



Food & Nutrition Innovation Council

Call to Advance Federal Nutrition Research

Suboptimal diet is a leading cause of poor health and preventable healthcare spending in the U.S. and globally. The science of nutrition is rapidly evolving, and a new significant coordinated investment, leadership, and strategy in federal nutrition research could more than pay for itself through better health, equity, military readiness, and sustainability. To accelerate solutions, the Innovation Council calls for a new national evaluation and strategy development for a major coordinated federal nutrition research effort.

Such a new coordinated federal nutrition research effort could include:

- Robust new leadership, strategy, and funding to advance and further harmonize the current federal infrastructure and investment in nutrition research and build new intra-governmental collaborations.
- Additive and synergistic funding and actions with existing NIH efforts and other federal agencies and departments.
- A new structure and leadership within NIH, such as a new Institute, Center, or major cross-agency initiative focused on nutrition.
- A focus on foundational basic science to accelerate transformative discoveries in nutrition, including related to the gut microbiome, epigenetics and metabolomics, development across the life course from conception to healthy aging, military readiness and treatment of battlefield injuries, and personalized nutrition.
- Coordinated and synergistic basic and translational research with existing NIH efforts and other federal agencies and departments on nutrition and major diseases afflicting Americans, including obesity, diabetes, cancers, cardiovascular disease, dementia and neurodegenerative diseases, allergies and autoimmune diseases, sarcopenia and bone health, macular degeneration and other eye diseases, and depression and other psychiatric disorders.
- Focus on efficiently advancing the role of nutrition as a key part of a comprehensive and holistic solution to these diseases.
- Research on “food is medicine” approaches to reduce health care costs.

- Research on determinants of and approaches to address nutrition-related health disparities.
- New research and policies to stimulate and reward private innovations in food and nutrition that are science-driven, transparent, and focused on increasing health, equity, and sustainability, including public-private partnerships.
- Support of the process for establishing national dietary guidelines based on the best available science.
- Support for nutrition training and education, including of scientists, physicians, and other healthcare professionals.

Benefits of such an effort should include new science that supports:

- More rapid advances in fundamental and translational discoveries to reduce the morbidity, mortality, disparities, and economic burdens associated with diet-related diseases and disorders.
- Healthier and more successful children; a healthier and more productive workforce; and more active and independent seniors.
- Fewer diet-related health and social disparities.
- Reduced healthcare spending on diet-related diseases by the federal government, states, private businesses, and individuals and families.
- Reduced public confusion about food and nutrition.
- Improved military readiness.
- New American inventions, jobs, and small businesses.
- Stimulation of private capital investment in this area, catalyzing and unlocking economic growth.
- Re-invigorated rural America, including farms, farmers, and their communities.
- Improved stewardship of our natural resources including water, soil, forests, oceans, and climate.
- A new generation of scientists and healthcare professionals who study and leverage nutrition for health and wellness.
- Positioning of the U.S. as a global leader in food and nutrition, helping to make the nation the 21st century breadbasket for nutritious, sustainable food for the world.
- A large return on investment (ROI). As just one example, the U.S. government currently spends \$151 billion per year on direct healthcare expenditures for diabetes alone. With even a 1-2% reduction in diabetes, a new multi-billion dollar coordinated federal nutrition effort could pay for itself, and the much larger likely reductions could provide a many-fold ROI.

We call for a national evaluation and strategy development for a new coordinated federal nutrition research effort.

The Food & Nutrition Innovation Council, including:

- 2 R Health
- AARP Foundation
- Acasti Pharma
- American Society for Nutrition
- Angiogenesis Foundation
- Azuluna
- Barilla
- Big Idea Ventures
- Brightseed
- Bunge Loders Croklaan
- Campbell Soup Company
- Center for Science in the Public Interest
- DayTwo
- The diaTribe Foundation
- Elysium Health
- End Allergies Together
- Filtricine
- Foodome
- Food at Google
- Food Tank
- Grupo Bimbo
- HumanCo
- January, Inc.
- John Hancock
- Juice Press
- KIND Snacks
- Motif FoodWorks
- Novo Nordisk
- Ocean Spray
- PepsiCo
- Power Plant Ventures
- Teens for Food Justice
- The Well
- Tiny Organics
- Whole Cities Whole Kids Foundation
- Wholesome Crave
- Wholesome Wave



The Food & Nutrition Innovation Council at the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University brings together diverse businesses and nonprofit organizations for a shared mission to foster a robust, science-driven ecosystem of food, agricultural, and wellness innovation and entrepreneurship for a healthier, equitable, and sustainable food system. For more information, see <https://nutrition.tufts.edu/entrepreneurship/nutritioninnovation>.

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