Improving Health and Sustainability in the Food System Through Institutional Food Service Guidelines

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HHS and GSA Collaboration

- **Goal:** Increase healthy food and beverage choices and sustainable practices at federal worksites.

- Apply the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010* to federal food service operations

“HHS and GSA Health and Sustainability Guidelines for Federal Concessions and Vending Operations”

[Link](http://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/resources/guidelines/food-service-guidelines.htm)
Terms: Health

Health:

- Align the food choices with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010

- Atmosphere, architecture, cleaning, serving ware, cooking methods
Terms: Sustainability

Sustainability:

• Building design and facilities, energy use, waste, cleaning materials, packaging, serving ware

• Sourcing of foods

A sustainable food system:

– Integrates production, processing, distribution, and consumption
– Regenerates rather than degrades natural resources
– Is socially just and accessible
– Supports the development of local communities
Terms: Guidelines

- A *guideline* is a statement by which to determine a course of action.
  - Aim to streamline particular processes according to a standard.
  - Following guidelines is never mandatory.
  - Guidelines are not binding and are not enforced.

- Assist staff, management, and contractors in aligning the food environment with healthier and more sustainable choices and practices
The Power of Food Service Guidelines

Direct

- Influence individuals by changing the food environment
- Adults spend considerable time at work as do children in school
- Over 100 million Americans eat at work daily \(^1,2\)

Indirect

- Influence family behavior and community norms

System

- Increase healthy food production - coupled with demand
- Develop social structures and culture norms and values

\(^1\) Bureau of Labor Statistics
Making Healthy Choices….
‘default’, ‘convenient’, ‘easy’, ‘immediate’

Individual and Family
• Exposure, Norms
• Skills, Knowledge
• Use of Time
• Individuality

Environment
• Policy
• Legislation
• Economics

Healthy eating & physical activity

Social Structures
Cultural Norms, Values

NUTRITION
Settings and Targets

**Setting**
- Federal, State, local governments
- School systems
- Worksites
- Hospitals
- Institutionalized populations
- Assisted living communities
- Colleges and universities
- Community-based organizations (including faith-based)
- Day care centers

**Targets**
- Cafeterias
- Snack bars
- Vending
- Lunch rooms
- Meetings
- Conferences
Guideline Examples

- **City**: NYC
- **County**: LA County
- **State**: Michigan, California, Oregon
- **Federal**: Health and Sustainability Guidelines for Federal Concessions and Vending Operations
  - GSA Nation Capital Region: over 20 million annual transactions
  - Nationwide GSA manages 10,000 building
  - HHS: 120,000 employees
- **Business, universities, schools**
Approach: Libertarian Paternalism

**Individuals**

- Are economic
- Are rational
- Make optimal choices
  - Information
  - Resources

- Are behavioral
- Choices dictated by
  - Culture
  - The present
  - Measurable, tangible

- Status quo bias, Default bias, Opting out
- Choice architecture
- Making the healthy choices default

Approach: Health and Sustainability Guidelines

- Guidelines? Standards? Policy?
- Gentle
- Flexibility
- Dietary:
  - Food vs. nutrient level
  - Choice vs. restriction
- Feasible: business and customer, all stakeholders
- Appropriately targeted for population and setting
Make Healthy Choices the Easy Choice

- More accessible
- More appealing
- More affordable
Implementation

• As contracts are renewed
• Gradually but Progressively
• Cafeterias, snack bars, shops, vending
• Various settings
  – Geographic, demographic
• Overall feasibility issues
• Approach
Guidelines Apply to all HHS and GSA Facilities

• All food service concession operations and vending machines managed by HHS and GSA.

• First contract: HHS Humphrey Building Cafeteria, Washington DC

• Now in facilities nationwide

• Conferences, meetings

• Events onsite and offsite.
Providing Healthy Choices

• Seasonal vegetables and fruits.
• Whole grain options, including pasta.
• High fiber, low sugar cereals.
• Low-fat milk, yogurt and cottage cheese.
• Vegetarian entrees.
• Lean meat entrees.

• 100% fruit juice.
• Freely available drinking water.
• Foods with less sodium.
• Foods free of synthetic sources of trans fats.
• Smaller portion sizes
Sustainable Practices

• Participate in waste reduction, recycling and composting programs
• Promote and incentivize reusable beverage containers.
• Use green cleaning and pest control practices.
• Use compostable and bio-based trays, flatware, plates and bowls.
• Offer food that is organically, locally or sustainably grown and labeled accordingly.
• Certified sustainable, shade grown, and/or bird friendly coffee and tea
• Offer drinking water
Letters of Support

- American Diabetes Association
- American Public Health Association
- California Pan-Ethnic Health Network
- National Association of Chronic Disease Directors
- National Business Coalition on Health
- National Association of Local Boards of Health
- Public Health Law and Policy

- Prevention Institute
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Center to Prevent Childhood Obesity
- Society for Nutrition Education
- And others
Next Steps

• Encourage wide spread adaption/ adoption
  – States, hospitals, universities, parks and recreation, etc.

• Designed to be adaptable to most environments

• A “living” document, to be updated as society and science change
Support for the Guidelines

A diverse array of public health organizations affirm

“The Guidelines – make important, needed changes to worksite environments”

“offer a more holistic and comprehensive approach to promoting healthful food”

“can serve as a model for state and local governments, businesses and non-governmental organizations seeking to make healthy choices easier for their employees.”
Health and Human Services and General Services Administration Health and Sustainability Guidelines for Federal Concessions and Vending Operations

http://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/resources/guidelines/food-service-guidelines.htm
Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010

Overarching Concepts

• Consume nutrient-dense foods and beverages.
• Build Healthy Eating Patterns
  – Including: vegetables, fruits, whole grains, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, seafood, lean meats and poultry, eggs, beans and peas, and nuts and seeds.
  – Limit sodium, solid fats, and added sugars.
• Maintain calorie balance over time to achieve and sustain a healthy weight.
Details
Nutrition Menu Labeling

Standard Criteria:

• Calorie labeling must be displayed at the point of purchase in a clear conspicuous manner on the menu board, or posted on signs near food items or menus.

• All items must be labeled with calories per serving.
Nutrition Information

• Available Upon Request, including:
  – Protein
  – Total fat
  – Saturated Fat
  – Cholesterol
  – Sodium
  – Total carbohydrate
  – Sugars
  – Dietary fiber

• A prominent statement regarding availability of additional nutrition information must be placed on menu or menu board.
Exceptions

• Condiments, and items for “general use”
• Daily specials
• Temporary Menu items on the menu for less than 60 days
• Custom orders
Trans Fats

Standard Criteria:

• Eliminate use of partially hydrogenated vegetable oils, shortenings, or margarines unless label for oil indicates 0 grams trans fat per serving. (0 grams trans fats on the Nutrition Facts label must contain less than 0.5 grams trans fat per serving).

• Oils and fats used must also be low in saturated fats.
Sodium

Standard Criteria:

• All individual food items must contain \( \leq 480 \) mg sodium as served.
• All meals must contain \( \leq 900 \) mg sodium as served.
Vegetables

Standard Criteria:

• At least 1 raw, salad-type vegetable and at least 1 steamed, baked or grilled vegetable seasoned without fat or oil should be offered daily.

• All vegetable offerings must contain ≤ 230 mg sodium as served.

• Mixed dishes containing vegetables must contain ≤ 480 mg sodium as served.

• Offer a variety of seasonally available vegetables.

Above Standard:

• Offer at least one prepared vegetable option with ≤ 140 mg sodium as served.
Fruits

Standard Criteria:

- All canned or frozen fruit must be packaged in 100% water or unsweetened juice, with no added sweeteners.
- Offer a variety of at least 3 whole or sliced fruits daily.
- Offer a variety of seasonally available fruits.
Cereals and Grains

Standard Criteria:
• When cereal grains are offered (e.g. rice, bread, pasta) then a whole grain option must be offered for that item as the standard choice.
• All cereal offerings must contain \( \leq 230 \text{ mg} \) sodium per serving.
• At least 50\% (half) of breakfast cereals must contain at least 3g of fiber and less than 10g total sugars per serving.

Above Standard:
• When cereal grains are offered (e.g. rice, bread, pasta), a 100\% whole grain option must be offered for that item as the standard choice.
• If cereal is offered, offer at least 1 cereal with \( \leq 140 \text{ mg} \) sodium per serving.
Dairy: Milk, Yogurt, and Cheese

Standard Criteria:

- If milk is offered as a beverage, only 2%, 1%, and fat-free fluid milk
- If cottage cheese items are offered, only low fat (2% or less) or fat-free items
- If yogurt is offered, only 2%, 1%, or fat-free yogurt.
- If yogurt is offered, only yogurt with no added caloric sweeteners or yogurts labeled as reduced or less sugar according to FDA labeling standards
- Processed cheeses must contain ≤230 mg sodium per serving
Protein Foods

Standard Criteria:
- When protein entrees are offered, offer lean meat, fish, or low-fat vegetarian entrée choices.
- At least twice per week, offer an entrée with a vegetarian protein source.

Above Standard:
- A vegetarian entrée must be offered every day.
Beverages

Standard Criteria:

• At least 50% of available beverage choices (other than 100% juice and unsweetened milk) must contain ≤ 40 kcalories/serving.

• If juice is offered, only 100% juice with no added caloric sweeteners

• Vegetable juices must contain ≤ 230 mg sodium per serving.

• Drinking water, preferably chilled tap, must be offered at no charge at all meal service events.
Above Standard:

For beverages with more than 40 kcalories/serving, only offer servings of 12 oz or less (excluding unsweetened milk and 100% juice)

At least 75% of beverages (other than 100% juice and unsweetened milk) must contain ≤40 kcalories/serving

Offer a non-dairy, calcium-fortified beverage (such as soy or almond beverage); these beverages must not provide more sugars than milk (12g sugar/8 oz svg or less), provide the same amount of protein (at least 6 g/8 oz.), calcium (250 mg/8 oz), and provide less than 5 g total fat (equivalent to 2 % milk)

Offer at least one low sodium vegetable juice ≤ 140 mg sodium/svg
Other considerations

Standard Criteria:

• Deep-fried options are not marketed or promoted as the special or feature of the day.
  – Limit deep-fried entrée options to no more than 1 choice per day.
• Offer half or reduced size choices for some meals and concessions items, when feasible.
• Where value meal combinations are offered, always offer fruit or vegetable as the optional side dish, instead of chips or cookie.
Other Considerations

Above Standard:

- Make healthier options more appealing to the consumer by offering them at a reduced price as compared to less healthy alternatives.

- Offer desserts that use less or no added sugars. For example, offer desserts prepared with fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, apple sauces, and yogurts without added sugars.
Sustainability Guidelines

General Operations

**Standard Criteria:**
- Participate in waste reduction, recycling and composting programs, as available.
- Promote and incentivize the use of reusable beverage containers.
- Promote use of tap water over bottled water.
- Utilize green cleaning practices.
- Use integrated pest management practices and green pest control alternatives to the maximum extent feasible.
- Provide materials for single-service items (e.g., trays, flatware, plates, and bowls) that are compostable and made from bio-based products.
General Food

Standard Criteria:

- Offer 25% of the product line to be organically or locally or documented sustainably grown (e.g. integrated pest management, pesticide free, other labeling programs, etc.).
- Offer seasonal varieties of fruits and vegetables.
- Above Standards:
  - Offer 35% of the product line to be organically or locally or documented sustainably grown (e.g. integrated pest management, pesticide free, other labeling programs, etc.).
Sustainability Labeling

Standard Criteria:
• Label organic, local, or documented sustainably grown food items available in food service at the point of choice.

Above Standard:
• Educate about the value of agricultural best practices that are ecologically sound, economically viable, and socially responsible in agency concessions services with signage, informational programs, or other means of communicating the benefits of the items that are labeled organic, local, and/or sustainable.

• For locally grown foods, include information that identifies the farms and sustainable practices used.
Animal products

Standard Criteria:
• Only offer fish/seafood identified as “Best Choices” or “Good Alternatives” on the Monterey Bay Aquarium’s seafood Watch list or certified by Marine Stewardship Council (or equivalent program).

Above Standard:
• Offer Certified Organic or documented sustainably or locally produced milk and milk products.
• Offer Certified Organic or documented sustainably or locally produced eggs and meat (e.g., grass fed, free-range, pasture raised, grass finished, humanely raised and handled).
Beverages

Standard Criteria:
• Offer drinking water, preferably chilled tap.

Above Standard:
• If offering coffee or tea, include coffee or tea offerings that are Certified Organic, shade grown, and/or bird friendly.

• If composting is available, bottled water must be offered in compostable bottles.
Menu labeling

• Nutrition Facts Label should be visible, but if not, at the point of purchase; the vending machine operator shall provide a sign in close proximity to each article of food or the selection button that includes a clear and conspicuous statement disclosing the number of calories.

• Only items that contain 0 grams trans fat per serving as defined by FDA should be offered.

• Only offer snack items that contain ≤ 230 mg of sodium per serving (excludes refrigerated meals).

• Refrigerated meals items must contain ≤ 480 mg sodium per serving.
In addition to meeting the requirements listed above, **at least 25%** of all packaged food choices must the following criteria:

- Limit all snack (not refrigerated meals) items to ≤ 200 **calories** per item (excluding nuts and seeds without added fats, oils, or caloric sweeteners).
- Limit total calories from saturated fat to ≤ 10% (excluding nuts and seeds without added fats or oils).
- Limit calories from sugars to ≤ 35% total weight (excluding fruits or vegetables without added caloric sweeteners).

**Beverage Requirements:**
- At least 50% of available beverage choices (other than 100% juice and unsweetened milk) should contain ≤ 40 kcalories/serving.
- If milk is offered, only 2%, 1% and non-fat milk dairy-type products should be offered.
Web Resources

- www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines
- www.CDC.gov
- www.GSA.gov
HHS Café: Healthy Balance

- Healthy menu options
- Calorie and nutritional information displayed on electronic menu board
- Intranet on-line daily menu for employees.
- Incentives offered.
- Customers satisfied
Helping Americans Make Healthy Choices

A Call to Action


- Belief Systems
- Heritage
- Religion
- Priorities
- Lifestyle
- Body Image

- Government
- Public Health and Health Care Systems
- Agriculture
- Marketing/Advertising
- Community Design and Safety
- Foundations and Funders
- Industry
  - Food
  - Beverage
  - Physical Activity
  - Entertainment

- Environmental Settings
- Individual Factors
- Social and Cultural Norms and Values

- Food and Beverage Intake
- Physical Activity

- Homes
- Schools
- Workplaces
- Recreational Facilities
- Foodservice and Retail Establishments
- Other Community Settings

- Demographic Factors (e.g., age, gender, socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, disability status)
- Psychosocial Factors
- Knowledge and Skills
- Gene-Environment Interactions
- Other Personal Factors
Go Green! Get Healthy

- HHS Wellness committee and Fedstrive, promote the overall theme: Go Green! Get Healthy!
- HHS Leadership support environment
- Wellness activities, Farmer’s Markets, all help promote healthy eating and physical activity.
Benefits of the Guidelines

• Procurement officers can use Guidelines to create proposals for contractors.

• Leadership can ensure healthy and sustainable food service for employees.

• Increases availability of healthy choices in cafeterias and vending.

• Brings the overall food environment in line with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010.