

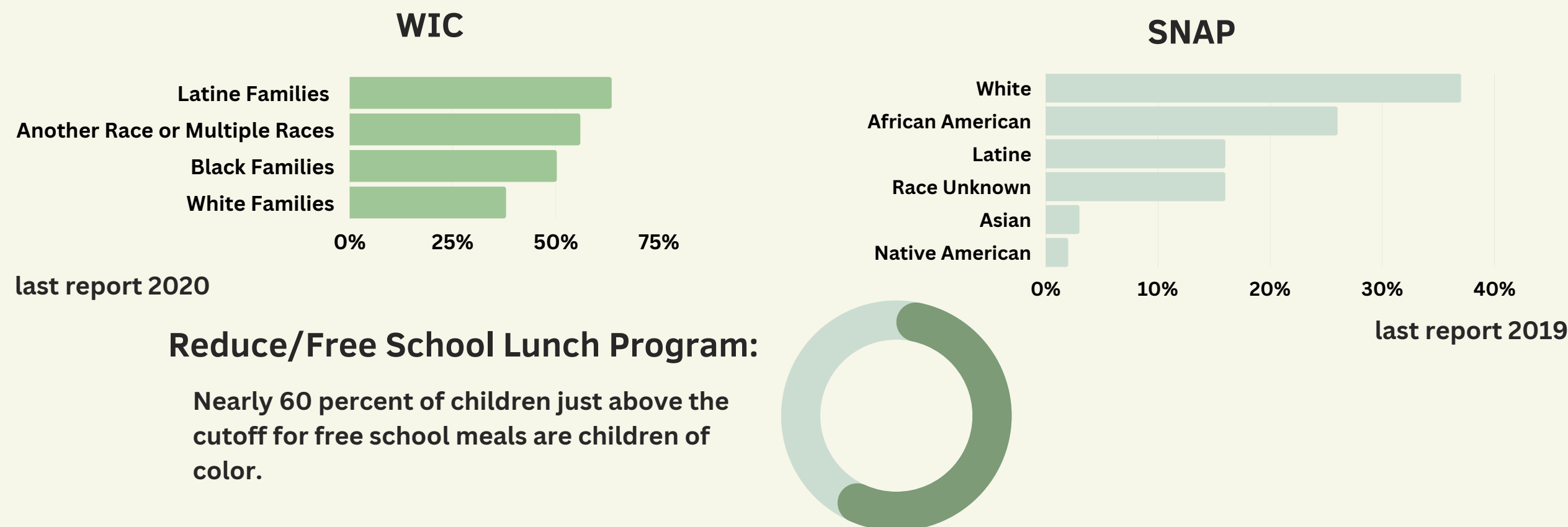
NURTURING & CULTIVATING EQUITY WITHIN NUTRITION SERVICES

POSTER BY AMCHP STAFF

BACKGROUND

Federal Nutrition Assistance Programs (FNAPs) have been a longstanding strategy to combat the ever-growing food insecurity epidemic millions of Americans face today. Federal nutrition assistance programs are designed to serve a diverse population that encompasses a broad range of identities, including differences in languages spoken, country of origin, and cultural attitudes and beliefs.

FNAPS SERVE POPULATIONS WITH A WIDE RANGE OF CULTURAL IDENTITIES



A large component of FNAPs are their nutrition education services. There have been intentional efforts in the past few years to create more equitable FNAP nutrition services (1,9,10). However, many FNAP nutrition education services fail to include culturally inclusive approaches, instead centering foods that are widely accepted and familiar to White populations (2,8).

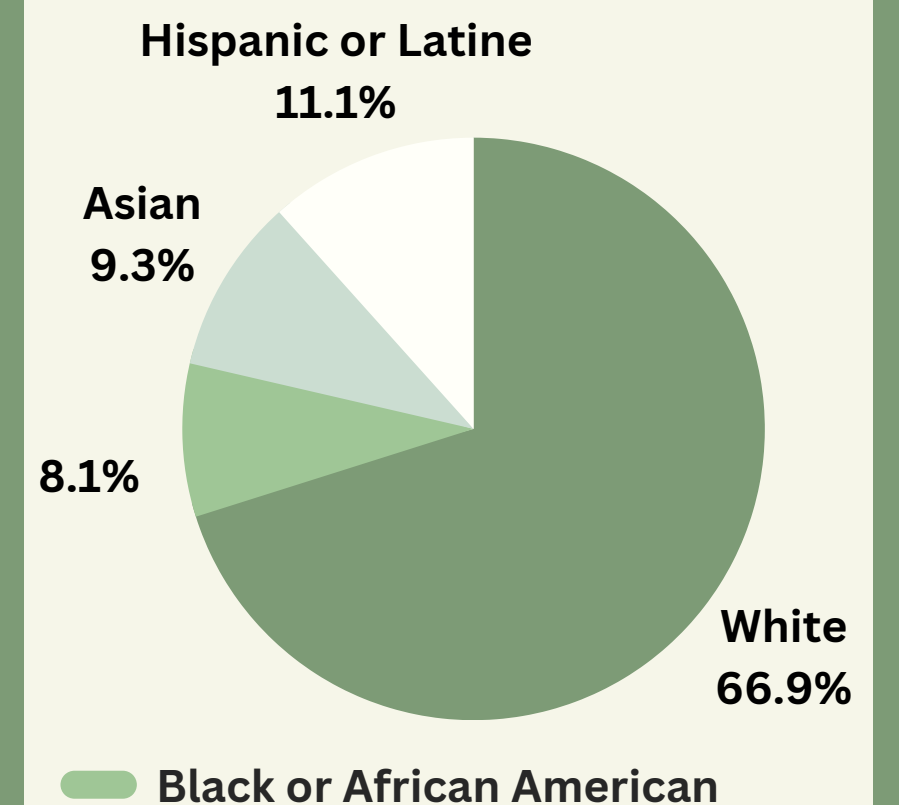
THE ROOTS OF NUTRITION EDUCATION SERVICES THAT CENTER WHITE IDENTITIES CONT'D

Although all the foods displayed here have rich nutritional value, the images on the left-hand side tend to be overrepresented in nutrition education materials. The prevalence of Eurocentric dietary norms within nutrition services perpetuates cultural erasure and promotes a false superiority in the nutritional value of European food over traditional foods from non-European cultures. (6)



The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) sets the standards for nutrition guidelines in the United States. Currently, the USDA has made recommendations to recognize cultural foodways when establishing nutrition initiatives (3). However, the demographic profile of nutrition practitioners has been largely unchanged for over a decade (7). In 2020, the USDA advisory board that establishes guidelines consisted of 14 members, and only two were people of color (10). The majority-White USDA advisory board mimics the underrepresentation of people of color within the nutrition workforce across the country and within communities, which perpetuates a lack of diversity and potentially hinders the development of culturally responsive practices.

REGISTERED DIETITIANS IN THE UNITED STATES



The number of Black Americans admitted into dietetic internship programs decreased by 58% in the last decade (7).

A diverse nutrition education workforce can play a critical role in improving cultural inclusion in nutrition education services by promoting a better understanding of the cultural context of food and dietary practices, and by building trust and rapport with diverse communities. A diverse workforce that includes individuals from different ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds can help to bridge cultural divides present in nutrition education services and provide more effective and tailored nutrition education services. (5)

THE ROOTS OF NUTRITION EDUCATION SERVICES THAT CENTER WHITE IDENTITIES

THE TENDENCY TO PRIORITIZE EUROPEAN CULTURE, SPECIFICALLY WHITE POPULATIONS, IS PREVALENT ACROSS MANY CONTEXTS, INCLUDING NUTRITION, AND PRESERVES SYSTEMIC INEQUALITIES AND MARGINALIZATION OF NON-EUROPEAN PEOPLE AND CULTURES.

EUROCENTRISM: A PERSPECTIVE THAT CENTERS EUROPEAN CULTURE AND HISTORY AS SUPERIOR OR DOMINANT TO ALL OTHER CULTURES AND HISTORIES (4).

STRATEGIES ON HOW TO DIVERSIFY THE WORKFORCE

As SNAP and WIC work to diversify the nutrition education portfolio, scan the QR code to view a few strategies Title V can implement to help further support improved access to culturally relevant nutrition services for MCH populations. The QR code also contains the references listed on the poster.

