

2020 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee: Guidance on Interactions with the Media and Other Organizations

Members of the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee (Committee) may be contacted by the media (i.e., reporters, bloggers) or members of the public (i.e., individuals, groups, or organizations) on topics related to the Committee's work. This document provides guidance on how Committee members should handle such inquiries if they arise.

- The Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee is a Federal advisory committee, and as such, activities pertaining to its operations are governed by guidelines stipulated in the [Federal Advisory Committee Act \(FACA\)](#).
- Members of the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee are appointed as [Special Government Employees \(SGE\)](#) and must abide by certain [standards of ethical conduct](#).

As a general rule, members are asked not to speak on behalf of the Committee.

Public meetings are the ideal place for the media and the public to get information about the Committee's work, and public comments are the appropriate venue for providing comments to the Committee.

Interactions with Media Guidance:

- Members should not grant media interviews on matters under deliberation or to be considered by the Committee.
- Members are asked to refrain from authoring any opinion pieces or social media (e.g. blogs, Op-Eds, letter to the editor, tweets, posts, etc.) related to any matters pertaining to the Committee. This includes but is not limited to the topics and scientific questions, proceedings, deliberations, or administrative processes.
- Members can speak to the media regarding topics unrelated to the work of the Committee. If doing so, members should make it clear that they are speaking in their own private capacity and not on behalf of the Committee.
- Members are asked to refer media requests relating to any topic under discussion by the Committee to press@fns.usda.gov.

Interactions with Other Organizations Guidance:

- Members are asked not to meet with any individual(s), group(s), or organization(s) related to the work of the Committee to avoid real or perceived conflicts of interest.
- It is permissible to speak in a professional capacity about matters unrelated to the work of the Committee. When doing so, members should make it clear that they are speaking in their own private capacity and not on behalf of the Committee.
- Please refrain from making any commitments or serving as a representative on behalf of the Committee.
 - This includes accepting speaking engagements to make presentations on the Dietary Guidelines or making reference to membership on the Committee when carrying out duties associated with a position in the private sector.
 - Any reference identifying a person as a member of the Committee when conducting business in a private capacity is discouraged as it may give the appearance that the member is acting or speaking on behalf of the Committee.
- Individuals or groups are encouraged to submit their comments and materials as public comment submissions through www.DietaryGuidelines.gov for review by the Committee. (The public comment period will open when the first public meeting of the Committee is announced and will remain open through the full period of the Committee's work.)
- Oral testimony will be available for the public during two of the Committee meetings.

The Committee disbands when the Scientific Report is submitted to the USDA and HHS Secretaries. At that time, members are no longer SGEs and may respond to inquiries directly at their discretion. They may also continue to refer the media, individuals, or groups to the DFO if they prefer.