate document in the required documents when there is a minor in the family composition.
5. Improvements administrative portal to create users.
6. Development of administrator portal in Security Roles and Questions.
7. Include question if you are a victim of gender violence and modify that does not validate address to maintain privacy.
8. Development of new field to indicate the closest office when indicating if you are a victim of gender violence.
9. Create question to comply with DDEC:

 Ethnicity Question

 Are you registered for Compulsory Military Service? Yes / No

 Are you a Veteran? Yes / No
10. Improvements in NAP Benefit Certification



Picture taking at an ADSEF Digital orientation in Toa Baja, PR on July 26, 2023



Picture taken in Hatillo Puerto Rico during orientation.



2024 STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS

Restaurant Meals Program

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Proposed Projects - Restaurant Meals Program

For this 2024 ADSEF proposes to implement a pilot project of Restaurant Meals Program for NAP participants with special needs.

The Puerto Rico Restaurant Meals Program (PR-RMP) is an alternative for NAP specific populations who may be unable to prepare meals for themselves or who do not have a permanent dwelling where they can prepare their own meals.

Puerto Rico has a total of 486,079 NAP registered participants from different population groups that might be eligible to participate in the PR-RMP.

From this total 394,254 participants are elder, 88,294 are disabled and 3,531 are homeless. The municipalities with largest concentration of elder NAP participants is Bayamon with 57,862, followed by Ponce with 55,989. Regarding the participants with some type of disability the municipality of Arecibo has the highest concentration with 14,471 participants followed by Bayamon with 13,317. The last group of participants that conform the populations with special needs is the homeless. The municipality with the greater concentration is San Juan with 1,572 participants followed by Caguas with a total of 350 homeless NAP participants.

During the last five (5) years Puerto Ricans have encountered situations that have impacted their economic and social stability. Natural disasters, a COVID-19 pandemic, and its aftereffects; a government bankruptcy, which has caused economic and social distress among the most vulnerable populations. Food insecurity, unemployment, homelessness, increase in domestic and gender violence, and child, elder, and disabled abuse are important indicators of a distressed society.

Region	Elderly	Disabled	Homeless
AGUADILLA	32,783	7,568	45
ARECIBO	51,446	14,471	273
BAYAMON	57,862	13,317	281
CAGUAS	38,409	8,656	350
CAROLINA	34,318	5,819	229
GUAYAMA	21,165	6,592	87
HUMACAO	31,577	9,316	239
MAYAGÜEZ	34,735	5,657	184
PONCE	55,989	11,539	271
SAN JUAN	35,970	5,359	1,572
Grand Total	394,254	88,294	3,531

NAP Participant's Eligibility

To be eligible for the PR-RMP NAP participants will have to be residents of the municipalities of Bayamon, Arecibo or San Juan, and belong to one of the populations with special needs selected.

Restaurants' Eligibility and Selection Process

ADSEF will Consult with the ASORES (one of the restaurants' association) and others, association for assistance in identifying specific retailers who would best serve the target population in the areas selected.

The following criteria will be provided to the ASORES to help them identify possible restaurants' participation in the program. These may include, but is not limited to:

1. Available healthy menu options.
2. Certain number of restaurants within a given radius of target populations.
3. Proposed concessional pricing.
4. Restaurant characteristics, such as available seating, take-out, drive-thru, priority seating, access to public transportation, among others.

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Proposed Projects - Restaurant Meals Program

Restaurants' Responsibilities

Restaurants interested in participate in the PR-RMP will have to sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with ADSEF accepting their responsibilities and requirements of the program.

The following list details those responsibilities with the RMP program:

- ❑ Not be operating as, or co-located, with a bar, tavern, casino, lottery, hemp or CBD retailer, even if allowed under PR State law.
- ❑ Not charge sales tax to recipients purchasing meals.
- ❑ Have 50% or more gross sales in foods cooked, prepared, or heated on-site by the restaurant before or after purchase and not sell a majority of accessory food items.
- ❑ Offer meals at concessional pricing to eligible NAP clients.
- ❑ Sign an MOU with the PR ADSEF/DFAM.
- ❑ Obtain an application (ADSEF will be using a revised version of FNS 252-2) from the NAP Retailer's Office within ADSEF and provide any information needed for authorization, including:
 - Copy of the MOU signed with ADSEF. (No applications will be accepted without the signed MOU.)
 - Copy of a valid business license.
 - Copy of the SSN card and photo identification for all owners/partners, or all officers of a private corporation.
 - Business records that show the restaurant has more than 50 percent total gross retail sales in hot and/or cold prepared foods.
- ❑ Obtain point-of-sale equipment and services to accept EBT cards.
- ❑ Meet ADSEF training requirements. (ADSEF will adapt FNS Retailers training materials to the NAP)



Retailers and NAP Participants' Trainings

ADSEF will develop a training component for participating restaurants and NAP clients, including:

- ❑ Visible signs to display in restaurants to inform clients of participating restaurants.
- ❑ Training materials for restaurant employees to understand the policy on concessional pricing, menu options, process for accepting EBT cards, and where to direct clients if they have RMP eligibility questions or their EBT card doesn't work.
- ❑ Notifying eligible NAP clients that the program exists and how and where they can find updates and information about participating restaurants.



2024 STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS

NAP - Mobile & Emergency Services

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Proposed Projects– NAP Mobile Services

The PR Department of Health passed the title of a mobile unit which has approximately 4 years of usage, so the agency will not have to acquire one. This process cuts off the waiting time of a new unit, which was estimated for two (2) years. Notwithstanding, the agency must refurbish the unit to accommodate it to the project needs.

Therefore, for this FY 2024 State Plan of Operations, ADSEF will adapt the unit's interior to include 4 stations to attend NAP participants, install internet satellite service, acquire the materials and any other Arrangements needed to prepare the unit. In addition, ADSEF is already working on the unit's exterior wrapping in order to include the agency's logo and program's name.

The mobile office will provide the following services:

1. NAP applications
2. EBT NAP card on site
3. Verify NAP benefits status
4. Verify balances
5. Household's composition changes.
6. Establish appointments
7. Coordinate other program services

In addition to the declared emergencies, ADSEF will use the Mobile Office Unit to reach out to participants living in hard to serve low- income communities, rural areas, or isolated communities with high concentration of special NAP populations (elderly, disabled, homeless) that because of their condition is too difficult to assist to a local office or access ADSEF Digital, due to their condition or location.



Picture was taken nu ADSEF staff in January 2018, during NAP relief services to participants at different locations of the island.

Project Outreach

Once the Mobile Unit Office is ready, ADSEF will prepare and disseminate an outreach campaign in collaboration with municipalities, to announce the services that will e available.

ADSEF will use public media, free media and other resources to inform about calendars, services, and locations where the unit will be assisting participants.

Monitoring Reviews

ADSEF will assign monitoring reviews of the use of the mobile office unit to ensure that all activities strictly comply with NAP's regulations as well as federal and state regulations.



2024 STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS

NAP *Purchases Online*

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Proposed Projects - Purchases Online

ADSEF will take over the implementation of the next stage of the Purchases Online project. Currently NAP participants can select their groceries in selected food retailers through their online sites. However, this transaction could only be completed at the retailers' location. Even though NAP participants can select and separate their groceries online, the system does not provide for completing and paying the transaction, meaning that the participants must go physically to the retailer's store to pay and pick-up their food.

During the period of this state plan ADSEF intends to complete a pilot project with two (2) food retailers in Puerto Rico, Walmart Super- centers and ECONO Supermarkets. Both retailers will be meeting with EVERTEC (EBT provider), and ADSEF for program details. ADEF will coordinate a meeting with FNS and EVERTEC to ensure that all the details, and program requirements are met, before officially starting the project.

PR intends to continue developing this next stage as a pilot project for a period of six (6) months to ensure that it has acceptance among NAP participants, and that benefits our participants.



Purchases Online Details

Food retailers participating in this pilot program will have to ensure that NAP EBT cards are not used to pay for delivery services and any other charges that are not related to the direct cost of food. If a participant requests the delivery of the goods, the cost of this services will have to be paid using another payment method, different from their NAP EBT card.

ADSEF will monitor the retailers and participants use of the NAP EBT card to ensure that they fall into the program's regulations.



2024 STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS

Documents Digitalization

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Proposed Projects - Digitalization

ADESF has programmed to start the digitalization of all NAP documents and files during this fiscal year. The selection of a company to start this process is being worked by the PR General Services Administration.

To better assist the program participants through the ADSEF Digital system, caseworkers must have their participants files digitalize. This will give them prompt access to each case file and will accelerate the process and reduce the participants' time waiting.

ADSEF has requested state funds to start the process, that has been estimated in approximately \$12 million dollars the complete process that include equipment, and software.

Depending the source and flow of funding available for executing this project, it could be separated in two (2) phases, starting with the participant's active files.

During this process, ADSEF will consult different agencies within PR state government, including the DMV to gather information on the systems used. This could lower the costs. In addition, the San Diego HHS office, has offered advise and information related to their Imaging Center.



ADSEF will analyze all the available options to choose the one is best for the agency and the program's objectives.

The agency aims to establish in the future a Virtual Imaging Center to process and digitalize all NAP documents and files. However, because of the lack of additional funding and resources, will start with those documents needed to attend NAP participants on a quick and efficient way.



2024 STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS

Outreach & Communications

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2023

Proposed Projects – Outreach & Communications

A comprehensive media plan will be designed for dissemination of the NEP in mass media throughout the Island using diverse outlets based on its efficiencies. This plan will include strategies and tactics to impact all population segments. It will use both paid and non-paid media strategies. The main objectives are educating families on the proper use of NAP benefits, preventing fraud, best nutritional choices and staying physically active.

Outreach efforts include all public relation strategies in owned media, earned media and paid media. Using the programs and other data to create compelling content that can impact our target audiences, through local media and digital media to enhance the educational efforts. Creating awareness based on our audiences' values and needs will help to tell stories that connect with their ideals and relate to their unique situations.

The plan includes finding partners in media and in social media to effectively communicate essential information that can help our audiences to make informed decisions regarding their nutritional choices. Our PR strategy will be inclusive, but also targets segmented populations.

Major local media outlets will be used to achieve the most exposure, supplementing our media involvement with regional efforts and local digital media sources that our target audiences follow and trust both in earned and paid media efforts.

Paid efforts will reinforce nutrition and healthy lifestyle information and main messages. These can include digital-programmatic advertising, billboards, traditional news outlets such as tv, newspapers, and their digital properties, radio, tv and radio integrations, among others. Some of the efforts may include, but are not limited to

- ☐ Video Capsules
- ☐ Development, production, and dissemination of nutritional capsules through official social media of the Department of Families and WIPR (Government of Puerto Rico TV station).
- ☐ Paid tv and radio integrations
- ☐ Paid Media in tv and newspapers and their digital properties (articles about healthy lifestyles, etc.)
- ☐ Billboards
- ☐ Magazines
- ☐ Paid social media content.
- ☐ NUTRITIONAL WEBSITE
- ☐ Promotional Items Will Include Different Useful Items Such As Cups, Recipe Cards, Recipe Book, Food Purchasing Planning Notebook, Coloring Books, Etc. Will Be Distributed In Services Fairs, Local Offices, Schools, Supermarkets, Elderly Homes, Special Presentations, Adsef's Family Markets, And Other Events To Be Determined That Can Impact Low Moderate-income Communities. All Developed Items Will Have A Direct Connection To Nutrition Education And General Wellbeing, With ADSEF Logo, NAP Branding And Look And Feel.
- ☐ CALENDAR

May include promotion of the family markets, seasonal products, harvest, and public nutritional habits to encourage healthy alternatives and motivation.

To maximize these efforts, resources such as licensed nutritionists, chefs, personal trainers, and public figures will be integrated to better disseminate the key messages. The public figures will be selected to appeal to different segments of the populations, for example, infants and young children, adolescents and young adults, and older adults. They can be renown local celebrities like athletes, television presenters or actors with a recognition factor for each of these population segments.



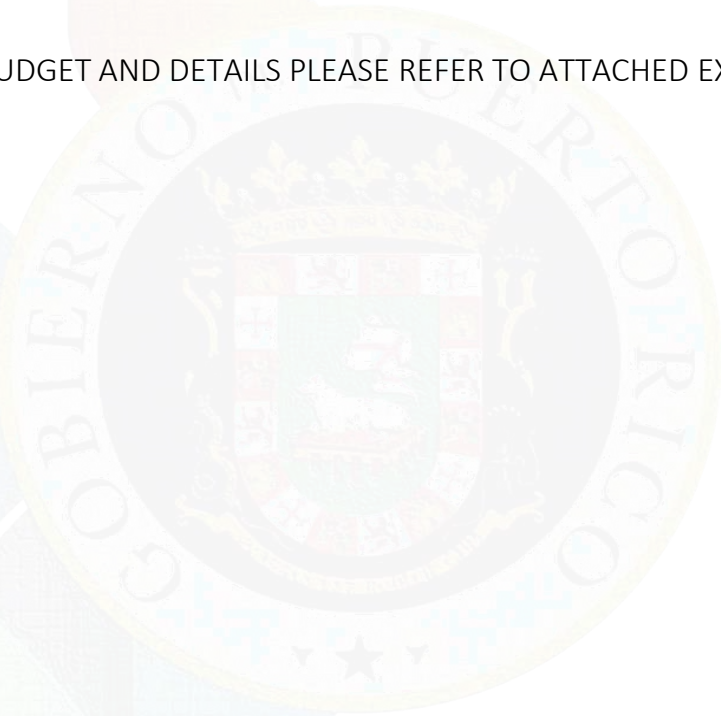
2024 STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS

Budget

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2024

Budget

FOR BUDGET AND DETAILS PLEASE REFER TO ATTACHED EXCEL DOCUMENT.





Federal & State Agreement

2024 NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS
Socioeconomic Development Administration(ADSEF)
PR Department of the Family

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2023

Federal and State Agreement

I. FEDERAL-STATE AGREEMENT

Federal-State Agreement

The NAP Puerto Rico Department of the Family (DF)/Socioeconomic Development of the Family's Administration (ADSEF) and the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), hereby agree to act in accordance with the provisions of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, as amended, implementing regulations and the FNS approved State Plan of Operation. The DF/ADSEF and FNS USDA further agree to fully comply with any changes in Federal law and regulations. This agreement may be modified with the mutual written consent of both parties.

PROVISIONS

Puerto Rico agrees to:

1. Administer the program in accordance with the provisions contained in the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, as amended, and in the manner prescribed by regulations issued pursuant to the Act; and to implement the FNS-approved State Plan of Operation.
2. Assurance of Civil Rights Compliance: Comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d et seq.), Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. 1681 et seq.), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794), the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (42 U.S.C. 6101 et seq.), section 11(c) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, as amended (7 U.S.C. 2020), Title II and Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 as amended by the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (42 U.S.C. 12131-12189) as implemented by Department of Justice regulations at 28 CFR part 35 and 36, Executive Order 13166, "Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency" (August 11, 2000), and all requirements imposed by the regulations issued by the Department of Agriculture to the effect that, no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of sex, including gender identity and sexual orientation, race, color, age, political belief, religious creed, disability, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subject to discrimination under SNAP. This includes program-specific requirements found at 7 CFR part 15 et seq. and 7 CFR 272.6.

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2023

Federal and State Agreement

3. This assurance is given in consideration of and for the purpose of obtaining any and all Federal assistance extended to the State by USDA under the authority of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, as amended. Federal financial assistance includes grants, and loans of Federal funds; reimbursable expenditures, grants, or donations of Federal property and interest in property; the detail of Federal personnel; the sale, lease of, or permission to use Federal property or interest in such property; the furnishing of services without consideration, or at a nominal consideration, or at a consideration that is reduced for the purpose of assisting the recipient or in recognition of the public interest to be served by such sale, lease, or furnishing of services to the recipient; or any improvements made with Federal financial assistance extended to the State by USDA. This assistance also includes any Federal agreement, arrangement, or other contract that has as one of its purposes the provision of cash assistance for the purchase of food, cash assistance for purchase or rental of food service equipment or any other financial assistance extended in reliance on the representations and agreements made in this assurance.

By accepting this assurance, the DF/ADSEF agrees to compile data, maintain records, and submit records and reports as required, to permit effective enforcement of nondiscrimination laws and permit authorized USDA personnel during hours of program operation to review and copy such records, books, and accounts, access such facilities, and interview such personnel as needed to ascertain compliance with the nondiscrimination laws. If there are any violations of this assurance, USDA, FNS, shall have the right to seek judicial enforcement of this assurance. This assurance is binding on the State agency, its successors, transferees, and assignees as long as it receives assistance or retains possession of any assistance from USDA. The person or persons whose signatures appear below are authorized to sign this assurance on behalf of the State agency.

PR NAP STATE PLAN OF OPERATIONS FY 2023

Federal and State Agreement

FNS agrees to:

1. Pay administrative costs in accordance with the Food Stamp Act, implementing regulations, and an approved Cost Allocation Plan.
2. Carry-out any other responsibilities delegated by the Secretary in the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, as amended.

Date:

Date:

Cieni Rodriguez Troche, Acting Secretary
Department of the Family (DF)

Alberto Fradera Vázquez,
ADSEF

Date :

Signature

(Regional Administrator, FNS)