



Academy Priorities for the 2023 Farm Bill

Promoting Nutrition Security, Health Equity
and a Sustainable Food System

Introduction



The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is committed to improving the health of Americans by ensuring access to a nourishing, safe, affordable and sustainable food supply. The Academy is also committed to ensuring that quality nutrition services and nutrition education are integral components of nutrition assistance programs.

The Academy offers the following recommendations to build upon and strengthen existing Farm Bill programs; increase access to affordable, nutritious food, especially for those most in need; and improve the demand and marketplace for foods that contribute to health and food security. The Academy's guiding principle is its commitment to improving health for all, especially those most susceptible to and experiencing food insecurity and health inequities, which is the basis for these recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION #1

Support nutrition security and health equity; improve access to healthful and culturally appropriate foods and resources to prepare them.

RECOMMENDATION #2

Create a diverse workforce and ensure sound science and program evaluation for future evidence-based decision making that is grounded in promoting health equity.

RECOMMENDATION #3

Support initiatives that foster a healthful and sustainable food system.

#1

Support nutrition security and health equity; improve access to healthful and culturally appropriate foods and resources to prepare them.

GOAL: Strengthen and expand federal nutrition programs and interventions that improve nutrition security and promote health equity.

The Academy supports:

Nutrition Education for the Public and Nutrition Services Programs

- Funding a new or existing, nationwide training and technical assistance resource center that could provide training to qualified professionals in nutrition or related subject areas and evidence-based support to all federal nutrition education programs for best practices to enhance networking, coordination, and capacity-building for nutrition education and promotion efforts by the public, nonprofit and business sectors.
- Examining regulations and guidance regarding duplication of services and lack of community and stakeholder input in nutrition education interventions.
- Establishing and funding the mechanism, roles, responsibilities, procedures and anticipated outcomes for coordination, surveillance systems and analytics support at federal, regional, state and local levels of government, as well as across public and private institutions that deliver nutrition education.
- Identifying opportunities to ensure program effectiveness and efficiencies in public nutrition education and assistance programs to promote positive consumer behavior change and meet other critical needs associated with Social Determinants of Health.
- Providing support for necessary leadership roles within the U.S. Department of Agriculture, specifically in the regional offices on nutrition and nutrition education.
- Piloting placement of retail dietetics and nutrition professionals in urban and rural areas to support efforts to provide referrals to federal nutrition programs, leverage SNAP-Ed and EFNEP funds to optimize reach, provide medical nutrition therapy and connect patients to medically tailored meals.

Supplemental Nutrition Education Program

- Expanding SNAP-Ed program funding from \$450 million to at least \$900 million annually to reach more people, enable more organizations to participate and both encourage innovation and center inclusion, diversity, equity and access in program design.
- Creating opportunities for innovative partnerships between SNAP-Ed and community-based/non-government agencies to develop and implement nutrition education and outreach strategies that better meet the needs of communities.
- Decentralizing the federal SNAP-Ed and empowering SNAP-Ed local implementing agencies to adapt, create and implement the nutrition education and outreach that meets the local needs of the population it serves. Reduce bureaucracy red tape to realize the full potential and impact of SNAP-Ed.

Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program

- Providing sufficient funding for the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

Access to Program

- Bringing parity to food assistance in Puerto Rico, American Samoa and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.
- Raising participation rates among eligible older adults.
- Lowering barriers to SNAP participation among military members and their families, college students, immigrants and individuals with disabilities who have difficulty accessing SNAP.
- Supporting tribal sovereignty and strengthening food security in Native communities.
- Increasing SNAP benefits to ensure individuals and families can afford healthful foods that align with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.
- Ending the ban that disallows participants to use benefits from the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations and SNAP within the same month.

Increase access to healthful foods that align with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*

- Updating standards for SNAP retailers that increase the availability of healthful foods.
- Expanding SNAP retailers beyond the current brick mortar to encourage innovative solutions to food access.

- Ensuring final regulations lead to enhanced retail offerings to promote and sell healthful foods that align with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.
- Ensuring adequate training and technical assistance are provided to retailers to assist transition to updated standards.
- Encouraging collaboration efforts with SNAP-Ed, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, farmers, retailers, trade groups, grocers and other stakeholders to align strategies to improve healthier options in retail spaces and drive demand for these healthier options.
- Expanding evidence-based healthful marketing strategies at SNAP-authorized retailers, including food and beverage placement and promotion strategies in-store, such as high-traffic areas of the store (e.g. checkout and end caps) and online.
- Encouraging innovative infrastructure to access healthful foods that align with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* that breaks down physical and time barriers such as digital groceries or digital farmer markets.

Modernization

- Improving access to online benefits (i.e. online purchases).
- Incorporating advances in EBT, such as mobile payment options.
- Eliminating delivery fees for online purchases.



The Emergency Food Assistance Program

- Including additional mandatory funding for TEFAP food in recognition of the sustained high need for food assistance at food banks nationwide.
- Authorizing TEFAP mandatory funds to at least \$500 million per year.
- Funding TEFAP storage and distribution at \$200 million per year and TEFAP Infrastructure Grants at \$15 million per year to help with transportation and storage costs.
- Increasing funding to support nutrition education to be provided through the TEFAP distribution partners.

Commodity Supplemental Food Program

- Reauthorizing the Commodity Supplemental Food Program to ensure that low-income seniors have access to nutritious monthly food packages and increase funding to provide an opportunity for the two remaining states (Alabama and Wyoming) to participate in the program.

Food Distribution on Indian Reservations Program

- Ending the ban that disallows participants to use benefits from the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations and SNAP within the same month.
- Enabling Tribal governments to administer all federal nutrition programs and allow Tribal organizations to expand Native-grown and culturally relevant food procurement options in federal nutrition programs.

Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program

- Doubling the investment in GusNIP.
- Eliminate the mandatory state match for GusNIP.
- Placing priority on projects through the granting process that:

Seek to engage retailers of all types (e.g., supermarkets, discount stores, warehouse/big box, convenience stores, and small, independent businesses).

Focus on the development of technology that could facilitate use of incentives for purchasing healthful foods that align with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* in the retail setting.

Encourage and prioritize coordination with nutrition education programming, such as SNAP-Ed and EFNEP.

- Encourage and provide technical assistance for projects with varying population densities and retail outlets.
- Focus on food desert communities and under-developed outlying communities where poverty is deep and access to healthful foods that align with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* is severely lacking.
- Provide more opportunities for small feeding agencies to obtain grant and financial assistance.

Senior Farmers Market

- Increase funding for and access to utilization of the Senior Farmers Market Program.

Child Nutrition Programs

- Increase current funding and maintain integrity of the Child Nutrition Programs, such as the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program and the Farm to School Program.



#2

Create a diverse workforce and ensure sound science and program evaluation for future evidence-based decision making that is grounded in promoting health equity.

GOAL: *Adequate funding in workforce development programs and a strong science portfolio informs development and enhancement of nutrition program content and high-quality, systematic monitoring and evaluation provide guidance for structuring and strengthening consumer education implementation and delivery systems.*

The Academy supports:

- Authorizing USDA funding to accomplish the requirements in the 1990 National Nutrition Monitoring and Related Research Act.
- Investing in nutrition monitoring to better understand the diets of those at greatest risk of health disparities—there is a critical need for more nutrition research participants from underrepresented groups.
- Increasing funding for the Agricultural and Food Research Initiative, including a focus on funds to support outreach and training of a diverse agriculture and nutrition workforce and encourage research that examines the intersection of human nutrition, agricultural practices, and climate change.
- Increasing funding for the Agricultural Research Service Human Nutrition Research Centers.
- Maintaining funding for the Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research.
- Funding adequate evaluation and program expertise to examine ways to improve health outcomes related to nutrition status, such as SNAP benefit adequacy that accounts for geographical differences in cost of living, reduction of participant stigma in nutrition assistance programs and child nutrition programs, and improved health outcomes of SNAP recipients.
- Continuing to strengthen linkages to nutrition programming and nutrition education research through the Interagency Committee on Human Nutrition Research, as outlined in the National Nutrition Research Roadmap.

#3

Support initiatives that foster a healthful and sustainable food system.

GOAL: *Strengthen and expand federal nutrition programs and interventions that improve nutrition security and promote health equity.*

The Academy supports:

- Funding and federal support for a variety of community-based and regional agriculture and food access initiatives that expand the availability of regionally-grown food, create jobs and promote economic development; further incentivize healthier food purchases; enable more collection of data about purchases to facilitate evaluation of program effectiveness; fund pilots that investigate further interventions that aim to improve diet quality, food security and fiscal responsibility
- Conservation, subsidy and insurance programs that incentivize farm practices and policies that conserve soil, water, air, habitat and biodiversity while promoting sustainability in farm practices, reduction of carbon emissions and nutrition quality.
- Policies and programs to ensure the next generation of farmers, including those from communities who have historically been disadvantaged, have access to land, skills and incentives to grow healthful foods and promote health equity.
- Increased funding for the Specialty Crop Block Grants to support food safety and drive demand through education for specialty crops to increase dietary diversity as an aid to help people achieve the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.
- Supply chain innovation for food retail outlets.
 - Reduce the cost and administrative burden for farmers markets, farm stands, green cart, community-supported agriculture, small rural grocers and other non-traditional vendors and convenience stores to accept EBT and participate in Farmers Market Nutrition Programs.
 - Provide targeted solutions for communities living in food deserts.
 - Reauthorize the Healthy Food Financing Initiative to stimulate economic development, create jobs and improve health in low-income, underserved communities and communities of underrepresented groups in both urban and rural areas, by supporting farmers and retailers to improve access to nutritious, affordable healthful foods that align with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.
 - Support nutrition assistance programs for populations that may need additional outreach and support.
 - Continue to fund and evaluate pilot projects that test innovative approaches to delivery of groceries, while ensuring client privacy is protected.
 - Expand/scale effective and cost-efficient programs.
 - Support community efforts to reach isolated older adults to provide healthful food options to help maintain their independence.

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