



PERSONNEL AND  
READINESS

**UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE**  
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

The Honorable James M. Inhofe  
Chairman  
Committee on Armed Services  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

**JUN 29 2020**

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The Department's response to House Report 116-84, page 62, accompanying H.R. 2968, the Department of Defense (DoD) Appropriations Act, 2020, is enclosed.

The report includes details of the Department's ongoing efforts in food transformation, costs associated with each effort, and an outline for a potential demonstration pilot program at multiple military installations. Building on past food service transformation efforts, we are looking across all sectors of the DoD food environment to identify opportunities for modernizing the on-installation food service system.

Thank you for your continued support of the health and well-being of our Service members, veterans, and families. I am sending identical letters to the other congressional defense committees.

Sincerely,

//Signed//

Matthew P. Donovan

US Under Secretary of Defense for P&R

Enclosure:  
As stated



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**JUN 29 2020**

The Honorable Jack Reed  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Armed Services  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Reed:

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**JUN 29 2020**

The Honorable Adam Smith  
Chairman  
Committee on Armed Services  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

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The Honorable William M. "Mac" Thornberry  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Armed Services  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

**JUN 29 2020**

Dear Representative Thornberry:

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The Honorable Richard C. Shelby  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Defense  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

**JUN 29 2020**

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The Honorable Richard J. Durbin  
Vice Chairman  
Subcommittee on Defense  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

**JUN 29 2020**

Dear Senator Durbin:

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The Honorable Peter J. Visclosky  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Defense  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

**JUN 29 2020**

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The Honorable Ken Calvert  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Defense  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

**JUN 29 2020**

Dear Representative Calvert:

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# REPORT TO CONGRESSIONAL DEFENSE COMMITTEES



**House Report 116-84, page 62, accompanying H.R. 2968, the Department of Defense  
Appropriations Act 2020, “Military Food Transformation Efforts”**

The estimated cost of this report or study for the Department of Defense (DoD) is approximately \$4,500 for the 2020 Fiscal Year. This includes \$0 in expenses and \$4,500 in DoD labor.

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## 1.0 Purpose

This report responds to House Report 116-84, page 62, accompanying H.R. 2968, the Department of Defense (DoD) Appropriations Act, 2020, which requested that the Secretary of Defense submit a report to the congressional defense committees concerning the DoD's ongoing food transformation efforts, including the costs associated with each effort, and a discussion of demonstration pilot programs at multiple military installations.

As requested, this report includes:

1. An overview of the ongoing DoD efforts and associated costs to transform food and nutrition in support of improving Service member readiness and optimizing the warfighter's performance.
2. A description of pilot demonstration programs at multiple military installations.

## 2.0 Background

Overview of the DoD Food Environment. The DoD identified five major sectors of the food environment in its review of the "ongoing food transformation efforts" across the Department:

1. **Food Acquisition:** Selection, acquisition, storage, and delivery of food products from prime vendor to Service members. Includes the process of revising and designing menus, contract determination, and product selection for nonappropriated funded (NAF) and appropriated funded (APF)<sup>1</sup> venues.
2. **Food Preparation:** Preparation of meals and/or snacks at NAF and APF venues. Includes education and training of food service staff, in addition to customers who purchase and prepare their own food.
3. **Food Delivery and Access:** Distribution of food across the installation to all food venues and presentation of prepared food to customers. Time, number of food venues in operation, and cost of food items, among other factors, impact access.
4. **Nutrition Education:** Education through programs, targeted intervention, wellness campaigns, marketing, and/or personal counseling.
5. **Research & Assessment:** Research, assessment, and evaluation to investigate the impact of food and nutrition interventions and the state of nutrition across socio-ecological levels.

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<sup>1</sup> APF venues (e.g., DFACs) use dollars appropriated from the U.S. Treasury by Congress for specific purposes. NAF venues (e.g., bowling centers, golf courses) must generate their own revenue used to support DoD military personnel and their families.

Method for DoD Food Service Transformation Efforts. Building on past food service transformation efforts (e.g., Healthy Base Initiative<sup>2</sup>), the DoD is working to “modernize the on-installation food service system” by holistically addressing opportunities to provide consistent access to healthy food options and empower behavior change for optimal nutritional fitness. The following general method is used across the DoD for food service transformation efforts:

1. **Assess:** Identify requirements, capabilities, and gaps to transform the food environment for a ready and resilient force through collaborative bodies of experts and leaders across all sectors of the food environment.
2. **Design, Develop, and Implement:** Develop new and improve current policies, business processes, and initiatives to address the specific challenges Service members face in accessing and habitually choosing healthy food.
3. **Evaluate:** Collaborate across the DoD to create the capability to assess and improve the nutritional environment and fitness of Service members and clarify authority and governance for food and nutrition-related activities to accelerate progress and increase collaboration.

Governance for DoD Food Transformation. There is no single owner of nutrition policy and food and beverage operations in the DoD. Stakeholders in the DoD food environment include multiple components within the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment, the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering, and the Military Departments are represented on four distinct executive boards that address components of the food environment.

### **3.0 Focus Area 1: Food Transformation Efforts**

The DoD conducted an environmental scan to identify the “ongoing food transformation efforts” across the DoD food environment. Several DoD Components and the Military Services are working to meet the nutritional needs and requests of Service members and their families. This section of the report will outline a broad sample of current food transformation efforts.

Transforming Food Acquisition. The DoD is updating acquisition strategies, processes, and policies to improve the Military Services’ ability to provide a variety of healthy food options on base. Changes in this sector are vital for the success of installation-level programs that seek to change individual eating behaviors.

- The Military Departments and the Defense Logistics Agency collaborated to develop consistent and robust food purchasing guides for each Service, which will enable greater purchasing power and food quality consistency. These Service Buyer’s

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<sup>2</sup> HBI was a short-term (2014-2015) demonstration project on 14 installations that tested 27 evidence-based interventions to promote healthy lifestyles, reduce obesity, and reduce tobacco use among Service members and their families.

Guides will utilize the DoD Menu Standards, which reflect updated nutrition requirements, as well as U.S. Department of Agriculture and Food and Drug Administration standards.

- Through the Joint Services Prime Vendor Program, the Military Departments combine the purchasing power of NAF food service activities to eliminate the need to compete individually for food requirements, which lowers food costs, increases food quality, and supports healthier menus.
- Each Service is actively working to enhance the types and quality of foods they serve to optimize nutritional readiness and performance, adding more whole grains, fresh produce, special diet options (e.g., kosher, gluten-free, vegan, or vegetarian), and healthier recipes.
- The United States Marine Corps (USMC) began using a nutritionally driven meal plate allowance in lieu of a basic daily food allowance to provide optimal fueling to the Marine warfighters.
- The Defense Logistics Agency is conducting a feasibility study on migrating Service-specific food environment information technology systems into a joint food management system and is gathering system requests from the Services, such as the ability to distribute newly updated and nutritionally adequate recipes to installation dining facilities.

Transforming Food Preparation. The DoD is improving recipes, equipment, and food service training to help food establishments meet nutrition standards, satisfy palates, incorporate new food service equipment, and change eating behaviors.

- USMC will implement new point of sale technology in Q3/Q4 2020, which provides recipe nutritional analysis. Expected implementation cost is \$450,000, which includes updated menu boards, menus, and marketing materials.
- The Armed Forces Recipe Service is updating 1600+ recipes and guideline cards for improved nutrition and palatability and has revised or archived 656 legacy recipes and developed 856 new recipes to date. In accordance with Go-for-Green® (G4G®), the recipe collection began as 40 percent red, 40 percent yellow, and 20 percent green, and is now 20 percent red, 42 percent yellow, and 35 percent green to scale back on less nutrient dense, less performance optimizing options while maintaining some psychologically comforting items.
- Since fall 2019, U.S. Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine has pushed out two more recipe downloads of approximately 50 new green-coded recipes. The Military Services continue to update their menus to implement G4G® concepts, add more plant-based protein options, and reduce deep-fried menu items and added butter and salt.

- Food 2.0 industry partners continue to introduce new recipes to meet Service member demands and have met a goal of 50 percent green-coded entrée items on menus.
- The Navy Preventive Medicine Department provides trainings for food handlers and food managers at all commands to improve food safety.

Transforming Food Delivery and Access. The DoD is applying lessons learned from previous food service transformation efforts, changing how food is delivered and helping Service members more easily access healthy foods.

- USMC is innovating to expand the use of unmanned micro-marts and pop-up restaurants to provide healthy and nutritious foods when and where it is convenient for Marines. Third-party delivery and bicycle or golf cart delivery systems are in pilot. Costs for development and execution of the pilot were approximately \$50,000.
- Navy Dietetics and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provided an overview of behavioral design to medical and facility management at Navy Medicine Readiness Training Command (NMRTC) Jacksonville and worked with the NMRTC to make changes to micromarkets including: (1) making healthier options easier to see and more accessible; (2) increasing the proportion and variety of healthy items in all sections; (3) increasing healthy options on signage; (4) adjusting shelving, lighting, flow paths, colors, and payment methods to encourage customers to slow down and make more rational, healthy choices. The Jacksonville NMRTC micromarket now has the highest percentage of healthy options and is the best performing micromarket in the region.
- Air Force Services Center (AFSVC) has focused on improving the quality and convenience of healthy “Grab n Go” selections, given many airmen’s reliance of fast food prior to joining the military. The United States Air Force (USAF) Smart Fueling Initiative led to expanding fresh food delivery in the form of a massive salad bar that feeds 1,500 cadets at the USAF Academy. A dietitian is studying the effect of streamlining menu choices to model high performance foods at Lackland Air Force Base, where new recruits begin their USAF careers.
- USMC Installations Command tailored its menus to align caloric load to the training demands of initial training units, USMC Special Operations Command, USMC Warfare Training Center, and School of Infantry. Menus are developed to meet nutritional unit activity levels and are not based solely on costs.
- DoD is aligning with the CDC Vending Machine recommendations, and Army and Air Force Exchange Service is increasing to 50 percent Fit Pick and/or healthy-only vending.

Transforming Nutrition Education. The DoD continues to develop, revise, implement, and evaluate nutrition education programs across the military community to empower individuals to make healthy choices. The DoD is also exploring ways to align better nutrition standards among NAF and APF venues.

- The USAF Food 2.0 partner proposed a wellness initiative in two to three dining facilities (DFAC) by incentivizing green-coded selections and measuring behavior changes in meal selection. AFSVC Registered Dietitian Nutritionist requested the required \$2,000 from USAF Surgeon General and Consortium for Health and Military Performance (CHAMP) to conduct this study, but funding has not yet been acquired.
- The Semper Fit Health Promotion Program expands accessibility to healthy food for Marines by utilizing installation health educators to provide nutrition education, including promotion of healthy options across the installation food environment. The Semper Fit Health Promotion Program intends to continue its current efforts and work collaboratively with the other Military Departments to identify and establish commonalities in nutrition education across installation food environments enterprise-wide. This will include the development of a performance nutrition curriculum for health educators and is being developed in partnership with headquarters Commander Naval Installations Command and Installation and Logistics Command Performance Dietitian. Curriculum costs include content development, printing/shipping program materials, and health educator training. The estimated cost for the initiative is \$100,000.
- The Military Services and multiple DoD components are updating and implementing G4G®, which uses healthy recipes, food labeling, choice architecture, and other innovative solutions as a guide to help Service members make healthy eating decisions. The USMC's version of G4G® is called Fueled to Fight, and Army combined G4G® with U.S. Special Operations Command nutritional standards in its DFACs. USAF teaches G4G® to food service managers every 2 months at AFSVC.

Transforming Research & Assessment. The DoD is developing assessment tools and conducting several research studies to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of programs, policies, products, and other efforts that aim to improve access to healthy food.

- Installations across the Military Services use the Military Nutrition Environment Assessment Tool (mNEAT) to evaluate APF and NAF food service venues and develop action plans to improve food options that support optimal human performance. The Services are collaborating with CHAMP at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences to update mNEAT 2.0 to mNEAT 3.0; develop a mobile app for rapid and standardized data acquisition; and test the app's effectiveness in promoting a healthier nutrition environment.

- USMC representatives participated in a pilot of mNEAT 3.0 in January 2020, and will roll out the tool across the USMC once a system platform is established. Costs for the pilot at Cherry Point were approximately \$4,000. Roll out of mNEAT 3.0 across the entire USMC enterprise is estimated to cost approximately \$60,000 annually.
- AFSVC pilot tested mNEAT 3.0 at Joint Base San Antonio Randolph and Lackland. The Food 2.0 Randolph DFAC and the Lackland G4G® 1.0 Legacy DFACs successfully demonstrated that the revised tool does capture healthy food initiatives as demonstrated by a higher score on DFACs that have placed higher emphasis on healthy foods.

#### **4.0 Focus Area 2: Demonstration Pilot Programs at Multiple Military Installations**

The Military Services regularly collaborate through the DoD Nutrition Committee and leverage shared best practices and lessons learned to tailor their initiatives to best address the unique needs of their populations. However, each Military Service population is different, with its own unique challenges, opportunities, and ways of addressing a common goal of improving nutritional fitness in support of optimizing human performance. This section of the report will outline a sample of current food transformation pilots at multiple military installations.

- USMC is conducting pilots for testing various delivery models and partnerships for increasing access to healthy and nutritious foods to on-base communities. Partnerships with third-party commercial food delivery companies are under viability analysis. Technology is also in development to increase delivery and online ordering capabilities. Restaurants – both third-party concessionaires and those directly operated by USMC Community Services – that feature healthier menus are the primary focus of these efforts. Costs of delivery will be passed primarily to the customers; however, start-up costs and technology are estimated to be \$100,000.
- Six Navy sites conducted a pilot study on the Nourish Food Literacy Program. It had a 95 percent success rate with 100+ families. This program is designed to begin meaningful conversations about food and motivate Service members and their families to consider what they eat in order to make better decisions. This program focused on changing habits at home, as opposed to the work place. This program can be revisited and re-piloted to include updated tools and initiatives, including G4G®.



## 5.0 Conclusion

Building on past food service transformation efforts, the DoD is looking across all sectors of the DoD food environment to identify and address barriers to, and opportunities for, modernizing the on-installation food service system. Currently, DoD is:

- Improving on-base accessibility to healthy food through system-wide improvements, such as the Services Buyers' Guides, and through new and improved policies, programs, and initiatives. It is also establishing and solidifying partnerships with industry to learn and apply best practices for improving the DoD food environment. (Focus Area 1).
- Testing new business models in order to increase the availability, affordability, and acceptability of healthy performance foods. (Focus Area 2).

Once established, a new collaborative body will review, document, and evaluate current food service transformation efforts across the Department, and will develop a coordinated, DoD-wide plan for improving on-base accessibility to healthy food that builds on current momentum.