USDA Actions on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health

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Chief Policy Advisor
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Provide an overview of USDA’s actions to reach the historic White House Conference goals to end hunger, improve nutrition and physical activity, and reduce diet-related diseases and disparities.

Hear from various USDA Mission Areas how they are implementing the National Strategy and how you can help.

Inspire new and enhanced non-government and private sector actions to accelerate progress.
Today’s Panelists

Deirdra Chester, PhD, RDN
Director
USDA Office of the Chief Scientist

Kate Fitzgerald
Senior Advisor for Food Systems
USDA Marketing and Regulatory Mission Area

Kellie Kubena
Rural Health Liaison
USDA Rural Development
White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health
First White House Conference USDA Impacts

- Significant expansions to Food Stamps (now known as SNAP)
- Increasing the reach of the National School Lunch Program
- Permanent authorization of the National School Breakfast Program
- Authorization of the pilot for what become known as WIC
- Setting the state for developing the Dietary Guidelines for Americans
FACT SHEET: The Biden-Harris Administration Announces More Than $8 Billion in New Commitments as Part of Call to Action for 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.
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
Stores Accepting SNAP Online

SNAP Online Purchasing Pilot

Click on the states listed below that are currently participating in the SNAP Online Purchasing Pilot to see the participating retailers:

Alabama
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
New in 2023!
Non-Congregate Meals

Could benefit more than 8 million children across America
Launching in 2024!
Summer EBT

Could benefit more than 29 million children across America
We Now Have 3 Ways to Defeat Summer Hunger

- Summer meal sites
- To-go and delivered meals (rural areas only)
- Summer grocery benefits
WIC: Safeguarding Our Nation Since 1972
WIC Works!

Effective investment: $1 invested saves almost $2.50 in costs
Proposed Updates to the WIC Food Package

**BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT**
Increase support for mothers who mostly, but not exclusively, breastfeed to support individual breastfeeding goals.

**SEAFOOD**
Improve access to canned fish to reflect the latest dietary guidance.

**DAIRY AND EGGS**
Provide more options, such as different sizes of yogurt containers or substituting soy yogurt for milk or tofu for eggs.

**FRUITS AND VEGETABLES**
Increase fruit and vegetable benefit by 3-4x, focus on whole fruit, and increase variety of fruits, veggies, and legumes offered.

**GRAINS**
Expand whole grain options to include things like quinoa, blue cornmeal, and whole wheat bagels.
Connecting WIC Participants with Produce
Collaborating to Ensure All Families Know About WIC
Setting All Families Up to Thrive
Get Connected Today

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

https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/modernization

@USDANutrition

@usdagov
National Strategy Pillar 2: Integrate nutrition and health

• Prioritize nutrition and food security in overall health
• Recognize the need for disease prevention and management
• Screen for food insecurity
Goal:
Encourage action and engagement
Support a diverse WIC workforce
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
PROPOSED RULE FOR SCHOOL MEAL STANDARDS

We all share a common goal: raising healthy kids and helping them reach their full potential!
School meals are the main source of nutrition for millions of children every school day. Here are some ways USDA is proposing to make these meals even more nourishing, while still appealing to kids. We welcome your feedback on these proposed changes through public comments.

- **Added Sugars**
  - Limit using a phased approach:
    - Phase 1: Limits on specific high-sugar products like yogurt and cereal
    - Phase 2: Overall weekly limits across all meals

- **Milk**
  - Allow some* flavored milk with reasonable limits on added sugars.

  *The proposed rule requests feedback on different options.

- **Whole Grains**
  - Offer products that are primarily whole grain with the option for occasional non-whole, enriched grain products.

- **Sodium**
  - Reduce weekly limits gradually and in line with FDA’s recommendations for industry.
SNAP HEALTHY INCENTIVES

SNAP healthy incentive programs encourage healthy eating by making nutritious food more accessible and affordable through coupons, discounts, gift cards, bonus items, or extra funds.

Research shows that incentive programs are an effective way to promote healthy eating and improve food and nutrition security. Improving what Americans eat can significantly reduce diet-related chronic diseases and disparities.

Interested in starting a SNAP healthy incentive program?
Visit the FNS website to learn more.

Where are incentives offered?
- Stores: from small, local markets to large national chains
- Farmers markets
- Online SNAP retailers

What are some types of incentives?
- Extra funds (e.g., “double bucks”)
- Percentage discount
- Coupon for future purchases
- Bonus food items

What foods can be incentivized?
- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Dairy
- Whole grains

An example of how SNAP healthy incentives can improve health:

Extra funds for fruits and vegetables
More fruits and vegetables purchased
More fruits and vegetables eaten
Improved health and well-being
Fewer diet-related diseases
MyPlate is on Instagram!

Follow us @myplate_gov
USDA Actions on Hunger, Nutrition and Health

February 15, 2024

Dr. Deirdra Chester
Director, USDA Office of the Chief Scientist
FEEDING A GROWING WORLD
USDA SCIENCE AND RESEARCH STRATEGY, 2023 - 2026: Cultivating Scientific Innovation
USDA’S FIVE SCIENCE PRIORITIES

Priority 1:
Accelerating Innovative Technologies & Practices

Priority 2:
Driving Climate-Smart Solutions

Priority 3:
Bolstering Nutrition Security & Health

Priority 4:
Cultivating Resilient Ecosystems

Priority 5:
Translating Research into Action
Priority 1:
Accelerating Innovative Technologies & Practices
Since FY21, USDA's Research, Education, and Economics mission area has invested **over $37M** in alternative protein research & development, including:

- $17.2M from the National Institute of Food & Agriculture (NIFA) for extramural research projects
- $20.2M from the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) to build USDA's internal research portfolio
Priority 2:
Driving Climate-Smart Solutions
The Agriculture Innovation Mission for Climate, also called **AIM for Climate**:

- Co-led by the U.S. & United Arab Emirates
- Raised **$17 billion+** in global investments
- Expanded to **600+ partners** worldwide, **55** national governments
- **78** private sector-led innovation sprints
Priority 3:
Bolstering Nutrition Security & Health
ASCEND FOR BETTER HEALTH
Priority 4: Cultivating Resilient Ecosystems
Priority 5:
Translating Research Into Action
QUESTIONS?

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Using Purchasing to Build Health, Equity & Opportunity

Kate Fitzgerald
Senior Advisor for Food Systems, MRP USDA
“Sourcing local foods can help increase consumption of fruits, vegetables, and other under consumed foods, improve attitudes about healthy eating, and support local economies.”

Biden-Harris Administration National Strategy on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health
Goals

• Create a fairer food system
• Make nutritious food more accessible
• Seed new revenue streams for producers
• Build a more resilient food supply chain
• Emphasize equity
Local Food Purchase Programs

$1 billion for local purchases by nutrition providers & schools:

• Meets immediate needs
• Responds to local preferences
• Provides fair prices to producers
• Fosters longterm relationships
“The entire LFPA experience has been...by far the deepest work I’ve ever done.”

_Eve Morrisey, New London Community Meal Center_
We were thrilled to be able to get fresh food out to so many immigrant families, especially the African greens and foods that they know and love.... These veggie bags make a tremendous difference for so many.

“...”

Hope House, MA
“It was extremely moving to see the happiness of the faces of many of our clients who were able to partake in quality fresh produce and extremely fresh dairy products, such as cottage cheese, yogurt, farmer cheese, and string cheese, which is not always available to them.”

Jewish Community Council of Canarsie, NY
“Recipients have commented that the quality of ground beef exceeds what they normally receive and are proud to support a local socially disadvantaged producer.”

Arkansas Dept. of Education
LFPA “increased access to fresh produce, reduced food waste, improved nutrition and cooking skills, and stronger community connections.”

*Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians*
“The impact this program has had on our producers cannot be overstated. It has been a remarkably valuable opportunity for our small-scale family farms to expand and invest in themselves.”

Tulsa OK farmers market
“The LPFA has been a major contributing factor in the success of our locally owned and operated business.”

A.J. Honey Farms, LLC, KS
For Tilghman Island Seafood, a new small blue catfish processor located in rural MD, the LFPA-funded purchases by the Maryland Food Bank literally “helped the business get off the ground.”

MD Dept of Ag
“Thanks almost entirely to the LFS/PA Grant, we were able to provide a total increased revenue of $440,000 to two local Arkansas processing plants in 2023.”

Natural State Beef, AR
Bison Pilot Program

Local tribal bison meat for tribal communities through FDPIR
“We understand that our success is not just measured in sales but in the impact we have on our community. By supporting local producers...we strive to leave a positive, lasting impression...”
THANK YOU
USDA.gov/markets
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Rural Health and Nutrition
USDA Rural Development

Kellie Kubena
USDA Rural Health Liaison
15 February 2024
Rural Health Liaison

• Rural Health Liaison appointed in March 2022

• 2018 Farm Bill created USDA Rural Health Liaison to
  • Coordinate across USDA, with Dept of Health and Human Services (HHS), and other partners to promote rural health
  • Share information and data related to USDA programs with customers and rural health information with USDA programs and partners

• 2022-2023 Accomplishments
  • Rural Health InfoHub for USDA employees with an Inventory of USDA programs/products related to rural health
  • Mental Health Awareness Month 2023 Workshop Series
  • Rural Health Day Outreach
  • Led USDA participation in Federal Social Determinants of Health Playbook, Implementation plan for Fentanyl Adulterated with Xylazine, National Drug Control Strategy
  • Launched Maternal Health Pilot Project with HRSA
USDA Rural Development operates over 70 financial assistance programs, such as loans and grants, for a variety of rural projects that impact a community's health.

For example:

- Community Facilities
- Distance Learning and Telemedicine
- Rural Economic Development Grants
- Healthy Food Financing
- Strategic Economic and Community Development
Rural Partners Network

Purpose: Advance equitable rural prosperity through local job creation, infrastructure development, and community improvement

• Place based support:
  • 3-4 staff per state focused, on all of government perspective
  • Navigation, application and capacity building support
  • Learning and feedback to federal partners

• Federal Agency Commitment
  • Rural desk officers identified
  • Rural.gov, a rural focused website of federal resources
Ideas for Moving Forward

• Exploration:
  • Better understand factors affecting farmers and behavioral health interventions that are successful
  • Equip our USDA field staff with mental health literacy tools to best support our customers and each other

• Leadership:
  • Update of National Suicide Prevention Strategy
  • Maternal Health Pilot Project with HRSA
  • Support for rural hospital feasibility analysis
Let’s Connect!

USDA Rural Development
• Website: https://www.rd.usda.gov/
• Subscribe for updates here
• Twitter: @usdaRD
• Contact Us
• Rural Data Gateway

USDA Rural Health
• Subscribe: Rural Health
• Contact: rural.health@usda.gov
  or kellie.kubena@usda.gov
• Phone: 202-579-5715

Rural Partners Network:
• Website: Rural.gov
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