

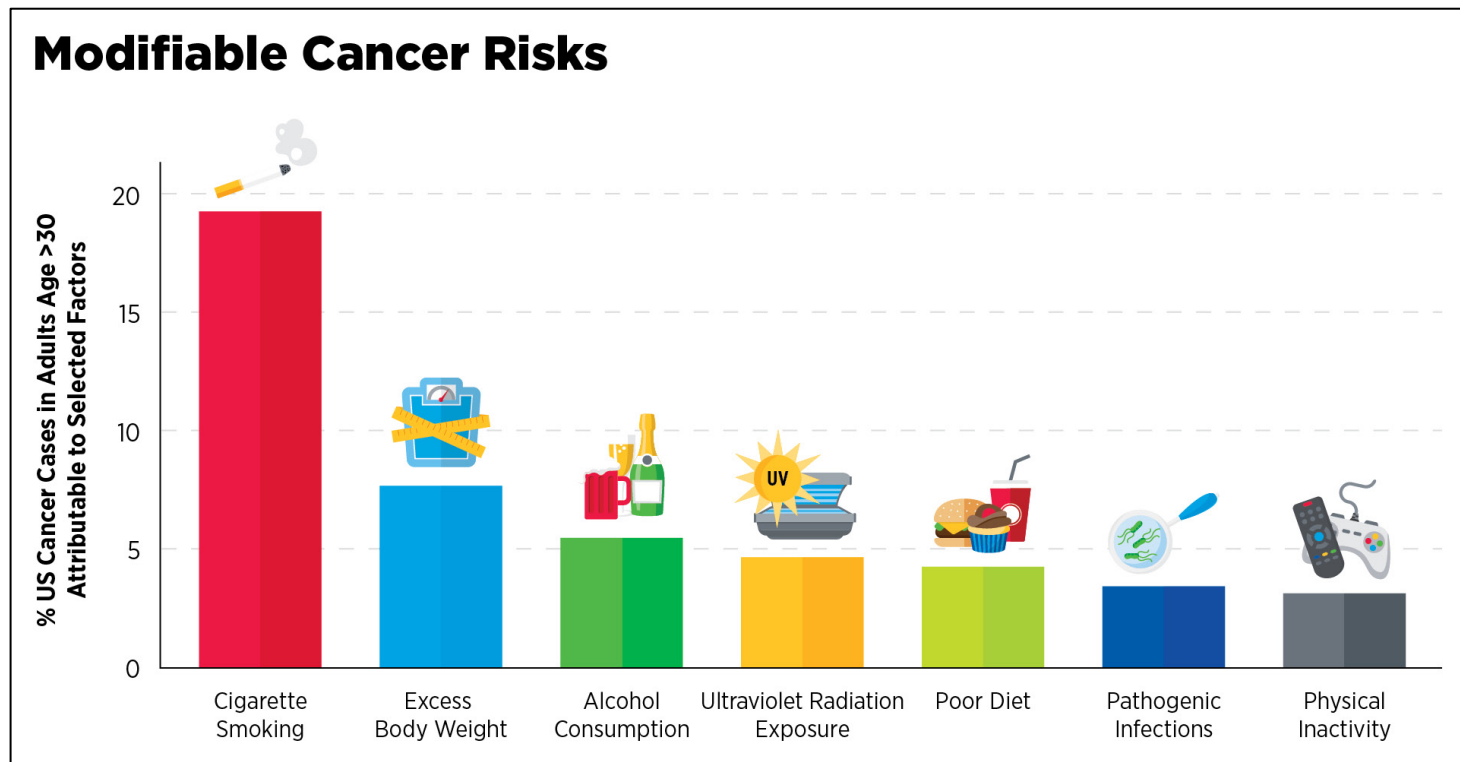
# Dietary Patterns in the Context of Daily Living

## *Insights from NCCOR*

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**Jill Reedy, PhD, MPH, RDN**  
*National Cancer Institute*

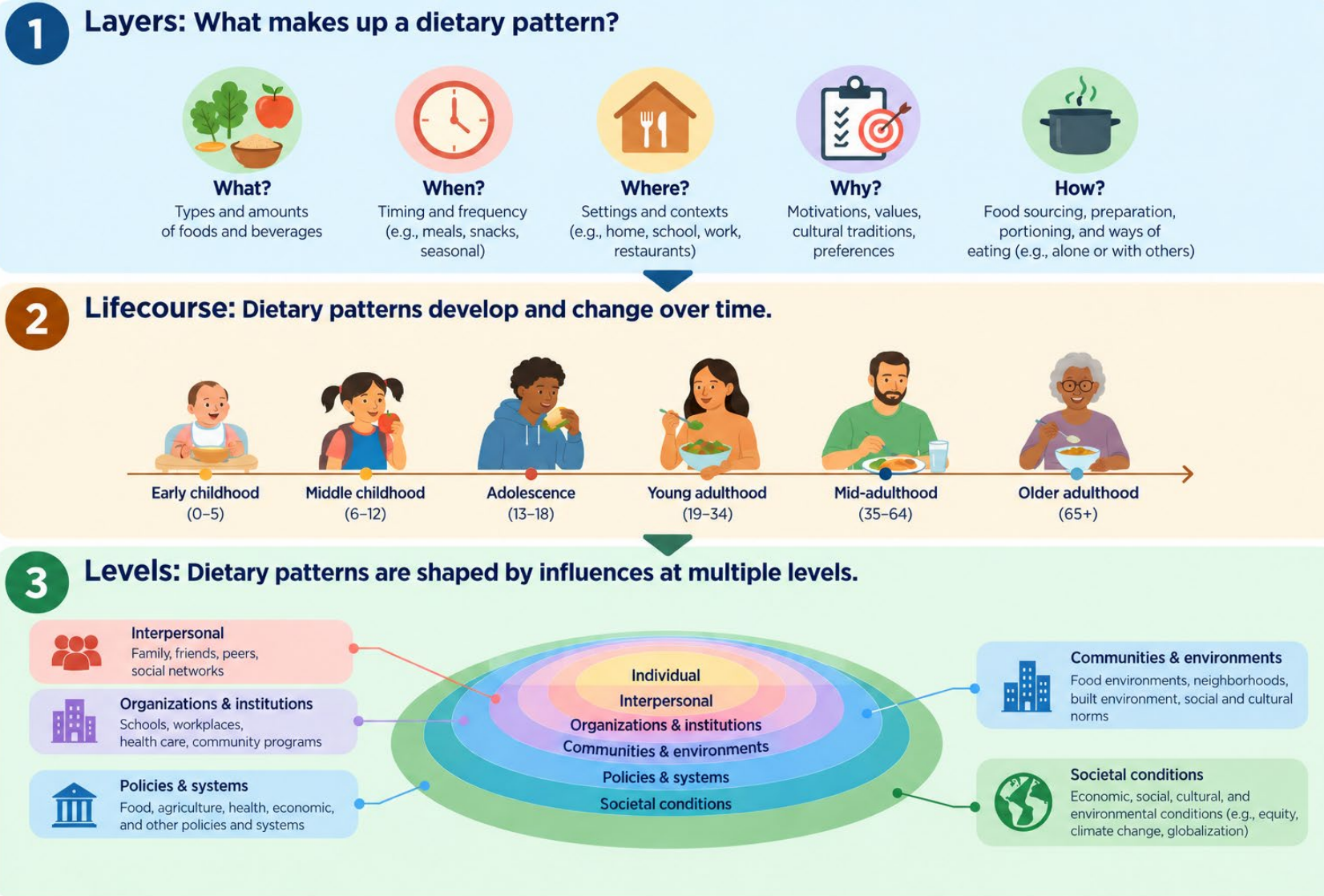
# Dietary patterns are important to health—and modifiable



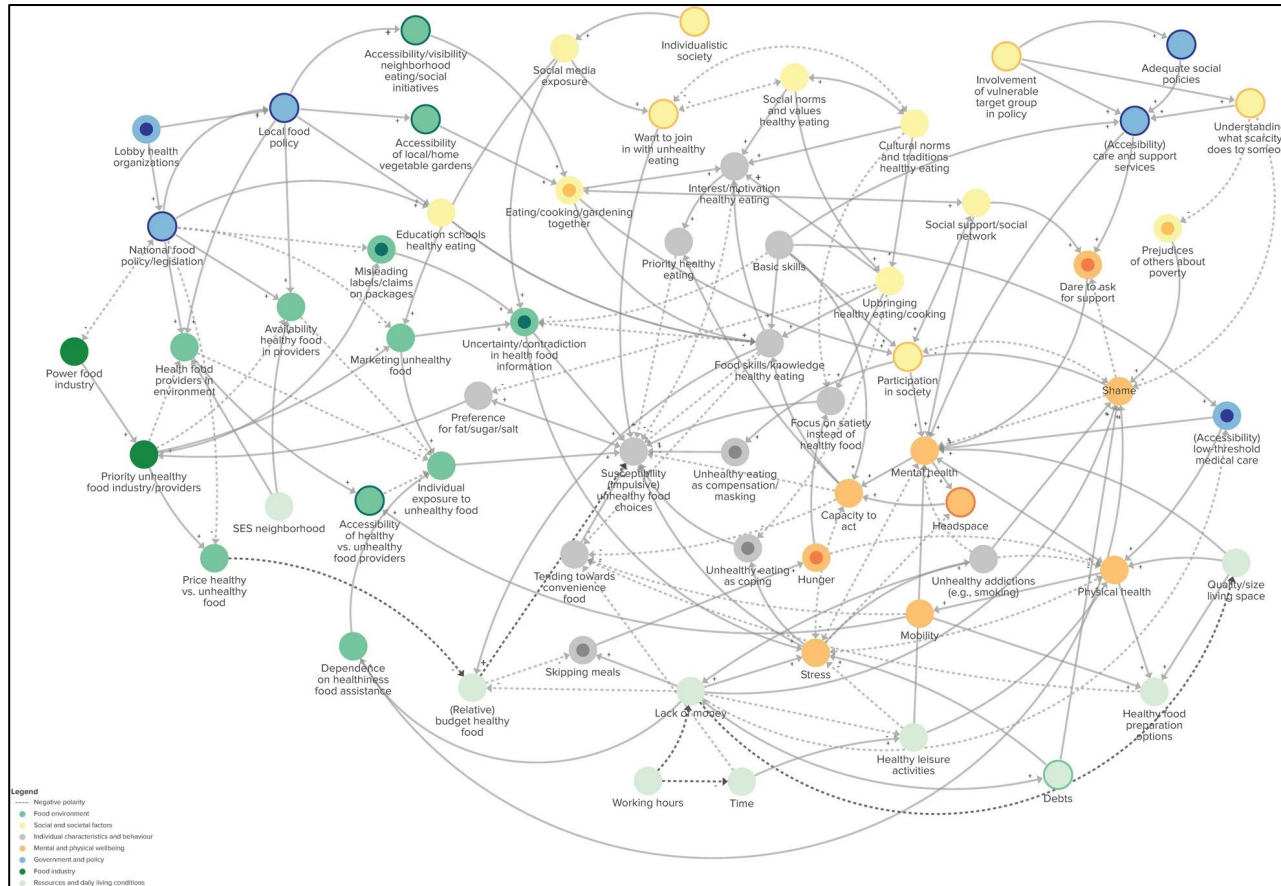
# Questions to consider

- **Patterns:** How do we conceptualize dietary patterns?
- **Complexity and dynamism:** What do complexity and dynamism require?
- **Collaboration:** How can collaboration advance whole-of-systems approaches?
- **Looking ahead:** Where do we go from here?

# Dietary patterns: layers, life course, and levels



# Complexity requires collaborative research infrastructure



# A collaborative response to a complex priority

As a partnership of major funders addressing obesity and health, NCCOR builds evidence and advances practice on strategic priorities in children's nutrition, physical activity, obesity prevention, and overall well-being through the following approaches:

- 1. Collaborating across disciplines and sectors**
- 2. Developing and promoting tools and resources**
- 3. Translating research into practice**

NCCOR brings together the **four largest funders of childhood obesity research.**

NCCOR's mission is to build evidence and advance practice to reduce childhood obesity in the United States, creating a healthier future for all children, their families, and communities.



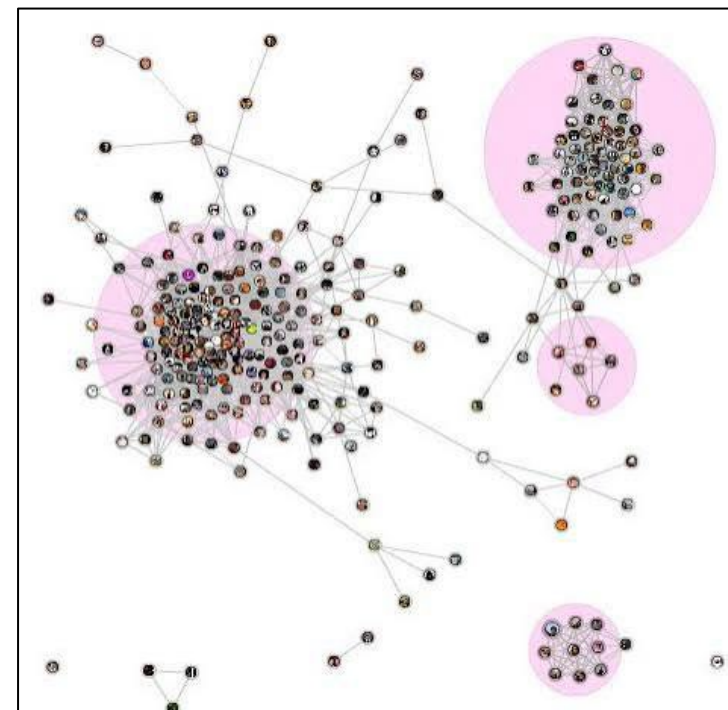
## Obesity-Related Policy, Systems, and Environmental Research in the U.S.



- Two-part virtual workshop series (June and October 2024) to explore how policy, systems, and environmental interventions can improve access to healthy nutrition and physical activity for children, families, and communities
- **Goals:**
  - Understand key learnings from past work
  - Explore critical methodological issues
  - Inform future directions for the field

# What did we learn?

- Leverage broader methods and partners
- Allow time for meaningful change
- Measure what matters
- Build capacity across the partnership



# Leverage broader methods & partners

- Broader methodological lens for research
- Co-creation with partners – broadly defined
- Involvement of multiple stakeholders, approaches, and societal sectors
- Approaches that embrace complexity
- Natural experiments
- Comprehensive, multicomponent approaches vs. only one or a few communities, outcomes, or individual features/changes

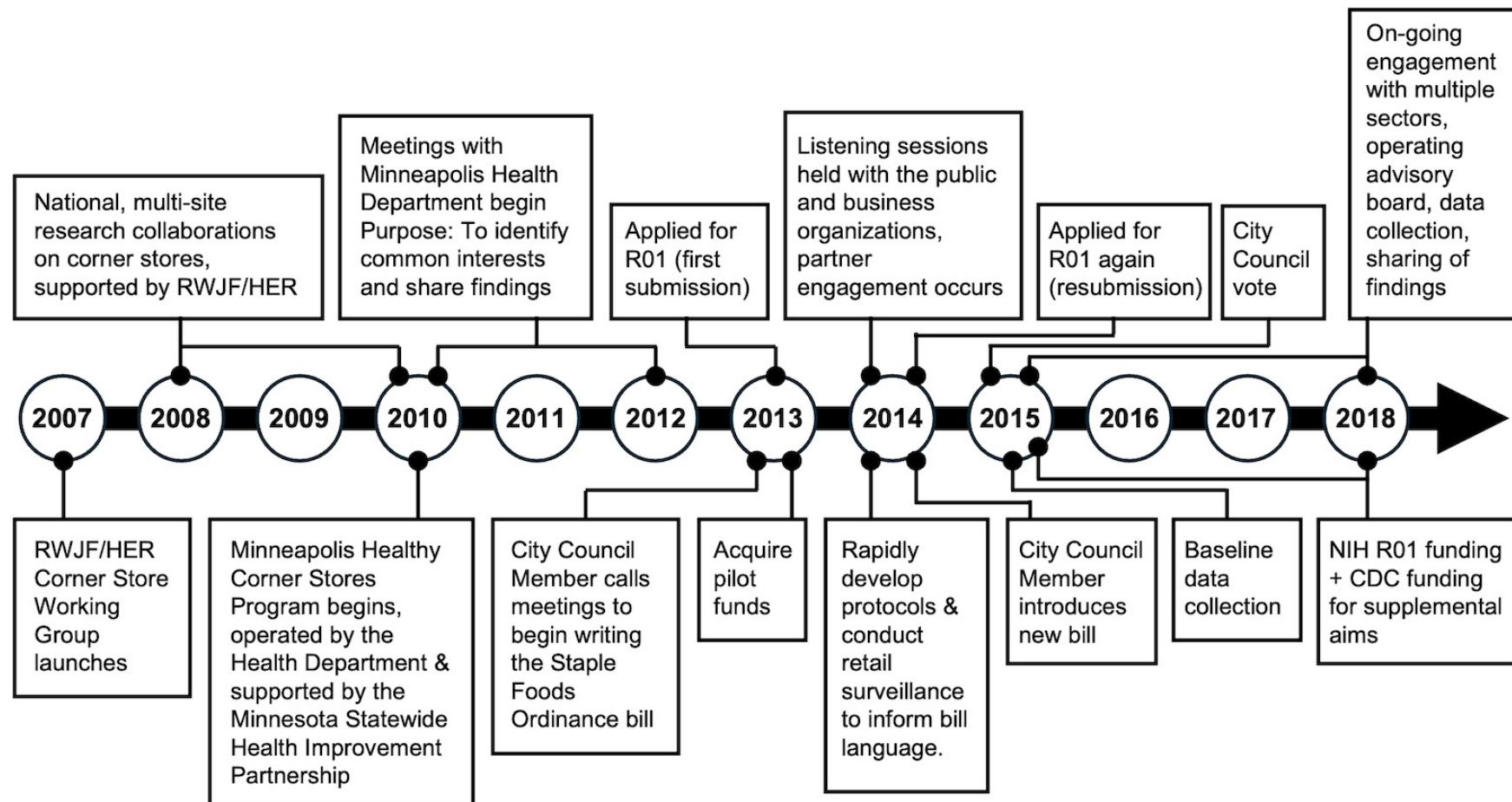


# Allow time for meaningful change

- Time needed to plan for, implement, and evaluate the impact of strategies far exceeds a typical funding cycle
- Unplanned delays
- Understanding and planning for what else needs to be measured
- Emergence of population-level impacts of changes on behaviors
- Establishing and maintaining trust
- Higher investments of time and resources with communities

*Example:*

## Partnership with local government to improve healthy food retail



# Measure what matters

- Research should account for factors and outcomes most relevant to stakeholders and partners
- Nutrition and weight-related outcomes are important downstream consequences of multiple complex factors operating in different timeframes and at different points of impact
- Assessing upstream or distal determinants can be important
- Identifying and measuring the outcomes most salient for decision makers and stakeholders



# Selected Tools, Approaches, and Resources for Studying Dietary Patterns

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## ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Gather high-quality dietary intake data



**ASA24**

Automated Self-Administered 24-Hour Dietary Assessment Tool



<https://epi.grants.cancer.gov/asa24>

Web-based, self-administered 24-hour dietary recall

**DHQIII**

Diet History Questionnaire



Self-administered food frequency questionnaire (FFQ)

<https://epi.grants.cancer.gov/dhq>

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## ANALYSIS APPROACHES

Translate intake data into meaningful dietary pattern measures



Measures diet quality relative to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans

<https://epi.grants.cancer.gov/hei/>



**WCRF/AICR  
SCORE**

Assesses adherence to the WCRF/AICR Cancer Prevention Recommendations

<https://epi.grants.cancer.gov/wcrf-aicr-score>

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## RESOURCES

Guidance, registries, and surveillance information to strengthen and integrate research and practice



### Dietary Assessment Primer

A comprehensive guide to dietary assessment methods, with practical considerations for research and practice.

<https://dietaryassessmentprimer.cancer.gov>



### NCCOR Measures Registry Resource Suite

A searchable database of measures, with detailed information on their characteristics and use.

<https://www.nccor.org/nccor-tools/mrresourcesuite>



### NCCOR Catalogue of Surveillance Systems

A database of nutrition-related surveillance systems, including information on dietary data, population coverage, and methods.

<https://tools.nccor.org/css>



### NCCOR Student Hub

Educational resources and training opportunities for the next generation of nutrition researchers.

<https://www.nccor.org/student-hub>

# Build capacity across the partnership

- Essential for pursuing relevant and timely research questions
- Systems science methods and implementation science
- Understanding program-relevant data and its collection
- Design thinking – to authentically engage partners
- Whole-of-systems approaches
- Frameworks that examine community features and health outcomes



# Current and upcoming opportunities

NCCOR COMMENTARY

**Advancing policy, systems and environmental change research to reverse upward trends in obesity prevalence—a new call to action** in *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*

- **OPUS Call to Action Paper:** Published in 2026
- **NCI/NIH Obesity Supplement Grantee Learning Network Paper:** In process
- **NASEM Community Engaged Research to Improve Diet & Health Workshop:** September 2026
- **NIDDK Early Research Partnership Engagement Challenge:** October 1, 2026
- **NIH Highlighted topics:** with NCI, NINR, and other involvement
  - HT48: Advancing Nutrition Research to Inform Regulatory Practice
  - HT60: GLP-1s: Implications for Nutritional Status and Metabolic Health Outcomes
  - HT78: Food Is Medicine
  - HT140: Advancing Multi-Level Intervention Research to Address Diet-Related Diseases Across the Lifespan
- **NIH Pathways to Prevention Workshop on Multi-Level Nutrition Interventions:** Late 2027
- **National Cancer Advisory Board:** Ad hoc Working Group on Strategic Approaches and Opportunities in Multi-Level and Systems Interventions in Cancer Control

# Additional recent NCCOR projects

- **Workshop:** Clinical Research Gaps in Pediatric Obesity Pharmacotherapy
  - White paper coming soon!
- **Workshop:** Revisiting Rapid Infant Growth: Assessing Longitudinal Growth in Children Under Age 2 Years
- **Workshop:** Defining Quality Youth Sports Environments: A Conceptual Framework and Examples from the Field
- **Tool:** Physical Activity Research Opportunities (PARO) framework
- **Tool:** Implementation Scorecard: A Decision-Making Companion for Practitioners



[www.nccor.org](http://www.nccor.org)



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If you are interested in learning more about NCCOR or attending any upcoming events, please email:

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Coordinates and facilitates NCCOR meetings, projects, and workgroups



Creates and promotes NCCOR products with marketing and communication expertise



Provides technical scientific support to translate and disseminates NCCOR work into publications, webinars, and presentations



Building Evidence and Advancing Practice for Healthy Children, Families, and Communities



## Looking ahead

- Dietary patterns are embedded in daily living
- Understanding dietary patterns in context requires knowledge of how those influences are experienced and interact in everyday life
- Authentic community engagement changes how we do nutrition research

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# OPUS learnings

- **Systems thinking:** An approach to problem-solving and innovation that views problems as part of an interconnected system with various parts that dynamically interact with and influence each other
- **Multi-level approach:** Examining and addressing complex problems by considering factors operating at various levels of society, including individual characteristics, physical and social environments, and the broader policy landscape
- **Multi-sectoral approach:** Integrated efforts across sectors, agencies, and disciplines to address complex challenges, foster resource sharing, reduce redundancies, and enable innovative solutions

# Notice of Special Interest, October 2024

**Purpose:** To build capacity and readiness for the development of *whole-of-systems* approaches to addressing obesity for cancer prevention and control via policy, systems, and environmental (PSE) approaches

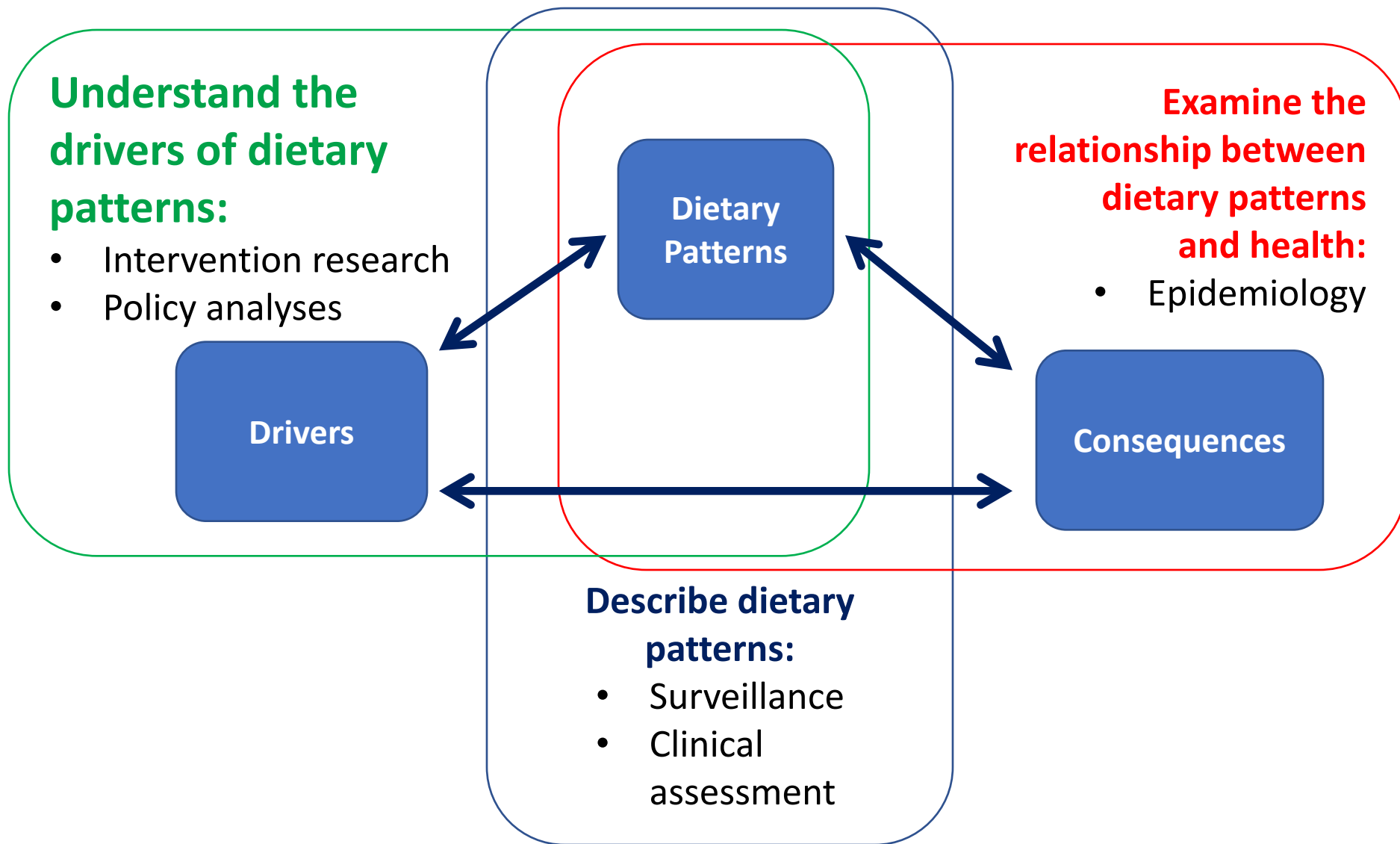
1. Describe prevalence of obesity in defined geographic areas of interest.
2. Conduct an environmental scan to identify key collaborators and summarize the policy landscape.
3. Convene groups to discuss community readiness to develop a whole-of-systems approach to obesity.

# Access the OPUS materials on the NCCOR website

- Workshop recordings
- Slides
- OPUS I and II white papers
- Co-chair commentary
- OPUS Learning Guides



[www.nccor.org](http://www.nccor.org)



# NCCOR's foundational research tools

