

Well Nourished Brighter Futures

Let's Eat
Healthy 

Initiative Launch Stakeholder Convening Report



Prepared by Dairy Council of California, in collaboration with:

The Children's Partnership • Latino Coalition for a Healthy California • First 5 Sacramento
Los Angeles County Office of Education • No Kid Hungry

With project support by Glen Price Group (GPG)

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Acknowledgements

In January 2021, a two-part stakeholder convening was held to inform and help launch the *Well-Nourished, Brighter Futures* initiative. This report serves as a record of the participants' input at this convening and is intended for use by the meeting participants—and others—to help inspire continued collaboration and co-creation in support of the nutritional well-being of children and families in California. Dairy Council of California, The Children's Partnership, Latino Coalition for a Healthy California, First 5 Sacramento, Los Angeles County Office of Education, and No Kid Hungry would like to express sincere gratitude to all the participating organizations who have helped shape the *Well-Nourished, Brighter Futures* Initiative strategic framework presented in this report. The diverse group of stakeholders, representing community-based, academia, government and advocacy organizations in California demonstrates that together we can share learning, resources and capacity to create action that supports healthier, nourished children and families.

Note: *The convening featured open dialogue with discussions on many topics identified by the attendees, including advocacy and policy needs. All items in this document that mention advocacy or policy needs reflect the interest from individual convening participants and may be the subject of future work by those groups. Dairy Council of California, or organizations with similar advocacy limitations, will not be involved in advocacy or attempts to influence government policy as it neither engages or encourages others to engage in policy advocacy.*

Funding for this project was provided by Dairy Council of California.

Call to Action From the *Well-Nourished, Brighter Futures* Core Collaborating Organizations

Many children in California lack access to nutritious foods and nutrition education, and are not adequately supported to achieve optimal nutrition. These are complex health and social issues that have long-lasting effects on a child's ability to succeed in school and life. We believe that comprehensive, creative, and collaborative action is needed in order to ensure nutrition equity for children in California.

Through the Let's Eat Healthy Movement, the Dairy Council of California initiated the *Well-Nourished, Brighter Futures* Initiative and invited a group of core collaborating organizations to help support the initial development of the initiative. The organizations were selected based on their demonstrated expertise in many of the areas related to the initiative, representative of the vast geographical communities across California, and their work with historically underserved communities. The core collaborating organizations were also involved in the planning and facilitation of the stakeholder convenings.

This Call to Action to address issues of nutrition equity reflects our combined commitment to create momentum for the *Well-Nourished, Brighter Futures* Initiative. We have agreed to work within our respective areas of responsibility to improve nutrition education, facilitate and provide access to nutritious foods, and advocate for every child's nutritional needs.

The following actions can, and should, be taken immediately by nutrition advocates and professionals, and other key stakeholders to advance the *Well-Nourished, Brighter Futures* Initiative's strategic objectives outlined in this report.

- Share the *Well-Nourished, Brighter Futures* Initiative's key nutrition principles in presentations, podiums, and communications
- Identify and advocate for the continuation of food programs that were created or expanded in response to the COVID-19 pandemic
- Leverage each other's resources by sharing relevant and culturally informed nutrition education between organizations
- Advocate for statewide policies to have a whole child approach and engage in a process for diverse¹ organizations to come together in making unified advocacy policy solutions
- Develop and distribute clear and appropriate messaging based on the needs of California's children and families

1. In this report, 'diverse' is meant: BIPOC, cross-sectors, various ethnic groups, geographically distributed, families/parents, etc.

- Scale successful education and/or advocacy efforts
- Assess who is engaged in this work and who is missing, including organizations whose primary work is not in nutrition, but who might have an interest; bring broader perspectives to this collaborative
- Leverage existing venues for stakeholder participation, contribution, and sharing of best practices and resources

As core collaborating organizations, our focus is to build on the important work already being done by nutrition experts, community organizations, and advocates, among others, across the state. We recognize that this is just the beginning. Much work is already taking place in community organizations, schools, local education agencies, and elsewhere. We invite leaders in these communities to join us as we continue to build on the *Well-Nourished, Brighter Futures Initiative*. We look forward to continuing on this journey together.



Executive Summary

In January 2021, five core collaborating organizations convened 30 thought leaders and stakeholders committed to nutrition equity for children to envision the framework and action steps needed to ensure children in California are well-nourished so they can all have a brighter future.

Well-Nourished, Brighter Futures Initiative Rationale

Childhood nutrition has far-reaching impacts, affecting a child's ability to succeed in school and life. It can also determine future health outcomes, including mental and emotional well-being and reduce the risk of developing chronic diseases. For many children in California, access to nutritious foods, nutrition education, and supports for optimal nutrition are severely limited. This puts them at a disadvantage and compromises their ability to grow up healthy. Systemic issues such as poverty, racism, and other socio-economic barriers exacerbate these conditions. That is why we must work together, across disciplines, to leverage each other's knowledge, experience, resources, and creative thinking. Working together, we can identify, examine, and effectively scale innovative solutions to ensure children are supported and have access to the nutritious foods they need. By advocating for every child's nutritional needs, we can positively impact educational, health, and wellness outcomes for children and families in California, with a special focus on building nutrition equity by focusing on those who need it most.

Stakeholder Convening

Through a 2-part Stakeholder Convening, participants strengthened their understanding of child nutrition, its key principles, and the rationale for joint action as part of the *Well-Nourished, Brighter Futures* Initiative. Participants also contributed to the development of the initiative's strategic framework, including objectives and action steps. Additionally, the convening engaged participants in cross-sharing, learning, and the identification of next steps for the initiative.

Well-Nourished, Brighter Futures Initiative Strategic Framework

Vision

We envision a future of nutrition equity, where each and every child has access to the healthy foods and supports necessary to reach their full potential for growth, health, and learning.

Purpose

Together, we pursue nutrition and child health equity through collaborative, multisector action and advocacy by passionate champions and diverse stakeholders.

Key Nutrition Principles

- 1** All children and families deserve equitable access to healthy, culturally diverse, and enjoyable foods as their human right.
- 2** Food systems have an opportunity to ensure the health and well-being of children, their families and communities, while also protecting the health of the planet for future generations.
- 3** Nutrition education, environmental changes and policies supporting healthy eating should center on individual and community diversity and lived experiences to foster health equity.
- 4** High-quality nutritious foods (especially nutrient-dense, under consumed foods such as fruit, vegetables, whole grains and dairy) are an essential part of ensuring children are supported to grow healthfully, learn optimally, and develop social-emotional well-being throughout life.

Objectives²

- 1** Establish mutually agreed-upon principles that address the unique nutritional needs of culturally diverse children in California for optimal health through critical life stages, including the first 1,000 days, early childhood, and school-age years.
- 2** Reduce food insecurity, achieve optimal growth and development, and reduce obesity and diet-related chronic diseases in children in California, especially those within communities furthest from opportunity through increased equity in access to nutritious foods (especially underconsumed, nutrient-dense foods such as fruit, vegetables, whole grains and dairy), evidenced-based nutrition education, and safe and active environments.
- 3** Embrace the rich cultural diversity of cuisines present in California communities to develop healthy and realistic pathways to nutrition equity.
- 4** Develop plans and policies to reduce the disparities in child health outcomes related to nutrition and food insecurity recognizing that systemic poverty, racism, and inequitable access to education and health care are key drivers of these disparities.
- 5** Develop and use clear, consistent, and age-appropriate nutrition messaging that is culturally and linguistically appropriate. Pair timely, relevant, and practical messages with resources that focus on the needs of children and families.

2. Specific action steps to support the objectives are found in the Well-Nourished, Brighter Futures Initiative Strategic Framework section of this report, under Objectives and Action Steps.

- 6** Expand and strengthen statewide education and advocacy efforts to establish actionable, equity-centered solutions that improve the nutritional health and well-being of children and families.
- 7** Organize and engage a diverse set (BIPOC, cross-sector, various ethnic groups, geographically distributed, families/parents, etc.) of stakeholder organizations that are interested in and willing to support the *Well-Nourished, Brighter Futures* Initiative's objectives.
- 8** Create spaces for stakeholder participation, contributions, and sharing of best practices and resources, as well as opportunities for stakeholder input and feedback to determine opportunities for stakeholder input to guide the future work of the initiative.

Foreword: Rationale for the *Well-Nourished, Brighter Futures* Initiative

Nutrition has far-reaching impacts on a child’s overall health and well-being, affecting their ability to succeed in school and life.³ It can also determine future health outcomes, including mental and emotional well-being and reduce the risk of developing chronic diseases.⁴ Yet for many children in California, access to nutritious foods, nutrition education, and environmental supports for optimal nutrition are severely limited. This puts many children at a disadvantage and compromises their ability to grow up healthy. Systemic issues such as poverty, racism, and other socio-economic barriers exacerbate these conditions.

Additionally, the context of our current environment provides an important lens for the *Well-Nourished, Brighter Futures* Initiative. The global COVID-19 pandemic elevated the importance of overall health and well-being. It also brought to light the alarming issues of hunger and food insecurity, chronic disease, and related health disparities that exist in the U.S. and around the world. With widening socio-economic gaps and inequities, our efforts to fully support the nutritional needs of children has its challenges, but also presents a unique and imperative opportunity.

The newly released (December 2020) Dietary Guidelines for Americans⁵ have a strong focus on the critical need to develop healthy eating patterns across the lifespan. This involves addressing appropriate nutrition and dietary needs to support each life stage, such as pregnancy, infancy, childhood and adolescence. In each of these pivotal life stages, nutrient-dense, high-quality foods make important contributions to dietary patterns, supporting proper brain development and promoting lean muscle development, bone health, normal growth and healthy weight.⁶ Nutrient-dense, high quality foods include a variety of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, milk, yogurt, cheese, beans, nuts, seeds, fish, lean meat, poultry, eggs and healthy fats and oils.⁷ Once healthy eating patterns are established, they can be carried to the next life stage, promoting lifelong optimal health and well-being.

3. Bradley BJ, Greene AC. “Do health and education agencies in the United States share responsibility for academic achievement and health? A review of 25 years of evidence about the relationship of adolescents’ academic achievement and health behaviors”, *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 52, 5 (2013): 523-532, doi:10.1016/j.jadohealth.2013.01.008.

4. Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee. Scientific report of the 2020 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee: advisory report to the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of Health and Human Services. July 2020. Accessed at https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/sites/default/files/2020-07/ScientificReport_of_the_2020DietaryGuidelinesAdvisoryCommittee_first-print.pdf

5. US Department of Food and Agriculture, “Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2020-2025”, December 2020 (accessed March 2, 2021). https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/sites/default/files/2020-12/Dietary_Guidelines_for_Americans_2020-2025.pdf

6. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website, Infant and toddler nutrition, Updated December 11, 2020. (accessed December 15, 2020). <https://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/InfantandToddlerNutrition/index.html>.

7. US Department of Food and Agriculture, “Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2020-2025”, December 2020 (accessed March 2, 2021). https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/sites/default/files/2020-12/Dietary_Guidelines_for_Americans_2020-2025.pdf.

There is strong evidence that good nutrition starts in the first 1,000 days of life (approximately from the beginning of pregnancy through age 2 years), and helps lay the foundation for a child's future health well into adulthood. Nutrition fuels the growth and development of the brain from the start and lays the foundation for cognitive abilities, motor skills, and socio-emotional development, which profoundly influence success in school and economic opportunities later in life.

Childhood overweight and obesity continue to be a public health priority. While early childhood influences and inter-generational factors can increase the risk for overweight and obesity, these conditions are also linked to malnutrition. To create solutions for childhood obesity, the equally important and interrelated issue of malnutrition must be addressed. There is an opportunity to improve overall diet quality by including more wholesome, nutrient-dense foods in daily, healthy eating patterns. With rates of obesity and associated chronic diseases remaining high among children and adults, health educators may tend to focus on disease outcomes as being individually controlled versus resulting from a systemic problem.⁸ The latter helps reframe these important public health issues in a way that is empathetic to those experiencing negative health outcomes as a result of their environment. Improving the health of those living with the impacts of obesity and chronic diseases is best approached with empathy and respect, acknowledging diversity and culture and consciously moving away from placing blame or stigma. Efforts to foster health equity will require a broad range of strategies aimed at the individual, systems and policy levels, while addressing the social determinants of health. Health educators can play an important part in these solutions, especially in identifying the personal experiences related to everyday barriers of those they support, such as children and families.

Most Americans do not align their food choices with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Poor quality diets have devastating health impacts, and most risk factors for high-burden chronic diseases are linked to dietary eating patterns, such as type two diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Over the past few decades, the food environment has changed dramatically. Most notably, there has been a significant increase in highly processed foods which are widely available, calorie-dense, nutrient-poor, affordable, and heavily promoted. This is widening the gap of healthy food consumption, especially within communities of need. Food insecurity is more than just experiencing hunger. Food insecurity, from moderate to severe, is tied to poor-quality diets, which can impact health. Lack of nutrition education and health promoting environments, as well as limited access, availability and increased cost of healthy foods can lead families experiencing food insecurity to compromise on diet quality.

Millions of children and their families rely on the critical safety net provided through federal nutrition assistance programs such as the U.S. National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Women, Infants and Children (WIC), the Child, Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), and others. Participants

8. State of Childhood Obesity website, National Obesity Monitor, (Accessed February 16, 2021).<https://stateofchildhoodobesity.org/monitor/>.

in these school meal programs consume more nutrient-dense foods overall than those who do not participate. Understanding the role of school meal programs as a community solution for nutrition adequacy is key. Research suggests that eating school breakfast every day is associated with healthier dietary intakes among U.S. school children.⁹ Additionally, consumption of nutrient-dense foods made readily available in school meal programs—like fruits, vegetables or dairy products—is associated with improved academic and health outcomes among children and adolescents.¹⁰

Nutrition education can increase the acceptability of healthy school meals and support school food services efforts. In the U.S., students receive less than eight of the 40-50 hours recommended to support behavior change each year. We have an incredible opportunity to improve the amount of nutrition education students receive. Nutrition education is part of a larger systems approach to health, delivered in combination with healthy foods through schools and communities. Nutrition education can exist in a variety of learning settings with diverse audiences, from classrooms to gardens to community centers. Standards-based, sequential nutrition education, as part of comprehensive health and wellness actions, has the power to positively change individuals, families and communities.

9. US Department of Food and Agriculture, “School nutrition and meal cost study”, April 23, 2019 (Accessed March 2, 2021). <https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-nutrition-and-meal-cost-study>.

10. Bradley BJ, Greene AC. “Do health and education agencies in the United States share responsibility for academic achievement and health? A review of 25 years of evidence about the relationship of adolescents’ academic achievement and health behaviors”, *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 52, 5 (2013): 523-532, doi:10.1016/j.jadohealth.2013.01.008.

Building the Initiative Through Stakeholder Engagement

There is an opportunity to support the overall nutrition, health and well-being of children by working collaboratively. Collective action is required to adequately address the complex issues impacting children's health.

The recently published Dietary Guidelines for Americans calls for collective action, acknowledging that:

“Comprehensive, coordinated strategies built on the science-based foundation of the Dietary Guidelines—and a commitment to drive these strategies over time across sectors and settings—can help all Americans consume healthy dietary patterns, achieve and maintain good health, and reduce the risk of chronic diseases.”¹¹

With collaboration and multisector action as a foundation for the initiative, a diverse set of stakeholders from across the state were invited to participate in the *Well-Nourished, Brighter Futures* Initiative Stakeholder Convening. Among the stakeholders invited were leaders from state and local governments, nonprofit organizations, and academics from a range of nutrition-related disciplines,¹² many of which had never engaged with each other before.

The convening was originally intended to bring together stakeholders for a full day of in-person activities. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the convening took place virtually via Zoom over the course of two half days, referred to as Stakeholder Convening Part 1 and Part 2. As pre-work to the convening, Dairy Council of California, The Children's Partnership, Latino Coalition for a Healthy California, First 5 Sacramento, Los Angeles County Office of Education, and No Kid Hungry shared the initiative's draft strategic framework (including its vision, purpose, key nutrition principles, and objectives) and a set of orientation videos¹³ on key nutrition-related topics with convening participants.

The convening provided multiple opportunities for stakeholder input and feedback on the *Well-Nourished, Brighter Futures* Initiative objectives, key nutrition principles, and action steps. Having two separate dates allowed for an iterative process where input and feedback from Part 1 was synthesized in preparation for Part 2. Additionally, a survey to gather additional input and feedback on the emerging Key Nutrition Principles from participants was shared between Part 1 and 2 of the convening.

11. US Department of Food and Agriculture, “Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2020-2025”, December 2020 (accessed March 2, 2021). https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/sites/default/files/2020-12/Dietary_Guidelines_for_Americans_2020-2025.pdf.

12. For the full list of convening participants, see Appendix A.

13. For the full list of videos and other information on the Well-Nourished, Brighter Futures Initiative, please visit: healthyeating.org/wellnourished

Below are the convening objectives that guided the process for both Part 1 and 2 as well as high level summaries of the meeting sessions and topics discussed in each part of the convening.¹⁴

Stakeholder Convening Objectives

1. Strengthen understanding of child nutrition, its key principles and rationale for joint action.
2. Further develop a strategic framework for the Well-Nourished Brighter Futures Initiative.
3. Co-create a shared agenda for action to address nutrition equity for children in California.
4. Engage in cross-sharing and learning, and initiate collaboration among diverse stakeholders and organizations across sectors.
5. Identify next steps for the initiative.

Convening Part 1 - January 20, 2021

- **Speaker Presentation:** Karen Ross, Secretary of the California Department of Food Agriculture, provided the opening remarks.
- **Context Setting from Participant Experience:** Participants shared key efforts that are working well in child nutrition efforts.
- *Well-Nourished, Brighter Futures* **Initiative Overview**
- **Stakeholder Collaboration for Success:** Participants shared key factors for successful multi-stakeholder collaboration to keep in mind in building this collaborative.
- *Well-Nourished, Brighter Futures* **Initiative Strategic Framework:** In breakout groups, participants reviewed, edited, and shared general feedback on the *Well-Nourished, Brighter Futures* Initiative Strategic framework objectives.
- **Nutrition Principles:** Participants shared what they believe are the Key Nutrition Principles to be carried forward that might bring us together for collective action.

Between Parts 1 and 2 of the convening, the facilitation team refined the *Well-Nourished, Brighter Futures* Initiative objectives based on the input gathered during Part 1. Additionally, the facilitation team synthesized participant input to draft Key Nutrition Principles which were then shared via a survey to all registered participants for feedback before Part 2 of the convening.

14. For the detailed convening summaries, see Appendix B.

Convening Part 2 - January 27, 2021

- **Building from the First Convening Event:** In small groups, participants shared key reflections/learnings/takeaways, from the first Convening event, that would be helpful to build upon and inform the second event.
- **Speaker Presentation:** Kim Frinzell, Director of Nutrition Services Division at the California Department of Education, provided the opening remarks.
- **Nutrition Principles and Equity:** The emerging Key Nutrition Principles survey results were shared.
- **Panel Discussion:** Three representatives from core collaborating organizations (Julie Gallelo, First 5 Sacramento; Kathy Saile, No Kid Hungry; Aracely Navarro, Children's Partnership) participated in a panel discussion sharing thoughts and insights on what is working well in nutrition equity that we can share, build upon, amplify, and scale.
- **Action Planning:** In breakout groups, participants drafted concrete action steps for the revised *Well-Nourished, Brighter Futures* Initiative objectives.
- **Wrap-Up & Post-Convening Next Steps:** Participants shared recommendations on next steps for continuing the momentum and going forward together.
- **Closing Remarks:** Rosa Flores, Senior Programs Manager with the Latino Coalition for a Healthy California, provided the closing remarks.

Well-Nourished, Brighter Futures Initiative Strategic Framework

The *Well-Nourished, Brighter Futures* Initiative framework was initially drafted by Dairy Council of California along with the five core collaborating organizations. The framework was further developed based on the input and feedback from the stakeholder convening and survey. The current version of the *Well-Nourished, Brighter Futures* Initiative framework is presented below. This framework will continue to evolve as the collaborative work continues.

Vision

We envision a future of nutrition equity, where each and every child has access to the healthy foods and supports necessary to reach their full potential for growth, health, and learning.

Purpose

Together, we pursue nutrition and child health equity through collaborative, multisector action and advocacy by passionate champions and diverse stakeholders.

Key Nutrition Principles

- 1** All children and families deserve equitable access to healthy, culturally diverse, and enjoyable foods as their human right.
- 2** Food systems have an opportunity to ensure the health and well-being of children, their families and communities, while also protecting the health of the planet for future generations.
- 3** Nutrition education, environmental changes and policies supporting healthy eating should center on individual and community diversity and lived experiences to foster health equity.
- 4** High-quality nutritious foods (especially nutrient-dense, under consumed foods such as fruit, vegetables, whole grains and dairy) are an essential part of ensuring children are supported to grow healthfully, learn optimally, and develop social-emotional well-being throughout life.

Strategic Objectives and Action Steps

The action steps outlined below are to be taken by stakeholders who want to continue being part of moving the *Well-Nourished, Brighter Futures* Initiative forward.

Strategic Objective 1:

Establish mutually agreed-upon principles that address the unique nutritional needs of culturally diverse children in California for optimal health through critical life stages, including the first 1,000 days, early childhood, and school-age years.

Short Term Action Steps

- A. Include an assessment of available education resources and evidence-based best practices for each life stage in the initiative framework.
- B. Collaborating organizations share out the Key Nutrition Principles in their presentations/podiums/communications
- C. Ensure future marketing and education materials developed include images that represent diverse communities, meals, and foods.

Long Term Action Steps

- A. Support and advocate for policies that align to the Key Nutrition Principles.

Strategic Objective 2:

Reduce food insecurity, achieve optimal growth and development, and reduce obesity and diet-related chronic diseases in children in California, especially those within communities furthest from opportunity through increased equity in access to nutritious foods (especially underconsumed, nutrient-dense foods such as fruit, vegetables, whole grains and dairy), evidenced-based nutrition education, and safe and active environments.

Short Term Action Steps

- A. Compile evidence-based best practices and establish a clearinghouse to streamline information/resources for food access information.¹⁵
- B. Disseminate information/resources in a way that will reach multi-generational households.
- C. Identify and advocate for expanded food access programs, both new and existing. For example, continue the pandemic electronic benefits transfer (P-EBT) and universal school meals.
- D. Identify non-traditional partnerships to support this objective (i.e. professionals in mental health, environmental sustainability, affordable housing, and transportation).

Long Term Action Steps

- A. Foster environments that support active play and physical activity in coordination with food access and nutrition education.
- B. Advocate and support making nutrition education in schools a requirement; address barriers to implementation.

15. For example, First 5 Sacramento shared their Resolution On Racial Equity and Social Justice. For the full resolution, see Appendix D.

Strategic Objective 3:

Embrace the rich cultural diversity of cuisines present in California communities to develop healthy and realistic pathways to nutrition equity.

Short Term Action Steps

- A. Ensure that nutrition education resources and curriculum shared by initiative stakeholders embrace the Key Nutrition Principles, are culturally informed and relevant to the needs of diverse communities. Examples include, recipes for parents, how to have conversations around equity, farm to school, and current recommended guidelines for healthy eating patterns.

Long Term Action Steps

- A. Develop programs collaboratively that introduce children to diverse cuisines and new foods.
- B. Educate and train direct health service leaders/professionals to understand the diverse needs and perspectives of California families.

Strategic Objective 4:

Develop plans and policies to reduce the disparities in child health outcomes related to nutrition and food insecurity recognizing that systemic poverty, racism, and inequitable access to education and health care are key drivers of these disparities.

Short Term Action Steps

- A. Codify and document innovative approaches and policies that create unique points of food access.
- B. Develop multiple ways for advocacy strategies to accommodate the diverse skills and resources of the initiative's participants.
- C. Ensure nutrition education and healthy food access advocacy priorities address racial inequities.

Long Term Action Steps

- A. Ensure statewide policies have a whole child approach and establish a process for diverse organizations to come together in making unified advocacy policy solutions.
- B. Streamline access to safety net programs and leverage systems to connect eligible children and families to programs and services.

Strategic Objective 5:

Develop and use clear, consistent, and age-appropriate nutrition messaging that is culturally and linguistically appropriate. Pair timely, relevant, and practical messages with resources that focus on the needs of children and families.

Short Term Action Steps

- A. Conduct a needs assessment of target audience(s) through gathering input from direct service providers and conducting key informant interviews.¹⁶
- B. Develop and curate nutrition messages by:
 - a. Inventorying and assessing the utility of existing messages
 - b. Identifying messaging gaps and needs
 - c. Prioritizing messages to be developed first
 - d. Align messages with *Well-Nourished, Brighter Futures Initiative Key Nutrition Principles and Dietary Guidelines for Americans*
 - e. Test messages with target audience(s). Compile and evaluate results of message testing to identify necessary edits or adjustments.¹⁷

Long Term Action Steps

- A. Evaluate the impacts of resources, campaigns and communications that utilized the tested and approved nutrition messages.

16. Questions to consider include: What are the priorities of the target audience? What are topic areas of interest? What are immediate concerns? Where/how can messages be delivered to achieve greatest impact?

17. Questions to consider include: Are we being consistent, age appropriate, culturally appropriate? Do messages resonate and inform behavior change? Test with both consumers and service providers

Strategic Objective 6:

Expand and strengthen statewide education and advocacy efforts to establish actionable, equity-centered solutions that improve the nutritional health and well-being of children and families.

Short Term Action Steps

- A. Conduct an inventory of existing assets and identify gaps through a workgroup.¹⁸
- B. Develop a shared action and policy agenda which scales local advocacy models that have proven successful.

Long Term Action Steps

- A. Secure additional funding to implement successful education and advocacy programs/campaigns/etc. throughout California, particularly in areas of need, with a focus on systems change.
- B. Increase the political will for equity-centered solutions to improve the nutritional health and well-being of children and families.

18. Questions to consider: Who at the state level is working in these areas? Who are the key players? What platforms are being used? What challenges do we anticipate and how should we address them? Identify successful education and/or advocacy efforts. Are they scalable to other communities or the state?

Strategic Objective 7:

Organize and engage a diverse set (BIPOC, cross-sector, various ethnic groups, geographically distributed, families/parents etc.) of stakeholder organizations that are interested in and willing to support the *Well-Nourished, Brighter Futures Initiative's* objectives.

Short Term Action Steps

- A. Determine who is part of the initiative and their lived experience in various diverse groups.
- B. Assess who is engaged in and who is missing from the initiative, including organizations whose primary work isn't in nutrition.
- C. Invite and create spaces for regular input from stakeholders on the initiative's work and future direction.

Long Term Action Steps

- A. Explore and (possibly) adapt the collective impact model with dedicated seats at the table with varying types of representation with a clear focus and measurable goals.

Strategic Objective 8:

Create spaces for stakeholder participation, contributions, and sharing of best practices and resources, as well as opportunities for stakeholder input and feedback to determine opportunities for stakeholder input to guide the future work of the initiative.

Short Term Action Steps

- A. Identify indicators of success to monitor and assess the progress/success of the initiative.
- B. Identify and leverage existing venues, such as family resource centers' parent advisory boards, to engage additional stakeholder groups in the initiative.
- C. Create a portal to gather and share resources, tools, and other documents related to the initiative's work.
- D. Identify and solicit flexible resources to support the active engagement of nonprofit collaborating organizations, children, families, and community members.

Long Term Action Steps

- A. Using agreed upon levels of participation with clear expectations, implement engagements within the community.¹⁹ Utilize focus groups and other participatory activities to gain input and ensure success.

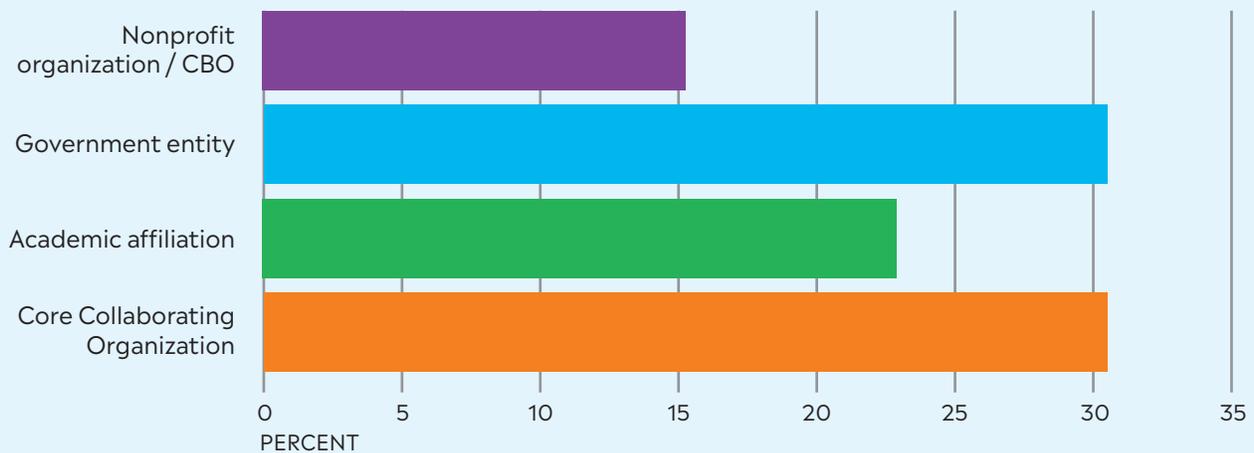
19. Model example: International Association for Public Participation (<https://www.iap2.org/>)

Survey Results: Convening Feedback & Initiative Collaboration

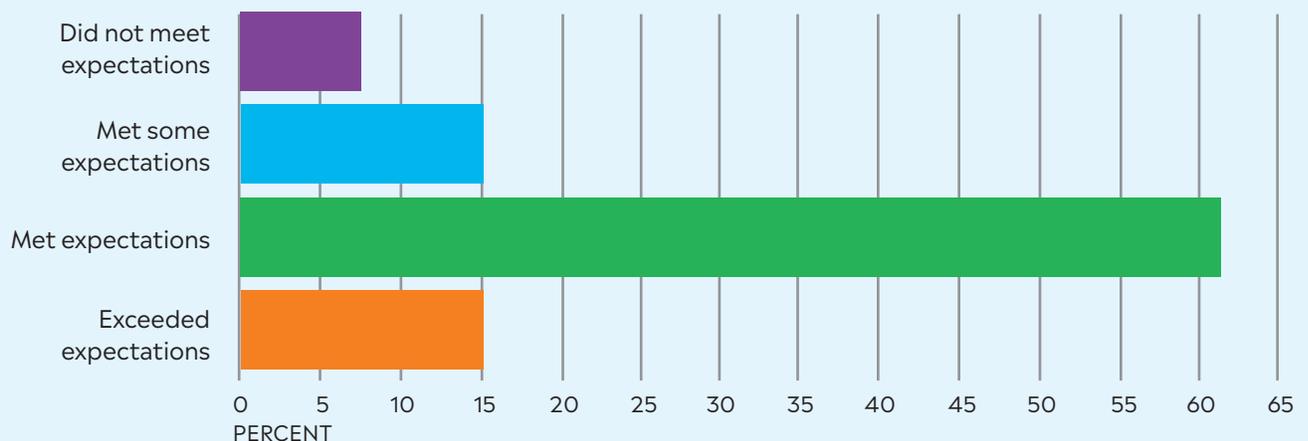
After both Part 1 and Part 2 of the stakeholder convening, a survey was circulated to all the stakeholders who participated in one or both parts of the convening. The purpose of this survey was to not only gauge the success of the convening, but also to solicit feedback on how to best continue collaborating with each other and further the *Well-Nourished, Brighter Futures* Initiative.

Below are some of the survey results that also helped inform the recommendations section that follows.²⁰

Select the option that best describes your organization type:



Overall, how well did the WNBFC Convening meet your expectations?

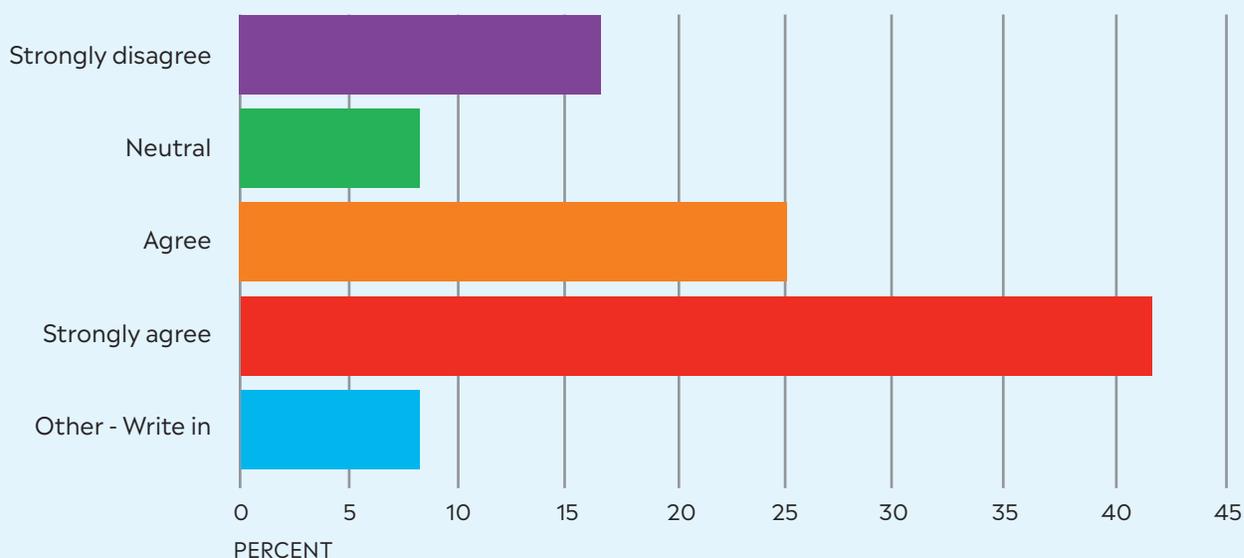


20. For the full survey results, see Appendix C.

To what extent did the Convening Achieve the stated over all Well-Nourished, Brighter Futures Initiative (WNBFI) Convening objectives?

	Much less than expected	Less than expected	Matched expectations	Exceeded expectations	Greatly exceeded expectations
Strengthen understanding of child nutrition and rationale for joint action.	0.0%	7.7%	46.2%	38.5%	7.7%
Further develop a strategic framework for the WNBFI Initiative.	0.0%	15.4%	23.1%	61.5%	0.0%
Co-create a shared agenda for action to address nutrition equity for children.	0.0%	23.1%	46.2%	23.1%	7.7%
Engage in sharing and learning, and initiate collaboration among diverse stakeholders and organizations across sectors.	0.0%	7.7%	23.1%	38.5%	30.8%
Identify next steps for the initiative.	0.0%	30.8%	38.5%	30.8%	0.0%

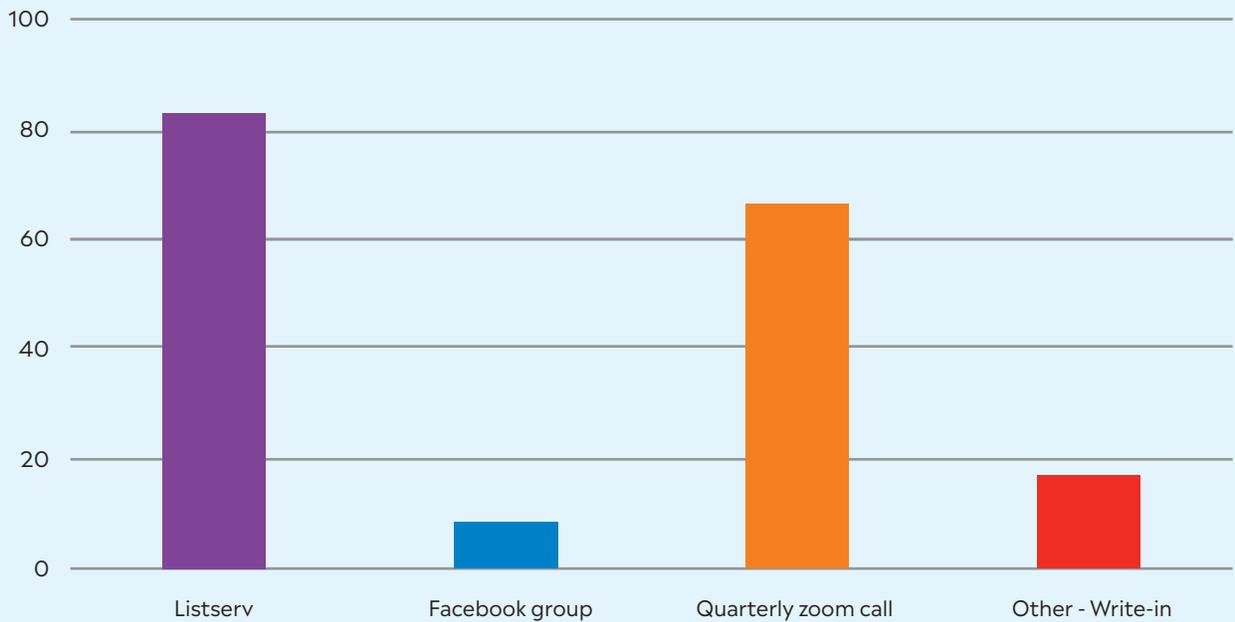
Rate your level of agreement for the Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration as the viable option for moving forward the Well-Nourished, Brighter Futures Initiative.



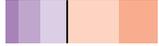
What is your level of interest for you, or someone within your organization, to continue to participate in the Initiative?

	Very interested	Somewhat interested	Unsure	Not interested
Participate in the WNBFI Initiative Collaborative	58.3%	25.0%	16.7%	0.0%
Network through interactive communications	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Join a collaborative work group	27.3%	36.4%	27.3%	9.1%
Become a Core Collaborating Organization for more involvement	36.4%	18.2%	36.4%	9.1%

If interested in participating in on-going communications, which mechanism for collaborative sharing is preferred? Select all that apply.



Please rank, in order of preference, the following convening project development areas.

Item	Overall Rank	Rank Distribution	Score
Address nutrition during the first 1,000 days	1		42
Provide nutrition education for children and families	2		40
Advocate for food access programs	3		36
Advance nutrition equity for children and families	4		32
Emphasize nutrition's influence on children's health, well-being and resilience	5		30



Lowest rank Highest rank

Recommended Focus Areas and Next Steps

Based on the next steps that emerged from the stakeholder convening and analysis of the post-convening survey results, what follows are recommendations on how stakeholders and other interested organizations can continue working collaboratively to further the *Well-Nourished, Brighter Futures* Initiative. These recommendations are structured as a set of four “recommended focus areas,” each with a list of individual next steps.

Recommended Focus Areas	Next Steps
Establish the <i>Well-Nourished, Brighter Futures</i> Initiative Collaborative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further develop the Collaborative structure, including stakeholder roles, based on interests and availability • Continue having regular action-oriented stakeholder convenings for updates, further discussions, sharing of resources, and collaboration • Establish a listserv for ongoing communications about the initiative • Create and share an expanded version of the initiative’s strategic framework that includes a place to track the progress being made
Broaden the Stakeholder List	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite stakeholders from other sectors not currently represented • Be intentional to align advocacy efforts among stakeholders. Engage in intentional networking with a diverse set of stakeholders to engage representatives from additional sectors in this work
Establish Workgroups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders engage in the topic-specific workgroups where they have they most interest / expertise using the Constellation Model²¹ • Workgroups help drive the short term action steps identified for relevant objectives in the tables above
Integrate Key Nutrition Principles In Action Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue refining the Key Nutrition Principles • Share the Principles in all participating organizations’ platforms / communications • Expand the Key Nutrition Principles with implications for supporting children and families through the First 1,000 Days (which was ranked as the top priority)

21. For a definition of the Constellation Model, please see: <https://glenpricegroup.com/constellation-model-networking-social-change/>

Appendices

- A. Convening Participants
- B. Convening Full Summaries
 - a. Part 1 - January 20, 2021
 - b. Part 2 - January 27, 2021
- C. Survey Results: Post Convening and Next Steps
- D. First 5 Sacramento: Resolution on Racial Equity and Social Justice

A. Convening Participants

Name	Affiliation
Amy Myrdal Miller, MS, RDN	Farmer's Daughter Consulting
Ana Goins-Ramirez	Public Health Advocates
Anisha Patel	Stanford University Pediatrics
Candice Lucas Taylor, MD	UC Irvine
Elysia Fong	California Department of Food and Agriculture
Gigi Tsonos	California Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
Jackie Richardson	California Department of Education, Nutrition Services Division
Jane Alvarado-Banister	Center for Wellness & Nutrition a program of the Public Health Institute
Jennifer Smilowitz	UCD Foods for Health Institute, Human Nutrition Department
Karen Abrego	Senator Pan's Office
Karen Ross	California Department of Food and Agriculture
Kim Frinzell	California Department of Education, Nutrition Services Division
Lauren Small	Leah's Pantry
Lorrene Ritchie	Nutrition Policy Institute, University of California Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources
Magali Flores Nuñez	Council For A Strong America
Maridet Ibanez	Orange County Health Care Agency, Nutrition Services
Melitza Cobham-Browne MD	UC Irvine, School of Medicine
Monica Bhagwan	Leah's Pantry
Sarah Hanson	California Department of Food and Agriculture
Shelly Masur	Council For A Strong America

Suzanne Rauzon	Nutrition Policy Institute, University of California Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources
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Tammy J.McMurdo	CalFresh Healthy Living, University of California
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Core Collaborating Organizations

Aracely Navarro	The Children's Partnership
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Kathy Saile	No Kid Hungry
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Maryam Shayegh	Los Angeles County Office of Education
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Rosa Flores	Latino Coalition for a Healthy California
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Julie Gallelo	First 5 Sacramento
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Linda Fong-Somera	First 5 Sacramento
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Dairy Council of California

Ashley Rosales	Program Director, Nutrition Science
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Shannan Young	Program Director, Food Systems & Access
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Tammy Anderson-Wise	Chief Executive Officer
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Mary Anne Burkman	Consultant
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Glen Price Group (GPG)

Christopher Szecsey	Senior Associate
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Rosa Guzman	Associate
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B. Convening Summaries

a. Part 1 - January 20, 2021

Opening

Shannan Young of the Dairy Council of California welcomed participants for joining today and emphasized the importance of collaboration.

Speaker Presentation

Karen Ross, Secretary, California Department of Food Agriculture provided the opening remarks.

Context Setting from Participant Experience

Participants shared their responses to the following question via chat.

From your experience, what is one key effort that is working well in child nutrition efforts, to build upon, to share?

The following are some of the themes that emerged from the responses:

- Using school as a hub for children, families, communities and a venue for change
- The pivot and change on how food is distributed to children and families during the pandemic, collaborating with community leaders, school bus drivers, etc.
- Modifications to the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) that allow all kids under 18 to be fed
- High nutrition standards and nutrition education, adapting to digital learning
- Partnerships between schools and other community organizations to leverage additional resources and communication strategies
- Grassroots leaders who are parents/caregivers from under resourced communities to engage with decision-makers on issues of food security/insecurity. Those closest to the pain are the best at advocating for solutions!
- Local School Wellness Policies to set goals and vision for where districts/communities want to be
- Diverting unspent school lunch dollars convert to family debit cards
- Lactation education and support both during pregnancy and in the early postpartum period
- Parent leaders and school food pantries
- Incorporating on-site school gardens into lesson plans for students
- Current school meal process is supporting local farmers

Well-Nourished, Brighter Futures (WNBFI) Initiative Overview

Ashley Rosales and Shannan Young from the Dairy Council of California provided an overview of the WNBFI Initiative.

Participants shared the following resources and information:

- Report from Mission Readiness about the link between obesity & malnutrition: <https://www.strongnation.org/articles/1335-breaking-point>
- Improving access in places where it's challenging to get food (urban or rural have limitations for people)
- Important for us to connect with administrators to share food insecurity data; looking for current food insecurity data by county, want administrators to have that data
- Correlation between early nutrition and academic performance
- <https://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2016/overall/california>

Convening Overview

Christopher Szecsey from the Glen Price Group gave an overview of the convening, shared the objectives, and reviewed the difference between meeting #1 (January 20, 2021) and meeting #2 (January 27th).

Stakeholder Collaboration for Success

Christopher Szecsey from the Glen Price Group acknowledged the various stakeholder groups participating in the meeting.

- Government
- Academics
- Non-profit organizations
- Five Core Collaborators
- Dairy Council of California/convener host/sponsor

Participants shared their responses to the following question

Identify 1 key factor for successful multi-stakeholder collaboration from experience that we should keep in mind in building this collaborative.

- Listening
- Equity
- Trust and commitment
- Dialogue and compromise
- Shared values, interests, and vision
- Diversity
- Imagination
- Accountability
- Resources
- Actionable workplans/goals, deliverables and shared success
- Clear objectives, expectations and role assignments
- Give and take
- Identifying shared interests

- Aligns with the work we are already doing
- Use of Appreciative Inquiry
- Celebrating successes, small or significant
- Participation
- Consideration
- Out of the box thinking
- Community-focused
- Generative conversations

WNBF Strategic Framework (Breakouts)

The Dairy Council of California and Glen Price Group led 4 breakout groups, assigned by stakeholder type, to review and make edits to the [WNBF Strategic Framework](#) objectives as well as gather any additional feedback.

Nutrition Principles

Ashley and Shannan from Dairy Council of California guided the group on what Nutrition Principles are, as well as provided a couple of examples.

Participants shared their responses to the following question.

What does your group believe are the Key Nutrition Principles to be carried forward that might bring us together for collective action?

For the full list of emerging Key Principles, [click here](#).

Second Convening Agenda

It was shared that Part 2 of the convening, January 27th, will be focused on action planning and next steps.

Closing and Next Steps

- Will be sharing a Nutrition Principles [survey](#) for participants to provide feedback
- Will revise Strategic Objectives, based on feedback

b. Part 2 - January 27, 2021

Opening

Ashley Rosales, from the Dairy Council of California, welcomed participants for joining us in this second part of the convening.

Building from the First Convening Event

Participants were then launched into small groups to debrief Part 1 of the convening using the following guiding question: What are your key reflections/learnings/takeaways, from the first Convening event, that are especially helpful to build upon & inform this second event?

Some of the key points that emerged from the small group discussions include:

- Affordability and sustainability of food and the planet
 - Secure funding for pushing this work forward
- Include diverse representations that includes voices from the community
 - Impressed with the diversity of this group—look forward to hearing different perspectives
- Use our unique voice and position to advance solutions
 - Ensure language on principles, objectives, etc. is straightforward and jargon-free
- Feeling hopeful, especially with new administration
- Importance of collaboration and having a shared vision
 - We are like minded collaborators who are passionate about health and nutrition
- Ensure the Nutrition Principles align with the Objectives of the Strategic Framework
- Importance of fostering health equity was emphasized.
- Strong endorsement of taste, enjoyment of food, cultural identity as critically important considerations; not just about the nutrient content of the foods

Introduction to Second Event

Christopher Szecsey from the Glen Price Group gave an overview of the convening and shared the objectives and agenda.

Speaker Presentation

Kim Frinzell, the Director of Nutrition Services Division at the California Department of Education provided the opening remarks.

Nutrition Principles and Equity

In Part 1 of the convening, participants shared what they believe to be the Key Nutrition Principles that should be carried forward, and that might bring us together for collective action. The Dairy Council of California team gathered all the input and drafted emerging Key Nutrition Principles which were then shared via a survey to all registered participants for feedback.

Overall, the emerging Key Nutrition Principles landed well with survey respondents. The average ‘star rating’ for the 4 principles was a 4.1 (out of 5), meaning that there is strong support for the principles moving forward.

Emerging Key Nutrition Principles

1. All children and families have access to healthy, culturally diverse and enjoyable foods as their human right, and a foundation that supports social capital strengthening people and their communities.
2. Supporting the health and well-being of children, their families, and the planet, requires food systems that ensure nutrition equity and create health promoting environments.
3. Healthy eating is a result of integrating education, empowerment, environment and positive emotion to foster and support individual and community resiliency.
4. All children are provided with high quality and nutritious foods, so they are better able to grow, learn, stay healthy and develop resilience, which supports well-being throughout life.

Collaborating Organizations Panel Discussion

Three representatives from the *WNBF* Initiative's core collaborating organizations (Julie Gallelo, First 5 Sacramento; Kathy Saile, No Kid Hungry; Aracely Navarro, Children's Partnership) participated in a panel discussion and took turns responding to the question: *What is working well in Nutrition Equity that we can share, build upon, amplify, and scale?*

Key points that emerged from the discussion included:

- Waivers that have been issued for school nutrition programs by USDA
- Opportunity to expand pandemic EBT
- Collaboration and sharing, problem solving to address community issues
- Nutrition equity is also about race equity—we need to look at the entirety of the system
- Direct services that families need—such as lactation consultant, provide nutrition books, cooking classes, recipes in multiple languages, etc.
- Systems changes through collaboration—such as working with hospitals to promote things like baby friendly hospitals
- Collaboration and problem solving together
- Meeting children and families where they are
- Intentional equity statements and plans

Panelists shared resources on where to go for best practices:

- Center for Excellence—<https://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/>
- Nourish California—nourishca.org

Action Planning

Participants were divided into 4 breakout groups, each group diving into a couple of the revised *WNBF* Initiative objectives, from earlier group input, and began drafting concrete action steps.

For a list of the preliminary action steps identified for each objective, please [click here](#).

WNBF Initiative Objectives

1. Establish mutually agreed-upon key principles that address the unique nutritional needs of culturally diverse California children for optimal health through critical life stages, including the first 1,000 days, early childhood, and school-age years.
2. Reduce food insecurity, achieve optimal growth and development, and prevent and eliminate obesity and other chronic diseases in children in California, especially those within communities in need, through increased equity in access to evidenced-based nutrition education, nutritious foods, and safe and active environments.
3. Embrace the rich diversity of cultural cuisines present in California communities to develop healthy, culturally respectful, and realistic pathways to nutrition equity.
4. Develop plans and policies to reduce the disparities in child health outcomes related to nutrition and food insecurity because of systemic poverty, racism, and inequitable access to education and health care.
5. Develop and use clear, consistent, and age-appropriate nutrition messaging that is culturally and language appropriate. Pair timely, relevant and practical messages with resources that focus on the needs of children and families.
6. Expand statewide education and advocacy efforts to establish actionable, equity-centered solutions that improve the nutritional health and well-being of children and families.
7. Engage diverse (BIPOC, various ethnic groups, geographically distributed, families/parents etc.) stakeholder organizations, interested in and willing to support the *WNBF* shared goals, by organizing together for collective action and impact.
8. Provide venues for stakeholder participation, contributions, and sharing of best practices and resources, as well as opportunities for stakeholder input and feedback to determine shared principles, priorities, and action steps in support of strategic collaboration to improve community outcomes and policies.
9. (*Newly suggested Objective*): Identify general funding possibilities for the collaborative and seek non-restrictive resources to support the active engagement of nonprofit collaborating organizations.

Wrap-Up & Post-Convening Next Steps

Participants shared their recommendations on what should be some next steps for continuing the momentum and going forward together. Key ideas included:

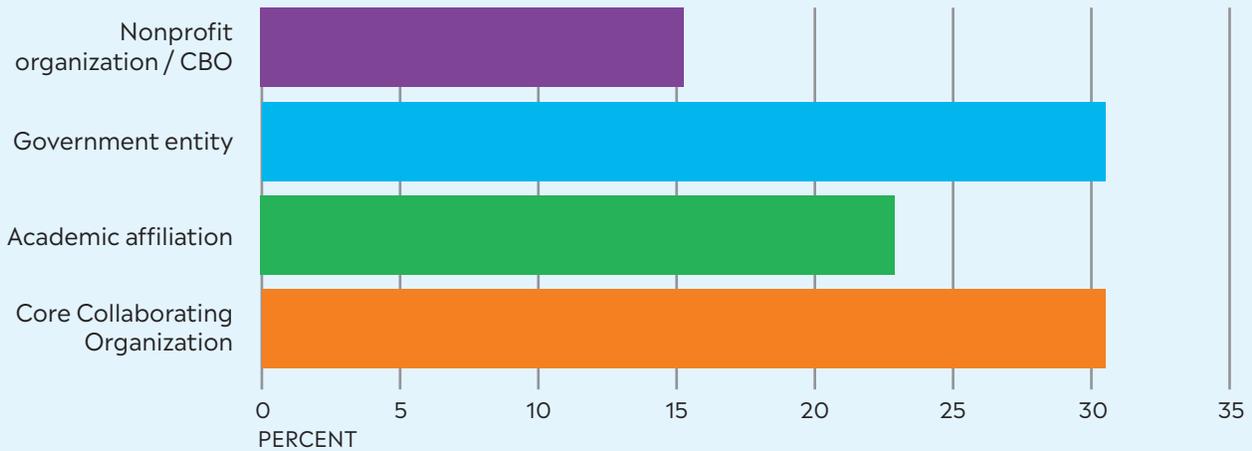
- Continue to convene for updates, further discussion, networking, and collaboration
- Share a ‘living’ overview document of the *WNBF* Initiative where everyone can see the progress being made
- Determine the target audience for the report to drive next steps
- Establish priorities/work that must get done “soon”, and then establish working groups where leaders can contribute where they have the most interest/expertise.
- Send the group some recommendations on next steps to vote on or react to

Closing Remarks

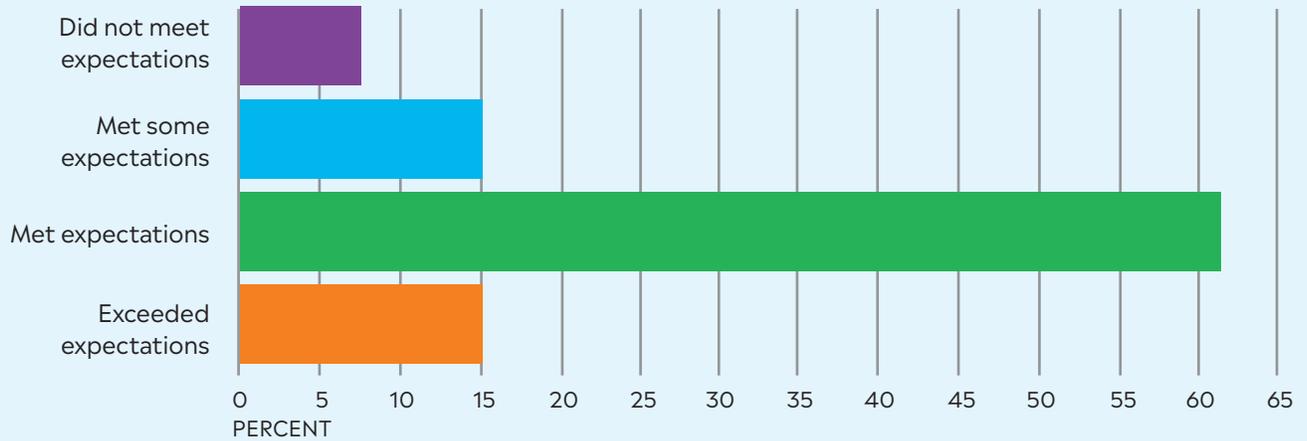
Rosa Flores, from the Latino Coalition for a Healthy California, made the closing remarks.

C. Survey Results: Post Convening and Next Steps

1. Select the option that best describes your organization type:



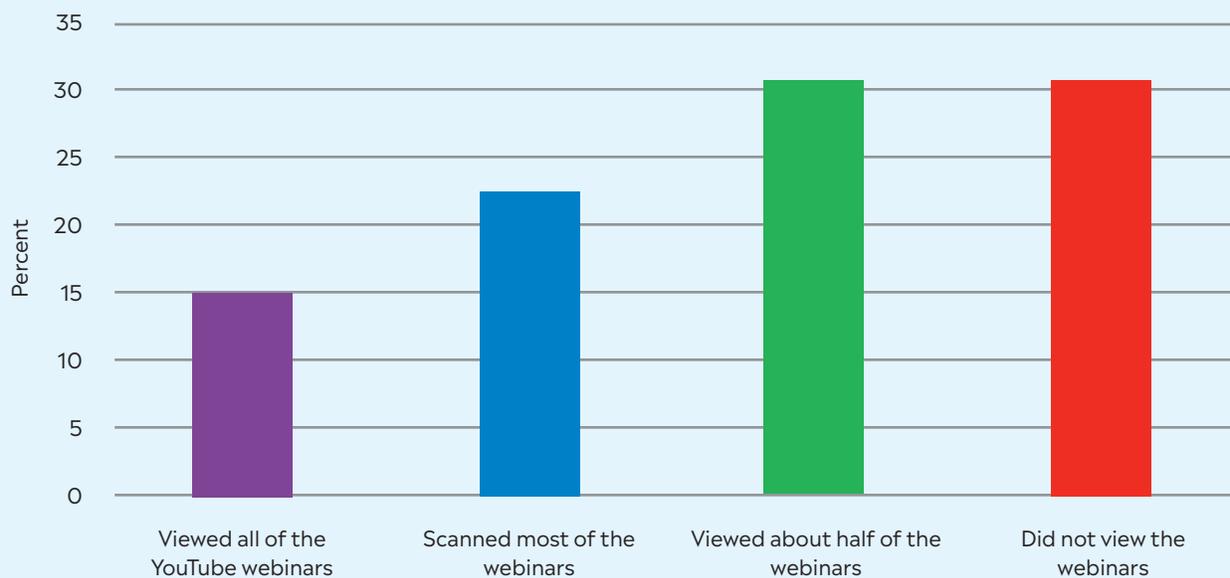
2. Overall, how well did the WNBFC Convening meet your expectations?



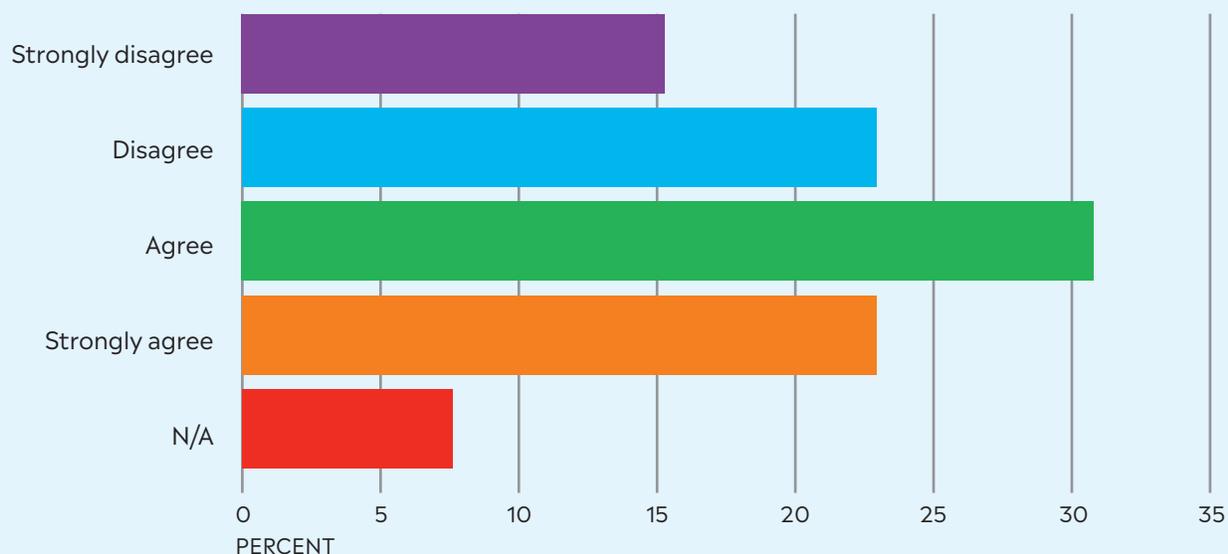
3. What is an area of improvement for future Convenings?

- Ask everyone to keep their cameras on. When people turn their cameras off, they disengage in the conversation.
- The stakeholder roles need to be defined. Typically working in networks, there needs to be give and take and it is always challenging to set roles.
- A clear path and direction and better engagement of participants.
- Future convenings could be much more action oriented and
- While it was helpful to have the objectives presented for the groups to weigh in on—it would have been helpful to hear how the Dairy Council would like to roll out an initiative. I appreciate being included in what the initiative will look like—but without a solid concept—I am still uncertain if what will become the initiative will align with the work we currently do.
- Might be helpful to offer shorter but more frequent opportunities to meet
- Interested to have more background information on the initiative before the meeting
- It'd be great to understand what specific deliverables we can get to work on.
- Like having it online—no need to travel. Interactive options will continue to evolve. Can manage better because can fit in a half day's work before or after.
- More active participation.
- Continue to utilize strategies to fully engage participants whether on Zoom calls or on other platforms.

4. To what extent did you engage in the preconvening Orientation Topic Presentations webinars?



5. My knowledge on the topic expanded after the presentation.



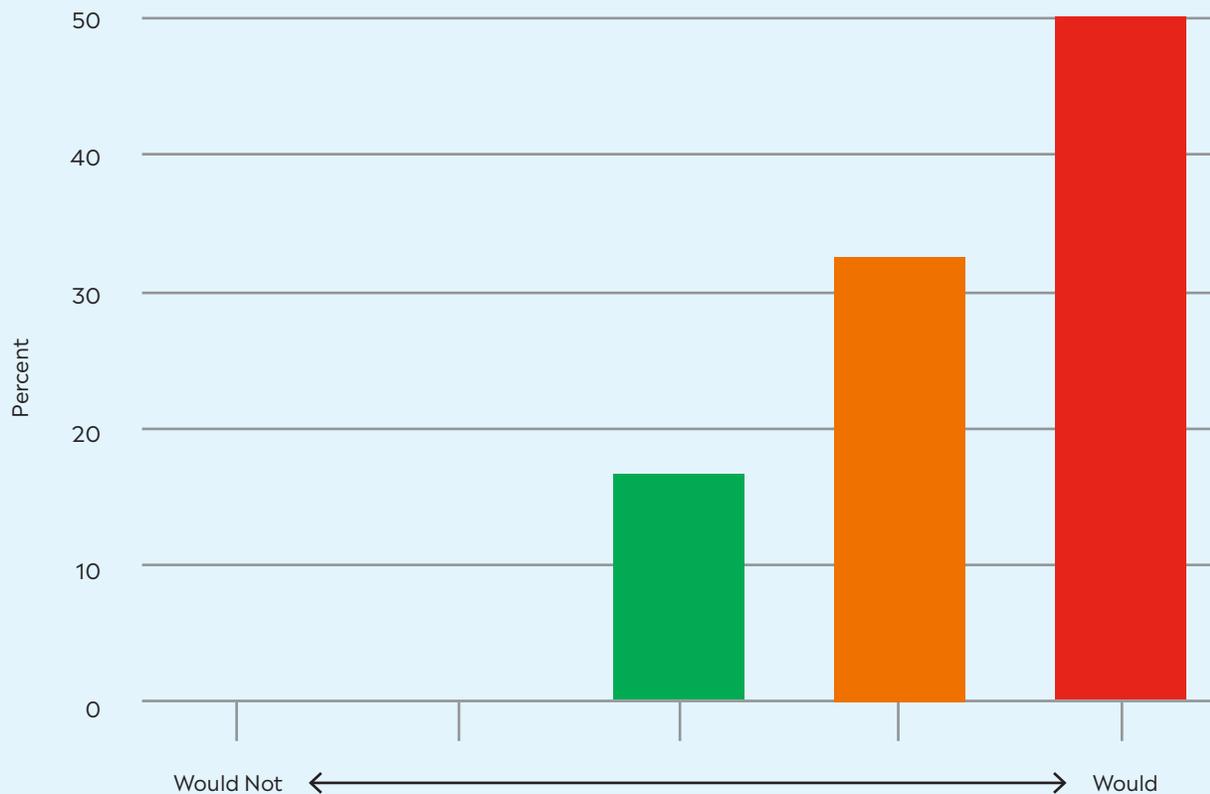
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Strengthen understanding of child nutrition and rationale for joint action.	0.0%	7.7%	46.2%	38.5%	7.7%
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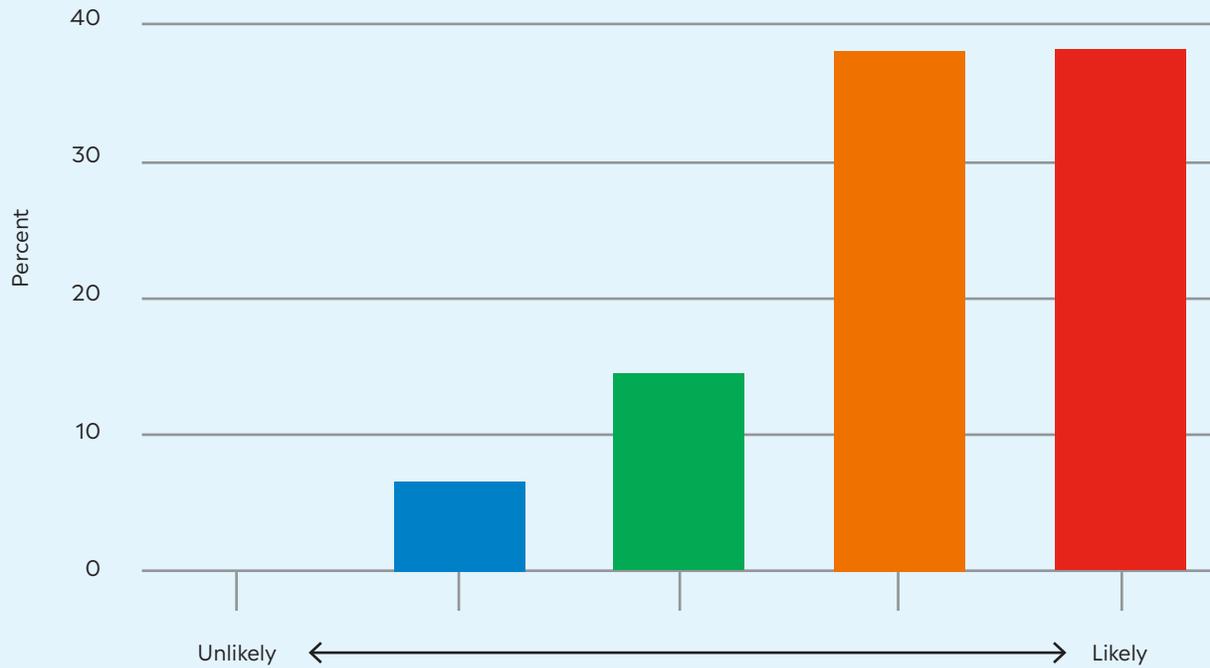
7. What was most useful about the Convening?

- I was able to expand my network of professionals who care about some of the same issues I care about and work on.
- General learning
- It's a wonderful broad group of partners. I'm not excited to see what comes next.
- Appreciate the collaboration and great facilitation. The convening was very relevant and applicable to my work.
- Being able to collaborate with others working in nutrition and health equity
- Always enjoy the group sharing sessions.
- Break out room discussions
- The initial awareness that child nutrition is a priority for many and that together we can be stronger, more efficient and more effective in our efforts.
- The Strategic Framework was very well fleshed out.

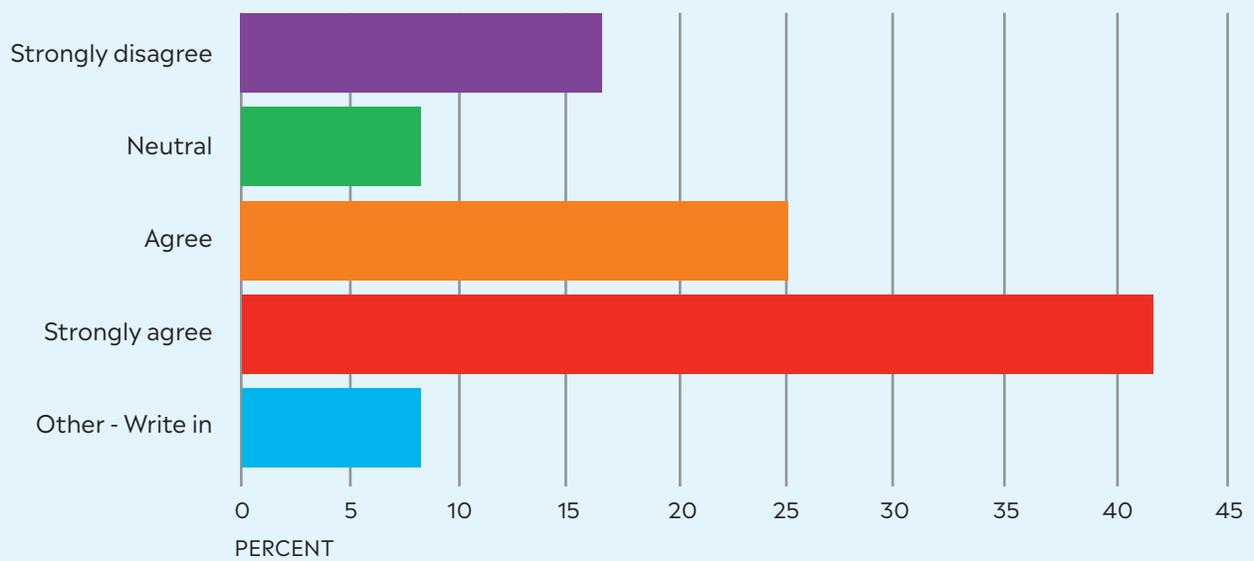
8. My likelihood of discussing this information with others:



9. My likelihood of recalling and using this information:



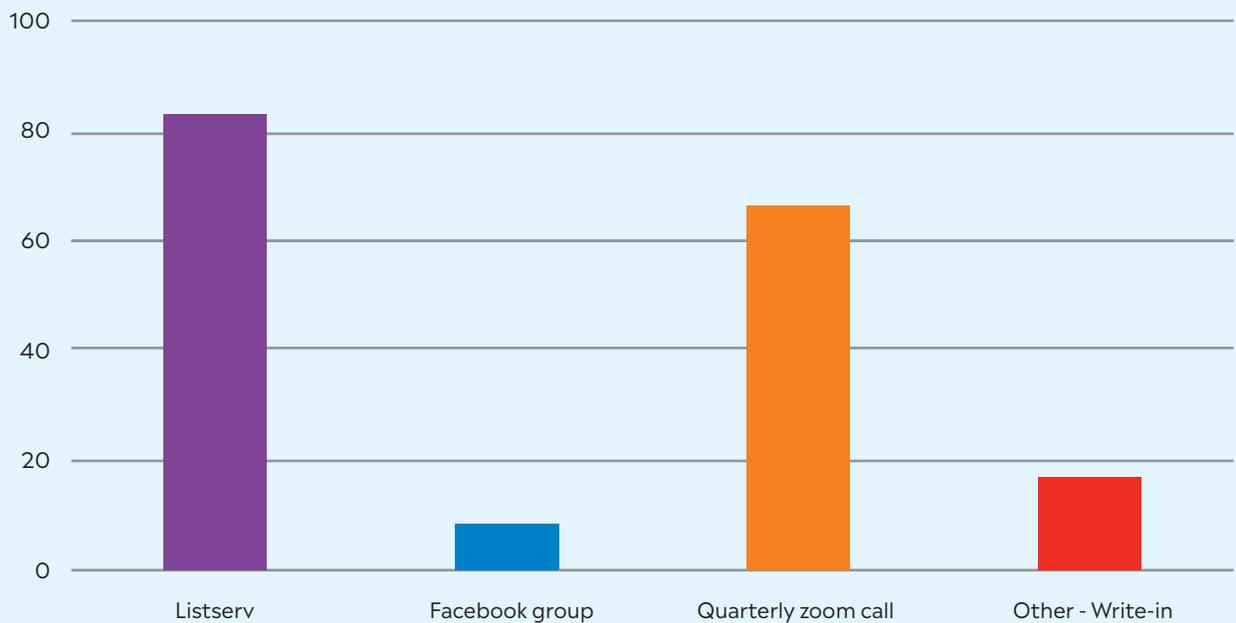
10. Rate your level of agreement for Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration as the viable option for moving forward the WNBFI Initiative.



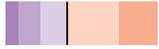
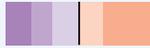
11. What is your level of interest for you, or someone within your organization, to continue to participate in the Initiative?

	Very interested	Somewhat interested	Unsure	Not interested
Participate in the WNBFI Initiative Collaborative	58.3%	25.0%	16.7%	0.0%
Network through interactive communications	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Join a collaborative work group	27.3%	36.4%	27.3%	9.1%
Become a Core Collaborating Organization for more involvement	36.4%	18.2%	36.4%	9.1%

12. If interested in participating in on-going communications, which mechanism for collaborative sharing is preferred? Select all that apply.



13. Please rank, in order of preference, the following convening project development areas.

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Provide nutrition education for children and families	2		40
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Emphasize nutrition's influence on children's health, well-being and resilience	5		30



Lowest rank Highest rank

14. What recommendations do you have to develop the WNBFI Initiative and Collaborative going forward?

- Simplify and focus the principles on the social determinants of health (SDH), four principles total, one for each SDH
- This is a big question. I really think that some networking that works needs to be done.
- The stakeholders invited to this all have extensive knowledge of the importance of nutrition in childhood. I'd recommend spending more time creating a concrete way for the different groups to collaborate on action-oriented initiatives with clear goals and clear next steps.
- Include policymakers and other key decision makers to call attention to food and nutrition-related issues
- Clarity on deliverables, specific activities to engage in
- Nail down the agreed upon principles and decide how to start messaging them to grow and advance our collaborative.
- I believe the core convening groups are on the right track. Important to define specific, realistic action steps and a means to measure impact of the same. Stay focused...don't try to do too much at once. Leverage efforts already underway by participant groups

**Well Nourished
Brighter Futures**

**Let's Eat
Healthy** 