

Study for Measuring the Cost of the Thrifty Food Plan in Puerto Rico

Client: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion

Overview

The Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion (CNPP) currently maintains four food plans that represent a nutritious diet for home consumption at different cost levels: Thrifty, Low Cost, Moderate Cost, and Liberal. The Thrifty Food Plan (TFP) serves as the “national standard for a nutritious diet at a minimal cost” and is used as the basis for the maximum Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) allotment. Food price data, food consumption pattern data, and dietary guidelines and standards are used to develop the TFP.

In 2020, CNPP received a Congressional Directive to examine the cost of a TFP in Puerto Rico. Currently, there is no TFP for Puerto Rico: Puerto Rico identifies its benefit levels for the Nutrition Assistance Program (NAP) based on available funding through a block grant FNS approves annually. Developing a TFP that reflects consumption patterns and food prices in Puerto Rico would be one step toward implementing SNAP in the territory. However, because the data used to estimate the TFP are not available in Puerto Rico, the current TFP methodology cannot be simply applied there. Rather, alternate options for consideration are needed for developing a TFP for the island territory. These options may range from applying an adjustment factor for the current mainland or Alaska or Hawaii TFPs, to collecting



new data on consumption patterns and food prices in Puerto Rico.

For this study, Insight will—

- Develop and compare a comprehensive set of options for estimating a TFP specific to Puerto Rico and estimate the cost of these options.
- Assess the applicability of each option for use in other outlying areas.
- Address the timeline for implementation of each option, considering the staffing needs of each.

Products

Final report examining the options for estimating a TFP in Puerto Rico, including costs and an implementation timeline