



# Arizona Food Service Guidelines 2024 Lanscape Analysis

ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES  
STATE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND NUTRITION PROGRAM

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ARIZONA DEPARTMENT  
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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This 2024 Landscape Analysis of Food Service Guidelines (FSG) in Arizona provides an examination of the existing guidelines, policies, and practices impacting food service operations across the state. The report assesses the current FSG landscape with a particular focus on how the guidelines align with the Arizona State Physical Activity and Nutrition (SPAN) program strategy to promote healthy eating environments in various settings, including worksites and federal institutions. This analysis aims to provide stakeholders, policymakers, and local organizations with a detailed understanding of the current state of FSG in Arizona and to outline actionable steps to improve nutritional standards and promote public health across diverse settings.

Our Interview findings offer insights into the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) that worksite wellness organizations experience in their programs. These findings highlight areas where we can enhance impact through collaboration and leveraging each other's unique strengths—such as combining HAWP's evidence-based strategies with Wellness A to Z's marketing advocacy and the Wellness Council of Arizona's resource network. Together, these efforts may create more cohesive and effective wellness initiatives across Arizona worksites.

Our key findings suggest that, while there is a strong foundation of existing guidelines and supportive policies, there are notable gaps in their implementation, particularly in non-traditional worksite settings and among populations such as agriculture farmworkers and correctional inmates. The analysis reveals the variation in guideline adherence across different sectors, with some areas demonstrating best practices, while others face challenges related to resources, technical assistance, and policy enforcement.

The analysis underscores the importance of enhancing cross-sector collaboration and providing technical support to ensure consistent and effective implementation of FSG statewide. Our recommendations are centered on aligning state-level policies with the practical needs of diverse worksite environments, with a strong focus on health equity and support for vulnerable populations.

## Recommendations

- Focus on Equity.** Ensure FSG address equity by making healthy food options accessible and affordable, especially for low-income and marginalized communities.
- Tailor FSG Implementation.** Implement FSG in phases, starting with high-impact settings, and customize guidelines to fit the needs of diverse environments, from urban to rural and large to small worksites.
- Leverage Partnerships for Resource Sharing.** Work with worksite wellness programs to share and create resources like newsletters, trainings, toolkits, and workshops for widespread support.
- Establish and Strengthen Data Collection and Monitoring.** Consider implementing a shared statewide data system across all participating worksites to encourage tracking and assessing the impact of FSG.

# SETTING THE STAGE

The [Food Service Guidelines](#) (FSG) standards are part of an initiative developed by the CDC, aimed at improving public health by enhancing the nutritional quality of food offered in various federal, state, local, and tribal government settings such as universities, hospitals, parks, and worksites.

The FSG standards align with the latest [Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), ensuring up-to-date food and nutrition standards that support healthy food environments. The [Food Service Guidelines for Federal Facilities](#) serve as a comprehensive model, addressing food and nutrition, facility efficiency, environmental support, community development, food safety, and behavioral design. These guidelines can be adapted for public and private use across state and community settings.

The CDC's FSG initiative is part of a broader effort to support healthier food environments that benefit population health, local economies, and the environment. The guidelines may:

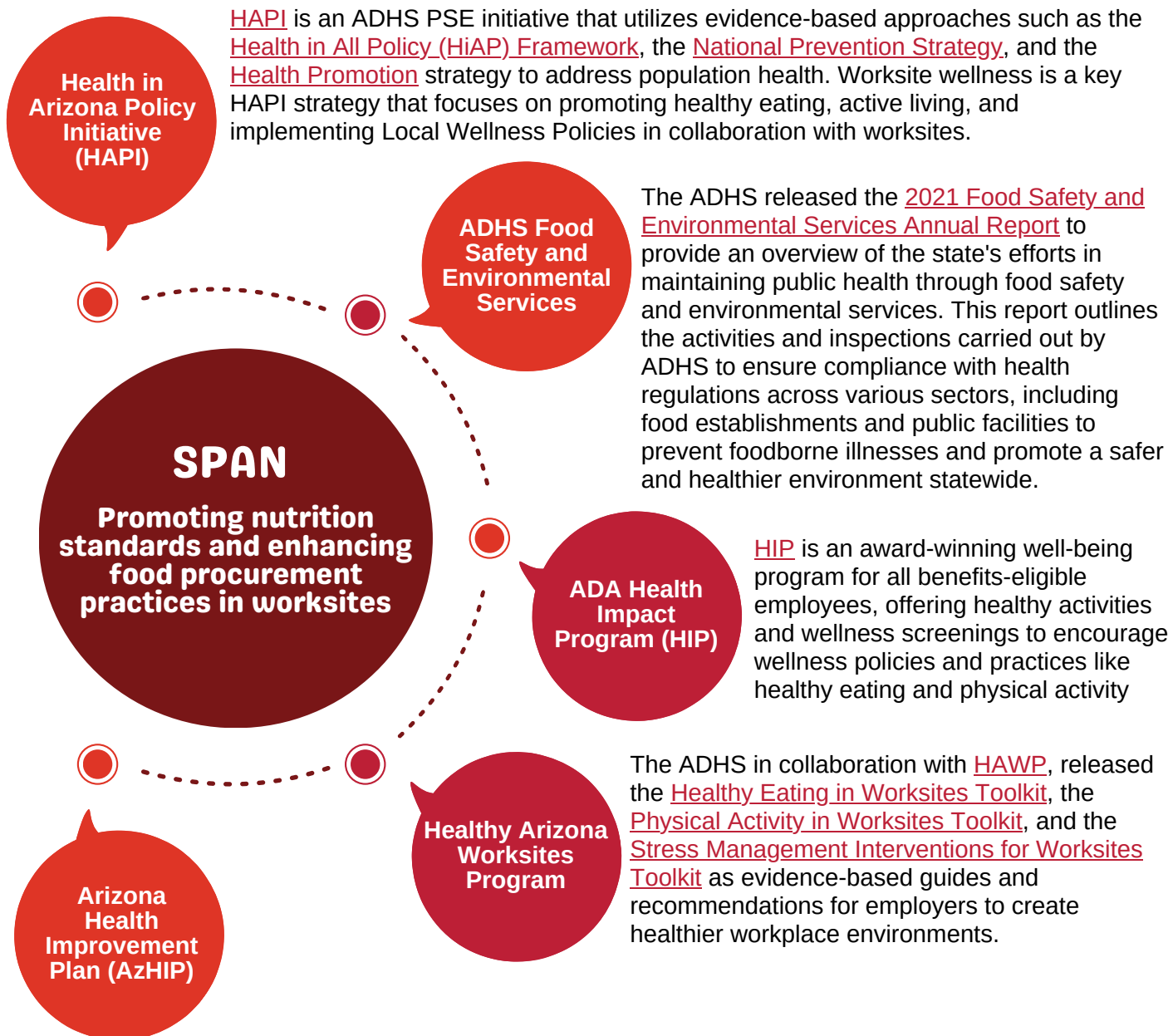
- ✓ Contribute to the health and wellness of employees and visitors
- ✓ Create expectations for healthier food and beverage availability
- ✓ Strengthen local food systems
- ✓ Improve facility management of natural resources
- ✓ Increase energy efficiency
- ✓ Reduce harmful environmental impact

In 2023, the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) received funding to implement the CDC's FSG strategy across statewide policies and initiatives. As part of their five-year SPAN program, ADHS is focused on promoting nutrition standards and enhancing food procurement practices in worksites as a key strategy to improving Arizona's overall health and well-being.



# EXISTING STATEWIDE PSE INITIATIVES THAT SUPPORT FSG IN ARIZONA WORKSITES

Arizona has launched multiple evidence-based policy, systems, and environmental (PSE) initiatives to address population health that align with SPAN's worksite wellness goals. The ADHS and the Arizona Department of Administration (ADOA) serve as anchor institutions, driving the majority of current PSE worksite initiatives, reports, and resources.



[AzHIP](#) is a statewide initiative aimed at improving public health by addressing key health priorities through PSE changes to tackle issues such as chronic disease prevention, access to care, and health equity. In the context of worksite wellness, AzHIP supports initiatives that encourage healthier behaviors among employees by influencing the environments in which they work. As part of the Mental Health and Wellness strategy, Tactic A describes enhancing HAWP by helping employers actively promote mental health resources to their employees. In the Nutrition strategy, Tactic A describes supporting worksites in implementing food service guidelines to improve access to healthy food during work hours.

# STATEWIDE AGENCIES WHO SUPPORT FSG IN ARIZONA WORKSITES

## Digging into the HAWP Menu

The Healthy Arizona Worksites Program is a statewide initiative funded by the Arizona [Prop 303 Tobacco Tax](#) (ARS 36-770) to support employers in creating healthy workplace environments. HAWP provides Arizona employers with no cost training, technical assistance, tools, and resources to design, implement, and evaluate evidence-based worksite wellness initiatives. HAWP was initiated to engage worksites in the HiAP framework and the HAPI program for improving population health and well-being.

HAWP utilizes the [CDC Worksite Health ScoreCard](#) as a tool to evaluate their workplace health program PSEs. The ScoreCard completion can guide employers to create healthier workplaces, identify evidence-based strategies to lower the risk of chronic diseases in workers, and create a supportive work environment. The ScoreCard includes 14 nutrition-related questions to evaluate how effectively a workplace promotes healthy eating and provides employer resources to bolster their nutrition PSEs.

**The 2023 CDC ScoreCard HAWP Report revealed that while most HAWP worksites struggled to promote healthy food and beverage options in the workplace, they excelled at providing and promoting educational materials and resources that support healthy eating. (n=93)**

Does your worksite...	Yes	No
Promote a written policy that makes healthier food and beverage choices available in cafeterias or snack bars?	33%	67%
Have and promote a written policy that makes healthier food and beverage choices available in vending machines or other vending outlets?	40%	60%
Make most (more than 50%) of the food and beverage choices available at the worksite (in vending machines, cafeterias, snack bars, or other purchase points) healthy food items?	47%	59%
Have and promote a written policy making healthy food and beverage choices available in break rooms, meetings, conferences, or company sponsored events when food is served?	28%	72%
Provide educational materials that address healthy eating?	94%	7%
Provide and promote free or subsidized lifestyle coaching/counseling or self-management programs that equip employees with skills and motivation to set and meet their personal nutrition goals?	91%	9%

# SWOT ANALYSES

In efforts to understand the systems-level coordination of worksite wellness programs, SPAN evaluation conducted interviews and focus groups with representatives from HAWP, WELCOAZ, and Wellness AtoZ. This resulted in a SWOT analysis to understand the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the three worksite wellness programs. By understanding the internal and external influencing factors, SPAN may be better equipped to coordinate efforts to enhance the effectiveness and reach of the FSG strategy and improve workplace wellness and nutrition statewide.

## HAWP Interview

### Strengths

**Comprehensive Resources:** HAWP offers resources in 18 different wellness categories, which includes areas in nutrition, weight management, and maternal and child health.

**Diverse Sector Engagement:** HAWP engages a wide range of sectors, including community education, insurance, healthcare, manufacturing, and retail, aiming for inclusivity across Arizona businesses.

**Statewide Reach:** The program has a strong statewide presence, particularly in Pima and Maricopa counties, which tend to lead the state in HAWP activities.

### Weaknesses or Gaps

**Limited Follow-Up:** The program lacks follow-up mechanisms and health coaching, which if implemented could help worksites maintain and expand their wellness initiatives.

**Geographical Disparities:** While Pima and Maricopa counties are strong, other counties have limited participation and engagement, leading to uneven program implementation across the state.

**Dependency on Changing Partnerships:** The program's list of partners changes annually, which may affect the consistency and continuity of support and resources provided.

### Opportunities

**Collaboration with SPAN:** By sharing existing resources and/or creating new ones (ex., documents, newsletters, trainings, webinars, workshops) the agencies can enhance their program reach and impact.

**Expansion of Resources:** By enhancing existing resources and introducing new wellness categories, particularly in underrepresented areas like breastfeeding support, can broaden the program's appeal and effectiveness.

**Leveraging Strong Counties:** Statewide implementation can be strengthened by capitalizing on the success in Pima and Maricopa counties to model and replicate strategies in other regions.

### Threats or Challenges

**Barriers to Broader Implementation:** The challenge of reaching and engaging diverse worksites across Arizona, especially in regions with less established wellness programs, could limit the program's overall effectiveness.

**Funding Instability:** HAWP's reliance on the Prop 303 Tobacco Tax State Dollars presents a potential risk if there are changes in state budget priorities or if the funding is reduced, which could impact the program's sustainability and growth.

# Wellness Council of Arizona Interview

## Strengths

**Diverse Initiatives:** The program offers a variety of initiatives including presentations, webinars, food demos, lifestyle challenges, and health coaching. They are designed to create behavioral and lifestyle changes across multiple focus areas such as physical activity, nutrition, stress management, self-care, and disease management.

**Strong Partnerships:** The Wellness Council has established strong partnerships with health insurance plans, school districts, and grocery stores like Bashas'. These partnerships provide funding, resources, and networking and community engagement opportunities crucial for program reach and sustainability.

**Incentive Programs:** The use of incentives like gift cards and wellness-themed giveaways (funded by health plans) motivates participants to engage. This bolsters the program's participation rates and impact.

**Educational Focus:** The program emphasizes education and awareness, reflected in initiatives like the "Taste the Rainbow" and "Veg Out" challenges, as well as workshops on topics like intuitive eating. Worksites favor these educational components, which have high participant engagement.

## Weaknesses

**Technology Gap:** A significant program gap is the lack of a dedicated mobile app. Many competitors have mobile platforms that enhance user engagement and tracking. The Wellness Council is currently trying to partner with a company to address this gap however, funding remains a challenge.

**Limited Success in Certain Initiatives:** Some initiatives, such as meal prep challenges for blue-collar workers, have not been as successful. Thus, certain program aspects can be more effectively tailored to meet participants' variable needs.

**Loss of Key Partnerships:** The program has experienced the loss of partnerships with organizations like Pima County and public libraries due to internal issues or those organizations opting for different wellness programs (i.e. HAWP).

## Opportunities

**Expanding Networking and Partnerships:** WELCOAZ expressed efforts to expand its network, especially with educational institutions. Partnerships with organizations like HAWP and the Phoenix Business Journal also present opportunities for increased visibility and program recognition.

**Collaboration with SPAN:** There are opportunities to collaborate with the SPAN team to revamp food environments within organizations, such as improving cafeteria options and vending machines.

**Introduction of a Mobile App:** Developing a mobile app could greatly enhance participant engagement, especially with younger demographics who are more tech-savvy. This could also provide more personalized tracking and feedback.

## Threats

**Funding Instability:** The reliance on health insurance plans for funding poses a threat if these plans decide to reduce or withdraw support. This could impact the program's ability to continue offering certain initiatives or expand its reach.

**Technological Advancements:** The rapid advancement of technology in wellness programs (apps and virtual platforms) could leave the program behind if they cannot secure the necessary funding and partnerships to upgrade their initiatives.



# Wellness AtoZ Interview

## Strengths

**Comprehensive Toolkit:** The program offers a well-structured toolkit that includes resources like newsletters, healthy eating guidelines, and recommendations for on-site food services and catered meals.

**Strong Partnerships:** The program has strong collaborations with key partners such as Maricopa County Department of Public Health and Blue Cross Blue Shield.

**Employer Engagement:** The program has built a broad distribution list and a strong employer following, with organizations expressing interest in utilizing the wellness resources and tools provided.

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## Weaknesses

**Funding Challenges:** The program is currently paused due to a lack of funding. Historically, funding has come from corporate foundations, but the continued support has disappeared.

**Employer Interest:** There has been a noticeable decline in employer interest in supporting wellness initiatives, further compounded by the growing availability of alternative wellness resources.

**Post-COVID:** The changes in workplace dynamics such as the rise of hybrid and remote work environments, have created challenges in maintaining the relevance and effectiveness of traditional workplace wellness strategies.

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## Opportunities

### **Adapting to New Wellness Trends**

The emergence of community-focused wellness initiatives like Blue Zones presents an opportunity to adapt and integrate these broader health and wellness concepts into their programs.

**Expanding Digital Presence:** Given the funding limitations, focusing on website marketing strategies and social media outreach could help the program maintain its relevance and reach.

**Collaboration with SPAN:** The organization is open to collaborating and supporting efforts that improve community health, as long as they are not mandates on businesses to implement certain things.

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## Threats

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**Competitive Landscape:** The rise of other wellness resources (Blue Zones) available to businesses may reduce the appeal of the program.

**Funding:** Continued funding issues could threaten the sustainability of the program if alternative funding sources are not identified.

**Shift in Employer Priorities:** As workplace wellness priorities shift post-COVID, there is a risk that employers may deprioritize participation in traditional wellness programs.

# Integrated SWOT Summary

The integrated SWOT analysis of Arizona's worksite wellness programs—HAWP, WELCOAZ, and Wellness AtoZ—reveals key strengths and shared challenges that align with the SPAN FSG strategy. By identifying areas for collaboration, particularly in promoting healthier food options in workplaces, this analysis highlights opportunities to enhance the effectiveness of wellness initiatives and support the broader public health goals of the SPAN FSG strategy in fostering healthier work environments across the state.

## Strengths

All three programs exhibit strong community partnerships and engagement, particularly with local health organizations and school districts. These connections provide a solid foundation for the programs to expand their reach and influence. The emphasis on health education and promotion through various channels (newsletters, webinars, health challenges) is also a shared strength that helps promote healthier behaviors among participants.

## Weaknesses or Gaps

Funding limitations and technology gaps are common challenges across the programs. Each program struggles with maintaining or acquiring funding, which hinders their ability to innovate or expand services. Additionally, the lack of advanced technological tools, such as mobile apps, poses a barrier to fully engaging with participants, especially in a digitally-driven era.

## Opportunities

There are clear opportunities for collaboration, particularly in technology development and resource sharing. By combining resources, the programs could reach a broader audience, enhancing their shared goals and impact in promoting healthy behaviors. Additionally, joint wellness campaigns could leverage each program's unique strengths, such as pairing HAWP's extensive reach with WELCOAZ's incentive-based challenges.

## Threats

Changing health policies and economic conditions present external threats that could impact all three programs. Budget cuts or shifts in public health priorities could reduce funding, while employers could shift focus away from wellness initiatives in response to evolving priorities.

The analysis of HAWP, Wellness A to Z, and WELCOAZ, reveals both unique and shared characteristics that can be leveraged to enhance worksite wellness across Arizona. While each program has developed distinct approaches and strengths, they all face similar challenges, particularly in funding and technology. Moving forward, a strategic emphasis on collaboration and resource sharing could enhance their collective strengths to address common challenges.

# HEALTH EQUITY FOCUS AND LOCAL PARTNER ENGAGEMENT

## Arizona Department of Labor

The SPAN program is interested in exploring the Department of Labor (DOL) as an emerging opportunity to understand the food and distribution system of agricultural work environments and to promote health equity and support local partner engagement in these environments. The DOL oversees the [H-2A Temporary Agricultural Program](#) — or H-2A visa program — which allows employers to bring foreign workers to the U.S. for temporary agricultural work when there are not enough domestic workers available to perform temporary or seasonal agricultural work including, planting, cultivating, or harvesting labor. As part of this responsibility, the DOL conducts compliance visits, provides education, engages in community outreach, and ensures that employers adhere to the program's requirements.

For instance, employers must provide three meals per day to workers if the employer cannot offer housing with a kitchen. When employers choose to provide meals, they are required to ensure that the food is calorically and nutritionally adequate, consulting guidelines from credible sources such as the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH). In addition, they must ensure the safe storage and handling of all meals. Despite its oversight role, the AZ DOL does not have the specialized expertise in food safety and nutritional adequacy needed to address these specific concerns directly. In the summer of 2024, this gap led the AZ DOL to reach out to the ADHS and other local partners for guidance and assistance on issues related to H-2A worker meals.

### Concerns and Limitations

Health equity considerations include improper meal bundling and inadequate nutrition for H2A visa workers.



- **Food safety risks:** Employers often allow third-party operators to deliver meals early without ensuring proper temperature control.



- **Inadequate nutrition:** Meals provided are often insufficient to meet the high energy demands of H2A visa workers' physically demanding shifts.

The unique structure of the H-2A program, with non-traditional worksites and varying employer capabilities, makes applying FSGs challenging. ADHS is assessing its role and seeking guidance to address these issues, particularly in Yuma County, where local collaboration may be needed.

### Opportunities for Strategic Alignment

Activities related to this work may align with SPAN, especially in implementing state-level policies that promote food service and nutrition guidelines with a focus on health equity. This includes ensuring healthy food procurement in facilities and programs where food is sold, served, or distributed. Providing technical assistance to employers to improve nutrition policies can address health equity concerns. Given the specific meal requirements of the H-2A visa program, there is potential to enhance policies and practices across [Federal Foodservice Guidelines](#), such as food and nutrition standards, food safety, and community development, with an emphasis on equitable access to quality nutrition.

# Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation and Reentry

The SPAN program is interested in exploring the [Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation, and Reentry \(ADCRR\)](#) as a developing opportunity to understand the food and distribution system, promote health equity, and support local partner engagement in correctional settings. The ADCRR aims to enhance public safety across Arizona through modern, effective correctional practices and meaningful engagements. However, a review of the agency's [strategic plan](#) and [2024 strategic initiatives](#) revealed no mention of nutrition, food service, or health outcomes related to these areas. The focus on health equity within the plan was limited to healthcare services, without addressing how meal quality or how the overall food environment might impact inmate health.

The [FY 2025 ADCRR Operating Budget Request](#) includes a \$9 million investment in food services, reflecting the anticipated costs of a new contract. This includes funding to maintain an average meal cost of \$2.00 per inmate and covers the additional 832,000 meals required by the [Jensen Injunction](#), which mandates three meals per day for inmates in restricted housing, with no more than 14 hours between dinner and breakfast. While ADCRR has met the injunction's meal quantity and timing requirements with a 100% compliance rate, there is little focus on enhancing the nutritional quality of meals or the overall food environment in correctional facilities.

## Concerns and Limitations

The ADCRR's current approach to food service is heavily compliance-driven, with a focus on meeting the legal requirements of the Jensen Injunction.



- **Nutrition and Quality Concerns:** ADCRR ensures inmates receive mandated meals but does not prioritize meal quality, nutritional adequacy, or health outcomes.



- **Limited Improvement Efforts:** There is no indication that the ADCRR is actively seeking to improve its food service practices beyond meeting these baseline requirements.



- **Collaboration Barrier:** ADHS has no prior relationships or contacts with ADCRR to facilitate communication and partnership efforts.

Engaging with the ADCRR would require a substantial investment of time and resources to build relationships, understand their goals, and align any proposed initiatives with their priorities.

## Opportunities for Strategic Alignment

Despite these challenges, there may be opportunities to align SPAN and ADCRR work by implementing state-level policies that enhance food service and nutrition standards within correctional facilities, with a health equity focus. Given the \$9 million investment in food services and the upcoming contract renewal, there is an opportunity to advocate for improved nutritional standards and food safety practices that promote health equity. Technical assistance could be provided to the ADCRR to help integrate these standards, drawing on successful examples from [other states](#) that have enhanced meal quality in correctional settings. Efforts could focus on increasing meal variety, nutrient density, and/or promoting food dignity, all within the constraints of the current budget.

# Federal Resources That Support FSG and Workplace Health

The CDC [Workplace Health Improvement Plan](#) is a key initiative designed to support employers in creating and maintaining science-based workplace health promotion programs. This plan emphasizes improving employee health, safety, and well-being by providing leadership, tools, and resources. The plan focuses on three main goals: getting more employers to offer health programs, improving the quality of these programs, and setting standards for what works best in workplace health.

## Resources



The CDC's [National Healthy Worksite Assessment Tools](#): A webinar on tools developed specifically for the National Healthy Worksite Program (NHWP) including: The CDC Worksite Health ScoreCard; CDC NHWP Employee Health Assessment (CAPTURE); and CDC NHWP Health and Safety Climate Survey (INPUTS).



The [Strategies for Building a Workplace Health Program](#) outlines a four-step process to develop and improve workplace health promotion programs guided by the [Workplace Health Model](#) and [Development Checklist](#) is a tool employers can use throughout these steps to review activities and track progress, ensuring a thorough and successful implementation of workplace health initiatives.



The [Work@Health Program Training](#) provides employers with the knowledge and skills needed to build and sustain an evidence-based workplace health program. It combines web-based and in-person training sessions, led by certified trainers, to enhance participants' capacity for implementing effective health initiatives in the workplace.



The CDC's [Work@Health Core Curriculum](#) provides employers with essential skills to develop workplace health programs through eight core training modules, with a [Train-the-Trainer program](#) focusing on effective training delivery and creating a positive learning environment. [Wellness Champions](#) are recognized organizations that promote the Work@Health program within their networks, assisting with outreach and follow-up activities.



The [CDC's Physical Activity in the Workplace](#) offers strategies to promote employee physical activity and highlights benefits like improved health and productivity. It also provides actionable steps for employers to create a supportive environment. *Note:* While physical activity does not directly relate to FSG, there is a broad public health appreciation for the collective impact that nutrition and physical activity can have on health outcomes, and of their relationship to each other.

# NEXT ON THE MENU: MOVING FORWARD IN YEAR 2

## Conduct and Enhance Partner Engagement

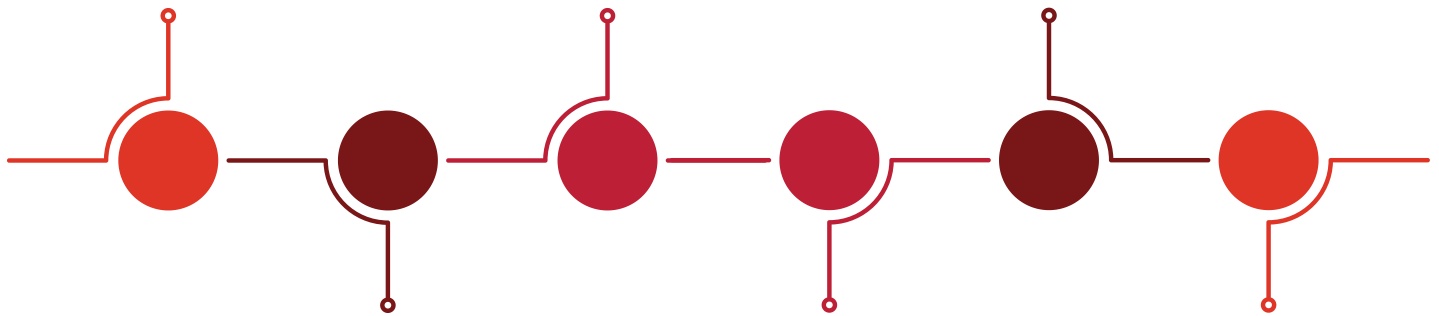
Engage with key stakeholders, including state agencies, employers, worksite representatives, food service vendors, and public health officials to gather valuable feedback, refine FSG implementation, and build broad support across various environments.

## Pilot FSG Implementation

Launch pilot programs as a part of existing worksite wellness initiatives, focusing on high-impact sectors such as nutrition and health management. These initiatives offer a captive audience and strong participant engagement, making it ideal for testing FSGs.

## Policy Alignment Review

Review existing state policies to ensure alignment with the new FSG. Identify any policy gaps or conflicts that need to be addressed to facilitate smooth implementation. Consider aligning with national FSG models and incorporating best practices from [other states](#).



## Assess Nutritional Quality

Conduct an in-depth assessment of the current nutritional quality of meals provided at worksites. This assessment should focus on identifying gaps where the FSG can improve food offerings, considering local dietary habits and preferences.

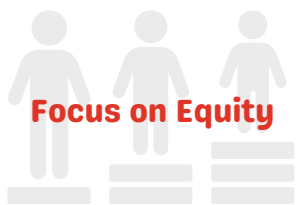
## Advocate for Policy Support

Collaborate with state policymakers to develop and promote specific and supportive policies that incentivize FSG adoption in both public and private sectors.

## Capacity Building and Training

Consider implementing training programs for food service providers, worksite wellness coordinators, and other relevant personnel. Training should focus on the importance of the FSG, how to implement them effectively, and strategies to overcome common challenges.

## Recommendations: The Recipe for Success



### Focus on Equity

Ensure that the FSG consider and address equity issues. This includes making healthy food options accessible and affordable for all employees, particularly those in low-income or marginalized communities such as DOL and DOC partnerships.



### Leverage Partnerships for Resource Sharing

Collaborate with worksite wellness programs to share existing resources and create new ones, such as newsletters, trainings, toolkits, and workshops. This strategy is common and highly requested for broad support and reach.



### Tailor FSG Implementation

Begin with a phased approach to implementing FSG, focusing first on high-impact settings. Gradually expand to other worksites, customizing the guidelines to meet the specific needs of various environments, including urban vs. rural areas and large vs. small worksites.



### Establish and Strengthen Data Collection and Monitoring

Consider implementing a standardized statewide data system across all participating worksites to track the implementation and impact of FSG. This could gather data on menu offerings, nutritional quality, compliance rates, and employee satisfaction with food choices.