

## **APHSA Recommendations for the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health** July 2022

The American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) is a bipartisan national membership association representing state and local health and human services agencies and the subject matter experts who help execute their mission to improve outcomes for people nationwide. Building on our long-standing relationships with health and human services leaders, we focus on generating pragmatic solutions that advance the well-being of individuals, families, and communities.

APHSA's membership includes the American Association of SNAP Directors (AASD), comprised of the national network of state SNAP Directors. Within this group, APHSA also engages state subject matter experts responsible for administering specific components of SNAP, including SNAP-Ed, SNAP Outreach, and SNAP E&T programs. APHSA has extensive expertise working with local, state, and federal government, including:

- Serving as a trusted broker connecting state and local human services leaders together to improve policy and practice;
- Representing the voice of human services agencies to inform national policies that reflect what works for implementers on the ground to achieve desired outcomes; and
- Partnering with federal agency leadership and career staff to strengthen the relationship between federal, state, and local agencies that administer human services and related programs to advance shared outcomes that promote social and economic mobility and move the health and human services field upstream to prevent issues before they happen.

As the White House prepares for the Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health, it is essential to partner with state and local human services leaders in developing and implementing initiatives that work to reduce hunger and increase health. **When developing the conference content and related policy agenda, the following policy levers should be pulled through a racial equity lens:**

### **Investing in Outcomes**

*Develop common outcomes in support of fostering alignment across nutrition programs including SNAP, WIC, and school meals to provide holistic access to nutrition supports that reduce disparities.* Many families participate in multiple nutrition supports to meet their needs and afford nutritious and desirable food options. However, silos remain across these programs in terms of eligibility, requirements, data, evaluation, and more. As we look toward the future, we must align and coordinate policies and practices across nutrition programs to achieve shared outcomes of reducing hunger, and integrate nutrition programs with other human services programs such as Medicaid and TANF, to promote well-being for the long-term.



### **Modern Platforms**

*Equip public and community organizations with modern tools to deliver nutrition assistance that is equitable and improves customer experience.* We must move beyond maintaining outdated modes of delivering nutrition programs to families experiencing



hunger, investing in modern approaches that meet people where they are, result in better outcomes, and improve customer experience. This requires intentional investment in public agencies and their community partners that are the critical infrastructure for distributing food assistance. Moreover, we must create resilient food systems that stand up to external factors such as weather and climate disasters to continue to provide effective nutrition supports to communities.

### **Space for Innovation**



*Leverage demonstration authorities to test new, community-led approaches to address systemic barriers within nutrition programs.* Over the past several years, public and private partners have tested new methods to improve access to nutrition programs such as through the Summer EBT pilots and the Elderly Simplified Application Process. Federal opportunities and authorities must give state, local, and tribal partners the space, flexibility, and resources they require to meaningfully test new ways of meeting people's needs based on their on-the-ground experiences.

### **Integrated Policy Levers**



*Address root causes of hunger by naming the role of poverty and aligning nutrition strategies with other social determinants of health that serve as the foundation to well-being.* Hunger is a symptom of poverty and lack of access to critical resources, and in turn disproportionately burdens people of color. To truly reduce hunger and support people in reaching well-being, we must build aligned and intentionally coordinated systems that simplify and streamline enrollment for people across nutrition supports, in addition to Medicaid, TANF, work supports, child care, housing, and more.

### **Applying Science & Design**



*Apply human-centered design principles in the design of services and work with communities to co-create solutions to build systems that meet the needs and realities of people experiencing hunger.* To build systems and structures that work, we must listen to the communities who have expertise navigating them. To supply people with the tools to be the architects of their own future, we must not only make a space for them at the table but open a path for them to build the table from the ground up.

### **Partnering for Impact**



*Invest in the capacity of community organizations and those most impacted by hunger to partner with state and local leaders to improve health and reduce hunger.* No one partner can end hunger on their own. True transformation of our food systems requires we bring community voices together with local, state, tribal, and federal leaders to work in partnership to address the root causes of hunger and build systems of support that are designed to ensure all people can live healthy and well.

APHSA looks forward to continuing to partner with the White House and other state, local, and national partners on building systems that create well-being for all people by reducing structural and systemic barriers and increasing equitable and meaningful access to food. To continue the conversation, please reach out to Chloe Green, Policy Associate for Food and Nutrition Services, at [cgreen@aphsa.org](mailto:cgreen@aphsa.org).