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COUNCIL FOR A STRONG AMERICA

Policy Overview:

Nutrition Roadmap Overview
Opportunities in the 117th Congress

Nutrition Road Map

Our battle plan to fight malnutrition and strengthen our national security

- Adapt And Innovate Federal Nutrition Programs
- Modernize And Integrate Nutrition Education Programs
- Support A Durable, Responsive Food System
- Support State and Local Efforts

Adapt and Innovate Federal Nutrition Programs

Child Nutrition programs need to meet
<u>all</u> children's needs, year 'round

- Means re-thinking delivery, composition, and access
- Strengthen nutritional standards and increase participation
- School Lunch Program (+Breakfast), Summer Meals, and WIC will be "reauthorized" by this Congress
- SNAP GusNIP: expand amount and reach of program outside of major reauthorization

Legislative Background

Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018, known as the **Farm Bill:**

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) - the largest nutrition program in the U.S.
- Nutrition Incentives Program (GusNIP): provides additional SNAP dollars to families to purchase fresh and nutritious foods

Healthy, Hunger Free Act of 2010, referred to as HHFKA and commonly known as the **"Child Nutrition Act"** or CNA:

- National School Lunch / School Breakfast Program
- Summer Food Service Program
- Women Infants and Children (WIC)

School & Summer Meals - Overview of how the Program Functions

NSLP is the oldest food and nutrition assistance program in the US, starting in 1946

- Close to 30 million children participate in the **school lunch** program each year: 20.2 million free lunches; 1.8 million reduced price (student pays $0.40); 7.7 million “full price” - 74% get free or reduced price
- School Breakfast started as a pilot in 1966 and became permanent in 1975
- Close to 15 million students participate in the **School Breakfast Program**; 11.77 million free breakfasts; 0.77 million reduced price (student pays $0.30) 2.17 million full price - 79% get free or reduced price

School & Summer Meals – Overview of how the Program Functions

Summer Meals

- 2.7 million kids access during the summer months at aggregate food sites - schools, playgrounds, libraries, community centers
- Program includes enrichment activities which include information on nutrition, physical activity and are often in collaboration with camps and other city recreation programs

- Eligibility is determined by whether a site serves children from 185% poverty or below, a limiting factor for low income families living in higher income areas
- Food must be consumed in congregant settings
- Innovations to SFSP could boost participation in the program:

School & Summer Meals – Opportunities for adaptation and modernization

- Innovations to Summer Meals Program could boost participation in the program:
  - Summer EBT benefits in place of congregant meals
    - Evidence from pilot projects has pointed to lower food insecurity and increased consumption of fruits and vegetables among participants.
  - Alternative meal delivery methods, like mobile meal sites, or food pick up locations
    - Both these options represent an expansion of the program

SNAP & GusNIP- Overview of how the Programs Function

SNAP provides food benefits to eligible low-income households to purchase food at authorized retailers

- 44% of SNAP recipients are families with children; ⅔ of the SNAP budget goes to families with children - over 20 million children - or “1 in 4” kids receive SNAP benefits
- In general, SNAP benefits may be redeemed for any food for home preparation and consumption. It is NOT cash assistance.
- SNAP benefits cannot be used for alcohol, tobacco, or hot foods intended for immediate consumption.
- Fresh foods are often more expensive; the Nutrition Incentives (GusNIP)program allows increased reimbursement for purchase of fresh fruits and vegetables

SNAP GusNIP– Opportunities for adaptation and modernization

Not all states have opted-in to GusNIP (31 of 50)

- Promoting enrollment in the program by the states
- Increase Investments
- Education about the program at the state level

WIC - Overview of how the Program Functions

"Improve health status and prevent occurrence of health problems during critical times of growth and development"

- Began in 1972 – for low-income and "nutritionally at-risk" pregnant, postpartum (breastfeeding), children to age 5
- Provides supplemental nutrition-rich foods and nutrition education and referrals to health care and social services
- Discretionary program – subject to annual appropriations
  - ~$6.5B, serving ~ 7.2M people
  - Congress does fund to meet the enrolled needs
  - No state matching funds required

WIC - Role in eradicating child malnutrition

"Roughly half of all infants in the US receive WIC benefits"

- Individually designed food packages, with nutritionally dense and fresh foods
  - Participants are given EBT cards to purchase specific foods (grains, proteins, fruits/vegetables) in accordance with nutritional needs
- All eligible household members receive foods
- Integrates nutrition education, and public health resources
  - Breastfeeding incentives
  - Food package expansion to address health disparities

WIC - Opportunities for adaptation and modernization

“A healthy start in life, requires healthy food”

- Conversion to EBT should be complete ”soon”; remote application and eligibility should be extended; on-line purchasing
- Increase eligibility to age 6 or enrollment in Kindergarten
- Update food packages when National Nutritional Guidelines are published (every 5 years)
- Incentivize states to recruit a variety of food retailers/vendors

Modernize And Integrate Nutrition Education Programs

When kids know what they are eating, why it's good for them, and reflects regional and cultural preferences, fresh and nutritious food consumption increases

- Provide recipes ideas and nutritional information at EBT retailers, farmer's markets and on-line
- Expand Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) in schools and out of school time programs
- Increase investments in technical assistance to school and summer meal programs for preparers to offer regional and diverse food offerings

Support A Durable, Responsive Food System

Where a child lives should not dictate her/his access to fresh and nutritious food

- Fund networks of local food providers, social service agencies and public health officials to meet unique needs
- Innovate food waste elimination & invest in food recovery
- Incentivize healthy, balanced shelf stable foods and packaging for school meals
- Strengthen local farm to school and WIC farmers' market programs

Support State and Local Efforts

States should fully participate, fund and expand access to nutrition programs

- Apply the myriad of adaptations and waivers available within federal food programs
- Increase funding into existing food and nutrition programs
- Launch locally designed food access programs and foster private/public partnerships
- Focus nutrition education at all stages of development

Hot Topics

- Continuation of Pandemic Reforms
  - Continuous Summer Meals
  - Delivery of Meals, Expanded Pick-up Options
  - Remote enrollment for WIC
  - Summer EBT v. Meals
- Community Eligibility / Universal School Lunch
  - Lunch Shaming
- Increased Access to Fresh Fruits and Vegetables
  - Farm to School
  - Amount of fresh food benefits

Opportunities in the 117th Congress

Mission: Readiness' Speakers' Bureau does not Lobby

Public Education Campaign Goals:

- Addressing barriers to access for federal nutrition programs, SNAP, WIC and meal programs
- Identify local food recovery models and highlight successful food waste elimination policies
- Strengthen and Protect WIC and SNAP to help eradicate child malnutrition
- Increase Nutrition Literacy in Communities & Schools

Ideas

Questions

Next Steps

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