

# Nutrition & Growing Consumption

## Quick Facts

- Eight out of ten healthcare dollars are spent on preventable chronic diseases.
- 9 out of 10 Americans do not meet the 2020–25 Dietary Guidelines recommendations for fruit and vegetable consumption.
- Current WIC benefit amounts provide enough fruits and vegetables for participants to meet Dietary Guidelines for Americans' recommendations.
- The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program has been shown to decrease obesity rates and reduce plate waste.
- SNAP participants consistently cite affordability issues as a barrier to eating healthier foods like fruits and vegetables.

## Background

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) establish a strong federal framework for nutrition targets, particularly the call to make fruits and vegetables “half the plate.” Yet, one year after the historic White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition and Health – many government nutrition programs continue to fall short on delivering the resources Americans need to follow the DGA. Reversing the nation’s diet-related diseases demands a systemic approach targeted at increasing Americans’ consumption of fruits and vegetables. To improve the health of Americans by filling half their plate with produce, starting now through 2030, we must accomplish the “fruit and vegetable moonshot” by adopting systemic, scalable policies and programs guided by the principle of “millions of mouths at a time.”

## 2023 Nutrition Priorities

### Farm Bill

- Make dietary quality a core goal of SNAP while exploring a stand-alone fruit and vegetable benefit for SNAP families and expanding the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive (GusNIP) program.
- Modernize USDA procurement programs to include more, and a wider variety, of fresh produce while eliminating lowest-cost bid solicitations.
- Maintain 10% of GusNIP funding for Produce Prescription projects.
- Expand the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) to all low-income elementary schools and keep the program open to only fresh commodities.

### Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

- USDA should release the WIC food package update making permanent the enhanced fruit and vegetable benefit amount. This update reflects a 3x–4x increase and would lead to low-income women and young children accessing the daily recommended amounts of produce.
- Congress should not intervene in delaying the WIC food package release or the science-based process of updating nutrition standards in WIC.
- Reject the House FY24 Appropriations bill proposal

to slash fruit and vegetable benefits by 70% for women and 56% for children. Support the Senate’s FY24 proposal.

### Produce Prescriptions (PRx)

- Provide a PRx benefit covering produce within Medicare.
- Evaluate the Indian Health Service (IHS) and Veterans Affairs (VA) produce prescription pilots.
- Health and Human Services (HHS) should continue to expedite state Medicaid waivers for produce prescriptions.

### School Meals

- Congress and USDA should provide schools with adequate financial and procurement resources to ensure students have access to a wide variety of fresh fruits and vegetables.

### FDA

- Promote nutrition clarity in food labeling, including front of pack options.
- Require fruit and vegetable claims (in name or imaging) to disclose the quantity of per serving fruit and vegetable servings in household measures.