



2026

Dietary Guidance and Sustainability by State: Scorecards and Analysis

CENTER *for*
BIOLOGICAL
DIVERSITY

Contents

Acknowledgments	2
Executive Summary	3
Background and Significance of Government Dietary Guidance	4
What are the Dietary Guidelines for Americans?	4
State Use and Adaptation of Federal Dietary Guidelines	5
Incorporating Sustainability in Dietary Guidance	7
Challenges to Healthy, Sustainable State Dietary Guidance	7
Methodology	8
Scoring Criteria	10
Findings and Recommendations	11
Summary of Findings	11
State Dietary Guidance and Implementation	12
General Sustainability Promotion	13
Plant-Forward, Reduced-Meat Promotion	13
Recommendations for States	13
The 50 State Scorecards	14
Alabama	14
Alaska	15
Arizona	16
Arkansas	17
California	18
Colorado	19
Connecticut	20
Delaware	21
Florida	22
Georgia	23
Hawai'i	24
Idaho	25
Illinois	26
Indiana	27
Iowa	28
Kansas	29
Kentucky	30
Louisiana	31
Maine	32
Maryland	33
Massachusetts	34
Michigan	35
Minnesota	36
Mississippi	37
Missouri	38
Montana	39
Nebraska	40
Nevada	41
New Hampshire	42

New Jersey	43
New Mexico	44
New York	45
North Carolina	46
North Dakota	47
Ohio	48
Oklahoma	49
Oregon	50
Pennsylvania	51
Rhode Island	52
South Carolina	53
South Dakota	54
Tennessee	55
Texas	56
Utah	57
Vermont	58
Virginia	59
Washington	60
West Virginia	61
Wisconsin	62
Wyoming	63
Glossary	64
Appendix: 50 State Score Chart	66
References	68

Acknowledgments

Primary author and researcher: Lauren Eno
Contributing author: Leah Kelly
Editors: Leah Kelly, Stephanie Feldstein
Designer: Linda Rico

Executive Summary

Dietary guidance and related policies play a key role in public health outcomes by influencing what people choose to eat, nutrition education, and food-access programs. Access to healthy, culturally relevant foods — combined with the ability to make informed choices — can decrease the risk of diet-related conditions like obesity and heart disease, lower healthcare costs, and support healthy communities.

Government nutrition programming has wide impacts on individual and community dietary patterns. It also has substantial potential to influence the climate impacts of food systems. Food systems contribute one-third of global greenhouse gas emissions,¹ with the agriculture sector responsible for about 11% of emissions in the United States.²

While the U.S. federal government creates the overarching *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* (DGA) to dictate nutrition policy, state governments are primarily responsible for implementing those policies. State agencies rely on the DGA when executing federally funded nutrition programs and creating nutrition materials. States are uniquely positioned to implement and expand federal standards using evidence-based, environmentally responsible, locally tailored guidance.

This report evaluates how all 50 states use and adapt federal dietary guidance to advance people’s health. It scores original materials, policies and outreach, and pays special attention to how states incorporate guidance that promotes environmentally sustainable diets.

Sustainability aligns with the 2025 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee’s scientific report. The committee’s recommendations to prioritize plant-based foods and plant sources of protein over animal protein support a healthy and sustainable dietary pattern.

Each state scorecard offers recommendations for states to strengthen educational programs, access and knowledge of healthy and environmentally friendly foods, and ensure people receive relevant and actionable dietary guidance.

We found dozens of ways that states are already building on federal nutrition guidance to meet the needs of their communities with creative programs, outreach, and culturally appropriate resources. With increased controversy and confusion around the latest DGA, there’s an opportunity for states to expand these efforts and learn from each other to provide robust, evidence-based nutrition programs to improve public and environmental health.

Key Findings:

1. Six states had centralized dietary guidance that explicitly considered sustainability: California, Hawai’i, Minnesota, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia.
2. Thirteen states discussed reducing red or processed meat intake: Arizona, Arkansas, California, Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, New Jersey, Oregon, Utah and Virginia.
3. Seven states considered the climate harms from meat production: California, Connecticut, Hawai’i, Illinois, New Mexico, Oregon and Virginia.

Although there are good examples of strong dietary recommendations, many states lack consistent public nutrition guidance and cohesive sustainability messaging.

Key Recommendations:

1. Create state-tailored dietary guidance with demographic data, health concerns and cultural preferences, to be employed across agencies (health, education, agriculture and environment departments) using a collaborative framework and strategic plan that integrates climate and sustainability goals with nutrition and health goals.
2. Create and promote supporting dietary materials that incorporate plant proteins, dairy alternatives and meat reduction, and address the correlation between sustainability and dietary choices. Include plant-based and dairy alternatives when implementing federal meal programs, nutrition assistance efforts, and educational outreach.
3. Reject and avoid any collaboration with for-profit food and agriculture industry interests in nutrition guidance efforts.

In the face of controversial federal guidelines, growing public health concerns and urgent environmental challenges, state leadership on nutrition policy is increasingly critical.

Background and Significance of Government Dietary Guidance

What are the Dietary Guidelines for Americans?

The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* (DGA) provide science-based advice on what to eat and drink to meet nutrient needs, promote health, and prevent disease. Since their creation in 1980, the DGA are updated every five years by the U.S. departments of Agriculture (USDA) and Health and Human Services (HHS).

The DGA are developed and written for a diverse audience including policymakers, healthcare providers, nutrition educators, and federal nutrition program operators,³ but are also tailored to be consumer-friendly through public-facing resources.

Historically many core messages have been consistent, such as increasing fruit and vegetable consumption and reducing fat intake, though priorities may shift and expand based on the latest nutrition and health research.

Most federal nutrition programs, which are primarily implemented at the state level, are required by law to follow the DGA. Therefore, the DGA drive billions of dollars of food purchasing decisions that feed millions of people. The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) alone provides 4.8 billion lunches to nearly 30 million students each year at a cost of \$17.1 billion.^{4 5}

Federal food-assistance programs reach 1 in 4 Americans every year.⁶ The DGA are used to support nutrition education efforts, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Program (EFNEP) and inform various organizations and industries.

The DGA also serve as an authoritative resource to inform the advice doctors and dietitians give to their patients, state and local government and private-sector policies, nutrition education, and individual and institutional purchasing decisions, as well as the public's understanding of a healthy diet.

Well over half of adults in the United States have a preventable chronic disease,⁷ many of which are related to diet and physical activity. State governments are often the ones responsible for ensuring that accurate and scientific nutrition guidance is disseminated to their populations.

The 2025-2030 Dietary Guidelines for Americans

The most recent *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, released by the Trump administration in January 2026, rejected precedent by ignoring the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee's scientific report and going against prevailing nutrition consensus that advises reducing red meat and prioritizing plant foods.⁸ Instead it consistently emphasized meat, full-fat dairy, and other animal-based proteins, which are high in saturated fat and among the worst foods for the environment.

Research shows that the majority of Americans get more than enough protein⁹ and are among the top per capita consumers of meat¹⁰ but deficient in fiber,¹¹ which suggests the need for more plant-based or plant-rich diets. The 2025-2030 Guidelines could have a severe negative impact on the healthfulness and sustainability of federal nutrition programs by pushing for increased protein consumption and saturated fat, primarily in the form of animal products like red meat.

Any resulting increase in saturated fat consumption conflicts with the DGA's recommendation to limit saturated fat to 10% of daily calories, which has caused widespread confusion.

State Use and Adaptation of Federal Dietary Guidelines

States implement federally funded nutrition programs in four key categories (see glossary for program definitions):

- 1. Nutrition Assistance Programs:** Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC); Seniors Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP); WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP); Older Americans Act (OAA) Nutrition Programs.
- 2. Child Nutrition Programs:** Child and Adult Care Food Program (CAFCP); Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program; National School Lunch Program (NSLP); School Breakfast Program (SBP); Special Milk Program; Afterschool Snack Service; Summer Food Service Program (SUN Meals); Summer EBT (SUN Bucks); Patrick Leahy Farm to School Program.
- 3. Food Distribution Programs:** Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP); Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR); The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP); Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP); disaster food assistance.
- 4. Nutrition Education Programs:** SNAP-Ed (defunded in 2025); Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP); Team Nutrition; WIC Nutrition Education; State Physical Activity and Nutrition (SPAN).

While these programs rely on federal funding and baseline rules tied to the DGA, states may be partially responsible for the administrative costs of implementation.

States have extensive opportunities to supplement these federal programs with their own nutrition programming and resources. States may tailor programs through materials, webinars or additional funding and support to local partners and state universities. This is prevalent in SNAP-Ed, WIC, the Older Americans Act, and farm-to-school programming.

States may also impose additional requirements on meals served in schools, government institutions, or sold in certain settings. They can provide additional funding for healthy foods, mandate universal school breakfast and lunch, impose local procurement policies, or require serving plant-based options.

States can adapt the dietary guidance they provide through agency websites and materials to suit the demographics of their own populations, such as rates of diet-related disease, food insecurity and food deserts, or cultural traditions. Many states rely on federally created materials and recommendations to reduce administrative burdens, but this can result in one-size-fits-all resources that don't reflect state-specific needs or issues, especially in states with limited budgets.

States that have integrated local considerations into dietary materials show that tailored materials can increase the effectiveness of federal recommendations by making them relevant to community needs.

Child nutrition is an especially important area where states can play a pivotal role in guiding their residents' health. For many low-income children, schools are the only place where they can obtain full nutritious meals. However, adhering to federal guidelines for school meal nutrition standards alone does not guarantee entirely healthy school food because federal standards can still allow for large amounts of meat, dairy, and processed foods.

States can take further steps to make healthy food more accessible, such as farm-to-school initiatives that provide students with fresh, nutritious local and regional produce in school meals. As of early 2026, nine states have taken full responsibility for providing free meals to all students regardless of income by funding and implementing universal school meals.¹²



Incorporating Sustainability in Dietary Guidance

Dietary guidance can significantly affect human and environmental health outcomes. Meat consumption, especially when promoted above DGA levels, can directly increase human health risks. The International Agency for Research on Cancer states that red meat is a probable carcinogen to people, while processed meat is carcinogenic to people.¹³ Excessive meat consumption also increases indirect threats to people's health because of the environmental harm caused by producing it.

Animal agriculture accounts for 16.5% of global greenhouse gas emissions¹⁴ and 80% of all agricultural land is used for animal agriculture.¹⁵ Meat and dairy grown in at-risk regions can endanger biodiversity, contribute to deforestation and worsen global climate change, creating a ripple effect on human wellbeing from increased pollutants and climate-related disasters. Dietary guidance that promotes high levels of meat and dairy consumption has significant potential for worsening these harms to people and nature.

The World Health Organization and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations recognize the importance of diets that promote both human and planetary health. The FAO facilitates a project to help countries implement dietary guidelines that promote healthy diets from more sustainable food systems.¹⁶ The UN defines healthy and sustainable diets as those that “promote all dimensions of individuals’ health and wellbeing; have low environmental pressure and impact; are accessible, affordable, safe, and equitable; and are culturally acceptable.”¹⁷

The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* have failed to take sustainability into consideration thus far.

A Model for Healthy, Sustainable Dietary Guidelines for Americans

The Center for Biological Diversity co-authored [*A Model for Healthy and Sustainable Dietary Guidelines for Americans*](#) to demonstrate what the DGA would look if the guidelines followed prevailing nutrition advice and incorporated sustainability. This includes prioritizing plant-based foods and plant proteins; limiting meat consumption, especially red and processed meat; making water the primary beverage; minimizing food waste; and avoiding single-use plastic food packaging.

The federal government's refusal thus far to address sustainability in the DGA presents an opportunity for states to take up this issue in their own guidance. The scorecards in this report include a review of state-based dietary guidance for opportunities to incorporate sustainability messaging and fill the gap left by the federal government's lack of action.

The Center's healthy and sustainable model and its accompanying [*Implementation and Policy Recommendations Guide*](#) can help state health agencies build out their own nutrition recommendations and policies beyond the limits of the current DGA.

Challenges to Healthy, Sustainable State Dietary Guidance

States face many obstacles to creating and promoting healthy and sustainable dietary guidance. There are logistical and resource constraints, such as lack of funding and personnel to plan and carry out nutrition-related programs and initiatives.

States have long relied on federal government guidance and resources to propel these programs, but recently many programs have come under attack at the federal level, leaving states to fend for themselves with far fewer resources.

A current prominent change to state execution of federal nutrition programs that could affect food access is the implementation of SNAP Food Restriction Waivers. Effective January 2026, these waivers restrict the purchase of certain foods through SNAP on a state-by-state basis and could affect the eligibility of certain SNAP-authorized retailers.¹⁸

The End of SNAP-Ed

In July 2025 President Trump approved a budget that cut \$186 billion in SNAP funding, restricted SNAP eligibility, increased states' cost-share for SNAP benefits and eliminated SNAP-Ed, the largest public nutrition education program in the country, which states relied on to provide nutrition resources and programming. This put millions of Americans at risk of losing food assistance and severely strained state budgets while reducing the quality of the country's overall food and nutrition environment. Without SNAP-Ed many states no longer have a program or funding to provide essential nutrition education services.

At the federal level, meat and dairy lobbyists attempt to influence state dietary guidance to favor their interests, which can lead to confusing or biased nutrition information.

Some states have worked with food and agriculture industry groups to create their nutrition guidance and programming. Sometimes these are federally supported campaigns, such as the USDA's Healthy Fluid Milk Incentive Project — colloquially known as *Add Milk!* — which reimburses SNAP participants for buying cow's milk.¹⁹ Certain states, like Alabama, have partnered on these projects to increase dairy milk purchases, directly benefiting the dairy industry.²⁰

In other instances industry groups are directly listed as contributors to state dietary guidance and resources. In Georgia the Southeastern United Dairy Industry Association helped create the state's school nutrition toolkit and coordinates an initiative promoting dairy products in schools.²¹

Even when the state government doesn't work directly with an industry group, nonprofit organizations that deliver state services and nutrition programming may do so.

For example, the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance, which works with state agencies, partners with the Arkansas Cattlemen's Association on the Arkansas Beef Project, a program that donates beef to food banks and food pantries in the state.²²

These industry partnerships endanger health and nutrition efforts by inserting profit-seeking influence into nutrition guidance, which can directly counter sound nutrition science — particularly that which warns against the health harms of meat and dairy.

Methodology

The 50 state scorecards evaluate each state based on the quality of their dietary guidance and related programs. State dietary guidance was found by going to the official government websites of each state's agencies and reviewing the nutrition- and health-related content, programs and resources provided to their constituents.

State departments assessed included, but were not limited to, health, environment, agriculture and education. Websites were visited primarily from May 2025 through August 2025 (with some additions made in January 2026), so content may have changed since then. Recent public materials and stand-out programs were

prioritized in the research.

Search terms included the state name and the following key phrases:

- SNAP-Ed, WIC, nutrition education programs
- Dietary guidance, *Dietary Guidelines*, nutrition guidance, healthy eating, healthy eating and active living
- Plant-based, vegetarian, tofu, beans, recipes
- Red meat, processed meat, reduce meat, Meatless Mondays
- Choose water, nondairy milk, soy milk, milk alternatives
- Nutrition programming, nutrition events, community nutrition events

Each state received a policy profile designed to highlight innovative programs or potential for improvement. These profiles are broken down into strengths, areas for improvement and recommendations.

Strengths were based on the potential of state initiatives to improve the diets of their specific populations, including: culturally tailored materials for different demographics; emphasis on local foods and farm-to-table education; food justice and access framing; easily accessible and centralized information; and focus on sustainability and plant-based foods. Recommendations were aimed at improving existing programs or filling in missing areas. These profiles are not designed to be comprehensive scoring explanations but are instead meant to highlight state-specific features.



Scoring Criteria

States were awarded one point per criterion, with 15 points possible. The exception for this was the industry group collaboration on dietary guidance or materials category, which was scored inversely — states were docked one point for meeting this description.

The first six criteria are related to general implementation of dietary guidance, while the last 10 criteria are specifically about actions that promote sustainable diets.

Special attention was given to actions in which states went “above and beyond” federal guidance to significantly improve health and sustainability outcomes for people, with the understanding that a state’s ability to do so is affected by its funding capacity.

Promotion of Federal and State Dietary Guidance:

1. **(+1) Educational Resources:** The state provides brochures, web tools, infographics or documents on dietary guidance or nutrition beyond basic program compliance information.
2. **(+1) Outreach Efforts:** State agencies actively conduct or coordinate at least one outreach effort (workshop, training, live event, etc.) that is not federally mandated. The effort must be targeted at the public, not state authorities or program operators. Efforts conducted primarily by nongovernmental organizations or state universities are not considered unless state departments actively fund or are a listed collaborator on the efforts.
3. **(+1) Cross-Agency Initiative:** At least one state-level, non-federally mandated initiative or policy council on dietary guidance or food involves two or more state agencies.
4. **(+1) Supplementation of National School Meal Programs:** The state supplements federal school meal programs with state funding, requires universal access or requires specific meal availability.
5. **(+1) Food Justice Framing:** The state addresses food access related to the built environment, food deserts, zoning, social determinants of health, etc. Acknowledges diet as part of a broader food justice system.
6. **(-1) Industry Collaboration:** The state government explicitly partners with a food or agriculture industry group on official, centralized dietary guidance. (Note: This criterion does not include industry collaboration on auxiliary materials or initiatives. However, such types of collaboration are still noted in the state scorecards.)

Sustainability Integration:

7. **(+1) Original State-Issued Dietary Guidance with Sustainability Considerations:** The framing of centralized state nutrition materials and recommendations, beyond reposting or rephrasing USDA/ DGA content, explicitly acknowledges the link between diet and food systems, sustainability and/or environmental impacts. Adjacent efforts with ties to diet or agricultural systems were not considered.
8. **(+1) Diet and Sustainability Initiative:** The state operates at least one active, state-supported or coordinated, and non-federally mandated initiative that combines dietary education with sustainability goals.
9. **(+1) Environmental Framing of Actions:** Sustainable actions were explicitly framed as supporting broader sustainability or environmental goals.

10. **(+1) Support for Plant-Based School Meals:** The state supports plant-based meals in schools with incentives, funding or guidance beyond paraphrasing USDA-allowable meat-alternate guidelines.
11. **(+1) Plant Proteins Promotion:** The state has explicitly promoted plant protein as alternatives or complements for animal protein.
12. **(+1) Red and Processed Meat Reduction:** The state encourages reducing red or processed meat intake for sustainability, economic or health reasons.
13. **(+1) Reduction in Animal Products:** The state recommends an overall reduction in consumption of animal products.
14. **(+1) Water as a Primary Beverage:** The state promotes water as a preferred beverage over milk or sugar-sweetened drinks.
15. **(+1) Recognizes Climate Impact of Animal Agriculture:** The state considers the climate impact of animal agriculture.
16. **(+1) Other Sustainable Food Actions:** The state considers other sustainable food-production tactics besides reducing animal agriculture (e.g. local, organic food, regenerative agriculture, or food-waste reduction).

Findings and Recommendations

Summary of Findings

Many states lack comprehensive and robust dietary guidance of their own, often relying on linking to the federal Dietary Guidelines for Americans or other external resources. This prevents them from adequately tailoring guidance to the specific demographic needs of their populations. The most recent 2025-2030 dietary guidelines present additional challenges for state officials because of unscientific and unreliable guidance that could undermine public health.

Several exceptions stand out, with states such as California and Oregon developing original and accessible nutrition materials that go beyond federal guidance. States like Connecticut and Virginia have codified their own higher nutrition standards into law. Lack of funding is a likely barrier preventing states from implementing stronger dietary recommendations.

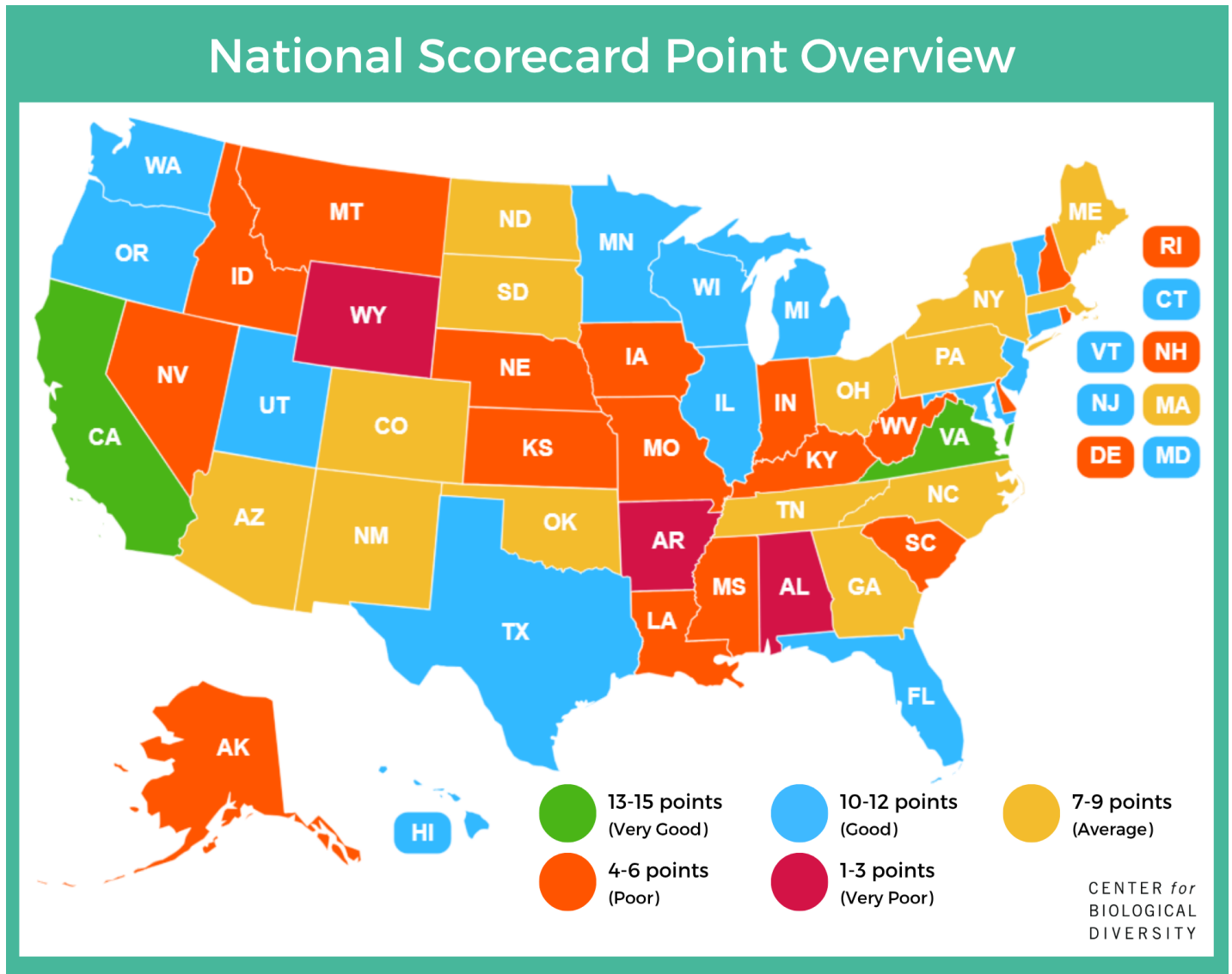
Meanwhile there's concern over industry influence in state dietary guidance and materials, as a fair number of states partnered with meat and dairy groups to create, promote, or implement nutrition-related resources and programs.

The recent defunding of SNAP-Ed means many states will now struggle greatly to provide sufficient nutrition resources because most state-run nutrition education programs were funded by that federal program.

Finally, promotion — or even consideration — of sustainable and plant-forward diets was rare among states. While some states addressed sustainability, most did not connect this directly to dietary choices related to animal product consumption. Instead they focused on other types of sustainable food actions such as purchasing local or organic food.

A handful of states addressed reducing red or processed meat consumption for health reasons, though dairy promotion was still common. Many states did promote increasing fruit and vegetable consumption, but few discussed prioritizing plant proteins like beans, peas and lentils.

Our analysis shows that states need to do a better job of making the connection between the food we eat and our climate, integrating sustainability across dietary initiatives and promoting plant-based foods over animal-based foods. By making progress in these areas, states can help improve the health of Americans and the planet.



A map of the 50 states, color-coded based on the score each state received according to the quality of their dietary guidance.

State Dietary Guidance and Implementation

1. All 50 states explicitly link to the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* or associated federal materials, such as MyPlate, on their websites.
2. All 50 states operate a farm-to-school initiative, but not all states explicitly linked the program to nutrition and agricultural education efforts, environmental impacts, or food systems.
3. The majority of states made educational nutrition resources available (46), conducted nutrition outreach efforts (41), and tied diet and/or health outcomes to broader food justice (44).
4. Most states featured cross-agency initiatives for dietary guidance (34) and supplemented federal school

meal programs (36).

5. Seven states featured industry group collaboration in dietary guidance: Alabama, Georgia, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire and Washington.

General Sustainability Promotion

1. A little over half of states had a diet and sustainability initiative (29) and framed their sustainability actions as supporting environmental goals (30).
2. Six states had centralized dietary guidance that explicitly considered sustainability: California, Hawai'i, Minnesota, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia.
3. Forty-three states referenced other sustainability efforts not related to plant-based food or meat reduction, such as local food, organic food, regenerative agriculture or food-waste reduction.
4. Twenty states recommended water as a primary beverage.

Plant-Forward, Reduced-Meat Promotion

1. Thirteen states discussed reduced red or processed meat intake: Arizona, Arkansas, California, Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, New Jersey, Oregon, Utah and Virginia.
2. Thirty-two states promoted plant proteins.
3. Seven states considered the climate impact of meat production: California, Connecticut, Hawai'i, Illinois, New Mexico, Oregon and Virginia.
4. Thirteen states supported plant-based meals in schools: California, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Hawai'i, Maine, North Carolina, New York, Oregon, Texas, Vermont, Washington and Wisconsin.
5. No state recommended reducing consumption of animal products.

Recommendations for States

1. Create state-tailored dietary guidance with demographic data, health concerns and cultural preferences, to be employed across agencies (health, education, agriculture and environment departments) using a collaborative framework and strategic plan that integrates climate and sustainability goals with nutrition and health goals.
2. Create and promote supporting dietary materials that incorporate plant proteins, dairy alternatives and meat reduction, and address the correlation between sustainability and dietary choices. Include plant-based and dairy alternatives when implementing federal meal programs, nutrition assistance efforts, and educational outreach.
3. Reject and avoid any collaboration with for-profit food and agriculture industry interests in nutrition guidance efforts.

The 50 State Scorecards

Alabama

Score: 2/15

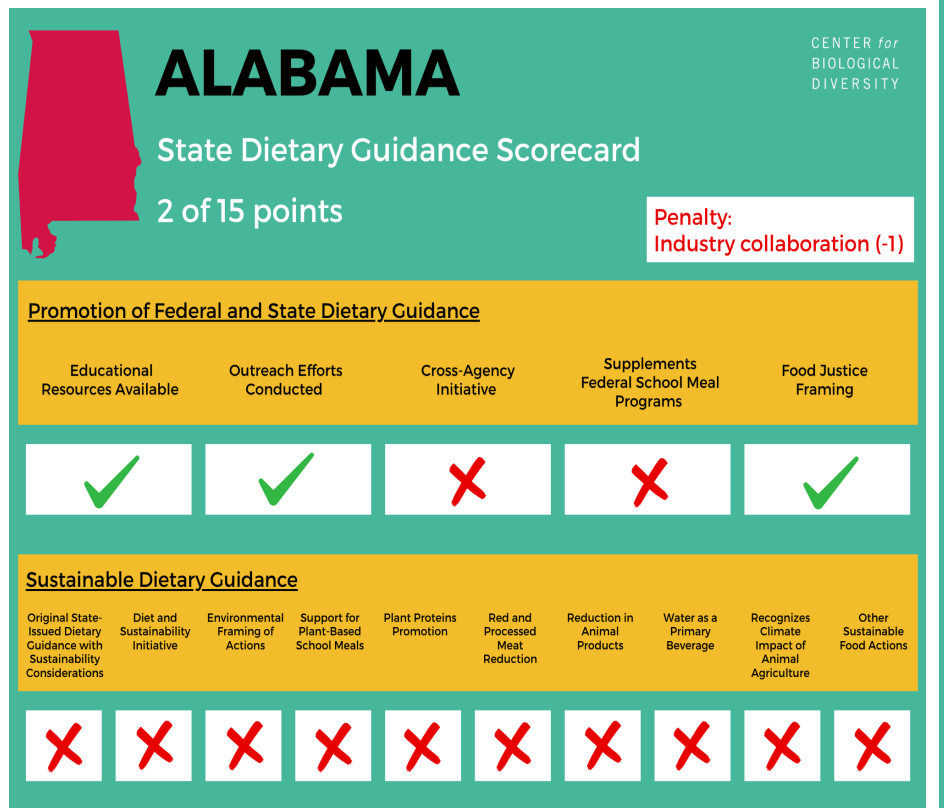
Strengths: The *Alabama Physical Activity and Nutrition Plan 2023-2033*, designed through the Alabama Wellness Alliance, provides objectives for different sectors, such as business, education, and public health, to target obesity, health disparities, and inadequate physical activity and nutrition. The plan focuses on obesity reduction through alignment with the DGA and federal physical activity recommendations, as Alabama has the fifth highest nationwide obesity rate. Health department campaigns for maintaining a healthy weight and habits include *Scale Back Alabama*, the State Obesity Task Force, and obesity-targeted grants from the Office of Minority Health. *iChoices* and the *Healthy Vending Machine and Checkout Programs* focus on making healthy choices the default. The state innovatively uses and maintains a wide base of social media campaigns, toolkits, and infographics for targeted areas.

Areas for Improvement: Industry-provided resources and endorsements raise questions of influence and whether the programs were designed based on the best available science and with the public’s best interest in mind. In Alabama, the *ReThink Your Drink* campaign promotes increased milk consumption using resources from the National Dairy Council. The USDA-funded *Add Milk* campaign, supported by the International Dairy Foods Association, provides a dollar for additional SNAP items when SNAP participants spend a dollar on low or nonfat dairy at a partner store. While the health department runs multiple programs that target obesity, they miss the opportunity to connect obesity with the built environment and overall sustainability goals.

Recommendations:

1. Remove industry influence on dietary messaging, especially regarding dairy and meat consumption recommendations.
2. Expand obesity initiatives like the *Alabama Physical Activity and Nutrition Plan* to promote the role of healthy, plant-forward eating and address the correlation between obesity and saturated fat and processed meat consumption.²³
3. Utilize existing social media models and creative media like infographics to include broader themes like food access and sustainable dietary choices.

Sources: [Alabama Wellness Alliance: Alabama Physical Activity and Nutrition Plan 2023-2033](#), [Alabama Public Health: Nutrition and Physical Activity](#), [Alabama Public Health: ReThink Your Drink](#)



Alaska

Score: 4/15

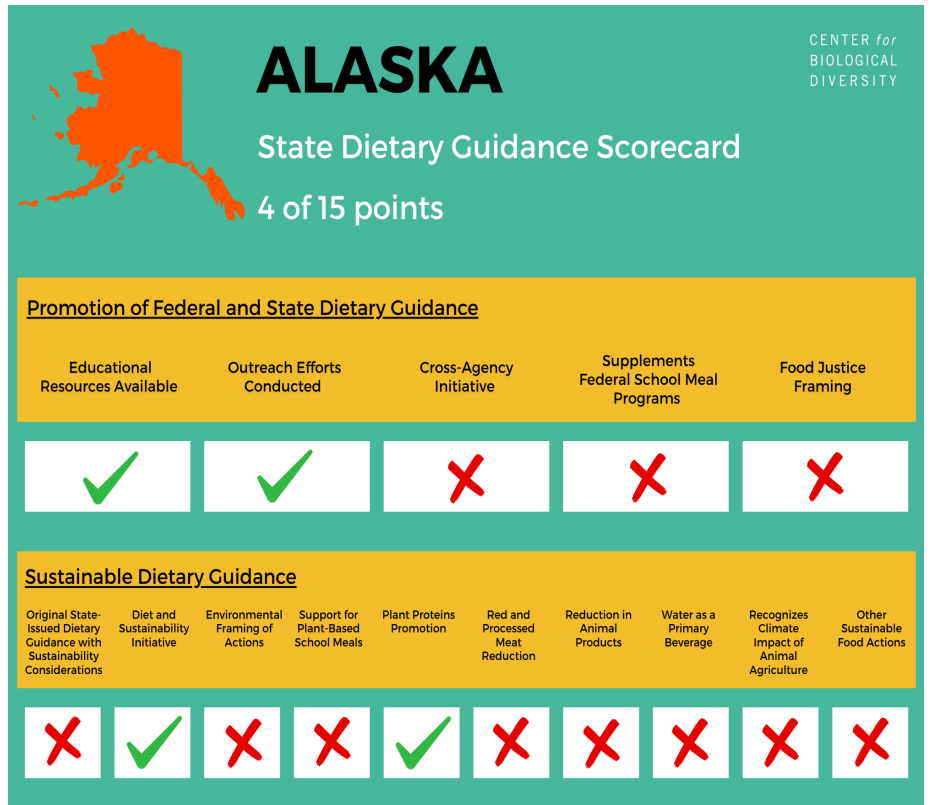
Strengths: Broader state policies demonstrate recognition of its unique food system and Indigenous populations, as individuals may be fined for not salvaging all available hunted meat, and the Alaska Food Code allows for donation of many traditional foods to food service or nonprofit programs. Prior to SNAP-Ed being defunded, state SNAP-Ed programming aimed to recognize the importance of traditional diets and foraging. The state offers free *Wellness Guidelines e-Learning Modules* and a resource *Listserv for Early Childhood Education Providers*. The *Every Bite Counts* social marketing campaign aims to increase healthy food choices, address access to fresh produce, and shift attitudes regarding convenience. The Alaska Department of Health runs the *Fresh Start* program, a resource to match adults with local or virtual educational programs to maintain healthy habits and manage diabetes, lower blood pressure, and manage substance use.

Areas for Improvement: Campaigns with the most substantial materials, such as former SNAP-Ed programming and *School Wellness Policies*, are not tailored to general adult populations, creating a gap in support and education for a significant part of the population. Much of state guidance is drawn from federal sources with limited original recommendations and materials, which is a missed opportunity to provide more robust guidance that reflects communities' needs, priorities and cultures. As federal DGA research found that most dietary needs could be met through traditional Alaskan Native diets, state resources could look to these groups as a model for all Alaskan citizens to feasibly maintain a healthy diet. Resources to address Alaska-specific food system challenges, such as isolation from traditional food systems, higher food prices, and extreme temperatures and weather, are largely absent. There does not appear to be any explicit sustainability messaging.

Recommendations:

1. Create state-specific dietary guidance to reflect unique food systems and cultural practices that are not sufficiently addressed in federal guidance.
2. Expand *Every Bite Counts* and any future SNAP-Ed programming to include education and workshops on plant proteins as an accessible and sustainable dietary choice.
3. Develop resources, such as outreach campaigns or maps, that address food insecurity and structural barriers to access.

Sources: [Alaska Department of Health: Physical Activity and Nutrition](#), [Alaska Department of Health: Early Care and Education](#), [Alaska Department of Health: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education](#), [Alaska SNAP-Ed 2023 Needs Assessment](#), [Alaska Division of Environmental Health: Traditional Foods](#), [Alaska Department of Health: Fresh Start Programs](#)



Arizona

Score: 8/15

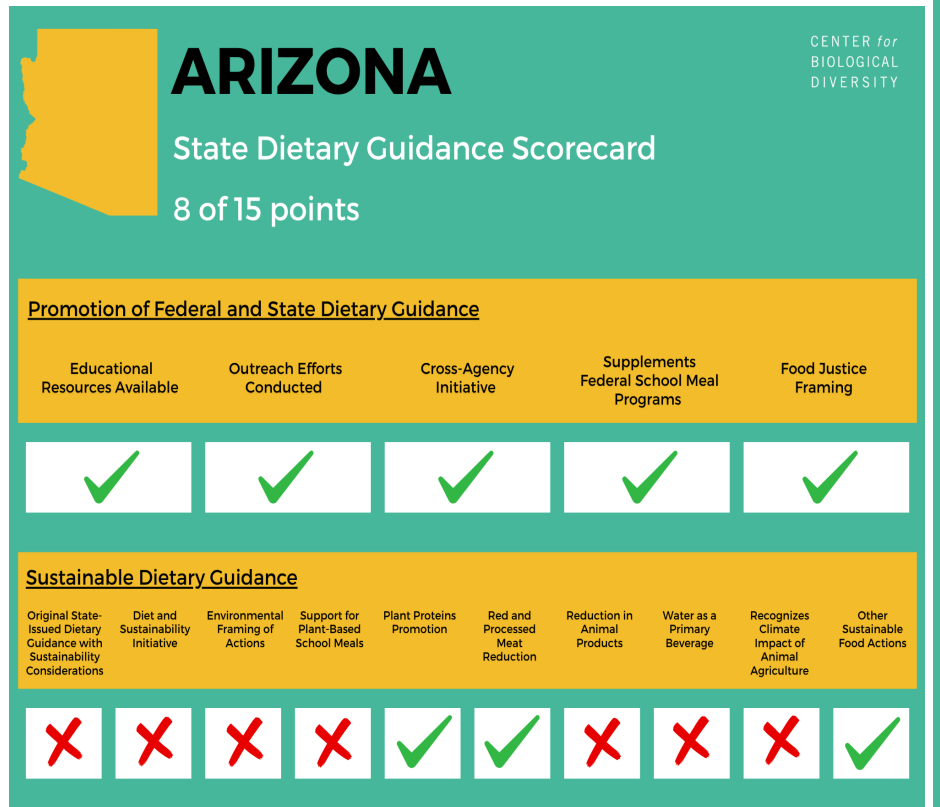
Strengths: Prior to SNAP-Ed's defunding, *AZ Health Zone* (AZHZ), an extensive SNAP-Ed based and cross-agency program, offered resources and classes, the *Nutrition Pantry Program*, gardening support, recipes, and local opportunities. AZHZ utilized both state- and county-level maps to display data related to SNAP-Ed activities, like demographics, economic need, food systems, and locations for school nutrition programs like Summer Food Service. The Bureau of Nutrition and Physical Activity (part of the Department of Health Services) develops original resources, such as the *Health and Nutrition Curricula Assessment*, to evaluate nutrition curricula for effective communication and trauma-informed approaches, and the *Coalition Crosswalk*, which details the work and how to be involved with food systems related groups. The *AZ Health Improvement Plan* has specific strategies to address the built environment and access to food as correlated to health outcomes, and the state partnered with county health departments to create *Community Health Assessments* and improvement plans.

Areas for Improvement: Sustainability framing is absent from AZHZ recipe resources that include plant proteins and in broader nutrition guidance. Nutrition efforts are limited to AZHZ outreach and the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, creating a gap in targeted support and education for a significant part of the adult population that does not receive federal food assistance. Data collected through *Community Health Assessments* could be used to further tailor nutrition guidance and outreach to local populations. While Arizona provides educational materials for local food and community gardening, it can improve public health and resilience by connecting these initiatives to broader dietary guidance.

Recommendations:

1. Use *AZ Health Zone* partners and network to expand outreach to reach general populations, using existing community health data to identify specific programming opportunities.
2. Use existing maps and pantry programs to actively promote local food resources and seasonally available produce options.
3. Include sustainability concerns and promotion of plant-forward diets in the next *AZ Health Improvement Plan* and *Community Health Assessments*.

Sources: [Arizona Department of Health Services: Nutrition and Physical Activity](#), [Arizona Department of Health Services: State Health Assessment](#), [Arizona Health Improvement Plan](#), [Arizona Department of Health Services: Director's Blog](#), [Arizona Health Zone](#)



Arkansas

Score: 3/15

Strengths: Prior to SNAP-Ed defunding, Arkansas' SNAP-Ed program employed nutrition educators who delivered training through school programs, learning experiences, food demonstrations, cooking schools, and material resources. The University of Arkansas' Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service provides information on diabetes, maintaining healthy weight, and nutrition, with a heavy reliance on federal DGA and MyPlate resources. It highlights home gardening, eating fruits and vegetables, and local foods. It maintains an *Arkansas Food Blog* that posts healthy recipes and grocery tips. It also operates EFNEP, which offers nutrition lessons to low-income adults and youth. The *Arkansas Local Food Network*, *Arkansas Grown* program, and *Arkansas Farm to School Collaborative* are all initiatives

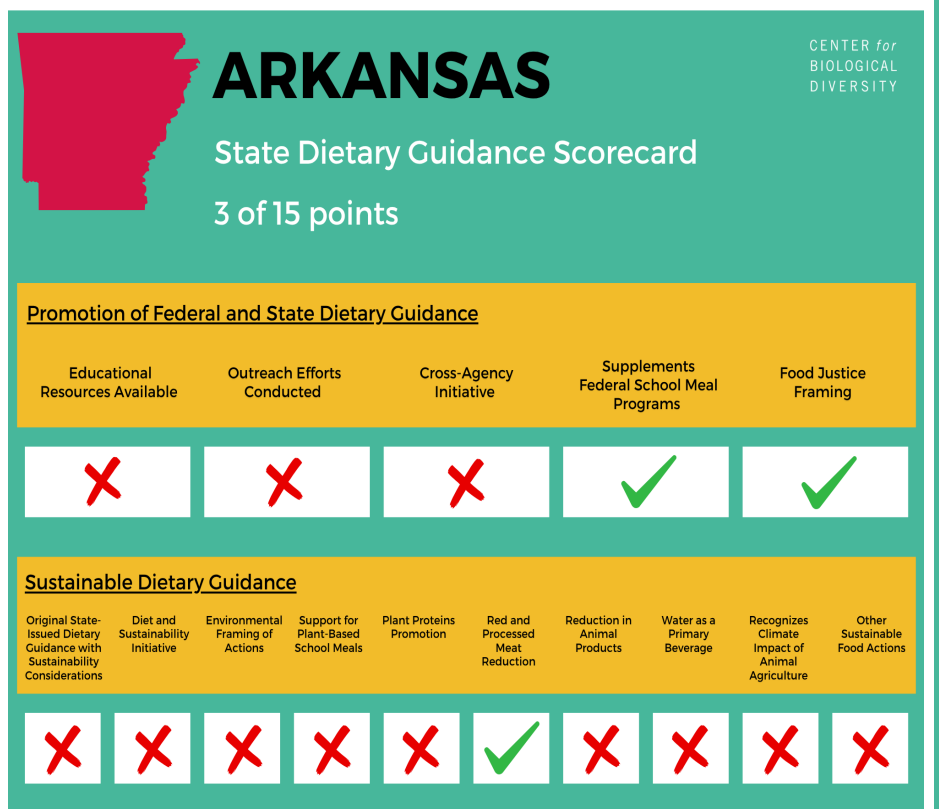
that bring locally grown foods to consumers. The Arkansas Department of Public Health took the *Healthy Meetings Pledge* to support healthy food choices at work by offering nutritious food and physical activity options.

Areas for Improvement: Arkansas passed a law that made it illegal for companies to use words like “meat” to describe products not made from animals; this law was declared unconstitutional by a federal judge in 2022.²⁴ The state also recently partnered with USDA on *Add Milk!*, a campaign to reimburse SNAP recipients for cow’s milk purchases that is supported by the International Dairy Foods Association. The nonprofit Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance, which works with the state to implement nutrition education, partners with the beef lobby to promote the *Arkansas Beef Project*, an initiative that provides beef to food-insecure Arkansans. Overall, nutrition information on various state websites, such as Arkansas’ WIC webpage and the Arkansas Department of Health nutrition resources webpage, is very sparse and typically just links to federal resources. There does not appear to be any explicit mention of sustainability or connection to environmental initiatives.

Recommendations:

1. End industry-supportive initiatives such as the *AddMilk!* campaign and the *Arkansas Beef Project*.
2. Integrate more plant-based recipes in the *Arkansas Food Blog* and under University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service’s *Eating Well: Healthy Recipes* webpage.
3. Add lessons on food sustainability and the connection between food and climate to EFNEP programming.

Sources: [Arkansas SNAP-Ed](#), [University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service: Food & Nutrition](#), [Arkansas Food Blog](#), [U of A: EFNEP](#), [U of A: Eating Well](#), [Arkansas Local Food Network](#), [Arkansas Grown](#), [Arkansas Farm to School](#), [Arkansas Department of Health: WIC](#), [Arkansas Department of Health: Nutrition](#), [Arkansas Add Milk](#), [Arkansas Beef Project](#)



California

Score: 14/15

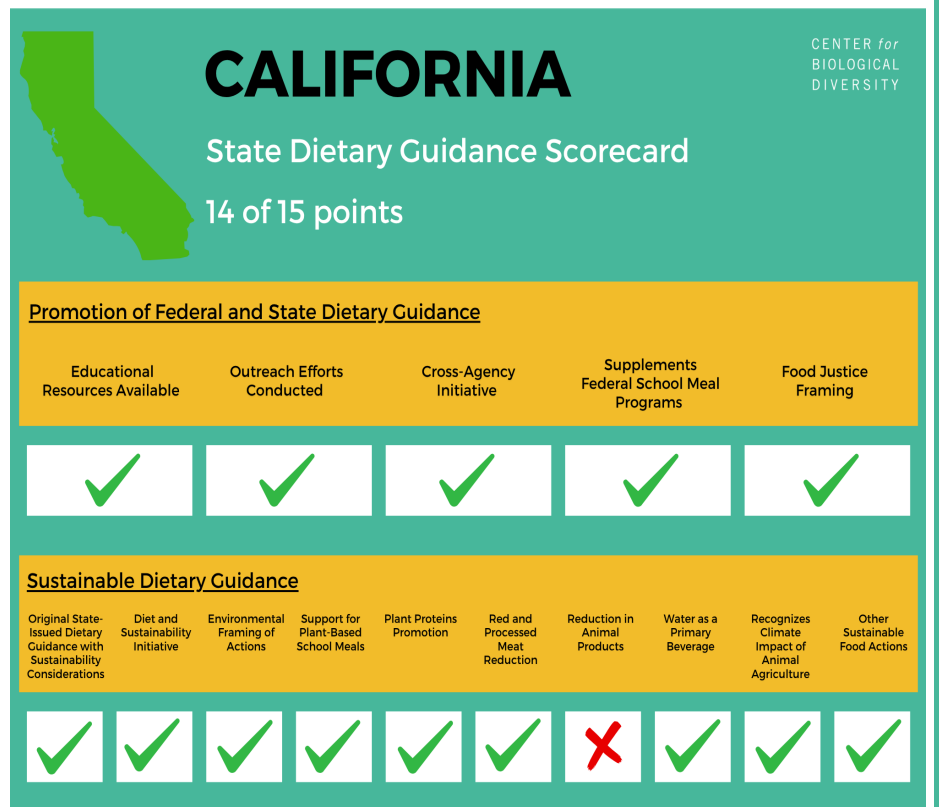
Strengths: California produces original, state-led efforts integrating nutrition and sustainability. California’s Department of Education (CDE) encourages the inclusion of plant-based meals in child nutrition programs and acknowledges the environmental correlation. The CDE webpage provides further details on health benefits, ways for schools to take action, school educational resources, and trainings for staff. State-funded efforts such as the *Farm to School* incubator grant program, providing over \$86 million in funding since 2021, and other resources explicitly address the benefits of environmental education, food access concerns, and lowered risk of diet-related diseases. These efforts have a particular impact in relation to their Universal School Meals mandate, with mass implementation of farm-to-school meals and additional grant-funding to support things like composting or serving sustainably grown foods. The state’s commitment to building sustainable food systems is further demonstrated through various agricultural grant programs to build resilience. The Department of Public Health also has programs such as *Healthy Victories* and the *Champion Provider Fellowship* which foster healthy habits, including healthy diets, through public outreach campaigns and education and collaboration with local health departments.

Areas for Improvement: While agricultural and educational policies under the CDE and CDFA acknowledge the link between climate and food systems, this framing remains separated from broader public dietary guidance. There is opportunity for greater coordination between agencies on these goals by linking environmental messaging with mainstream nutrition guidance and materials. Similarly, California has strong efforts focused on institutional procurement and production, with potential to increase impact by connecting individual dietary choices and education to environmental and health outcomes. Guidelines and resource collections are more robust under the *Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health* program, leaving the potential to create a similar level of resources and programming for other demographics.

Recommendations:

1. Leverage universal school meal program and existing farm-to-school education frameworks to increase awareness of plant-forward proteins and dairy alternatives.
2. Link climate-resilient agriculture initiatives and public health education with materials that address how agriculture and diet choices affect environmental and health outcomes. Utilize the Local Agency and Support Section, whose staff coordinate relationships and meetings between federal agencies and interest groups, to coordinate messaging and efforts.
3. Expand nutritional guidance and materials for the adult population beyond family units, using existing PR models like *Healthy Victories* to reach a wider audience.

Sources: [California Department of Food and Agriculture: Farm to School Incubator](#), [California DPH: Systems and Environmental Change](#), [California DPH: Nutrition and Physical Activity Initiative](#), [California Department of Education: Plant-Based Meal Options in CNPs](#), [California Farm to School](#), [California Department of Food and Agriculture: Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program](#)



Colorado

Score: 9/15

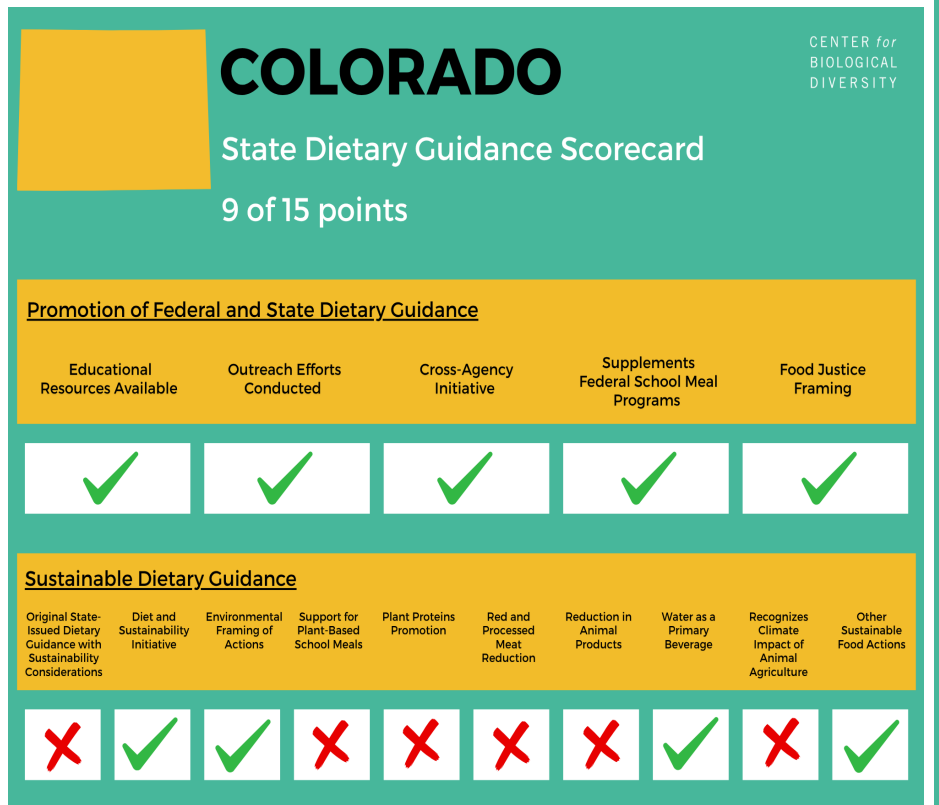
Strengths: The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment provides substantial educational resources through the *Healthy Eating and Active Living Program* (HEAL), which focuses mainly on children and families. Community engagement toolkits, resources, and a Google Drive of success stories address the relationship between nutrition and the built environment. The state promotes farm-to-child education, gardening, and local food purchasing through grant funding, a video series for early childhood education professionals, and local food-procurement maps. The *Colorado Nutrition Incentive Program* delivers *Community Supported Agriculture* produce to participants in the WIC Program and Older Adult Congregate Meal. Prior to SNAP-Ed being defunded, Colorado SNAP-Ed use was tailored to state populations, like *Text2LiveHealthy*, which provides refugees with cultural and multilingual healthy living resources and messages.

Areas for Improvement: Local food programs tend to promote meat consumption, such as a local beef directory, while generally failing to address plant-based diets, dairy alternatives, or diet/sustainability correlations. Although Colorado has strong efforts concentrated on vulnerable populations like children and low-income individuals, outreach to broader populations could be improved. While implementation of USDA dietary programs is strong, Colorado could benefit from utilizing state-specific data to create initiatives that integrate agriculture, health, and the environment in a more cohesive way.

Recommendations:

1. Utilize outreach programs like *Nutrition Nuggets*, an initiative that displays nutritional facts and recipe cards in grocery stores to increase fruit and vegetable consumption and promote the environmental and health benefits of plant proteins such as beans, peas and legumes.
2. Translate existing HEAL campaigns into guidance for broader audiences, launching adult and community programming.
3. Integrate plant-based education into existing local food initiatives, like farm-to-child, by updating materials and food directories to address the benefits of reduced meat and dairy consumption, while supporting plant-based crops and products.

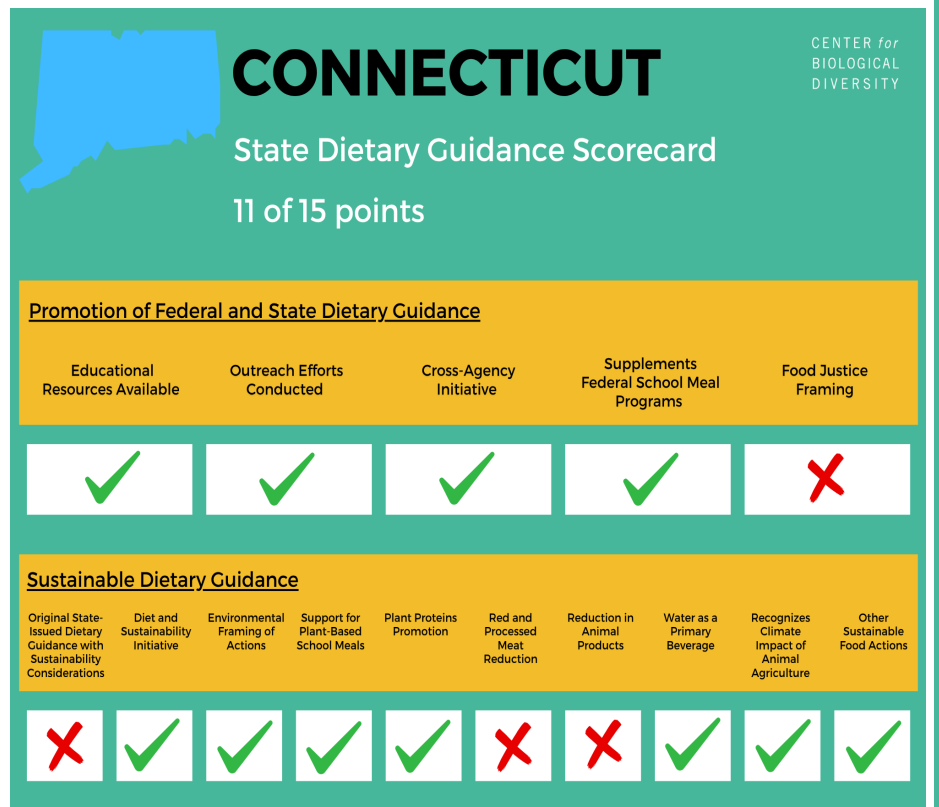
Sources: [Healthy Food Choices in Schools: Milk Substitutes in School Meals](#), [Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment: Healthy Eating and Active Living \(HEAL\)](#), [CDPHE: Healthy Food Environments](#), [Colorado Department of Human Services: SNAP-Ed](#), [Colorado Department of Education: Source Local Food](#)



Connecticut

Score: 11/15

Strengths: Connecticut stands out as one of the only states with its own state-specific dietary guidance codified into law, the *Connecticut Nutrition Standards* (CNS). The CNS sets regulations for nutrient density in schools, requiring assessments and annual reviews. The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) supports implementation through materials and training for school food authorities. The state promotes K-12 education on school gardens and agricultural literacy through online curriculum resources and a partnership with the *CT Farm to School* collaboration. The CSDE webpage encourages the inclusion of local and vegetarian meal options, and reflects coordination between health, agriculture and education sectors to make such choices possible. The Department of Public Health explicitly promotes water as a primary beverage, an important step in reducing the promotion of dairy intake.



Areas for Improvement: The *CT Farm to School* collaboration lists New England Dairy as a collaborator; though New England Dairy does have initiatives to address environmental sustainability, dairy is among the most environmentally harmful foods and not accessible to many parts of the population who cannot digest it, particularly among Indigenous and communities of color. While the CNS is a strength, many state efforts remain school-based, with limited access to similar, coordinated standards or efforts for the public. Also, despite some vegetarian options being promoted in resources, there is no integration of reducing animal product consumption as a climate or health strategy within the CNS.

Recommendations:

1. Broaden CNS or DPH materials to serve general audiences, not just schools. Address disparities in nutrition education by creating a dedicated webpage with accessible guidance on healthy eating and resources highlighting the benefits of plant-forward and nondairy options.
2. Create educational resources for school food authorities on how to comply with the CNS while supporting sustainability through training videos, menu guides, and procurement tips on increasing plant-based and nondairy options.
3. Provide coordinated, state-level funding to local partners delivering nutrition education to ensure consistent outreach and education of general populations.

Sources: [CT Farm to School Collaborative](#), [Connecticut Department of Public Health: Nutrition, Physical Activity & Obesity Program](#), [Connecticut Nutrition Standards](#)

Delaware

Score: 6/15

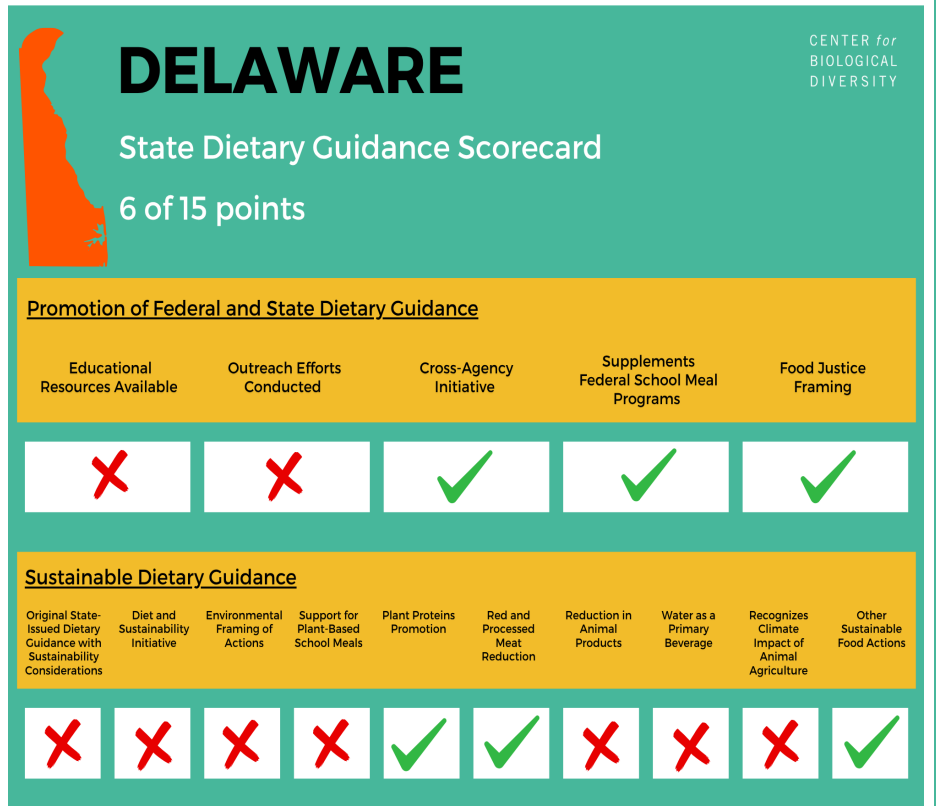
Strengths: Delaware’s Division of Public Health has a *Physical Activity, Nutrition, and Obesity Prevention* (PANO) Program, whose webpage discusses healthy eating and overviews the federal dietary guidelines. The program provides mini-grants to childcare centers and schools under the *Advancing Healthy Lifestyles* (AHL) Initiative, which pilots programming and strategies to encourage healthy habits in children, including through nutrition education. The majority of nutrition information for Delawareans is available on HealthyDelaware.org, run by the Delaware Cancer Consortium. That website has a nutrition page, *Trade Up for Health*, that lists ways to eat better, including eating more whole grains, fruits and vegetables; avoiding high-fat dairy products; and limiting consumption of grilled and processed meats. However, it encourages more fish consumption. The lieutenant governor has a health challenge that rewards Delawareans for promoting healthy choices through policy, systems, or environmental changes. Delaware’s *State Health Improvement Plan* (SHIP), 2025-2028 promotes health equity for better public health outcomes and includes attention to better health education and access to nutritious foods as ways to reduce chronic disease. Prior to SNAP-Ed defunding, Delaware’s SNAP-Ed program, *Healthy in a SNAP*, provided nutrition education and cooking programs, as well as tips, tools and recipes on its website.

Areas for Improvement: The Division of Public Health webpages, such as the one for the Office of Health Education, largely link to other sources instead of providing their own original information. It appears to rely mainly on nutrition information provided by *Healthy Delaware*, which is run by an external organization, and its SNAP-Ed program, which has since been defunded. Delaware’s SHIP and other nutrition-related programs could benefit from an explicit emphasis on plant-forward and sustainable diets.

Recommendations:

1. Create original state nutrition guidance resources and make them easily accessible on the state’s health website.
2. Integrate plant-forward and sustainable diets into Delaware’s *State Health Improvement Plan* (SHIP).
3. Add promotion of healthy and sustainable diets into state-aligned programs such as *Physical Activity, Nutrition, and Obesity* (PANO), *Trade Up for Health*, and the Lieutenant Governor’s Challenge.

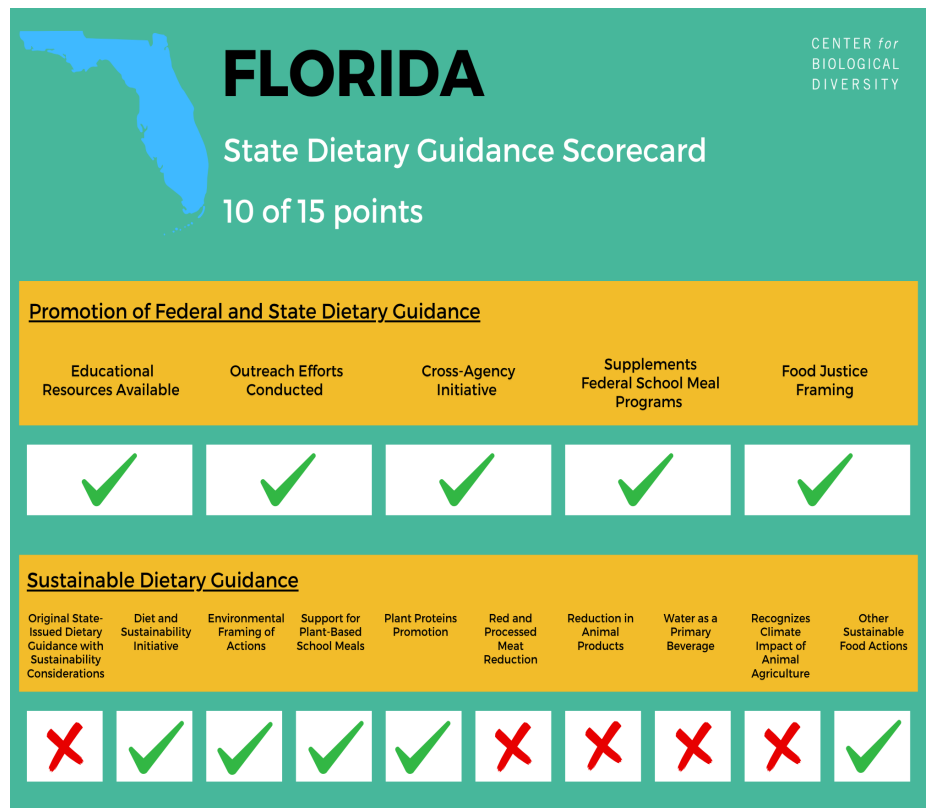
Sources: [Healthy Delaware: Trade Up for Health](#), [Delaware Division of Public Health: PANO](#), [Delaware Division of Public Health: Health Ed](#), [Delaware Lieutenant Governor’s Challenge](#), [Delaware SHIP](#), [Delaware Healthy in a SNAP](#)



Florida

Score: 10/15

Strengths: The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) employs chefs to create recipes for healthy eating and utilization of local agricultural products. The *Fresh from Florida* campaign highlights seasonal produce and agricultural diversity. Florida also runs a cross-agency Green School network to support sustainable school initiatives, including cafeteria operations. The *Going Green in School Nutrition* webpage provides school nutrition staff with resources and funding opportunities to promote local food procurement and operational sustainability. The Food Recovery Program uses the Food Recovery Hierarchy to educate institutions and address the connection between uneaten food, food insecurity, and climate impacts. Florida's *Roadmap to Living Healthy* is an innovative, interactive display of food deserts, eligible SNAP residents, death rates from diet-related illnesses, social indicators, and locations for food assistance. This creates transparency in efforts and informs strategic priorities.



Areas for Improvement: In 2025, The Florida Farm Bill (SB700) included language that would prohibit the labeling of plant-based products as “meat” or “milk.” While this language did not automatically trigger a ban, it authorizes the state to enforce identity restrictions, which could limit access to plant-based alternatives and potentially undermine efforts to create diverse, sustainable diets. Florida’s dairy industry has an influence on school food programs through a state-sponsored organization, *Florida Ag in the Classroom*, despite the environmental harm of dairy and lactose intolerance in certain groups. The *Getting Fresh with Florida Fish* campaign promotes increasing fish consumption to DGA levels through well-designed educational resources but does not acknowledge environmental risks like overfishing or biodiversity loss. Florida’s nutrition infrastructure is deeply tied to agricultural promotion through FDACS, rather than a focus on education. The nutrition page for the Florida Department of Health is sparse and lacks state tailored dietary recommendations or materials for diverse populations, with a missed opportunity for further impact.

Recommendations:

1. Feature plant proteins like beans, lentils and legumes as a category within *Fresh from Florida* recipe pages.
2. Create funding opportunities within the *Going Green School Nutrition* program to aid schools providing more plant-based and nondairy options. Criteria for green meals should reflect not just sourcing practices but climate-friendly dietary patterns, like plant-forward eating.
3. When promoting increased consumption of Florida fish, raise awareness of the importance of sustainable fisheries, minimizing bycatch, and the climate impacts of different types of seafood in classroom modules, public infographics, or menu planning tools.

Sources: [Florida Department of Health: Nutrition](#), [Florida Department of Health: Seafood Consumption](#), [Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services: Nutrition Programs](#), [Fresh from Florida: Our Chef](#), [Florida Department of Health: Food Access](#), [Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services: National School Lunch Program](#), [Florida’s Roadmap to Living Healthy](#), [Florida Ag in the Classroom](#)

Georgia

Score: 9/15

Strengths: Two Department of Public Health (DPH) toolkits, targeted at public schools and workplaces, address both physical activity and nutrition. The *Work Healthy Georgia Toolkit* uses parameters from the DGA recommending reduced red meat consumption in work environments as a strategy to decrease high rates of adult obesity. The *Georgia Grown* initiative, under the Department of Agriculture, shares recipes using local ingredients, and briefly frames purchasing as a sustainability action. The *Harvest of the Month* initiative integrates seasonal, monthly Georgia produce into school meals and classroom lessons to encourage familiarity with fresh fruits and vegetables.

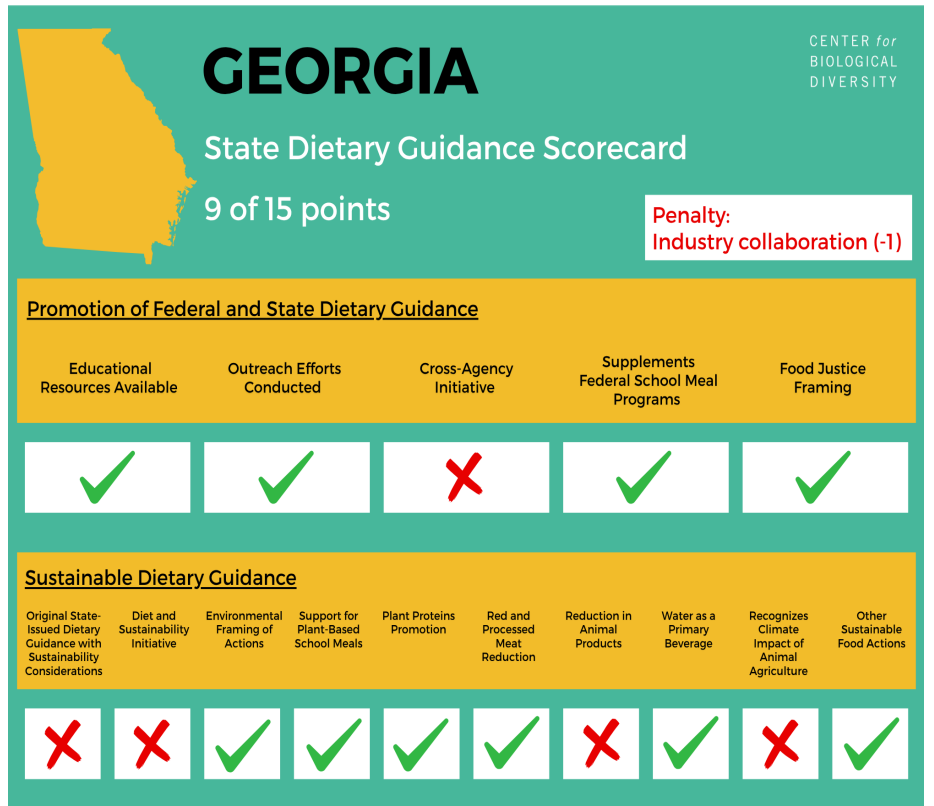
Areas for Improvement:

The Southeastern United Dairy Industry Association is named as a contributor to the state’s *K-12 Physical Activity and Nutrition (PAN) Toolkit*. The National Dairy Council’s *Fuel Up to Play 60* effort promoting dairy products to students is used in Georgia schools. The Dairy Alliance, an organization dedicated to promoting dairy milk, is also an official partner of the Georgia High School Association. While the state recommends choosing calorie-free beverages such as water, low-fat and fat-free dairy are given equal footing without addressing the environmental impact of dairy, inability of many populations to digest lactose, or nutritional adequacy of nondairy milks. While toolkits mention obesity, they do not address aspects of the built environment such as access to fresh, healthy foods or plant-based options that shape diet-related health outcomes. Dietary education infrastructure lacks cross-agency collaborations and consistent public engagement which can hinder the efficacy and reach of nutrition programs. A gap in state-created outreach campaigns beyond schools means that Georgia adults and at-risk populations, like low-income individuals, are less likely to receive accessible guidance tailored to state-unique needs.

Recommendations:

1. Remove the influence of industry-aligned interest groups and promote evidence-based guidance of nondairy milks and environmentally friendly diet options, especially in programs endorsed by the state.
2. Expand *Harvest of the Month* into a statewide public nutrition campaign, utilizing the model to include curriculum on the environmental and nutritional benefits of reducing red meat and dairy consumption.
3. Update existing toolkits with current obesity and nutrition data that explains the environmental and health benefits of plant-forward diets. Add context on factors like food access and affordability, which can shape health outcomes.²⁵

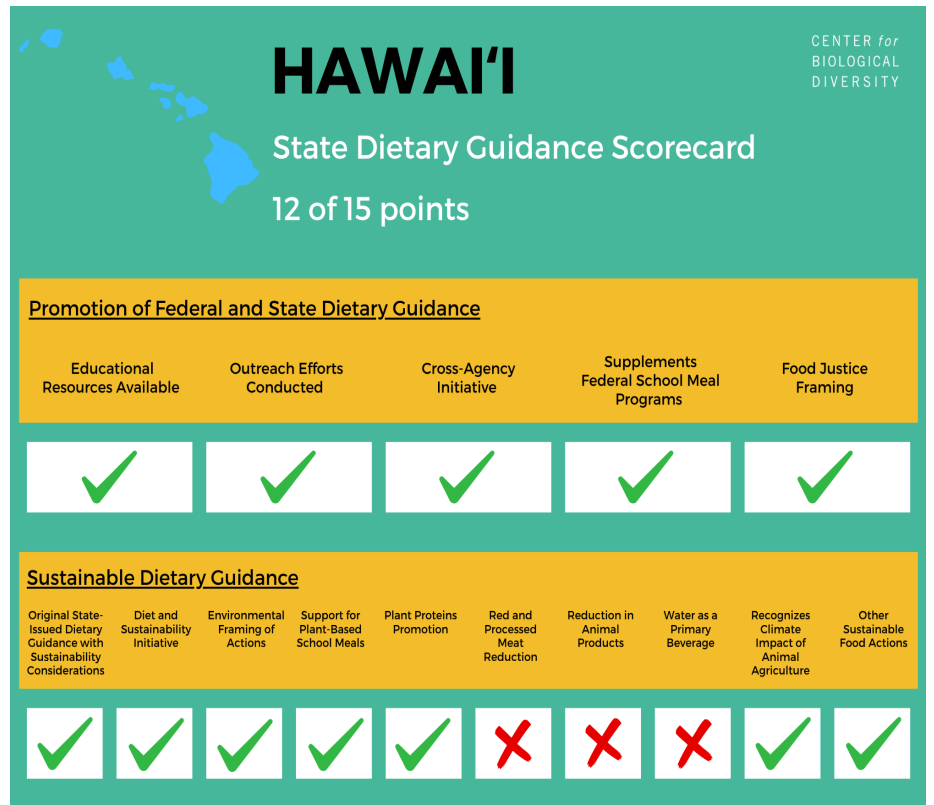
Sources: [Georgia Grown](#), [Georgia Department of Public Health: Nutrition Standards](#), [The Dairy Alliance Partner](#), [Georgia PAN Toolkit](#), [Work Healthy Georgia Toolkit](#), [Atlanta Falcons Fuel Up to Play 60](#)



Hawai'i

Score: 12/15

Strengths: Hawai'i has an entire website dedicated to healthy living, called *Start Living Healthy*, which has campaigns and guides for various health needs. It includes a page on the benefits of healthy eating with original resources and recipes. Hawai'i's *Choose Healthy Now* program expands healthy snacks and drinks in stores by promoting the healthy options on food labels, while its *Rethink Your Drink* program tells people to choose water. Prior to SNAP-Ed defunding, the state's SNAP-Ed program promoted wellness guidelines in early childcare and schools, established Food Access Coordinator positions, funded a *Food Access Capacity Building Project*, and ran nutrition incentive programs through federally funded food programs. The state also developed its own *Nutrition Wellness Policy* that requires the Department of Health to offer healthy food and drink options for state and federally sponsored events.



Meanwhile, Hawai'i's *Physical Activity and Nutrition (PAN) Plan 2030* emphasizes nutritious diets to prevent chronic disease and comes with an implementation plan that seeks to improve food access for low-income residents. Strategies include promoting healthy food donations to food banks, funding nutrition education based on traditional Hawaiian concepts, employing food access coordinators, and increasing participation in healthy food incentive programs. The plan's nutrition section centers on increasing consumption of nutrient-dense fruits and vegetables while limiting saturated fats. Its website has many pages specific to individual needs, such as school health, childcare nutrition, SNAP, and access to healthy foods, as well as providing legislative details for each issue area. On the legislative side, Hawai'i's Legislature Act 175 mandates 30% local food sourcing in schools by 2030, while Act 258 provides funding for a School Garden Coordinator in the Department of Education. Hawai'i's Senate Bill 549 requires public high schools to offer plant-based meal options and explicitly acknowledges impacts on health, local agriculture, and environmentally conscious decision-making.

Areas for Improvement: The state's *PAN Plan 2030* could improve upon its existing nutrition goals to increase fruits and vegetables by making the connection to environmental sustainability, as could the rest of its nutritional materials. The plan could go farther than recommending lean meats by also recommending the reduction of red and processed meats, the prioritization of plant proteins, and making water the primary recommended beverage.

Recommendations:

1. Translate legislative wins into guides for schools to implement plant-based meal options.
2. Pass and implement Senate Bill 549 to require plant-based meal options in public high schools.
3. Integrate sustainable dietary guidance into the *Physical Activity and Nutrition Plan 2030*.

Sources: [Healthy Hawai'i Strategic Plan](#), [Hawai'i Department of Health: Physical Activity & Nutrition Program](#), [Hawai'i Choose Healthy Now](#), [Start Living Healthy Hawai'i](#), [Hawai'i SNAP-Ed](#), [Hawai'i Department of Health: Policy Work](#), [Hawai'i Rethink Your Drink](#), [Hawai'i Farm to School Network](#), [Hawai'i SB549](#)

Idaho

Score: 5/15

Strengths: Idaho’s dietary guidance and sustainability efforts are strong in the education sector, especially seen through a 70% farm-to-school participation rate in the federal Patrick Leahy Program. State-created materials for farm-to-school implementation are detailed and accessible with direct mention of sustainability in relation to local sourcing, promotion of gardens, and composting. The *Idaho Physical Activity and Nutrition Program*, led by the Department of Public Health and Welfare, supports outreach efforts through strategic programming for community, childcare, and farmers’ markets. These dietary efforts focus on increasing access to fruits and vegetables through partnerships with the University of Idaho to implement *Idaho Farm to Early Care Education* and the Idaho Farmers Market Association

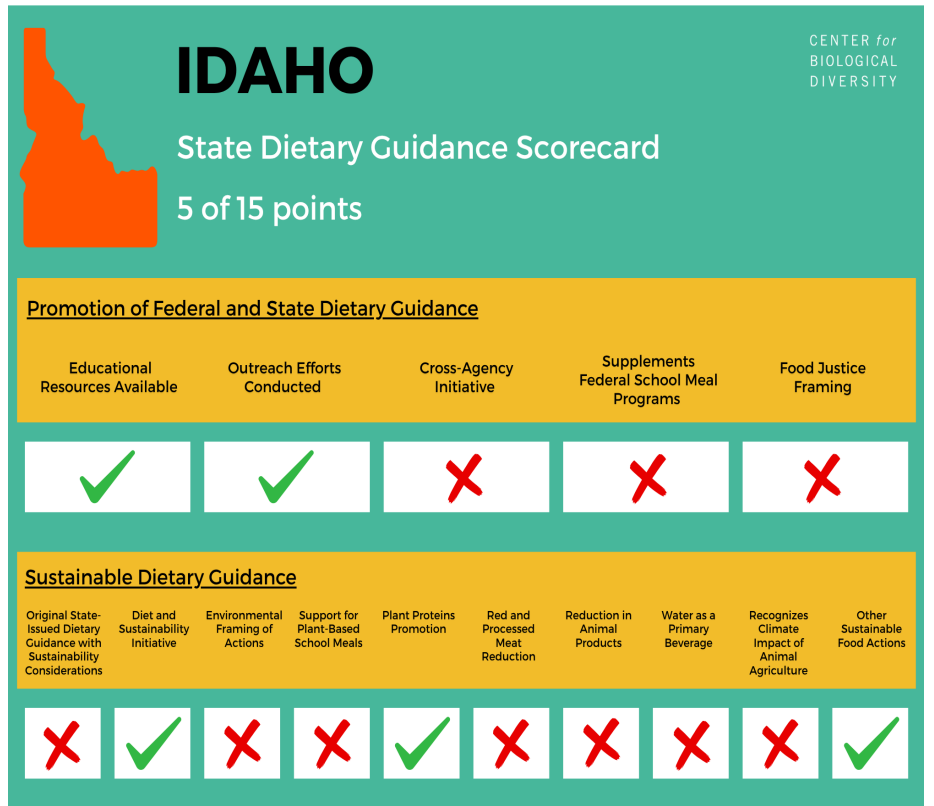
to improve EBT capabilities at farmers markets. The *BeActive Kids* initiative shows commitment to national best practices by providing support from local health districts and training local childcare facilities to implement the program. The *Idaho Preferred* initiative through the Department of Agriculture is a strong tool supporting local and community supported agriculture. While it offers guides to support various farm-raised meat and dairy products, it also highlights how to find plant-based, local alternatives such as 10 kinds of dry beans, varied grains and mushrooms.

Areas for Improvement: Many of the state’s strongest initiatives, like Eastern Idaho Public Health’s resource lists and the *Idaho Preferred* initiative, are federally funded and USDA branded, which may limit state ownership or long-term visibility. While *Idaho Preferred* and *Farm to School* programming promotes local agriculture broadly, it does not frame plant-based eating in terms of health or environmental sustainability, a missed opportunity to educate the public on the significance of their dietary choices. Some outreach materials are more institution-facing, with the opportunity to expand tailored resources to caregivers or low-income families seeking nutrition education.

Recommendations:

1. Develop state-specific nutrition guidance to complement existing success of farm-to-school efforts; integrate sustainability insights and local dietary data to improve relevance and impact.
2. Expand IPAN efforts to include sustainability and plant-forward education with resource guides on the impact of dietary choices.
3. Encourage existing *BeActive* providers to include sustainability concerns. Expand education to caregivers with modules on healthy and sustainable eating in daily life.

Sources: [Idaho Preferred](#), [Idaho Farm to School Guide](#), [Idaho Department of Health & Welfare: Physical Activity and Nutrition](#), [University of Idaho Extension: Farm to School](#)



Illinois

Score: 11/15

Strengths: Illinois' efforts are guided by the *State Health Improvement Plan* (SHIP), which aims to decrease preventable chronic diseases with nutrition. The SHIP sets targeted objectives to implement changes to improve access and support consumption of nourishing food and ensure that health advice aligns with the needs of diverse, state-specific demographics. The state implements a multisector *Coordinated School Health Model* to assess student health needs and implement activities, education and nutrition services. Illinois provides funding for local community groups, including support for farm-to-school, school gardens, food waste, and overall education strategies. Prior to SNAP-Ed's defunding, the SNAP-Ed *Eat. Move. Save. Campaign* through the University of Illinois Extension implemented a *Find*

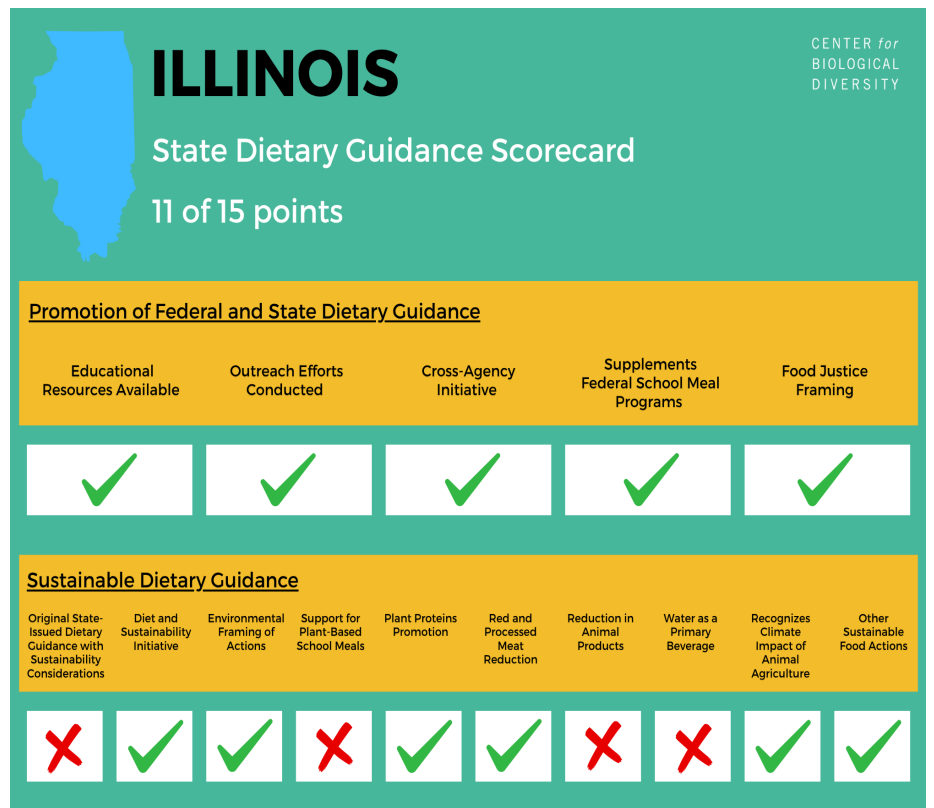
Food IL map to find places offering free food or accepting federal food-assistance programs, a monthly newsletter, and a *Healthy Text Program* with weekly fun, healthy tips. Their *Grocery Store Tour* pages on dairy and protein options included nondairy and plant protein options alongside traditional animal-based products.

Areas for Improvement: While the state has solid infrastructure and educational resources, they could utilize local data to be better tailored to the state's population-specific needs and include information about sustainable diets. Sustainability is mentioned in some programs, like reducing food waste in schools, but educational materials could be improved by framing plant-forward eating and climate-conscious eating as sustainability strategies. Initiatives focus on youth and school settings, leaving a gap in outreach for adults and non-SNAP individuals that could be addressed with the creation of broader, unified dietary resources.

Recommendations:

1. Include sustainability more explicitly in SHIP goals and implementation and include strategies that encourage education on, and procurement of, climate-friendly foods.
2. Expand the *Coordinated School Health Model* by creating sustainability focused toolkits for other nutrition leaders in the community, like community centers and healthcare professionals.
3. Relaunch a version of the cross-agency campaign, *We Choose Health*, which was discontinued in 2014 due to the end of funding from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The initiative affected 3 million people, and increased state funding for nutrition and healthy food focused programs. It could bridge the gaps in outreach efforts.

Sources: [Illinois Coordinated School Health](#), [Healthy Illinois 2028 State Health Improvement Plan](#), [Illinois Department of Public Health: We Choose Healthy Living](#), [Illinois Department of Public Health: We Choose Health Initiative](#), [Illinois State Board of Education: Nutrition Department](#)



Indiana

Score: 6/15

Strengths: Indiana has a high participation rate in farm-to-school programs, and the *Local Food for Schools Cooperative* provides state funding for high need schools to serve regionally grown food. The state co-leads two yearly day-long *Community Food Systems* workshops to bring together interest groups involved in community food networks. To address food insecurity, the resource finder *Indiana 211* and *Community Compass*, a smartphone app to locate food resources, aim to connect residents with services and address food deserts. Indiana’s Department of Health provides funding opportunities through grants and healthcare partnerships, such as mobile food markets and pantries. The *Purdue Extension Nutrition Education Program* provides direct nutrition education opportunities in almost all Indiana

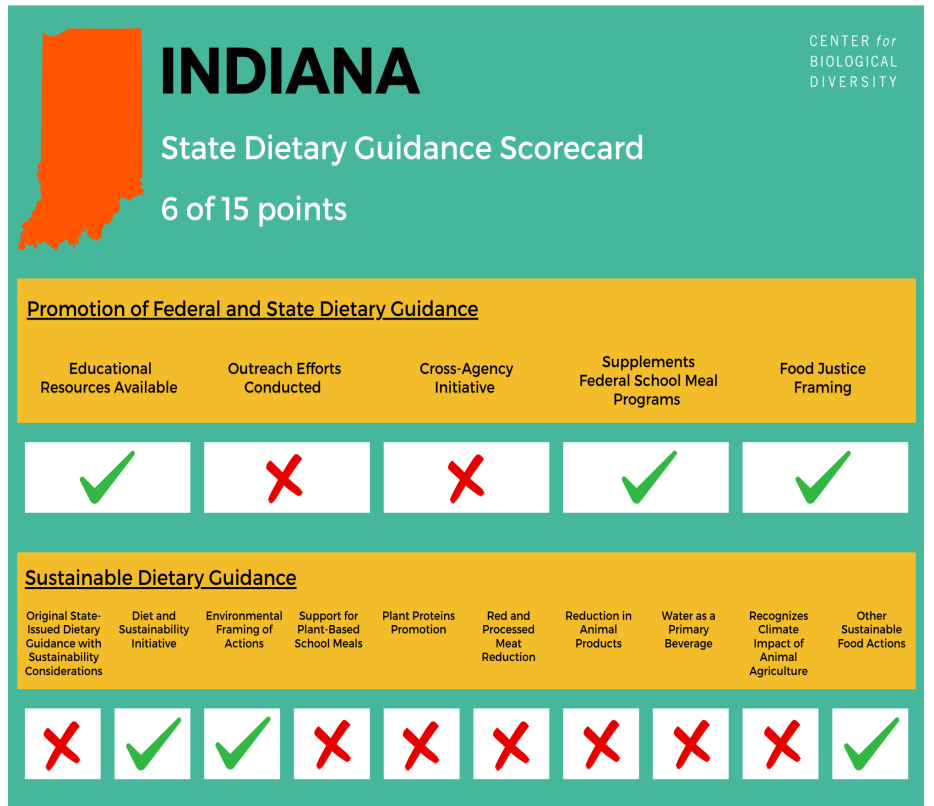
counties and focuses on improving nutrition, cooking skills, and ways to stretch food dollars. Community Wellness Coordinators live in the communities they serve and work to collaborate with organizations on nutrition goals.

Areas for Improvement: Despite a robust infrastructure to improve food access, Indiana lacks statewide dietary guidance or toolkits linking diet to health. Environmental motivations are rarely mentioned in local sourcing materials. Prior to defunding, SNAP-Ed efforts were strong but had the potential to include the environmental and health benefits of plant-based eating, especially as plant proteins tend to be cheaper than animal protein and aid low-income populations.

Recommendations:

1. Include sustainable food choices and information on plant-based or seasonally sourced meals in existing apps and resource finders.
2. Launch sustainable nutrition focused grants within the existing system.
3. Amend materials that address eating on a budget to include the cost-saving and environmental benefits of protein sources such as beans, peas and legumes.

[Indiana Department of Health: Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity](#), [Indiana Department of Education: Special Dietary Needs](#), [Indiana Department of Health: Resources](#), [Purdue University Extension: Nutrition Education Program](#)



Iowa

Score: 6/15

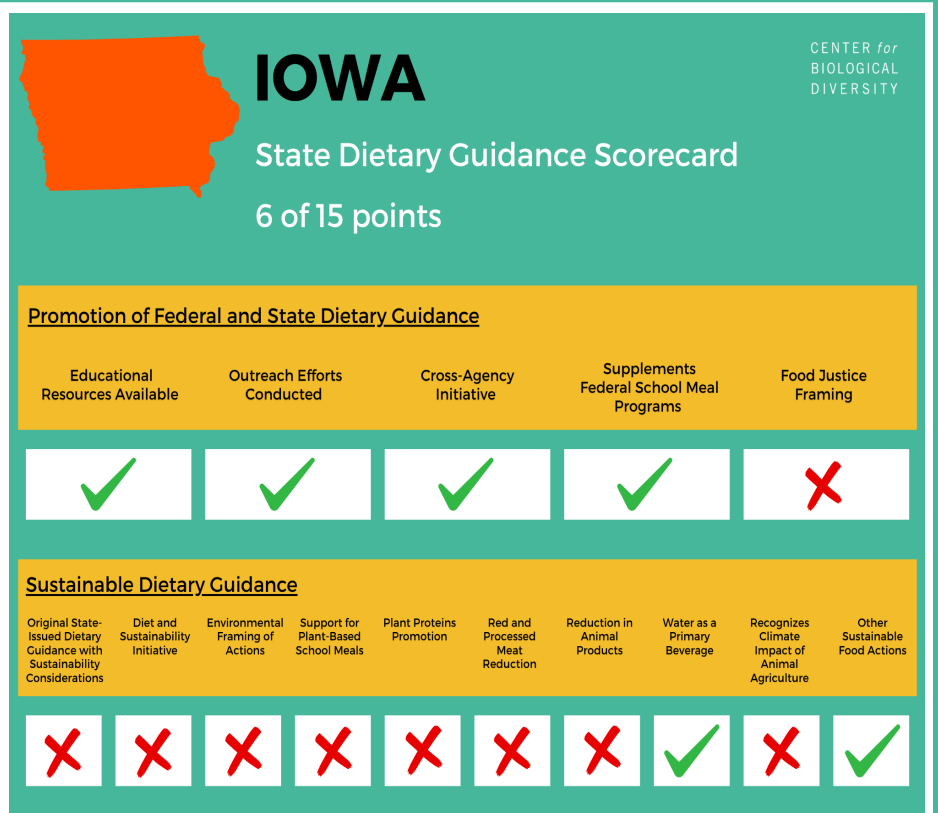
Strengths: Iowa’s nutrition guidance programs show clear implementation of federal funding and adaptation to state needs. The state’s *Healthy Eating and Active Living* (HEAL) guide and strategic plans offer implementation strategies for nutrition and physical activity goals and brochures in multiple languages to educate people about USDA resources. The *Farm to Early Childhood Education* program between the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services and Iowa State University Extension effectively promotes gardens and local food sourcing by training providers, building food literacy and sustainable procurement models. The *5-2-1-0 initiative*, funded by the state, recommends drinking more water and consuming zero sugary beverages, which helps de-prioritize dairy. The state uses webinars and in-person meetings to deliver nutrition guidance. Iowa has tailored USDA programs like *Fresh Conversations* and *Pick a Better Snack* with state-specific adaptations of federally funded tools that deliver content in digital and in-person forms.

Areas for Improvement: Iowa does not appear to incorporate sustainability messaging or environmental impacts into its strong dietary education materials, such as in the HEAL initiative. The state could build on existing infrastructure by layering sustainability ideas like plant-based eating, especially given its strong public engagement platforms. Resources for providers and the public are often combined, so a clearer distinction between target audiences for materials would improve usability.

Recommendations:

1. Elevate HEAL goals with infographics and messaging campaigns. Explicitly include sustainable dietary choices within these goals.
2. Create separate resource guides for providers and the public to better tailor guidance to different audience needs.
3. Utilize webinars and in-person meeting structures to promote sustainability goals, such as the environmental or health benefits of plant-based eating.

Sources: [Iowa State University Extension: Farm to School](#), [Iowa Department of Health and Human Services: Healthy Eating and Active Living](#), [Iowa Department of Health and Human Services: Best Practices in Addressing Food and Nutrition Security](#), [Iowa Department of Health and Human Services: Healthy Eating Active Living \(HEAL\)](#), [Iowa Department of Education: Professional Standards for School Nutrition](#)



Kansas

Score: 6/15

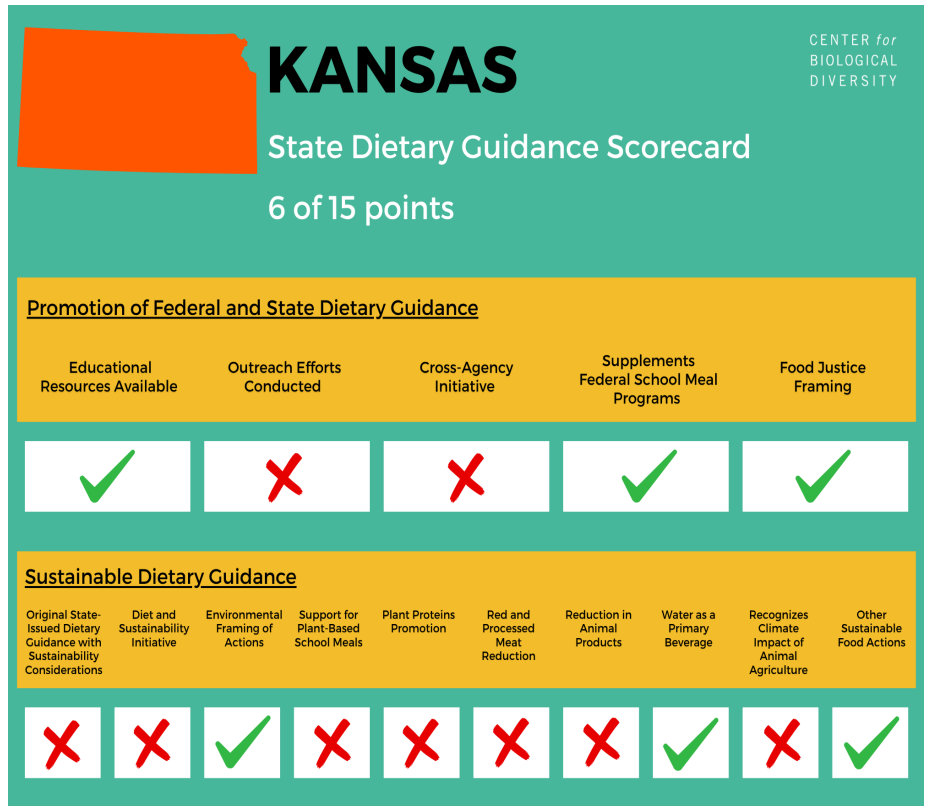
Strengths: State-specific fact sheets like *Strengthening Communities with Local Food* and the *Food Policy Council Priorities Reference Guide* explicitly address sustainability themes like food systems, food waste and local food. K-State Extension, the state’s primary SNAP-Ed facilitator prior to defunding, had fact sheets and *Leaders Guides* that acknowledge the impact of diet on sustainability goals, health, saving money, and the vitality of local communities. These materials encourage actions like minimizing food waste and packaging, choosing nutrient-rich or locally grown foods, and limiting energy and water use. K-State Extension, in coordination with the Kansas Department of Education and the Kansas Rural Center, ran farm-to-school procurement webinars and provided educational resources. The *Kansas Healthy Food Initiative* is a public-private partnership that provides funding through loans and predevelopment technical assistance grants, and technical assistance to improve access to healthy food.

Areas for Improvement: Sustainability and nutrition initiatives appear to be scattered across agencies and various grant-funded projects, creating potential confusion for residents and missed opportunity for a centralized outreach hub. While SNAP-Ed support was strong prior to defunding, there is no parallel resource set or guidance for non-SNAP individuals, limiting the accessibility of nutrition education. The Kansas Division of Public Health and Environment’s (KDPHE) nutrition page lists general strategies to increase fruit and vegetable consumption and boost breastfeeding rates, but they are accompanied by limited educational materials. Resources and initiatives conducted by nongovernmental organizations are not easily searchable through state platforms. While sustainability framing is present within the K-State resources, they tend to emphasize individual actions and fail to address critical topics such as plant-forward diets or sustainable food systems.

Recommendations:

1. Update the *Healthy Sustainable Diets* page on K-State Extension to include recommendations and information on the environmental, economic and health benefits of plant-based eating.
2. Create unified dietary guidance and expand resource lists with existing educational resources and nutrition initiatives on the KDPHE website.
3. Use the Kansas Food Action Network to launch community-based nutrition and sustainability initiatives.

Sources: [Kansas Department of Health and Environment: Governor’s Council on Wellness](#), [Kansas Department of Health and Environment: Nutrition](#), [Kansas Food Action Network](#), [K-State Extension \(SNAP-Ed\): Healthy Sustainable Diets](#), [K-State Extension \(SNAP-Ed\) Nutrition Program](#)



Kentucky

Score: 6/15

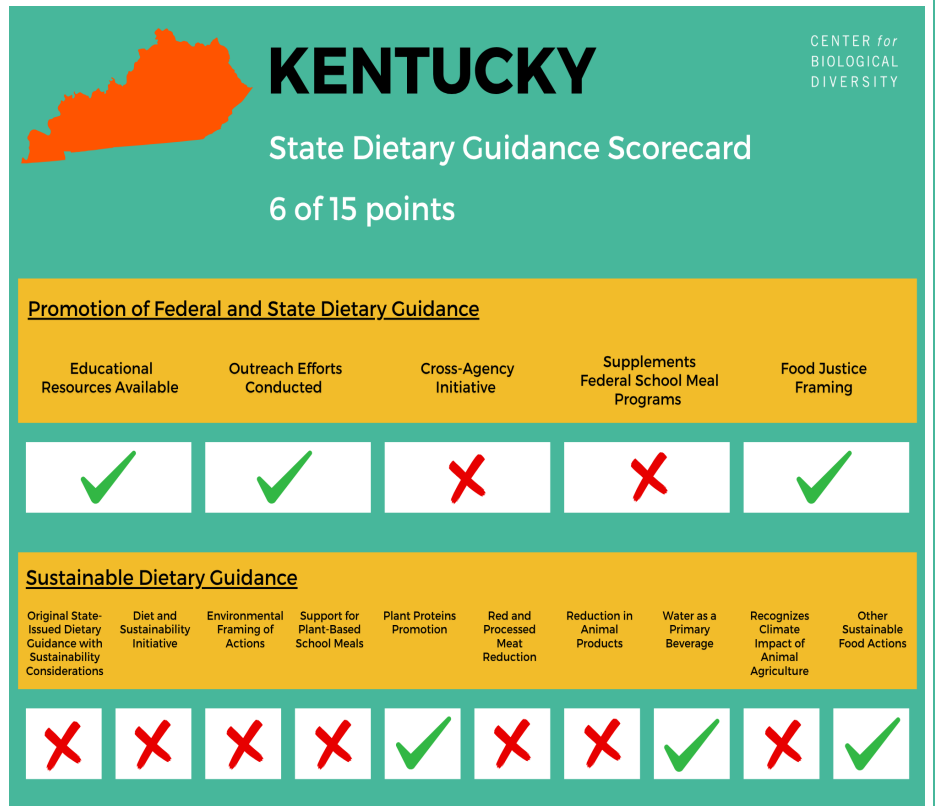
Strengths: Kentucky’s *Community Nutrition and Medical Nutrition Therapy* program provides resources such as free nutrition counseling, health education, and cooking classes in 104 of 120 counties. These services are coordinated with WIC, a federal program, but materials are tailored to the state. Within their *Basic Preventative Health Nutrition Guidelines*, the state lists original feeding guides for children of different ages, though it utilizes USDA resources for adult wellness. The *Eat More Fruits and Veggies* campaign offers Kentuckians information and resources to boost produce intake. The University of Kentucky Extension has taught more than 30,000 nutrition education lessons, reaching nearly 900,000 limited resource individuals. The *Kentucky Farm to School Stars Recognition Program* recognizes three districts, with monetary incentives, who participate in the National School Lunch Program and purchase the highest percentage of locally grown products, showing a state-led commitment to local food sourcing.

Areas for Improvement: There is a lack of original, state-issued guidance connecting diet to sustainability or long-term health outcomes. Adult guidance relies on generic USDA materials and state-created tools focus heavily on child nutrition, creating gaps for residents outside of schools and federal food-assistance programs to access relevant guidance. The state previously published a *Nutrition Services Branch Newsletter*, but the publication has not been updated recently, and no central communication tools are available to share information with the public.

Recommendations:

1. Relaunch the *Nutrition Services Branch Newsletter* with updated data and content; add a sustainability section with environmental and health benefits of plant-based eating, food-waste reduction, and local food systems.
2. Include preventative education and content into MNT materials and sessions, adding the environmental and health benefits of plant-based eating.
3. Expand Kentucky’s original food guides to include comprehensive, state-specific guidance for adults.

Sources: [Kentucky Public Health \(WIC\): Community Nutrition and Medical Nutrition Therapy Guidelines](#), [Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services: Nutrition Services Branch](#), [Kentucky Department of Agriculture and University of Kentucky: Farm to School Hub](#), [Kentucky Department of Agriculture: Farm to School](#), [Kentucky Department of Education: School and Community Nutrition](#)



Louisiana

Score: 6/15

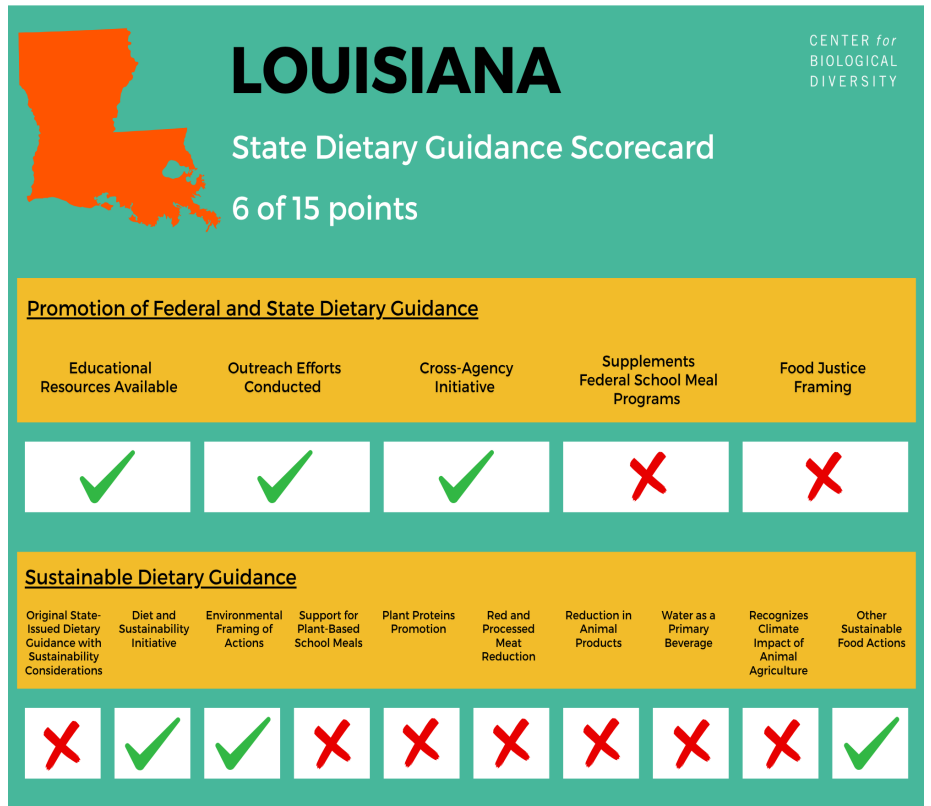
Strengths: The *Living Well in Louisiana* health tipsheet advises limiting high-fat dairy and meat options. The Louisiana Department of Education highlights USDA Child Nutrition Programs and provides state-created guidance and program checklists for their implementation. They highlight state created programs like *Louisiana Fit Kids*, a partnership between the Louisiana Department of Education, Division of Nutrition Support, and the Pennington Biomedical Research Center, which seeks to support efforts of child-nutrition program sponsoring organizations to improve the quality of children’s diets, while maintaining USDA nutrition standards. *Seeds to Success*, funded by the Louisiana Department of Education and the Farm to School program of Louisiana State University, provides educational materials for agriculture and nutrition both at school and at home. *Seeds to Success* began with a USDA Farm to School grant and is an excellent example of the state tailoring and expanding federal initiatives.

Areas for Improvement: While *Louisiana Fit Kids*, *Seeds to Success*, and Louisiana State University SNAP-Ed (prior to defunding) and EFNEP efforts offer valuable educational tools, they are primarily focused on children and low-income populations, and they don’t include explicit sustainability messaging. There is a major gap in guidance for the general adult population, leaving many Louisiana residents without access to state-specific, clear dietary resources or education. The lack of cross-agency coordination and scattering of resources between agency websites increases difficulty for residents attempting to locate resources and education.

Recommendations:

1. Develop guidance for adults that utilizes state-specific data and sustainability goals for the general public.
2. Add sustainability messaging into *Louisiana Fit Kids* and *Seeds to Success* by creating educational materials that address the environmental, economic and health benefits of plant-based eating.
3. Integrate sustainability themes into nutrition education (like EFNEP) efforts.

Sources: [Louisiana Department of Health: Bureau of Nutrition Services](#), [Living Well in Louisiana Tipsheet](#), [Louisiana Department of Education: Nutrition Support](#), [Louisiana State University AgCenter: Nutrition Education Programs](#)



Maine

Score: 8/15

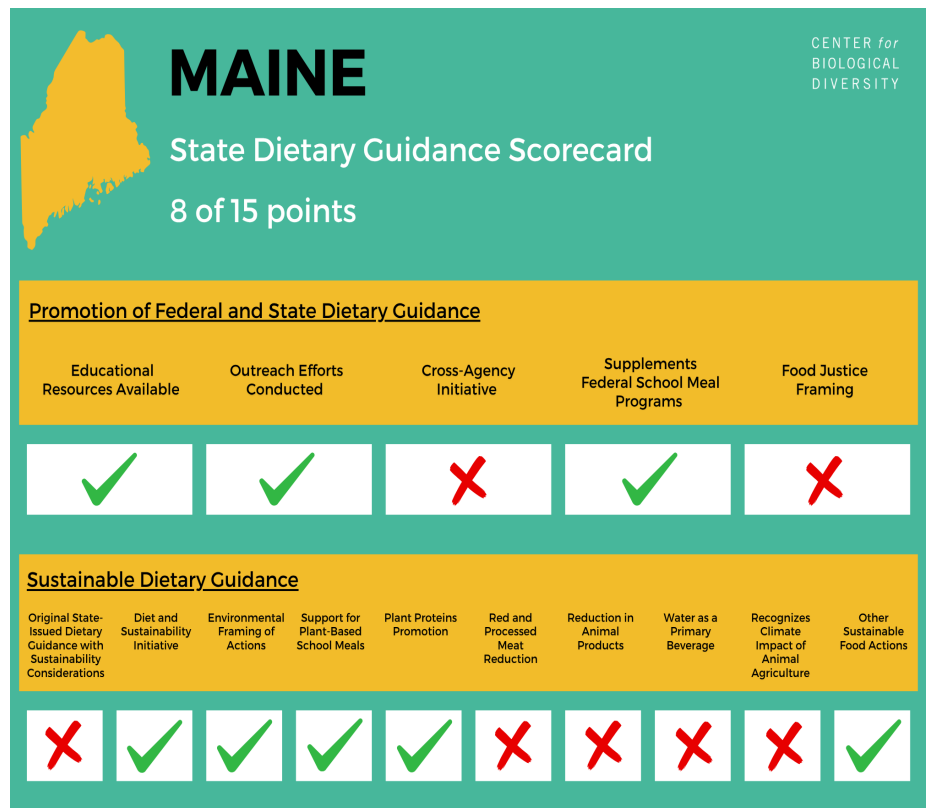
Strengths: The University of Maine Cooperative Extension is responsible for implementing EFNEP, but offers an additional *10 Steps to a Healthier You* online course for noneligible residents who want to learn more about healthy eating. The extension offers some sustainability focused blog articles, such as reducing food waste and reducing your “foodprint,” including eating more plant-based meals to reduce your impact on the environment. The Maine Department of Education supports local procurement for school meals through training and webinar series. Farm to School, Sea to School, and the Maine Food Alliance show coordinated statewide approaches to connect local food systems to education. Prior to SNAP-Ed being defunded, the Maine SNAP-Ed program offered a range of resources including local and online classes, recipe finders, blog posts, and basic nutrition information. SNAP-Ed resources included tip sheets, food-storage infographics, and information on food nutrition labels. Local food efforts are grant funded.

Areas for Improvement: Maine lacks unified guidance for the broader public. The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Food & Nutrition website is sparse beyond links to federal programs like SNAP and WIC. There is no statewide guidance and little content for individuals who are not enrolled in federal assistance programs or in schools, leaving out the broader population from nutrition efforts. Maine’s efforts would benefit from a platform that communicates central dietary guidance using state-specific data and promoting existing educational resources to the public. Despite the state having a rural and aging population, no state resources reviewed connected food access and diet to the built environment, its role in food insecurity, or sustainability.

Recommendations:

1. Develop public-facing dietary recommendations and include resources on DHHS website. If funding remains or becomes available, expand the SNAP-Ed nutrition program’s reach to general non-SNAP populations and make sure all Maine citizens are encouraged to access nutrition education resources.
2. Include sustainable dietary education and plant-forward recipes on Maine nutrition education webpages.
3. Extend funding for local food programs by applying a similar grant funding approach to promote sustainable actions like plant-based eating or dairy alternatives in schools.

Sources: [UMaine Cooperative Extension \(EFNEP\): Reducing Your Foodprint in the New Year](#), [UMaine Cooperative Extension \(EFNEP\): Spoonful Blog](#), [Department of Health and Human Services: Food and Nutrition](#), [Maine SNAP-Ed: Healthy Eating on a Budget](#), [Maine Department of Education: Child Nutrition](#), [Maine Bureau of Human Resources: Delicious Plant-Based Swaps](#)



Maryland

Score: 11/15

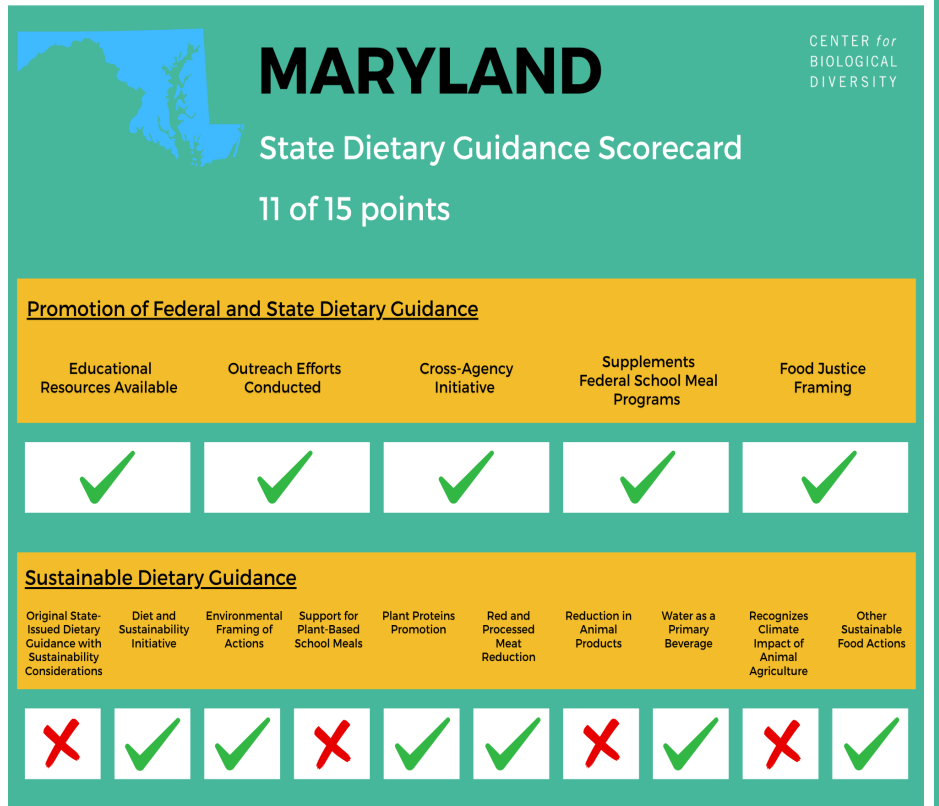
Strengths: Maryland’s 2023 *Roadmap to School Sustainability* and *Maryland Sustainability Initiatives* through the Department of the Environment foster sustainable actions, outline eight strategic recommendations, and aim to integrate local food and sustainable dietary choices into school programming. The *Maryland Green Schools Award Program* recognizes schools that integrate sustainability practices such as composting, gardening, and other student-driven environmental practices. The Maryland Department of Health provides some original recommendations, but no state-created educational resources.

Areas for Improvement: There are few sustainable diet-related resources or roadmaps outside of those targeting school sustainability, and limited recommendations or guidance for the public. There is potential to expand SNAP resources and create outreach programming. While school efforts are strong, they focus heavily on local food and less on sustainability metrics like dairy and meat reduction.

Recommendations:

1. Establish a coalition with recurrent funding to solidify farm-to-school efforts into a sustainable statewide procurement effort.
2. Develop state-specific dietary guidance and healthy cooking resources, expand adult nutrition programming through community partners.
3. Incorporate plant-based and dairy alternatives into educational resources for schools.

Sources: [Maryland State Department of Education: Roadmap to Farm to School Sustainability 2023](#), [Maryland Department of Health: Nutrition](#), [Maryland State Department of Education, Green Schools](#), [US Department of Education GreenRibbonSchools: Sustainability Initiatives Presentation](#)



Massachusetts

Score: 8/15

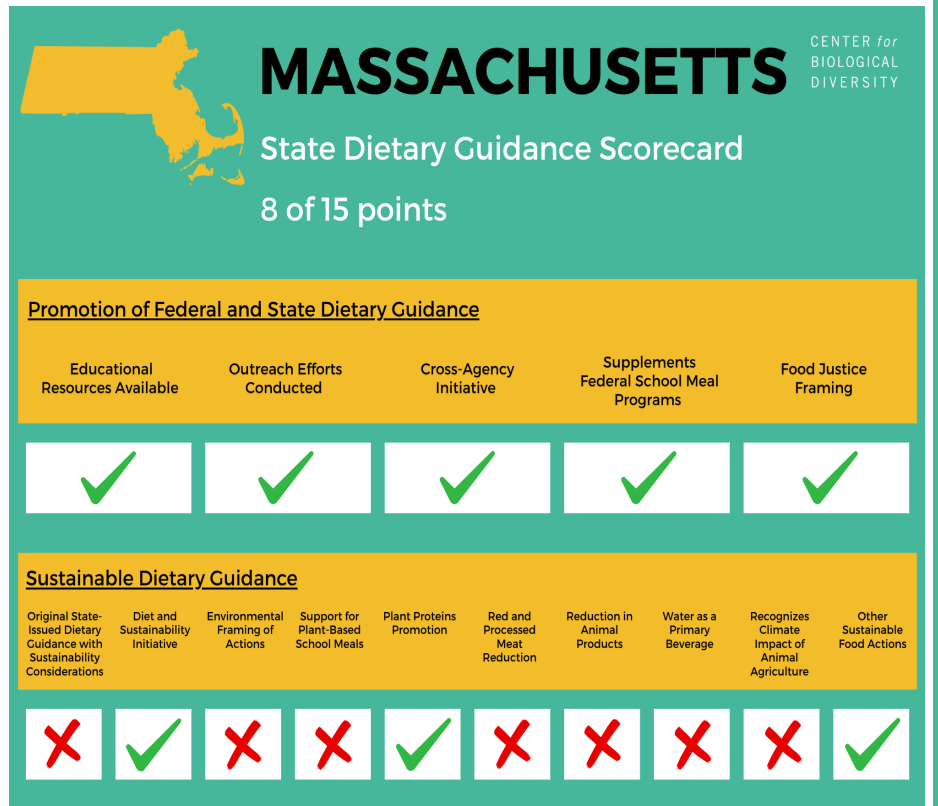
Strengths: Executive Order 509 implements nutrition standards for state agencies; school nutrition standards acknowledge soy milk as an alternative option. Both sets of standards specifically recommend avoiding saturated fat from meat and dairy, and the school nutrition standards generally require foods to not exceed 35% of calories from any kind of fat and ban trans fats altogether. The *Digging Deeper* pilot program provides schools and early childhood centers with funding, professional development, farm-to-school consultations, and food literacy programming valued at about \$12,000. Prior to SNAP-Ed defunding, UMass Extension and SNAP-Ed platforms and community partners provided nutrition education through workshops, classes and online content aimed at improving food literacy. While many resources are federally funded, the state has adapted them to meet community needs.

Areas for Improvement: Despite having valuable programs, efforts are heavily fragmented across organizations, with little evidence of cross-agency collaboration or centralized recommendations. This causes inconsistent and less structured reach beyond institutional settings and limits strategic collaboration. Additionally, the absence of state-specific coordination and resources can reduce the impact and clarity of efforts. Pending legislation like HD1043 could solidify farm-to-school programming and expand curriculum integration, but stronger leadership from agencies is needed to connect the dots.

Recommendations:

1. Establish a nutrition guide for all audiences using existing resources from UMass Extension and state departments. Expand educational resources with recipes, tip sheets, and infographics.
2. Make public-facing roadmaps and sheets that explain legislative changes, resource options, and nutrition improvement strategies to empower institutions and individuals to understand state nutrition goals.
3. Centralize resources under a designated state agency website to ensure that existing nutrition programs and education reach the targeted audiences.

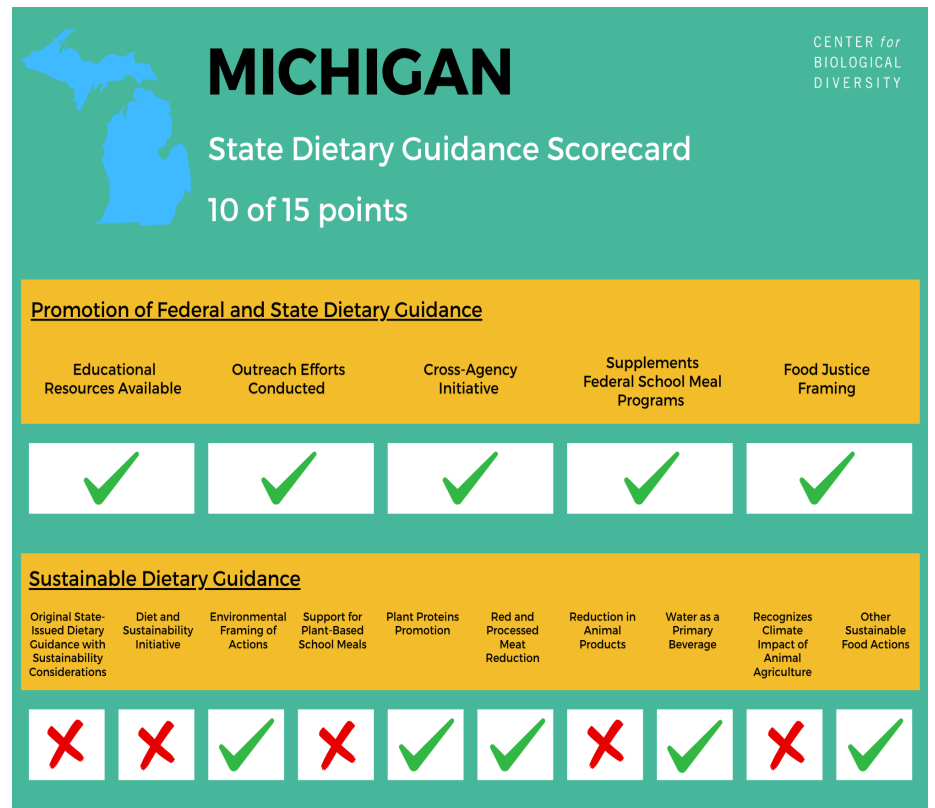
Sources: [Massachusetts Department of Public Health: Nutrition Standards in Public Schools](#), [Massachusetts EO 509: Nutrition Standards for State Agencies](#), [Massachusetts Bureau of Family Health and Nutrition](#), [Massachusetts SNAP-Ed](#), [Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education: Food and Nutrition Programs](#)



Michigan

Score: 10/15

Strengths: Michigan’s state-funded *10 Cents a Meal* program reimburses local food purchases in institutions and schools, with over \$9 million in funding awarded between 2023-2024. Robust farm-to-school efforts, with over 80% participation; farm to ECE efforts include a strategic plan and grant funding. The *Team Nutrition* grant program, administered through the Michigan Department of Education, focuses on nutrition education events and activities for students and families that feature local foods, serving over 10,000 children in each two-year cycle. Michigan State University (MSU) Extension is the primary SNAP-Ed (prior to defunding) and EFNEP implementor, and delivers programs such as *My Way to Wellness*, an online self-paced nutrition program, and *Teen Cuisine*, an educational program for teens. Michigan has unique nutrition tips through the Foster Youth in Transition Portal, a demographic that most states do not explicitly consider.



Areas for Improvement: Industry-provided resources and endorsements raise questions of influence and whether the programs were designed based on the best available science and with the public’s best interest in mind. For example, MSU Extension’s podcast promoted dairy and had a representative from the United Dairy Industries of Michigan (UDIM) to promote youth dairy consumption. The *Michigan Nutrition Standards* toolkit also lists funding from UDIM and has resources targeted at *Fuel Up to Play 60*, an initiative promoting the increased consumption of dairy. Despite strong programming, the lack of a centralized nutrition portal and cross-agency coordination makes it difficult for the public to identify available resources and programs. Initiatives are dispersed between the Department of Education, the Department of Health and Human Services, Michigan State University Extension, and niche websites, like the *Michigan Foster Youth in Transition* page. While strong dietary education campaigns exist and focus on critical groups, like schools and low-income populations, there is a gap in targeted support and education for a significant part of the adult population that does not receive federal food assistance.

Recommendations:

1. Remove industry influence on dietary messaging, especially regarding dairy consumption recommendations and materials.
2. Create a centralized, accessible website to tie together state programs, guidance, and existing educational resources.
3. Integrate sustainability concerns, such as the environmental and health benefits of plant-based eating, into existing education programs like *Teen Cuisine* and *My Way to Wellness*.

Sources: [Michigan Department of Education: Team Nutrition](#), [Michigan Health Endowment Fund: Farm to ECE Network](#), [Michigan Foster Youth in Transition: Nutrition](#), [Michigan Department of Education: Food & Nutrition Programs](#), [Michigan Department of Health and Human Services: Healthy Lifestyles Page](#), [Michigan Department of Community Health: Food Access Factsheet](#)

Minnesota

Score: 11/15

Strengths: Minnesota has taken steps to reduce waste and promote local procurement. The state implements *Offer Versus Serve* in child nutrition programs, allowing students to decline certain food items in a reimbursable meal to reduce food waste. The *Farm to Kids Strategic Plan (2025-2030)* forms an alliance to advance agricultural education and local procurement strategies. Grants for farm to early childhood education efforts are available to assist in delivering local food to younger age groups in an institutional setting. State agencies and nonprofits collaborate on webinars, toolkits, and newsletters, though resources are spread across multiple platforms. The State Health Improvement Plan *Meals in Motion* program delivers food to residents with mobility or transportation barriers, demonstrating a commitment to food access. The Minnesota Department of Health’s (MDH) “Healthy Eating Resources and Funding Opportunities” page demonstrates a strong example of a state centralizing a resource list for ease of citizen access. Similarly, the University of Minnesota Extension page, the state’s SNAP-Ed primary facilitator prior to defunding, provides tipsheets, toolkits and promotion materials for local food in an effectively centralized method. Certain resources, like the beverage choice or protein food groups page, promote sustainability actions such as choosing water as a primary beverage and highlight the affordability and health benefits of beans and peas as a protein source.

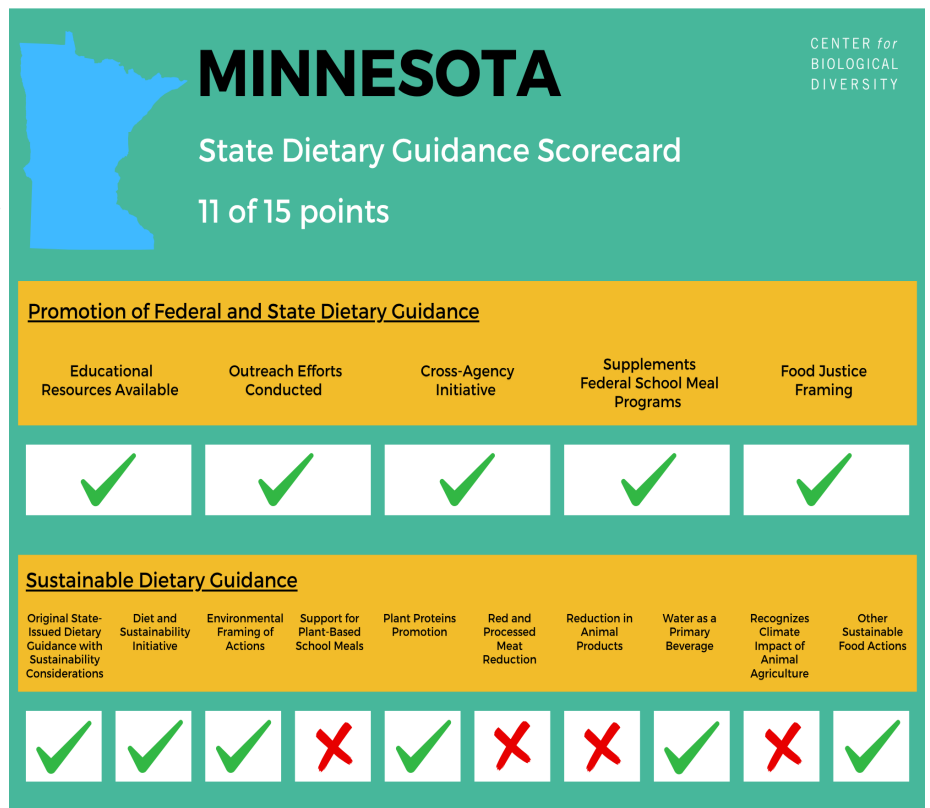
The promotion of bulk milk dispensers in school meal programs is framed to reduce packaging waste, but there is no mention of nondairy milks or the harmful environmental impacts of dairy. The promotion of bulk dispensers also overlooks the inaccessibility to students who cannot digest lactose, especially Indigenous and communities of color. The *MDH Healthy Eating Basics* page only acknowledges why access to healthy food is important and lists a few key takeaways, such as federally recommended produce and sugar consumption habits, but could be tailored further with Minnesota-specific guidance. Without supporting materials or data and recommendations that are specific to Minnesotans, it is harder for individuals to translate the general recommendations into daily practices.

Areas for Improvement: The promotion of bulk milk dispensers in school meal programs is framed to reduce packaging waste, but there is no mention of nondairy milks or the harmful environmental impacts of dairy. The promotion of bulk dispensers also overlooks the inaccessibility to students who cannot digest lactose, especially Indigenous and communities of color. The *MDH Healthy Eating Basics* page only acknowledges why access to healthy food is important and lists a few key takeaways, such as federally recommended produce and sugar consumption habits, but could be tailored further with Minnesota-specific guidance. Without supporting materials or data and recommendations that are specific to Minnesotans, it is harder for individuals to translate the general recommendations into daily practices.

Recommendations:

1. Acknowledge the environmental impacts of bulk dairy consumption and offer ways to increase nondairy milk consumption, such as fortified soy milk, in schools.
2. Integrate sustainability education into farm-to-school efforts by providing increased lesson planning resources and including it in the conditions to receive grant funding.
3. Develop educational resources and state-specific recommendations for adult audiences, including more active outreach campaigns.

Sources: [Minnesota Department of Agriculture: Farm to School and Early Care Overview](#), [Minnesota Department of Health: Healthy Eating Basics](#), [Minnesota Department of Education: Meal Pattern Requirements](#), [University of Minnesota Extension \(SNAP-Ed\): Food, Health and Nutrition](#)



Mississippi

Score: 4/15

Strengths: The Mississippi Department of Health (MDH) offers workplace wellness templates and guidance through the *Healthy Worksite Program*. *Healthy Heroes* is an educational K-5 campaign on healthy eating and exercise led by police officers and firefighters to increase health literacy. The state offers handouts on how to cook healthy at home, make healthy choices eating out, menu planning and recipes, and resource links for professionals and teachers. Notably, the MDH promotes the *Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension* and Mediterranean diets, for health and weight control — a more specific approach to dietary guidance than many states take.

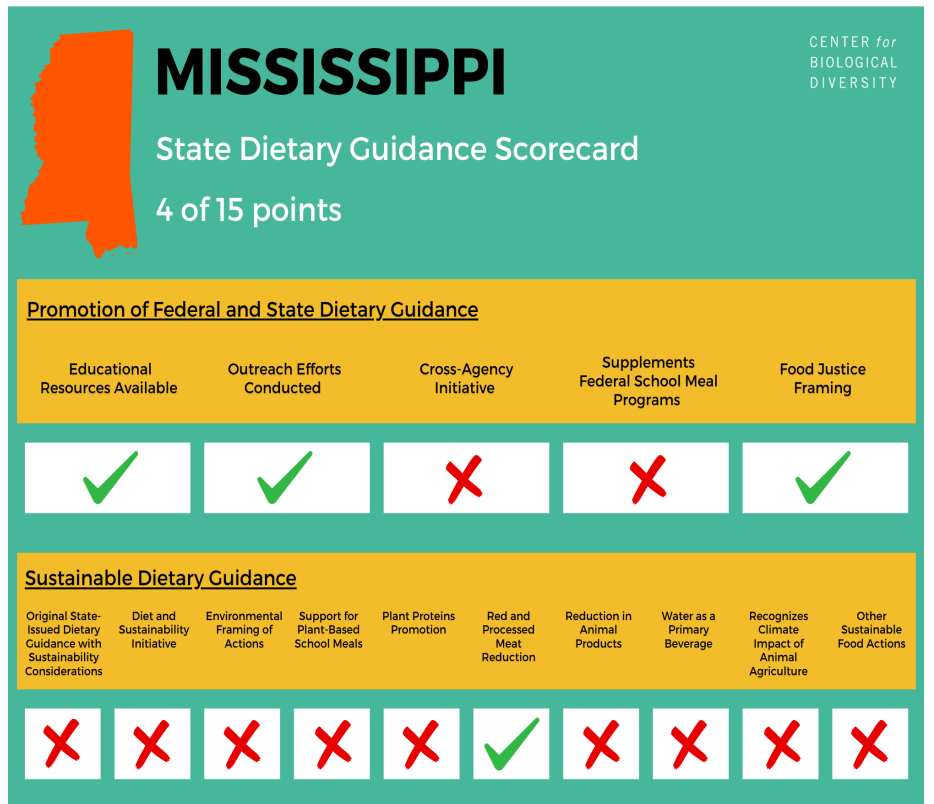
Areas for Improvement: The *Basics of Healthy Eating* subsection on the Mississippi State Department of Health

page recommends choosing fish and poultry over red meat but fails to elevate plant proteins that are affordable and have lower environmental impacts. Protein options like tofu or beans would align with the state’s advice and focus on reaching a healthy weight and lowering risk of heart disease or high blood pressure. Also, guidance around weight loss recommends strategies for tracking food and exercise and reducing calories in a way that overlooks nutrient density or broader mental health trends. This framing contradicts their recommendation to avoid extreme diets that emphasize one type of food and risks promoting unhealthy eating patterns, which can counter long-term health goals or weight loss, instead of focusing on how to increase consumption of healthy foods. Lastly, the apparent omission of state-specific data regarding food deserts and access to healthy foods creates a missed opportunity to connect nutrition recommendations to broader infrastructure or community trends. There is minimal visible collaboration between agencies, limiting the likelihood that residents can find resources to act on given advice.

Recommendations:

1. Expand and tailor programs like *Healthy Heroes* to broader high school and adult populations, using the existing framework as a model.
2. Acknowledge the health and environmental benefits of plant proteins, especially in the context of building and maintaining a healthy diet and weight.
3. Change the *Healthy Worksite Program* to include more state incentives for workplaces to adopt the program.

Sources: [Healthier Mississippi: Healthy Heroes](#), [Mississippi State Department of Health: Healthy Living](#), [Mississippi State Department of Health: Nutrition, Weight Loss and Healthy Eating](#), [Mississippi Department of Education: Child Nutrition](#), [Mississippi State University Extension: Nutrition and Wellness](#)



Missouri

Score: 4/15

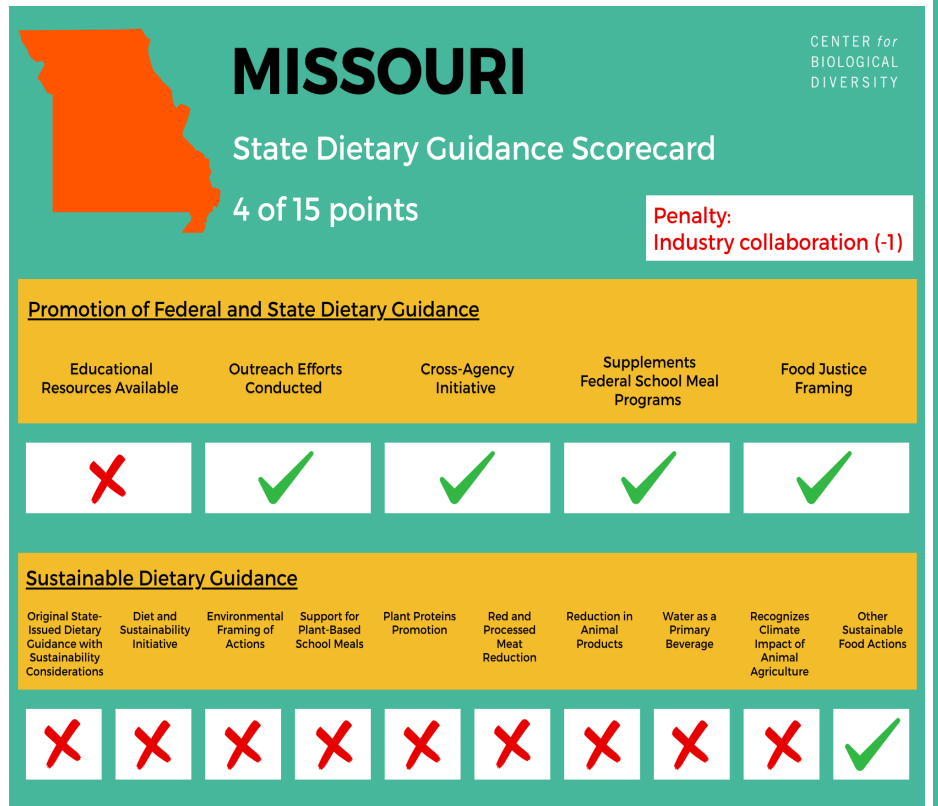
Strengths: Prior to SNAP-Ed defunding, the University of Missouri Extension (SNAP-Ed) page provided a range of education materials, including a variety of healthy eating options, 25 handouts on fruits and vegetables, and recipes that highlight nutritious and affordable foods like lentils. The state participates in broad farm-to-school initiatives, such as the *Patrick Leahy* initiative, which expands access to local foods and agricultural education. The *Team Nutrition* initiative implements nutrition education and promotion programs, such as the cooking program *Healthy Cuisine for Kids*, with collaboration between multiple state agencies. Another *Team Nutrition* program, *Salad Bars to Schools*, connects donors to schools without additional administrative challenges. This initiative promotes the health benefits of produce consumption, encourages school meal program participation, decreases food waste, and can help showcase local, fresh foods. The Department of Health and Senior Services and MU Extension support community gardens and tasting events, showing collaboration between state agencies and federally funded community partners.

Areas for Improvement: Some MU Extension materials, such as an article celebrating National Dairy Month and promoting 3 servings of dairy a day, may inadvertently prioritize industry interests over sustainability goals by encouraging increased dairy consumption to “thank a farmer.” Farm-to-school programming focuses on local sourcing of meats, which may also inadvertently prioritize local industry over sustainability. Missouri lacks general adult nutrition outreach for non-SNAP recipients, creating a gap in support and education for a significant part of the population. The creation of state guidance with original materials could better reflect Missourian communities’ needs, priorities and cultures.

Recommendations:

1. Create a unified, public-facing webpage to consolidate existing nutrition resources and reach a broader audience.
2. Implement a public nutrition campaign to promote healthy and environmentally conscious eating habits among adults.
3. Modernize digital resources with easily readable infographics, tip sheets and messaging to encourage exploration of online resources.

Sources: [University of Missouri Extension \(SNAP-Ed\): Dietary Guidelines](#), [Missouri Department of Elementary & Secondary Education: Patrick Leahy Farm to School](#), [Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services: Missouri Team Nutrition](#)



Montana

Score: 4/15

Strengths: Montana’s 2024-2028 *State Health Improvement Plan* (SHIP) provides resources to allow citizens to understand and implement healthy habits in their lives through an orientation brochure, data resource guide, and local plans dashboard. This is supplemented by resources such as literature reviews for *Healthy People 2030*, the federal initiative tied to SHIP. Montana State University’s Extension program offers nutrition education classes, recipes and resources. It also hosts *Montana Team Nutrition*, a USDA Nutrition Training Grant Program, which focuses on improving school meal quality, farm-to-school implementation, student engagement in meals, and federal education curriculum resources. DPHHS’s *Nutrition & Physical Activity (NAPA) Program* is dedicated to active living and healthy eating. Its *Joy in*

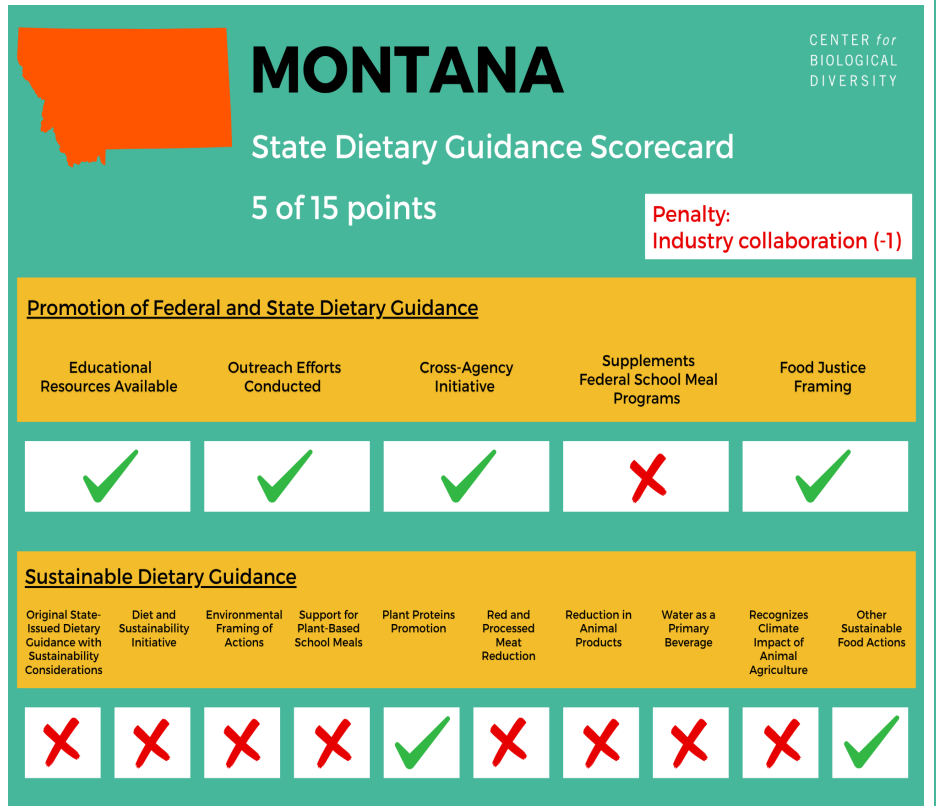
Healthy Living Story Map is an interactive page correlating health statistics, fresh food, active living, community health programs, tribal success stories, and family living. The Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) *Community Programs Map* offers five types of community health-education programs. These cross-agency initiatives and locally tailored implementation of federal programming allow for increased program impact.

Areas for Improvement: Although Montana acknowledges local foods, cultural food practices, and the built environment as part of healthy living and ways to promote nutrition education, they are not framed within a sustainability strategy context. Connecting dietary patterns to environmental outcomes could reinforce the link between public health and the environment and could appeal to communities where land stewardship is a key value. The state’s *Farm to School* program has a *Montana Beef to School Project*, a partnership between beef producers and schools that encourages local beef in every Montana school.

Recommendations:

1. Link Montana *Team Nutrition* recipe ideas and initiatives within *Healthy People 2030* resources to broaden the reach and accessibility of existing initiatives.
2. Incorporate sustainability themes and local resources into the *Joy of Healthy Living Story Map* to highlight the environmental benefits of healthy eating.
3. End industry collaboration and initiatives that promote unsustainable foods such as *Montana Beef to School*.

Sources: [Montana Nutrition and Physical Activity Program](#), [Montana Department of Public Health & Human Services: Joy in Healthy Living](#), [Montana Department of Public Health & Human Services: Community Health Programs Map](#), [Montana State University: Team Nutrition and Nutrition Education](#), [Montana Beef to School](#)



Nebraska

Score: 6/15

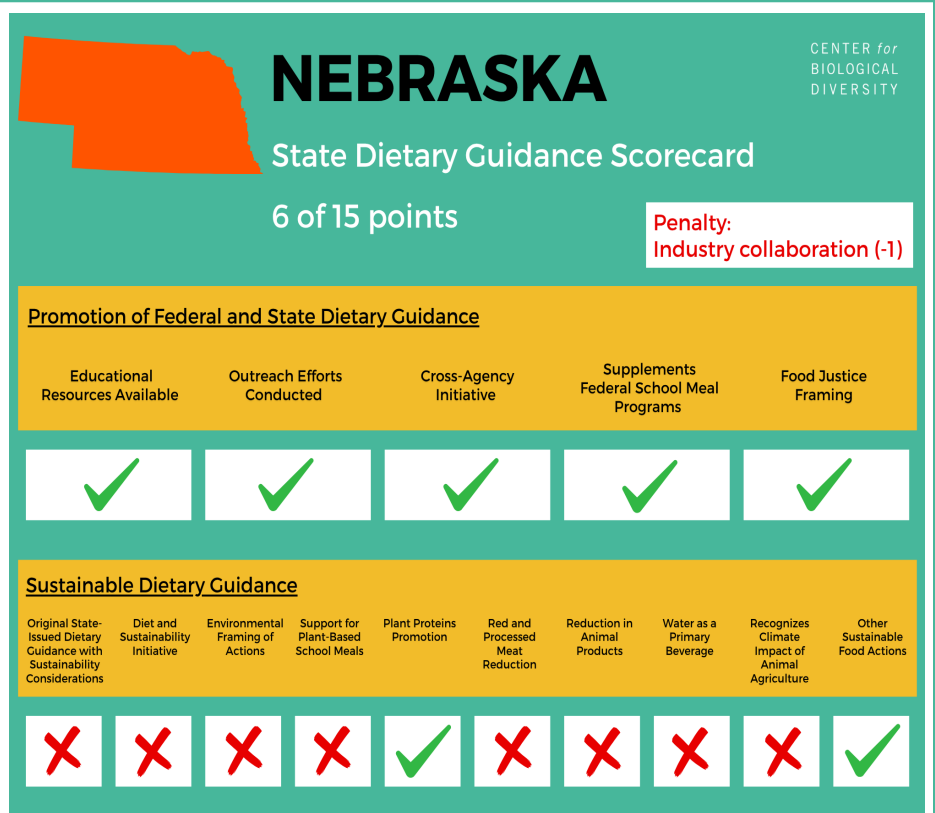
Strengths: The Nebraska Department of Education *Farm to School* program’s *Beanstock Initiative* introduces students to local plant proteins, especially beans, through online lessons, presentations, quizzes and activities that highlight history, flavors, and impact. This is an excellent example of a state boosting an environmentally friendly dietary choice while supporting their local economy and producers. The *Local and Indigenous Foods Training* (LIFT) program educates staff, students and farmers on the benefits of using local and culturally significant foods in school meal programs and engages students in creating recipes for use in the LIFT program. The *Farm to School* network provides training, assistance for supplying, and sustainability-focused coordination. The University of Nebraska Extension, which implements the state’s SNAP-Ed (prior to defunding) and EFNEP programs, has unique resources like a *Healthy Food Access Bingo* game of fun and creative ways to increase access to healthy foods and an interactive website called *The Dish*, a lesson platform to plan meals, save money, and eat healthier.

Areas for Improvement: While initiatives promoting plant-based and Indigenous food education in schools are strong, they are undermined by rhetoric from state leadership, like a statement on the Nebraska Attorney General website condemning the Biden-Harris administration for its “radical recommendation” to get protein from beans instead of beef. It is important to ensure that science-based, coordinated recommendations remain centered in state dietary materials and are consistent across agencies to provide clear, apolitical guidance for public health. There does not appear to be any explicit sustainability messaging in nutrition-related materials.

Recommendations:

1. Expand *Beanstock* and *LIFT* educational resources to elevate similar dietary choices in adult populations.
2. Develop state-level guidance that promotes local and indigenous foods.
3. Ensure that programs are supported by all branches of government and coordination between state actors does not create confusing messaging.

Sources: [Nebraska Department of Education: Team Nutrition Curriculum](#), [Nebraska DHHS Medical Nutrition Therapy Statutes](#), [Nebraska Department of Education: Special Diets for Schools](#), [Nebraska Farm to School: Beanstock](#), [Local and Indigenous Foods Training](#), [Nebraska Farm to School Network](#), [Nebraska Attorney General Criticism of Dietary Guidelines](#), [University of Nebraska Extension: SNAP-Ed Program Update](#), [Nebraska Food Security Mapping](#)



Nevada

Score: 5/15

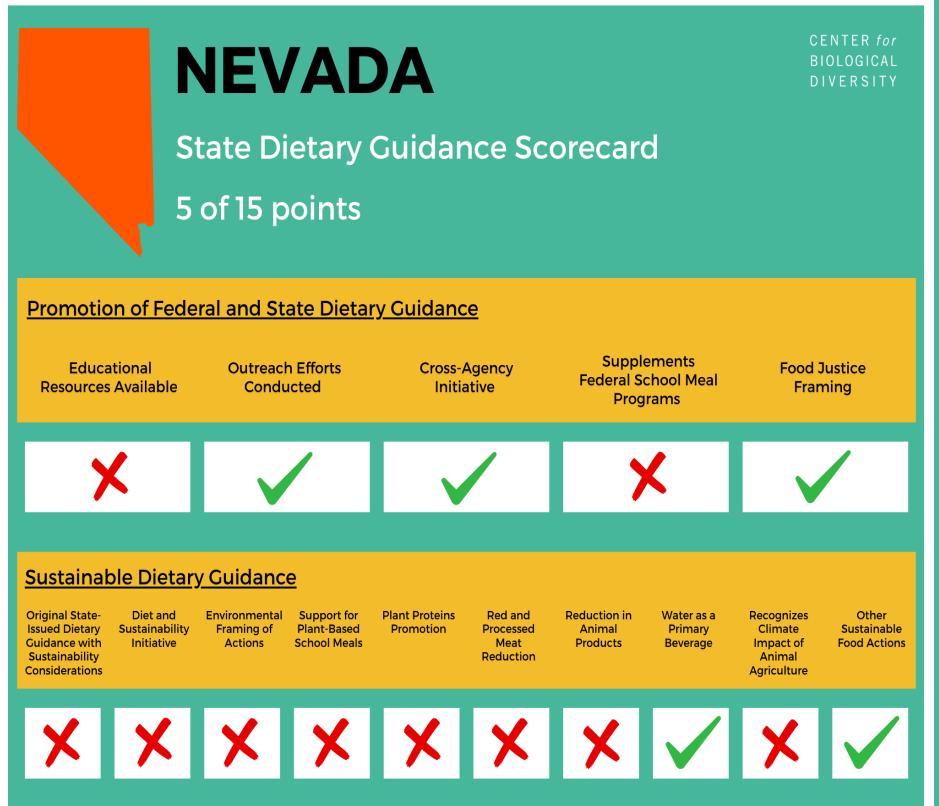
Strengths: The *Home Feeds Nevada Agriculture Food Purchase* program promotes local food efforts by allowing the Nevada Department of Agriculture (NDA) to purchase nutritious foods from Nevada growers and processors and distribute them through designated food banks. Nevada’s SNAP-Ed website briefly acknowledges dried beans as an affordable and non-perishable protein source. Prior to defunding the University of Nevada Reno Extension, the state’s SNAP-Ed and EFNEP facilitator, incentivized participation in their nutrition course with items such as a cutting board, measuring spoons, food thermometer, and cookbook, a unique way to provide tools for healthy cooking and eating while promoting participation in education efforts. The Extension explored food systems and food insecurity as related to health and nutrition outcomes through educational resources.

Areas for Improvement: While SNAP-Ed (prior to defunding) and federal nutrition program materials are strong, there is no broader dietary guidance and limited educational materials for a broader audience. This creates a gap in targeted support and education for a significant part of the adult population that does not receive federal food assistance. The Nevada Dairy Commission, part of the NDA’s Division of Food and Nutrition, actively assures the availability of dairy products, but the agency doesn’t provide messaging around milk alternatives in educational materials or guidance. Endorsement of dairy in food and nutrition efforts neglects that it is one of the most environmentally harmful foods and not accessible to many parts of the population who cannot digest it, particularly among Indigenous and communities of color. Though farm-to-school and local food efforts are present, they could be tied to nutrition education or sustainability framing to increase impact.

Recommendations:

1. Integrate efforts to educate the public on nondairy options when promoting the accessibility of dairy options.
2. Create a centralized nutrition portal by utilizing existing resources to reach a broader audience.
3. Pair existing programs, such as *Home Feeds Nevada*, with education and outreach on the health and sustainability benefits of local food consumption, including plant-based foods.

Sources: [Southern Nevada Health District: Dietary Guidelines](#), [Nevada Department of Agriculture: Food & Nutrition](#), [University of Nevada, Reno Extension \(EFNEP\): Healthy Eating](#), [Nevada Department of Agriculture: Home Feeds Nevada Agriculture Food Purchase Program](#), [Nevada Department of Agriculture: Nevada State Dairy Commission](#)



New Hampshire

Score: 5/15

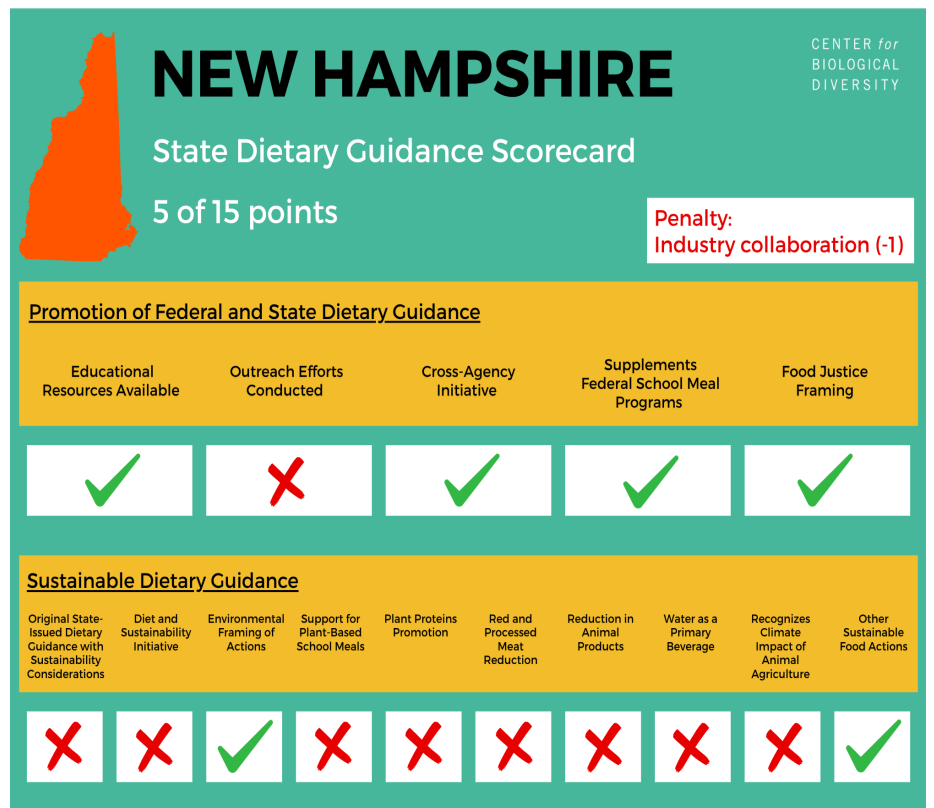
Strengths: The *New Hampshire Food and Agriculture Strategic Plan*, developed by over 90 food systems organizations including the New Hampshire Food Alliance, University of New Hampshire (UNH) Extension, and the New Hampshire Department of Agriculture, proposes 140 recommendations to address agriculture and food-related topics. It addresses key sustainability topics such as farmland conservation, nutrition access, wasted food, and food system literacy. UNH Extension, the SNAP-Ed (prior to defunding) and EFNEP administrator, offers no-cost educational programs to provide limited resource families with the skills they need for better health. The *Nutrition Pantry Program* works with local food pantry staff to develop a plan to improve operations and increase the availability of healthy food options. The *Granite State Market Match* and *Double Up Food Bucks NH* double the value of SNAP dollars spent on fruits and vegetables at participating farmers markets, farm stands, *Community Supported Agriculture* programs, and retail locations, increasing produce consumption and support for local producers. The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services provides ways to decrease food waste such as donation locations, composting, and a statewide ban prohibiting landfilling or incinerating one or more tons of food waste per week if there is an alternative management facility that can accept the food.

Areas for Improvement: Though the *Food and Agriculture Strategic Plan* is comprehensive and a strong cross-sector effort, it focuses heavily on ways to support local meat and dairy industries and recommends increasing processing and slaughter capabilities. The plan's *Dairy Brief*, which discusses how to boost the New Hampshire dairy industry and recommends developing a Dairy Association, was written by a group with ties to the dairy industry. Not addressing the harmful environmental impacts of meat and dairy, or ways to work within those industries to reduce those harms, is a missed opportunity to build a more sustainable food system and portray how dietary choices have environmental and health implications. The state has a strong focus on programming and policy but appears to lack centralized and public dietary guidance, creating a gap in targeted support and education for a significant part of the adult population that does not receive federal food assistance. Expanding online resources could address this gap.

Recommendations:

1. Consider the environmental impacts of meat and dairy within the *New Hampshire Food and Agriculture Strategic Plan* and add a section on supporting access and growing of plant-based alternatives.
2. Incorporate sustainability themes, especially plant-based eating, into existing UNH Extension educational initiatives and the *Nutrition Pantry Program*.
3. Consolidate and build upon existing online resources to make nutrition education more accessible for all residents.

Sources: [New Hampshire Department of Education - Bureau of Wellness and Nutrition](#), [NH Food Alliance: NH Food and Agriculture Strategic Plan](#), [Granite State Market Match and Double Up Food Bucks NH](#), [UNH: Nutrition Connections](#), [NH Department of Environmental Services: Food](#), [NH Food Alliance: Dairy Brief](#)



New Jersey

Score: 10/15

Strengths: The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) has a *Food Waste Reduction Plan* with the stated goal of reducing waste by 50% by 2030. The *Food Waste Reduction Toolkit* offers resources like fact sheets on food donation and tips for individuals to reduce their waste. It is supported by cross-sector and agency campaigns such as *More Meals, Less Waste*, which help residents and businesses prevent food waste, and *Sustainable Jersey*, which awards certifications to municipalities and schools that have met standards for sustainability best management practices. The Office of the Food Security Advocate emphasizes six dimensions of food security, including a sustainability dimension. The office has a thorough resource library with fact sheets, webinars, research, and tools

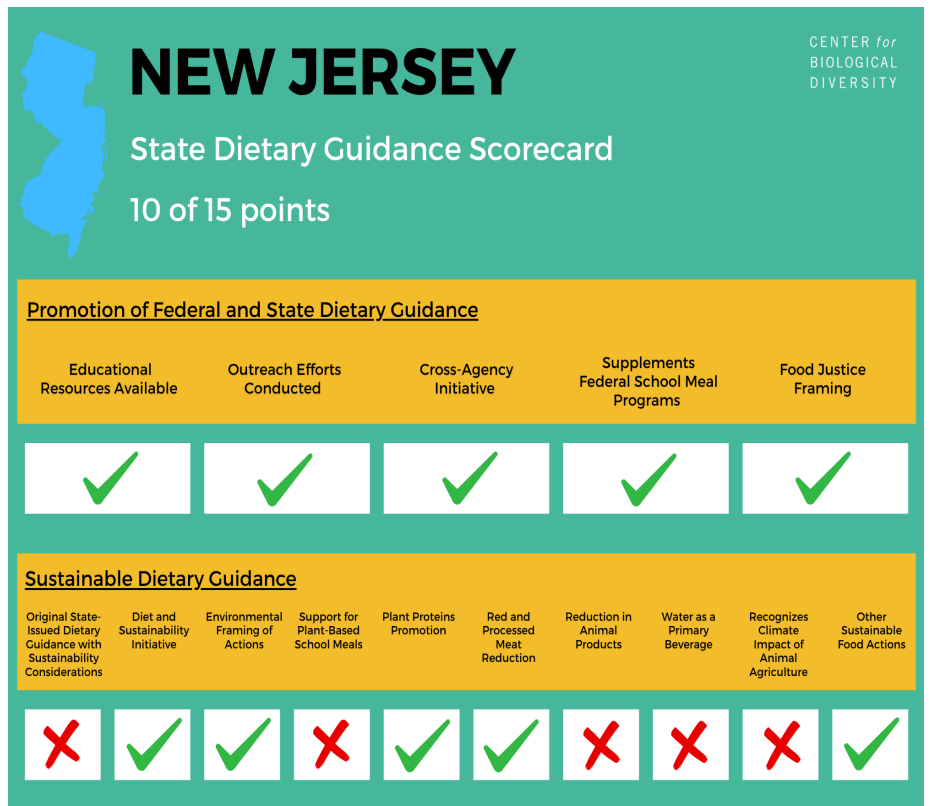
searchable by theme and dimension, making it easy for residents to find relevant information in their desired format. The state addresses how health outcomes and diet are correlated with food access, and that part of food security is the knowledge to make healthy choices. The *Healthy Corner Store* initiative, sponsored by the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH), works to improve access to healthy options in underserved communities.

Areas for Improvement: The NJDOH has substantial resources and support for communities and institutions, such as the *Working Well Toolkit* to promote healthy workplace wellness, however their *Nutrition and Fitness* page misses the opportunity to offer similar resource guides to individuals seeking to make healthy and sustainable dietary choices. Similarly, the *Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity* page has information about systemic risks but could provide more guidance and education for individuals to reduce their risks of obesity and diet-related illnesses. Without direct nutrition guidance, the state underutilizes the potential for impacts outside of institutional settings.

Recommendations:

1. Adapt the *Food Security Advocate* portal infrastructure to a similar resource library with nutrition guidance, healthy and/or plant-forward recipes, sustainability tip sheets, and existing resources, such as food-waste reduction tools.
2. Add scoring sections to the *Sustainable Jersey* standards that award points to municipalities and schools who provide plant-based and nondairy options.
3. Pair existing data reports, like *Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity* page, with information on strategic, data-driven ways for individuals to create change.

Sources: [New Jersey Department of Health: Nutrition and Fitness](#), [New Jersey Department of Agriculture: School Nutrition Programs](#), [New Jersey State Health Assessment Data: Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity](#), [New Jersey Office of the Food Security Advocate Resource Library](#), [New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection: Food Waste Toolkit](#), [New Jersey Economic Development Authority: Food Security](#), [New Jersey SNAP-Ed](#)



New Mexico

Score: 8/15

Strengths: The New Mexico Food and Agriculture Policy Council’s *Food Charter*, developed in collaboration between government and interest groups, outlines desired outcomes and policy strategies. These priorities explicitly include biodiversity conservation, sustainable agricultural, and climate resilience as desired outcomes under its environment, conservation and climate focus area, while also emphasizing nutrition and food security through education and access. The statewide *Food, Farm, and Hunger Initiative* invested \$24 million in FY23 to provide immediate hunger relief and build infrastructure to improve food access, including senior food boxes for adults with disabilities, produce vouchers, food security initiatives, funding for food bank assistance, and summer and afterschool nutrition support. The state also invested in local producers to sustainably increase and build supply chain capacity through initiatives such as the *Healthy Food Finance Fund*. The New Mexico Family Nutrition Bureau, which administers CAFCP and SFSP, provides a public materials library with regulations and forms, grant opportunities, nutrition trainings, and meal patterns. They also publish original WIC materials with more localized messaging than federal resources alone. Further resources through the New Mexico State University Extension, the EFNEP and SNAP-Ed (prior to defunding) facilitator, include the *Ideas for Cooking and Nutrition* courses in both English and Spanish. They offer an online, self-paced course called *Seed to Super* to support adult nutrition education and publish factsheets that encourage a variety of dietary choices and the inclusion of plant-based foods.

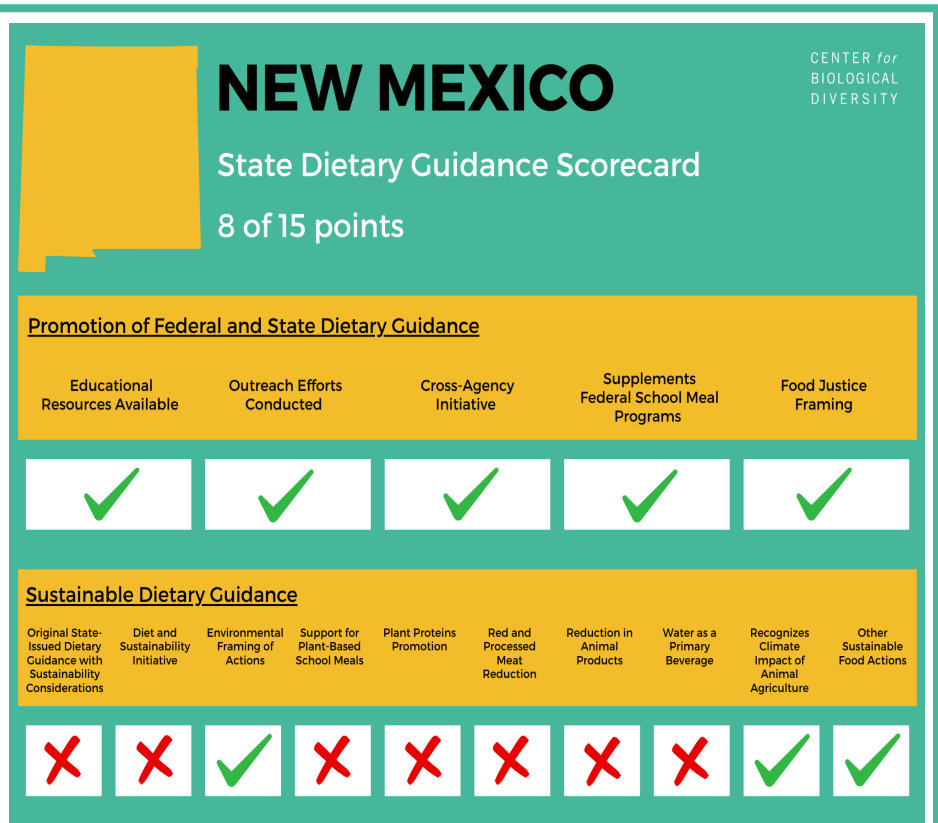
The state also invested in local producers to sustainably increase and build supply chain capacity through initiatives such as the *Healthy Food Finance Fund*. The New Mexico Family Nutrition Bureau, which administers CAFCP and SFSP, provides a public materials library with regulations and forms, grant opportunities, nutrition trainings, and meal patterns. They also publish original WIC materials with more localized messaging than federal resources alone. Further resources through the New Mexico State University Extension, the EFNEP and SNAP-Ed (prior to defunding) facilitator, include the *Ideas for Cooking and Nutrition* courses in both English and Spanish. They offer an online, self-paced course called *Seed to Super* to support adult nutrition education and publish factsheets that encourage a variety of dietary choices and the inclusion of plant-based foods.

Areas for Improvement: Despite strong infrastructure for addressing food insecurity and support for producers, there is room to increase centralized dietary guidance. While many programs focus on access, there is a gap in targeted support and education for a significant part of the adult population that does not receive federal food assistance. Expanding educational outreach on how to eat healthy on a budget using local and plant-based options could deepen the reach of current investments and connect diet choices with health and environmental impacts.

Recommendations:

1. Highlight plant-based options in classes and factsheets to promote the economic, environmental and health benefits of plant proteins.
2. Develop statewide nutrition resources that acknowledge challenges in food insecurity while providing realistic ways to follow dietary guidance.
3. Increase nutrition education more explicitly in existing food security support programs to help recipients apply healthy eating strategies with available resources.

Sources: [New Mexico’s Health Indicator Data and Statistics: Nutrition](#), [New Mexico State University: Nutrition Facts for Better Meals](#), [School Nutrition Association of New Mexico](#), [New Mexico WIC Nutrition Resources](#), [New Mexico Early Childhood Care and Education Department: Family Nutrition](#), [New Mexico State University \(SNAP-Ed, EFNEP\)](#): ICAN, [New Mexico Governor Food, Farm, and Hunger Initiative](#), [New Mexico Food & Agriculture Policy Council: Food Charter 2023 to 2027](#), [New Mexico Economic Development Department: Healthy Food Financing Fund](#), [New Mexico WIC](#):



New York

Score: 9/15

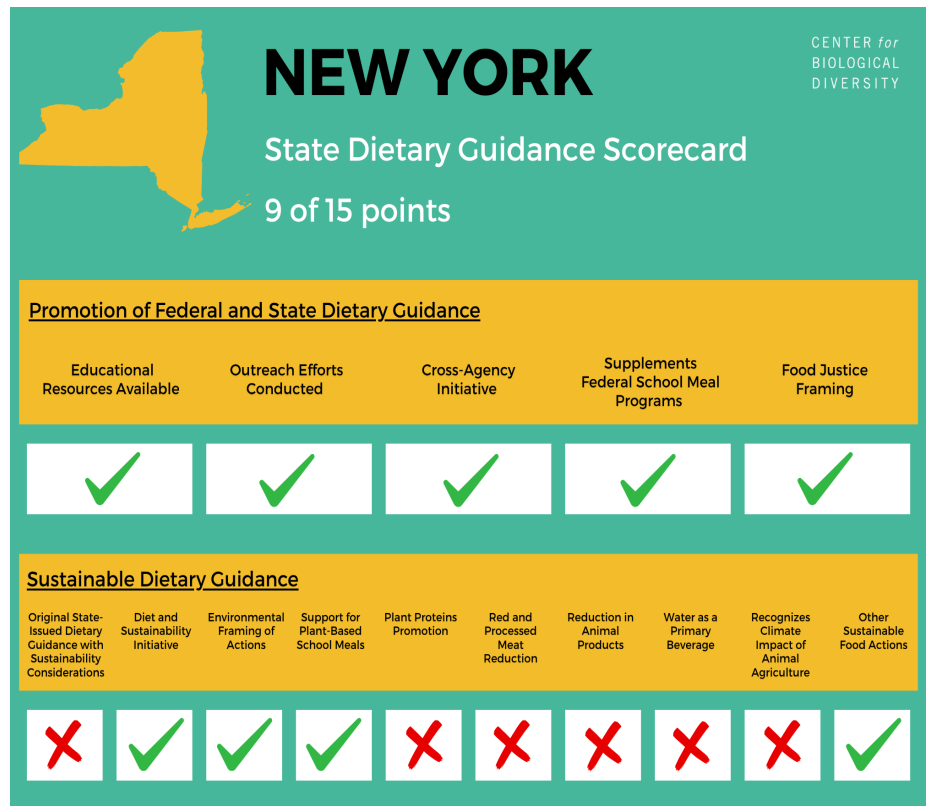
Strengths: The New York State Department of Health administers federal nutrition programs and state-led initiatives, such as the *Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program*, which uses state and federal funds to support emergency food relief organizations. The *Growing Up Healthy Hotline* offers 24/7 support to connect individuals to resources and nutrition programs. The *Just Say Yes to Fruits and Vegetables Program* (JSY) reaches over 40,000 people annually, delivering nutrition education through regional food banks. The *JSY Stellar Farmers Market Program* operates at farmers markets to provide free nutrition and cooking workshops to SNAP eligible residents. The *Eating Healthy on a Budget Training Space* offers ways to purchase efficiently, plan, and prepare meals using tipsheets and resources, including mention of plant proteins and milks. The \$425 million Environmental Protection Fund invests over \$90 million in agricultural stewardship programs to implement climate smart practices on farms and protect farmland.

Areas for Improvement: Local procurement goals under *Good Food NY* and the *30% NYS Farm to School Initiative* are strong, but participation remains low, with less than 12% of school food authorities participating. Additional resources or a procurement seminar series could help meet these goals. There's still room for New York to create and offer its own state-tailored dietary guidance that includes sustainability considerations, promotes plant proteins, and recommends reducing red and processed meat.

Recommendations:

1. Expand the *Eating Healthy on a Budget* course to include information or tipsheets on the economic, environmental and health benefits of plant-based protein sources.
2. Offer technical assistance to implement existing local food initiatives.
3. Acknowledge the environmental harms of meat and dairy in nutrition related materials.

Sources: [New York Department of Health: Nutrition](#), [NY Department of Health: Division of Nutrition Guidance Documents](#), [NY State Education Department: Child Nutrition](#), [NY Health Foundation: Physical Activity and the Built Environment](#), [NY DoH: Growing Up Healthy Hotline](#), [NY Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance: Eating Healthy on a Budget](#), [NY State Department of Education: Child Nutrition Programs](#), [New York State Council on Hunger and Food Policy 2023 Report](#), [New York Department of Agriculture and Markets: Farm to School](#), [New York State Fairy Modernization Grant](#)



North Carolina

Score: 9/15

Strengths: The North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality’s *Use the Food NC* campaign directly correlates wasted food with financial, social and environmental impacts such as methane production and food insecurity, providing educational resources on ways to reduce waste. The Office of State Human Resources promotes eating lean sources of protein, including tofu and beans, with concise recommendations on how to eat healthy, mostly unprocessed foods. They also run wellness webinars on different healthy eating tips and focus areas, accompanied by recipes, many of which are plant-forward. The State’s CAFCP materials, through the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, offer a wide variety of original resources including recipe books, nutrient calculators for dairy alternatives,

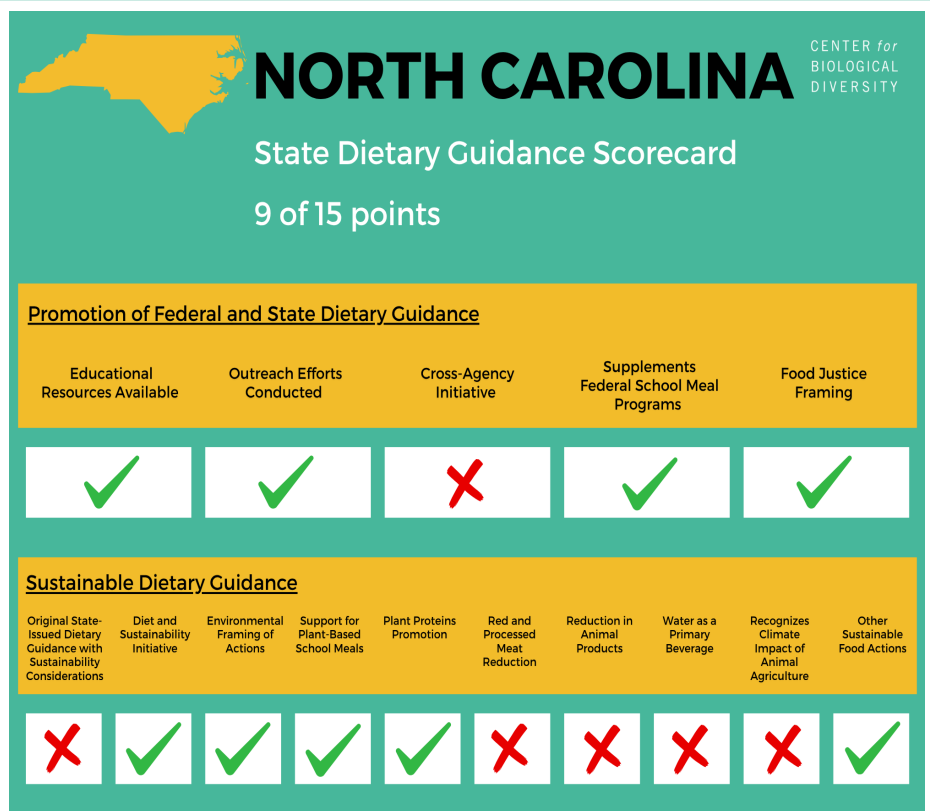
Excel workbook produce guides, and disaster relief sample menus. Combined with federal resources sorted by category, these tools demonstrate a strong blend of existing federal information with state-specific guidance for implementing the program. The state also runs a centralized webpage to link all SNAP-Ed partners (prior to defunding) and details the demographics and strategies used, helping users navigate existing opportunities and information.

Areas for Improvement: Many strong programs, such as the state employee wellness webinars and SNAP-Ed partnerships (prior to SNAP-Ed defunding), are designed for specific, niche audiences and not actively promoted for the public. This creates a gap in targeted support and education for a significant part of the adult population outside of these demographics, which could be strengthened by broadening existing initiatives to increase reach and impact. Though acknowledging the impacts of food waste is important, outside the Department of Environmental Quality there appears to be limited acknowledgment of the environmental and health impacts of red or processed meat and dairy.

Recommendations:

1. Host an Office of State Human Resources webinar on plant-based protein options, promoting the environmental and health benefits.
2. Promote existing SNAP-Ed and Office of State Human Resources online education through social media or public relations campaigns to expand the reach to residents seeking nutrition guidance.
3. Adapt CAFCP recipe books and produce guides to broader public use as everyday meal planning aids.

Sources: [North Carolina Office of State Human Resources Nutrition Page](#), [NC State Extension: Nutrition & Health](#), [NC Health Info](#), [NC Department of Health and Human Services: Meal Patterns and Nutrition Resources](#), [North Carolina Nutrition Education Partners](#), [North Carolina Department of Public Instruction: Nutrition Education](#), [North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality: Use the Food NC](#), [NC Office of State Human Resources: Wellness Webinars](#), [NC Department of Public Instruction: School Nutrition](#)



North Dakota

Score: 8/15

Strengths: North Dakota has several efforts targeted at increasing access to local foods and personal connections to the food system. The North Dakota Department of Commerce’s *Rural Grocery Store Sustainability Grant Program* funds grocery stores, co-ops, and distributors to connect underserved people to local, healthy foods. The *Hunger Free North Dakota Garden* project distributes fresh produce to charitable entities and encourages reduced food waste. The Department of Agriculture maintains an interactive local foods directory. The NDDA also has resources and grants for *Agriculture in the Classroom*, with about \$100,000 every two years dedicated to developing and conducting K-12 agriculture activities. Webinars from the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction such as the *Kitchen Counters*

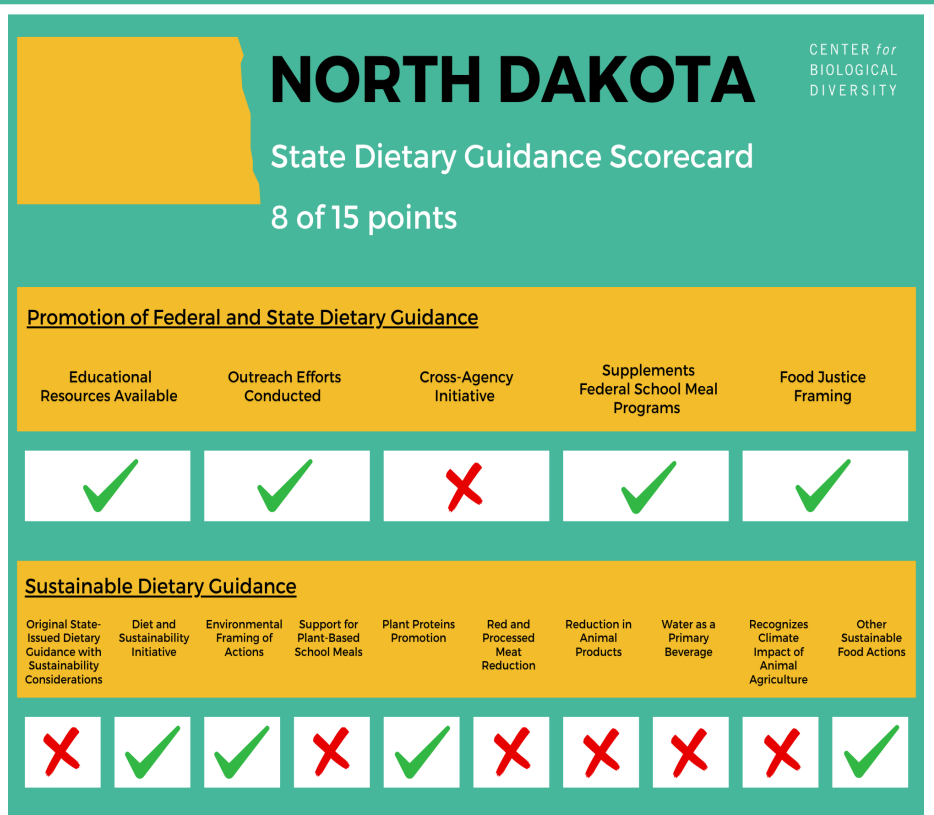
series, which featured seminars on soy and beans in 2024, highlight plant-forward foods with health and environmental benefits. Nutritional resources from the North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services, such as videos on managing health conditions with diet, print materials, and toolkits, address topics related to diet such as diabetes, healthy eating and meal planning, and heart health.

Areas for Improvement: Despite the SNAP-Ed (prior to defunding) and EFNEP facilitator, North Dakota State University, hosting classes, there are limited online resources. This creates gaps for participants to access education or broader guidance for healthy eating on a budget if they are unable to dedicate time to such courses. Similarly, *Team Nutrition* efforts to educate children on healthy food choices are present but accompanied by limited training resources other than a few links to federal resources. Gaps in resources and guidance tailored to state-specific data may make it more difficult for educators or the public to take measurable steps toward improving their health. Local food efforts, though strong, do not appear to connect the benefits of local produce to health or environmental outcomes.

Recommendations:

1. Connect North Dakota’s existing local food efforts to health and sustainability messaging, encouraging residents to recognize the health and environmental benefits of state grown, plant proteins such as dry beans.
2. Strengthen Team Nutrition implementation by compiling data and state-specific implementation strategies into available training materials.
3. Consolidate nutrition and food systems resources, such as local food campaigns, dietary education, and grants, in a centralized hub to improve coordination and access to resources across departments.

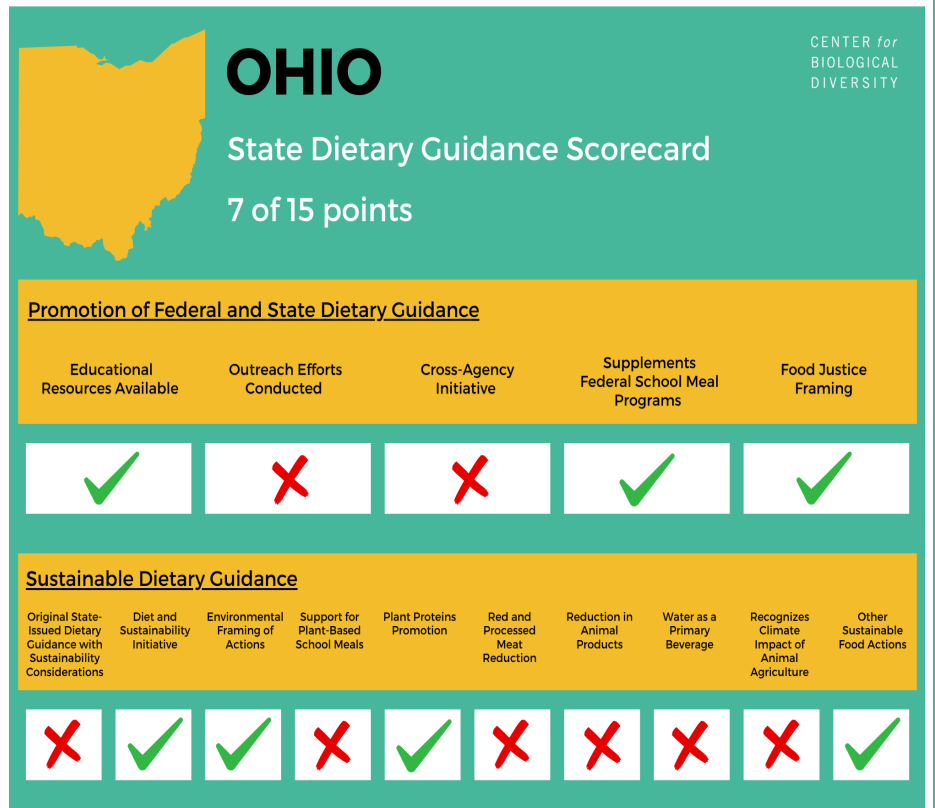
Sources: [North Dakota Health & Human Services: Nutritional Resources](#), [North Dakota State University: EFNEP](#), [North Dakota Department of Public Instruction: Child Nutrition and Food Distribution](#), [Pride of Dakota Diet Concept](#), [North Dakota State University: Food and Nutrition](#), [North Dakota Department of Public Instruction: Team Nutrition](#), [North Dakota Department of Agriculture: Ag in the Classroom](#), [North Dakota Department of Agriculture: Local Foods](#), [ND Department of Agriculture: Hunger Free ND Garden Project](#), [North Dakota Commerce: Rural Grocery Store Sustainability Grant](#)



Ohio

Score: 7/15

Strengths: The Ohio Department of Health’s *Healthy Eating* webpage combines initiatives and information on topics such as food service guidelines, access initiatives, farm-to-school, farmers markets, produce prescriptions, and external resources. It highlights other statewide initiatives such as *Celebrate Your Plate*, an Ohio State University SNAP-Ed campaign (prior to defunding), and *Ohio Community Agriculture Nutrition (Ohio CAN)* program, which distributes locally grown foods through underserved channels. Similarly, the Ohio Department of Education & Workforce has resources and tools for food and nutrition programs on their webpage. Ohio State Extension adds depth with resources such as classroom lessons for farm-to-school and nutrition webinars for RESTART Ohio.



Areas for Improvement: Ohio lacks accessible, state-specific nutrition guidance to combine policy and data priorities. Despite the hub of resources on the DOH webpage, it does not provide dietary recommendations for individuals outside of schools or federal food-assistance programs. This gap in targeted support and education for a significant part of the adult population could be closed by broader guidance and educational programming. There is a need to increase sustainability messaging in nutrition-related materials.

Recommendations:

1. Create Ohio-specific dietary guidance and house these recommendations with the DOH *Healthy Eating* webpage.
2. Add information about utilizing plant proteins as a healthy, affordable and sustainable option through *Celebrate Your Plate* materials.
3. Create interactive tipsheets and recipe libraries tailored to adults, utilizing Ohio grown and sustainable components.

Sources: [Ohio Department of Health: Healthy Eating](#), [Celebrate Your Plate](#), [Ohio Department of Education & Workforce: Food and Nutrition](#), [Ohio State University: SNAP-Ed](#), [Ohio State University Extension: Farm to School](#)

Oklahoma

Score:8/15

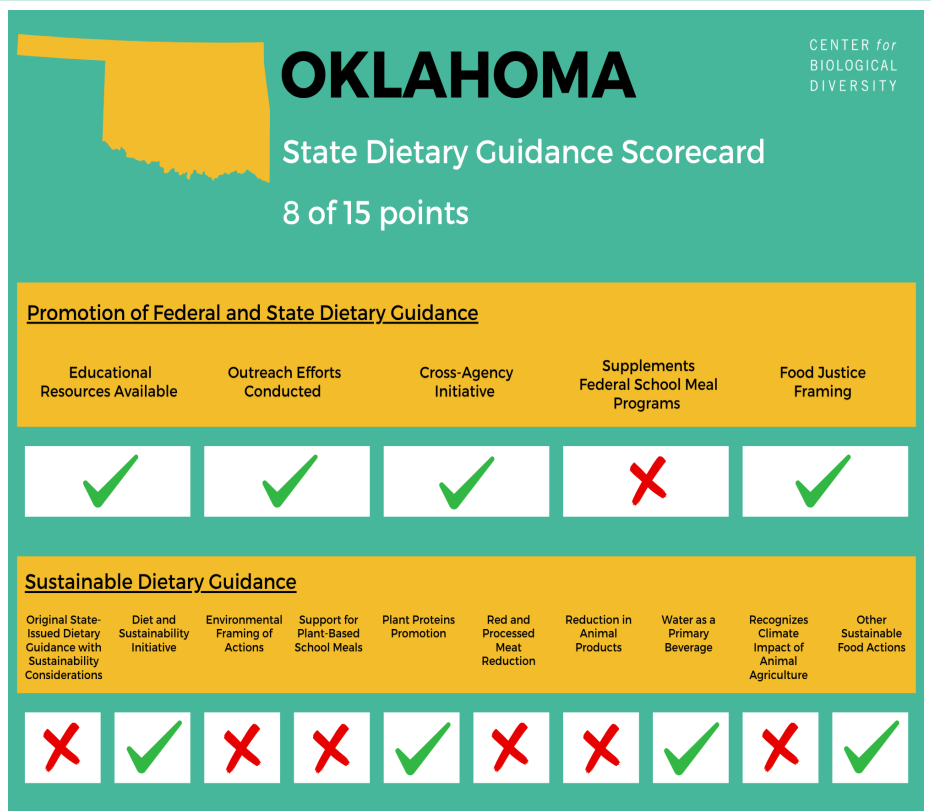
Strengths: Oklahoma offers a state-tailored MyPlate resource under its farm-to-school page with local foods and resources, a step beyond many states that simply link to federal resources. It features ways to connect students to their food, like farm field trips, school taste tests, recipes, and providing classroom lesson plans that are aligned with Oklahoma Academic Standards. The *Ag in the Classroom* initiative, a cross agency and Oklahoma State University collaboration, offers educational resources that cover different foods, such as peas, which they acknowledge as a valuable source of protein. They have a lesson series comparing milk and milk substitutes to explore the nutritional values, consumer trends in milk consumption, and labeling to think critically about marketing tactics. The state’s farm-to-school resources address key food-production topics such as the environmental impacts of pesticides and sustainable residential garden creation.

Areas for Improvement: Some materials within the *Ag in the Classroom* program contain inaccurate nutrition information. For example, one lesson claims that plant proteins do not contain all of the essential amino acids in sufficient quantity and therefore are incomplete, despite the evidence that soybeans contain all essential amino acids for human nutrition. Additionally, classroom resources promote beef consumption without balance or needed context. Resources titled “Beef is Good for You,” “Build a Burger,” and “Good Breeding,” which teach about local cattle brands, all promote eating more beef as an important dietary component without lessons on the environmental or health concerns associated with high consumption levels. Nutrition education could offer a more nuanced view that includes sustainability concerns, like high greenhouse gas emissions and resource intensity, and plant-based alternatives. Further, the state-tailored *MyPlate* only has interactive information about fruits, lacking similar depth for grains, vegetables, dairy and protein. This limits the overall impact and misses an opportunity to educate students on a range of categories, including environmental factors and protein options. While efforts for schools and SNAP-eligible populations are strong, there is a gap in targeted support and education for a significant part of the adult population that does not receive federal food assistance.

Recommendations:

1. Update *Ag in the Classroom* materials to reflect current science, acknowledging that plant proteins can be complete. Include education on the environmental and health consequences of red meat consumption in beef-related lessons.
2. Tailor existing educational resources for schools into a campaign for a broader adult population.
3. Expand the state-tailored MyPlate webpage to include content for all food groups. Create a similar version for adults to improve reach and impact.

Sources: [Oklahoma MyPlate](#), [Oklahoma State Department of Health: Nutrition Education](#), [Oklahoma Ag in the Classroom: Food and Nutrition](#), [Oklahoma Ag in the Classroom: Milk and Milk Substitutes](#), [Oklahoma State Department of Health: Nutrition Access and Built Environment](#)



Oregon

Score: 12/15

Strengths: The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality has a series of documents on the environmental footprints of a variety of foods, with a strategic plan of nine projects to prevent food waste. The plan emphasizes redistributing food to those in need and sponsors alternative strategies like composting and anaerobic digestion for food that cannot be distributed, and acknowledges how what we eat, like dairy and meat, affects greenhouse gas production. The state's *Farm to School Communications Toolkit* helps schools communicate their farm-to-school programs and school gardens to families and offers a newsletter. They partner with the Oregon Farm to School Network, which has resources to get started and continue efforts through lesson plans, professional development opportunities, and funding.

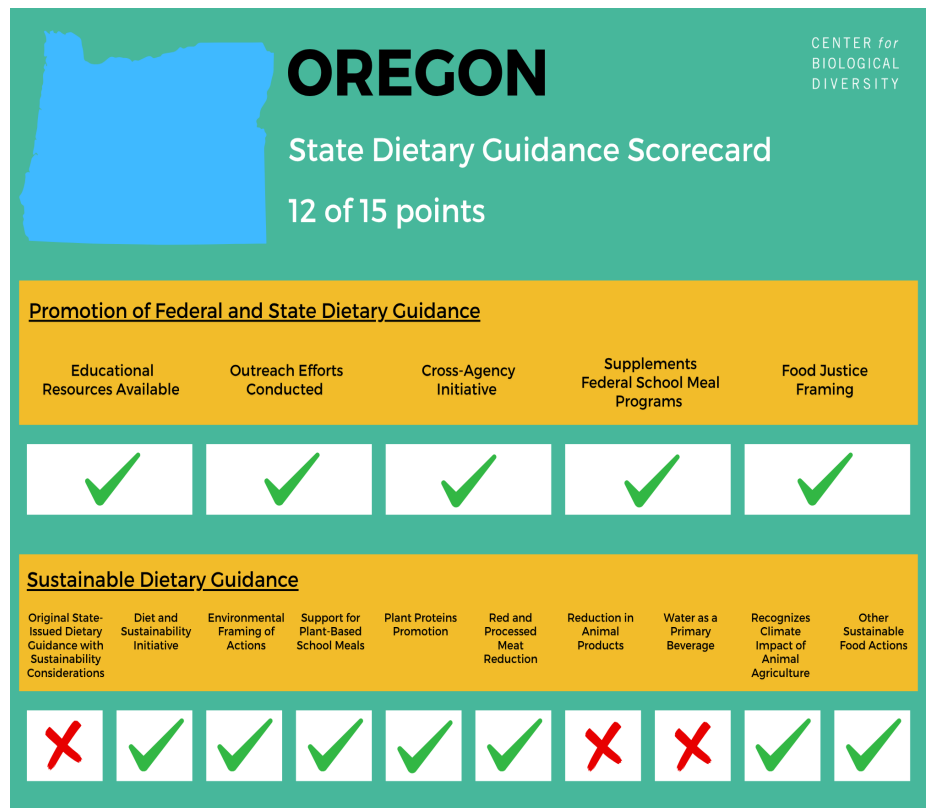
The state provides guidance not just for schools, but also for food producers and processors through toolboxes and tip sheets. The Oregon Health Authority acknowledges the broader contexts of health and nutrition, which are shaped by policies, individual food choice, genetics, and the food environment. The agency links federal resources for implementing nutrition standards and practices to increase access to healthy and affordable foods, healthy worksites, and breastfeeding. Its *Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity Prevention Program* collaborates with local partners to implement a five-year plan, using campaigns with toolkits such as the *Oregon Shared Meals Initiative*, promoting shared meals to support healthy eating habits, and a model for local screenings of the documentary series *Weight of the Nation*.

Areas for Improvement: Oregon's food footprint materials do not cover key high-impact foods such as dairy and beef. The program is strong yet does not address the disproportionate negative environmental effects of such foods, limiting its effectiveness. Promoting existing resources more widely, such as the Department of Environmental Quality's research study results on the environmental footprints of different foods, could increase their effectiveness and potential impact on consumer diets. Nutrition education resources for older adults on the Oregon Department of Human Services website are limited to two federal sites and a few sample resources. They could be further tailored to Oregon-specific needs and data, closing the gap with specific recommendations and practical tools.

Recommendations:

1. Create environmental footprint documents for dairy and beef. Promote existing executive summary sheets through public relations campaigns to educate consumers on the environmental results of food choices.
2. Develop Oregon nutrition education resources for older adults.
3. Integrate sustainability education, such as the benefits of plant-based eating, into existing toolkits and resources.

Sources: [Oregon Farm to Children Nutrition Programs](#), [Oregon Farm to School Network](#), [Oregon Department of Agriculture: Farm to School Program](#), [Oregon Department of Human Services: Nutrition Programs](#), [Oregon State University: Nutrition Education and Outreach Programs](#), [Oregon State University: Healthy Recipes](#), [Oregon Health Authority: Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity Prevention](#), [Oregon Department of Environmental Quality: Food Environmental Impacts and Actions](#)



Pennsylvania

Score: 7/15

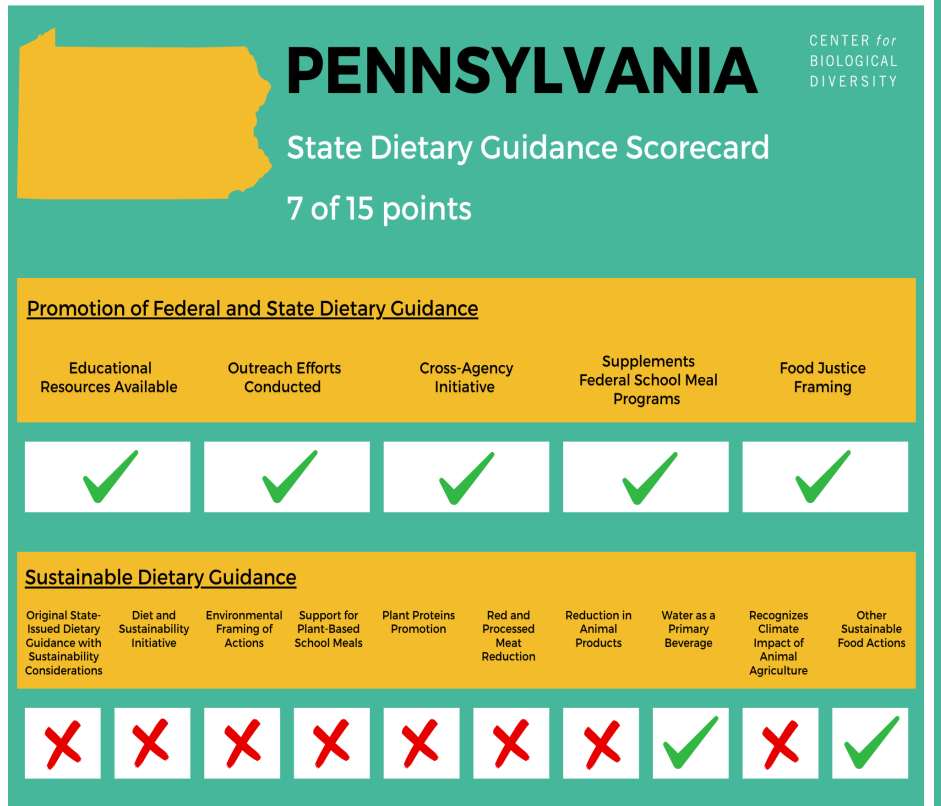
Strengths: Penn State Extension, the state’s SNAP-Ed facilitator (prior to defunding), provides practical tips and information for increasing plant-based meals as a healthy choice. The Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) partners with Feeding PA and its member food banks, using dietitians and nutrition educators to guide clients toward healthy choices through hands-on nutrition education and increased healthy inventory. *Keystone Kids Go*, a collaboration of state agencies, offers resources, professional development opportunities, and announcements to support educators, families, and children in improving nutrition practices. Key resources include *Nibbles for Health*, newsletters for CAFCP providers to share with parents of children, and *I am Moving, I am Learning*, which addresses childhood obesity and improves healthy food choices. *Project PA*, a collaboration between the Department of Education and Penn State University, partners with schools and communities to provide nutrition education and promote children’s healthy eating behaviors. Additional services like *Harvest of the Month* trainings for school food service personnel, local food grant opportunities, culinary training, and breakfast program expansion grants work to provide dietary education and quality foods in schools. The state also allocated more than \$500,000 to projects addressing urban agriculture sustainability and innovation, paired with nutrition education and hands-on learning programs. \$3.4 million was allocated in *Fresh Food Financing Grants* to connect communities with fresh, healthy and affordable food produced by local farms.

Areas for Improvement: The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania nutrition page only has brief recommendations that are not tailored to the state or accompanied by implementation resources, and do not contain explicit sustainability messaging. While school nutrition and SNAP-Ed resources that target vulnerable populations are strong, the lack of educational resources for the public creates a gap in targeted support and education for a significant part of the adult population that does not receive federal food assistance.

Recommendations:

1. Use *Nibbles for Health* to create a targeted and understandable newsletter on economic, environmental and health benefits of plant-based eating.
2. Integrate culinary training on plant-based meal choices into *Project PA*.
3. Link nutrition recommendations on the DOH website with further resources to aid in education and implementation.

Sources: [Pennsylvania Department of Health: Nutrition](#), [Pennsylvania Department of Education: Nutrition Education, PA Nutrition Education Network, Project PA](#), [Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture: Food Security, Investments to Support Urban Farmers](#), [PennState Extension: Plant-Based Diet Investments to Support Farms](#)



Rhode Island

Score: 6/15

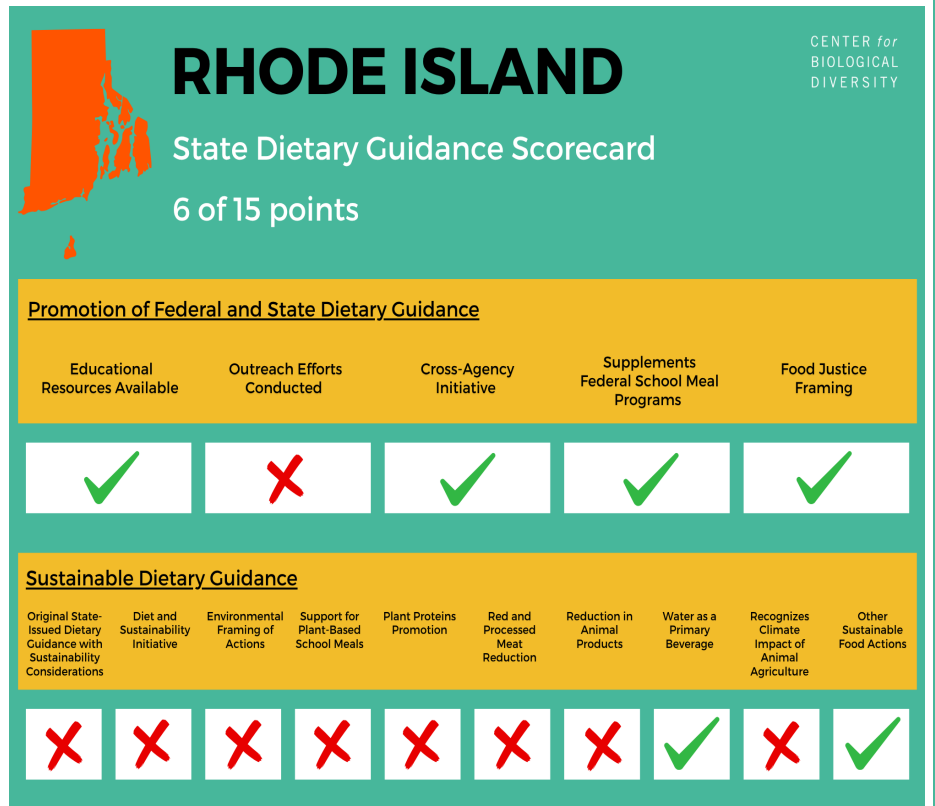
Strengths: The *2023-2028 Healthy Eating and Active Living (HEAL) Strategic Plan* has priorities like access to affordable, nourishing food and prioritizing nutrition security across the state. The *Enhancing Nutrition Security Strategic Plan* section highlights programs like produce prescriptions and *Bonus Bucks*, which matches SNAP benefits for locally grown produce. The Rhode Island Department of Health, in partnership with USDA, helps fund the Rhode Island Food Policy Council which has a robust materials library, *RI Food System Factbook*, municipal fact sheets, and other resources. They explicitly consider food, climate and environment as a priority area, indicating that sustainability concerns are indirectly considered in state-level resources. Programs like the *Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure* program, in partnership with USDA, administer state-coordinated initiatives to build resilience across food supply chains. The Department of Environmental Management also offers resources to order local food and support businesses.

Areas for Improvement: Despite the strategic plan and resources targeted at underserved communities, there is a notable lack of public nutrition guidance. Most resources orient toward infrastructure with limited emphasis on what healthy eating looks like, beyond increasing produce consumption, for individuals. Educational resources are missing from state agency websites and there is a gap in nutrition and education for adults who are not enrolled in federal assistance programs like SNAP. While sustainability is a strategic priority, connections with diet such as plant-based eating or reducing food waste are not thoroughly addressed in consumer-targeted materials.

Recommendations:

1. Publish state-level guidance with actionable and educational resources.
2. Combine existing produce prescription and local food efforts with dietary education by partnering with dietitians or creating fact sheets on the benefits of different produce options.
3. Coordinate efforts between food policy councils, state agencies, and program facilitators through a centralized resource hub.

Sources: [Rhode Island Healthy Eating & Active Living 2023-2028 Strategic Plan](#), [Rhode Island Department of Education: Child Nutrition Programs](#), [Rhode Island Food Policy Council: Resources](#), [Enhancing Nutrition Security: An Overview of Fruit and Vegetable Programs in Rhode Island](#), [Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management: Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program](#), [RI Department of Environmental Management: Local Food Resources](#)



South Carolina

Score: 6/15

Strengths: *Don't Waste Food SC* is a collaborative outreach campaign that brings together the public and private sectors to coordinate resources and reduce wasted food in South Carolina, with targeted resources and guides for different interest groups. The *Take Charge Health Campaign* under the South Carolina Department of Public Health provides centralized recommendations and accompanying resources on a range of topics like eating more fruits and vegetables and utilizes MyPlate-adapted visuals like the *Take Charge Placemat*. These suggestions and materials are practical and easily useable. The *South Carolina Health + Planning toolkit* provides a systems-level guide to healthy eating and active living with policy guides for different elements. It is supported by different initiatives, including the

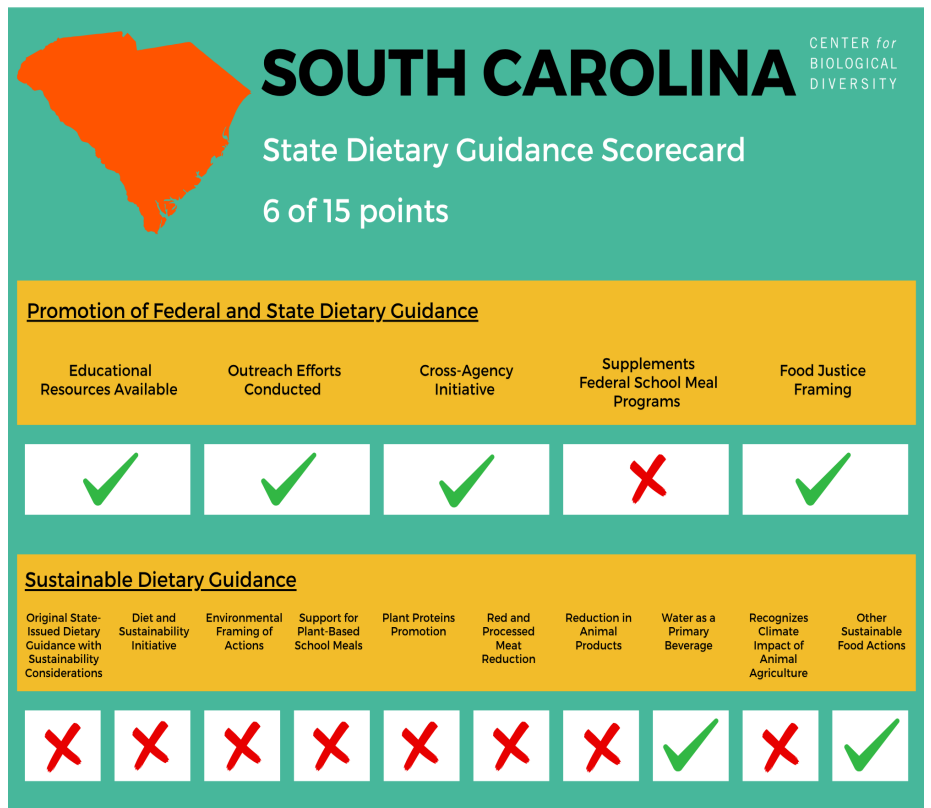
Department of Agriculture *ChangeSC* campaign to connect those in food deserts with local food, while improving eating habits through targeted education with the nonprofit Pick 42. Community-level engagement in nutrition is done through local partners, like implementing produce gardens and farmers markets at public libraries. Prior to SNAP-Ed being defunded, the statewide SNAP-Ed *5210* campaign had substantial educational resources to promote eating five fruits and vegetables daily, two hours of screentime, one hour of physical activity, and zero sugary drinks. The campaign was supported by downloadable materials and public social media channels (Facebook and Instagram).

Areas for Improvement: While nutrition guidance is easily accessible and practical, nutrition messaging focuses heavily on calorie reduction by providing sheets on how long it takes to burn 100 calories, or ways to avoid 100 calories. While small changes can create meaningful health benefits, this broad guidance promotes calorie counting and emphasis in ways that tend to overlook nutrient density or broader, mental health trends. This framing can promote unhealthy eating patterns, which can counter long-term health goals or weight loss instead of focusing on how to increase consumption of healthy foods. It also appears to lack explicit sustainability messaging. Resources that are kept separate from the central public guidance page, such as the *Health + Planning Toolkit* or the *5210* campaign, could support existing nutrition suggestions.

Recommendations:

1. Reframe nutrition messaging around calories to emphasize nutrient quality and sustainable healthy eating habits, rather than calorie reduction as an isolated goal.
2. Incorporate the health and environmental benefits of plant-based protein options into existing produce promotion materials.
3. Embed the *5210* campaign into the *Nutrition & Active Living* DPH webpage.

Sources: [South Carolina Department of Public Health: Nutrition & Active Living](#), [South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control: Take in More Fruits and Veggies](#), [SC DPH: Nutrition, Physical Activity, & Obesity Prevention](#), [South Carolina Department of Education: Nutrition Programs](#), [South Carolina SNAP-Ed: Public Library Nutrition Support Implementation](#), [ChangeSC](#), [South Carolina Health + Planning Toolkit](#), [SC Department of Environmental Services: Don't Waste Food SC](#)



South Dakota

Score: 7/15

Strengths: The South Dakota Department of Health (DOH) implements *Healthy SD*, with a wide set of resources to support adherence to the DGA. It highlights monthly produce picks, mindful and healthy eating articles, well-developed lesson plans, and other tips on how to incorporate healthy habits into lifestyles. Articles can be filtered by demographic and focus area and are engaging and accessible. These resources are guided by their yearly *Nutrition & Physical Activity State Plan*. One standout article about what to consider with a high protein diet highlights soy, beans and legumes as great sources of protein alongside meat, and highlights their health benefits. The main DOH nutrition page promotes eating a healthy, balanced diet of nutrient dense foods and has embedded state and federal resources

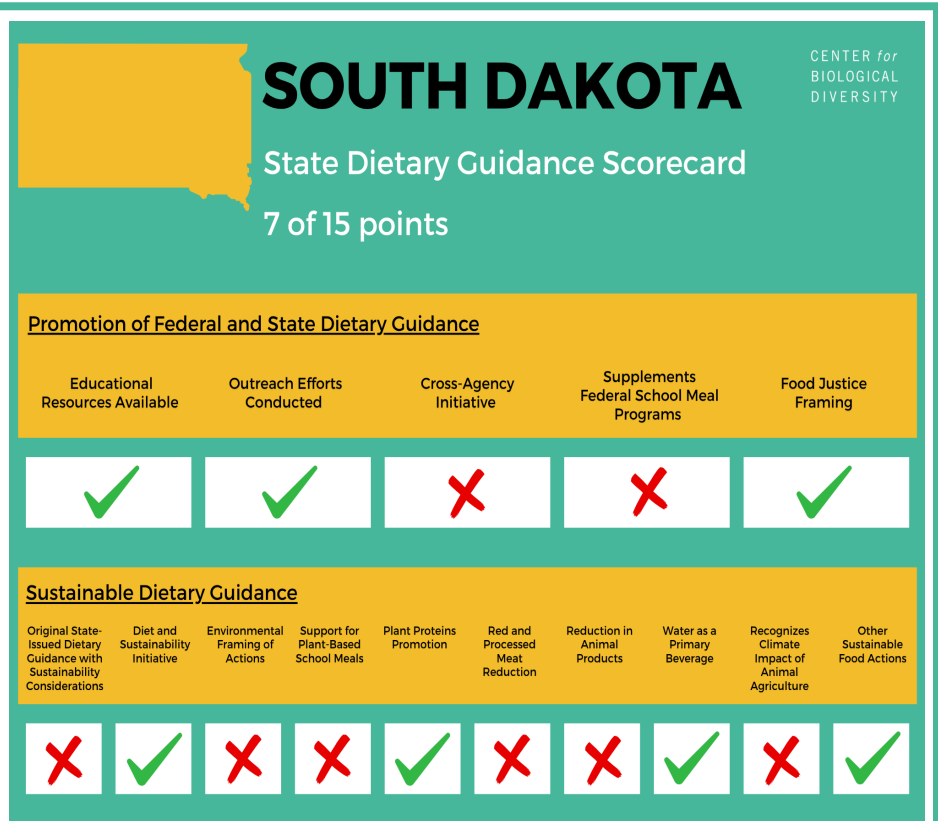
like *My Native Plate* for Indigenous communities, nutrition.gov recipes, and tips to support youth healthy routines. The department participates in the *South Dakota Healthy Nutrition Collaborative*, which is a coalition of nutrition, food, and health-related organizations, to improve healthy outcomes with education and resource sharing to improve coordination and best practices of food and nutrition. South Dakota’s farm-to-school webpage is a strong resource center for schools, buyers and growers, with strategic plans, social media templates, and educational tools.

Areas for Improvement: While the content breaking down the DGA is helpful, South Dakota could strengthen this information by creating state specific dietary guidance, utilizing population specific data, agricultural practices, and cultural backgrounds. The high-protein *Healthy SD* article effectively introduces plant-based protein choices but could make direct links to environmental sustainability to promote the broader benefits of dietary shifts.

Recommendations:

1. Highlight environmental, economic, and health benefits of more plant-based protein options on the *Healthy SD* platform.
2. Amplify work and resources from collective efforts, including the *SD Healthy Nutrition Collaborative*, by highlighting them on main DOH webpages.
3. Supplement resources on DGA with state-specific data and context.

Sources: [HealthySD: Nutrition](#), [South Dakota Department of Health: Nutrition](#), [South Dakota Healthy Nutrition Collaborative](#), [South Dakota Department of Education: Farm to School](#), [South Dakota Nutrition & Physical Activity State Plan](#)



Tennessee

Score: 9/15

Strengths: *Get Food Smart TN* is a food-waste reduction and diversion program, with actionable steps for schools, consumers, restaurants and grocers. Tennessee’s farm-to-school programming provides technical assistance to school food authorities and farmers. Tennessee hosts thorough and centralized nutrition resources across multiple departments and focus areas. The Tennessee Department of Health’s *Healthy Places — Food and Nutrition* page acknowledges the correlations between wealth, healthy foods, and public health outcomes. The site has centralized resources about local foods and community gardening, food insecurity, and sustainable food management. It addresses food security and that climate change will threaten food production, quality, prices, and distribution, with agricultural practices and consumer choices playing key roles.

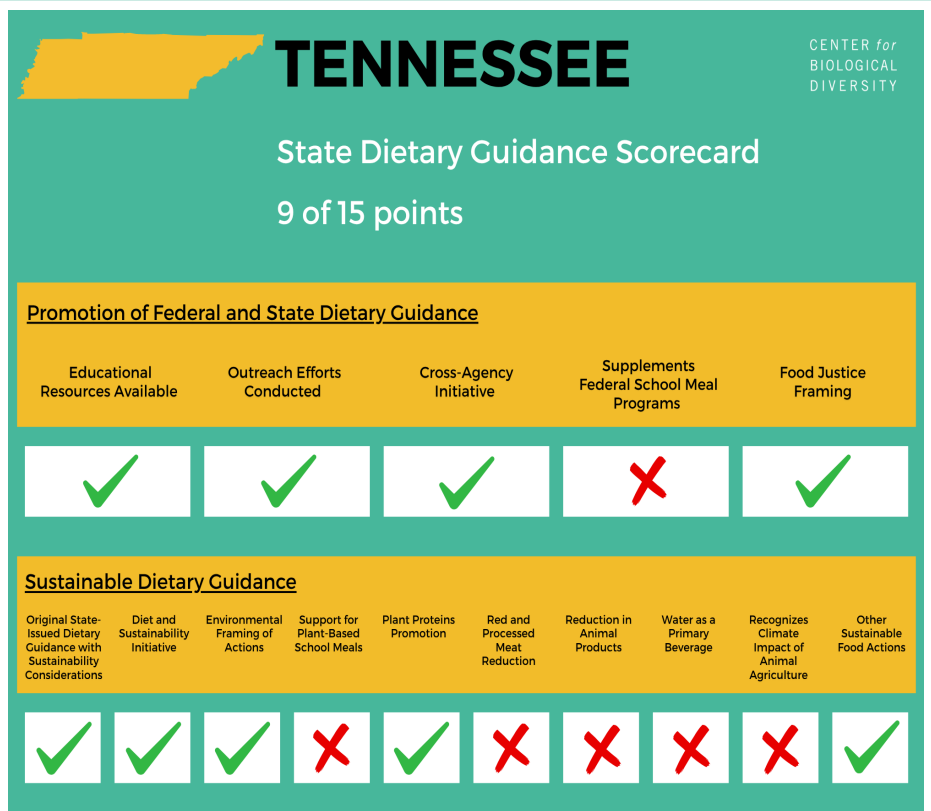
The *Tennessee Vitality Toolkit* is a living resource with evolving priority areas and programming updates to support prevention-focused, evidence-based, and community-oriented strategies to improve community health. It has a dedicated nutrition security subpage that advocates for supporting communities and federal nutrition programs. The Department of Education’s school nutrition programs page has information on federal nutrition programs, state-developed content like *Taste of Tennessee*, exotic produce guides, and school nutrition program handbooks and marketing toolkits.

Areas for Improvement: Prior to SNAP-Ed defunding, the *Tennessee Nutrition and Consumer Education Program*, operated by University of Tennessee Extension and the state, provided SNAP-Ed materials tailored to the state and listed a series of youth programs. Despite this, links to more information about these programs appeared to be inaccessible, including key materials on Google Drive. Ensuring that digital materials are accessible is important for nutrition education and public reach. While the state’s *Healthy Places* page and waste reduction initiatives highlight the correlation between climate, food systems, and diet, it lacks direct connection of these ideas to meat and dairy consumption. Highlighting plant-based eating as a strategy for climate resilience could fully integrate sustainability and dietary education and provide actionable information for consumers to contribute to resilient food systems.

Recommendations:

1. Expand existing *Healthy Places* information under food security to link dietary choices to long-term sustainability and food security.
2. Develop educational content to promote plant-based and nondairy foods within existing sustainability focus areas.
3. Update nutrition education materials to ensure that digital resources are accessible and functional across partner websites.

Sources: [Tennessee DOH: Food and Nutrition](#), [Tennessee DOH: Healthy Eating and Nutrition](#), [Tennessee DOH: Nutrition Education](#), [Tennessee Nutrition and Consumer Education Program](#), [Tennessee Department of Education: School Nutrition Marketing](#), [Tennessee State University: EFNEP](#), [Get Food Smart Tennessee](#), [Tennessee Department of Environment & Conservation: Waste](#), [Tennessee Department of Agriculture: Farm to School](#), [Tennessee DOH: Nutrition Security](#)



Texas

Score: 10/15

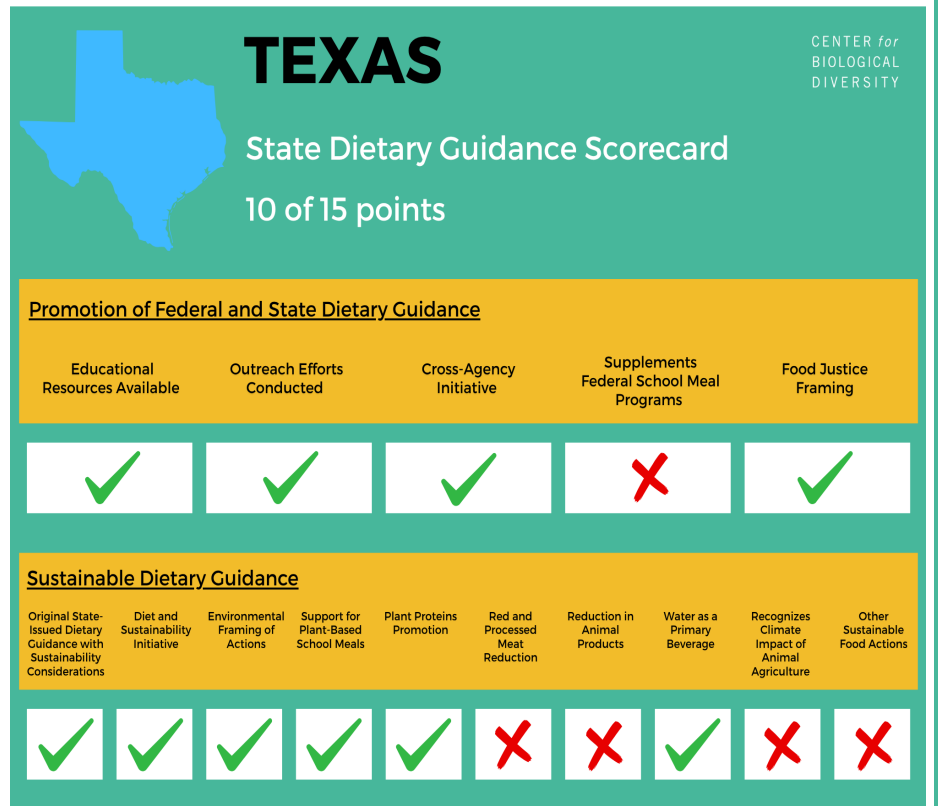
Strengths: The *Texas Farm Fresh* initiative through the Texas Department of Agriculture works by connecting local schools with Texas agriculture to teach kids that foods are chosen to positively affect their own health and the health of their community. The initiative provides a planning guide and a parent involvement guide, hosts webinars, and lists funding opportunities. A map of projects and network sourcing opportunities demonstrates reach and impact. The state provides linguistically accessible nutrition education, with most program materials for WIC and other programs provided in both English and Spanish, as nearly 8 million Texans speak Spanish. Online training programs for nutrition professionals and federal program administrators are clearly organized by topic, intended audience, time, and professional standards codes where applicable. Similarly, prior to SNAP-Education defunding, a centralized SNAP-Education list of nutrition education providers and contact information provides an easy way for people to identify education partners. The state also runs a *Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure* grant program, a USDA cooperative effort to build resilience in the middle of the food supply chain, demonstrating commitment to building sustainable and strong food systems.

Areas for Improvement: Sustainability principles do not appear fully embedded in most program areas. While the *Texas Farm Fresh* initiative focuses on teaching the importance of foods that affect community health, it fails to integrate relevant information on the environmental and health impacts of meat and dairy, and the benefits of plant proteins. Treating sustainability as an integral part of this education could advance sustainability goals and improve reach. The state appears to lack a unified nutrition strategy across departments, with Department of Agriculture resources remaining largely separated from WIC and SNAP-Education resources through the Department of Health and Human Services.

Recommendations:

1. Use extensive farm-to-school reach to include lessons on beans, plant proteins, or regional environmental impacts of agriculture.
2. Explicitly connect sustainability to existing initiatives for local food like *Texas Farm Fresh* and the *Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure* grant program.
3. Expand professional development programs for nutrition program administrators to include plant-based eating.

Sources: [Texas Department of Agriculture: Texas Farm Fresh](#), [Texas Health and Human Services: WIC Client-Centered Nutrition Education](#), [Texas A&M Agrilife Extension: EFNEP](#), [Texas Department of Agriculture: Summer Food Service Program Training](#), [Texas Department of Agriculture: Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program](#), [Texas Department of Agriculture: Farm to School](#), [Texas Department of Agriculture: Farm Fresh Initiative Supports Child Nutrition](#), [Texas Health and Human Services: SNAP-Education](#)



Utah

Score: 10/15

Strengths: The Utah Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) *Food & Nutrition* page highlights reputable sources for guidance and recipes alongside red flags for misinformation on nutrition, an area that many states do not include in guidance materials. The page connects users to ways to find healthier foods, learn why nutrition policy is important, Utah and federal programs, and food policy councils. *Eat Well Utah*, a statewide initiative, focuses on making healthy choices available and appealing, with environmentally responsible practices conducted at Utah venues. It offers resources such as a toolkit, assessments and suggestions to improve, marketing materials and a recognition system. *Eat Well Utah's* ways to participate include serving plant proteins, using environmentally preferable cleaning or utensil options, and defaulting to healthier drink options like water. The CSFP has an interesting display to show the total money given back into the local food system through programs like SNAP, *Double Up Food Bucks*, SFMNP, and *Produce Rx*. At the time of this writing it amounted to about \$2.8 million, showing a clear way to communicate the benefits of these programs for communities, not just recipients. The Utah DHHS and the Department of Transportation funds *Get Healthy Utah*, a nonprofit working to improve healthy eating and active living through system-level change, utilizing easily sortable resources.

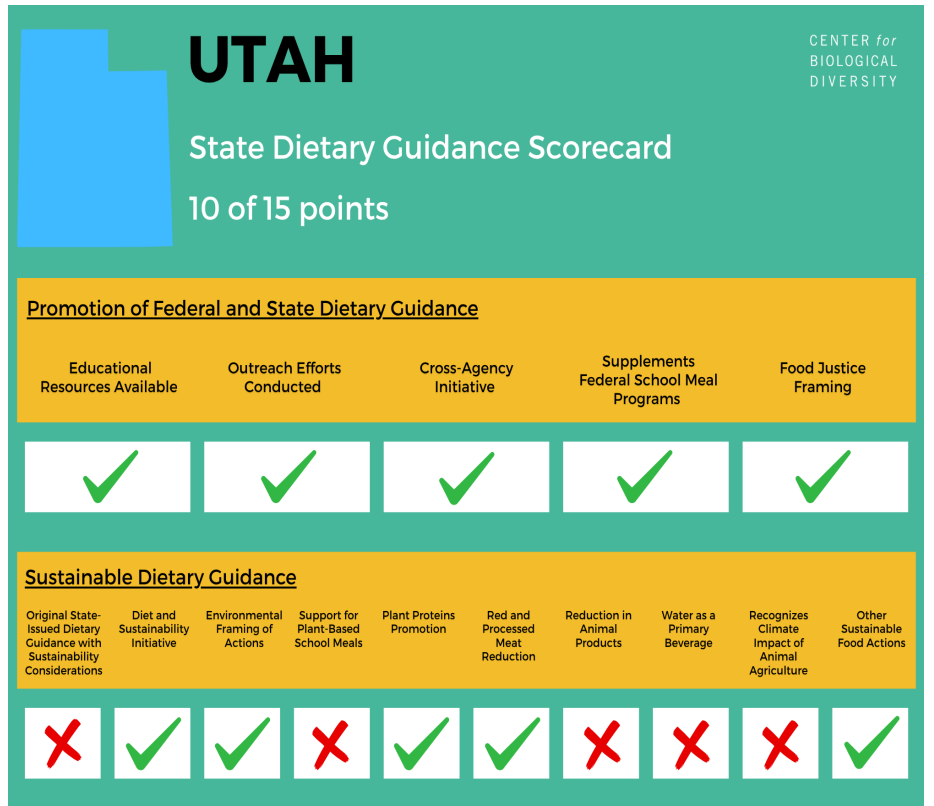
The CSFP has an interesting display to show the total money given back into the local food system through programs like SNAP, *Double Up Food Bucks*, SFMNP, and *Produce Rx*. At the time of this writing it amounted to about \$2.8 million, showing a clear way to communicate the benefits of these programs for communities, not just recipients. The Utah DHHS and the Department of Transportation funds *Get Healthy Utah*, a nonprofit working to improve healthy eating and active living through system-level change, utilizing easily sortable resources.

Areas for Improvement: The *Utah's Own* program, through the Department of Agriculture and Food, offers a directory and newsletter dedicated to supporting local foods. However, its celebration of National Beef Month every year and the vital role of beef producers was unbalanced, without mention of the environmental harms of beef. While some featured producers highlight regenerative or restorative environmental practices, the messaging lacks discussion of sustainability concerns generated by increasing meat consumption.

Recommendations:

1. Acknowledge the environmental impacts of beef and meat production in future *Utah's Own* newsletters, balancing promotion of local producers with sustainability education.
2. Explicitly connect the environmental and health benefits of plant-based food choices within *Eat Well Utah*.
3. Use consistent sustainability messaging in all diet-related outreach, not just public health campaigns.

Sources: [Utah Department of Health & Human Services: Food & Nutrition](#), [Utah WIC](#), [Utah Department of Health & Human Services: Community Food Security Program](#), [Utah's Own](#), [Utah's Own Newsletter](#)



Vermont

Score: 10/15

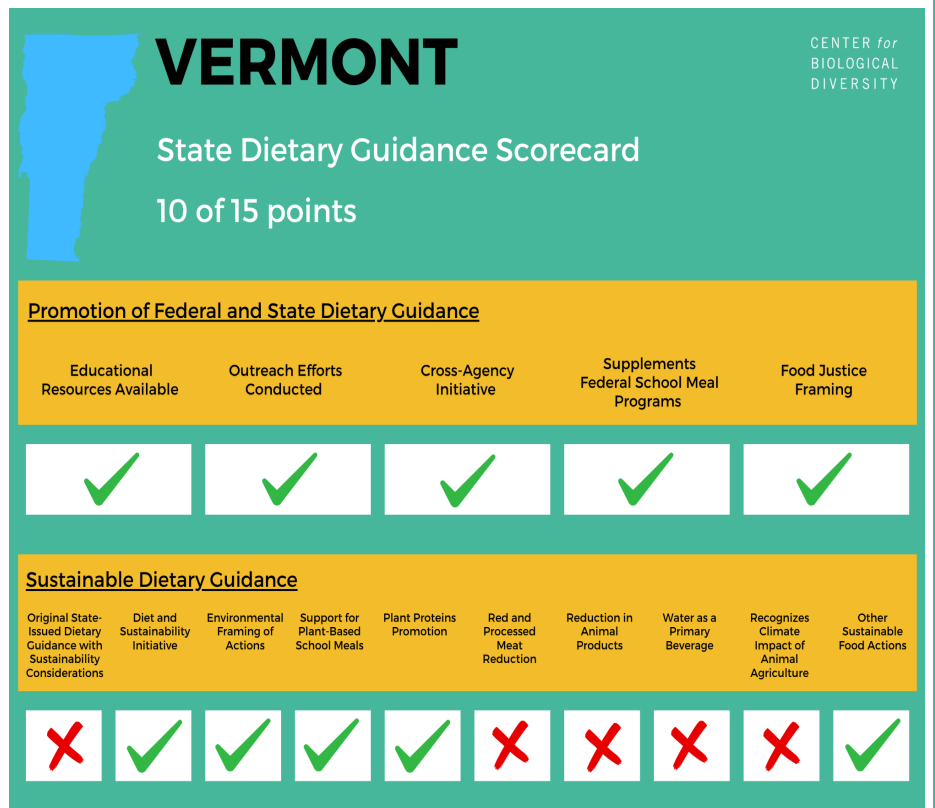
Strengths: The *Vermont Food Standards* require all food and beverages purchased by or on behalf of the state to meet standards by the Commissioner of Health and promote plant proteins and offering a plant-based entree five to seven days of the week. The Vermont Agency of Education supports healthy school meals through the *Seasonal Cycle Menu Toolkit* and School Nutrition Program employee training. State programs target expanding food access, such as *Crop Cash* to expand SNAP dollars for fresh produce and *VeggieVanGo*, which delivers free, fresh produce to anyone in need at community sites. Prior to SNAP-Ed defunding, the Vermont Nutrition Education Committee was a joint effort to share program updates and look for opportunities to collaborate. Resource lists through the Department of Health and *Vermont Farm to Plate* connect participants to relevant programming, through efforts like *Food and Nutrition Resources for Vermont Families*, which provides a high-level overview of food access programs, and the *Vermont Food and Farm Health Program Inventory*, which lists community programs working to elevate food security. The *Abenaki MyBowl* collaboration between the Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi and the Department of Health honors tradition, encourages eating from the land, and promotes health using traditional foodways to meet dietary guidelines. The *Farm to Plate Network* has created a new network structure built around the *Vermont Agriculture and Food System Strategic Plan 2021-2030*, with goals to increase economic development and jobs in the farm and food sector, and improve soils, water, resilience to climate change, and access to healthy local foods.

Areas for Improvement: While Vermont’s *Agriculture & Food System Plan (2021-2030)* includes a focus on agroforestry and sustainable land use in agriculture, it does not address the environmental or land intensity of meat and dairy production. Added information on what foods are resource intensive to produce is critical when attempting to build sustainable food systems and slow land use changes. The plan also has a large focus on dairy with sections on the Dairy Business Innovation Center and the Vermont Milk Commission yet does not balance information on the environmental impacts of dairy. State-level resources do not appear to typically link nutrition guidance with sustainability, which is a missed opportunity to strengthen the public understanding of interconnected food systems.

Recommendations:

1. Utilize *VeggieVanGo* to distribute nutrition information, delivering fresh produce with tailored fact sheets on the health or environmental benefits.
2. Expand information on the environmental and social benefits of traditional foodways promoted in the *Abenaki MyBowl* collaboration.
3. Include promotion of sustainable dietary choices as a recommendation within the *Vermont Agriculture & Food System Plan*.

Sources: [Vermont Food Standards & Implementation Guide 2024](#), [Vermont Agency of Education: School Meals](#), [Vermont DOH: Nutrition & Food Access Resources](#), [Vermont Agriculture & Food System Plan 2021-2030: Agroforestry](#), [Vermont Farm to Plate](#)



Virginia

Score: 13/15

Strengths: Virginia has its own codified nutrition standards for foods in public schools, which require all foods to be consistent with the federal Dietary Guidelines for Americans and meet certain nutrient standards. Virginia’s WIC program provides nutrition education and supplemental nutritious foods and links to federal WIC nutrition resources. The Virginia Department of Health runs the *Healthy Corner Store Initiative*, which improves access to healthy foods in underserved communities. The Division of Community Nutrition has a *2024 Virginia State Plan* that contains goals to improve nutrition services, such as by training nutrition services staff and establishing priorities in line with the *Nutrition Services Standards*. The Virginia Department of Education’s Office of School and Community Nutrition Programs works to ensure

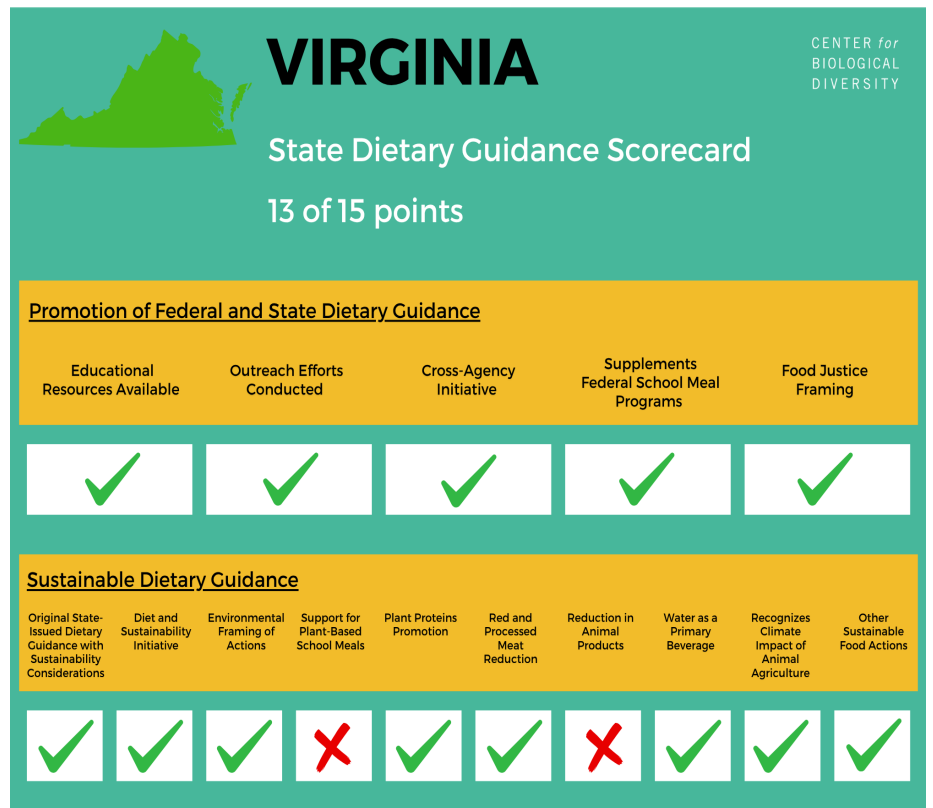
students have access to fresh, nutritious, and locally sourced meals through initiatives like the *Virginia Farm to School* program, *Harvest of the Month* program, *Team Nutrition* training, and *Virginia Food for Virginia Kids*. It also employs Community Nutrition Program Specialists and provides many training resources and toolkits for schools to improve their nutrition offerings. Virginia Tech and Virginia State University’s Virginia Cooperative Extension run food and health programming, with a webpage offering resources on chronic disease prevention and community food systems. It also runs the *Virginia Family Nutrition Program*, funded by EFNEP, whose website *Eat Smart, Move More* provides nutrition education related to the Dietary Guidelines, practical cooking skills and recipes, and resources for shopping local and healthy. The *Shop Smart, Eat Smart Healthy Food Retail Initiative* partners with local food stores to provide healthier options.

Areas for Improvement: The Department of Health website touches on many different chronic diseases afflicting Virginians but does not appear to make a direct connection to prevention through nutritious diets. The webpage on school health has a pending *School Health Guidelines and Toolkit* whose 2024 edition has not yet been uploaded. In general, most nutrition resources on the Department of Health website are outsourced to nongovernmental organizations such as Action for Healthy Kids instead of providing original content. There does not appear to be direct reference to sustainability in the state’s nutrition-related content or resources.

Recommendations:

1. Provide more original nutrition content on the Virginia Department of Health website.
2. Integrate explicit sustainability considerations into existing nutrition resources and programs, such as *Virginia Farm to School*, *Virginia Food for Virginia Kids*, and *Virginia Family Nutrition Program*.
3. Add more emphasis on plant proteins, reduced meat consumption, and water as the primary beverage to Virginia’s codified school food nutrition standards.

Sources: [Virginia DOH: WIC](#), [VDH: Healthy Corner Store Initiative](#), [VDH: School Age Health](#), [VDH: Community Nutrition State Plan 2024](#), [Virginia Department of Education: Farm to School](#), [Virginia DOE: School Nutrition Training Resources](#), [Virginia Nutritional Standards in Schools](#), [Virginia Cooperative Extension: Family Nutrition Program](#), [Eat Smart Move More VA](#), [VA Cooperative Extension: Food and Health](#)



Washington

Score: 10/15

Strengths: Washington stands out for having its own *Washington State Healthy Nutrition Guidelines*, which follow the federal DGA and emphasize fruits and vegetables, minimize added sugar and sodium, and list water as the healthiest beverage. The *Healthy Nutrition Guidelines* have been adapted for meetings and events, cafeterias, vendors, micro-markets, and other institutions, and they come with an implementation guide, examples of healthy meals, and ways to accommodate veganism and vegetarianism. The Governor’s Executive Order 13-06 requires every state executive agency to adopt a food and beverage service policy that follows the *HNG*. Washington’s Department of Health has webpages on access to healthy foods, health equity, and environmental justice. The website on

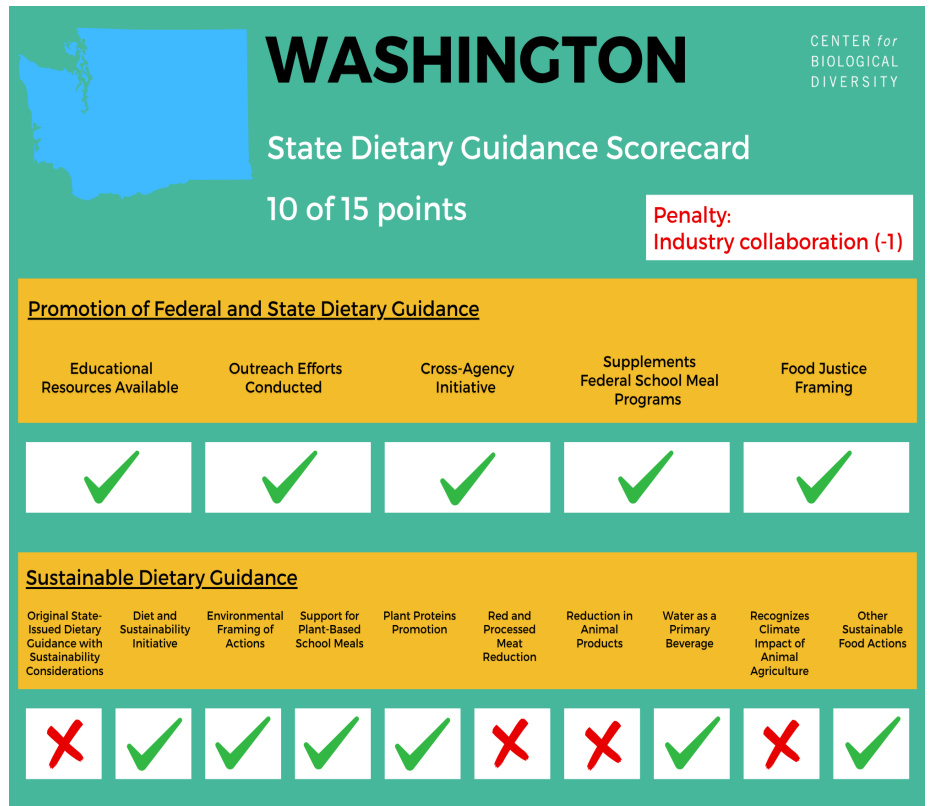
nutrition and physical activity provides resources on how schools can support nutrition, finding and obtaining more fruits and vegetables, reducing sodium, and links to farm-to-school, SNAP, and *Team Nutrition* programs. The state offers *SNAP Match* programs to subsidize SNAP recipients’ purchases of fruits and vegetables. Even though SNAP-Ed was defunded federally, Washington provides its own funding, partnering with local organizations to provide nutrition education, strategies, and other projects to communities. Washington’s WIC program provides online resources about healthy eating on a budget, nutrition needs for every stage of life, and ways to eat more fruits and vegetables. Washington’s Department of Ecology has a Center for Sustainable Food Management and a *Use Food Well Washington Plan*, primarily focused on reducing food waste.

Areas for Improvement: While the *Healthy Nutrition Guidelines* emphasize fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, they could go further by promoting plant proteins over animal-based proteins, reducing red and processed meat intake, and addressing sustainable diets. Washington’s health department links to a website promoting the state’s dairy industry and the nutrition benefits of dairy, which raises questions about potential industry bias. The Washington State Department of Agriculture’s webpage, *WA Grown Food Kit for Milk and Dairy*, also offers materials produced by the Washington State Dairy Council and one poster that thanks the Dairy Farmers of Washington for being a partner.

Recommendations:

1. Update the *Healthy Nutrition Guidelines* to address sustainable diets and more plant-forward dietary recommendations.
2. End promotion of the state’s dairy industry.
3. Integrate the Center for Sustainable Food Management with other nutrition initiatives and pivot beyond food waste to address the climate impacts of animal agriculture, with a goal to reduce meat consumption.

Sources: [Washington DOH: Healthy Foods Access](#), [Washington DOH: SNAP Match](#), [WA DOH: Health Equity](#), [WA DOH: Nutrition and Physical Activity](#), [Washington WIC Nutrition Education](#), [Washington Governor’s Executive Order 13-06](#), [WA Healthy Nutrition Guidelines: Cafeterias](#), [Washington Dairy](#), [Washington Department of Ecology: Sustainable Food Center](#), [Washington Healthy Food and Beverage Standards for Meals](#), [Use Food Well Washington Plan](#)



West Virginia

Score: 5/15

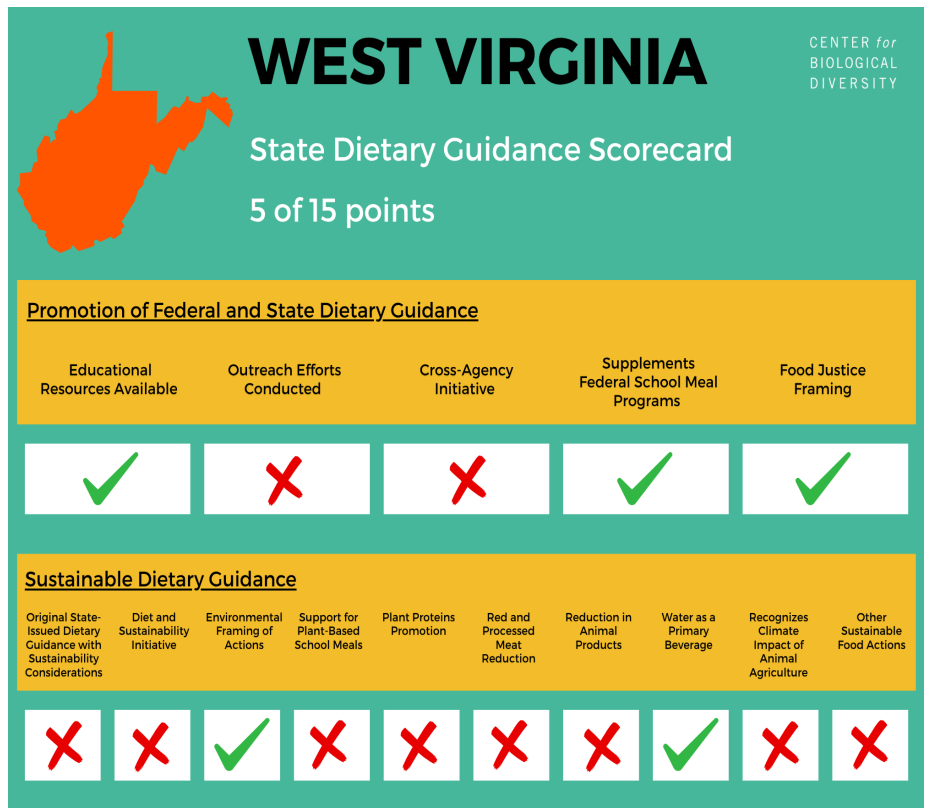
Strengths: West Virginia’s Bureau for Family Assistance offers links to food and nutrition programs with an emphasis on addressing food insecurity. West Virginia’s SNAP-Ed has a network of over 28,000 local partners to deliver nutrition education, although the future of the network is uncertain due to federal defunding. SNAP-Ed also formerly funded West Virginia University Extension’s *Family Nutrition Program*, which offers nutrition, food and physical-activity projects to help low-income individuals. These included *Grow This: West Virginia Garden Challenge*, *Kids Market @ the Store*, and *Rethink Your Drink*. The *FARMacy* program offers fresh, healthy, locally grown produce prescriptions to food-insecure individuals. *Eating Smart, Being Active* is a nutrition education program that offers lessons taught by nutrition educators to low-income families. *West Virginia Feed to Achieve*, enacted by state legislation, focuses on improving children’s health and nutrition at school. It also includes efforts to reduce food waste and find ways to meet children’s nutritional needs during emergency times. The state’s WIC website offers some resources on creating a healthy breakfast and maximizing WIC benefits for fruits and vegetables.

Areas for Improvement: Nutrition-related pages on West Virginia’s human services and education websites are relatively sparse and generally do not offer any original nutrition guidance, instead linking to other outside resources. The West Virginia Department of Health website does not appear to have any webpages about nutrition at all. The Office of Nutrition Service’s website provides a link to the National Dairy Council as a source of nutritional information about dairy. There do not appear to be any efforts to promote plant foods or address sustainability from a nutrition perspective, besides one initiative on food waste.

Recommendations:

1. Create original state-tailored nutrition guidance for residents that is easily accessible on agency websites and integrate across agencies.
2. Improve existing WIC and other nutrition education websites by adding additional recipes, toolkits and guides that promote plant foods.
3. Improve *West Virginia Feed to Achieve* by adding parameters to ensure that the food provided is nutritious and focuses on whole fruits and vegetables.

Sources: [West Virginia Bureau for Family Assistance: Food and Nutrition](#), [West Virginia University Extension: Family Nutrition Program](#), [WV Extension: FARMacy](#), [WV Extension: Eating Smart, Being Active](#), [WV Department of Education: Child Nutrition](#), [WV DoE: Feed to Achieve](#), [West Virginia Office of Nutrition Services](#), [West Virginia Department of Health](#)



Wisconsin

Score: 10/15

Strengths: Wisconsin’s *CACFP Training Spotlight* features a vegetarian meals handout with information on vegetarian diets, menu planning, meat alternates, and an extensive number of recipe ideas. This demonstrates an intentional effort to support the inclusion of plant-based meals in federal meal programming. The Department of Natural Resources promotes food rescue and donations and alternative waste-management strategies to sustainably manage food, acknowledging the environmental and social costs of food loss. The state offers unique WIC resources such as *Affordable Flavors*, a budget-focused meal plan and cookbook to feed a family of four. The *Wisconsin Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity State Plan: Food System* emphasizes local foods, food access, and community gardens. Resources like *Got Access?* and *Got Dirt?* promote improved produce access and community gardens. The *Wisconsin Local Food Marketing Guide* also helps bring new local products to market. The USDA collaborative Team Nutrition program helps the state offer creative programs such as the *Whipping Up Wellness Wisconsin Student Chef Competition*, *Nutritious, Delicious Wisconsin* school curriculum guide, training grants, and multimedia campaign *Wisconsin School Meals Rock!* Additional toolkits like *The Great Garden Detective Adventure* and *Dig In!* provide standards-based nutrition and garden curricula for students to encourage food literacy.

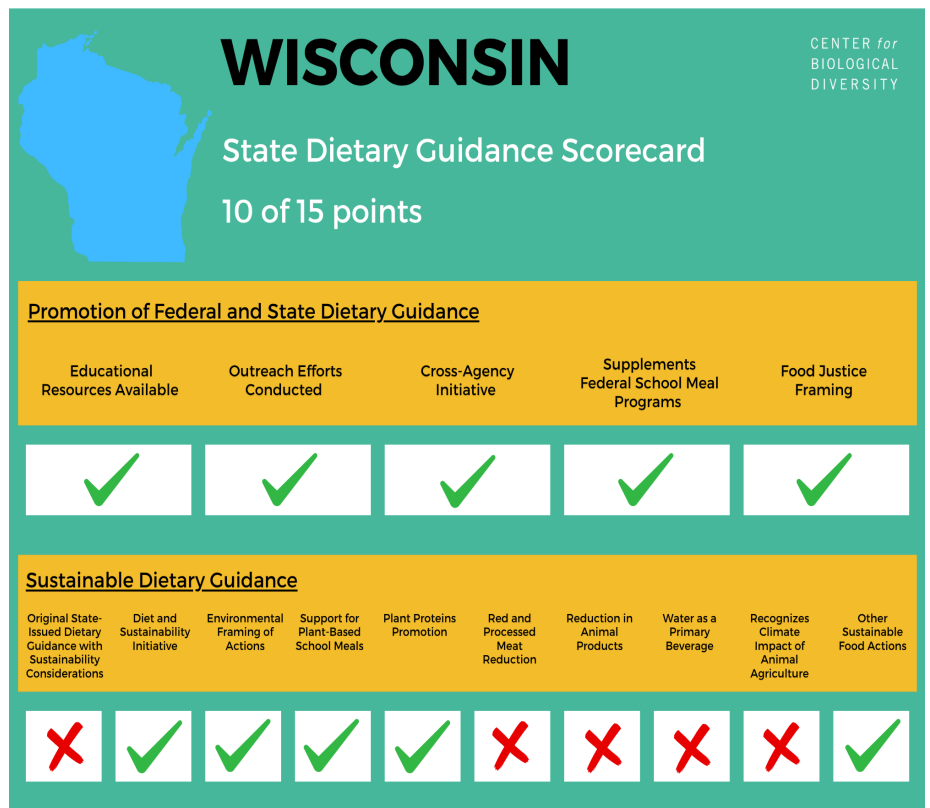
The *Wisconsin Local Food Marketing Guide* also helps bring new local products to market. The USDA collaborative Team Nutrition program helps the state offer creative programs such as the *Whipping Up Wellness Wisconsin Student Chef Competition*, *Nutritious, Delicious Wisconsin* school curriculum guide, training grants, and multimedia campaign *Wisconsin School Meals Rock!* Additional toolkits like *The Great Garden Detective Adventure* and *Dig In!* provide standards-based nutrition and garden curricula for students to encourage food literacy.

Areas for Improvement: While the state offers robust information on nutrition and food system intervention strategies to prevent and address chronic disease through its Chronic Disease Prevention Program, it could benefit from explicitly integrating environmental sustainability into this approach and making the connection between human and planetary health. And while Wisconsin’s Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity Program’s food system goal is to “create and support a sustainable, healthy food system through policy and environmental change,” the strategies accompanying the goal seem to primarily focus on increasing access to healthy foods, local foods, and fruits and vegetables without addressing environmental sustainability or recommending reductions in animal products.

Recommendations:

1. Include information on the environmental and health benefits of certain food choices, like reduced meat consumption or local produce, in existing nutrition materials.
2. Feature information on the environmental and health benefits of plant proteins, such as beans, lentils and legumes, within the *Affordable Flavors* guide.
3. Integrate environmental sustainability considerations into the *Chronic Disease Prevention Program* and the *Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity Program*.

Sources: [Wisconsin Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity State Plan: Food System](#), [Wisconsin CACFP Training: Vegetarian Meals](#), [Wisconsin Department of Health Services: WIC: Nutrition Education](#), [Wisconsin Department of Health Services: Nutrition and Physical Activity](#), [Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction: Nutrition Education](#), [Wisconsin DHS: Nutrition: SNAP-Ed](#), [Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources: Sustainable Management of Food](#), [Wisconsin Food System Goal](#)



Wyoming

Score: 2/15

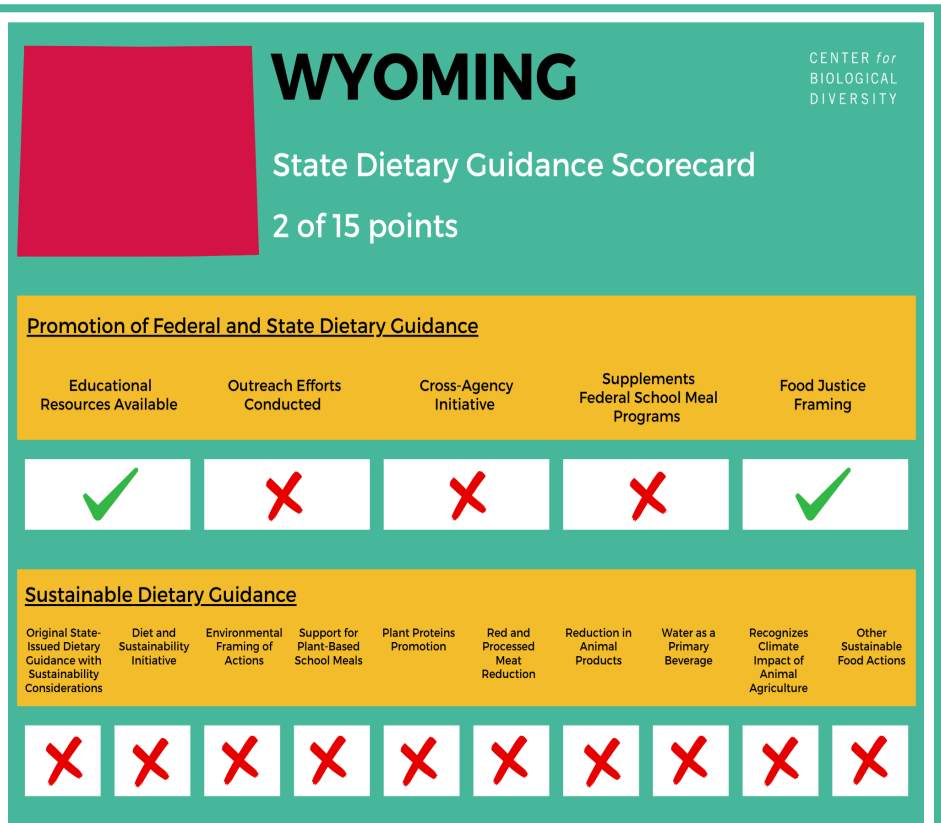
Strengths: The Wyoming Department of Health’s Nutrition Services program offers resources on federal food assistance, nutrition education, recipes, and the federal dietary guidelines. Wyoming’s WIC program also has a nutrition education webpage with resources, including a *Live Well* blog and a food shopping guide. The University of Wyoming, the state’s SNAP-Ed and EFNEP facilitator, runs the *Cent\$ible Nutrition Program*, which provides cooking and nutrition classes, tools, recipes, and resources. The Department of Education website provides information on federally funded child nutrition programs, including the *Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program* and *Wyoming Farm to School*.

Areas for Improvement: While the Department of Health has a seemingly robust *Chronic Disease Prevention Program*, the program would benefit from a framework that centers nutrition as the primary tool for prevention. Many of the recipes provided through the *Cent\$ible Nutrition Program* website are meat-and-beef heavy. Overall, state agencies could do a better job of providing concise and concrete nutrition advice to constituents, such as the importance of eating more plants. There do not appear to be any food sustainability initiatives.

Recommendations:

1. Increase agency website content to offer concrete, integrated, state-tailored dietary guidance to residents.
2. Improve the Cent\$ible Nutrition Program’s nutrition and sustainability by providing more plant-forward recipes and nutrition advice.
3. Focus chronic disease prevention strategies around nutrition-related prevention.

Sources: [Wyoming Department of Health: Nutrition](#), [Wyoming WIC Resources](#), [Wyoming WIC Nutrition Education](#), [Wyoming Department of Health: Chronic Disease Prevention Program](#), [University of Wyoming: Cent\\$ible Nutrition Program](#), [Wyoming Department of Education: Nutrition](#), [University of Wyoming: Healthy Habits Recipes](#)



Glossary

Afterschool Snack Service: A federal program providing snacks for children participating in afterschool activities.

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP): A federal nutrition program providing reimbursements for meals and snacks to children and adults enrolled at participating institutions, including childcare centers, daycare homes, and adult daycare centers.

Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP): A federal nutrition program, administered by state and tribal agencies, providing supplemental food packages to low-income adults at least 60 years of age.

Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA): A federal nutrition guide that provides advice on what to eat and drink to meet nutrient needs, promote health, and prevent disease. It is developed and written for a professional audience, including policymakers, healthcare providers, nutrition educators, and federal nutrition program operators. The U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services (HHS) and Agriculture (USDA) work together to update and release the DGA every five years.

EBT: Electronic Benefits Transfer: An electronic system that allows a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participant to pay for food using SNAP benefits.

EFNEP: Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program: A federal nutrition education program for low-income populations responsible for reducing nutrition insecurity of low-income families and youth.

Farm-to-school initiatives: Programs, typically implemented at the state level, that link local producers to schools and provides students with fresh, healthy, locally grown foods.

Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR): A federal food-assistance program providing USDA Foods to income-eligible households on Native American reservations.

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP): A federal nutrition program providing free, fresh fruit and vegetable snacks to children at eligible elementary schools.

GusNIP: Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program: A federal nutrition program that funds projects that incentivize or support the purchasing of fruits and vegetables by low-income consumers.

HEAL: Healthy Eating and Active Living: A type of program or framework, often implemented by states, that promotes healthy lifestyles and nutritious diets.

National School Lunch Program (NSLP): A federal program that provides low-cost or no-cost lunches, which must meet federal meal patterns following the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, to eligible students in schools across the country.

Older Americans Act (OAA) Nutrition Programs: Federal nutrition programs for seniors, including the Congregate Nutrition Program and the Home-Delivered Nutrition Program, which provide eligible older individuals at least 60 years of age with health-promoting meals at their homes or in group settings such as senior centers.

Patrick Leahy Farm to School Program: A USDA initiative to aid child nutrition program operators in incorporating local foods in the National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, the Summer

Food Service Program, the Child and Adult Care Food Program and all associated programs. The program also works with tribal communities by promoting food sovereignty and integrating traditional food into tribal meal programs.

USDA: United States Department of Agriculture: A United States governing body responsible for leadership on food, agriculture, natural resources, rural development, nutrition, and related issues based on public policy, the best available science, and effective management.

School Breakfast Program (SBP): A federal program providing reimbursements for states to operate nonprofit breakfast programs in schools and residential childcare institutions.

Seniors Farmers' Market Nutrition Program: A federal nutrition program providing low-income seniors with access to locally grown fruits and vegetables and generally supporting the development of local agricultural markets.

SHIP: State Health Improvement Plan: A state-developed public health strategy, often created in collaboration with local stakeholders, that outlines health priorities, typically in alignment with the federal *Healthy People 2030* initiative.

SNAP: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program: A federal food-assistance program for low-income families to supplement their grocery budget.

SNAP-Ed: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education: A federal nutrition education program that helps people make their SNAP dollars stretch and teaches them how to shop for and cook healthy meals and lead physically active lifestyles. It is implemented through state and local initiatives such as nutrition education classes, social marketing campaigns, and efforts to improve policies, systems, and community environments. The One Big Beautiful Bill Act of 2025 ended federal funding for SNAP-Ed.

SPAN: State Physical Activity and Nutrition: A federal program under the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that funds states to carry out a program to reduce health disparities related to nutrition, physical activity, and obesity.

Special Milk Program: A federal program that provides milk to children in schools and childcare institutions who do not participate in other federal meal-service programs.

Summer EBT (SUN Bucks): A federal food-assistance program that provides grocery benefits for eligible school-age children to obtain food during the summer.

Summer Food Service Program (SUN Meals): A federal food-assistance program that provides meals and snacks for children at various community locations in different states during the summer.

Team Nutrition: A federal nutrition-education program that supports child-nutrition programs through training and technical assistance for foodservice, nutrition education, and school and community support for healthy eating and physical activity.

TEFAP: The Emergency Food Assistance Program: A federal food-assistance program that provides no-cost emergency food assistance to low-income individuals.

Universal school meals (USM): An initiative, thus far implemented at the state level by a handful of states, that provides free breakfast and lunch to all students regardless of income.

WIC: Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children: A program to safeguard the health of low-income women, infants and children up to age 5 by providing supplemental foods, nutrition

education, and healthcare referrals.

WIC Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program: A federal nutrition program that issues coupons to eligible WIC participants to allow them to buy eligible foods from farmers, farmers markets, or roadside stands.

WIC Nutrition Education: A component of WIC that requires WIC providers, such as state agencies, to offer no-cost nutrition education programming and resources to WIC participants.

Appendix: 50 State Scores Chart

State	Score
Alabama	2
Alaska	4
Arizona	8
Arkansas	3
California	14
Colorado	9
Connecticut	11
Delaware	6
Florida	10
Georgia	9
Hawai’i	12
Idaho	5
Illinois	11
Indiana	6
Iowa	6
Kansas	6
Kentucky	6
Louisiana	6
Maine	8
Maryland	11
Massachusetts	8
Michigan	10
Minnesota	11
Mississippi	4
Missouri	4
Montana	5
Nebraska	6
Nevada	5
New Hampshire	5
New Jersey	10
New Mexico	8

State	Score
New York	9
North Carolina	9
North Dakota	8
Ohio	7
Oklahoma	8
Oregon	12
Pennsylvania	7
Rhode Island	6
South Carolina	6
South Dakota	7
Tennessee	9
Texas	10
Utah	10
Vermont	10
Virginia	13
Washington	10
West Virginia	5
Wisconsin	10
Wyoming	2

Highest Scoring States

1. California: 14
2. Virginia: 13
3. Hawai'i, Oregon: 12

Lowest Scoring States

1. Alabama, Wyoming: 2
2. Arkansas: 3
3. Alaska, Mississippi, Missouri: 4

References

- ¹ Crippa, M., Solazzo, E., & Guizzardi, D. (2021). Food systems are responsible for a third of global anthropogenic GHG emissions. *Nature Food*, 2, 198–209. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s43016-021-00225-9>
- ² U.S. EPA. (n.d.). *Agriculture sector emissions*. <https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/agriculture-sector-emissions>
- ³ Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. (n.d.). *Dietary guidelines for Americans*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. <https://odphp.health.gov/our-work/nutrition-physical-activity/dietary-guidelines>
- ⁴ Food and Nutrition Service. (2025, December 12). *National school lunch program: Participation and lunches served*. U.S. Department of Agriculture. <https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/slsummar-12.pdf>
- ⁵ Food and Nutrition Service. (2025, December 12). *National school lunch program: Cash payments*. U.S. Department of Agriculture. <https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/06slcash-12.pdf>
- ⁶ Food and Nutrition Service. (n.d.). *About FNS*. U.S. Department of Agriculture. <https://www.fns.usda.gov/about-fns>
- ⁷ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2024, October 4). *About chronic diseases*. <https://www.cdc.gov/chronic-disease/about/index.html>
- ⁸ U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2026). *Dietary guidelines for Americans, 2025-2030*. <https://cdn.realfood.gov/DGA.pdf>
- ⁹ Feldscher, K. (2025, February 12). *Protein is important—but we’re eating too much, experts say*. Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. <https://hsph.harvard.edu/news/protein-is-important-but-were-eating-too-much-experts-say/>
- ¹⁰ Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future. (n.d.). *Meat consumption: Trends and health implications*. <https://clf.jhsph.edu/projects/technical-and-scientific-resource-meatless-monday/meatless-monday-resources/meatless-monday-resourcesmeat-consumption-trends-and-health-implications>
- ¹¹ ASN Staff. (2021, June 9). *Most Americans are not getting enough fiber in our diets*. American Society for Nutrition. <https://nutrition.org/most-americans-are-not-getting-enough-fiber-in-our-diets/>
- ¹² Higham, A. (2025, August 6). *Map shows states offering free school meals*. Newsweek. <https://www.newsweek.com/map-states-free-school-meals-2025-2109563>
- ¹³ Gonzalez, N., Marques, M., Nadal, M., & Domingo, J.L. (2020). Meat consumption: Which are the current global risks? A review of recent (2010–2020) evidences. *Food Res Int.*, 137: 109620. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodres.2020.109341>
- ¹⁴ Twine, R. (2021). Emissions from animal agriculture—16.5% Is the new minimum figure. *Sustainability*, 13, 6276. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13116276>
- ¹⁵ Ritchie, H., & Roser, M. (2024, February 16). *Half of the world’s habitable land is used for agriculture*. Our World in Data. <https://ourworldindata.org/global-land-for-agriculture>
- ¹⁶ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. (2024). *Food systems-based dietary guidelines: An overview*. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/20b9fd77-47f5-46f0-bdd9-94f798620368/content>
- ¹⁷ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations & World Health Organization. (2019). *Sustainable healthy diets: Guiding principles*. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/03bf9cde-6189-4d84-8371-eb939311283f/content>
- ¹⁸ Food Research & Action Center. (2025, December). *Research brief: The risks of state SNAP food choice restriction waivers*. <https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/SNAP-Choice-Restriction-Waivers-Risks.pdf>
- ¹⁹ Food and Nutrition Service. (n.d.). *Healthy fluid milk incentive projects*. U.S. Department of Agriculture. <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/healthy-fluid-milk-incentive>
- ²⁰ Auburn University Hunger Solutions Institute. (n.d.). *Add milk*. <https://hsi.auburn.edu/au-addmilk/>
- ²¹ Georgia Health Policy Center and Georgia Department of Public Health. (n.d.). *Physical activity and nutrition toolkit for Georgia K-12 public schools and school districts*. https://dlg.galileo.usg.edu/data/dlg/ggpd/pdfs/dlg_ggpd_s-ga-bp780-b-pm1-b2015-bp4-belec-pbtext.pdf
- ²² Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance. (n.d.). *AR beef project*. <https://arhungeralliance.org/programs/ar-beef-project/>
- ²³ Wang, Y., & Beydoun, M.A. (2009). Meat consumption is associated with obesity and central obesity among US adults. *Int J Obes*, 33(6), 621–628. <https://doi.org/10.1038/ijo.2009.45>
- ²⁴ Animal Legal Defense Fund. (2022, October 26). *Challenging Arkansas’ meat labeling law*. <https://aldf.org/case/challenging-arkansas-meat-labeling-law/>
- ²⁵ Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. (n.d.). *Healthy people 2030: Neighborhood and built environment*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. <https://odphp.health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/browse-objectives/neighborhood-and-built-environment>
- ²⁶ Michelfelder, A.J. (2009). Soy: a complete source of protein. *Am Fam Physician*, 79(1), 43–47. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/19145965/>