

City of Riverside's Local Food Procurement Plan

INTRODUCTION

Local food procurement is the City of Riverside's (City) effort to support local agriculture, provide healthier options at meetings and events, and be a positive role model to the businesses and citizens of the City.

Numerous studies show that foods produced locally and consumed locally generate increased local economic activity. Potential economic impacts from local food systems include, but are not limited to: (1) Farmers generating income directly from farm sales to consumers and increased indirect income through local distribution channels; (2) Increases to local economic activities via the multiplier effect, meaning money invested in the local food economy is more often re-spent locally; and (3) Local employment opportunities increase because of enhanced demand for locally sourced food.

The benefits of supporting local food not only has an economic impact but also plays a positive role in the betterment of our City's overall health. The adoption of a local food procurement plan allows the City to be an example to its constituents by promoting the consumption of more fruits and vegetables and offering healthy options at City sponsored meetings and events.

The City's Local Food Procurement Plan engages three phases as follows:

Phase 1) Evaluation: Baseline Determination and Interest Group outreach,

Phase 2) Implementation: Commitment of 20% of food purchased locally 5 years from City Council Action to do so, and;

Phase 3) Citywide Influence: The City and University of California Riverside's (UCR) commitment provides support for Riverside Food System Alliance's (RFSA) effort to encourage implementation of a local food purchasing policy with other large agencies and organizations throughout the City limits.

Phase 1) EVALUATION

During the first phase, a team will begin meeting with City departments that purchase local food, as well as community stakeholders and residents, in order to identify current baseline common goals, interests, and evaluation models before adopting a local food procurement policy.

The Community Economic and Development Department (CEDD) will assemble a team that will evaluate the overall monies spent on catering and food purchasing with current contracts for catering services and food vendors to determine a baseline for the current

level of local food purchasing. This team will gather the data by meeting with City departments that are currently purchasing food to learn their purchasing habits, including but not limited to: Arts and Cultural Affairs, Parks Recreation and Community Services, General Services, the Mayor's Office, and Community and Economic Development.

During this phase CEDD will also gather input from stakeholders (professionals, businesses and colleagues currently involved in local health initiatives, in the health field or interested in efforts related to health and wellness) on milestones and reporting systems to make the implementation successful - for example, Potential Stakeholders include: RFSA, Community Garden Council, Eastside HEAL Zone, County Nutrition Action Plan (CNAP), Riverside University Health System-Public Health, Fit, Fresh & Fun Forum, Riverside Community Health Foundation (RCHF), Mujeres Activas en Salud (MAS), and Eastside Community Health Partnership (ECHP).

Additional Ideas for this phase could include but are not limited to: (1) establishing a reporting system for tracking progress, (2) establishing milestones to help make the transition to 20% local food purchase incrementally, thus leading to overall project successful, and (3) providing definitions of key measurables like "local".

Phase 2) IMPLEMENTATION

Once input is compiled, the team will incorporate the findings into steps and milestones needed to implement the 20% commitment of local food purchasing in five years' time.

During this phase, City departments, catering services, and food vendors will begin purchasing a percentage of locally sourced food products. The targeted percentage is 20% in five years' time. Milestones will be documented as created by the CEDD team in cooperation with City departments and stakeholders to reach this goal.

Each city department, catering service and food vendor shall utilize a reporting system created or provided by the CEDD team to track progress and document increased purchases of locally sourced food products compared to the original baseline. A yearly progress report shall be compiled by the CEDD team to report any and all findings related to the Local Food Procurement Policy.

Additional Ideas for the phase could include but are not limited to: (1) establishing a list of local food sources available for City functions and restaurants, and (2) encouragement of marketing efforts to increase awareness at City events of locally sourced foods.

Phase 3) CITYWIDE INFLUENCE

Phase three combines UCR's, other participating local institutions, and the City's purchasing power and a 20% commitment of local food purchase to influence adoption of measures Citywide by agencies and community groups who purchase food. Serving as model agencies, the City and participating entities will support efforts of the RFSA and other local food Interest groups to assume leadership of a citywide effort to see 20% of food procurement from local sources.

Additional Ideas for this phase could include but are not limited to: (1) Establishing an “I Pledge” campaign that agencies and residents of Riverside would sign based upon the Los Angeles Food Policy Council Model, (2) Developing a toolkit, including a policy that other agencies could adopt utilizing models established by the City and participating partners.