

Submitted via WHHungerHealth@hhs.gov

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RESULTS submits the following recommendations for the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health.

RESULTS creates the public and political will to end poverty by empowering individuals to exercise their personal and political power for change. We support a network of more than 115 chapters with over 650 active volunteers (and an additional 7,000 members in our email action network) across the U.S. Our grassroots advocates educate members of congress, work with the media, and build awareness within their communities on housing programs and policies, basic nutrition and health programs, along with budget and tax policies. Our grassroots network includes a specific focus on engaging young leaders and elevating the voices of low-income Americans who have firsthand expertise of poverty.

Our topline recommendation is that the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health and overall policymaking – across all agencies and decision-making structures -- **center the expertise of people with lived experience in policy design (including the design of this process to solicit input from stakeholders for the White House Conference), policy priorities, and implementation – and ensure there is accountability.**

Secondly, we believe that the White House Conference must recognize that the **root cause of hunger is poverty** – we support the calls for a sixth pillar to explicitly include poverty in the conversation. It is critical that we recognize that there are systemic barriers to food access and affordability, nutrition, physical activity, and more that go beyond food-related policies. We appreciate the “all of government approach” and urge a holistic conversation about poverty at the Conference and beyond. For example, the conversation should include leaders at Treasury and the IRS given the important role tax policy can – and does, especially in 2021 with the expansion of the Child Tax Credit – play in reducing poverty, a root cause of hunger. For too long, tax policy has been a driver of inequality – providing benefits and incentives for those who are wealthy while often failing to focus on reducing hardship and creating opportunity for the lowest-income families. Similarly, we know there are direct connections between housing stability and hunger – as Matthew Desmond describes, when families have limited resources “the rent eats first”. There is an opportunity to uplift successful local policies including state-level EITCs and CTCs, learning

from state renters credits, guaranteed income pilots, and other innovative approaches that we can scale on the federal level. **We hope this process will include looking at how the tax code can help end poverty, address the affordable housing and homelessness crises, and achieve housing and economic justice for all.**

In addition to a broader focus on addressing the root causes of hunger and related issues, we strongly support the calls to **strengthen existing federal nutrition programs** to “Improve food access and affordability” and “ensure access to healthy choices”. RESULTS priorities for these policies are guided by RESULTS Experts on Poverty; at the 2021 RESULTS International Conference, [SNAP participants shared](#) their reflections and experiences accessing benefits and the grueling process that has come with inadequate support for their family's food needs. We hope you'll consider these broad points from that session given they relate to federal nutrition programs and beyond:

- Establish a mechanism for nutrition program beneficiaries to equitably participate in program design, planning, and evaluation. On a related note, we support measures that promote equity and eliminate practices that exclude or hurt people of color
- Participants discussed the lack of cultural competency and compassion showed by caseworkers, and support strengthened hiring, training, and accountability of caseworkers.
- Further increase SNAP and other benefit levels. RESULTS supports USDA's much-needed reevaluation of the Thrifty Food Plan (as a result of the last bipartisan Farm Bill) and urges policymakers to go further in reviewing the adequacy of SNAP benefits.
- The need to address the increasingly disastrous impact of issues such as [the benefits cliff](#).
- Strengthen the collection and disaggregation of data within SNAP and other nutrition programs.

In considering SNAP and the upcoming Farm Bill, RESULTS also urges the Administration to support efforts to **provide a pathway for the successful transition from NAP to full participation in SNAP for U.S. citizens residing in Puerto Rico, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands**. We also support **full repeal of the lifetime ban on individuals with a past felony drug conviction** from receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Repealing the lifetime SNAP/TANF drug felony ban would eliminate a cruel and counterproductive policy that has disproportionately exacerbated hunger and poverty for women and people of color -- who are statistically more likely to be convicted of a drug felony and therefore more likely to be denied eligibility for SNAP and TANF assistance. Food insecurity is pervasive among people transitioning from the criminal legal

system and families with an adult who is banned from benefits have access to less food and support. Repealing this ban would improve equitable and affordable access to critical SNAP and TANF for food insecure and impoverished individuals and families, as well as mitigate racial disparities in eligibility for SNAP and TANF that are perpetuated by this policy. Allowing full participation in SNAP for citizens in Puerto Rico and other territories and repeal of the SNAP/TANF ban directly connects to the priority of the White House conference to eliminate disparities, improve equity, and support the diverse range of individuals and communities that are impacted by hunger. With SNAP and nutrition programs up for review as part of Farm Bill reauthorization due next year, this conference will be a critical venue to discuss the vital importance that Congress fully repeal the SNAP/TANF drug felony ban and move participants from NAP to SNAP. The Administration should also include in its strategy that will be announced at this conference the critical action that Congress must take to fully repeal this ban.

There are also **critical changes to child nutrition programs** that we urge the Administration to incorporate into the strategy along with engagement with Congress on pending Child Nutrition Reauthorization, including:

- Address the summer meal gap -- Expand eligibility and permanency of the [Summer EBT program](#) for all students receiving free or reduced-price school meals during the school year,
- Lowered CEP threshold for elementary schools to 25 percent of students participating in SNAP,
- Increased auto-enrollment of students receiving Medicaid or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) for free school meals
- \$1 billion for healthy foods in schools, providing additional support and enhanced reimbursements rates for schools meeting higher nutritional standards.
- Eliminating unpaid school meal debt,
- Expanding WIC to children 6 years old and younger to ensure children have access to food before becoming of school age,
- Streamlining the administration of child nutrition programs so more money can be spent on food, and
- Offering universal school meals to all students.

It is critical that people of lived expertise with these programs deserve to be at the forefront of these policy dialogues about federal nutrition policies and beyond,

leading conversations around solutions that will uplift their families and their communities.

We applaud the Administration for convening this process and we loudly endorse policy changes and other actions that will ensure ending hunger in America is a national priority.

It is essential that the conference live up to its Congressional mandate to examine the root causes of hunger and how they can be addressed and echo the priorities in our [May 2022 joint statement with other anti-hunger organizations](#). **RESULTS is ready and eager to work with the Administration, Congress, and stakeholders – notably leaders with lived expertise of poverty – to end hunger and poverty in the United States.**

Please reach out with any questions, and we appreciate this opportunity.

Sincerely,



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