

April 25, 2023

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and
Related Agencies
United States Senate

The Honorable Susan Collins
Ranking
Senate Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate

The Honorable Kay Granger
Chair
House Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking
House Committee on Appropriations
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Chair
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education, and
Related Agencies
United States Senate

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Ranking
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education, and
Related Agencies
United States Senate

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chair
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen
Chair
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Financial Services and General Government
United States Senate

The Honorable Bill Hagerty
Ranking
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Financial Services and General Government
United States Senate

The Honorable Steve Womack
Chair
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Financial Services and General Government
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Steny Hoyer
Ranking
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Financial Services and General Government
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable John Boozman
Ranking
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and
Related Agencies
United States Senate

The Honorable John Carter
Chair
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and
Related Agencies
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Ranking
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Military Construction,
Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies
United States House of Representatives

Dear Chairs Murray, Granger, Baldwin, Aderholt, Van Hollen, Womack, and Carter, and Ranking Members Collins, DeLauro, Moore Capito, Hagerty, Hoyer, Boozman, and Wasserman Schultz:

The undersigned organizations request that you include funding to support updating and implementing the *Food Service Guidelines for Federal Facilities* (FSG) in the Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) appropriations legislation.

Developed by an interagency working group led by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the FSG are evidence-based, currently voluntary best practices to align food service in federal facilities with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and advance food safety, facility efficiency, environmental support, and community development.¹

If implemented in all federal facilities, the FSG could leverage government purchasing power and operations to improve health outcomes and reduce long-term health care costs—creating net cost savings for the federal government—for the millions of people who rely on federal food service operations, including federal employees, veterans in Veterans Affairs hospitals, members of the armed services, and people who are incarcerated in federal prisons.² However, since their inception in 2011, voluntary uptake of the FSG in federal facilities has been sporadic at best, with limited data available on implementation.³

In the 2022 *National Strategy on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health*, the Biden-Harris Administration committed to “[i]mplementing and updating the Federal Food Service Guidelines in federal facilities,” but did not specify a policy mechanism or process for implementing the commitment. While this commitment is both critical and overdue, it is a significant undertaking that would benefit from dedicated resources.

We support three measures that will facilitate updating the FSG and beginning to phase in implementation in FY24:

1. In the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, direct and fund the CDC’s Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity to update the FSG and create a comprehensive implementation plan.
2. In the Financial Services and General Government Appropriations bill, direct and fund the General Services Administration to develop government-wide trainings to help agencies adopt the FSG.
3. In the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, direct and fund the Department of Veterans Affairs to fully implement the FSG in Veterans Health Administration facilities.

Our recommended report language and detailed rationale for each of these requests are enclosed. They represent key steps to align federal food service with the federal government’s own public health, sustainability, and equity goals. Thank you for your careful consideration.

¹ Food Service Guidelines Federal Work Group. *Food Service Guidelines for Federal Facilities*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2017.

https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/downloads/guidelines_for_federal_concessions_and_vending_operations.pdf.

² Abrahams-Gessel S, et al. Implementing federal food service guidelines in federal and private worksite cafeterias in the United States leads to improved health outcomes and is cost saving. *J Public Health Pol.* 2022;43:266-280. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41271-022-00344-y>.

³ U.S. Government Accountability Office. *Federal Food Service Operations: Implementation of the HHS/GSA Health and Sustainability Guidelines*. December 23, 2014. GAO-15-262R. <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-15-262r>.

Sincerely,

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

American Heart Association

Association of State Public Health Nutritionists

Balanced

Center for Biological Diversity

Center for Good Food Purchasing

Center for Science in the Public Interest

Chicago Food Policy Action Council

Chilis on Wheels

Community Food Advocates

DC Greens

Denver Urban Gardens

Earthjustice

Environmental Working Group

FOUR PAWS USA

Friends of the Earth

Health Care Without Harm

Harvard Law School Food Law & Policy Clinic

Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future

Jump IN for Healthy Kids

National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners

National League for Nursing

Plant Based Foods Institute

Prevention Institute

Redstone Global Center for Prevention & Wellness

Slow Food USA

Society of Behavioral Medicine

The Common Market

Union of Concerned Scientists

ENCLOSURE

1. In the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Act, direct and fund the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity (CDC DNPAO) to update the FSG and create a comprehensive implementation plan.

Language request: *The Committee supports the goal set forth in the National Strategy on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health to update and implement government-wide the Food Service Guidelines for Federal Facilities. The Committee includes \$350,000 for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in consultation with the Federal Food Service Guidelines Work Group it has convened, to 1) update the Food Service Guidelines within 120 days or sooner to reflect the most current Dietary Guidelines for Americans and applicable science and to incorporate guidelines that support a resilient and safe food system and 2) create a comprehensive plan including an assessment of resources and other needs for full implementation of the FSG across federal food service operations, for food both served and sold.*

Rationale: The FSG were created in 2011 and last updated in 2017. Since then, the federal government has issued an update to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, and this administration has established new priorities, including advancing racial justice, supporting workers' rights, promoting health equity, building resilient local food economies, and fighting climate change, that are not adequately reflected in the 2017 FSG. CDC DNPAO has already convened an interagency workgroup on the FSG that is well-positioned to incorporate these considerations in an update or addendum to the FSG, but the agency would need to be directed to make these changes and be appropriated additional resources to undertake this effort.

2. In the Financial Services and General Government Appropriations Act, direct and fund the General Services Administration (GSA) to develop government-wide trainings to help agencies adopt the FSG.

Language request: *The Committee supports the goal set forth in the National Strategy on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health to update and implement government-wide the Food Service Guidelines for Federal Facilities. The Committee provides \$2,000,000 to the General Services Administration to implement government-wide training to support implementing the Food Service Guidelines for Federal Facilities across all federal facilities within 18 months or sooner of the date of enactment of this Act. The Committee requests within two years or sooner of the date of enactment of this Act a report on the outcomes of the training, the status of the implementation of the Food Service Guidelines across all federal food service operations and into federal food service contracts; and recommendations for changes to procurement or other laws that would facilitate ongoing implementation of the Food Service Guidelines.*

Rationale: The FSG were created in 2011 and last updated in 2017. CDC has implemented the FSG in its foodservice facilities, but implementation across other agencies has been sporadic. The National Strategy on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health included a commitment to update and implement government-wide the FSG, but it lacked a mechanism for implementation. Directing and allocating resources for GSA to provide government-wide trainings to facilitate the implementation of the FSG in GSA managed food service operations and other federal food service facilities, and then providing a report to Congress on its evaluation and lessons learned would help to fulfill this commitment to phase in FSG implementation across the entire federal government.

3. In the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, direct and fund the Department of Veterans Affairs to fully implement the FSG in Veterans Health Administration facilities.

Language request: *The Committee supports the goal set forth in the National Strategy on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health to update and implement government-wide the Food Service Guidelines for Federal Facilities. The Committee provides \$1,000,000 to the Veterans Health Administration to implement the Food Service Guidelines across its food service facilities within one year or sooner of the date of enactment of this Act. The Committee requests within two years or sooner of the date of enactment of this Act a report that evaluates the implementation of the Food Service Guidelines, including implementation costs and customer feedback.*

Rationale: The FSG were created in 2011 and last updated in 2017. CDC has implemented the FSG in its foodservice facilities, but implementation across other agencies has been sporadic. The National Strategy on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health included a commitment to update and implement government-wide the FSG, but it lacked a mechanism for implementation. Directing and allocating resources for the Veterans Health Administration to implement the FSG for the veterans and guests it serves and report to Congress on its evaluation and lessons learned would help to fulfill this commitment to phase in FSG implementation across the entire federal government.