



Food and Nutrition Service  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

# USDA's Actions on Food and Nutrition Security

Alberto Gonzalez, MPP  
Senior Advisor for External Engagement  
USDA Food and Nutrition Service

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# Today's Panelists



**TusaRebecca Pannucci, PhD, MPH, RDN**  
**Branch Chief**  
**Nutrition and Economic Analysis**  
**USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS)**

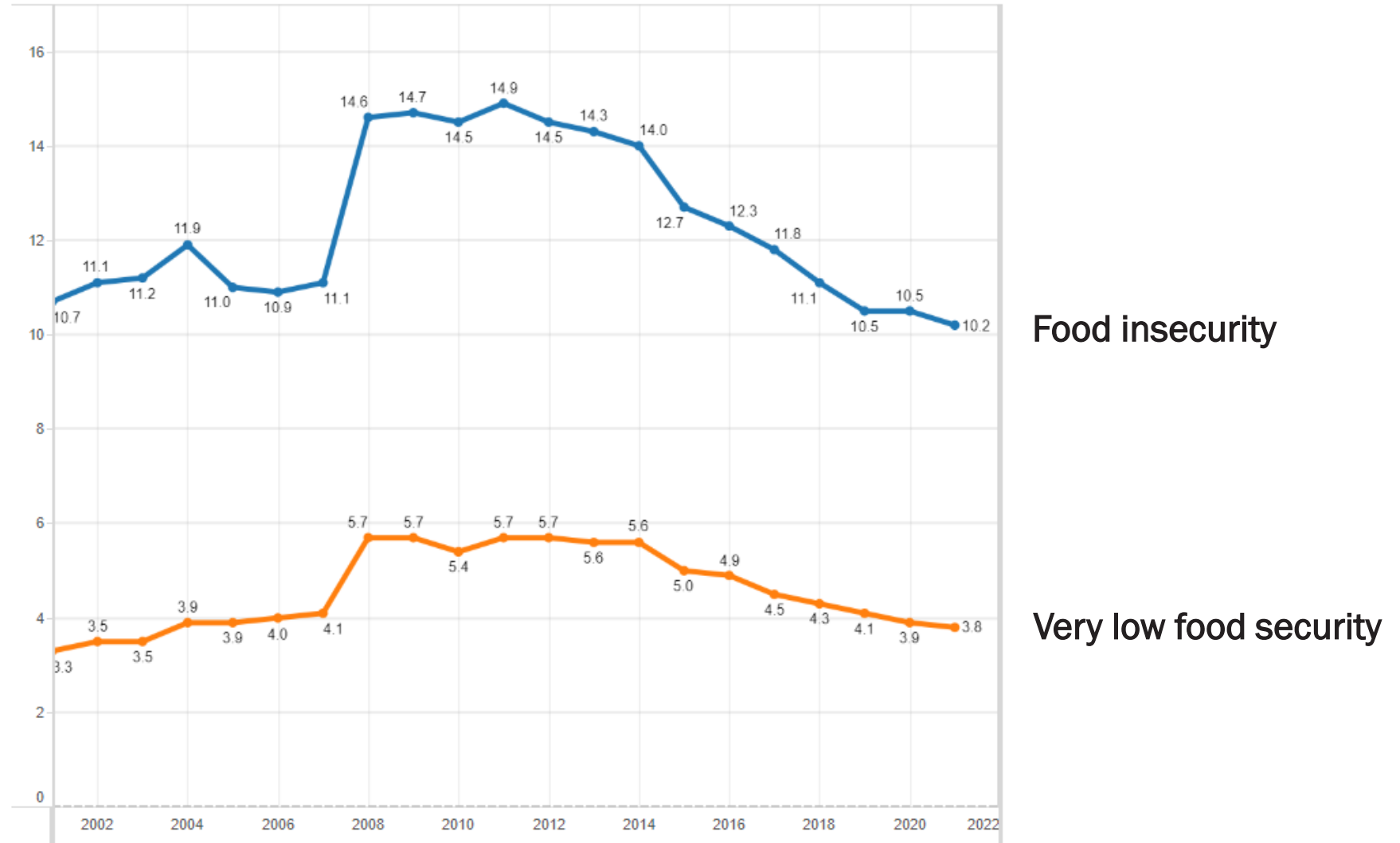


**Madeline Becker, BA**  
**Senior Technical Advisor**  
**School Meals Policy Division**  
**USDA FNS**



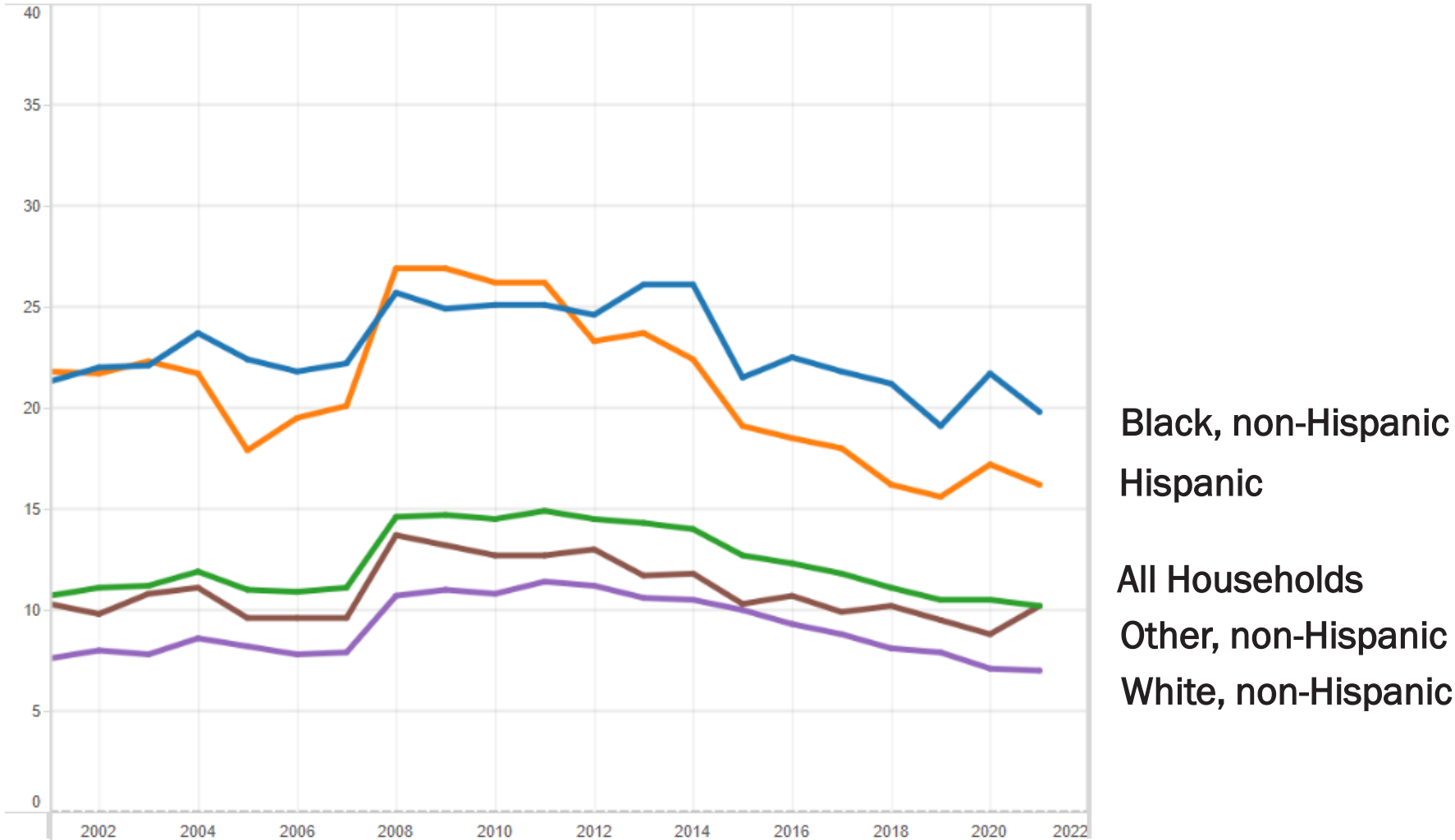
**Amy Herring, MPP**  
**Director of the Office of**  
**Innovation, WIC**  
**USDA FNS**

# Trends in the prevalence of food insecurity and very low food security in U.S. households, 2001-21, percent of households



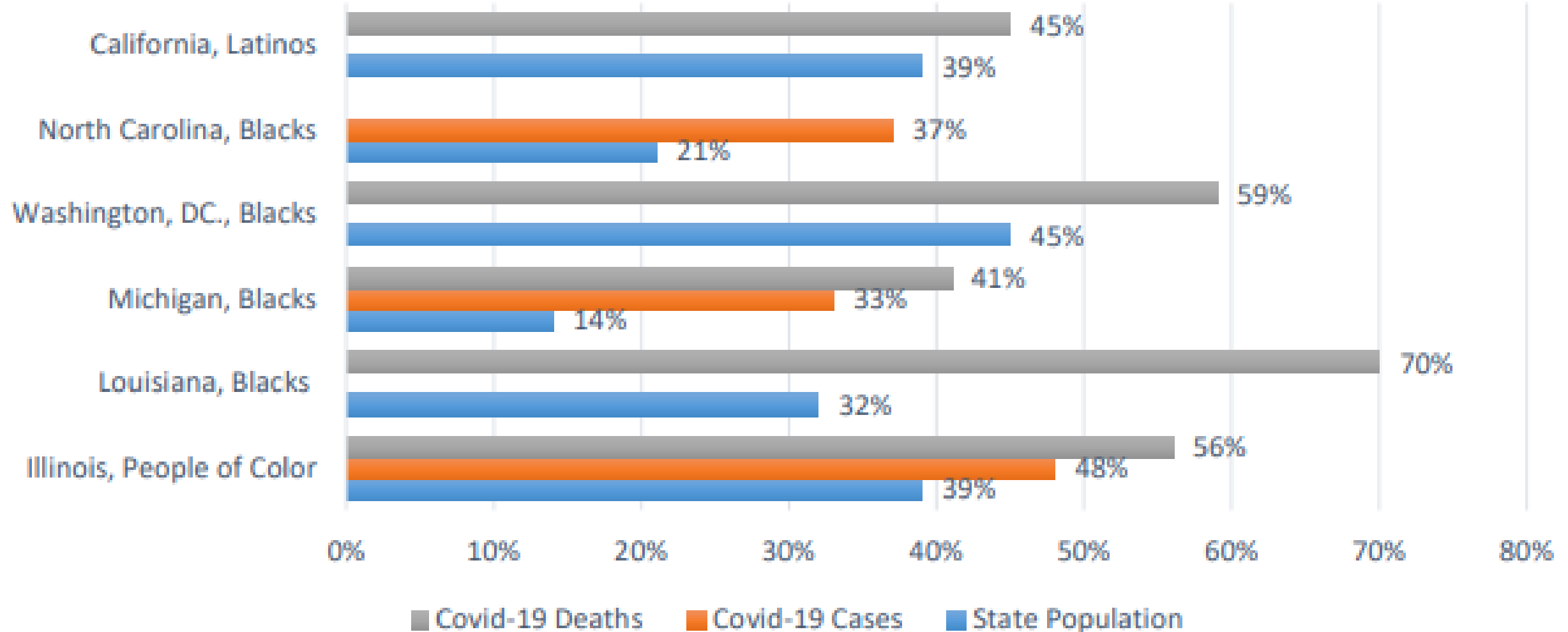
# Trends in food insecurity by race and ethnicity, 2001-21

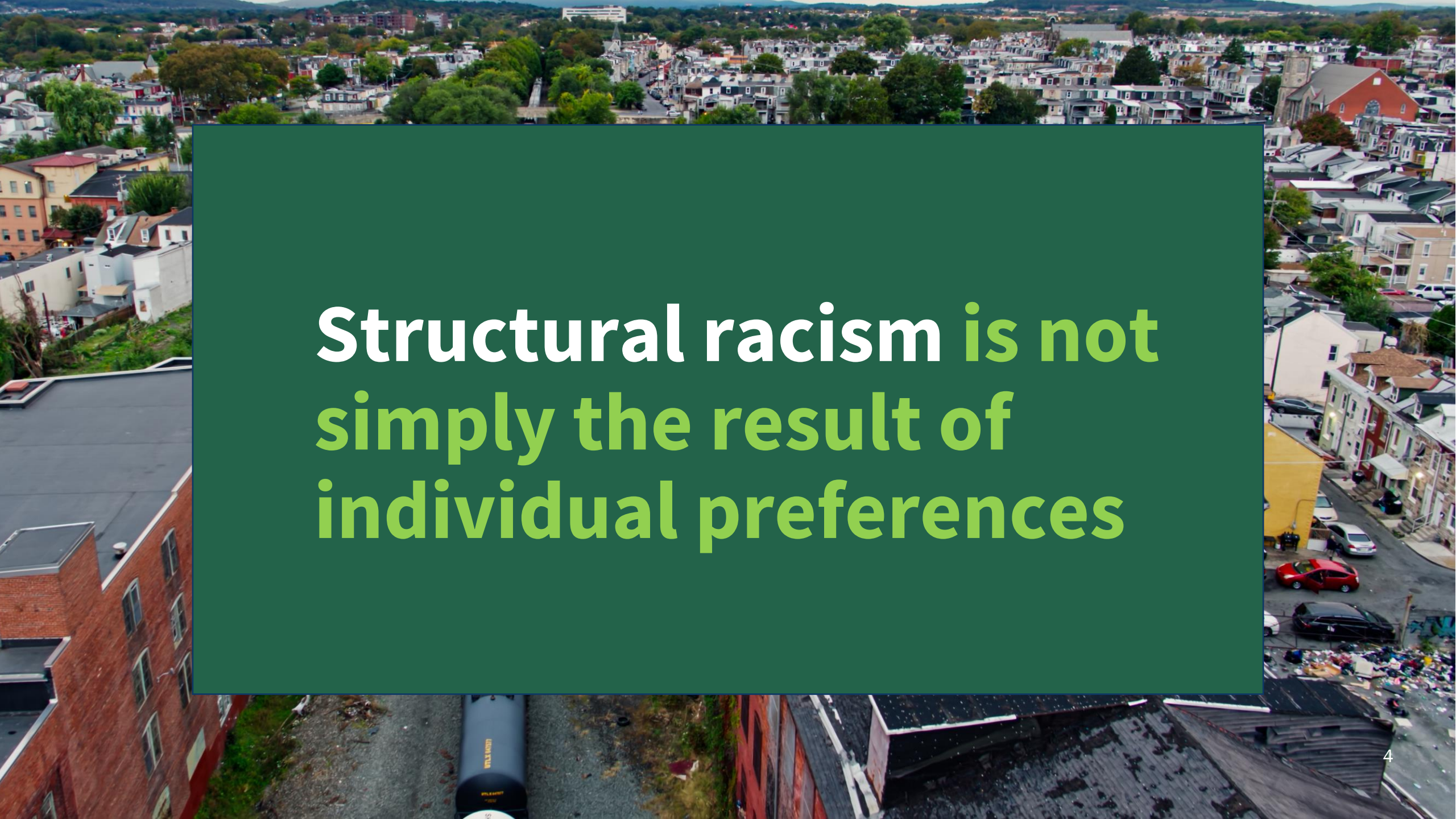
Percent of households



Black, non-Hispanic  
Hispanic  
All Households  
Other, non-Hispanic  
White, non-Hispanic

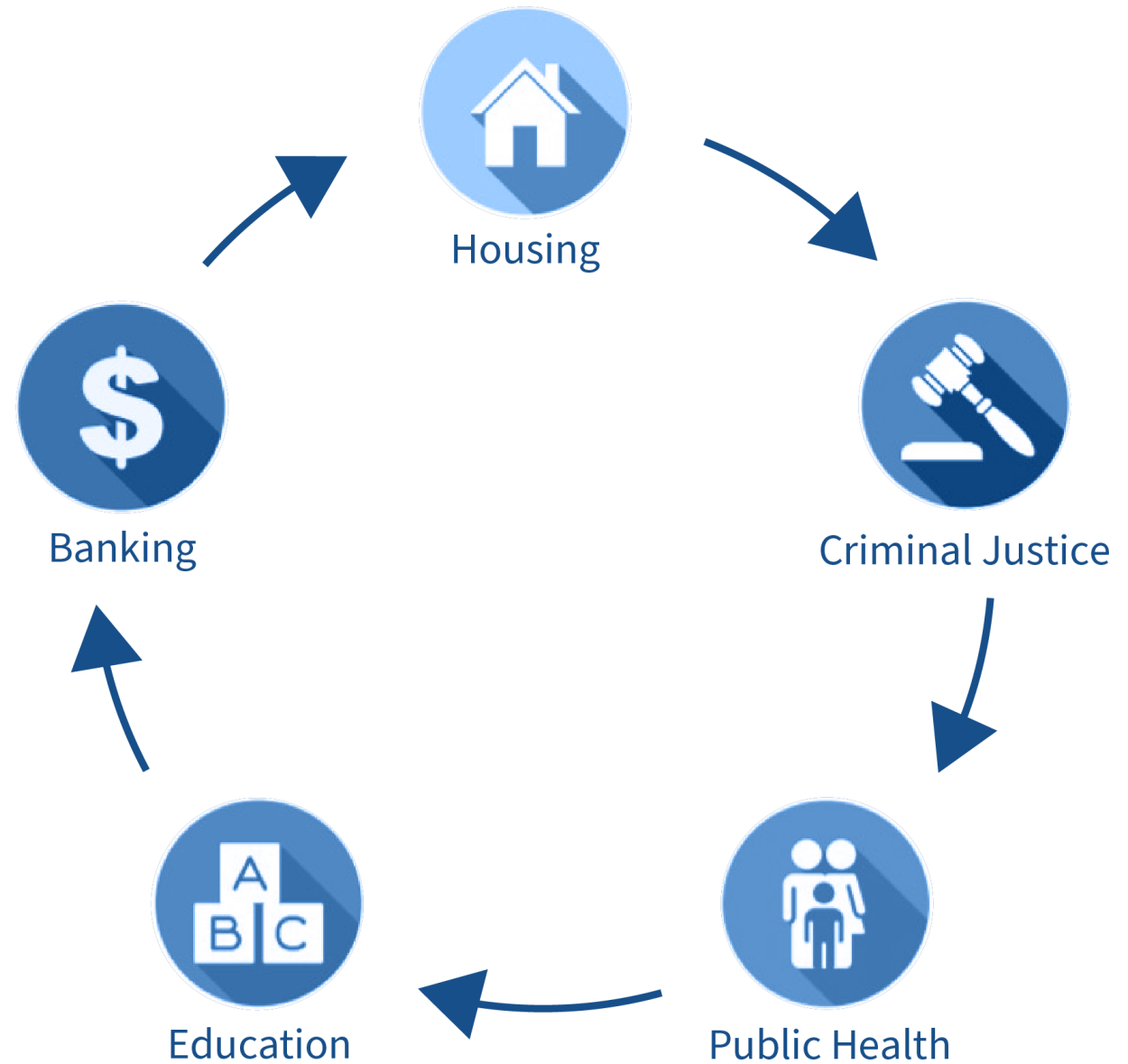
# Percentage of Blacks, Latinos, and People of Color by State Population, COVID Cases, and COVID-19 Deaths



An aerial photograph of a densely populated urban neighborhood, likely in Philadelphia, showing a mix of residential buildings, streets, and greenery. A large green rectangular overlay is centered on the image, containing white and green text. The text reads: "Structural racism is not simply the result of individual preferences".

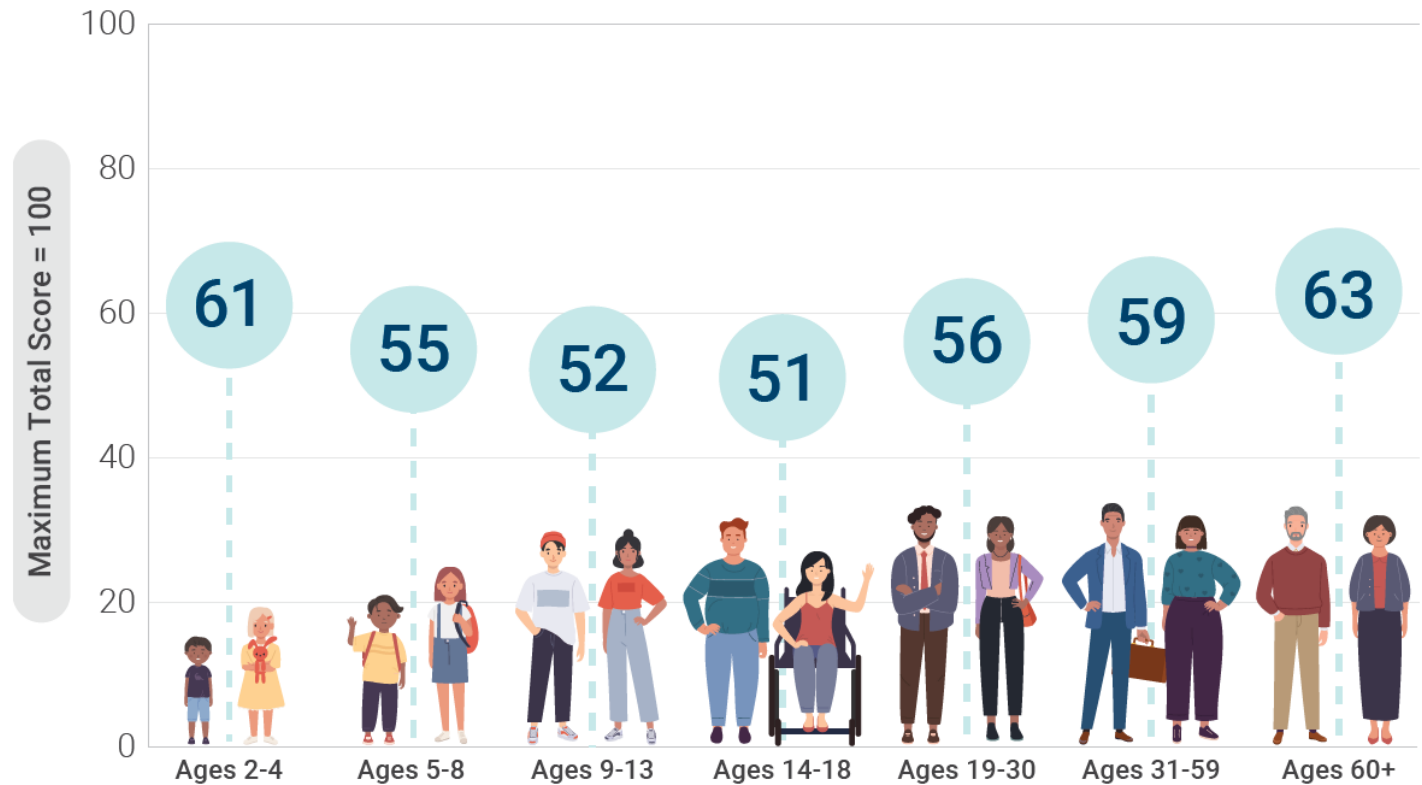
**Structural racism is not  
simply the result of  
individual preferences**

# Structural racism in practice



# Improving dietary intake is critical

**6 IN 10** ADULTS  
are living with one or more  
diet-related chronic diseases



**NOTE:** HEI-2015 total scores are out of 100 possible points. A score of 100 indicates that recommendations on average were met or exceeded. A higher total score indicates a higher quality diet.

**Data Source:** Analysis of What We Eat in America, NHANES 2015-2016, ages 2 and older, day 1 dietary intake data, weighted.

Nutrition security:  
**Consistent and equitable access to  
healthy, safe, and affordable foods  
essential to health and wellbeing**



# Building on longstanding efforts **to address food insecurity**





**1 in 4 Americans is  
served by one of  
USDA's 15 nutrition  
assistance  
programs**

# Uniquely positioned to impact food and nutrition security

- Nutrition assistance programs
- Dietary Guidelines and MyPlate
- Nutrition education and promotion
- Other USDA equities



# Our work is driven by research and grounded in science

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It's woven into our policies, informs each of our decisions, and most importantly, impacts every life we touch.

<https://www.usda.gov/nutrition-security/research>





# USDA's Four Pillar Approach



## Meaningful Support

**Providing Nutrition Support from Pregnancy to Birth and Beyond**



## Healthy Food

**Connecting All Americans with Healthy, Safe, Affordable Food**



## Collaborative Action

**Developing, Translating, and Enacting Nutrition Science Through Partnership**



## Equitable Systems

**Prioritizing Equity Every Step of the Way**



# Meaningful Support

- **Support healthy eating patterns**
- **Reflect the latest nutrition science**
- **Deliver high-quality nutrition education**
- **Promote and support breastfeeding**

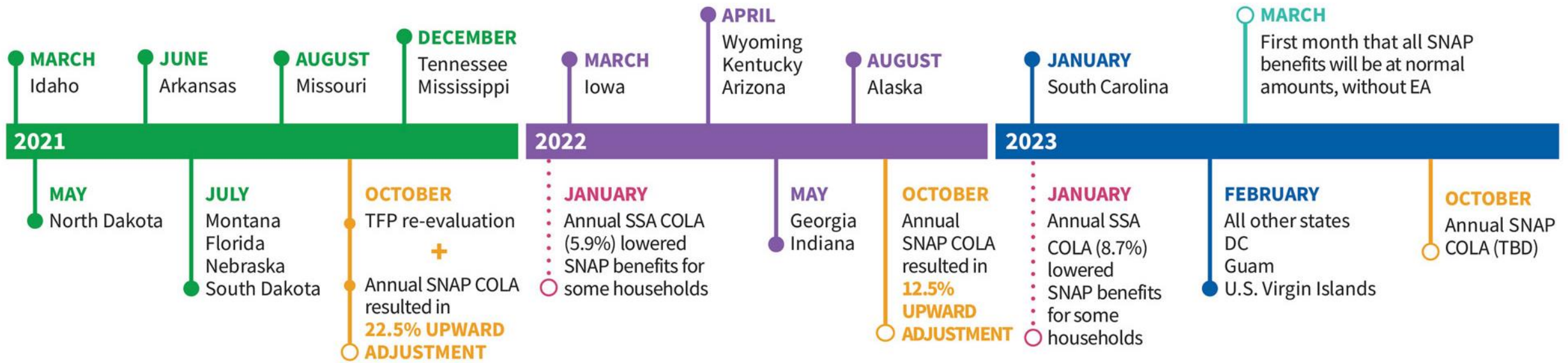
<https://www.usda.gov/nutrition-security/meaningful-support>



**SNAP**  
benefits  
increased  
by 21%



# Recent Changes to the SNAP Benefit Amounts



- States that ended EA in 2021 —●—
- States that ended EA in 2022 —●—
- States and territories ending EA in 2023 —●—
- Annual SNAP cost-of-living adjustment
- ⋯ Annual Social Security cost-of-living adjustment
- All states back to normal benefit amounts



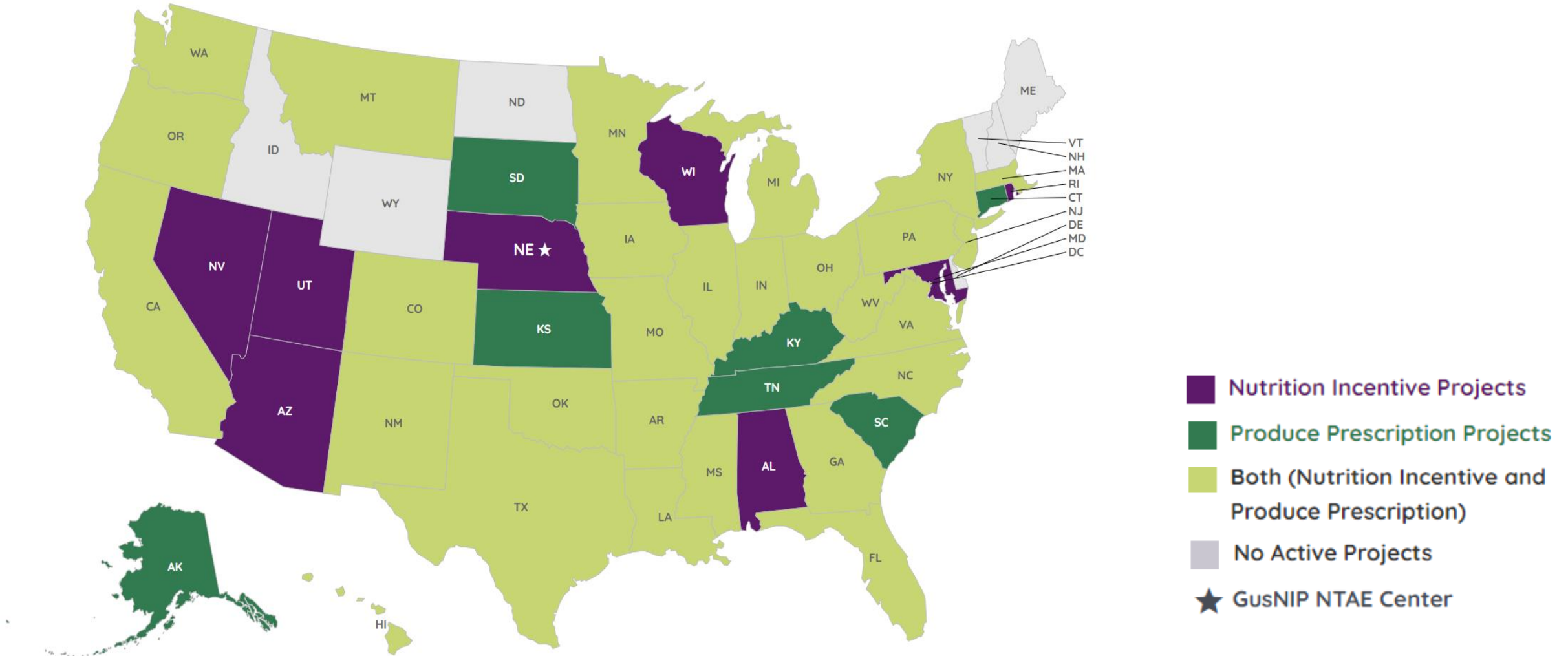
# Healthy Food

- **Promote and support fruit and vegetable consumption**
- **Utilize incentive programs**
- **Provide food for people in need**

<https://www.usda.gov/nutrition-security/healthy-food>



# GusNIP Grantees



<https://www.nutritionincentivehub.org/grantee-projects>



**Nutrition  
Incentive  
Hub**

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CREATED BY GUSNIP NTAE CENTER

- **Increased fruit and vegetable intake**
- **Purchased more than \$20M in fruits and vegetables from local retailers**
- **Incentive spending generated an economic impact of approximately \$41M**

<https://www.nutritionincentivehub.org/media/fjohmr2n/gusnip-ntae-impact-findings-year-2.pdf>



# Food Systems Transformation



Tune in for an announcement by Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack on USDA's framework for shoring up the food supply chain and transforming the food system to be fairer, more competitive, and more resilient.

Wednesday, June 1 • 11:30 am ET  
[www.usda.gov/live](http://www.usda.gov/live)



<http://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2022/06/01/usda-announces-framework-shoring-food-supply-chain-and-transforming>



# Collaborative Action

- **Update and build the evidence base for the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* (DGAs)**
- **Translate the latest DGAs**
- **Equip child nutrition program operators**
- **Tailor products to our programs**

<https://www.usda.gov/nutrition-security/collaborative-action>





Make Every  
Bite Count With  
the *Dietary  
Guidelines*



Dietary  
Guidelines  
for Americans

2020 - 2025





# Equitable Systems

- **Native American/Tribal School food programs**
- **Expanding online shopping options for SNAP and WIC**
- **Bridging language barriers**
- **Reaching underserved populations**
- **Diverse partners to foster healthy food options through diverse partners**

<https://www.usda.gov/nutrition-security/equitable-systems>





# White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health





# National Strategy on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health

**Anchored around five pillars and provides a roadmap for:**

- **Actions the federal government will take administratively;**
- **Several legislative proposals; and**
- **A call to action for private sector; local, state, Tribal, territory governments; philanthropy; civil society; and other partners**

**Improve food access  
and affordability**

**Integrate nutrition  
and health**

**Empower all consumers  
to make and have access to  
healthy choices**

**Support  
physical activity  
for all**

**Enhance nutrition  
and food security research**

[#WHConfHungerHealth  
tinyurl.com/whconfshareyourvoice](https://www.whitehouse.gov/whconfshareyourvoice)



## National Strategy Pillar 1: **Improve food access and affordability**



- **Increase access to local and regional food systems**
- **Fund training and equipment purchases**
- **Invest in the school nutrition workforce**
- **Expand nutrition education for children**



## National Strategy Pillar 3:

# **Empower all consumers to make and have access to healthy choices**

- **Increase access to healthy food**
- **Encourage healthy workplace and school policies**
- **Invest in public education campaigns**



LEVERAGING THE WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE  
TO PROMOTE AND ELEVATE NUTRITION SECURITY:

## **The Role of the USDA Food and Nutrition Service**



Food and Nutrition Service  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

# Thank You & Stay Connected



[www.usda.gov/nutrition-security](http://www.usda.gov/nutrition-security)



@USDANutrition





United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

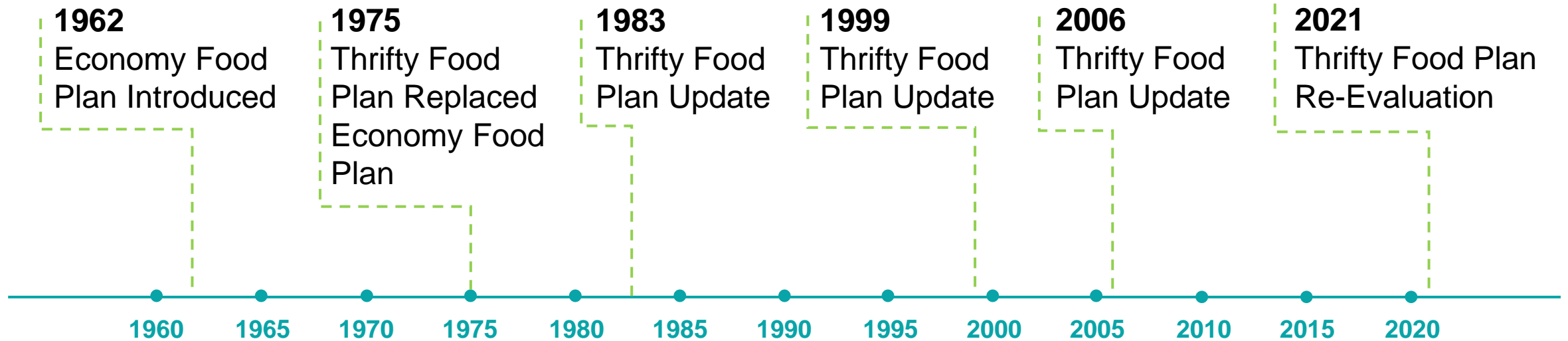
# Thrifty Food Plan Re-Evaluation



# Food and Nutrition Act of 2008

*SEC. 3(u) “Thrifty food plan” means the diet required to feed a family of four persons consisting of a man and a woman twenty through fifty, a child six through eight, and a child nine through eleven years of age, determined in accordance with the Secretary’s calculations...The cost of such diet shall be the basis for uniform allotments for all households...”*

# History of the Thrifty Food Plan



# 2018 Farm Bill

Prior updates were completed periodically at the Secretary's discretion to reflect updates to nutritional standards and data on food prices and consumption.

The Agriculture Act of 2018 requires USDA to re-evaluate the TFP by 2022 and regularly going forward:

*“By 2022 and at 5-year intervals thereafter, the Secretary shall re-evaluate and publish the market baskets of the thrifty food plan based on **current food prices, food composition data, consumption patterns, and dietary guidance.**”*

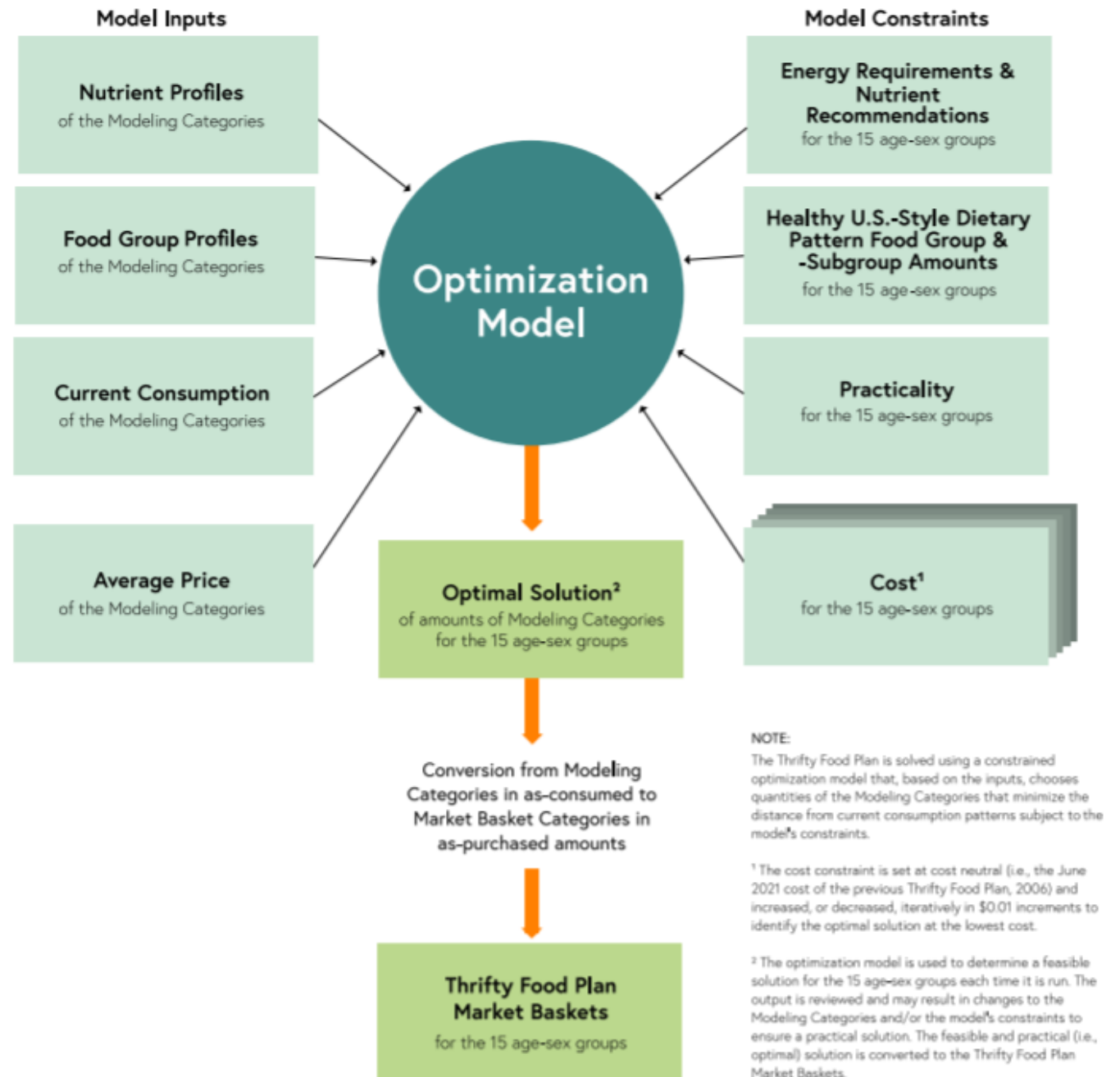
# Methods: Optimization Model

- Uses nationally representative data on consumption patterns, food composition, and current food prices
- Applies constraints to ensure market baskets are practical and cost effective and meet dietary guidance
- Produces a market basket of foods at the lowest cost that meets dietary guidance and is practical



# Food Plan Optimization Model

Market basket: Weekly amounts from categories of foods and beverages in purchasable forms, and associated costs, to support a healthy diet.



# Alaska & Hawaii

- Alaska, Hawaii have separately calculated TFPs under law, as do Guam and USVI
- Alaska and Hawaii TFPs created in 1978 and have been updated semi-annually with the Consumer Price Index (CPI)
- USDA will re-evaluate cost estimates for TFPs for Alaska and Hawaii by 2023; in meantime, TFPs will be adjusted proportionally



# How does the Thrifty Translate to SNAP?

- Maximum allotments increased by 21%,  
**relative to what they otherwise would have been**
- \$43 increase per month for 1 person HH
- \$80 increase per month for 2 person HH } **70+% of SNAP HHs**
- The SNAP **minimum benefit** increased \$3 per month—to \$20/month
- On average, most SNAP participants will receive  
**40 cents more per meal**





U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

# Thrifty Food Plan, 2021

Food and Nutrition Service

August 2021  
FNS-916



[FNS.USDA.gov/tfp](https://fns.usda.gov/tfp)

- Thrifty Food Plan, 2021 Report
- Monthly Cost of Food Reports
- Online supplement that provides the input data, including food categories and food price data as well as code needed to replicate the results.

# Nutrition and Economic Analysis Branch

TusaRebecca Pannucci, PhD, MPH, RD  
*Branch Chief, Nutrition and Economic Analysis*

tusarebecca.pannucci@usda.gov

The background of the slide is a light beige color with a repeating pattern of various fruits and vegetables in a flat, stylized illustration style. The items include green pears, red cherries, pink tomatoes, yellow lemons, green lime slices, orange carrots, purple eggplants, green peas in pods, yellow star-shaped fruits, and green broccoli. The text is centered over this pattern.

# Strengthening School Meals for Healthier Kids

The USDA logo is located in the bottom left corner. It consists of the letters "USDA" in a white serif font, positioned above a stylized white graphic of a mountain range and a river.

USDA

The Child Nutrition Programs logo is located in the bottom right corner. It features a stylized green broccoli head with a white stalk. Inside the stalk, the words "CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS" are written in a white sans-serif font, with "CHILD" on the top line, "NUTRITION" in the middle, and "PROGRAMS" at the bottom.

CHILD  
NUTRITION  
PROGRAMS

# School Meal Programs

National School  
Lunch Program

School Breakfast  
Program

# School Nutrition Standards

## **Breakfast:**

- Fruits
- Grains
- Fluid milk

## **Lunch:**

- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Grains
- Meats/meat alternates
- Fluid milk



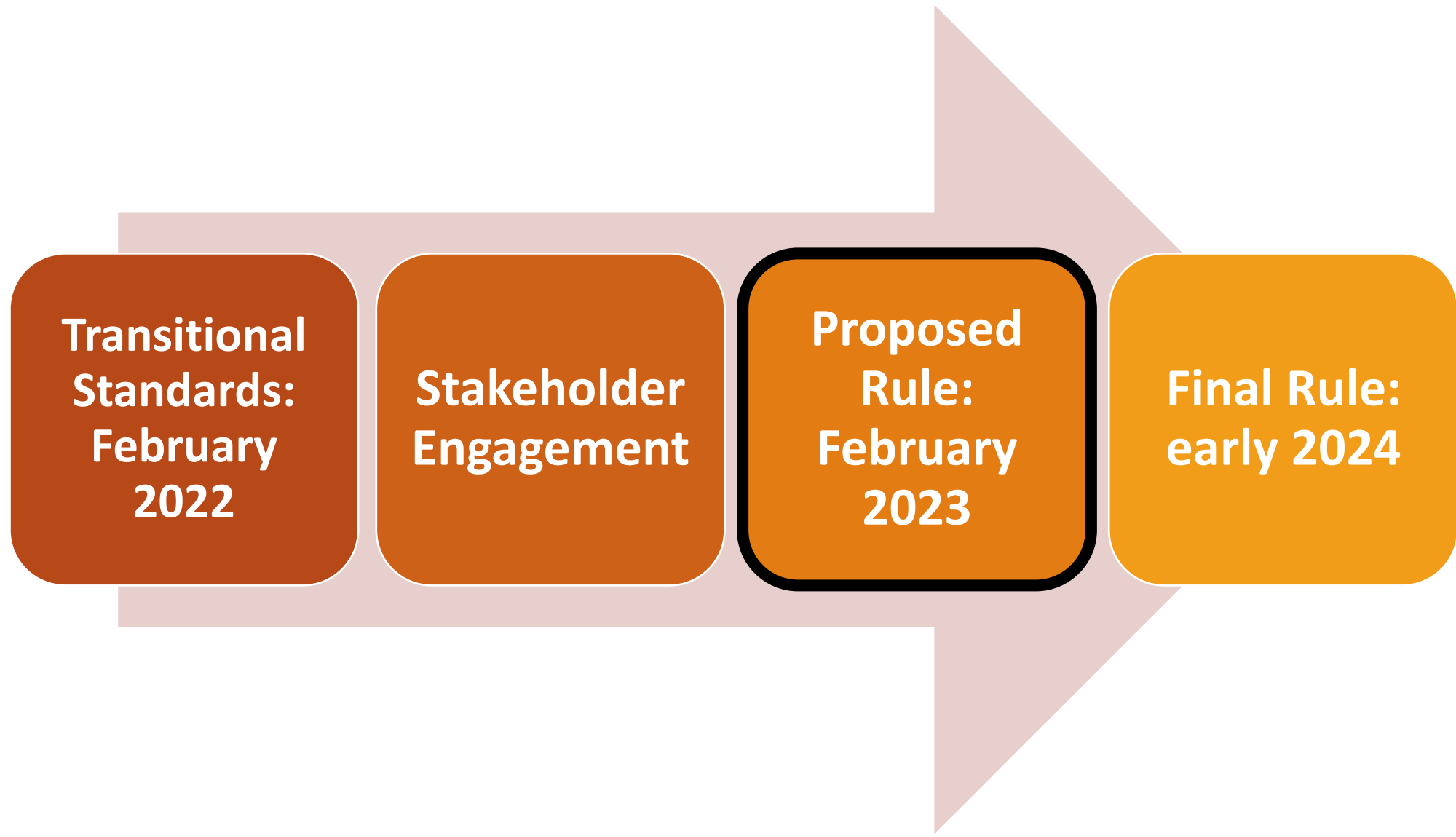


# School Nutrition Standards

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- Required by law to align with the goals of the most recent Dietary Guidelines
- Last major update occurred in 2012 following the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act:
  - Greatly increased focus on fruits, vegetables, and whole grains
  - Limited fluid milk to fat-free and low-fat
  - Established sodium, saturated fat, and calorie limits
- USDA provided waivers in response to COVID-19
- Schools needed a bridge to stronger standards following COVID-19 operations

# Strengthening School Nutrition Standards



# Practical and Durable Standards



DIETARY GUIDELINES



STAKEHOLDER  
ENGAGEMENT



LESSONS LEARNED FROM  
PRIOR RULEMAKINGS

# Added Sugars

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- Proposes to phase in two standards over time
- *Product-based limits* for leading sources of added sugars in school meals, including breakfast cereals, yogurts, flavored milks, and grain-based desserts
- *Weekly limit* of less than 10% of calories per week from added sugars in the school lunch and breakfast programs





# Milk

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Requests input on two proposals:

- Allow flavored milks in high schools only and limit milk choices in elementary and middle schools to unflavored milks; **OR**
- Continue to allow all K-12 schools to offer both flavored and unflavored milk

# Whole Grains

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- Proposes to continue to require that least 80% of grains offered must be whole grain-rich
- Requests public input on an alternative days-per-week model



# Sodium

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- Informed by the Food and Drug Administration's voluntary sodium reduction goals
- Proposes to phase in gradual reductions in school meals:
  - Three reductions of 10% each at lunch
  - Two reductions of 10% each at breakfast





# Supporting Traditional Foods

Proposes to:

- Allow tribally operated schools, schools operated by the Bureau of Indian Education, and schools serving primarily American Indian or Alaska Native children to serve vegetables to meet the grains requirement
- Explicitly state in regulation that traditional foods may be served in reimbursable school meals

## Key Goals:

- Incorporate the latest nutrition science and robust stakeholder input
- Make gradual changes that set schools up for success
- Develop standards that result in nutritious school meals that children will enjoy





Visit our website to learn more!  
[https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/  
proposed-updates-school-  
nutrition-standards](https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/proposed-updates-school-nutrition-standards)



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# WIC Outreach, Innovation, and Modernization

**Amy Herring**

Director, Office of Innovation  
Supplemental Nutrition and Safety Programs  
USDA Agricultural Outlook Forum  
February 24, 2023



# WIC Helps Families Thrive



WIC has an established history of improving health and developmental outcomes for underserved children.

# WIC Complements Optimal Child Health

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WIC foods provide specific nutrients that promote positive health outcomes during critical times of growth and development.



A photograph of a woman with dark hair, smiling and looking down at two young children. One child is a girl with curly hair and a bow, and the other is a younger child. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent green filter. The text "USDA is Investing in the Future of the WIC Program to Maximize its Impact" is written in white, bold, sans-serif font across the middle of the image. Below the text is a short orange horizontal line.

# USDA is Investing in the Future of the WIC Program to Maximize its Impact

# USDA's WIC Modernization Goals

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- Enroll more eligible families.
- Retain all eligible participants.
- Increase redemption of food benefits.
- Expand program access and equity among diverse populations.





# Meeting Today's Families Where They Are

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# All Eligible Families Should Know About WIC

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# WIC Must be Easy to Access

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# WIC Shopping Must be Simple and Convenient

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# WIC Families Should Know their Farmers' Markets

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# WIC Must Provide Culturally Relevant Care

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# Get Connected Today

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Connect with your WIC State or local agency and engage with USDA on social media.



<https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/modernization-and-innovation>



@USDANutrition



@usdagov



# Thank You!



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USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

