



United States Department of Agriculture

# Agricultural Marketing Service

Creating Opportunities for Farmers and Businesses

## USDA Seeks Comments on Food Purchase Program, Will Host Listening Session

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Creating Opportunities for Farmers and Businesses

## USDA Seeks Comments on Food Purchase Program, Will Host Listening Session

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) seeks comments on the development, coordination, and implementation of a food purchase and distribution program intended to provide additional aid to nonprofits serving Americans in need of nutrition assistance.

**USDA AMS**  
LISTENING SESSION ON FOOD PURCHASES

**MARCH 22**  
**2 P.M. TO 5 P.M. ET**

PROVIDE FEEDBACK TO IMPROVE  
USDA'S FOOD & NUTRITION  
DISTRIBUTION

If implemented, the program will serve as a successor to the temporary food box purchase program created in April 2020 in response to the rapidly developing crisis within the food

supply chain and increased joblessness due to COVID-19. While the food box effort served some communities well, it faced challenges in others.

Comments can be submitted through midnight ET on March 31, 2021, via [online portal](#) or by email to [AMSCOVIDStimulus@usda.gov](mailto:AMSCOVIDStimulus@usda.gov). We welcome feedback from all interested parties, and we appreciate early response. Additional information is available on the [AMS website](#).

In addition, AMS will host a listening session to provide groups and individuals an opportunity to share their views on how USDA can best serve people in need of food assistance as well as the industry through this program. All interested stakeholders are invited to attend. Stakeholders are also invited to register to provide oral comments during the session.

### **Listening Session Information**

The listening session will be conducted via webinar using ZOOM.

#### **Date and Time:**

March 22, 2021 from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. ET

#### **Registration:**

Registration will remain open until the start of the event, or until the session is full. However, you must register by midnight ET on March 17, 2021, to provide oral comments during the listening session. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar. Registrants who request to speak will be contacted by a staff member and must participate in a practice session to test audio requirements. Speakers will be introduced by a moderator; and speaking time is no more than three minutes.

AMS will make the agenda for the session available on the website by March 19, 2021.

**Register in advance for this webinar**

#### **Contact:**

Questions regarding the listening session can be directed to [AMSCOVIDStimulus@usda.gov](mailto:AMSCOVIDStimulus@usda.gov). Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication (Braille, large print, audio tape, etc.) should contact the USDA Target Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

AMS encourages comments from smaller businesses, new and beginning farmers and ranchers, socially disadvantaged producers, veteran producers, and underserved communities, and/or organizations representing these entities. AMS expects commenters writing or speaking on behalf of these entities to engage and involve them in planning comments.

**Background:** Sec. 751 of the COVID Stimulus Package, part of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, provides no less than \$1.5B to purchase food and agricultural products, including seafood, fresh produce, dairy, and meat products, to distribute to individuals in need, including through delivery to nonprofit organizations that can receive, store, and distribute food items, and for grants and loans to small or midsized food processors or distributors, seafood processing facilities and processing vessels, farmers markets, producers, or other organizations to respond to coronavirus, including for measures to protect workers against COVID-19.