



BLOG

FNCS Supports Food Sovereignty of Tribal Nations

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Summer is a beautiful time to travel the country and visit with partners, and I am delighted, humbled and honored to have visited the [Spirit Lake Sioux Tribe](#), [Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians](#), and [Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribe](#) last month. It was inspiring and impressive to see how the tribes are dreaming big in terms of food sovereignty – delivering healthy, fresh, locally sourced, and traditional foods to their members in their communities through the [Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations](#) and [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#).

With expanded availability of FDPIR administrative funds for nutrition education, Spirit Lake FDPIR Director Mary Greene-Trottier has overseen the completion of a versatile space to provide nutrition education and distribute FDPIR foods through a grocery store model. A colorful and bright test kitchen is stocked with blenders, food processors, a dehydrator, and six mobile cook stations with conductive cooktops. It is used for many activities including community meals, youth cooking classes, and even an Iron Chef-inspired competition using only FDPIR foods!

Turtle Mountain is similarly visionary with their use of FDPIR nutrition education funds. Under the direction of FDPIR Director Lyle Lunday, Turtle Mountain held a ceremonial grand opening of its new FDPIR facility. The tribe is greatly expanding educational offerings and teaching indigenous ways like beekeeping, pickling, gathering June berries, and promoting farm to warehouse opportunities.

In Washington State, the Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribe is being similarly innovative within the SNAP program. Since 2009, the [Washington State Department of Social and Health Services](#) has successfully partnered with the tribe to operate a demonstration project, allowing tribal employees to conduct SNAP eligibility determinations under statutory and

regulatory waivers. DSHS recognizes that some members of the community face program access barriers and would be more inclined to participate in SNAP if services were offered directly by a tribal government. Additionally, the Port Gamble Community Service Office is strategically located in a remote area of the state, helping alleviate transportation barriers to program access.

I am delighted to announce that the Washington State, allowing for adaptation to their specific needs. This expansion will play a crucial role in enhancing nutrition security, as tribal communities possess a unique ability to address hardships and improve access to essential services for their members. It marks a significant stride towards advancing tribal food sovereignty. However, we remain cognizant that there is still work to be done. We acknowledge the impact that some of our past policies had on undermining self-governance and food sovereignty and are committed to supporting tribes realize their vision where we can. We eagerly anticipate further collaboration with tribal leaders to promote equity and opportunities for tribal nations and communities.



Learn more about [FDPIR Nutrition Education funding](#), USDA Food and Nutrition Service [demonstration projects in tribal communities](#), and USDA’s [Indigenous Food Sovereignty Initiative](#).

AUTHOR:
Stacy Dean
Deputy Under Secretary for Food
Nutrition
and Consumer Services

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