

The American Society for Nutrition (ASN) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the framework for the National Institutes of Health (NIH)-wide 5-year Strategic Plan. ASN has more than 5,000 members around the world, working throughout government, clinical practice, academia and industry, to conduct nutrition research that helps all individuals live healthier lives. The Framework's focus is consistent with ASN's own mission as the not-for-profit, professional scientific society dedicated to bringing together the world's top researchers to advance our knowledge and application of nutrition.

ASN urges the NIH to include nutrition research, an integrated and integrating discipline, as an "Area of Opportunity that Applies across Biomedicine" within the Strategic Plan. While ASN supports the value placed on basic science in the "Promote Fundamental Science" portion of the framework, ASN would like to see equal importance given to human nutrition research with clinical trials in the Strategic Plan. Nutrition research creates a unifying theme across multiple fields thereby promoting teamwork, collaboration, translation and technology-sharing. Crosscutting areas of nutrition research that NIH should highlight under "Improve Health Promotion and Disease Prevention" include nutrigenomics, the gut microbiome, and the concept of developmental programming. Developmental origins of disease influencing a person's health throughout their life course have been shown to be molded by peri-conception conditions of the parents, oocyte environment, in utero conditions, and even infant/ postpartum diet. Nutrition can cost-effectively prevent, treat, and mitigate disease, and therefore improve public health.

ASN encourages NIH to maintain their existing focus on public-private partnerships and underserved individuals within the Strategic Plan, and promote the recruitment and support of a diverse and interdisciplinary research workforce throughout their training and early independent career. ASN looks forward to implementation details for the Strategic Plan, as well as the opportunity to provide comments on the draft Strategic Plan.