

July 20, 2023

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About

The Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior (SNEB) represents 1,000 nutrition educators worldwide. SNEB is dedicated to promoting effective nutrition education and healthy behavior through research, policy, and practice and has a vision of healthy communities, food systems, and behaviors. <https://www.sneb.org/>

Overview

The Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior (SNEB) hosted listening sessions to solicit member feedback focusing on the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health from June-July 2022. Based on these sessions, and discussions among SNEB leaders, *Recommendations from the Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior for the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health* were submitted on July 15, 2022.¹ We were pleased to see several of official SNEB recommendations were included in the National Strategy on Hunger, Nutrition and Health.²

In the wake of the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health, SNEB aims to advocate for evidence-based policies and programs that foster healthy behaviors and reduce food insecurity across the nation. For that reason, SNEB is advocating for the 118th US Congress to pass the Farm Bill with the following considerations:

1. **Expanding and improving access to food and nutrition education programs:** SNEB stresses the importance of incorporating culturally appropriate food and nutrition education into the school curriculum, from early childhood to college level. Food and nutrition education can help promote healthy eating habits, reduce the risk of obesity and

¹ https://www.sneb.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/SNEB_WHCN_7.15.2022.pdf

² House, W. Biden-Harris administration national strategy on hunger, nutrition, and health. Published September 2022. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/White-House-National-Strategy-on-Hunger-Nutrition-and-Health-FINAL.pdf>

chronic diseases, and improve academic performance.³ SNEB members advocate for increased funding and resources for effective nutrition education programs across the nation. As noted in our July recommendations, currently there is no standardized nutrition education curriculum for K-12 students in the U.S. By incorporating nutrition education into the curriculum, schools can help students understand the connection between their diet and their ability to learn and perform well in school. This knowledge may encourage students to prioritize healthier eating habits, which can lead to better academic outcomes. Nutrition education goes beyond the classroom by equipping students with essential life skills, such as meal planning, food budgeting, and cooking. These skills can help students become self-sufficient and make healthier choices throughout their lives, ultimately improving their long-term health and well-being.⁴ Integrating nutrition education into the school curriculum can help reduce health disparities among different socioeconomic and ethnic groups. By providing all students with access to nutrition education, schools can help bridge the knowledge gap and promote health equity among their diverse student populations.⁵ Including nutrition education in state exams serves to reinforce its importance within the educational system. This emphasis can encourage schools to allocate more resources to nutrition education, ensuring that students receive consistent, high-quality instruction on this critical subject matter.

We encourage you to support:

- Expand SNAP-Ed program funding from \$450 million to at least \$900 million annually to reach more people, enable more organizations to participate, and encourage innovation.
- Fund, develop, and share evaluation approaches that provide valid and reliable data, include qualitative and quantitative measurements, and facilitate assessment across all federal nutrition education programs.

³ C Contento IR. Nutrition education: linking research, theory, and practice. *Asia Pac J Clin Nutr.* 2008;17 Suppl 1:176-9. PMID: 18296331.

⁴ Lichtenstein, A. H., & Ludwig, D. S. (2010). Bring back home economics education. *JAMA*, 303(18), 1857-1858.

⁵ Pérez-Rodrigo, C., & Aranceta, J. (2001). School-based nutrition education: lessons learned and new perspectives. *Public Health Nutrition*, 4(1a), 131-139.

2. **Strengthening the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP):** SNAP plays a critical role in reducing food insecurity and improving nutrition among low-income and other under resourced families.⁶ SNEB members will discuss the importance of supporting and expanding SNAP to ensure that vulnerable populations have access to nutritious food. They will also suggest policy changes that encourage the purchase of healthier food options, such as incentives for fruits and vegetables and restrictions on unhealthy foods.⁷

We encourage you to support:

- Eliminating the ban on SNAP for individuals with prior drug felony convictions, both increasing nutrition security and reducing recidivism.
- Expanding SNAP eligibility for [college students](#) by making the pandemic-era expanded [college student](#) eligibility permanent.
- Ensuring [Older adults](#), grandparents and kinship caregivers, and adults with disabilities are able to access SNAP to stretch their budgets.

3. **Supporting local and sustainable food systems:** SNEB recognizes the importance of local and sustainable food systems in promoting food security, environmental sustainability, and community development. Members will advocate for policies that support small-scale, diversified, and environmentally responsible farming practices. They will also emphasize the need for investment in farm-to-school programs, community gardens, and farmers' markets to increase access to fresh, locally produced foods.⁸ Sustainable food systems that prioritize nutritious, locally produced, and environment-friendly foods can help combat climate change and promote biodiversity. Advocating for policies that support local and sustainable food systems can contribute to environmental sustainability while also promoting food security and community development.

⁶ Keith-Jennings, B., Llobrera, J., & Dean, S. (2019). Links of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program with food insecurity, poverty, and health: evidence and potential. *American journal of public health, 109*(12), 1636-1640.

⁷ Guthrie, J. F. (2004). *Understanding fruit and vegetable choices: Economic and behavioral influences* (No. 1474-2016-120865).

⁸ Feenstra, G., Allen, P., Hardesty, S., Ohmart, J., & Perez, J. (2011). Using a supply chain analysis to assess the sustainability of farm-to-institution programs. *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development, 1*(4), 69-84. <https://doi.org/10.5304/jafscd.2011.014.009>

We encourage you to support:

- Increase nutrition research on sustainability by tripling the amount of current funding from \$15 million to at least \$50 million per year for Sustainable Nutrition Science. This research and education intersect food production, climate and the environment, and nutrition, with a focus on health equity and distribution of awards to minority-serving institutions, as well as those engaging in collaborative partnerships and community-based participatory research.
4. **Addressing food waste:** Food waste is a significant issue in the United States, with approximately 30-40% of the food supply going to waste.⁹ While there are many strategies to reduce food waste, such as education campaigns, food waste audits, and policy incentives for food recovery programs minimal funding has been dedicated to study the issue and expand effective practices. It is important to incorporating food waste reduction goals into national nutrition policies and programs.

We encourage you to support:

- Increase TEFAP Farm to Food Bank (FTFB) funding to at least \$25 million annually, remove the state match requirement within the TEFAP FTFB program and allow for the purchase of food. The FTFB supply chain is a key opportunity to fight hunger and increase nutritious donations while cutting food waste.
 - Fund, develop, and share evaluation approaches that provide valid and reliable data, including qualitative and quantitative measurements, for food waste reduction efforts that are equitable and scalable.
5. **Promoting equity in food access:** SNEB members recognize that food insecurity disproportionately affects minority and low-income communities perpetuating health disparities.¹⁰ There is a great need for policies that address systemic barriers to food access, such as improving transportation options, reducing food deserts/ neighborhoods

⁹ Thyberg, K. L., & Tonjes, D. J. (2016). Drivers of food waste and their implications for sustainable policy development. *Resources, Conservation and Recycling*, 106, 110-123.

¹⁰ Seligman, H. K., & Schillinger, D. (2010). Hunger and socioeconomic disparities in chronic disease. *N Engl J Med*, 363(1), 6-9.



affected by food apartheid, and ensuring equitable distribution of resources.¹¹ Advocating for policies and programs that address these inequities, such as expanding access to nutritious foods in food deserts and improving nutrition assistance programs, can help promote health equity and improve overall population health.

We encourage you to support:

- Advocacy efforts for changes in local, regional, and national policy that could help reduce systemic barriers to food access. This could include supporting funding to improve public transportation to grocery stores, pushing for changes to zoning laws that could allow for more supermarkets in low-income neighborhoods, and lobbying for more equitable distribution of resources to reduce the incidence of food deserts.
- Implementation programs aimed at increasing access to nutritious foods in communities affected by food insecurity. This could involve supporting healthy food access in food banks, community gardens, or mobile food markets. Additionally, educational programs could be implemented to help individuals and families make healthier food choices, even when access to food is limited.

Prepared by: Kritika Gupta, Ricardo Kairios, Mim Seidel, and Sara Elnakib on behalf of the Advisory Committee on Public Policy for the Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior and presented during Capitol Hill Visit- July 20, 2023; 10:30am -11:30am ET in Room: HVC-215. For more information, please contact Rachel Daeger, CAE, SNEB Executive Director at rdaeger@sneb.org

¹¹ Larson, N., & Story, M. (2015). Barriers to equity in nutritional health for US children and adolescents: a review of the literature. *Current Nutrition Reports*, 4, 102-110.



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