



July 15, 2022

White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition & Health
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TO: White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition & Health

FROM: National Fruit & Vegetable Consumption Coalition (NFVCC)

Thank you for the opportunity to share perspectives relevant to the planning of the upcoming White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition & Health, including the development of the national strategic roadmap to help eliminate hunger and reduce diet-related diseases by 2030. The [National Fruit & Vegetable Consumption Coalition \(NFVCC\)](#) is dedicated to providing leadership that can help accelerate increased nationwide access to and demand for fruits and vegetables for improved public health. Despite the well-established benefits of eating fruits and vegetables each day, nine out of 10 Americans don't meet daily recommendations.

NFVCC members applaud the White House efforts to convene stakeholders from all sectors to address the increasing and alarming hunger and nutrition insecurity disparities in the United States. NFVCC members recognize a multi-sector, collaborative initiative is necessary to eliminate hunger and reduce the risk of diet-related diseases by 2030. To that end, NFVCC members work together to help elevate new fruit and vegetable eating behaviors as a national priority, central to all U.S. public health initiatives, to help ensure all Americans can meet fruit and vegetables recommendations.

NFVCC members represent various sectors of the U.S. food system, from farm and agriculture to manufacturing, retail, and foodservice, to consumer education. Many of the NFVCC members met on June 30, 2022, as part of a Listening Session to share sector-relevant perspectives that may inform White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition & Health planning efforts. The following members participated in the June 30 Listening Session and respectfully submit the below recommendations for consideration, as specific, positive and future-focused solutions to help improve fruit and vegetable consumption, while helping to eliminate hunger and reduce diet-related diseases by 2030: Produce for Better Health Foundation (PBH, NFVCC chair); Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics (AND); American Association for Public Health Nutritionists (ASPHN); American Frozen Food Institute (AFFI); American Heart Association (AHA); American Society for Nutrition (ASN); Canned Manufacturers Institute (CMI); Fair Food Network; Feeding America; Food Allergy Research and Education (FARE); The Food Industry Association (FMI); International Food Information Council (IFIC); International Fresh Produce Association (IFPA); Juice Products Association (JPA); National CACFP Sponsors Association (NCA); Nutrition On Demand (NOD); and Partnership for a Healthier America (PHA). Additional federal agency NFVCC members were also present during the Listening Session.

Thank you for your time, commitment, and consideration.

Pillar 3: Empower all consumers to make and have access to healthy choices

Recommendations include the following:

Elevate fruit and vegetable consumption as a national priority, with increased and equitable funding across dedicated federal agencies – including the United States Department of Agriculture, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and National Institutes of Health, as well as Health and Human Services, which has traditionally focused efforts on secondary prevention, with little to no funding focused on healthy eating as a primary disease prevention strategy.

Prioritize Congressional appropriations earmarked specifically toward spending on initiatives to close the fruit and vegetable gap and improve public health, such as:

- Innovative clinical and consumer research, to support improved fruit and vegetable consumption behaviors;
- Intentional and improved fruit and vegetable access for all people, to assist populations at disproportionate risk of chronic disease and nutrition insecurity; and
- Inspiring and actionable ideas that create new, sustainable habits, highlighting positive and unifying messages, to support fruit and vegetable consumption in all forms (fresh, frozen, canned, dried and 100% juice), while also reinforcing existing behaviors as well as appreciating and acknowledging individual needs, barriers, and successes.

Ensure all Americans have access to a variety of all fruits and vegetables.

- Incentivize public-private partnerships that can enable and improve access to all forms of fruits and vegetables, as well as improve educational efforts to help empower Americans to enjoy fruits and vegetables more often
 - Consider incentives that foster partnerships at all stages of the fruit and vegetable supply chain -- from farmers and the agricultural community, to manufacturers, retailers and foodservice outlets -- to improve access to fruits and vegetables and resources that support their consumption (e.g., recipes, tips, meal plans, etc.)
 - Encourage opportunities to offer a wider variety of fruits and vegetables in outlets such as convenience stores and similar retail venues where grocery shopping is most prevalent in lower income and rural communities
- Modify the Equal Treatment Provision to allow retailers to offer discounts and price breaks on all forms of fruits and vegetables -- fresh, frozen, canned, dried, and 100% juice -- to SNAP customers. Remove or minimize barriers to purchase to help improve access and empower all consumers, including the most vulnerable populations.
- Maintain the increased amount of funds allocated in WIC packages for the purchase of fruits and vegetables, particularly as the United States Department of Agriculture currently considers revisions to the WIC package. Any revisions to the package could expand the fruit and vegetable offerings, inclusive of all forms.
 - Include sufficient fruit and vegetable options to ensure infants and toddlers are exposed to a wide variety of fruits and vegetables as they transition to complementary foods
 - Include food allergens in the infant food package to reduce the risk of developing food allergy as they transition to complementary foods
 - Ensure appropriate substitutions are allowed for children and women with food allergies

- Provide adequate education to support families about early introduction of food allergens in the diet of infants to reduce the risk of developing food allergy
- Modify other federal feeding programs to encourage access to all forms of fruits and vegetables (fresh, frozen, dried, canned, and 100% juice).
 - Increase funding for the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program, intended to increase overall produce consumption, and allow for flexibility in including all forms of fruits and vegetables
 - The Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP) should support incentive programs that seek to increase all forms of produce consumption so that consumers have the flexibility to enjoy more produce
 - Produce Prescription Programs should include all forms of produce so that consumers have increased flexibility and options

Emphasize the importance of educating Americans on the benefits of increasing fruits and vegetables to improve nutrition security, while also empowering credentialed health professionals such as registered dietitian nutritionists (RDNs) who can credibly lead these educational efforts.

- Support funding and incentives to expand the reach and impact of RDNs working in retail environments, within food assistance programs and at food banks – as well as in other positions helping to educate and empower Americans, particularly vulnerable, nutrition insecure populations
 - Encourage public-private partnerships at the national, state, regional, community and Tribal level to expand the reach of RDNs in providing much-needed nutrition education to Americans, such as RDN counseling sessions for all food assistance program participants
 - Empower health professionals and other educators with practical resources based on consumer behavioral research, to help prioritize new fruit and vegetable consumption habits, especially for those working within food assistance programs such as SNAP-Ed, WIC and GusNIP. While allocations for fruit and vegetable purchases have increased, it's essential to help educators ensure fruits and vegetables are being *consumed* after they are purchased, across all life stages
 - Ensure health professionals such as RDNs have access to trusted, practical resources to provide to consumers, to enable them to purchase, prepare, store, and enjoy more fruits and vegetables each day, including *MyPlate* and other federally supported consumer nutrition education programs

Motivate new fruit and vegetable eating habits with inspiring, positive and evidence-based messages that address health benefits, cultural relevancy, convenience, affordability, taste, and other drivers (and barriers) to consumption.

- Within the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, *MyPlate* and similar nutrition policy initiatives, as well as food assistance programs, continue to highlight all forms of fruits and vegetables in education and promotion efforts, to help Americans appreciate how a variety of all fruits and vegetables – fresh, frozen, canned, dried and 100% juice – can play a role in optimizing health and reducing the risk of chronic disease. Research continues to demonstrate the role of all forms of fruits and vegetables in improving health – and people tend to consume more fruits and vegetables when they eat more than one form
- As part of the Food Labeling Modernization Act (FLMA), label fruit and vegetable foods accurately and transparently to indicate the amount of fruit and/or vegetable servings

provided, consistent with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* – to help ensure people are consuming real, wholesome fruits and vegetables to improve health