



THE COUNTY ROLE IN FOOD SYSTEMS:

**LOCAL STRATEGIES
TO ADDRESS HUNGER,
HEALTH AND NUTRITION**



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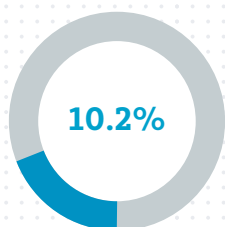
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INTRODUCTION: THE COUNTY ROLE IN SUPPORTING FOOD SECURITY

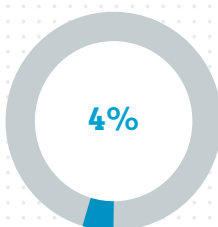
Among our numerous responsibilities, serving as the front line of the social safety net is a primary function of county governments to ensure healthy, safe and vibrant communities for our residents. County governments are steadfastly committed to protecting our residents' quality of life, including by ensuring they can access the nutritious food they need to thrive.

Food insecurity often corresponds with poor nutrition, which can negatively impact health, educational outcomes and productivity in all individuals, but especially in children. Meanwhile, diet-related diseases are some of the leading causes of death and disability in the U.S.

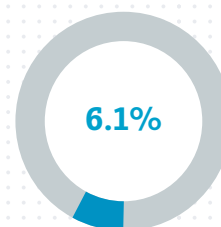
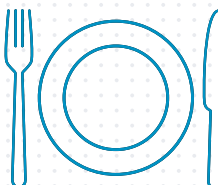
According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), in 2021:



13.5 million (10.2 percent) American households struggled to provide enough food for everyone in their household at some time in the year due to a lack of resources.



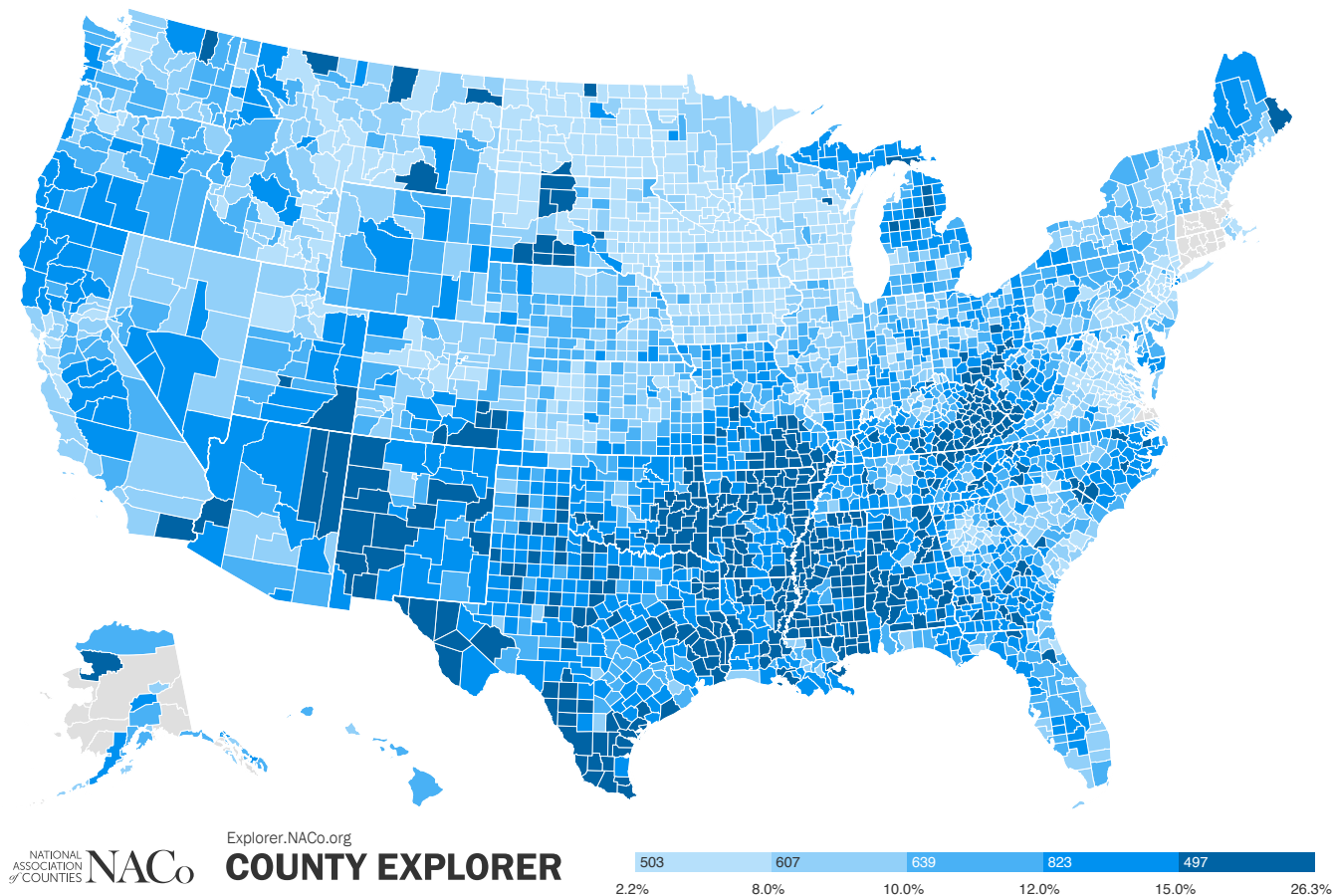
Nearly 4 percent of households experienced very low food security, meaning they were regularly skipping meals or reducing their intake because they could not afford more food.



Approximately 19 million residents, or 6.1 percent of the population, live in a food desert, which is an area that has limited access to affordable and nutritious food.



2021 FOOD INSECURITY RATE



Counties are key partners with the federal government in developing, implementing and administering food and nutrition programs at the local level. Across the nation, county governments are leading efforts to combat hunger by transforming local food systems and often serve as conveners and/or key partners for local food councils. Counties sponsor programs in partnership with community organizations to increase access to fresh fruit and vegetables at farmers markets, organize food drives and support local food production. We are also investing significant portions of our American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (SLFRF) allocations to combat food insecurity.

However, the county role in supporting food security and nutrition extends far beyond the administration

of federal nutrition programs. Counties are owners and operators of the services, resources and systems that shape the way our nation produces, delivers and provides access to healthy, nutritious food to all the nation's residents. This includes building and maintaining critical infrastructure that supports transportation routes from food producers to providers, and investing in facilities that provide food to low-income and vulnerable populations such as schools and public libraries. Counties are also responsible for consumer protection, economic development, employment and workforce training, emergency management, land use planning and zoning, which all support the social, environmental and economic conditions that keep our nation's food system running.

This report provides an outline of the county role in addressing hunger, nutrition and health, while highlighting key policy recommendations to support a whole-of-government approach to improving the nation's food systems.



Counties invest **\$63 billion annually in human services** programs, employing 259,000 workers.



Counties support the nation's approximately **17,000 public libraries**, which serve as trusted community institutions that address local needs, including food insecurity.



Counties support the majority of **2,800 local health departments**, crucial for the nation's food safety system and care resource coordination.



11 million residents live in the nation's 2,050 rural counties where the agriculture sector supports millions of jobs and improves access to affordable, healthy food.



Counties invest **\$103 billion in public education** from K-12 to post-secondary, covering various costs and operations such as school meals, tuition assistance and school equipment.



Counties employ **3.6 million public servants**, providing services to over 300 million residents and promoting economic development across our diverse communities.



Counties foster **economic mobility through partnerships with Career and Technical Education (CTE)** schools and in administering continuing education and workforce development programs.



Counties own and maintain **45 percent of public road miles, 38 percent of bridges** throughout the nation, investing **\$134 billion in public infrastructure**.

THE NATIONAL STRATEGY TO END HUNGER BY 2030: HIGHLIGHTS FOR COUNTY GOVERNMENTS

On September 28, 2022, the Biden administration hosted the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health and released their National Strategy with actions the federal government plans to take that will drive solutions to end hunger, improve nutrition and physical activity and decrease diet-related diseases by 2030. The Strategy, which anticipates an approach to these problems that encompasses federal, state and local governments, private industry, philanthropy, health care, community-based organizations and other partners, is the culmination of months of stakeholder input via listening sessions and written comments.



The Strategy highlights proposed actions across five major pillars:

1. Improving food access and affordability
2. Integrating nutrition and health
3. Empowering all consumers to make and have access to healthy choices
4. Supporting physical activity for all
5. Enhancing nutrition and food security research

As a key intergovernmental partner in developing, implementing and administering food and nutrition programs, as well as leading efforts to transform local food systems, counties play a critical role in implementing many of the federal policy goals outlined in the Strategy.

Specifically, counties will be heavily involved in, and in some circumstances have already begun implementing, the following Strategy areas:

Permanently expanding the Child Tax Credit: Counties support permanent changes to expand the size and eligibility of the Child Tax Credit (CTC) to reduce child poverty and help families afford the rising cost of food. Notably, the temporary expansion of the CTC under ARPA led to a 46 percent reduction in the child poverty rate, a four-fold increase over the regular CTC's anti-poverty impact in 2020. Additionally, data suggests the CTC expansion was associated with a 26 percent reduction in food insecurity for families. Counties can play a key role in connecting low-income households to refundable tax credits and are also leading the way in piloting income support programs with local dollars.

COUNTY SPOTLIGHTS: EXPANDING ACCESS TO THE CHILD TAX CREDIT

Working Family Income Supplement (WFIS), Montgomery County, Md.



Montgomery County's Working Family Income Supplement (WFIS) provides economic support to local families, adding additional income support to the federal and state tax credits, such as the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the Child Tax Credit (CTC). The WFIS provides added benefits after the state and federal credits are provided, ensuring that families have sustained income and economic stability throughout the entire year. The WFIS provides a 100 percent match to the EITC, and the funds can be flexibly used to help meet the varying needs of families.

Universal Basic Income (UBI) Program for Youth, Santa Clara County, Calif.



The pilot program, launched in 2020 and approved for an extension in 2021 by the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors, provides a universal basic income for youth transitioning out of foster care. The Transition-Aged Youth Basic Income Pilot program assists young adults aging out of the foster care system at the age of 24 with \$1,000 a month for a year. Additionally, through partners at Excite Credit Union and MyPath, the program provides financial education and mentorship to assist the participants in their transition.

Harris County, Texas CTC Outreach



In 2021, the Harris County Commissioners Court approved \$500,000 to help residents understand how to apply for and receive additional tax credits through a partnership with a local non-profit, BakerRipley. The funds hired additional staff, supported grassroots outreach and allowed BakerRipley to launch new mobile tax centers, taking tax support into neighborhoods to reach families who need it most.

COUNTY SPOTLIGHTS: EXPANDING ACCESS TO CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS



Quad County Nutrition Action Partnership, San Bernardino County, Calif.

From 2015-2019, the San Bernardino County Nutrition Action Partnership (SBCNAP) created the Summer Meals Collaborative. This program, co-chaired by local school districts and No Kid Hungry, prioritized increasing summer meal participation to address food insecurity and access to healthy food. SBCNAP engaged three neighboring Southern California counties to form the Quad CNAP School Meals Access Collaborative to support school district food service departments as well as increase access to school meals and other food resources during COVID-19.



DuPage County, Illinois WIC Mobile Clinic

DuPage County has introduced a WIC mobile clinic aimed at reaching vulnerable populations who may lack flexibility in their work schedules, have childcare issues or limited access to transportation. The new mobile clinic is a full-service WIC clinic on wheels offering full WIC appointments and distributing WIC EBT cards with food benefits in real-time.



Coordinating SNAP and Nutrition Supports to Reduce Child Hunger, Mecklenburg County, N.C.

The Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services (DSS) is leading an initiative to coordinate nutrition support across government and community partners to streamline access to resources that improve food security for families. The program educates families and households experiencing food insecurity on the resources and services available, as well as how to apply for public benefit programs. In service of this vision, DSS will: analyze nutrition program data, convene cross-sector stakeholders and create a Food Security Navigation (FSN) team. The program advances health equity through a “No Wrong Door” service delivery model, which allows people to access support at various access points, such as community-based organizations, local offices or Community Resource Centers and become connected to benefits as efficiently as possible.

Expanding access to child nutrition programs:

Counties support legislative changes to remove administrative and resource barriers that block children from accessing nutritious meals. This includes permanently expanding the Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT), increasing eligibility for Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) and ensuring all children have access to nutritious breakfast, lunch and snacks at school, in child care settings and during the summer months at no cost. Counties further support targeted investments to ensure child nutrition program operators receive adequate funding and reimbursement to implement these programs and meet rigorous nutrition standards.

Allowing certain formerly incarcerated individuals to enroll in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program:

County jails release 135,000 individuals back into our communities every day, and food insecurity remains a prevalent challenge for this population. Counties support additional flexibility in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) disqualification determinations for states and local

governments and support lifting the lifetime ban on individuals with felony drug convictions in all states.

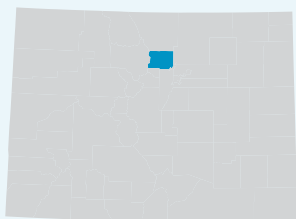
Streamlining nutrition assistance enrollment across other federal safety net programs, including Medicaid:

County social services departments see many individuals and families that are eligible for multiple programs, but requirements are often slightly different for each program, generating significant work for staff and applicants alike. Counties support increased options available to state and local administrative bodies in streamlining applications and administrative processes to reduce barriers to entry for participants and reduce program churn.

Modernizing health data and public benefits systems:

Counties have a vital role in the modernization of health data systems to advance interoperability and use integrated social needs data such as access to healthy food. County governments should be provided the necessary resources and flexibility to deliver federal social services programs through the use and adaptation of technology, including data sharing between programs and centralized community resource centers.

COUNTY SPOTLIGHT: STREAMLINING NUTRITION ASSISTANCE ENROLLMENT



Basic Needs Navigation Pilot, Boulder County, Colo.

Boulder County Department of Health and Human Services' vision is an integrated services model of care (ISDMC) where clients enter through any door and tell their story, receive the right services at the right time, get connected to community supports, receive evidence-based services as needed, which leads to increased stability and self-sufficiency. Through the ISDMC pilot, they implemented social determinants of health screening, service-matching, and appropriate level of service delivery for navigated clients. In total, 666 clients went through the pilot and results showed that navigated clients experienced fewer instances of receiving no benefits, received more monetary benefit per person, received referrals to resources, and needed to visit county offices less often after their initial appointment.

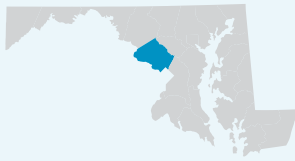
This allows citizens to apply for several federal social services in a single location, reducing the burden on the constituents and ensuring cost-effective allocation of federal resources.

Leveraging the Medicaid program to screen for food insecurity and spur local innovation to treat diet-related health conditions: Counties serve as the gateway to our nation’s health system, serving nearly one-quarter of the U.S. population who

receive Medicaid benefits through hospitals, long-term care facilities and public health departments. Due to local providers’ proximity to residents who are disproportionately impacted by food insecurity, or in need of medically tailored dietary interventions, counties support federal action that incentivizes solutions that would better serve the Medicaid population through whole-person care.

COUNTY SPOTLIGHTS: LEVERAGING THE MEDICAID PROGRAM

Electronic Integrated Case Management System (eICM), Montgomery County, Md.



Montgomery County’s Department of Health & Human Services created an enterprise integrated case management system (eICM) with an operational data warehouse that shares data across more than 70 DHHS programs. It provides staff with more complete real-time and historical information about each client and the variety of services they requested or received than staff previously had access to, allowing DHHS staff to better understand their clients, more efficiently serve them, and improve their outcomes.

ALL IN Recipe4Health (R4H), Alameda County, Calif.



Alameda County has leveraged California’s CalAIM Medicaid waiver to provide beneficiaries with Medically Supportive Food and Nutrition services (MSF&N). ALL IN Recipe4Health (R4H) combines healthy food interventions with group medical visits to prevent, treat and reverse chronic diseases while addressing food insecurity and social isolation. Patients are prescribed 16 weeks of produce to be filled at a “Food Pharmacy” by Dig Deep Farms, an urban farm utilizing regenerative practices to grow nutrient-dense food. Group medical visits bring together patients through weekly visits that include physical activity, healthy food, social connection and stress reduction to help patients adopt healthy practices to maximize the benefits of this medical intervention.

Increasing funding for senior nutrition programs:

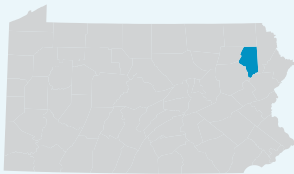
As the nation’s population rapidly ages, counties face increasing demand and challenges in providing comprehensive systems of care to their older residents. Federal funding for Older Americans Act (OAA) programs has not kept pace with these demographic changes. Without additional federal resources, counties will face new challenges in providing the rapidly aging population with access to critical services. We support

full funding for OAA programs, including senior nutrition programs.

Expanding tools for assessing and measuring food insecurity:

Counties recommend federal investment in standardized metrics, data collection protocols and technical assistance for local governments to assess food insecurity in our communities, which strengthens the ability of social service agencies to appropriately assess and provide outreach to households in need of

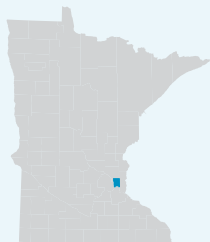
COUNTY SPOTLIGHTS: INCREASING FUNDING FOR SENIOR NUTRITION PROGRAMS



Eat HAPI (Healthy Aging Produce Partnership Initiative), Lackawanna County, Pa.

Lackawanna County’s Eat HAPI (Healthy Aging Produce Partnership Initiative) is an innovative program seeking to reimagine the distribution of the Senior Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) that provides vouchers to seniors to purchase produce from farmers. In addition to providing access to healthy food for seniors, the objective of Eat HAPI is to create a more holistic approach to the social determinants of health. The Lackawanna County Agency on Aging collaborated with the Arts and Culture Department and several community partners to include activities and education such as health screenings, cooking demonstrations, education on nutrition and art and recreational activities.

COUNTY SPOTLIGHTS: EXPANDING TOOLS FOR ASSESSING AND MEASURING FOOD INSECURITY



Food Resources Web Map, Ramsey County, Minn

In response to the economic downturn resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic beginning in 2020, Ramsey County’s Health and Wellness Division and Information Services Department collaborated with numerous community partners to create a continually updated web map locating various food access resources within the county. These include food shelves, free meal sites, food programs associated with schools, food mobiles and stores participating in the SNAP and WIC programs. The use of GIS allowed the county to assist those in need and make it easy for them to find healthy, affordable food near them.

COUNTY SPOTLIGHTS: INCREASING ACCESS TO LOCAL FOODS

Washtenaw County Food Policy Council, Washtenaw County, Mich.



The Washtenaw County Food Policy Council (WFPC) is an advisory subcommittee of the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners that increases and preserves access to safe, local and healthy food for all residents of Washtenaw County. The WFPC has multiple policy action teams, including Farmers and Institutional Purchasing, Food Access and Nutrition, Food Waste and Packaging, Planning and Zoning and Pollinators. The WFPC supports a viable, economical and sustainable local food system through multiple strategies including strengthening the connections between food, health, natural resource protection, economic development and the agricultural community; researching, analyzing and reporting on information about the local food system; advocating for and advising on food system and food policy implementation and promoting and providing education on food system issues

Roving Radish Marketplace, Howard County, Md.



The Roving Radish Marketplace's mission is to provide access to local fruits, vegetables and proteins to the community regardless of income level while creating a market for our local farms. The Marketplace is open to all local farms, which sell their produce and proteins at a retail price of their choosing and pay a 20 percent fee to cover operations. Through funding from the Howard County Department of Community Resources and Services and the Local Children's Board the Marketplace also provides a 50 percent subsidy on all food products to those who qualify.

Urban Farm, Dallas County, Texas



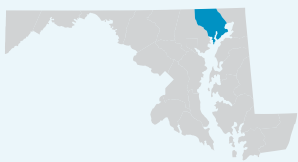
Dallas County converted its auto service center into a multi-purpose learning center called the Urban County Farm. The Farm's mission is to research high-intensity growing practices in restrictive Urban environments while developing a county coalition of growers focused on addressing the food insecurity issues they face in some areas of the county. The Farm partnered with two other local farms and now grows and donates as a co-op by organized planting and coordinated distribution. They have donated or processed over 12,000 pounds of food grown on less than an acre of land. The fresh food goes to homeless shelters, community center food distribution sites and food distribution ministries in some of the most impoverished areas in Dallas County.

assistance. While federal data can provide insight into the levels of food insecurity in counties, there is a delay in the release of data, which prevents county leaders from accurately understanding the real-time level of need in our communities.

Increasing access to local food to better connect people to nutritious foods and support local economies: Counties support federal investments in infrastructure, entrepreneurship programs and facilities that process, distribute and develop value-added products using locally grown commodities purchased from local farmers to meet the demand for local, healthy food.

Investing in transportation solutions and community and economic development: County governments play a critical role in the overall economic vitality of our nation through the development of viable urban, suburban and rural communities. Counties support federal programs that invest in state and local economic development by providing funding resources, bonds, information and technical assistance to further this important role. Counties have been critical partners in the successful implementation of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) apply directly for new grant programs established by these laws to support eligible projects that can increase a community's access to food, including major investments in transportation alternatives.

COUNTY SPOTLIGHTS: INVESTING IN COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



The Grove at Harford, Harford County, Md.

The Grove at Harford was founded as an outlet for farmers, artists and food processors in Harford County to sell their products directly to local consumers and to promote local agriculture commerce and sustainability, particularly in rural areas. The Grove is an open-air building with space leased to local agricultural entrepreneurs.



Food Business Portal, Franklin County, Ohio

The Franklin County Food Business Portal (FBP) is a free, online compilation of resources and services designed to help Franklin County entrepreneurs successfully plan, launch, and grow a food business. Franklin County worked closely with numerous community partners to guide a comprehensive and intentional approach to diversity, equity, and inclusion, ensuring that under-resourced and minority entrepreneurs can identify, access, and utilize key resources and services. The project resulted in the creation of a free resource to strengthen food entrepreneurs and has received positive feedback from entrepreneurs and business service providers.

Better understanding the Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) to achieve health equity:

Healthy communities depend upon a full array of interrelated county services and programs which include access to healthy foods, community development plans and public works infrastructure projects that promote healthy living and access to affordable housing and shelter. Counties across the country are leading efforts to promote health equity and eliminate health disparities through data reporting and the adoption of health information technology to address the social determinants of health, especially in racial and ethnic minority communities.

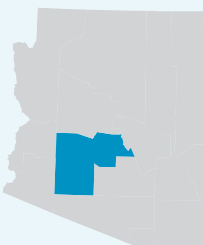


COUNTY SPOTLIGHTS: BETTER UNDERSTANDING THE SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH



Reducing Health Inequity and Hunger Among Veterans During COVID and Beyond, San Bernardino County, Calif.

San Bernardino County initiated a health-equity-focused intervention for residents of its subsidized housing facility for Veterans, aiming to mitigate food insecurity and build resilience by creating easy food access. The on-site pantry has a reliable and sustainable food supply through collaborations with community partners, while health needs assessments are being utilized to develop capacity-building education classes for the veterans.



ParksRX, Arizona, Maricopa County, Ariz.

ParkRx Arizona, as administered by the Maricopa County Department of Public Health's (MCDPH) Office of Nutrition and Active Living, encourages clinicians to "prescribe" park activity and connections to nature to combat chronic conditions and diseases associated with sedentary lifestyles. ParkRx Arizona at MCDPH is investing in the health of specific communities, providing active living opportunities and investing in the training and confidence of community leaders facilitating the activities. To thrive, the program has discovered generous partners with a shared commitment to public health and healthy park conditions.

ADDITIONAL COUNTY POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Beyond the policy commitments outlined in the National Strategy, counties urge our federal partners to consider the following recommendations to achieve our shared goal of ending hunger and diet-related disease by 2030:

ADDRESS THE UNIQUE FOOD INSECURITY CHALLENGES

FACING RURAL COUNTIES: Both poverty and food insecurity rates are higher in rural counties than in urban counties. Nine out of ten counties with the highest rate of food insecurity are rural. These numbers are also correlated with worse health outcomes for rural residents compared to residents of metropolitan areas. The nature of life in rural communities – including limited access to grocery stores, longer and costlier travel, and inferior access to health care – means that the approaches to improve local food systems in urban and suburban areas may not be effective in rural areas. Policymakers should consider implementing initiatives that provide both greater flexibility and utility for residents of rural counties, such as mobile food banks, subsidized food delivery services and enhanced outreach efforts for nutrition program enrollment.

ENSURE SNAP BENEFIT ADEQUACY: While counties applaud the recent increase in the Thrifty Food Plan (TFP) that prompted a uniform SNAP benefit increase, that increase has not kept pace with inflation. Additionally, the expiration of the Public Health Emergency has initiated a loss in emergency SNAP benefit allotments for many participating households. Counties support legislation ensuring SNAP benefits are adequate, especially for children and families, and phase out more gradually to ease the transition from benefits to income. Counties further urge regular review and updates to the TFP to account for the cost of food more accurately, dietary needs, purchasing patterns and regional differences in food costs, housing and medical care, all of which affect the purchasing power of SNAP benefits.

INCREASE SNAP ADMINISTRATIVE FLEXIBILITY: Administrative flexibilities for SNAP during the COVID-19 pandemic streamlined and eased paperwork burdens for both families and county eligibility workers without jeopardizing program integrity. Counties support legislative and/or federal administrative actions to continue COVID-era federal flexibilities in administering federal health human services and nutrition benefit programs.

COMBAT MILITARY FOOD INSECURITY: While a percentage of military members experiencing food insecurity have access to federal food assistance programs, access is impeded due to SNAP eligibility requirements that count the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) as income. Counting the totality of BAH as income is inappropriate, as it is a non-taxable portion of a service member's pay that allows for equitable housing compensation. Service members in areas with particularly high cost-of-living are especially disadvantaged, as the BAH neither fully covers the cost of housing nor allows them access to SNAP and other supports that they may otherwise be eligible to receive. Congress should pass legislation excluding the BAH from SNAP income determinations.

PROMOTE UPSTREAM SOLUTIONS TO INTERGENERATIONAL POVERTY:

Though not all food insecure populations live below the Federal Poverty Line, poverty and food insecurity are closely linked. Families in poverty usually need supportive services to become self-sufficient. Local and state governments are best positioned to assist their citizens when federal programs are flexible and support all generations within a family. The federal government should pursue policies that support and enable state and local jurisdictions to coordinate a multi-generation approach to combat the barriers related to poverty, focused on creating opportunities that address the needs of children and their parents collectively.

PROTECT FUNDING FOR THE PREVENTION AND PUBLIC HEALTH FUND:

Counties support the majority of America's approximately 2,800 local health departments and protect our residents' health, safety and quality of life. Amongst numerous other public health responsibilities, local health departments work with community partners to help prevent the leading causes of death and disability, while also reducing health care costs. As the only source of dedicated federal funding for local health departments, Congress should consider increased investments in the Prevention and Public Health Fund (PPHF) to provide support for local health departments to play a larger role in the hunger safety net by identifying and connecting food insecure individuals with community resources.

PROMOTE RECYCLING AND COMPOST GRANT PROGRAMS:

NACo applauds the launch of the Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling Grant Program at the Environmental Protection Agency and encourages the development of similar programs moving forward. Counties need additional support from the federal government to continue to operate these programs or to initiate them. Recycling and composting programs are often expensive, and further federal resources would be invaluable.

SUPPORT INITIATIVES TO ADDRESS AND MITIGATE CLIMATE CHANGE:

Across the U.S., counties are experiencing new, often drastic, weather patterns and their effects, including impacts on food security and nutrition. Counties encourage the federal government to provide more federal funding and economic, fiscal and practical incentives for counties and businesses to research, mitigate and develop new technologies to address climate change. Further, we encourage our federal partners to provide financial and technical assistance to local governments to help develop and implement local climate change adaptation and mitigation plans and projects.

DEVELOP RESILIENT LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS BY SUPPORTING LOCAL AGRICULTURE:

Supporting local agriculture through a variety of farm-based initiatives increases

access to fresh options for county residents while also providing new business opportunities for local agricultural producers. Non-profits, local and state governments should support local farmers seeking to engage in Community Supported Agriculture programs (CSA) and Cost-offset Community Supported Agriculture (CO-CSA). Federal partners should seek to expand farm assistance programs targeting small and medium-sized farms and agribusinesses, such as the USDA Microloan Program, the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program and the Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Program.

IMPROVE EASE OF ACCESS TO FEDERAL FARM RESOURCES FOR NONCONVENTIONAL FARMERS:

A robust network of local producers is a crucial cornerstone of resilient local food systems. However, many nonconventional farm operations such as urban farms, organic farms and specialty farms encounter difficulty accessing federal farm programs that provide financing, market opportunities and technical support that conventional farm operations take for granted. This creates a barrier to entry for young and beginning farmers and undermines opportunities for community residents to obtain healthy local foods. Counties urge our federal partners to expand eligibility requirements and flexibility of federal farm assistance programs to improve ease of access for nonconventional farm operations.

ENHANCE AND SUPPORT THE INNOVATIVE DELIVERY OF SOCIAL SERVICES AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT:

The federal government should create, support the development of, and fund pilot/demonstration programs for the innovative delivery of federal social services and workforce training programs that are offered through local governments. Along with utilizing regulatory tools to increase coordination and streamline eligibility, counties encourage Congress to increase the options available to state and local administrative bodies in streamlining requirements, applications and administrative processes across assistance programs.

APPENDIX

Federal Programs for Addressing Hunger, Nutrition & Health

Counties are key partners with the federal government in developing, implementing and administering a variety of assistance programs that combat hunger and promote health at the local level.

FEDERAL PROGRAM	PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND COUNTY INVOLVEMENT
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)	<p>Ten states, accounting for 32 percent of total program participants, delegate the administration of SNAP to county governments: California, Colorado, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Virginia, and Wisconsin. In these states, counties often contribute substantial local funds for administrative and supplemental costs toward the program.</p>
Older Americans Act (OAA)	<p>More than half of the nation's Area Agencies on Aging function as part of, or with the support of, county governments, and strive to provide nutritious meals to older adults living in our communities through the administration of Older Americans Act senior nutrition programs.</p>
Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)	<p>Counties play an active role in supporting federal child nutrition programs like WIC, which is operated in 1,900 local agencies in 10,000 clinic sites across the nation. Nearly 50 percent of local WIC agencies function as part of a local government and clinic sites can also include county health departments and other county offices.</p>
National School Lunch Program, National School Breakfast Program and Summer Meals	<p>Counties are responsible for federal school meal programs, directly appropriating funds to support K-12 schools in Alaska, Maryland, North Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia. County government agencies also serve as summer meal site sponsors, with local governments representing 7,362 sponsors that provided meals at 68,321 sites across the country in 2018.</p>
Child and Adult Food Care Program (CAFCP)	<p>CACFP is a federal program that provides reimbursements to qualified providers for nutritious meals and snacks to eligible children and adults who are enrolled for care at participating child care centers, day care homes and adult day care centers including those operated by counties. Training and educational programs are also offered to child care providers that participate with CACFP, to ensure that nutritious, safely prepared meals and snacks are available to children in their daycare program. County governments play a significant role in local child care systems, whether by administering federal human services programs that subsidize care or contributing local dollars to efforts with cross-sector partners to build the supply of high-quality child care.</p>
Summer Election Benefit Transfer (EBT) Program	<p>The Summer EBT program provides SNAP benefits during the summer months for families whose children are certified to receive free or reduced-price school meals during the school year through the National School Lunch Program. Summer EBT is a complement to the Summer Nutrition Programs and can help reduce food insecurity for low-income families, particularly in rural or other areas with limited access to summer meals. Beginning in FY 2024, Summer EBT will transition from a pilot model in certain states to a nationwide rollout. Counties responsible for administering SNAP will be key partners in implementing this expanded program.</p>

Federal Programs for Addressing Hunger, Nutrition & Health Continued

<p>Medicaid</p>	<p>Counties help finance and deliver Medicaid as an integral part of the program's federal, state and local partnership and leverage the program to directly connect enrollees with access to food. While the program does not provide funding for direct food provision, states with Medicaid flexibility for home and community-based services (HCBS) can cover home delivered meals for eligible individuals.</p>
<p>Child Tax Credit (CTC)</p>	<p>The Child Tax Credit is a partially refundable tax credit that allows households to deduct up to \$2,000 per child from their tax liability each year. Already a powerful tool for reducing child poverty, the CTC received a temporary expansion under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) which included an increase in the size of the credit and broadened eligibility for very-low-income families during the 2021 tax year. These changes lifted 2.9 million children above the federal poverty line in 2021—a 46 percent reduction in the child poverty rate. Additionally, data suggests the CTC expansion was associated with a 26 percent reduction in food insecurity for families. County governments often work with community stakeholders to provide outreach and education to ensure households can access the tax credits for which they are eligible</p>
<p>Farm to School Grant (F2S)</p>	<p>FS2 competitive grants support planning, developing and implementing farm to school programs, helping bring healthy, locally grown foods and nutrition education to schools through child nutrition programs. Along with schools, farmers and non-profit organizations, county governments are eligible applicants for FS2 grants.</p>
<p>Community Service Block Grant (CSBG)</p>	<p>Through its boards involving the public sector, the private sector and the community, the CSBG represents a unique and effective partnership with counties, states, federal government and community organizations.</p>
<p>Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program</p>	<p>TANF represents an important source of flexible funding for a variety of anti-poverty activities benefiting vulnerable county residents, including cash assistance, child care, education, job training and work support programs. Although TANF is a partnership between the federal government and states, nine states representing 55 percent of total participants delegate TANF administration to counties: California, Colorado, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio and Virginia.</p>
<p>The Local Agriculture Market Program (LAMP)</p>	<p>LAMP assists counties in increasing access to locally and regionally produced agricultural products and developing new market opportunities for farm and ranch operations in local areas through four programs created in the 2018 Farm Bill including the Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP), Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP), Regional Food System Partnerships Program (RFSP) and Value-Added Producer Grants Program (VAPG).</p>





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