

Food, Nutrition, and Obesity Policy Research

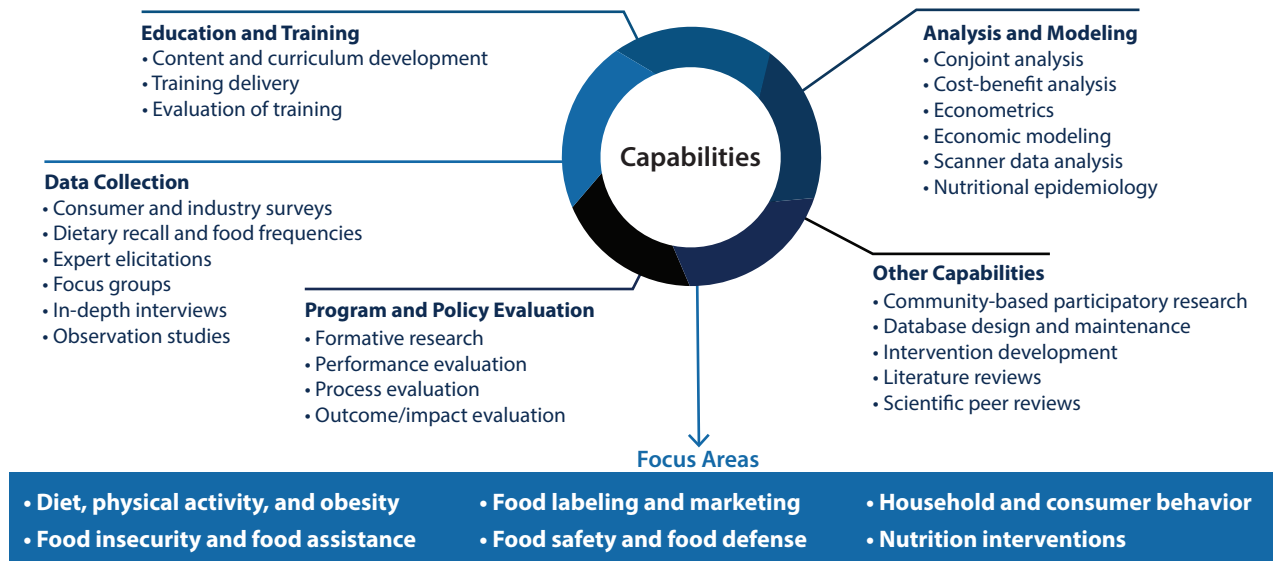


For more than two decades, our team of interdisciplinary experts has been analyzing and evaluating the effects of programs and policies affecting food, nutrition, obesity, and physical activity to improve health and well-being. We combine an in-depth understanding of a broad range of policy topics with extensive quantitative and qualitative research capabilities.

RTI researchers provide independent research capabilities to help agencies and organizations achieve their missions and address analytical challenges. We study programs and policies affecting vulnerable populations and limited-resource households around the world. Our interdisciplinary staff of economists, program evaluators, nutritionists, behavioral scientists, policy analysts,

statisticians, and survey researchers conduct research for federal and state agencies and private organizations. Recent clients include United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. Agency for International Development, Alliance for a Healthier Generation, and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

We apply our capabilities to address policy questions across multiple focus areas.



Project Highlights

Policy Research for Front of Package Nutrition Labeling

To guide policy on front of package (FOP) nutrition labeling, RTI conducted an extensive literature review on consumer, producer, and retailer response to FOP labels. We also tested an algorithm for assigning nutritional scores to foods and developed a multiphased plan for monitoring and evaluating industry adoption of, consumer use and understanding of, and potential product reformulation resulting from FOP labels.

Evaluation of the Healthy Out-of-School Time Framework

Using surveys, secondary data analysis, and key informant interviews, RTI conducts evaluation activities that assess the impact of a quality improvement and technical assistance intervention on snack quality and physical activity in over 300 afterschool programs in low-income communities.

Nationally Representative Study of WIC Nutrition Education

RTI and its research partners conducted a national survey of WIC local agencies and sites to describe delivery of WIC nutrition education. We are conducting a pilot study with six WIC sites to assess the impact of WIC nutrition education on participants' dietary behaviors. Based on the pilot study findings, we will design a national evaluation study.

SNAP–Education and Evaluation, Waves I & II

RTI and Altarum Institute conducted two studies to evaluate seven demonstration SNAP–Ed programs. We led the impact evaluations to examine the effect of the programs on participants' dietary behavior using experimental or quasi-experimental research designs.

Consumer Education on Food Safety for Poultry and Eggs

RTI and its research partners are conducting a study to design and evaluate an educational program on safe handling practices for raw poultry and eggs. We conducted focus groups and a national survey to identify risky consumer practices. Following development of educational materials, we will conduct an impact evaluation to assess changes in consumers' practices following exposure to the materials.

RTI iShopper® Software for Consumer Behavior Research

RTI iShopper® provides a virtual store environment that allows researchers to immerse participants into a simulated store environment and study their behavioral responses to changes that are difficult to assess in real-world settings. Clients can work with RTI to develop customized versions to address specific applications or research questions.

National Surveys of Meat, Poultry, and Egg Products Plants

RTI conducts recurring national surveys of USDA-regulated establishments to collect information on technologies and practices for controlling pathogens and promoting food safety. We use these data to assess the relationship between plant characteristics and food safety performance and to examine associations between food safety audits and plant characteristics and use of technology.

Economic Analysis of FDA Regulation for Foods and Other Products

RTI develops models and conducts studies in support of economic analyses of food safety and nutrition regulations. We have developed models that FDA uses to estimate costs of labeling changes, reformulation of food products, and implementation of food defense practices. We also conducted analyses of the food processing sector, imported foods, food safety certification, and food safety practices.

Food Regulation and Enforcement Policy Trade Impact Model

RTI developed a model for FDA to analyze the effects of potential enforcement and regulatory policies on international trade for foods and other products. Users can simulate potential trade flows across countries, product prices, and employment.

More Information

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