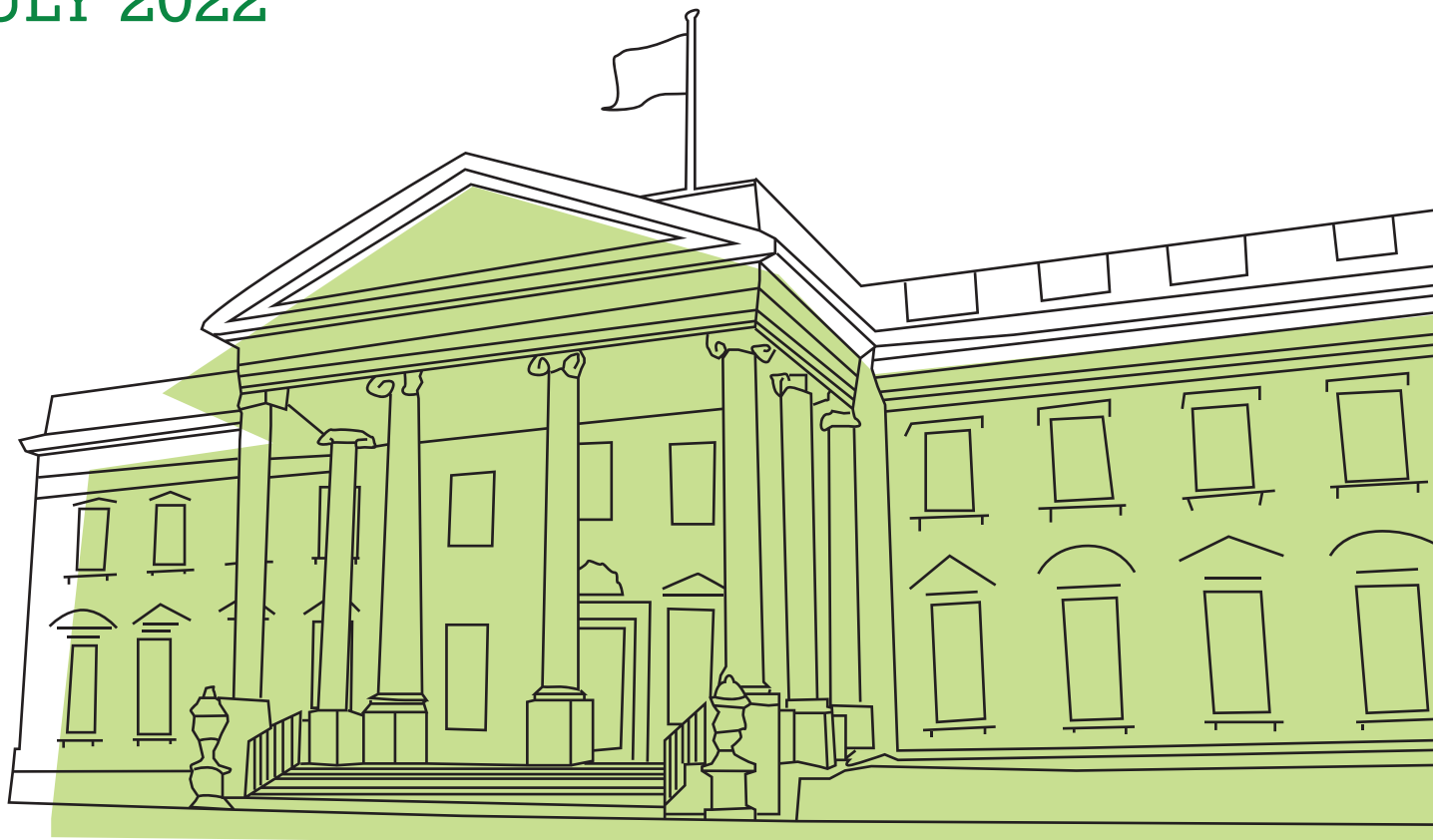




FMI THE FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
COLLECTIVE REPORT TO
WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE
ON HUNGER, NUTRITION
AND HEALTH

JULY 2022





THE FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

FMI- The Food Industry Association Collective Report to White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health

July 2022

Introduction

[FMI- The Food Industry Association](#) is pleased to contribute to the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health, scheduled to be held in September 2022. The Conference presents an historic opportunity by providing a collaborative platform for all stakeholders to join together in working toward the goal of ending hunger and food insecurity, reducing diet-related diseases, and improving nutrition. FMI recognizes the important role the food industry plays in hunger, nutrition, and health.

More than 50 years after the first influential White House Conference, the time is right to address the critical challenges faced by millions of Americans in accessing and affording food, and to improve the health of so many Americans living with disease that can be managed through diet, such as obesity, diabetes, and heart disease.

To support our work with the White House Conference, FMI collected insights, stories, and recommendations from its member companies – food retailers, wholesalers, and suppliers of products and services – about their nutrition, health, and well-being initiatives and community partnerships that align with the stated goals. FMI also hosted a convening that brought together food industry representatives to discuss potential feedback and recommendations for the White House Conference. This resulting report puts forth preliminary food industry commitments, recommendations for government actions, and showcases examples from members’ health and well-being initiatives and community outreach and engagement programs that demonstrate the important role the food industry plays in impacting hunger, nutrition, and health.

The food industry is empowered by the opportunity to work with policy makers, non-profit partners, and community stakeholders from around the country. During the

COVID-19 pandemic, the grocery store and the entire food supply chain played a critical role in providing access to affordable, nutritious food for all Americans. This Conference presents a chance to build strategies that align with consumer priorities for health and well-being, that strengthen community-based public-private partnerships, and that enact technological innovations to improve the lives of Americans. FMI is proud to work alongside its member companies to engage with the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health.

About FMI – The Food Industry Association

As the food industry association, FMI works with and on behalf of the entire food industry, including retailers and wholesalers, product suppliers and manufacturers, and a wide variety of companies providing critical services to advance a safer, healthier, and more efficient consumer food supply chain. The food industry plays an important role in hunger, nutrition, and health, with the grocery store serving as an accessible, convenient community-based destination for feeding assistance, preventive care, nutrition guidance, and nourishing, practical meal solutions.

Food Industry Involvement and Commitment

As the centerpiece in regional food systems and local communities, and as partners in the health care ecosystem, the food industry is uniquely aligned with the first three White House Conference Pillars focused on improving food access and affordability, integrating nutrition and health, and empowering all consumers to make and have access to healthy choices - whether in the grocery store, online, or in the community.

FMI commits to working to improve food access and affordability, increase food donations, leverage federal feeding programs, integrate nutrition and health across the industry, expand Food as Medicine initiatives in the food retail setting, strengthen public-private partnerships, encourage business innovation, empower consumers to make healthy choices, and promote family meals and meal solutions that emphasize nutrient-dense foods in all forms that align with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.

To further these goals, FMI hosted a Member Convening for the White House Conference, which brought together a range of food industry stakeholders from around the country. As a result of multiple member meetings in addition to the convening, FMI shares in this report examples of food industry commitments, recommendations for government actions, and

examples from members' health and well-being initiatives and community engagement programs that demonstrate the important role the food industry can play in positively affecting hunger, nutrition, and health. FMI will continue to work with member company representatives to ensure these commitments are feasible, actionable, and measurable with specific metrics. We appreciate the White House addressing these critical issues that influence the lives of Americans, but we also need to address obstacles to achieving solutions. FMI will continue to collaborate across the food industry and with stakeholders to provide insights, feedback, recommendations, and commitments, and on behalf of the food industry FMI encourages and respectfully requests that the White House incorporate the recommendations outlined below into the National Strategy.

Action Recommendations for Government to Address the Goals of the Pillars

We encourage the White House to build upon successful policies and programs and to facilitate modernization to help address challenges.

White House Pillar 1: Improve Food Access and Affordability

End hunger by making it easier for everyone — including urban, suburban, rural, and Tribal communities — to access and afford food. For example, expand eligibility for and increase participation in food assistance programs and improve transportation to places where food is available.

The food industry is committed to increasing access to affordable, nutritious, safe food through a variety of avenues and programs. The entire food industry plays a vital role in expanding food donations and food deliveries to those in need, facilitating federal feeding assistance programs in-store and online, and expanding equity and access to food through technology advancements and ecommerce solutions. These efforts are foundational in daily operations within food industry companies as they strive to support individuals, families, communities and neighborhoods.

The food industry continues to collaborate on creative solutions such public-private partnerships for food delivery solutions, including mobile food access through grocery shuttles and trucks, particularly to serve Americans with limited access to food or

inability to get to the grocery store. Industry-wide food recovery programs are a noteworthy example of efforts that both enhance food donations and minimize food waste.

There is a desire to explore more of these resourceful possibilities; however, some challenges to address include the lack of uniformity across federal feeding program operations, technological barriers, minimal infrastructure to facilitate food donations and food recovery, lack of transportation options in areas with limited access to food, and the need for better delivery options.

To help build collaborative industry initiatives to improve food access and affordability, the White House should incorporate these recommendations into the National Strategy:

- The federal government should support modernization of donation infrastructure (including refrigerated and frozen storage, coordination between community collaborators, and transportation of donated products) to make it easier to donate food in all communities.
- The federal government should remove regulatory barriers for food recovery programs and provide incentives for companies supporting food recovery and food donation programs.
- The federal government should consider community grants, and novel and flexible transportation and delivery options to identify and address areas of limited food access - particularly for households located more than 10 miles from a grocery store. Support for public transportation options or changes should be considered.
- USDA should provide support to promote the use of the SNAP retailer incentive programs to integrate nutrition and health in retail establishments to help consumers achieve their own well-being goals and empower SNAP recipients to make informed healthy choices.
- USDA should encourage and incentivize nutrition education programs and food retail Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN) services, such as one-on-one counseling for SNAP and WIC participants and low-income households, in the retail setting, online and in-store.
- USDA should partner with the food industry to prioritize and facilitate Online WIC ordering and purchasing to improve access to WIC foods for families.

- USDA should continue to modernize WIC programming and ensure the WIC Food Packages reflect consumer demands, commercial accessibility and nutritional needs.
- The federal government should evaluate the multiple factors that impact the cost of food including but not limited to production and trade issues.
- USDA and Congress should implement Summer EBT nutrition programs, so children may continue to access nutritious food during the summer and other occasions when school is not in session. The successes of the P-EBT program during the COVID-19 pandemic as well as previous summer EBT pilots demonstrate that this type of program can have a positive impact on hunger and allows quick response during unexpected school closures.
- USDA should prioritize the Mobile Payment Pilot for SNAP, which would allow SNAP participants to utilize their EBT card in a mobile device to make SNAP purchases at the point-of-sale and should work with the food industry to integrate this capability into retail technology.
- USDA should work with the food industry to address technology complexities and provide support for nutrition incentive programs to simplify execution by the industry and usage by shoppers. These programs should also be equitably offered both in online and in-store grocery shopping settings.

Food Industry Commitment for Pillar 1: Improve Food Access and Affordability

1. FMI will develop bold, measurable commitments to increase food donations to food banks and other non-profits to help consumers build meals consistent with the *Dietary Guidelines*.
 - The food industry will donate 2 billion meals in 2023.
 - Future goals include increasing donations, continued tracking and focus on qualitative benchmarking.
2. FMI will develop bold, measurable commitments to expand access to and leverage federal feeding programs in the food retail setting that include nutrient-dense foods.

White House Pillar 2: Integrating Nutrition and Health

Prioritize the role of nutrition and food security in overall health, including disease prevention and management, and ensure that our health care system addresses the nutrition needs of all people.

Grocery stores serve as destinations for health and well-being for countless Americans and are a centerpiece in regional food systems, local communities, and health care ecosystems with Food as Medicine programs in the food retail setting. All Americans must eat and purchase food, and the supermarket provides a natural touchpoint that offers services to connect nutrition to health that can help customers improve their overall well-being. Food retailers and product suppliers have increased their health and well-being programs for both customers and employees, quite often with the strategic guidance and collaborative efforts of registered dietitian nutritionists (RDNs), pharmacists, and other healthcare professionals working to provide practical and innovative solutions to improve public health.

There are many trained and educated RDNs in influential roles throughout the food industry (including among retail, wholesale, supplier organizations) with expertise in nutrition science, disease prevention, and connecting food and health to consumers using evidence-based principles. RDNs possess the education, knowledge, and experience to translate the science of nutrition into practical solutions to help individuals make personalized, positive lifestyle changes.

It is often difficult to integrate the valuable contributions of RDNs due to challenges with referrals and reimbursement coverage for services. RDNs support many programs, from policy development in federal agencies to ensuring accurate labeling and providing personal nutrition counseling at the store level. RDNs are well-equipped to develop and implement Food as Medicine programs in retail organizations and in communities.

To help support health and well-being initiatives that integrate nutrition and health for consumers, the White House should incorporate these recommendations into the National Strategy:

- USDA should incentivize food retail RDN services such as nutrition education, store tours, cooking classes and one-on-one counseling for SNAP and WIC participants and low-income households.
- USDA and Congress should promote and fund Food as Medicine programs such as medically tailored meals, medically tailored groceries, and produce prescriptions as covered benefits in Medicare and Medicaid. Produce prescription programs should include produce options in all forms, which includes fresh, frozen, and canned fruits and vegetables.
- Congress should expand access to nutrition care through legislation that would expand Medicare Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT) coverage to include a wide range of diseases and medical conditions, including prediabetes, obesity, hypertension, dyslipidemia, malnutrition, eating disorders, cancer, celiac disease, HIV/AIDS, and other conditions causing unintentional weight loss.
- Congress should expand access to nutrition care through legislation that would expand the list of qualified providers authorized to refer their patients for MNT to include nurse practitioners, physician assistants, clinical nurse specialists, and psychologists.
- USDA and Congress should promote food choice with positive incentives rather than restrictions on certain foods.
- USDA should promote and provide incentives to build on best practices established by the community partnerships that include local food retailers, healthcare organizations, non-profits, and other collaborators.

Food Industry Commitment for Pillar 2: Integrating Nutrition and Health

FMI will share clear, metric-driven commitments to ensure access to the expertise and services of RDNs and Food as Medicine initiatives across the food industry to prevent, manage and treat diet-related disease.

- The food industry will share 100 million evidence-based messages for consumers in 2023 through many different avenues, supporting nutrition and healthy eating patterns.
- Future goals include increasing shared messages and platforms to reach diverse audiences and continued tracking and expansion.

White House Pillar 3: Empower All Consumers to Make and Have Access to Healthy Choices

Foster environments that enable all people to easily make informed healthy choices, increase access to healthy food, encourage healthy workplace and school policies, and invest in public messaging and education campaigns that are culturally appropriate and resonate with specific communities.

Numerous tools and programs exist, many of them created by credible experts and RDNs within federal agencies (USDA and FDA) and other organizations, designed to assist consumers as they seek the information they desire to make their own personal decisions and food choices for themselves and their families. These tools and programs include consumer messaging and guidance on nutrition education, recommendations from the *Dietary Guidelines*, practical meal and snack solutions that align with MyPlate, portion balance, better understanding of food labeling, safe food handling practices, and the promotion of family meals to support health and social benefits.

Food retailers support health and well-being for consumers and employees by connecting the science of food to improved public health, building trust in the grocery store as a destination for health and well-being, and providing access to healthful choices and practical resources. The food industry plays a critical role in fostering healthy food environments by providing consumers tools they need to make informed food choices to meet personalized needs. This is achieved through a variety of avenues, such as clear and accurate product labeling, in-store signage and displays, and online information, applications, and resources that help customers better understand and gain access to healthy purchases.

Consumers are faced with a lack of consistent and at times even conflicting evidence-based information regarding nutrition, health and food choices everywhere, and they are confused and frustrated about how to know what the “healthy” choice is and how to achieve a healthier pattern of eating that aligns with the *Dietary Guidelines*. The food industry wants to support and empower consumers in their decision-making process with consistent science-based messages and tools and to ensure accurate and transparent labeling, while also supporting the work of USDA and FDA in these areas.

To help support and empower consumers with evidence-based information as they make and have access to healthy choices, the White House should incorporate these recommendations into the National Strategy:

- The White House should work with other government stakeholders and the food industry to increase positive consumer-facing, nutrition education messages through existing resources and should expand the reach of these programs.
- USDA should support and promote the work of SNAP-Ed and other community organizations to promote healthy nutrition messages and MyPlate resources to promote the *Dietary Guidelines* and overall healthy patterns of eating.
- The White House should continue to work with and provide resources to FDA, USDA, and other government agencies to promote labeling policies and other strategies that will help consumers make informed purchasing decisions that support overall health and wellness.
- Federal agencies should encourage retail and manufacturer partnerships on nutrition and health education programs that help consumers achieve their own health and well-being priorities and empower them to make informed healthy choices.
- USDA should promote and expand nutrition incentive programs to integrate nutrition and health in helping consumers achieve their own well-being goals and should empower them to make informed healthy choices.

Food Industry Commitment for Pillar 3: Empower Consumers to Make and Have Access to Healthy Choices

FMI and its member companies will significantly increase the number, scope and clarity of positive, actionable, consumer-facing educational messages delivered to consumers that align with the *Dietary Guidelines*.

- 100 FMI members across the food industry will share links to education messages and tools for consumers including existing resources related to: *Dietary Guidelines*, USDA MyPlate, FDA labeling information, PFSE safe food handling practices, Family Meals Movement™, and more.
- Future goals include increased use of education messages and tools to inform consumers and continued expansion.

Examples of FMI Member Contributions to Support the Pillars

For more FMI Member Contributions, please see www.fmi.org/WHConference.

White House Pillar 1: Improve Food Access and Affordability

Food Donations

Food retail is the largest source of donations to [Feeding America's](#) food bank network. In 2021, food retailers donated 1.7 billion meals through the Feeding America network. FMI members contribute significantly to food banks across the country, both in terms of pounds of food and number of meals donated, in addition to providing financial support. The following provides only a few such examples.

- For example, one retailer developed a program to collect near-date fresh produce, dairy items, and shelf staples and package them to donate to food pantries in communities across their operating area. The company provides more than 50 million meals annually through this program. The retailer also supports volunteerism as a way to help local food banks expand access to healthy food in underserved areas. They provided more than 10,000 volunteer hours in 2022, the equivalent of almost 3 million meals.
- Donations continue throughout the year but are especially prevalent during the holiday season. Each year during the week before Thanksgiving, one regional retailer distributes nearly 1,000 Thanksgiving meals to those in need throughout the St. Louis area. Another retailer provides an annual donation of 25,000 turkeys through its hunger relief program around Thanksgiving time. This retailer also has a "Buy 1, Give 1" program in November, through which customers can purchase participating products, and the retailer will donate the same item to a regional food bank.
- Since 2017, one retailer has partnered with [Food & Friends](#), a community-based organization that prepares and delivers nutritionally tailored meals to people living with life-challenging illnesses, including cancer, HIV/AIDS, and other serious diseases. Last fall, this company provided \$25,000 for its annual Thanksgiving Day event, which assembled more than 800 Thanksgiving meals to support not only the Food & Friends clients suffering from life-challenging illnesses, but also their caretakers and dependents. In April 2022, the food retail company formed a multi-year, \$100,000 sponsorship with Food & Friends to continue as the

premiere sponsor for the annual Thanksgiving event through 2025. In addition, store employees have volunteered at the facility to assist with preparing and packing meals for delivery.

- One retailer shows its support of Hunger Action Month™ by focusing on volunteerism, education/awareness, and significant giving to its food partners. To help in the fight against hunger, the retailer donated more than 10 million pounds of meat to regional food banks through one of its programs focused on ensuring that those in need receive enough protein to fulfill the requirements of a balanced diet.
- One retailer works closely with the Utah Food Bank, including holding an annual food bank drive, serving as a collection point for food year-round, sponsoring a mobile food pantry at elementary schools throughout the year, and educating the community about making healthier donations (e.g., canned tuna, whole wheat pasta, and low-sodium canned vegetables) during peak donation times like the holidays.
- One product supplier has a commitment to create “Better Days” for 3 billion people by the end of 2030. As part of this global goal, the company intends to feed 375 million people in need by providing food donations, supporting child feeding programs, and providing relief in times of disaster. Since 2015, the company has fed 195 million people through food donations and reached 3.7 million children through feeding programs. It also partners with food banks on six continents, sponsoring food drives to help stock community food pantries around the world and providing essential food to those coping with natural disasters.
- The food industry also works to build new infrastructure and pathways in the community to fight hunger. One retailer created a program to help kids who struggle with food access at night and over the weekends by working directly with schools to help establish and support in-school pantries. The company is now supporting 130 in-school pantries across five states.
- Across one regional retailer’s four-state footprint, the company partners with food banks, food pantries, and hunger relief organizations to help feed those who are among the most vulnerable in the communities. Each year, the company donates more than \$13 million in food to help those in need.

Federal Feeding Programs

Through direct interaction in food retail stores and with employees nationwide, the food industry plays the critical front-line role in the shopping experience of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) customers.

The food industry is proud to administer and support these public-private partnerships, often through the financial support and work of retailers and associates. The food industry worked diligently during the COVID-19 pandemic to expand access to SNAP Online and helped grow the program from five states to now 49 states and the District of Columbia. The food industry has made great strides in increasing access to food for SNAP consumers through online platforms with the integration of EBT into online ordering. Through these advancements, customers have the flexibility to use multiple payment forms on their online orders, allowing them to use their EBT cards as well as their credit or debit cards.

FMI also participated in the USDA Task Force on Supplemental Foods Delivery in the WIC program, and the Task Force submitted a report with comprehensive recommendations for the WIC online ordering processes, regulatory and policy flexibilities, and additional considerations impacting the future modernization of the WIC shopping experience.

- For example, a large member company with operations on the East Coast provides its associates with training and in-store guidance to ensure that feeding assistance participants have access to the information and eligible foods needed to access their benefits. WIC participants can find clearly labeled product eligibility information through shelf labeling and bib tags, and SNAP participants can easily check their benefit balances to ensure their purchases align with their budget.
- One large retailer deployed a new online service for EBT recipients at several of its retail banners across the country. The integration of EBT services enables SNAP customers to use their benefits when purchasing groceries online through the retailer's website and app, ensuring that low-income families and individuals have greater access to nutritious food with online ordering, delivery, and curbside pickup.

- One retailer's new EBT service includes expanded benefits use through a third-party delivery app, reaching EBT recipients in 10 new states, including Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Louisiana, Montana, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. EBT access now reaches 49 states and Washington D.C., serving more than 28.5 million people experiencing food insecurity across the U.S.
- Through one regional retailer's partnership with a third-party delivery service, the company announced in August that delivery and curbside orders are now eligible for EBT SNAP payment. With this program, EBT SNAP participants will now be able to use their benefits to access qualified fresh food and pantry staples online from all their locations across four states.
- By locating its stores in food deserts, a specialized retail member focuses on supporting families participating in the WIC program and has been committed to providing fresh, affordable, and nutritious foods to families in the WIC program for more than 27 years. The company's stores are designed to provide WIC families with a fast, convenient, and culturally sensitive place in which to redeem their WIC benefits. In addition to providing the full WIC food package, the stores often feature locally sourced produce from small farms located throughout California.

Facilitating Business Innovations and Leveraging Technology

While grocery stores will continue to serve as partners with the government in administering feeding assistance programs and supporting hunger organizations through donations, the industry is committed to advancing innovative solutions in ecommerce. Business innovations and use of technology across the food industry supply chain play a critical role in increasing access to nutritious and affordable foods to all consumers. For example, ecommerce and online purchasing programs help to deliver nutritious food to those who may not otherwise have easily accessed it.

- In 2021, one company launched a program to raise awareness of convenient and affordable grocery options to help residents in urban areas where it may be difficult to find affordable, fresh food. The company's community access program that makes these options available has also built a strong network of partners across the cities where it has a presence, including Baltimore, Washington, D.C., Houston, Dallas, and Atlanta. Technology is critical to supporting these communities in their ability to more equitably access food, and it is important to the continued expansion and success of the program.

- Another example, one of FMI's retailer members is an early retail partner of [Flashfood](#), an innovative mobile app that enables customers to access fresh foods nearing their best buy date at significantly reduced prices. For grocery retailers, the program helps reduce food waste while enabling customers to access meat, dairy, fresh produce, and more at prices up to 50% off.
- The pandemic advanced an important nationwide conversation regarding health and nutrition. In 2021, one large retailer utilized technology to expand access to licensed professionals by offering free nutrition counseling via two-way video chat (also referred to as tele-nutrition) with expert retail registered dietitian nutritionists to help customers with their nutrition needs during a time of changing food routines, food access, and food budgets. These same tele-nutrition services continue to help customers navigate their food budgets, nourish critical and chronic health conditions, and learn to shop online and cook at home.

Community and Public-Private Partnerships

The food industry plays a vital role in ensuring all Americans have access to affordable foods, but community partnerships and public-private partnerships are the key reasons this can be accomplished, with the grocery store serving as a cornerstone in the community.

- In efforts to increase access to nutritious foods, one East Coast retailer partnered with a non-profit to begin to convert a food desert into a food oasis by developing the Bleacher Garden to feed underserved families with nutritious foods grown locally. The first year, the garden anticipates yielding more than 6,000 pounds of vegetables, with increases of about 25% in subsequent years. This year, the yield is sufficient to supply 120 families with 50 pounds of fresh vegetables for each family throughout the growing season.
- To build lasting relationships, one large retailer commits to making a difference by connecting with community organizations in local communities. For example, when the company opened a new store location in Washington D.C., it created new partnerships and committed more than \$350,000 to the local community through donations and event sponsorships in the District in the last year.
- To improve the physical, emotional, and mental health of the communities they serve by increasing access to wholesome food and resources for living a

healthier, better life, one retail company donated \$10,000 to [Bread for the City](#), an organization that provides food, clothing, medical care, and legal and social services to low-income residents of Washington, D.C. Bread for the City now also receives all proceeds from the store's annual Check Out Hunger campaign.

- One retailer partnered with non-profit *Backpack Beginnings*, which addresses the food insecurity gap for children in North Carolina. The retailer helped with the opening of *Backpack Beginnings*' new community market.
- One retailer's foundation donated \$50,000 to DC Greens to support The Well, an intergenerational farm and community wellness space in the Congress Heights neighborhood of Ward 8, in Southeast, D.C. The funds are being used to support health and wellness programs that are held for community at The Well such as Wellness Wednesdays, youth engagement days, monthly creek walks with Ward 8 Water Watchers, and the annual Fall Festival.

Food and Meal Delivery

An important tool to improve access is the ability to deliver food and meals to those who otherwise cannot physically get to the grocery store. Many barriers exist in the lives of Americans today, and the food industry is working to help address these challenges with their own food delivery efforts or by partnering with local non-profit organizations to serve those most at risk in their communities.

- One retailer partners with *Meals on Wheels America* to provide funding for grants to 40 Meals on Wheels chapters across their operating area, which will aid them in securing long-term operations to better serve the senior population in the towns and cities in which they operate.
- One of FMI's retailer members works with Interfaith Food Shuttle programs to support low-income families living in food deserts without adequate access to nutritious food and without the income to purchase healthy meals. The Food Shuttle recovers and distributes more than 8 million pounds of food per year, and teaches skills for self-sufficiency, including culinary job skills, shopping, cooking healthy on a budget, and how to grow food. Almost 5,000 children receive nutritious meals through Backpack Buddies, School Pantries, and their food truck.
- One of FMI's East Coast retailers partnered with the Capital Area Food Bank to launch a food truck in 2020 that is filled with healthy fruits and vegetables. The food truck drives daily to multiple areas in Ward 8 of Washington, D.C. so

residents can have easier access to purchasing healthy food for themselves and their families. A second truck was launched in the fall of 2021 in Prince George's County, MD.

- One retailer collaborates to develop healthy, affordable meals that are delivered directly to participants as well as education outreach programs that improve nutrition education. The program targets elderly and home-bound individuals who have been identified with COVID and other chronic diseases in the Washington D.C. area and provides four meals and other necessities per home.
- One regional retailer helps MetroMarket get fresh produce to underserved areas of St. Louis. MetroMarket, a mobile grocery store that brings healthy and affordable food to St. Louis food desert communities, was founded in 2016 and travels to communities with little access to fresh, healthy food. The bus operates every Wednesday through Saturday, April through November, making two-hour stops at designated partner locations. Their donations will be used to distribute 2,000 \$5 fresh produce vouchers to members and patients of four area organizations (500 vouchers to each) that can then be redeemed at the MetroMarket mobile grocer. An additional \$5,000 will enable the MetroMarket to make five weekend flex stops at additional community sites.

Financial Support

Beyond working with community partners to donate food and facilitating federal feeding programs in-stores and online, many food industry companies also provide significant financial support to specific programs designed to combat hunger and food insecurity.

- For example, one retailer provides gift cards for people in need to fill their holiday tables with joy. Gift cards provide the dignity of choice for neighbors to purchase the food they need and want for their holiday tables. In 2021, the company provided nearly \$22 million in gift cards to more than 400,000 people in need through its non-profit partners.
- One product supplier supports breakfast clubs in 21 countries and provides financial support to expand school and summer feeding programs so children everywhere can reach their full potential.
- One retailer's hunger campaign allows customers to round up their change to the nearest dollar at checkout, with 100% of the proceeds distributed to area food bank partners.

White House Pillar 2: Integrate Nutrition and Health

Food as Medicine Programs

In 2021, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics approved this conceptual definition for Food as Medicine: “Food as Medicine is a philosophy where food and nutrition aids individuals through interventions that support health and wellness. Focus areas include: 1) Food as preventative medicine to encourage health and well-being; 2) food as medicine in disease management and treatment; 3) food as medicine to improve nutrition security;¹ 4) and food as medicine to promote food safety.”

Food as Medicine is a reaffirmation that food and nutrition play a role in sustaining health, preventing disease, and as a therapy for those with conditions or in situations responsive to changes in their diet.²



¹ Yoder AD, Proaño GV, Handu D. Retail Nutrition Programs and Outcomes: An Evidence Analysis Center Scoping Review. *J Acad Nutr Diet.* 2020; In Press.

² Downer S, Berkowitz SA, Harlan TS, Lee Olstad D, Mozaffarian D. Food is medicine: Actions to integrate food and nutrition into healthcare. *BMJ.* 2020; 369: m2482

FMI's Board of Directors approved a policy statement in support of the Academy's definition of Food as Medicine and believes this conceptual definition, grounded in science, will help guide food retailers and their industry partners to deliver programs to connect food to health for consumers in practical and applicable ways.

Food retailer health and well-being programs line up well within the four focus areas included in the definition of Food as Medicine that connect food to improved health to include:

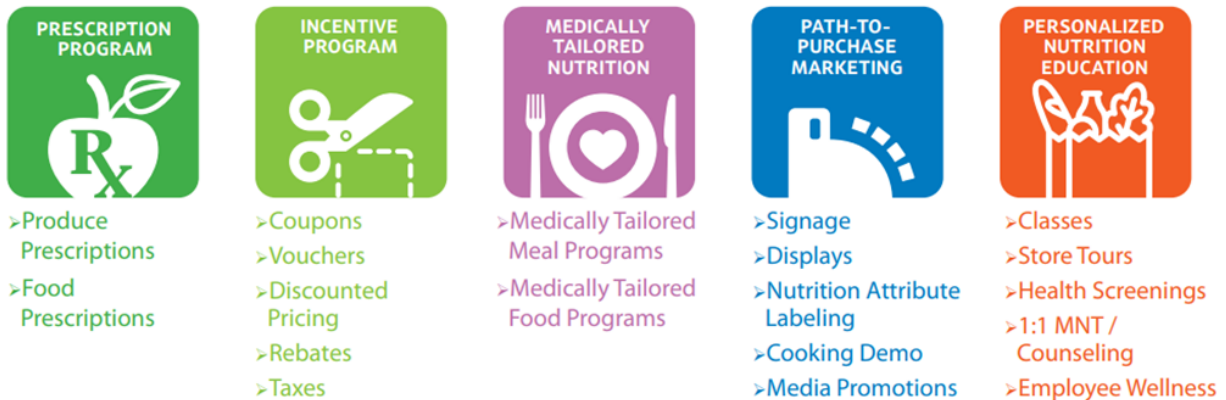
- Encouragement of health and well-being for families, consumers, and employees.
- Management and treatment of disease for individuals with diabetes, obesity, and heart disease.
- Improvement of nutrition security for SNAP and WIC beneficiaries and low-income households.
- Promotion of food safety for customers, employees, and community partners.

Food retail settings provide a unique opportunity for registered dietitian nutritionists and pharmacists to address gaps in healthcare equity, improve public health, and meet consumer demands for health and well-being services. The grocery store provides a natural touchpoint for innovative, nutrition-focused programming and the delivery of evidence-based health information by RDNs. The grocery store allows RDNs to meet consumers where they are on a regular basis to positively impact food purchasing decisions, both in-store and online.

Some examples of programs the food retail industry implements are:

- Produce and food prescription programs
- Incentive programs
- Medically tailored nutrition programs
- Path-to-purchase marketing and media promotions
- Personalized nutrition education
- Cooking classes, disease-specific classes, and store tours

FOOD AS MEDICINE PROGRAM MODELS



Food as Medicine approaches, especially those implemented in a retail setting, have documented success in improving overall health and well-being, and many food retailers are prioritizing programs for both customers and employees that align with the definition of Food as Medicine, even if they are not specifically referring to them as Food as Medicine efforts.

Food Retail Registered Dietitian Nutritionists

When it comes to fostering consumer understanding, the food retail industry provides a unique opportunity for registered dietitian nutritionists and pharmacists to address gaps in healthcare equity, improve public health, and meet consumer demands for health and well-being services. The grocery store allows RDNs to meet consumers where they are on a regular basis to positively impact food purchasing decisions, both online and in-store. Supermarket dietitians sit in the sweet spot between healthcare and public health, providing innovative, nutrition-focused, solution-oriented guidance for shoppers. According to FMI's 2021 Report on Retailer Contributions to Health & Well-being, a survey of FMI members found 81% of food retailers responding to the survey employ dietitians (65% at the corporate level, 31% in-store/virtual, and 12% regionally).

FMI has released two videos on health and well-being at retail, including interviews with registered dietitian nutritionists. The video "[Grocery Stores Encourage Health and Well-being](#)" describes how grocery stores are ideal places for disease management and treatment support because they are accessible and convenient, while the retail setting allows RDNs to put the customer at the center of their care and offer innovative solutions. These professionals offer not only nutrition education but true medical nutrition therapy to support patients with a variety of health needs. The video "[Grocery Stores Provide Access to Disease Management and Treatment](#)" showcases stores that

offer nutritionists, chefs, and pharmacists that can help customers on their health journeys through one-on-one consultations and store tours. Food retailers have increased their health and well-being support for both shoppers and employees. Programs pivoted to virtual formats during the pandemic to stay connected, offer support and expand outreach to consumers.

Personalized Nutrition to Encourage Overall Health and Well-Being

Consumers find personalized nutrition education services provided by their grocery stores, such as MNT, to be very appealing as noted in *The Food as Medicine Opportunity in Food Retail 2021* report (developed jointly by FMI – The Food Industry Association and the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Foundation). Many supermarkets also offer one-on-one counseling with RDNs and “tele-nutrition” initiatives that have expanded considerably throughout the pandemic, making it even easier for customers to take advantage of personalized counseling services when offered in the food retail setting. For example:

- One large retailer provides services with RDNs to help consumers understand the information that is accurate and relevant to their unique situations through tele-nutrition, a two-way video chat nutrition counseling service. With an enormous amount of dietary and nutrition information available, tele-nutrition helps consumers sift through overwhelming and sometimes confusing information on personal nutrition and health. RDNs take dietary restrictions, varying health conditions, relationships with food, culture, ability and desire to cook, and more into consideration to teach patients how to nourish their bodies on their own terms. Tele-nutrition gives patients the flexibility to work with a registered dietitian from the comfort of their homes, or anywhere else they have internet connection.
- This same large retailer’s team of registered dietitians can provide a variety of services through tele-nutrition, such as:
 - Medical Nutrition Therapy based on medical conditions
 - Healthy alternatives, delicious recipes, and meal ideas that work with patients’ busy schedules
 - Guidance on nutritious foods to add to grocery lists
 - Advice on how to navigate the grocery store
 - Tips for feeding the whole family nourishing food while sticking to a budget

- One retailer operating in the New England area partnered with the City of Boston Public Health Commission to identify a store location situated in an area with high rates of chronic health conditions and high poverty rates, with a view to help improve health outcomes. The company's investment in the store includes the addition of an in-store dietitian to provide free nutrition education services, a new community wellness room at the store dedicated to health-related programming, and the addition of the Fresh Connect produce prescription program to increase access to fresh produce for those in the neighborhood facing food insecurity. The retailer also opened a nearby school food pantry, which supports more than 200 food-insecure families each month, plus free nutrition education.
- One FMI member company has a team of registered dietitians available to help support its customers. The dietitians offer online sessions and provide hands-on support and education centered around nutrition, movement, and well-being. The company also underwrote a K-12 wellness initiative that assesses schools' nutrition programs and provides tailored resources for improvement. The company also provides additional free services, including online classes, webinars, nutrition store tours, community cook-alongs, workplace wellness programs, community events, and a healthy living podcast.
- One retailer has a team of seven registered dietitian nutritionists who cover all 21 of their store locations and surrounding communities. The team provides budget-conscious services like low-cost medical nutrition therapy and free store tours for customers and employees to help them find healthy choices to meet their needs.
- One retailer has a full-time dietitian to manage its wellness program, with support from wellness ambassadors at all store locations. This program provides the associates with resources like no-cost counseling, weight management courses, pre-diabetes classes, monthly health education, and education focused on budget shopping and cooking.
- One retailer has a dietitian who serves as a retail representative on a local food policy council with a goal of improving access to healthy, affordable, and culturally appropriate food.
- One regional retailer has a full-time, registered dietitian on staff who oversees the company's nutritional programmatic efforts, including virtual healthy kids cooking classes.

- One regional retailer publishes a bi-monthly magazine featuring recipes to inspire customers to cook more at home. Each issue highlights the healthier recipes so customers can pick out the more nutritious options. In January and August, almost all the recipes are healthy as they tie into the shopper marketing campaigns.

Cooking Education and In-Aisle Nutrition Classes

- In 2016, in partnership with one regional retailer, Common Threads launched its Pittsburgh market with a goal of increasing access and consumption of healthy food and elevating the health and wellness of the Pittsburgh community by equipping children, families, educators, medical practitioners, and providers with the skills and knowledge to make healthier choices where they live, work, learn, and play. Since 2016, 15,000 individuals have participated in 200,000 hours of cooking and nutrition education and prepared nearly 150,000 healthy meals and snacks. The multi-faceted partnership has included \$1M in investments, strategic counsel, and introductions to C-level executives and community leaders from the retailer's CEO, who sits on Common Threads' national board and government affairs strategy, advocacy, and outreach at the local, state, and federal level from their VP of Sustainability.
- One member retailer highlighted the value of the retail RDN with an independent clinical research study to learn how retailers serve as important health care destinations by leveraging food and nutrition education to support the health and well-being of shoppers. The study aimed to increase diet quality and decrease cardiovascular risk by promoting a heart-healthy diet through nutrition counseling delivered by a retail RDN. The study found that in-aisle teaching with an RDN significantly increased adherence to a heart-healthy diet compared to traditional nutrition counseling alone.

Disease Management and Treatment

FMI and its members also work to expand access to nutrition care including Medicare Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT) coverage, which includes a wide range of diseases and medical conditions, including prediabetes, obesity, hypertension, dyslipidemia, malnutrition, eating disorders, cancer, celiac disease, HIV/AIDS, and other conditions causing unintentional weight loss.

- For example, one retailer partnered with Geisinger health system last year, providing a \$200,000 donation to Geisinger's Fresh Food Farmacy program. Currently Geisinger operates three locations (Shamokin, Lewistown, and Scranton), enrolling 683 families with 550,443 meals served. The program is open to anyone with Type 2 diabetes who is food insecure within a 30-mile radius. The intent is to reduce the burden of disease, lower the cost of care, and ultimately change the cycle of poor nutrition. Currently 50% of the households include children, and all households receive at least 10 healthy meals per week, narrowing the meal gap. Participants have access to an RN, RD, community health associate, and education.
- One retailer has expanded its partnerships with groups like the Huntsman Cancer Institute, who worked with the company's dietitian team to create a cancer-fighting foods shopping list that is distributed at community events and is available at certain checkout lanes. The dietitian team has also supplemented the company's longstanding support for the MS Society by providing nutrition counseling and classes for customers living with MS.
- Diabetes-focused tours sponsored by local grocers (virtual): In 2021-early 2022, grocery retailers and wholesalers offered their employees and their shoppers' diabetes-focused virtual tours. The objective of the tours was to teach participants how to read labels and make sound choices when managing (pre)diabetes (or feeding a household member with diabetes). The tours covered products across all areas of the store, including fresh meat and produce, grocery, dairy, frozen, and beverages. In addition to educating shoppers on carbohydrate intake and key components of the nutrition fact panel, the registered dietitians who ran the tours also covered related topics such as: eating healthy on a budget; what to look for in snacks; hydration; tips for staying on target when hosting or attending parties and when dining out; plant-based foods; and keeping healthy eating interesting/exciting.
- In Washington, D.C., Produce Rx allows medical professionals to provide customers who are experiencing a diet-related chronic illness with a prescription for fruits and vegetables. The prescriptions can be filled at the retailer's in-store pharmacy, which enables these eligible customers to purchase fruits and vegetables from the store.

- One of FMI's retailer members is a founding partner of the [Hunger to Health Collaboratory](#), created in 2018 by a group of cross-sector stakeholders working toward long-term solutions to address hunger and its health-related consequences. The company also joined the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine's Roundtable on Obesity Solutions to address the obesity epidemic in America.
- One regional retailer has two RDNs who help their guests across 60+ locations shop for foods that they can turn into meals and snacks regardless of time, money, or health considerations. They also partner with the company's pharmacy team to implement both internal and external programming for disease management, specifically diabetes and heart health.
- One retailer's 1,700+ pharmacies remain an important access point to vital care services. A local pharmacist is one of the most trusted health care professionals, in many cases, accessible when other health care options are lacking. Their goal is to provide patient-centric, integrated health care that is convenient and easy for millions of Americans to access. The retailer's pharmacy teams are dedicated to delivering core pharmacy as well as many care services such as immunizations, travel health consults, point-of-care testing, prescribing services, medication administration, mental health, and substance abuse recovery services.

Improving Nutrition Security

- One large retailer partnered with a non-profit to offer produce prescription incentives to targeted SNAP and non-SNAP customers with certain health conditions. The initial program started with 12 stores and a \$300,000 USDA grant in 2018, and has now expanded to more than 500 stores with more than \$13M in funding allocated over time through a variety of federal, state, and private funding mechanisms. More than 40,000 customers have benefited from produce prescription programs at this retailer.
- In New England, one retailer partnered with non-profit About Fresh to offer Fresh Connect, a produce prescription program that empowers people to buy the food they need to be healthy with pre-paid debit cards prescribed by health care providers.

- The Food as Medicine Platform of a retail member was recognized as a leading healthy lifestyle approach by a University of Cincinnati study, which found that in-aisle teaching with the store’s registered dietitian significantly increased adherence to a heart-healthy dietary pattern compared to traditional nutrition counseling alone. The adherence was further improved when in-aisle teaching was paired with education on how to use online shopping technologies, including grocery delivery service, and the store app and website.
- One retailer’s stores in the Seattle area accept Fresh Bucks, a local government supplemental program to help consumers afford fruits and vegetables. The retailer is working to expand programs like Fresh Bucks to more stores.
- One retail banner piloted the SNAP Produce Match program with the state of Washington. SNAP customers who spent \$10 in stores received a \$5 coupon for produce. The Washington State Department of Health measured the clinical outcomes and found that: 88% ate more fruits and vegetables than previously; 72% have better condition management; and 74% reported food was less likely to run out.³

White House Pillar 3: Empower All Consumers to Make and Have Access to Healthy Choices

Empowering Consumers with Product Information and Transparency

The food industry plays a critical role in helping consumers make informed food choices and have access to healthy purchases. Retailers, suppliers, and manufacturers utilize tools such as clear and accurate product labeling, in-store signage and displays, and online information, applications, and resources to provide product information for consumers. Front-of-pack labeling programs, such as Facts up Front, provide consumers with information about calories, added sugar, sodium, and saturated fat content of a product. Facts Up Front was developed for the industry as a voluntary initiative as a simple and easy-to-use labeling system that displays key nutrition information to consumers on the front of food and beverage packages. According to the most recent analysis from NielsenIQ in 2021, more than 57,000 products participate and carry the Facts up Front front-of-pack label.

³ Marcinkevage J, Auvinen A, Nambuthiri S. Washington State’s Fruit and Vegetable Prescription Program: Improving Affordability of Healthy Foods for Low-Income Patients. *Prev Chronic Dis* 2019;16:180617.

FMI, along with the Consumer Brands Association, developed the SmartLabel® program that helps consumers easily and clearly find labeling information online. SmartLabel® provides easy and instantaneous access to detailed information about thousands of foods, beverage, personal care, household, and pet care products. Consumers can find product information in many ways – smartphone, computer, telephone. As of last month, 94,393 products participate in SmartLabel®. Other retailers utilize wellness attributes to guide shoppers to products that meet their specific health, wellness, and/or lifestyle priorities in store, on shelf tags, and online.

- One retailer utilizes wellness attributes to guide shoppers to products that qualify as good or excellent sources of a specific nutrient, or products that are vegan or vegetarian, low in sodium, or are free of certain allergens. These wellness attributes can enhance shopper experiences both in-store through marketing and shelf-tag programs as well as online through ecommerce search and filter options. The convenience of these attributes is welcomed by shoppers, particularly if they are looking to make product choices quickly and effortlessly, and this kind of information puts consumers in the driver's seat as far as making decisions that impact their health and well-being.
- One national retailer committed to improving the nutritional quality of the products sold throughout its grocery brands through implementing the Guiding Stars program. Guiding Stars is a nutrition rating system through which all foods are evaluated and earn a rating, but only those with a positive rating earn one, two, or three Guiding Stars. The Guiding Stars Program is also being used at brand level to reward customers and associates for shopping healthier. By 2025, 54% of its private brands food sales will achieve, one, two, or three stars through this program.
- Similarly, one product supplier member has a long-standing commitment to driving consumer awareness and understanding of its foods through transparent labeling. The company believes front-of-pack labeling can help individuals make more informed decisions and the most successful programs among consumers support holistic eating patterns. They support a uniform system that is transparent and empowers consumers with simple, positive information to drive them toward more healthful eating patterns.
- One product manufacturer is a founding member of The Whole Grains Council, which is a non-profit consumer advocacy group working to increase consumption of whole grains for better health. The Whole Grains Council helps consumers find whole grain foods and understand their health benefits and helps the media write

accurate, compelling stories about whole grains. Along with many others, this manufacturer uses the whole grain stamp on its products, and it helps fund the Whole Grains Council's educational outreach.

- Another retailer expanded the use of its in-store labeling to point out “better for you” foods to help customers find foods appropriate for their lifestyles or health conditions (i.e., carb-conscious – an important tag for people living with metabolic disease). The company’s meal planning tools allow customers to select meal plans by ethnic cuisine preference, allergies, and lifestyle preferences. Meal planning makes it easy to plan, shop, and prepare delicious, healthy meal options.
- One retailer strives to make the healthy option the easy option for its shoppers with solutions like dietitians’ choice tags, which indicate the healthiest choices in the store. The company also has healthy check lanes at all locations where only dietitian-approved foods and beverages are stocked.
- One regional retailer allows its rewards members to opt into a program on its app or website, which will show a count of the total number of “Good For You” items and a percentage of the food items that were purchased that are “Good For You.” Those who opt in will also receive monthly reports to gauge if they are making progress when it comes to improving the healthfulness of the foods filling their pantries and refrigerators. Developed by nutrition experts and powered by a third-party retail technology solution provider, the “Good For You” criteria is rooted in science and guided by the 2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans as well as the FDA, USDA, and American Heart Association. With an emphasis on fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and whole grains and foods lower in added sugar, sodium, and saturated fat, customers can trust these items are “Good For You.”

Empowering Consumers with Wellness Campaigns and Nutrition Education

The food industry has increased use of consumer education in store, online, and through social media on how to include nutrient-rich foods to build recipes that encourage overall healthy eating patterns. There are many opportunities to build programs and services and to provide nutrition education aligned with the Dietary Guidelines and overall healthy eating patterns and promote partnerships that currently connect health care providers, local food banks, and community-based organizations with food retailers.

- One retailer created and implemented a curriculum for elementary school children to introduce them to new fruits and vegetables with Slow Foods Utah.
- One retail independent operator has a shelf tag program called “Dietitian's Choice” that helps guests find dietitian-recommended products throughout the store without the RDN having to be in every aisle.
- One retail member created the OptUp program, an industry-leading nutrition rating system to simplify and track healthier shopping. This large retailer recognizes eating healthy can feel hard. The company developed this nutrition rating system to simplify choosing nourishing foods. The goal is to make it simple and sustainable for customers to shop and eat well, and that starts with understanding the food they are buying today. Driven by the company’s team of expert registered dietitians, nutrition ratings are calculated by leveraging data science, evidence-based nutrition information, and machine learning to rate foods on a simple scale from 1 to 100. The more nutritious the food, the higher the nutrition rating. Nutrition ratings can be used to quickly compare similar products and choose better-for-you items. Nutrition ratings from customers’ recent purchases are also used to calculate a personalized score. While nutrition ratings depict the healthfulness of single items, a personalized score provides insight into personal macro trends by allowing customers to reflect on the nutritional quality of what they purchase over time. The nutrition rating system then helps customers shop healthier on their terms because simple changes can have a meaningful impact on health over time.
- One regional retailer plans and executes two major health-focused shopper marketing campaigns with vendors each year. In January, the company highlights items throughout the stores that are healthier to make it easier for customers to find and choose healthier items when shopping. In August, a similar theme as January is developed and tied to kids and building healthy habits at a young age-encouraging the whole family to be a part of choosing and preparing healthy meals as they begin return-to-school meal planning.
- One retailer provides nutrition education and meals to local schools via store field trips and toolkits. The company also supports programs that provide culinary skills training programs to help participants move out of hunger toward economic stability. The partnership through a capital campaign in support of a Mobile Teaching Kitchen works to address rural health disparities and food insecurity associated with nutrition. An additional partnership with Cooking with

HOPE provides nutrition education and shows moms and caregivers how to read and interpret labels to make sure they can provide the nourishment their family needs through prepared meals.

- One regional retailer has a “Pick Well” program which empowers consumers to make healthier choices through the better-for-you shopping guide. It uses seven lifestyle tags including Heart Healthy, Low Sodium, Whole Grain, Gluten Free, Carb Aware, No Sugar Added and “Dietitian’s Pick.” The company also has In-store recipe cards and signage offering ideas for meal planning with those “Pick Well” food items. This includes food safety instructions included on in-store ready-made and take and heat meals. The retailer focuses on food safety messaging with media segments and social media videos as well.

Portion Balance Coalition

FMI is a partner with the [Portion Balance Coalition](#) (PBC), a multi-sector collaborative of private, public, and non-profit leaders and organizations working together to achieve better nutrition for all by focusing on portions. Other PBC collaborators include prominent public health associations and hunger organizations, distinguished academic and biomedical researchers and scientists, large global food companies, leading industry trade associations, health systems and health professional associations, and federal agency liaisons.

The portion balance framework takes into account the three factors of volume (quantity), proportionality (variety), and quality (nutrient density), which are consistent with key principles from the Dietary Guidelines. Using this framework, PBC offers nutrition educators turnkey educational resources with the flexibility to customize materials to different audiences. Educational program materials include videos, slides, and suggested scripts.

Most recently, PBC translated this framework into its [Eat For You consumer educational campaign](#), which was developed using a consensus-building approach with the PBC Scientific Advisory Board, registered dietitian nutritionists, SNAP-Ed, and community-based nutrition educators, along with consumers’ lived experiences. Adjusting portion sizes for various food groups using an individual’s hand as a guide is a practical application of portion balance. The Portion Balance Coalition’s “Eat for You” is a direct education and social marketing intervention developed to guide consumers on appropriate portion sizes by food groups.

- A product manufacturer is also a member of the Portion Balance Coalition, and as part of the *Eat for You* campaign, the company uses the materials and images used in the campaign that reflect cultural diversity, budget consciousness, connect to USDA's MyPlate, and provide practical tips for increasing the nutrient density of foods and beverages. The company has leveraged these materials in social media outreach to health professionals to help them in turn educate consumers on portions and building nutrient-dense, affordable meals and snacks. They are committed to advancing research and communicating the benefits of nutrient-dense affordable foods.

Family Meals and Meal Solutions

Created in 2015 by the FMI Foundation on behalf of the nation's food retailers, the [National Family Meals Month™](#) (NFMM) campaign dedicated the month of September to encouraging families to enjoy one more meal at home each week. Hundreds of health professionals, community groups, retailers, and manufacturers have embraced the concept and have started to promote family meals throughout the year.

The stay-at-home realities of the global pandemic created increased opportunities for family meals, resulting in newly found awareness and appreciation for the benefits of eating together. Recent Harris Poll data shows that more than 91 million Americans are cooking more meals at home and eating together more often. Family meals eaten at home strengthen the family's social fabric and promote healthier eating. With the proven benefits of combating obesity and deterring unhealthy behaviors such as substance abuse, family meals contribute to a healthier community and nation.

The FMI Foundation's promotion of NFMM encourages food retailers, suppliers, and community collaborators to provide solutions designed to support families in enjoying more meals together using items purchased at the grocery store and, as a result, receive the health and social benefits of doing so. The month of September continues to serve as an opportunity to accentuate the value of family meals. However, support of family meals has evolved to be far more significant, and the campaign has now become a year-round effort widely recognized as the Family Meals Movement™. The aim is to stay strong with family meals.

Currently, more than 80 retailers, 40 product suppliers, and 500 community collaborators partner to participate in the Family Meals Movement™ to help families of all shapes and sizes stay strong with family meals through collaborative activations.

- In 2021, one out for every three Americans saw National Family Meals Month™ messaging and nine out of 10 of those consumers reported that the messaging impacted how they shopped or what they ate.
- FMI Foundation research found that 86% of Americans are having in-person family meals as frequently or even more often than before the COVID-19 pandemic. Of those, 70% reported the benefit of being more connected to their families. Reducing food insecurity is a crucial step in ensuring all Americans can enjoy more meals with their families, connecting to help build a healthier, stronger nation.

As a destination for health and well-being, family meals, and meal solutions, the grocery store plays a key role in the family meals movement, and 43% of food retailers surveyed participate in the program by utilizing their health and well-being initiatives, promotions, and innovation to provide meal solutions year-round. These efforts support, inspire, and encourage consumers to emerge from the pandemic with new skills and perspectives on shopping, cooking and eating - to include the food safety home cooking basics: clean, separate, cook, chill.

Partnership for Food Safety Education

Safe food handling practices are essential to the prevention of foodborne illness. Providing effective food safety interventions that consumers can follow when cooking meals at home, coupled with appropriate messaging from educators, such as registered dietitians and food safety experts, can have a positive impact on reducing the foodborne illness risk of consumers. The food industry advocates for the advancement of consumer food safety education through support of the [Partnership of Food Safety Education](#) (PFSE) to provide resources to help consumers reduce their risk of foodborne illness.

The food industry works with PFSE by providing shoppers with food safety information on the core four practices – clean, separate, cook, chill – to help consumers with home food safety practices year-round. To improve food safety practices, the FMI Foundation supported PFSE to develop the *Safe Recipe Style Guide*, which provides standardized text to incorporate into recipes that address the four major areas of most food safety

violations in home kitchens: temperature, handwashing, cross contamination, and produce handling.

The food industry is uniquely positioned to help consumers achieve their health and well-being goals through consumer outreach and education. Retailers and many others across the industry utilize the *Safe Recipe Style Guide* to promote the importance of food safety by equipping consumers with food safety skills and healthy eating habits.

USDA MyPlate Strategic Partnerships

FMI is a USDA MyPlate National Strategic Partner, collaborating with many other industry stakeholders to raise awareness of the MyPlate resources and to include MyPlate messaging in communications. MyPlate translates the core elements of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025* into actionable steps to help consumers make tailored and affordable choices that meet their personal, cultural, and traditional food preferences,

Examples of other MyPlate partners include large, national organizations such as health care corporations, media outlets, grocery retailers, health professional associations, restaurant chains, and food manufacturers. Retailers, product suppliers, and community collaborators often work together as MyPlate partners to produce resources that align with the *Dietary Guidelines* and that promote messaging and recipes that are nutrient dense, budget friendly, and culturally inclusive.

FMI retailer and product supplier members work with non-profit organizations, commodity checkoff programs, registered dietitian nutritionists, and culinary experts to provide consumers with easy-to-use shopping and cooking tips, affordable recipes, and practical meal ideas, as a result of MyPlate partner collaborations.

Conclusion

FMI recognizes that the food industry plays an important role in hunger, nutrition, and health with the grocery store as a destination for health and well-being. FMI appreciates members' providing real-life solutions for feeding assistance, preventive care, nutrition guidance, and nourishing, practical meals in the communities they serve, making food safe, accessible, affordable, and convenient every day. We look forward to continuing this collaborative effort with members and others across the nation as we advocate, educate, and collaborate to support the work of the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition and Health.