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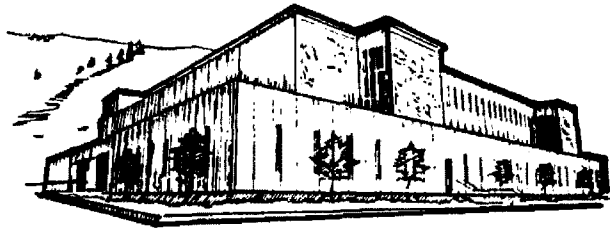
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University of
Montana

A REPORT ON THE TEMPORARY EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE
PROGRAM IN THE STATE OF MONTANA

By

Linda Irene Stallings

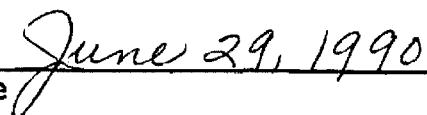
B. S., Saint Mary College, 1981

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Public Administration
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1990

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) established by Executive Order in 1981 makes surplus agricultural commodities available to states for distribution to low income individuals. The principal purpose of TEFAP was to reduce the excessive surplus of commodities in storage; feeding the hungry was only a secondary goal of the program. Over the past eight years TEFAP has succeeded in achieving its principal goal of reducing the amount of food in storage. There is no longer a surplus of commodities, especially dairy products. The amount of food available has declined drastically, with cheese having been eliminated from the program altogether. TEFAP is currently authorized through 1990, but there is no indication that the USDA plans to continue it.

It is reasonable to assume that those individuals who have and continue to benefit from this program will be seriously affected if TEFAP is terminated. These individuals have come to rely upon this program to

supplement their nutritional needs. It is highly likely that they have little or no money to buy additional groceries and need the commodities to alleviate hunger. Many of these people are probably among the working poor who, because they are above the poverty level, are not eligible for food stamps or other forms of assistance.

Periods of recession and depressed economies have increased the number of unemployed or underemployed workers. Many people barely make enough money to survive and yet because they are employed they may make too much money to receive any of the welfare benefits which are available to those who are at or below the poverty level. These individuals may have been working for some time and may own their own car or maybe even their own home. Because many welfare programs have resource limits on the amount of assets individuals may possess, many of these people may be ineligible for benefits because of their home or vehicle.

Proponents argue that TEFAP commodities "fill the gap" for households that do not receive enough food stamps to purchase an adequate supply of food to last throughout the month. For example, Mary Jo Henny, TEFAP state coordinator in Arizona argues that "the TEFAP program is 'taking up the slack' left by the food stamp program and should be made part of a permanent food bank program."¹ Survey data also indicates that a considerable number of

people may use TEFAP as an alternative, rather than as a supplement to food stamps.²

Also, it is reasonable to assume that TEFAP commodities are received by individuals who do not qualify for other welfare benefits such as AFDC, Food Stamps, or WIC. They may be low income or needy families due to underemployment, unemployment, or some other misfortune who have received TEFAP commodities for the past eight years and have come to rely upon them. If this program is terminated such individuals who currently benefit from it will be facing additional hardships of hunger.

Despite the reasonableness of such assumptions, very little is known about TEFAP recipients and the harm they may experience if the TEFAP program is eliminated. The purpose of this paper is to profile those individuals who receive TEFAP commodities in the State of Montana and to assess the possible consequences for them of program elimination. The study was initiated at the request of James Nolan, Bureau Chief, Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services, State of Montana. His principle concern was to test the hypothesis that TEFAP recipients are not benefited by other social and welfare programs and are dependent on TEFAP to have enough food to eat each month.

The information contained in this report will be used during Congressional Hearings to justify continuing the

program. The data will also be given to Congressional Representatives, concerned Legislators, the Governor, other departments in State government, and special interest groups as requested.

Research Method

A survey of the recipients of TEFAP commodities was used as the means for providing essential data on the recipients. The intent of this survey was to provide a profile of the people who receive TEFAP commodities in the state of Montana. Survey questions were designed to help demonstrate the need for this program by showing the number and variety of individuals who benefit from it. They were also designed to determine the number of recipients who "fall through the cracks" by not receiving unemployment benefits, being underemployed, or being otherwise ineligible for other welfare benefits.

All individuals who received TEFAP commodities in the state were surveyed over a two month period. Volunteers at the distribution sites handed out the surveys to program recipients when they walked through the door and collected the completed surveys as the food packages were distributed. A total of 14,448 surveys were completed.

CHAPTER 2

TEFAP - An Overview

Introduction

The Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) originated as the Special Dairy Distribution Program (SDDP) in December, 1981.³ The SDDP, enacted by Executive Order, was intended to be a relatively informal "giveaway" of surplus cheese with a minimum of rules and regulations.⁴ The word "Temporary" in the title of the program indicates that the President intended the program to be short term. According to Lipsky & Thibodeau, "The President's order to release cheese was regarded by officials of the USDA, the states, and the local distribution agencies as being a 'one-time' release."⁵ It has nonetheless survived for eight years, and 5 billion pounds of surplus commodities have been distributed to millions of low-income people.

A Brief History

The Agriculture and Food Act of 1935 was enacted during the Great Depression. It empowered the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), along with the purchasing authority given to the Commodity Credit

Corporation (CCC), to buy commodities on the open market for distribution to charitable groups.⁶ In 1974 the Food Stamp Act became law and the distribution of free commodities in geographical areas where the food stamp program was in place was prohibited. This development ended nearly a quarter century of federal policy in which commodity distribution to households was the primary vehicle for nutritional assistance.⁷

Three events took place just three days before Christmas, 1981, which restored the federal government's role as a distributor of surplus commodities to households. First, the Secretary of USDA was directed to limit commodity program expenditures by reducing storage costs associated with the dairy product price support program. There was a concern in Washington over the high levels of surplus products held by the CCC in federally leased warehouses. It was projected that traditional food distribution programs to charitable institutions, school lunch programs, and the military would use only 15 percent of the current surplus dairy stocks.⁸

Second, faced with the choices of either paying rising storage costs or dumping spoiled cheese and butter, Congress directed the Secretary to expand the types of outlets eligible to receive surplus commodities.⁹ This decision was probably influenced by public concern that the surplus might be dumped in the ocean when there were

needy individuals in the United States.

As a result, President Reagan, through an Executive Order, announced that 30 million pounds of cheese would be released from federally leased warehouses for the States to distribute to needy households. It was made clear through the wording in this Order that the main goal for releasing the cheese was the need to reduce the levels of costly surplus stock.¹⁰ This distribution was viewed as a one-time release of commodities which would reduce the inventory of surplus commodities while providing temporary food assistance to low-income and unemployed persons affected by the economic recession.¹¹

The original intention for TEFAP was to reduce the excessive surplus of commodities in storage and thus reduce accelerating storage costs. Feeding the hungry was merely a secondary goal for the program. However, the program has gradually shifted its emphasis from disposing of surplus commodities to a program feeding the needy. Each time Congress reauthorized TEFAP, features were added emphasizing food assistance rather than commodity disposal goals.¹²

The Program In General

Because the initial distribution was such a success, and because dairy product inventories continued to build-up, distributions of commodities were expanded. States

were encouraged to order as much cheese and butter as they could use without waste. Publicity surrounding the program also contributed to an increase of interest and participation in it.

Many factors contributed to the demand for commodities. First, as a result of the worst economic conditions in half a century, unemployment was high. Second, through the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Acts of 1981 and 1982, substantial cuts were made in a variety of federal social welfare programs. Third, the number of individuals already in need of food and shelter, such as mental health patients who were deinstitutionalized, single individuals who were not eligible for public assistance, and others, was increasing.¹³

Due to the temporary nature of the program only general guidelines were issued for implementation of the program. The federal government was to supply the food; the states were to arrange for local distribution and allocation; and voluntary nonprofit organizations were to be responsible for giving it away. Eligibility requirements for individuals receiving commodities were left up to each state. They were broadly defined and did not always reflect economic need. As the program continued there were concerns expressed about program accountability and about people who were neither poor nor hungry receiving surplus foods; tighter rules and

regulations were implemented as a result.

Enactment of the Jobs Bill in March, 1983 directly affected the lax administration of the food distribution program. In the beginning food was allotted to states based on population. The Jobs Bill, however, provided that states be allotted food based on their historical usage of USDA commodities, the number of households below the poverty level, and the number of unemployed persons. Another provision of the Jobs Bill was the allocation of funds to states for assistance with administrative costs associated with storage and transportation expenses. The monies were allotted based on a formula in which 60 percent of monies were based on the number of households below the poverty level and 40 percent on the number of unemployed persons in each state. A third requirement of the Jobs Bill was for states to designate eligible recipient agencies and contract with them to distribute the food. The Jobs Bill also required that states maintain records documenting the receipt and disposal of commodities, maintain data on individuals who received commodities, and maintain detailed records regarding items for which reimbursement was sought.¹⁴

The Hunger Prevention Act of 1988 extended TEFAP through September 30, 1990. This legislation also required the Secretary of USDA to purchase \$120 million worth of commodities for distribution through TEFAP in

both Fiscal Years 1989 and 1990.¹⁵

The TEFAP Program In Montana

Montana was the second state in the Union to accomplish a TEFAP distribution. This distribution took place in January, 1982. It was accomplished more easily in Montana than in other states because there was already a system in place for distributing commodities to needy families on Indian Reservations. The second distribution occurred in April, 1982. Like the first one, this was thought to be a "one-time" occurrence, with cheese the only item distributed. In July, 1982, regular monthly distributions were implemented. At that time butter was added, with flour, cornmeal, rice, low-fat powdered milk, and honey soon to follow.¹⁶

CHAPTER 3

THE SURVEY

Research Method

A survey of the recipients of TEFAP commodities was conducted by the author at the request of James Nolan, Bureau Chief, Intergovernmental Human Services, Family Assistance Division, Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services, State of Montana. The purpose of this survey was to obtain information about the people who receive TEFAP commodities in the state of Montana. It was hoped that the survey would help demonstrate the need for this program by showing the number and variety of individuals who would be most affected by its elimination.

The survey was conducted during the months of December, 1988, and January, 1989. Approximately 30,000 surveys were sent to the Human Resource Development Councils (HRDC's) who contract with the State to distribute the TEFAP commodities. The HRDCs passed out and collected the surveys during their regular commodity distributions. The return response was 14,448. Every recipient who received commodities during the two month period filled out a survey.

Montana has 56 counties, of these, 53 counties returned the completed surveys in time for this report. The three counties which did not respond represent 2% of the state's population.

The Survey Format

The survey sheet was kept as simple as possible so as not to be an imposition on the people who were administering the survey, or upon those surveyed. The survey was to be filled out during distributions, and in order for the distribution process to not be delayed, something clear and easy to complete was required. With these concerns in mind, a one page survey was developed.

The survey was divided into six parts. Part 1 asked about recipients' residency status. Although there is no residency requirement for receiving TEFAP commodities, this information was needed to determine how many individuals are transient, how many individuals have lived in Montana for a short period, and how many individuals have lived in Montana for all or most of their lives. This information would help test the view, shared by many, that such programs disproportionately benefit transients or individuals who have lived in the state only a short time.

Part 2 listed the various welfare programs available in the state and asked a series of questions regarding

recipients' use of them. Eligibility for TEFAP commodities is based on household income. The programs listed have income regulations which are more stringent than those for TEFAP and people must be certified to participate in these programs. If an individual is eligible for these programs they are categorically eligible for TEFAP. These questions would help determine what other programs TEFAP recipients benefit from and, how many of the individuals who receive commodities do not have other forms of assistance available to them.

Government unemployment figures are derived from those individuals who are currently receiving unemployment benefits. Those people who run out of unemployment benefits, or do not qualify for unemployment, are not counted in the unemployment figures. For this reason, a question on employment status was included in the survey to determine the actual number of recipients who were unemployed.

Part 3 seeks to find out how many of the people who receive commodities are also on the food stamp program, and how many weeks of the month the food purchased with food stamps lasts. This information was needed to test the hypothesis that TEFAP commodities are important supplements to the food stamp program.

The purpose of Part 4 was to determine the size of households; whether or not they were single parent

households; and the ages of household individuals who benefit from this program. This information was needed to test the hypothesis that recipients are predominantly from single-parent households and/or the elderly.

Part 5, which was optional, contained questions related to race. This area was added to provide information regarding the racial makeup of TEFAP recipients. The validity of the data was threatened, however, by a misunderstanding of the term "Native American." Although it was intended to mean American Indian, several of the recipients considered themselves Native American because they were born in America.

A space was left at the bottom of the page for Name, Address, and Comments. If an individual had a question or problem which required a personal response, their name and address would be available for the response. Several of the recipients added comments. The comments ranged from praise for the program and those who run it to condemnation of the program for not providing more food.

CHAPTER 4

SURVEY RESULTS

This chapter reports the information obtained from the surveys. It summarizes each part of the survey and details the number of recipients in each of the sections.

Residency

Although there is no residency requirement for receiving TEFAP commodities, information was desired regarding the number of individuals who are transient, who have lived in Montana for a short period, and who have lived in Montana for all or most of their lives. The residency figures presented in table 1 reveal that most TEFAP recipients are long time residents of Montana. The number of individuals who reported living in Montana for less than 1 year was 1,289 (8.9%). There were 13,145 (91.0%) who reported they had lived in Montana for more than one year; of this number, 11,028 (76.3%) reported living in the state for more than ten years.

Recipients were also asked how long they had resided in the county. County residency figures were similar to the state residency figures. There were 1,389 (9.6%) who reported living in their present county less than one

year. The number who reported living in the county for more than one year was 13,045 (90.3%); of this number, 9,160 (63.4%) reported living in the county for more than ten years. These figures show that the majority of individuals who benefit from TEFAP in Montana are long time residents rather than transients.

TABLE 1			
TEFAP Survey Residency Figures - State of Montana			
State		County	
Less Than 1 Year	1,289 (8.9%)	Less Than 1 Year	1,389 (9.6%)
1 to 10 Years	2,117 (14.7%)	1 to 10 Years	3,885 (26.9%)
More Than 10 Years	11,028 (76.3%)	More Than 10 Years	9,160 (63.4%)
No Response	14 (0.1%)	No Response	14 (0.1%)
Total	14,448 (100%)	Total	14,448 (100%)

Participation by TEFAP Recipients in Other Assistance Programs

The second set of questions pertained to participation in state welfare programs. These responses show how many of the individuals who receive commodities also receive other forms of assistance. Most eligibility requirements for participation in these welfare programs are more stringent than for TEFAP. If an individual is currently receiving benefits from one of these programs he or she is automatically eligible for TEFAP. In many cases individuals who qualify for one program will qualify for

additional programs. As a result, many TEFAP recipients participate in more than one of the following assistance programs.

Aid To Families With Dependent Children (AFDC)

AFDC is an economic assistance program designed to provide financial and medical assistance (Medicaid) to families unable to meet the basic needs of their minor children. Monthly grants are issued to provide day-to-day support for low income children because of the absence, incapacitation, or unemployment of a parent. Eligibility for participation in AFDC is determined by various criteria established by federal and state regulations. The income limit is based on family size as determined by federal regulations, the federal poverty index, and available state funds.¹⁷

Of the 14,448 TEFAP recipients responding to the survey, 2,084 (14.4%) reported receiving AFDC benefits. This figure represents 7,276 household members. The fact that over 85% of TEFAP recipients are not also AFDC participants is significant because it suggests that there is a large category of needy individuals not being served by AFDC. The 2,084 AFDC households who received TEFAP commodities is 22.3% of the 9,361 households in Montana who participate monthly in AFDC.¹⁸ This fact is also significant because it suggests that another 77.7% of

households are eligible for TEFAP but for some reason are not taking advantage of the program.

Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants & Children (WIC)

WIC is the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants & Children. With the WIC program, monthly vouchers are issued for purchase of specifically prescribed food items such as cheese, milk, peanut butter, dry beans and peas, hot and cold cereals that are iron fortified, eggs, and infant formula.

To qualify for WIC benefits, a person must be pregnant, or a breastfeeding woman; a woman who recently had a baby; an infant, birth to 12 months; or a child, 1-5 years; determined by a health professional to be at medical/nutritional risk; and below 185% of Federal Poverty Income Guidelines. A WIC household may have more than one WIC participant residing in it. To receive TEFAP commodities for the household, only one member needs to qualify for the WIC benefits.

In April, 1989, the WIC caseload was 14,547. This represented 2,488 women and 12,059 infants and children.¹⁹ The number of TEFAP recipients who reported receiving WIC was 1,716. Even assuming that these 1,716 households contain multiple WIC "cases," it is clear that many WIC recipients are not also taking advantage of the TEFAP program.

General Relief Assistance (GA)

GA is a cash benefits program that provides public assistance to persons in need of such assistance and who are ineligible for all other programs including Federally assisted programs. GA provides basic necessities (food, shelter, utilities, and personal needs) that allow minimum subsistence compatible with decency and health.

Persons receiving GA are also eligible for general relief medical assistance (Medicaid), which provides medical services necessary for the treatment of a serious medical condition. To be eligible for GA a person must be a Montana resident or intend to become one, and must not be receiving benefits or services through any other federal or state assistance programs. The monthly benefit amount paid to a single person with no dependents is \$209.²⁰ There were 827 (5.7%) TEFAP recipients who reported receiving GA. These recipients reported a total of 1,686 household members.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

SSI is a needs based program which provides monthly payments to individuals who are aged, blind, or disabled and who may have little or no income. Individuals who are eligible for SSI are automatically eligible for Medicaid. The amount of payment is based on living arrangements, i.e., independent living, living in the household of

another, or in a medical institution; and marital status. There is a resource limit of \$2,000 for an individual, \$3,000 for a couple (any two people), and \$100 for each additional family member.²¹ Of the 14,448 TEFAP recipients, 2,115 (14.6%) reported receiving SSI. This figure represents 3,897 household members.

Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA)

JTPA is a program which provides job training to the economically disadvantaged and other persons who face serious barriers to employment and need special training to obtain productive employment. To participate in JTPA a person must be economically disadvantaged. This includes individuals who receive or are members of families that receive cash welfare payments; have or are members of families that have incomes below the poverty level; receive food stamps; are foster children for whom state and local payments are made; or are handicapped adults who meet welfare or income requirements regardless of family income.²² Sixty TEFAP recipients (less than 1%) reported participating in JTPA. These individuals reported 181 household members.

Food Stamps

The food stamp program supplements the food costs of low income households with food stamps that are redeemable for groceries. There are two kinds of food stamp

assistance: Public Assistance, assistance to households in which at least one member receives income from AFDC, and Non-Assistance, food stamp assistance to households in which no members receive income from AFDC.²³ Eligibility for food stamps is determined by both financial and non-financial criteria as established by Federal regulations. Some of the criteria are: household size, citizenship, social security numbers, work rules, and income and resource limits.²⁴

Of the 14,448 TEFAP recipients, 5,095 (35.3%) reported they receive food stamps. This figure represents 14,028 household members. Conversely, this data indicates that 64.7% of TEFAP recipients do not benefit from food stamps and may, as a result, be very dependent on TEFAP commodities.

Medical Assistance (Medicaid)

Medicaid is a federally assisted program which provides payment of medical costs for AFDC and SSI individuals and families, and others who qualify. Each person is counted as a case.²⁵ The number of TEFAP recipients who received medicaid benefits was 3,354, 23.2% of the 14,448 TEFAP recipients. These individuals reported total household members of 8,487.

Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP)

LIEAP is an fuel assistance program designed to

provide emergency assistance payments and heating payments for eligible households to offset the costs of home energy that are excessive in relation to other household expenditures. Households with incomes at or below 125% of the federal poverty level are eligible for LIEAP assistance. Also, households which consist solely of members receiving SSI, AFDC, or GA are automatically financially eligible for LIEAP.²⁶

Of the 14,448 TEFAP recipients, 3,729 (25.8%) reported receiving LIEAP benefits. This figure represents 9,723 household members. This data indicates that 74.2% of the TEFAP recipients do not benefit from LIEAP.

Weatherization

This program provides services which result in decreasing fuel costs associated with home heating such as insulating and weather-proofing the homes of low income households. Any household eligible for LIEAP is also eligible for weatherization. Households are prioritized and, unfortunately, there are many thousands of eligible households who do not receive weatherization assistance because they are not high enough on the priority list.²⁷ Of the 14,448 TEFAP recipients, 767 (5.3%) received weatherization benefits.

Summary of Participation in Social and Welfare Programs

Many individuals who are eligible for public assistance do not receive benefits. Some do not want to receive the benefits because of the stigma attached to being a welfare recipient. Others are unaware that they qualify for assistance. Some assistance programs such as AFDC are not available in all counties. Other programs such as weatherization are prioritized and individuals do not receive benefits.

In many areas TEFAP serves as an outreach program. Individuals who are not on an assistance program and who receive commodities are referred to agencies where they can get further assistance.

Individuals who qualify for public assistance also qualify for TEFAP. Of these individuals, a relatively small number take advantage of the program. A possible reason for this may be that there is not enough food to meet the demand. Commodities are available from the U.S.D.A. in limited quantities and many TEFAP sites run out of food before all recipients are served. Also, with recent cutbacks in the amount of commodities available, food packages contain less food. Many individuals may believe that it is not worth their time to stand in long lines to receive less food or to be told there is no food.

Another notable factor is that the type of

commodities available for distribution have changed. There is no longer a surplus of cheese, thus it is not available for the TEFAP program. As a protein supplement for cheese; peanut butter, vegetarian beans, and canned pork are available in limited quantities. When cheese was no longer available for distribution, the number of TEFAP recipients decreased dramatically.

TABLE 2		
TEFAP Survey Program Participation Summary		
Program	Number Served	% of TEFAP Recipients
AFDC	2,084	14.4%
WIC	1,712	11.9%
GA	827	5.7%
SSI	2,115	14.6%
JTPA	60	0.4%
Food Stamps	5,095	35.3%
Medicaid	3,354	23.3%
LIEAP	3,729	25.8%
Weatherization	767	5.3%
Not participating in any assistance program	2,595	17.9%

The individuals who participate in the commodity program must truly need the food. They are willing to travel to the distribution site, stand in long lines, verify their eligibility, and take a chance that the food will be gone before they are served. As shown in table 2, 2,595 of these individuals, nearly 18% of those surveyed,

do not receive any other form of public assistance. This information is extremely important to the purposes of this study because it represents an estimate of the number of needy individuals who would be severely affected by the elimination of TEFAP. For them no "safety net" exists.

Unemployed

Government unemployment figures are derived from those individuals who are currently receiving benefits. Those people who run out of unemployment benefits, or do not qualify for unemployment, are not counted in the unemployment figures. There were 5,172 (35.8%) TEFAP recipients who reported they were unemployed. This figure represents 13,018 household members.

Of the 5,172 who reported they were unemployed, only 428 (8.3%) claimed to receive unemployment compensation. The number of unemployed who reported receiving no other benefits except TEFAP was 1,537. This is 32.4% of the 4,744 who reported being unemployed and not receiving unemployment benefits. These figures are significant because they indicate that a large number of households neither receive unemployment compensation nor benefits from any other welfare programs. The only assistance they receive is commodities from the TEFAP program and they are, for this reason, likely to be very dependent upon TEFAP.

Low Income

Federal regulations permit states to set their own low income eligibility guidelines for TEFAP up to 185% of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines. Montana has set its eligibility at 150% of the Federal poverty guideline. To qualify as low income in Montana an individual's income must be at or below the state guidelines as shown below in table 3.

TABLE 3		
Poverty Income Guidelines February 1989		
Household Size	Federal	Montana
	Income/Year	Income/Year
1	\$ 5,980	\$ 8,970
2	\$ 8,020	\$12,030
3	\$10,060	\$15,090
4	\$12,100	\$18,150
5	\$14,140	\$21,210
6	\$16,180	\$24,270
7	\$18,220	\$27,330
8	\$20,260	\$30,390
Each Additional Member	\$ 2,040	\$ 3,060

An individual may receive TEFAP commodities in Montana if their household income is within the above stated guidelines. These individuals may or may not receive benefits from public assistance programs. This

includes the working poor who may be employed, but do not make enough money to raise them above the poverty line. Others may be recently unemployed and receiving unemployment benefits. These are individuals who are sufficiently needy to qualify for TEFAP but not for other forms of assistance. The number of TEFAP recipients who reported being low income was 5,872 (40.6%). Of this number, 2,595 (44.2%) reported receiving no benefits from other welfare programs. These individuals depend upon TEFAP commodities to have enough food to last throughout the month. Without commodities these individuals would suffer extreme hardships because they do not receive other forms of assistance.

The 2,595 low income TEFAP recipients who received no other benefits reported 5,843 household members. Of this figure there were 1,766 children under the age of 18 and 1,501 individuals over 60. The significance of these figures is that, of the individuals affected by low income, 3,267 (55.9%) have little or no means of income. These individuals would be the most adversely affected by elimination of the TEFAP program.

Food Stamp Benefits

A common complaint among food stamp recipients is that they do not receive enough food stamps to last throughout the month. It is believed that the TEFAP

program is used as a resource for providing food stamp recipients additional food to get them through the month. To test this assumption, the following question was asked on the survey: "If you receive food stamps, when does the food purchased with them run out?"

A total of 5,054 recipients responded to this question. Of this number 550 (10.9%) reported that the food purchased with food stamps runs out in the first week. The number who reported running out in the second week was 834 (16.5%). The number who reported running out in the third week was 2,093 (41.4%). The number who reported running out in the fourth week was 723 (14.3%). Finally, those who reported that the food lasts all month was 854 (16.9%).

This data indicates that the majority of food stamp recipients (68.8%) run out of food purchased with food stamps by the third week of the month. It is evident that these individuals rely upon TEFAP commodities to provide sufficient food to support them for an entire month.

Miscellaneous Household Information

The 14,448 TEFAP recipients who completed the survey reported a total of 35,699 household members. Of the 14,448 recipients 2,590 (17.9%) reported being single parents, and 4,312 (29.8%) reported belonging to two parent households. The remaining 7,546 (52.3%) were

households without children. This information undermines the common assumption that most TEFAP recipients are single parents.

The recipients were also asked to report the age of household members. (See table 4). This information is useful in determining who would be most affected by termination of the TEFAP program.

TABLE 4		
Number of Persons in Household in Each Age Group		
Years	Number	Percent
0 - 5	4,830	10.9%
6 - 18	7,735	21.6%
19 - 25	2,178	6.1%
26 - 40	6,808	19.1%
41 - 60	4,214	11.8%
Over 60	5,965	16.7%
Total	31,730*	88.8%*
*Note: Not everyone responded to this question.		

The significance of this data is that 51.9% of the individuals who benefit from TEFAP are under 18 years or over 60. These individuals are most likely unemployed and thus without independent means for purchasing additional food. They are dependent on their parent's income, in the case of children, and dependent upon fixed incomes, in the case of the elderly. Because they have no means of

improving their standard of living, they would be directly affected by the elimination of the TEFAP program.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

Survey results reported above help to undermine stereotypical views of who are needy and receiving public assistance, and demonstrate that many Montana residents would be adversely affected by elimination of TEFAP. Specific conclusions drawn from analysis of survey data include the following:

1. Most TEFAP recipients are not transients. Only 8.9% reported living in Montana for less than one year, while 91.0% reported they had lived in Montana for more than one year. This is significant because it undermines the theory that TEFAP disproportionately assists transients.

2. Although many TEFAP recipients participate in other assistance programs, 17.9% do not. This is significant because it demonstrates that there are many needy individuals who do not benefit from other assistance programs. Some of these individuals are the working poor who make too much money to qualify for public assistance but are sufficiently needy to qualify for TEFAP. Some have recently become unemployed and do not know about

available assistance programs. TEFAP is an excellent outreach program to help these individuals.

3. Most TEFAP recipients who receive food stamps run out of stamps by the third week of the month. Only 16.9% reported that the food purchased with food stamps lasts all month. This is significant because it demonstrates that TEFAP commodities are an important form of supplemental assistance for meeting nutritional needs.

4. Most TEFAP recipients are not of employment age. Only 37.0% reported their age to be between 16 and 60. The remaining 51.9% are either dependent children or elderly. This is significant because these individuals are not in a position in which they can improve their situations. The elderly, for example, usually live on fixed incomes and have no way of improving their food purchasing power. These individuals, the youth and the elderly, would be adversely affected by the elimination of the TEFAP program.

5. Most unemployed TEFAP recipients do not receive unemployment compensation. Only 8.2% of the TEFAP recipients who are unemployed receive compensation. This is significant because many of the unemployed TEFAP recipients who do not receive unemployment compensation also do not receive benefits from other assistance programs. The only assistance they receive is commodities and, for this reason, they are likely to be very dependent

upon TEFAP.

In conclusion, if the TEFAP program were eliminated, 35,699 recipients would be denied benefits they currently receive. These individuals represent categories of residents who are least likely to be able to improve their economic status, such as the young, elderly, chronically unemployed, and single parents.

ENDNOTES

1. Economic Opportunity Report. Vol. 24, No. 12; March 20, 1989; p. 92.

2. Jean Yavis Jones. Issue Brief, "Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP): Issues in the 100th Congress," Education and Public Welfare Division, Congressional Research Service, 25 August 1988, p. CRS-14.

3. Quality Planning Corporation and Abel, Daft & Earley. "A Study of the Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)." Prepared for: Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, April, 1987, p.x.

4. Michael Lipsky and Marc A. Thibodeau. Food in the Warehouses, Hunger in the Streets. "A Report on the Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program." Department of Political Science Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts, July, 1985, p. 6.

5. Ibid., p. 7.

6. Ibid., p. 4.

7. Ibid., p. 5.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid., p. 6.

11. Quality Planning Corp., et al., p. I-3.

12. Jones, p. CRS-12.

13. Lipsky and Thibodeau, p. 8.

14. Ibid., pp. 12 & 13.

15. John N. Merz, memo to All State Distribution Agencies, Mountain Plains Region, "FDP - Implementation of the Hunger Prevention Act of 1988," January 27, 1989.

16. Gordon Davidson, interview at the Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services, State of Montana, Helena, Montana, January 1990.

17. Kathleen S. Demme, interview at the Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services, State of Montana, Helena, Montana, January 1990.

18. Montana, Department of Social & Rehabilitation Services, Statistical Report, State Fiscal Year, 1989.

19. David Thomas, "Informational Profile," Montana, Department of Health and Environmental Sciences, December 1, 1989.

20. Terri H. Perrigo, interview at the Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services, State of Montana, Helena, Montana, January 1990.

21. Betty A. Todd, interview at the Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services, State of Montana, Helena, Montana, January 1990.

22. James Nolan, interview at the Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services, State of Montana, Helena, Montana, February 1990.

23. Montana, Department of Social & Rehabilitation Services, Statistical Report, State Fiscal Year, 1989.

24. Betty A. Todd, interview at the Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services, State of Montana, Helena, Montana, January 1990.

25. Montana, Department of Social & Rehabilitation Services, Statistical Report, State Fiscal Year, 1989.

26. National Center for Appropriate Technology Butte, Montana, "Montana Low-Income Energy Alternatives Project, Final Report," prepared for: Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation and Montana Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services, 28 February 1989, pp. 11-14.

27. Ibid., pp. 19-24.

APPENDIX

Reduced copy of TEFAP Survey.

TEFAP SURVEY

This survey is being conducted by the State of Montana, Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services. The purpose of this survey is to determine which households benefit from the Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program. Please answer the following questions.

County in which you reside: _____ (County number -- ask volunteer)

How long have you lived in this county? _____ Years _____ Months

How long have you lived in Montana? _____ Years _____ Months

Check all programs which your household is currently on:

_____ (A) AFDC _____ (D) SSI _____ (F) Food Stamps

_____ (B) WIC _____ (E) JTPA _____ (G) Medicaid

_____ (C) GA (General Assistance)

_____ (H) LIEAP (Fuel Assistance) _____ (I) Weatherization

Unemployed: _____ (J) Receiving unemployment compensation

_____ (K) Not receiving unemployment compensation

_____ (L) Low Income (Income does not exceed 150% of poverty)

Approx. monthly household income _____

If you receive food stamps, when does the food purchased with them run out?

_____ (1) Week 1 _____ (3) Week 3 _____ (5) Lasts all month

_____ (2) Week 2 _____ (4) Week 4

Single parent household? _____ (1) Yes _____ (2) No Household size _____

Number of persons in household in each age group:

_____ 0-5 _____ 19-25 _____ 41-60
_____ 6-18 _____ 26-40 _____ Over 60

Race data (optional): _____ (1) Native American _____ (3) Hispanic
_____ (2) Caucasian _____ (4) Other: _____

(Optional) -----

Name: _____ Address: _____

Comments: _____

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