



PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF WAR
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

The Honorable Roger F. Wicker
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

AUG 20 2026

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The Department's response to section 1093 of the Servicemember Quality of Life Improvement and National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025 (Public Law 118-159), "Implementation of Comptroller General Recommendations Relating to the Food Program of the Department of Defense," is enclosed.

The Department has made significant progress in implementing the recommendations in Government Accountability Office Report GAO-24-106155, "DOD FOOD PROGRAM: Additional Actions Needed to Implement, Oversee, and Evaluate Nutrition Efforts for Service Members," June 2024. Six of the 16 recommendations have been fully implemented following the Military Services' establishment of formal guidance for nutrition programs (three have been closed and three have been submitted for closure). The Department is establishing strategic coordination and comprehensive oversight mechanisms pursuant to the remaining recommendations, with anticipated completion of all implementation efforts between September 2026 and September 2027.

Thank you for your continued strong support for the health and well-being of our Service members. I am sending a similar letter to the Committee on Armed Services of the House of Representatives.

Sincerely,



Sean O'Keefe
Deputy Under Secretary of War for Personnel
and Readiness

Enclosure:
As stated

cc:
The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member



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OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF WAR
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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

The Honorable Mike D. Rogers
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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Sincerely,



Sean O'Keefe
Deputy Under Secretary of War for Personnel
and Readiness

Enclosure:
As stated

cc:
The Honorable Adam J. Smith
Ranking Member

Report to the Committees on Armed Services of the Senate and the House of Representatives



Implementation of Comptroller General Recommendations Relating to the Food Program of the Department of Defense

August 2026

The estimated cost of this report or study for the Department of War (DoW) is approximately \$4,160 for the 2025-2026 Fiscal Years.

This includes \$1,440 in expenses and \$2,720 in DoW labor.

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Introduction

Section 1093 of the Servicemember Quality of Life Improvement and National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 (Public Law 118–159), “Implementation of Comptroller General Recommendations Relating to the Food Program of the Department of Defense,” required the Secretary to:

- (1) implement the recommendations of the Comptroller General of the United States contained in the report published by the Comptroller General in June 2024 and titled “DOD Food Program: Additional Actions Needed to Implement, Oversee, and Evaluate Nutrition Efforts for Service Members” (GAO-24-106155); or
- (2) if the Secretary does not implement any such recommendation, submit to the Committees on Armed Services of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report explaining why the Secretary has not implemented those recommendations

As of the date of this report, not all recommendations have been fully implemented, thus this report is provided.

Executive Summary

The Joint Explanatory Statement accompanying the NDAA for FY 2022 included a provision for the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to review the quality and nutrition of food available at military installations. This report (GAO-24-106155)¹ assessed the extent to which the Office of the Secretary of War and the Military Services have: (1) implemented programs and initiatives to provide Service members with access to nutritious food at military installations; (2) overseen such programs and initiatives; and (3) evaluated their effectiveness. Their findings resulted in 16 recommendations: 8 to the Department of War (DoW), 4 to the Navy, and 2 each to the Army and the Air Force. The following is a breakdown of the primary challenges identified in the GAO report.

- **Program Implementation:** A core finding of the GAO report highlighted a lack of standardization in how the military services implement and oversee the Go for Green® program. GAO recommended that the Military Services (Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force) establish clear and comprehensive guidance to ensure all required elements of the Go for Green® program (and the Marine Corps’ “Fueled to Fight®”) are consistently implemented in dining facilities. This includes proper food coding, labeling, and presentation.
- **Leadership and Oversight:** There have been delays in establishing an oversight body to oversee food transformation efforts. There is a need to clarify leadership responsibilities to ensure an oversight body is empowered to direct these initiatives.

¹ GAO-24-106155, “DOD FOOD PROGRAM: Additional Actions Needed to Implement, Oversee, and Evaluate Nutrition Efforts for Service Members.” Published June 24, 2024. Publicly Released June 24, 2024. <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-24-106155>.

- **Role of Nonappropriated Fund (NAF) Venues:** The role of NAF food venues (e.g., commercial restaurants and snack bars on installations) in providing nutritious food is not clearly defined. It is important that their role be defined to develop a strategy to improve access to healthy options in these venues, which make up a significant portion of the food environment on installations (~75 percent of meals served, per the GAO report).
- **Oversight and Assessment:** There are challenges with the Military Services performing required annual oversight assessments of nutrition programs. There is a need to establish a process for these annual reviews that should include all Go for Green® elements to better identify and fix implementation problems.
- **Performance Metrics:** While some feedback is collected, there is a lack of strategic goals, performance goals, and performance metrics to properly evaluate the effectiveness of nutrition programs.

In response, DoW and its Components developed a comprehensive Corrective Action Plan (CAP). The Military Services have made significant progress on Service-specific recommendations via the submitted CAP. The Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps have completed actions to update their food service guidance and inspection checklists to fully incorporate all elements of the Go for Green® program.

For the broader, Department-wide strategic recommendations, DoW's approach has evolved. Based on a leadership decision to leverage existing committees rather than standing up the Defense Feeding and Nutrition Board, DoW is utilizing the DoW Nutrition Committee (established by Department of Defense Instruction 6130.05, "DoD Nutrition Committee") and its associated subcommittees and working groups to implement the recommendations directed to DoW. This approach aims to address complex strategic issues by involving key stakeholders, including those overseeing both appropriated fund (APF) and NAF food venues.

DoW has demonstrated a responsive posture to the GAO's findings. Service-specific implementation and oversight have substantially improved, while the more complex, strategic challenges are being addressed through a deliberate, long-term plan utilizing a revised oversight framework incumbent upon the DoW Nutrition Committee.

Status of Recommendations

Recommendation 1 – In Progress (Anticipated Completion: March 2027)

The Secretary of the Army should establish guidance that addresses what steps dining facilities should take to implement each of the required Go for Green® program elements.

The initial actions taken by the Army of issuing an Execution Order, "Establishment and Employment of the Enterprise-Wide Go for Green-Action Menu in Dining Facilities," implemented an enterprise-wide nutrition-centric menu to support the nutritional fitness of Soldiers. They also completed updates to culinary specialist training. The Army is now working

with the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences' (USUHS) Department of Military and Emergency Medicine to perform a Military Nutrition Environment Assessment Tool (mNEAT) evaluation of the Army's nutrition environment. This evaluation began in FY 2026 at a pilot location (Fort Bragg, North Carolina) with an executive summary expected by March 2027. This will complete the Army's implementation of this recommendation.

Recommendation 2 – Implemented, Submitted for Closure

The Secretary of the Navy should ensure that the Commandant of the Marine Corps establish guidance that addresses what steps dining facilities should take to implement each of the required Go for Green® elements in the Marine Corps' Fueled to Fight® program.

The GAO stated the United States Marine Corps (USMC) was not aligned with three specific requirements. In response, the USMC asserted that its program is intentionally centralized at the headquarters level to ensure consistency, which addresses the requirements for training, promotion, and staff knowledge. For example, all master menus must contain 30 percent green-coded items validated by the USMC lead dietitian, and since the program is managed at the enterprise level, installation staff and contractors do not require separate training, as they must use the centrally managed Marine Corps Food Management Information System.

Recommendation 3 – Implemented, Submitted for Closure

The Secretary of the Navy should establish guidance that addresses what steps dining facilities should take to implement each of the required Go for Green® program elements.

DoW partially concurred, noting a distinction between different types of facilities. For Navy Ashore Galleys, the actions are complete as of July 2024; these galleys use Naval Supply Systems Command (NAVSUP) publications and Commander, Navy Installations Command (CNIC) Five Star Accreditation Checklists to achieve program goals, with Food Management Teams and dietitians providing ongoing training and oversight. However, for the over 300 Navy Morale, Welfare, and Recreation commercial food outlets, adopting the recommendation is considered untenable at this time due to significant costs, information technology upgrades, and manpower needed to implement such a significant change.

Recommendation 4 – Implemented, Submitted for Closure

The Secretary of the Air Force should establish guidance that addresses what steps dining facilities should take to implement each of the required Go for Green® program elements.

The Department of the Air Force (DAF) concurred and has completed its corrective actions. After reviewing its food service policies, the DAF identified and updated four directives to address gaps related to menu coding, promotion of green-coded items, and staff training. This updated guidance was communicated to all DAF installations, and compliance will be assessed through Food Management Assistance Team (FMAT) and staff assistance visits.

Recommendation 5 – In Progress (Anticipated Completion: September 2027)

The Secretary of Defense should evaluate and, as needed, clarify or adjust responsibilities for leadership of the forthcoming Defense Feeding and Nutrition Board to guide food transformation efforts.

The decision was made in April 2025 by the then-Official Performing the Duties of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness to utilize existing food and nutrition boards, offices, and committees to implement GAO recommendations. To address this recommendation, an evaluation of the responsibilities and roles of leadership structures which have a role in the DoW food program was completed.

Recommendation 6 – In Progress (Anticipated Completion: September 2027)

The Secretary of Defense should ensure the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, in coordination with the forthcoming Defense Feeding and Nutrition Board, develops the congressionally directed plan to increase access to healthy food on installations.

DoW partially concurs, since all key stakeholders must be involved. Following the decision not to create a new board, sub-committees and working groups under the DoW Nutrition Committee are providing input on plans to increase access to healthy food on installations.

Recommendation 7 – In Progress (Anticipated Completion: June 2027)

The Secretary of Defense should ensure the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs, in coordination with the forthcoming Defense Feeding and Nutrition Board, defines the role of nonappropriated fund food venues in providing nutritious food on installations.

The CAP reflects the decision to use existing committees rather than a new board. Sub-committees and working groups under the DoW Nutrition Committee are working toward implementing this recommendation.

Recommendation 8 – In Progress (Anticipated Completion: September 2027)

The Secretary of Defense should ensure that the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs, in coordination with the forthcoming Defense Feeding and Nutrition Board, develops a strategy for increasing healthy menu options at nonappropriated fund food venues as part of its plan to increase access to healthy food on military installations.

The CAP reflects the decision to use existing committees rather than a new board. Sub-committees and working groups under the DoW Nutrition Committee are advising on the methodology to assess healthy food access. These groups are working to develop a methodology to assess healthy food access and create a strategy for increasing healthy menu options at NAF venues by September 2027—this will complete DoW’s implementation of this recommendation.

Recommendation 9 – In Progress (Anticipated Completion: September 2027)

The Secretary of Defense should ensure the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs develops a process to annually assess each military department's food environment and nutrition standards, and review all nutrition programs, policies, and related processes.

DoW partially concurred, due to the feasibility of conducting such a comprehensive assessment on an annual basis. Sub-committees and working groups under the DoW Nutrition Committee are working towards implementing this recommendation.

Recommendation 10 – Implemented, Closed

The Secretary of the Navy should ensure the Commandant of the Marine Corps incorporates all eight Go for Green® nutrition program elements into Marine Corps food service inspections checklists.

The Marine Corps concurred and changed future checklists to include comparable Go for Green® requirements that align with its customized "Fueled to Fight" program.

Recommendation 11 – Implemented, Closed

The Secretary of the Navy should incorporate all eight Go for Green® nutrition program elements into Navy food service inspection checklists.

DoW concurred, and this action was completed in July 2024. Navy Ashore Galleys will continue to use the checklists provided by the NAVSUP Navy Food Management Team and the CNIC Ashore Galley Program, which already include all eight elements to ensure full compliance.

Recommendation 12 – Implemented, Closed

The Secretary of the Air Force should incorporate all eight Go for Green® nutrition program elements into Air Force food service inspection checklists.

The Air Force concurred, and this action was completed in August 2024. The Go for Green® section of the FMAT checklist has been revised to encompass all eight program elements, ensuring a holistic evaluation during installation visits.

Recommendation 13 – In Progress (Anticipated Completion: March 2027)

The Secretary of the Army should develop a process to ensure that all installations use the required Go for Green® program fidelity assessment tool to conduct oversight of the Army food service program.

The Army uses its FMAT checklist to assess dining facilities and established the “Army Commitment to Improving Overall Nutrition (ACTION)” Campaign to assist in assessing

nutrition improvements. Furthermore, the Army implemented the Vantage Dashboard to provide a visual representation of compliance metrics and an ACTION Scorecard for leaders. The Army is now working with USUHS to perform an mNEAT evaluation of its food service ecosystem at a pilot location (Fort Bragg, North Carolina) and a comparison site, which began in FY 2026. This will complete the Army's implementation of this recommendation.

Recommendation 14 – In Progress (Anticipated Completion: September 2026)

The Secretary of Defense should ensure that the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs, in coordination with the military services, establishes department-wide strategic goals for nutrition programs and initiatives.

DoW partially concurred, noting that oversight of APF and NAF policy belongs to other stakeholders who must be included. Sub-committees and working groups under the DoW Nutrition Committee are working towards implementing this recommendation.

Recommendation 15 – In Progress (Anticipated Completion: September 2026)

The Secretary of Defense should ensure that the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs, in coordination with the military services, establishes performance goals that align with strategic goals for nutrition programs and initiatives.

DoW partially concurred, noting that oversight of APF and NAF policy belongs to other stakeholders who must be included. The plan, executed in tandem with recommendations 14 and 16, involves utilizing the expertise of the sub-committees and working groups under the DoW Nutrition Committee.

Recommendation 16 – In Progress (Anticipated Completion: September 2026)

The Secretary of Defense should ensure that the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs, in coordination with the military services, establishes performance metrics to assess progress toward nutrition performance goals.

DoW partially concurred, noting that oversight of APF and NAF policy belongs to other stakeholders who must be included. The planned corrective action, being done in tandem with the previous two recommendations, is utilizing the expertise in the DoW Nutrition Committee's sub-committees and working groups.

Conclusion

In response to GAO Report 24-106155, DoW has made significant and measurable progress in addressing the 16 recommendations aimed at improving its food and nutrition programs. The Military Services have successfully implemented most Service-specific recommendations, updating guidance and inspection checklists to ensure consistent application of the Go for Green® program and its principles.

The more complex, strategic recommendations involving oversight of NAF venues, the establishment of Department-wide metrics, and the creation of a unified oversight process are in progress. DoW has altered its approach, leveraging the DoW Nutrition Committee to lead these efforts rather than establishing a new board. This strategy enables established structures to address the remaining challenges supported by subcommittees and working groups advising the DoW Nutrition Committee.

DoW has demonstrated a responsive and deliberate approach to implementing GAO recommendations. Foundational improvements have been implemented at the Service-level, and ongoing work is being performed to address the broader strategic objectives supporting improvements to the DoW food program. DoW is on a positive trajectory to fully implement all GAO recommendations between September 2026 and September 2027, benefitting the nutrition readiness of Service members.