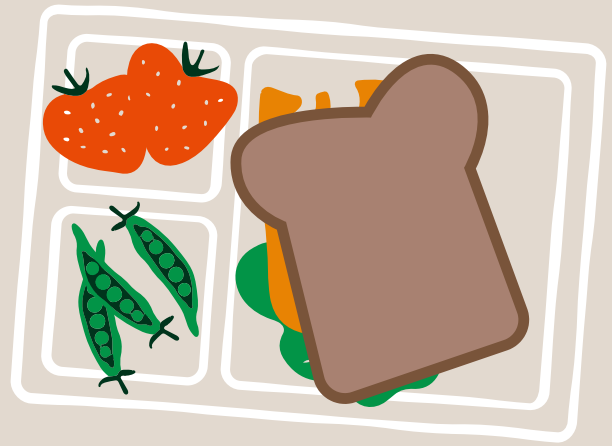


Healthy Eating Research

Policy, systems, and environmental strategies for advancing healthy eating



BUILDING A NATIONAL RESEARCH AGENDA

America stands at a crossroads. Despite decades of progress, millions of children and families still lack access to affordable, nutritious food. Rates of diet-related disease continue to rise, especially in low-income communities and communities of color.

At the same time, key federal nutrition programs face political headwinds and funding changes—USDA has ended decades-long hunger reporting, and programs like SNAP and WIC are under constant threat. Meanwhile, ultra-processed foods dominate the marketplace, intensifying health disparities.

Now more than ever, **evidence must guide policy, systems, and environmental (PSE) change**. Without a strong, independent research agenda, our nation risks losing ground on child health.

A NATIONAL RESEARCH AGENDA

Launching in fall 2025, HER will lead the development of a **national research agenda** to chart the next era of child and family nutrition science.

The agenda will be a **critical tool for our nation**—guiding researchers, policymakers, funders, and advocates toward the most promising solutions to improve child and family nutrition.

- **Synthesize the evidence base:** What we know now about effective PSE interventions
- **Identify urgent gaps:** What we need to know to respond to emerging threats
- **Set priorities:** Define the most important research questions for the next 5 years

A LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP

For 20 years, Healthy Eating Research (HER) has been at the forefront of evidence-based nutrition policy.

- Invested \$35 million in more than 400 research grants
- Produced 500+ publications shaping school meals, SNAP, WIC, food labeling, and sugary drink policies
- Shifted the field from a focus on individual responsibility to systemic, policy-driven solutions
- Centered equity by addressing the social and structural drivers that shape nutrition and food security

HER has played a pivotal role behind many landmark nutrition policies—funding rapid, solution-oriented research that equips policymakers, advocates, and practitioners with actionable evidence when they need it most.

PROJECT DETAILS

The **National Research Agenda** will be built over a 15-month time-period through a rigorous, collaborative process that ensures both scientific integrity and policy relevance.

FOUR THEMATIC REVIEWS

HER will commission four expert-led reviews, each focused on a critical life stage or system:



Early Childhood

Policies and programs for children from birth to age five (e.g., WIC, CACFP, Head Start, home visiting).



School-Age Children

Nutrition programs in K–12 settings including school meals and after-school programs.



Family & Community Nutrition Supports

Programs families directly access, such as SNAP, charitable food systems, child tax credits, and Medicaid.



Shaping the Food Environment

Macro-level policies that influence the food system, such as ultra-processed foods, labeling, marketing, sugary drink taxes, and retail strategies.

The reviews will be conducted by expert writing teams led by national subject-matter leaders, each producing a publishable paper. An advisory board—made up of HER's National Advisory Committee members and the writing team leads—will provide strategic guidance and ensure scientific rigor and policy relevance.



Each review will be structured to address three key questions

- **What do we know now?** What the evidence shows about effective policies and programs.
- **What do we need to know?** What are the gaps and emerging questions that demand attention.
- **Where should we focus next?** The most important research priorities for the next five years.

THE IMPACT

The **National Research Agenda** will be a critical tool for the nation—a consensus-driven roadmap guiding researchers, policymakers, funders, and advocates. By synthesizing evidence, identifying urgent gaps, and setting priorities, it will ensure resources flow to strategies with the greatest potential to improve child and family nutrition.

HER is uniquely positioned to lead. With two decades of experience, trusted relationships across research, policy, and advocacy, and a proven record of turning science into solutions, HER will ensure the next generation of research is bold, actionable, and equity-driven.

This is not an endpoint—it is a launchpad, catalyzing the future of nutrition research and building a healthier, more equitable nation for children and families.

THE AGENDA WILL:

- Focus scarce resources on the most promising strategies
- Equip leaders with evidence to defend and strengthen programs
- Prioritize equity-driven solutions to reduce disparities
- Provide continuity for a field at risk of fragmentation