Alliance Roadmap to Healthy Local Food Systems

December 2013

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Implementation Steps</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.1</strong> Leverage food procurement policies to amplify positive impacts on the Southern California local food system, through regional collaboration.</td>
<td>Coordinate purchases to obtain volume discounts from regional food suppliers. Coordinate purchases with other local jurisdictions through a regional food hub.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.2</strong> Apply guidelines or standards for nutrition and local food sourcing to government-funded procurement¹, *</td>
<td>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.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1.3</strong> Increase access to and knowledge of healthy choices in schools and childcare settings. *</td>
<td>Improve the nutritional value, local sourcing, and sustainability of meals served in schools and childcare settings. Promote farm-to-school² and farm-to-childcare opportunities as well as school gardens³. 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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.4</strong> Improve healthy food access and education in hospitals and</td>
<td>Promote the adoption of food procurement and vending policies by promoting the adoption of food procurement and vending policies by hospitals to demonstrate and promote healthy eating.</td>
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² Resource: California Farm to School Task Force website ([http://www.cafarmtoschool.org](http://www.cafarmtoschool.org)).

³ Resource: San Diego Unified School District’s Food Services website ([http://www.sandi.net/food](http://www.sandi.net/food)) describes its Farm to School and school garden programs.
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<tr>
<td>1.5 Improve healthy food access and education in the workplace. *</td>
<td>Promote the adoption of food procurement and vending policies by large employers</td>
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### Goal 2: Make healthy food more readily available, affordable, and appealing in community food environments.

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<tr>
<td>2.1 Use food assistance programs to make healthy food more affordable. *</td>
<td>Increase enrollment in WIC, SNAP / CalFresh, and Child Nutrition programs of FNS *</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.2 Provide and promote more healthy choices in food retail outlets. *</td>
<td>Healthy corner store certification program⁵ and conversion assistance programs⁶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Provide and promote more healthy choices in restaurants.</td>
<td>Encourage restaurants (both chain and independent) to display nutritional information</td>
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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/](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](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](http://www.healthycornerstores.org)).

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<tr>
<th>2.4 Use land use strategies to provide better neighborhood access to healthy choices.</th>
<th>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</th>
<th>Zoning regulations including limits on concentrations of fast-food outlets and “healthy food zones” around schools</th>
<th>Zoning code incentives (density bonus, reduced parking, etc.) for developments that include grocery stores and fresh food markets</th>
<th>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</th>
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<td>2.5 Increase public demand for healthy food and healthy food environments. *</td>
<td>Educate and raise public awareness through campaigns like “Rethink Your Drink” and “Harvest of the Month” *</td>
<td>Engage and educate youth to demand improved food environments through processes such as CX3*</td>
<td>Elevate successes using models such as ‘Champions of Change’ *</td>
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**Goal 3: Promote access to locally produced food while contributing to local and regional economic development.**

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<td>3.1 Create opportunities for direct farm-to-consumer sales such as farmers markets, farm stands, and community supported agriculture (CSA).</td>
<td>Incorporate farmers markets and farm stands into the zoning code as an allowable use.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.2 Promote the utilization of food assistance benefits to purchase locally grown food.</td>
<td>Create a program to match food assistance dollars spent at farmers markets.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.3 Use land use strategies to create and protect</td>
<td>Farms exercise Williamson Act to reduce property tax</td>
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<td><strong>Goal 4: Reduce negative environmental and social impacts of food systems that have implications for public health.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>4.1 Protect consumers from food-borne illness and other direct health risks from food consumption.</strong></td>
<td>Through County legislative platform, support legislation and funding to ensure state and federal food safety.</td>
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<td><strong>4.2 Implement California’s Cottage Food Operations law to facilitate the sale of cottage foods.</strong></td>
<td>Develop an Approved Source Program for the use of produce from gardens and small farms in regulated food facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.3 Support efforts to reduce the use of toxic pesticides, herbicides, rodenticides, and fertilizers; promote public education on pesticide use and impacts.</strong></td>
<td>Implement California’s Cottage Food Operations law to facilitate the sale of cottage foods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.4 Eliminate or minimize the use of non-therapeutic antibiotics on livestock.</strong></td>
<td>Support efforts to reduce the use of toxic pesticides, herbicides, rodenticides, and fertilizers; promote public education on pesticide use and impacts.</td>
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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 through 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/.
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<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Task Description</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
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<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Protect the health of agriculture workers.</td>
<td>Limit worker exposure to agriculture chemicals</td>
<td>Ensure minimum working conditions to provide for rest, water, and shade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Use composting to divert food waste from landfills and improve soils.</td>
<td>Incorporate composting into municipal or County waste management contract</td>
<td>Provide green waste drop-off / compost pickup facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Reduce solid waste from food service.</td>
<td>Assess opportunities to reduce waste from single-serving containers and food packaging, while maintaining sanitation</td>
<td>Support health and safety code modifications to lower barriers to re-use of water bottles and food service items</td>
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<td>4.5</td>
<td>Manage goods movement impacts from food distribution.</td>
<td>Coordinate as a region with transportation agencies to develop goods movement strategies</td>
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<td>4.6</td>
<td>Measure the potential of local food sourcing to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and food miles traveled.</td>
<td>Review available research on VMT reduction and local food sourcing</td>
<td>Develop new data sources for tracking VMT related to food systems</td>
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<td>4.7</td>
<td>Use health impact assessment (HIA) to evaluate potential food system changes.</td>
<td>Conduct an HIA for a food policy council plan, policy, or program</td>
<td>Conduct an HIA for a proposal impacting local food production and healthy/local food access</td>
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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).