

Goals for Healthy Local Food Systems

In order to advance chronic disease prevention by improving the nutritional intake of Southern California residents, the Public Health Alliance of Southern California supports the following goals for the Southern California region:



Goal 1: Foster healthy food environments in workplaces, institutions, and government-sponsored activities.

Potential Strategies:

- 1.1 Leverage food procurement policies to amplify positive impacts on the Southern California local food system, through regional collaboration.*
- 1.2 Apply guidelines or standards for nutrition and local food sourcing to government-funded procurement.*
- 1.3 Increase access to and knowledge of healthy choices in schools and childcare settings.*
- 1.4 Improve healthy food access and education in hospitals and healthcare settings.*
- 1.5 Improve healthy food access and education in the workplace.*

Potential Indicators:

- Percentage of government-funded meals meeting procurement standards
- Total number of meals meeting procurement standards
- Public dollars saved through volume discounts for healthy, local food



Goal 2: Make healthy food more readily available, affordable, and appealing in community food environments.

Potential Strategies:

- 2.1 Use food assistance programs to make healthy food more affordable.*
- 2.2 Provide and promote more healthy choices in food retail outlets.*
- 2.3 Provide and promote more healthy choices in restaurants.*
- 2.4 Use land use strategies to provide better neighborhood access to healthy choices.*
- 2.5 Increase public demand for healthy food and healthy food environments.*

Potential Indicators:

- Percentage of eligible population using food assistance benefits
- Fruit and vegetable intake
- Fast food and sugar-sweetened beverage consumption
- Food retailer participation in programs to highlight and promote healthy choices
- Proportion of fast-food outlets to other food retail outlets



Goal 3: Promote access to locally produced food while contributing to local and regional economic development.

Potential Strategies:

- 3.1 *Create opportunities for direct farm-to-consumer sales such as farmers markets, farm stands, and community supported agriculture (CSA).*
- 3.2 *Promote the utilization of food assistance benefits to purchase locally grown food.*
- 3.3 *Use land use strategies to create and protect opportunities to grow food in and around population centers.*
- 3.4 *Create and support food policy councils and CNAPs to improve local food systems.*
- 3.5 *Improve local food distribution systems through food hubs and goods movement strategies.*
- 3.6 *Reduce wasted food and find uses for agricultural surplus.*

Potential Indicators:

- Farmers markets per capita
- Food benefit dollars spent in farmers markets
- Dollars spent in direct farm-to-consumer sales
- Community garden acreage per capita
- Percentage of land used for growing food crops



Goal 4: Reduce negative environmental and social impacts of food systems that have implications for public health.

Potential Strategies:

- 4.1 *Protect consumers from food-borne illness and other direct health risks from food consumption.*
- 4.2 *Protect the health of agriculture workers.*
- 4.3 *Use composting to divert food waste from landfills and improve soils.*
- 4.4 *Reduce solid waste from food distribution and service.*
- 4.5 *Manage goods movement impacts from food distribution.*
- 4.6 *Measure the potential of local food sourcing to reduce vehicle miles traveled.*
- 4.7 *Use health impact assessment to evaluate potential food system changes.*

Potential Indicators:

- Percentage of food waste sent to landfill
- Exposure of workers to harmful chemicals
- Incidence of food-borne illness
- Reliability of data showing health benefits from local food sourcing

Assessment, Implementation and Evaluation

Significant shifts in policy, systems and the environment require extensive collaborative work at all stages of implementation. Many of the strategies and implementation steps below may share a common process of assessment, implementation and evaluation:

Assessment:

- Assess current environment
- Identify partners
- Identify barriers and opportunities
- Work with identified partners to find opportunities for mutual benefit
- Identify possible indicators, collect 'before' data

Implementation

- Work collaboratively with partners to implement change

Monitoring/Evaluation

- Collect 'after' data, evaluate data for possible change
- Communicate with partners to gauge effectiveness of intervention
- Develop list of potential revisions/modifications that could improve future implementation

Potential Implementation Steps

Because the Alliance is a regional collaborative, there are a variety of economic, social and political forces at play that inform how each member will approach the work of improving local food systems. The strategies and implementation steps below provide a “checklist” of options to achieve these goals. They provide various entry points that give each local health department the ability to customize its approach. An asterisk * indicates an item that is similar to Local Health Department Objectives from the Network for a Healthy California 2013-2016 Scope of Work.

Goal 1: Foster healthy food environments in workplaces, schools, institutions, and government-sponsored activities.					
Strategy	Implementation Steps				
1.1 Leverage food procurement policies to amplify positive impacts on the Southern California local food system, through regional collaboration.	Coordinate purchases to obtain volume discounts from regional food suppliers	Coordinate purchases with other local jurisdictions through a regional food hub			
1.2 Apply guidelines or standards for nutrition and local food sourcing to government-funded procurement'. *	Adopt procurement policies for meals and vending for county workers and for custodial populations in health care, day care, and corrections	Adopt food and beverage policies for government-sponsored meetings and events	Form local collaborative or work through CNAP to support adoption of procurement policies in school districts, public universities, and cities	Provide guidance on nutrition standards, placement, and pricing to assist in development of procurement policies	Evaluate and monitor implementation of contracts and policies
1.3 Increase access to and knowledge of healthy choices in schools and childcare settings. *	Improve the nutritional value, local sourcing, and sustainability of meals served in schools and childcare settings	Promote farm-to-school ² and farm-to-childcare opportunities as well as school gardens ³	Increase education about healthy beverages, meals and snacks that meet or exceed USDA guidelines *	Provide structured opportunities for physical activity in childcare and school settings	Combat childhood hunger by expanding meal programs to breakfast, dinner, and summer
1.4 Improve healthy food access and education in hospitals and	Promote the adoption of food procurement and vending policies by	Area hospitals are certified as ‘baby-friendly’ , with strong	Use hospital campuses to demonstrate and promote healthy eating		

¹ Resource: The CDC handbook “Improving the Food Environment Through Nutrition Standards: A Guide for Government Procurement” (www.cdc.gov/salt/pdfs/DHDSP_Procurement_Guide.pdf) is a step-by-step guide to developing a food procurement policy with nutrition standards. It provides sample standards from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

² Resource: California Farm to School Task Force website (<http://www.cafarmtoschool.org>).

³ Resource: San Diego Unified School District’s Food Services website (<http://www.sandi.net/food>) describes its Farm to School and school garden programs.

healthcare settings.	hospitals and other healthcare facilities	lactation-support environments	with farmers markets, gardens, and displays ⁴		
1.5 Improve healthy food access and education in the workplace. *	Promote the adoption of food procurement and vending policies by large employers	Engage employers through programs such as <i>California Fit Business</i> to allow adequate break time and facilities for exercise, healthy food purchasing/ preparation, and lactation *	Promote other strategies for worksite wellness such as <i>American Heart Association Fit-Friendly Worksite</i> and programs for smaller, less formal employers	Implement CSA and farm-to-workplace programs and demonstrations	Work with agricultural employers to allow 'gleaning' of surplus produce by workers

Goal 2: Make healthy food more readily available, affordable, and appealing in community food environments.

Strategy	Implementation Steps				
2.1 Use food assistance programs to make healthy food more affordable. *	Increase enrollment in WIC, SNAP / CalFresh, and Child Nutrition programs of FNS *	Use CNAP to coordinate between programs and share best practices	Support food assistance program reauthorization in County legislative platform *		
2.2 Provide and promote more healthy choices in food retail outlets. *	Healthy corner store certification program ⁵ and conversion assistance programs ⁶	Work with food retail outlets on healthy food placement, signage, and promotion. *	Adopt a healthy retail licensing program to require food stores to carry a minimum selection of healthy food and meet other basic operating standards ⁷	Use the conditional use permit (CUP) zoning designation to require retail outlets to meet minimum standards	
2.3 Provide and promote more healthy choices in restaurants.	Encourage restaurants (both chain and independent) to display nutritional information	Create recognition programs for restaurants offering and promoting healthy choices			

⁴ Resource: The Healthcare Without Harm program Healthy Food in Health Care provides education, tools, resources, and support to health care facilities seeking to make the connection between the food they serve and the health of patients, staff and community (<http://www.healthyfoodinhealthcare.org/>).

⁵ Resource: Healthy Corner Stores Network publication "Health on the Shelf: A Guide to Healthy Small Food Retailer Certification Programs" (<http://www.healthycornerstores.org/health-on-the-shelf>).

⁶ Resource: The Healthy Corner Stores Network has resources and news about increasing the availability and sales of healthy, affordable foods through small-scale stores in underserved communities (<http://www.healthycornerstores.org>).

⁷ Resource: The ChangeLab Solutions webpage "Licensing Healthy Food Retailers" (<http://changelabsolutions.org/publications/HFR-licensing-ord>) provides a model licensing ordinance and guide for implementation.

2.4 Use land use strategies to provide better neighborhood access to healthy choices.	General Plan land use policies and zoning that allow and encourage neighborhood-serving retail and healthy mobile vending, as well as supportive food supply networks	Zoning regulations including limits on concentrations of fast-food outlets and “healthy food zones” around schools	Zoning code incentives (density bonus, reduced parking, etc.) for developments that include grocery stores and fresh food markets	Work with transit agencies/authorities to improve safe routes to healthy destinations, facilitate carrying groceries on transit, and provide access to healthy food at stops and stations	
2.5 Increase public demand for healthy food and healthy food environments. *	Educate and raise public awareness through campaigns like “Rethink Your Drink” and “Harvest of the Month” *	Engage and educate youth to demand improved food environments through processes such as CX3*	Elevate successes using models such as ‘Champions of Change’ *		

Goal 3: Promote access to locally produced food while contributing to local and regional economic development.

Strategy	Implementation Steps				
3.1 Create opportunities for direct farm-to-consumer sales such as farmers markets, farm stands, and community supported agriculture (CSA).	Incorporate farmers markets and farm stands into the zoning code as an allowable use.	Collaborate with DEH and Ag Commissioner to accommodate direct farm-to-consumer opportunities within existing code	Support health code modifications to accommodate farm-to-corner store, CSA, farmers market, and farm stand opportunities	Develop guidelines for and promote mobile vending of whole produce	Support funding for farmers market inspection and organic certification in County legislative platform
3.2 Promote the utilization of food assistance benefits to purchase locally grown food.	Create a program to match food assistance dollars spent at farmers markets ⁸	Promote acceptance of EBT/WIC as payment at farmers markets and other healthy retail environments *	Use Farm to EBT/WIC ⁹ programs to bring farm produce into stores catering to EBT/WIC recipients		
3.3 Use land use strategies to create and protect	Farms exercise Williamson Act to reduce property tax	Incorporate community garden into zoning code as an allowable use	Identify and provide opportunities to communities for land,	Facilitate establishment of joint-use policies on public facilities for gardening,	

⁸ Example: Michigan’s Double Up Food Bucks program (<http://www.doubleupfoodbucks.org/>).

⁹ Example: Farm to WIC program in L.A. (<http://www.uepi.oxy.edu/our-projects/farm-to-wic/>).



opportunities to grow food in and around population centers.	burden in exchange for commitment to agricultural use		water, and other support for community and school “edible” gardens	cooking, and recreational uses	
3.4 Create and support food policy councils and CNAPs¹⁰ to improve local food systems.	Integrate CNAP and food policy council work ¹¹	Participate in peer sharing across regional food policy councils and CNAPs *	Establish local food producer networks in collaboration with Ag Commissioner and Farm Bureau	Support and facilitate improved tracking of food production and distribution, including point of origin, production and packing processes	
3.5 Improve local food distribution systems through food hubs and goods movement strategies.	Assess current food production, distribution and consumption practices	Identify barriers to local food system (i.e.- packing capacity, need for mobile slaughter operations)	Develop and regulate branding of local products to facilitate development of ‘buy local’ market		
3.6 Reduce wasted food and find uses for agricultural surplus.	Work with agricultural producers to allow ‘gleaning’ of surplus and unwanted produce ¹²	Work with retail and food outlets to allow informal economies of re-use			

Goal 4: Reduce negative environmental and social impacts of food systems that have implications for public health.

Strategy	Implementation Steps				
4.1 Protect consumers from food-borne illness and other direct health risks from food consumption.	Through County legislative platform, support legislation and funding to ensure state and federal food safety	Develop an Approved Source Program ¹³ for the use of produce from gardens and small farms in regulated food facilities	Implement California’s Cottage Food Operations law to facilitate the sale of cottage foods	Support efforts to reduce the use of toxic pesticides, herbicides, rodenticides, and fertilizers; promote public education on pesticide use and impacts	Eliminate or minimize the use of non-therapeutic antibiotics on livestock

¹⁰ The County Nutrition Action Plan (CNAP) convenes and coordinates various nutrition programs.

¹¹ Examples: In Riverside and Contra Costa Counties, the CNAP serves as an umbrella for food policy council activities.

¹² Example: Hidden Harvest is a produce recovery program that employs low-income farm workers to glean produce that is left behind in the fields and orchards after harvest (www.hiddenharvest.org/), then distributes the food throughout eastern Riverside County through over 60 agencies.

¹³ Examples: San Diego Unified School District has a protocol for school gardens in the Garden to Cafe program (<http://bit.ly/187av7c>) while San Diego County DEH offers a conditional approval for culinary gardens (http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/deh/food/pdf/Culinary_Garden_Agreement.pdf). The Mendocino Food Policy Council describes the need for and key components of the Approved Food Source program it is developing: <http://bit.ly/16975xN>. One of its models is the Napa County Approved Source program for gardens: <http://www.countyofnapa.org/DEM/GardenApplication/>.



4.2 Protect the health of agriculture workers.	Limit worker exposure to agriculture chemicals	Ensure minimum working conditions to provide for rest, water, and shade	Provide housing and family services for migrant workers		
4.3 Use composting to divert food waste from landfills and improve soils.	Incorporate composting into municipal or County waste management contract	Provide green waste drop-off / compost pickup facilities	Launch a municipal composting program		
4.4 Reduce solid waste from food service.	Assess opportunities to reduce waste from single-serving containers and food packaging, while maintaining sanitation	Support health and safety code modifications to lower barriers to re-use of water bottles and food service items	Assess connections between waste stream reduction and healthy food choices; develop an educational campaign ¹⁴		
4.5 Manage goods movement impacts from food distribution.	Coordinate as a region with transportation agencies to develop goods movement strategies				
4.6 Measure the potential of local food sourcing to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and food miles traveled.	Review available research on VMT reduction and local food sourcing	Develop new data sources for tracking VMT related to food systems			
4.7 Use health impact assessment (HIA) to evaluate potential food system changes.¹⁵	Conduct an HIA for a food policy council plan, policy, or program	Conduct an HIA for a proposal impacting local food production and healthy/local food access			

¹⁴ Example: The Laptop Lunches® product website promotes the connection between re-usable containers, home food preparation, and healthy choices (<http://www.laptoplunches.com/index.php>).

¹⁵ Examples: HIAs for the Hawaii County Agriculture Development Plan (<http://kohalacenter.org/agplan.html>), “Allocating Resources towards Access to Healthy Foods Strategies in an Underserved South Florida Community” (<http://www.flphi.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=pages.HealthImpactAssessment>), and “Kane County Farmland Protection” (<http://www.co.kane.il.us/development/>), all profiled on the Health Impact Project website.