

May 11, 2018

The Honorable John Hoeven
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and
Drug Administration and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and
Drug Administration and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and
Drug Administration and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sanford Bishop
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and
Drug Administration and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Hoeven and Aderholt and Ranking Members Merkley and Bishop:

The undersigned organizations write in support of the president's Fiscal Year 2019 budget request of \$12.297 million for the development and release of the *2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGAs)*. We would like to thank Chairman Aderholt and Ranking Member Bishop for fully funding this request in their bill, released on May 8. We hope the Senate will similarly prioritize this issue. With adequate funding, the U.S. Departments of Agriculture (USDA) and Health and Human Services (HHS) could ensure the process is transparent, independent from special interests, comprehensive and scientifically rigorous. The development of the *DGAs* must continue to be driven by strong science and integrity—and free from political interference—to give consumers confidence in the *Dietary Guidelines*.

The *Dietary Guidelines* provide the basis for nutrition programs, practices and policies. Nutrition is an essential and powerful tool for combating the diet-related chronic diseases that place an increasingly large burden on our nation's health care system. The *Dietary Guidelines* translate current research into succinct, food-based recommendations to promote health, prevent chronic disease and help Americans meet their nutrient needs. Additionally, organizations and industries in the private sector use the *Dietary Guidelines* to guide their product development.

The proposed funding for FY 2019 would support the USDA and HHS to successfully meet the increased demands and responsibilities related to the development and launch of the 2020 edition of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, including increased scope, transparency and opportunities for public engagement during the development process. As the lead department, USDA has the primary financial responsibility for all costs related to administration of the full process from the comprehensive scientific review to its development and release. As the federal government's premier agency with expertise in scientific review focused on diet, health and disease prevention, USDA maintains responsibility for the evidence review that informs each edition of the *Dietary Guidelines*. USDA is also the lead agency in developing consumer messaging materials, testing and distribution. Additionally, USDA is responsible for managing the 2020 advisory committee, holding public meetings, providing public comment database support, developing the report and guidelines, which includes writing, editing and print layout and design and creating and maintaining a user-friendly website.

Starting with the 2020 edition, the scope of the *Dietary Guidelines* will be expanded to include guidance for pregnant women, infants and toddlers from birth to 24 months (B-24) as mandated by the Agriculture Act of 2014. For the first time, the dietary guidance will account for the full life span.

Pregnancy and early childhood offer a unique window of opportunity to build healthier and more prosperous futures. Good nutrition during pregnancy and the first years of a child's life provides the essential building blocks for brain development, healthy growth and a strong immune system. In addition, a growing body of scientific research indicates the foundations for lifelong health—including predispositions to obesity and certain chronic diseases—are largely set during pregnancy and the early years of life.

While the current *DGA* recommendations for other topic areas are based on more than 20 years of critical research and analysis, guidelines for the B-24 population are novel and will require new resources. There will also be a need to expand the agency's work in translating the *Dietary Guidelines* into easily understandable, consumer-targeted materials to serve these additional populations. The guidelines will also have important implications for federal programs that serve these groups, including the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC). WIC relies on science-based dietary guidance to provide appropriate, targeted and cost-effective interventions to eligible low-income participants.

Set forth in the 1990 National Nutrition Monitoring and Related Research Act, the secretaries of USDA and HHS are charged with publishing the *DGAs* at least every five years. To date, Congress has not appropriated any funds to either department to support the development, revision or promotion of the *DGAs* over the course of the 28 years of the mandate. Currently, the base operating budget for the Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion at USDA supports numerous initiatives, including the development of the *DGAs*. A majority of the base operating budget originates from USDA's Food and Nutrition Service Nutrition Program Administration budget with additional funding provided by the Child Nutrition Programs.

The widespread use and robust methodology of the *DGAs* provide a unique means to improve our nation's health through dietary guidance. Given the increased scope and transparency, while serving as the department lead, USDA will require a strong commitment of resources to ensure a rigorous process. Therefore, we urge you to appropriate \$12.297 million for the 2020-2025 edition of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* in FY 2019.

Sincerely,

1,000 Days

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

American Academy of Pediatrics

American Heart Association

American Public Health Association

American Society for Nutrition

ASNNA (Association of SNAP Nutrition Education Administrators)

Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs
Association of State Public Health Nutritionists
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
Center for Biological Diversity
Center for Science in the Public Interest
Grundy County Health Council
Health Resources in Action
Healthy Food America
Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future
Jump IN for Healthy Kids
Laurie M. Tisch Center for Food, Education & Policy, Teachers College Columbia University
March of Dimes
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National WIC Association
Nutrition Policy Institute
Public Health Institute
Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
Trust for America's Health
Union of Concerned Scientists