



OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

June 3, 2026

THE HONORABLE JAHANA HAYES
United States House of Representatives
2049 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Hayes,

Thank you for your May 11, 2026, letter regarding the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) intention to reorganize and restructure the Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services (FNCS) mission area into the new Food and Nutrition Administration (FNA). The Department is dedicated to refocusing its core operations to better align with its founding mission of supporting American producers, the participants that benefit from American agriculture, and ensuring accountability to the American taxpayer.

Let me be clear, amid the reorganization, there will be no interruption to the implementation of USDA's sixteen nutrition assistance programs nor to the Department's work to ensure each program operates with integrity. The Food and Nutrition Administration will continue to bring the same capacity and resources that our partners and the public have come to rely on for decades.

Since the FNA reorganization was announced, the only concern raised by Congressional Democrats and leftist organizations is that the Agency will fail in its duty to deliver food assistance to those in need. That is unequivocally false.

However, I might remind you of two recent instances that did significantly impact access to nutrition programs. The first was the Obama and Biden Administrations' mismanagement of the Food Distribution on Indian Reservations Program, which disrupted food availability and access across Indian Country. The Biden Administration's failures were so serious that the Subcommittee on Nutrition, Foreign Agriculture, and Horticulture of the Committee on Agriculture and the Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies of the Committee on Appropriations held a rare joint oversight hearing¹ to investigate how the Biden Administration's incompetence caused those shortages. That was a failure of execution, twice over, by Secretary Vilsack.

¹ *Hearing on Severe Food Distribution Shortages in Tribal and Elderly Communities*, Subcommittee on Nutrition, Foreign Agriculture, and Horticulture of the Committee on Agriculture and the Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies of the Committee on Appropriations, 118th

The second was the government shutdown last fall, when Congressional Democrats refused to open the Federal government to feed families in need. Rather than negotiate a compromise that would restore Federal operations, Democratic lawmakers prioritized ideological grievances over the immediate needs of our Nation's most vulnerable.

On May 13, 2026, the House Committee on Agriculture held a roundtable where I discussed the reorganization and took questions from attending Members. Noticeably absent were these questions raised in this public letter. However, I welcome a second opportunity to provide information.

When a business is not serving its customers or operating within its budget, corporations regularly restructure. Some recent notable private sector restructurings include Chevron's relocation to Houston, Texas, to escape the over regulation and hostile business climate found in California.² Walmart similarly announced it was relocating about one thousand workers as it sought to combine its global technology and product teams into two primary locations.³

In that vein, the reorganization of the Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services mission area to the Food and Nutrition Administration comparably positions the agency to other similar programs across the Federal government, all while reducing duplicative layers and bureaucratic complexity. As a State-administered program, USDA aims to deliver more resources and target technical assistance directly to State programs, outside of the National Capitol Region. The FNS National Office in Alexandria, Virginia, has not significantly reduced SNAP error rates, improved application timeliness, or significantly minimized program fraud. The same is true of the former regional office structure.

As the first step of restructuring and in response to employees' concerns about the building's condition and safety,⁴ the National Office in Alexandria, Virginia, will be closed. On the announced closure of Braddock Place, union negotiations commenced for the *local* move to relocate employees. The union representatives' demands have included such things as: grieving periods for employee strain; allowing employees to choose from which office they work, regardless of the agency's needs; sunlight access or so-called "happy" lamps to mimic the

Congress, Second Session (Sept. 11, 2024), transcript available here: <https://www.congress.gov/118/chrg/CHRG-118hrg56684/CHRG-118hrg56684.pdf>. See also: *Senators demand the USDA fix its backlog of food distribution to Native American tribes*, AP (Aug. 23, 2024), available at: <https://apnews.com/article/usda-tribal-food-distribution-senate-letter-d749e8199631161c428412699863ff6e>.

² *Chevron plans massive \$66.5 million update to its Houston headquarters*, CHRON (Oct. 21, 2024), available at: <https://www.chron.com/business/article/chevron-downtown-houston-renovation-19851493.php>.

³ *Walmart Lays Off or Relocates about 1,000 Corporate Workers*, WALL ST. J. (May 12, 2026), available at: https://www.wsj.com/business/retail/walmart-layoffs-relocates-technology-jobs-23bbf322?st=Bz8FjR&reflink=desktopwebshare_permalink.

⁴ *Difficult, Demoralizing, and Draining: USDA Nutrition Staff Complain about Working Conditions in Virginia Facility*, POLITICO PRO (July 23, 2025), available at: <https://subscriber.politicopro.com/article/2025/07/usda-staff-complain-working-conditions-virginia-facility-00468177>.

sunlight; single occupant restrooms; coffee machines; auditory dampeners; onsite food vending; shuttle buses; and more. It appears some union leaders are prioritizing their own interests and needs over the agency's mission, despite their public claims to be primarily interested in American citizens' need of food assistance.

The agency intends to move program and regional offices to State hubs once office closures occur. Retailer operations and compliance duties will be assigned to offices in Atlanta, Georgia; Los Angeles, California; Dallas, Texas; and New York, New York. The State Support and Evaluation Hubs will provide customer service and management evaluations to States. These offices will be in Denver, Colorado; Dallas, Texas; Raleigh, North Carolina; Indianapolis, Indiana; and Kansas City, Missouri. The Program Implementation and Oversight Centers will be in the following cities: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in Indianapolis, Indiana; Child Nutrition Programs (CN) in Dallas, Texas; Supplemental Nutrition and Safety Programs (SNAS) in Kansas City, Missouri. The Research Hub will be in the Department's Raleigh, North Carolina, hub. The fifth hub in Denver, Colorado, will serve as the Emergency Management and Continuity of Operations location.

Transitioning to a program-based leadership model reduces administrative layers, cuts through information silos, enhances customer service across the country, distributes workload, and strengthens relationships with program participants, governors, state agencies, tribes, and local partners. To be clear, each hub will have programmatic experts available to assist all States in their execution of USDA's nutrition programs. It is essential the Department maintains a workforce it can sufficiently accommodate, while preserving the Secretary's authority to fill critically necessary positions when appropriate.

Thank you, again, for your letter. All stakeholders – including USDA employees, program participants, members of the agricultural community, and Capitol Hill offices – are encouraged to visit the USDA's FNA reorganization website⁵ for additional information.

If you have further questions, please contact USDA's Office of Congressional Relations at (202) 720-7095 or ocr@usda.gov. A copy of this response letter has been sent to your colleagues.

Sincerely,



Stephen Alexander Vaden
Deputy Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture

⁵ FNA Reorganization website, available at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/about/reorganization>.