THE STATE OF GOOD FOOD IN LOS ANGELES

2025 - A DECADE IN REVIEW

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The State of Good Food in Los Angeles: A Decade in Review serves as a critical resource for evaluating progress and challenges across the regional food system, encompassing health, affordability, sustainability, fairness, and accessibility. With over 250 indicators drawn from 10 Southern California counties (Imperial, Kern, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura) - emphasizing Los Angeles County - it provides a comprehensive landscape analysis to inform decision-making, strengthen coordination, and guide collective action among stakeholders. This report integrates diverse data from national databases, local government agencies, and trusted community partners, offering a contextualized and actionable understanding of the regional food system. The report combines both quantitative data and qualitative narratives.

Since the first release of this report in 2013 (originally titled the **Food System Snapshot**), indicators have been tracked and updated to align with LAFPC's core values and reflect current data. Expert commentaries from members of our Leadership Circle and case studies from our programs and partners add depth to the ongoing work. Built around six core values–Healthy, Fair, Sustainable, Affordable, Accessible, and Policy–the report is deeply rooted in equity by analyzing data that is disaggregated by race, ethnicity, nationality, age, income, and neighborhoods within Los Angeles County and cities. This approach helps identify disparities in communities with concentrated disadvantages and track whether the food system is becoming more equitable for everyone.

HEALTHY

Rates of people who are obese and people with diabetes are still on the rise across racial groups. Consumption of fruits and vegetables continues to drop, while fast food consumption is decreasing in parts of the Valley, Metro, and East LA.

FAIR

While average hourly wages in the food system are increasing, they're still not keeping up with the living wage in Los Angeles, and the gap between the living wage and food system wages continues to grow.

AFFORDABLE

Food insecurity is gradually decreasing overall, though disparities persist across different races and nationalities. Fruit and vegetable consumption has dropped across income levels, even as more people agree that produce is becoming more affordable. Participation in school lunches and CalFresh programs is increasing.

ACCESSIBLE

While access to nutritious food has improved slightly for lower-income residents, barriers remain for marginalized communities, including issues with transportation, affordability, and systemic inequities. Culturally relevant food options are limited, and access to safe recreational spaces and clean water varies across neighborhoods.

SUSTAINABLE

Micro-farms are becoming increasingly common, while large farms continue to expand.These shifts in farming practices have significant environmental implications, including impacts on soil health, water scarcity, and greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change. Pesticide use has remained high across the past 10 years.The LA Foodshed has also seen a notable rise in the number of women- and minority-operated farms, reflecting a shift toward greater diversity and inclusion in the region's agricultural landscape.

POLICY

Policies and investments introduced at various levels of government during the pandemic, such as the USDA's Farmers to Families Food Box Program, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program's Online Purchase Pilot, the County's American Rescue Plan Market Match program, and the Grocery Voucher program have helped improve food access in Los Angeles. However, disparities persist, emphasizing the need for adaptable policies that ensure long-term access, affordability, and food system resilience.

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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Over the past decade, Los Angeles has made significant strides in reimagining and rebuilding a food system rooted in equity, resilience, and sustainability. As we present the State of Good Food LA report, we reflect on how far we have come, acknowledge the work ahead, and honor the leaders who have shaped this movement. **This report highlights not only a decade of collective effort but also the evolving role of the Los Angeles Food Policy Council (LAFPC) as a convener, advocate, and thought leader, dismantling barriers to good food for every Angeleno.**

In 2011, LAFPC set out with a bold vision: a food system where all communities thrive, and no one is left behind. Over the years, we have built a network of diverse stakeholders across government, community organizations, academia, and the private sector. Together, we have tackled food insecurity, waste, and local policy reform while fostering economic growth. At the heart of this work is collaboration—no single entity can solve these challenges alone. **Our collective approach has amplified community voices in policy discussions and driven data-driven solutions that reflect the lived experiences of Angelenos.**

LAFPC has advanced food equity through innovative policies and programs shaped by data, case studies, and community insights. Initiatives like Good Food Zones and the Healthy Neighborhood Market Network have expanded access to nutritious, affordable food while supporting local economies. Programs such as the Good Food Purchasing Program and Food Waste Prevention and Recovery Working Group promote sustainability and equity across the food system. Meanwhile, the Food Leaders Lab equips the next generation of advocates with the tools to champion food justice and sustainability.

As we look ahead, we carry forward the vision of remarkable leaders like Bryce Fluellen, whose deep commitment to food justice and community empowerment continues to inspire our work. Bryce's leadership in expanding access to healthy food and economic opportunities, particularly for Black and Brown communities, remains a cornerstone of our movement. His impact lives on in the programs, policies, and partnerships he helped build.

The State of Good Food LA offers a roadmap for collective action. In the coming years, we will expand our focus on climate-smart agriculture and support local food businesses, ensuring a resilient and just food system. This report will track progress, identify gaps, and refine strategies based on evidence and community input. Together with our partners, **we look forward to advancing solutions that address food insecurity, uplift local food economies, and protect the well-being of all Angelenos.**

Alba Velasquez
Executive Director, Los Angeles Food Policy Council

INTRODUCTION

INTRO TO THE STATE OF GOOD FOOD IN LOS ANGELES

The State of Good Food in Los Angeles: A Decade in Review represents a transformative evolution of the 2020 Los Angeles Food System Dashboard, capturing over 250 key indicators that assess the health, affordability, accessibility, sustainability, fairness, and ultimately equity of our food system. Over the past 10 years, this report has grown into a vital tool for understanding how our food system is performing, both locally and regionally. Tracking trends across the city, county, and a foodshed that spans ten counties in Southern California offers a comprehensive lens into the broader food landscape. We also want to highlight our collaborative efforts across the region through case studies, commentaries, and a network organization analysis (See Appendix D for a full list of all organizations in our network).

This 2024 edition brings forward not just a reflection on the past decade but an urgent look ahead. New indicators on accessibility and food policy have been added to ensure the report remains an essential guide for addressing the evolving challenges and opportunities in the food system. These additions underscore our commitment to responding to community needs, policy shifts, and the realities of food access in Los Angeles and beyond.

Our approach remains grounded in both quantitative and qualitative insights. On the quantitative side, the report presents a wealth of data: statistics, trends, and visualizations that track key metrics over time. However, numbers alone do not tell the full story. The inclusion of expert commentaries and case studies brings nuance and context to these figures, providing a deeper understanding of the lived experiences and community impacts behind the data.

The State of Good Food in Los Angeles: A Decade in Review is not simply a static report, it is a dynamic tool constantly evolving to meet new priorities and challenges. This report is designed to adapt, incorporating new data, metrics, and long-term goals that align with emerging issues such as food security, climate resilience, environmental sustainability, and public health. As this resource continues to grow, so too will our strategies to create a more just and sustainable food system for all.

This is not just a reflection of our progress as a region; it is a call to action. As we review a decade of data, we are reminded that our work is far from complete. The report serves as both a mirror of where we've been and a map for where we must go, driving forward collective efforts to reshape the food system for the better. We envision a future where these evolving indicators continue to inform, inspire, and ignite change in Los Angeles and the broader region.

PURPOSE

The State of Good Food in Los Angeles: A Decade in Review is a collaborative tool that brings together data from trusted sources to offer a clear view of our local food landscape. **This report serves as a resource for organizations, policymakers, and community members, providing a comprehensive way to track progress and identify opportunities for a stronger, more equitable food system in LA.** While the LA Food Policy Council collected secondary data for this report, our goal is to spotlight trends that shape the current state of Good Food in Los Angeles covering areas like affordability, sustainability, and accessibility. We've also included expert commentary and case studies that highlight the vital work happening in our communities, from grassroots initiatives to policy changes. Ultimately, this report is meant to equip everyone with useful insights into our food system, empowering each reader to make informed choices and advocate for positive change.

EQUITY

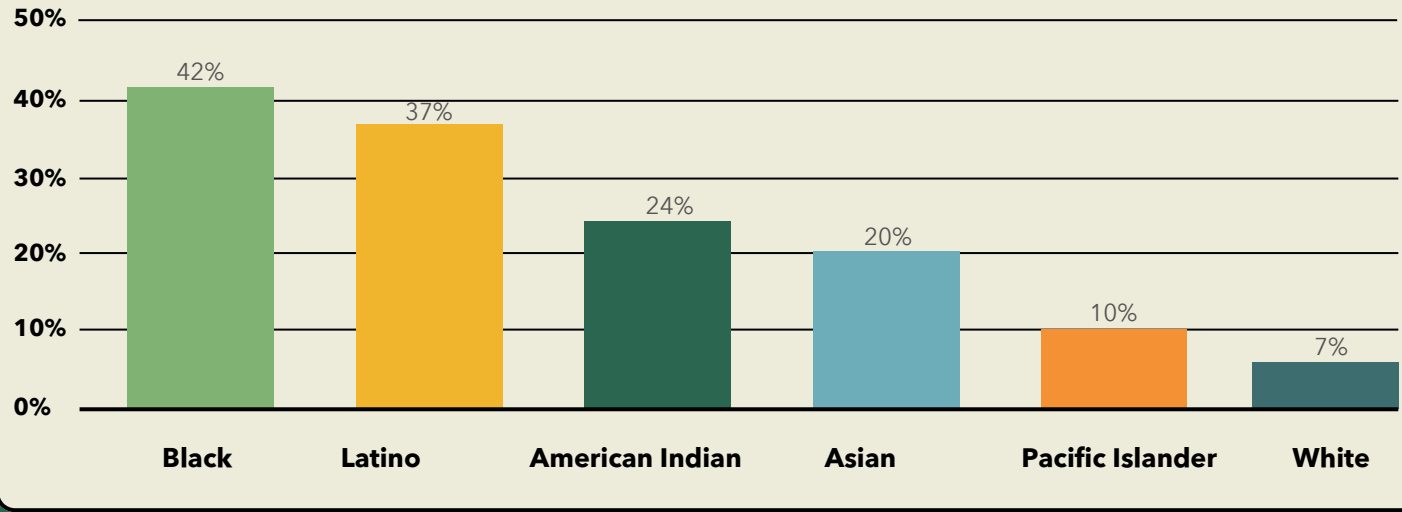
At the Los Angeles Food Policy Council (LAFPC), **we recognize that systemic inequities in our food system are deeply rooted in historic and ongoing racial and social injustices.** Policies and practices rooted in discrimination, such as redlining, exclusionary zoning, and unequal labor laws, have disproportionately impacted Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities, creating barriers to food access, economic opportunities, and health equity. Addressing these inequities requires intentional action and a steadfast commitment to racial equity.

In alignment with the **LA County Racial Equity Strategic plan**, equity refers to "the idea that differences matter and that systems must be balanced to distribute resources and opportunities needed to reach equal outcomes by treating everyone justly according to their circumstances. We define equity in terms of just outcome (distribution of benefits, resources, burdens, and penalties cannot be predicted by life characteristics such as gender, age, ethnicity, culture, and sexual orientation, or persistent conditions such as caste and disability) and fair process (impacted groups are fully engaged, fully included, with shared power for the opportunity to participate in the design and distribution of benefits and resources). Focusing on equity ensures that everyone has fair access to opportunities and resources while acknowledging and addressing the structural disparities that continue to harm communities with concentrated disadvantages. Racial equity demands that we center the voices, needs, and experiences of communities that have historically been affected the most by the lack of access to good food. At LAFPC, we believe that each individual has an inalienable right to health, economic opportunity, safety, and self-expression, regardless of race, gender, identity, ability, class, age, sexual orientation, affiliation, or background.

To create a truly Good Food system, we are committed to ensuring that all Angelenos–especially those historically excluded from resources–have equitable access to food that is healthy, affordable, sustainable, fair, and accessible. The State of Good Food in Los Angeles report reflects these values by centering equity and, when possible, disaggregating data by race and income, highlighting disparities in areas such as food security, health outcomes, and neighborhood food resources. Through this commitment, we aim to build a more inclusive and just food system that serves all Angelenos.

Percentage of Population Living in Concentrated Disadvantage Neighborhoods

Source: Los Angeles County Racial Equity Strategic Plan



1

Whenever possible, we disaggregate data to paint a clearer picture of various realities alive in Los Angeles. This approach includes examining indicators such as food security and diabetes rates by race and income level, as well as analyzing the distribution of grocery stores across different neighborhoods. By breaking down this data, we can better understand the strengths and opportunities within our food system and highlight areas that need targeted intervention and support. **This detailed analysis helps us to advocate more effectively for equitable food access and policies that benefit all communities.**

2

The State of Good Food in Los Angeles: A Decade in Review sources only vetted and reliable data sources. However, we acknowledge the inherent limitations of surveys, particularly in terms of response rates, which can vary across different communities. Factors such as Public Charge policies and anti-immigrant rhetoric can lead to lower response rates in certain populations due to fear of participation. At the same time, language variations and visual and auditory challenges pose barriers to participating, meaning some data may not fully reflect the experiences and realities of these communities. **This highlights the need for continued advocacy and outreach efforts to ensure that all voices are represented and heard in our data collection processes.**

3

We understand that numbers alone don't tell the whole story. To enrich our insights, we incorporate expert commentary and case studies, which provide essential context and depth that quantitative data may not convey. These qualitative contributions highlight the experiences and perspectives of community members, **helping to illuminate the narratives behind the statistics and enhance our understanding of the food system in Los Angeles**.

SOME OF OUR FOOD PARTNERS ACROSS LOS ANGELES

Despite the efforts we've made in compiling the State of Good Food in Los Angeles: A Decade in Review, we recognize that the data and trends presented here only scratch the surface of our complex food system. There is so much more to uncover beyond the indicators and insights provided. We encourage readers and stakeholders to continue exploring and researching the ever-evolving landscape of our local and regional food system. By digging deeper into the issues and opportunities that influence health, equity, and sustainable food systems in Los Angeles, we can work together to create meaningful change.

As we reflect on the past and plan for the future, we remain committed to fostering equity, diversity, and inclusion in all aspects of our work. By addressing historical prejudices and prioritizing racial equity, we aim to build a food system rooted in fairness and justice, one that uplifts all communities, particularly those most impacted by systemic harm.

COLLECTIVE IMPACT CONDITIONS

The Good Food movement in Los Angeles is organized through a collective impact approach – one that involves **"the commitment of a group of actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem using a structured form of collaboration"** (Partnership for Strong Communities). According to the Stanford Social Innovation Review, the collective impact model includes:

- **A Common Agenda**
- **Backbone Support**
- **Mutually Reinforcing Activities**
- **Shared Measurement**
- **Continuous Communication**

Shared measurements, such as data from reputable sources, provide a foundation for making informed policy decisions that can lead to more effective outcomes and solutions. When used appropriately, data is a powerful tool. However, we also recognize the limitations that can arise from a lack of resources, whether in terms of time, funding, or personnel, or from inequitable data collection strategies.

As you explore The State of Good Food in Los Angeles: A Decade in Review, we encourage you to think critically about what these numbers represent in the real-world experiences of your community and the broader implications they may carry. While we offer an initial step toward contextualization through our expert commentaries and case studies, we hope this report inspires you to continue questioning and reflecting on the data and trends presented.

VALUES

The State of Good Food in Los Angeles: A Decade in Review is organized into six unique sections based on the five Good Food values (healthy, affordable, sustainable, fair, accessible) and policy.

HEALTHY

Food is integral to the health and quality of life of individuals and communities. Healthy food is nutritious, delicious, safe, and culturally relevant. It meets dietary guidelines and recommendations and contributes to the health and vitality of those who consume it. A "healthy" food system offers people genuine options in their food choices so as to provide them with equal opportunity to access and ability to consume preferred foods, no matter their neighborhood.

AFFORDABLE

All Angelenos, regardless of their income level or occupation, should have the ability to purchase good food to nourish themselves, their families, friends, and neighbors. Supplemental nutrition programs such as SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), formerly known as Food Stamps, and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) increase the affordability of food by expanding the food budgets of program participants, most of whom are low-income children, families, and seniors. Prioritizing affordability means ensuring that our most vulnerable populations can access Good Food in their neighborhoods.

SUSTAINABLE

Sustainable food is grown, distributed, and disposed of with respect to people and the planet in ways that sustain and regenerate the natural resources used to create it, such as soil, water, seed, and biodiverse habitats. Our local food system is both a contributor to climate change and a critical tool for reversing it. A sustainable food system fosters dynamic and symbiotic relationships between food and nutrition security, economic development, and environmental sustainability.

FAIR

Fair food consists of food produced, manufactured, distributed, sold, and recycled with fair labor practices and humane treatment of animals. At every point in the food supply chain, workers should receive livable wage compensation, ethical treatment, and be free from exploitation and enslavement. In addition to fair treatment of food workers such as grocery workers, factory workers, farm workers, and restaurant workers employed by the food system, fair food also means support for marginalized and low-income entrepreneurs, such as street vendors, home cooks, family farmers, and other small food businesses with barriers to resources. Finally, fair food honors and respects the lives of all species involved in food provision.

ACCESSIBLE

All individuals, regardless of their background, location, or physical ability, should have access to nutritious food that is within reach both physically and economically. A truly accessible food system ensures that food is available in all neighborhoods, particularly in underserved communities, and addresses barriers such as transportation, disability, and food deserts. Access to Good Food means more than proximity; it means ensuring that everyone can consistently access fresh, culturally relevant, and healthy food options.

POLICY

Local, state, and federal policies play a crucial role in shaping the food system. Good Food policies promote equity, food security, and public health by influencing everything from food pricing and agricultural practices to distribution networks and food assistance programs. Effective food policies ensure that nutritious food is affordable, accessible, and sustainable, and they address disparities in food access among low-income, marginalized, or underserved communities. Policy is a key driver for ensuring the long-term health and fairness of our food system.

METHODOLOGY

The State of Good Food in Los Angeles: A Decade in Review report is a comprehensive 10-year review of Los Angeles's food system. New measures focus on topics like accessibility and food policy to reflect what matters most to the community today. These updates build on goals first outlined in the 2013 Food System Snapshot.

Shaped by input from a wide range of voices, the report includes a mix of longstanding and new indicators that offer a broad view of our food system's health. Data in the report comes from reliable sources, including government databases, public business records, research studies, and trusted partner organizations. With the addition of new measures for accessibility and policy, the report stays current and reflects today's local priorities. We've also removed some indicators if they relied on outdated or irregular data, though these may still hold value in other contexts. By adding new categories like accessibility and policy, the report addresses what the community has flagged as key areas in recent years.

The report combines numbers and stories. Updated baseline data from 2013, alongside snapshots from 2017, 2020, and now 2024, show trends over the past decade. Alongside the data, expert insights and case studies add context and bring the experiences behind the numbers to life. The State of Good Food LA report doesn't represent the direct impact of the LA Food Policy Council. Instead, it's a tool for understanding changing conditions across Los Angeles's food system. While it highlights trends, it doesn't explore what caused them or connect cause and effect.

Each section of the report focuses on key values identified in 2013, with updates from 2017, 2020, and 2024. The findings are intended to provide an overview of observed trends and do not demonstrate statistically significant changes or causal relationships. The racial categories included in the report have been predetermined by their sources. See Appendices A and B for more on how the data was collected and analyzed.

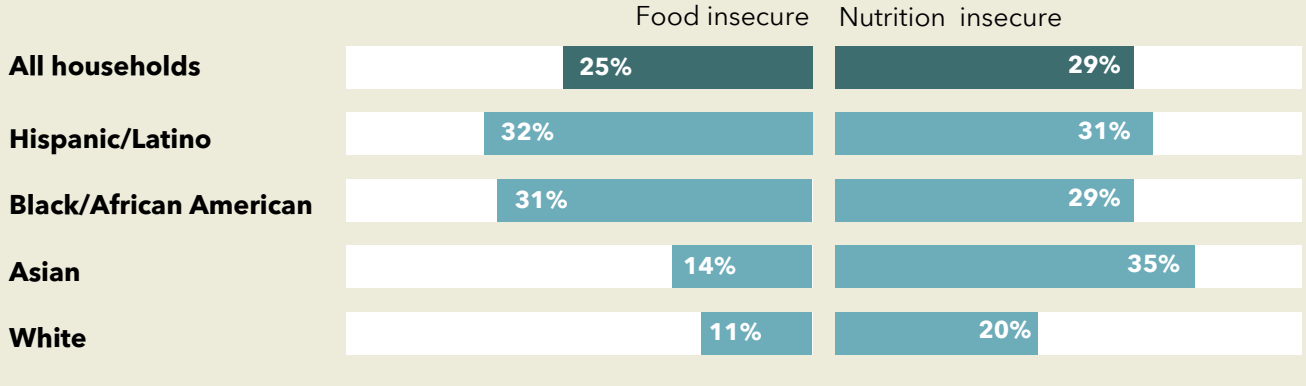
THE STATE OF FOOD AND NUTRITION INSECURITY IN LOS ANGELES

Food and nutrition insecurity in Los Angeles impacts thousands of families who face challenges in putting healthy, nourishing meals on the table. Food insecurity refers to the lack of consistent access to enough food to support an active and healthy life, often due to limited financial resources. Nutrition insecurity, on the other hand, goes beyond the quantity of food, emphasizing access to nutrient-dense, culturally appropriate foods that are essential for maintaining good health. Together, these issues disproportionately affect low-income communities and people of color, who often live in areas with limited availability of fresh, affordable, and healthy foods.

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated these challenges, driving a sharp increase in food insecurity as families contended with job losses and rising food prices. While some recovery has occurred, food and nutrition insecurity remains a significant issue. Many families still struggle to afford fresh produce and nutrient-rich foods essential for promoting health and well-being. Consequently, diet-related illnesses such as obesity and diabetes continue to rise, particularly in neighborhoods inundated with fast food options and lacking access to healthier alternatives.

Addressing this complex issue requires community-driven solutions that prioritize equitable access to nutritious foods. Expanding initiatives like farmers' markets that accept SNAP benefits, increasing investment in food assistance programs, and implementing policies to tackle systemic root causes can pave the way for a healthier future. By addressing these barriers, we can ensure every Angeleno has the opportunity to thrive through access to healthy, affordable food.

Rates of food and nutrition insecurity by race and ethnicity in Los Angeles County in 2024



Source: USC Institute for Food System Equity October 2024 Food and Insecurity Brief

THE LOS ANGELES FOODSHED

The Los Angeles Urban-Rural Roundtable defines a foodshed as an area linked by a common local food source. Just as a watershed describes an area of land bounded by a common water source, a foodshed describes a geographic area bounded by its capacity to produce food for its occupants. The LA Foodshed includes ten counties in Southern California.

Imperial	San Bernardino
Kern	San Diego
Los Angeles	San Luis Obispo
Orange	Santa Barbara
Riverside	Ventura

LAFPC FOODSHED PARTNERS

LONG BEACH

Long Beach Fresh connects "Eaters, Feeders, and Seeders" in LA County's second-largest city, where diversity thrives but food access challenges persist. In a dense, gritty city shaped by environmental challenges, we focus on creating vibrant food hubs in underserved neighborhoods. From launching a Night Market alongside Cambodian refugees to engaging Master Gardeners to grow a garden for a Peruvian restaurant, we partner with stewards and socially-minded entrepreneurs to turn food spaces into community anchors. Our mission is connection over production fostering **"Food Democracy" where everyday residents actively shape the local food system**, creating opportunities and connections that nourish us all.

THE INLAND EMPIRE

The Inland Empire Food Systems Alliance is strengthening the local food ecosystem across Riverside and San Bernardino counties. The Alliance hosts a Farmer Training Apprenticeship, which has 50 farmers who have graduated, with 100+ currently enrolled, and supported the creation of 13 small farms in the region. The **Riverside Food Hub**, in collaboration with the Alliance, has secured $2.5M in Local Food Purchase Assistance (LFPA) program grants, spent $4.6M with local farms, prioritizing BIPOC farmers, and distributed produce to schools, hospitals, and food banks throughout the Inland Empire. The Alliance has boosted food access by providing $89,000 in Market Match incentives across four regional farmers markets. Additionally, it supports education and collaboration through the annual GROW conference, Growers Forums, and food safety training initiatives.

SANTA BARBARA

The Santa Barbara Food Action Network works within the LA Foodshed to strengthen regional food systems. It connects small-scale producers to institutional procurement channels, providing technical assistance and information to support their efforts. The network is developing a regional meat processing infrastructure that emphasizes livable wages, humane practices, and environmentally conscious operations while keeping locally raised food in the region. It also coordinates community-designed food system infrastructure, including community kitchens, microenterprises, food-as-medicine programs, and food hubs, fostering a closed-loop food system. Additionally, the network identifies and supports equitable access to farmland with reliable water sources.

ORANGE COUNTY

In 2018, **Abound Food Care, Second Harvest Food Bank, and CAPOC/OC Food Bank formed the OC Hunger Alliance (OCHA)** with a mission of optimizing the emergency food system and leveraging food assistance to address the root causes of poverty. The expanded OCHA has since worked jointly with regional stakeholders to develop solutions that increase efficiencies in the food system. These solutions lead to a reduction in food waste, food/nutritional insecurity, and inequities. The OCHA believes regional collaboration is the key to optimizing the food system.

STATE OF GOOD FOOD:

HEALTHY

Over the past decade, health outcomes in Los Angeles County have highlighted both the challenges and the progress made toward improving the well-being of low-income communities and communities of color. These populations have long faced a disproportionate burden of diet-related health conditions. Still, there has also been a growing movement toward addressing these disparities, fueled by advocacy and community-driven initiatives. While challenges remain, the data reflects a concerted effort to improve access to healthier food and promote better dietary habits.

Historically, many neighborhoods in Los Angeles have lacked access to healthy food, often surrounded by liquor stores, convenience shops, and fast food restaurants (See Accessibility Section for more information about retail outlet access). Yet, over the years, there have been significant improvements. For example, although fruit and vegetable consumption among adults has declined slightly, there has been a growing awareness of the importance of nutrition, particularly among teens and children, with the percentage of teens eating 5+ servings of fruits and vegetables rising to 32.4% in 2020 before experiencing a recent dip. This highlights the positive influence of public health campaigns, school programs, and community gardens, which are helping to shift dietary habits in the right direction.

Furthermore, while the percentage of children and adults consuming soda or sweetened drinks has been relatively high, there is a clear trend toward reducing sugary beverage consumption in certain areas.

For instance, the percentage of children drinking at least one soda or sweetened drink a day has decreased from 38.3% in 2013 to 34.6% in 2024, reflecting the success of public health initiatives like health education programs and efforts to make healthier beverage choices more accessible. These efforts are contributing to a gradual but significant shift in the community's consumption patterns.

Community engagement, paired with policy changes to improve food access, is creating a shift toward healthier lifestyles. The efforts to tackle chronic conditions like hypertension, diabetes, and high cholesterol also reflect a growing recognition of the importance of preventative health care and nutrition education, with more focus being placed on providing access to affordable and healthy food options for all.

Our network includes 52 organizations actively working to improve health outcomes through the food system. These organizations focus on increasing access to nutritious food and reducing diet-related health disparities.

For a comprehensive list of these organizations, refer to Appendix D.

THIS REPORT SUMMARIZES DATA TRENDS WITHOUT SHOWING STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT CHANGES OR CAUSAL RELATIONSHIPS.

HEALTHY

INDICATOR	2013	2017	2020	2024
FOOD CONSUMPTION IN LA COUNTY[1]				
Adults who consume 5+ servings of fruit and vegetables/day	16.2%	14.7%	12.1%	10.8%
Teens who consume 5+ servings of fruit and vegetables/day	24.1%	26.7%	32.4%	15.6%
Children (2-11) who consume 5+ servings of fruit and vegetables/day	25.8%	31.2%	24.6%	26.2%
Adults and children who consume fast food at least once/week	68.5%	71.5%	72.5%	not updated
Adults who drink at least one soda or sweetened drink/day	35.5%	31.4%	not updated	35.1%
Children who drink at least one soda or sweetened drink/day	38.3%	39.2%	37.2%	34.6%
PERCENTAGE OF ADULTS WHO CONSUME 5 OR MORE SERVINGS OF FRUIT AND VEGETABLES A DAY[2]				
African American	12.4%	12.1%	10.4%	11.6%
Asian	17.5%	11.8%	7.2%	10.5%
Latino	13.0%	12.4%	9.7%	9.6%
American Indian/ Alaska Native	16.3%	11.7%	not updated	not updated
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	not updated	not updated	not updated	17.5%
White	21.0%	20.1%	18.1%	12.5%

[1] *UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, California Health Interview Survey, 2011, 2015, 2017, 2023*
[2] *LA County Key Indicators of Health, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, 2011, 2016, 2018, 2024*

INDICATOR	2013	2017	2020	2024
PERCENTAGE OF ADULTS WHO CONSUME FAST FOOD AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK[1]				
Antelope Valley	69.5%	70.3%	79.4%	55.4%
San Fernando	64.0%	68.9%	74.9%	25.1%
San Gabriel	69.8%	71.5%	70.8%	42.6%
Metro	63.0%	66.7%	64.5%	20.2%
South LA	74.3%	81.8%	71.9%	18.3%
East LA	78.6%	82.3%	79.6%	33.1%
South Bay	71.1%	71.5%	69.4%	52.0%
West LA	51.9%	52.4%	50.0%	36.0%
PERCENTAGE OF ADULTS WHO DRINK AT LEAST ONE SODA OR SWEETENED DRINK A DAY[2]				
African American	35.5%	41.0%	not updated	39.6%
Asian	20.6%	25.5%	not updated	23.3%
Latino	47.7%	39.0%	not updated	47.2%
American Indian/ Alaska Native	47.7%	15.7%	not updated	36.1%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	not updated	not updated	not updated	not updated
White	26.4%	21.0%	not updated	21.1%

HEALTH OUTCOMES BY COMMUNITY

PERCENTAGE OF ADULTS WHO ARE OVERWEIGHT[2]

INDICATOR	2013	2017	2020	2024
African American	12.4%	12.1%	10.4%	11.6%
Asian	17.5%	11.8%	7.2%	10.5%
Latino	13.0%	12.4%	9.7%	9.6%
American Indian/ Alaska Native	16.3%	11.7%	not updated	not updated
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	not updated	not updated	not updated	17.5%
White	21.0%	20.1%	18.1%	12.5%

PERCENT OF ADULTS WHO ARE OBESE[2]

INDICATOR	2013	2017	2020	2024
African American	31.0%	32.9%	32.5%	39.9%
Asian	8.9%	9.3%	9.5%	10.1%
Latino	31.6%	30.9%	37.0%	39.1%
American Indian/ Alaska Native	25.8%	19.1%	38.0%	58.9%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	not updated	15.0%	52.0%	60.9%
White	18.0%	18.0%	21.9%	21.4%
Children in grades 5, 7, and 9	22.4%	21.2%	21.2%	43.3%

INDICATOR	2013	2017	2020	2024
PERCENTAGE OF ADULTS EVER DIAGNOSED WITH DIABETES[2]				
African American	12.6%	13.7%	14.4%	12.9%
Asian	9.3%	8.2%	8.2%	10.3%
Latino	9.5%	10.7%	13.6%	13.5%
American Indian/ Alaska Native	not updated	15.2%	not updated	30.2%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	not updated	29.9%	not updated	18.7%
White	8.5%	8.2%	8.8%	8.3%
Antelope Valley	10.7%	13.9%	13.1%	15.1%
San Fernando	9.3%	8.2%	10.1%	8.1%
San Gabriel	7.7%	9.1%	11.0%	12.3%
Metro	7.3%	11.6%	12.1%	12.3%
South LA	10.1%	12.3%	14.7%	16.7%
East LA	15.1%	11.2%	11.4%	14.1%
South Bay	9.8%	10.4%	12.5%	11.3%
West LA	5.5%	4.5%	6.3%	4.8%

INDICATOR	2013	2017	2020	2024
PERCENTAGE OF ADULTS EVER DIAGNOSED WITH HYPERTENSION[2]				
African American	39.2%	33.3%	35.9%	38.0%
Asian	25.3%	20.4%	21.9%	25.7%
Latino	18.0%	19.7%	22.8%	24.4%
American Indian/ Alaska Native	43.3%	24.2%	25.6%	42.5%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	not updated	36.8%	not updated	38.9%
White	27.4%	27.5%	27.3%	31.8%
Antelope Valley	29.0%	27.5%	27.3%	30.7%
San Fernando	23.9%	30.3%	30.7%	26.3%
San Gabriel	25.4%	23.7%	24.2%	32.6%
Metro	20.4%	25.3%	25.0%	26.1%
South LA	28.4%	22.4%	27.6%	26.5%
East LA	24.4%	22.8%	23.2%	28.8%
South Bay	24.5%	23.1%	27.6%	26.0%
West LA	17.1%	17.1%	19.6%	25.0%

INDICATOR	2013	2017	2020	2024
PERCENTAGE OF ADULTS EVER DIAGNOSED WITH HIGH CHOLESTEROL[2]				
African American	26.9%	23.5%	23.9%	31.6%
Asian	26.3%	24.5%	25.6%	35.4%
Latino	22.2%	22.4%	26.3%	30.0%
American Indian/ Alaska Native	38.6%	23.9%	13.1%	45.1%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	not updated	33.3%	30.5%	28.0%
White	29.7%	29.8%	29.6%	37.%
Antelope Valley	26.4%	28.3%	30.3%	30.4%
San Fernando	28.4%	24.9%	24.7%	34.1%
San Gabriel	23.9%	23.7%	27.7%	33.9%
Metro	24.1%	25.7%	28.9%	33.9%
South LA	22.9%	22.2%	26.5%	32.3%
East LA	25.4%	27.6%	24.9%	31.5%
South Bay	26.5%	26.5%	29.0%	30.5%
West LA	24.8%	24.4%	24.8%	33.2%

HEALTHY COMMENTARY:

BUILDING ON 10 YEARS OF PROGRESS: HEALTHY EATING AS THE PATH FORWARD FOR LA COUNTY

By Kayla de la Haye, Institute for Food System Equity Research
Associate Professor of Psychology and Spatial Sciences, USC

Though food is meant to nourish, poor diets are the root of many health problems, including heart disease, diabetes, and some cancers. Most Americans' diets lack essential fruits, vegetables, and whole grains while including too much sugar, salt, and highly processed foods, harming both personal and planetary health. While we often attribute unhealthy eating habits to personal choice, the root causes are systemic issues, including food and nutrition insecurity, food injustice, and an unhealthy food system that makes accessing nutritious food difficult, if not impossible, for many. This food crisis is especially acute in Los Angeles (LA) County. **Data from 2023 show that only 11% of adults eat the recommended five servings of fruits or vegetables per day**, while about a third consume sugar-sweetened beverages (SSB) daily (35%) and fast food weekly (34%). A quarter (26%) of LA County residents struggle with food insecurity, and a third (33%) with nutrition insecurity, which compromises children's and adults' nutrition, health, and well-being. One-fourth of county residents live in "food deserts," areas with limited access to affordable, healthy food. This has fueled rising rates of diet-related diseases: diabetes diagnoses rose from 6% in 1997 to 11% in 2023, and hypertension diagnoses rose from 16% in 1997 to 28% in 2023. In LA County, diet-related diseases are now the leading cause of death.

Critically, this food crisis doesn't impact everyone equally: some segments of our community face unequal and unjust barriers to accessing and eating healthy food. For example, rates of food insecurity in LA County are two times higher among Latino and Black residents compared to white residents. They are also higher for those living near the poverty line and for women. Food deserts are concentrated in low-income communities and communities of color.

To tackle these issues, we must understand and address the causes. But there is no one main cause and no 'silver bullet' solution. Complex food systems shape food access and diets. These systems include individual factors, like food preferences, differing dietary needs, and household budgets. However, they also entail community food access and support, government food programs, and regional trends like economic development, urbanization, and food policy. Due to historical and structural processes, like structural racism, some communities face barriers across many levels to achieving food security and eating a healthy diet: e.g., a lack of financial resources to purchase healthy food, targeted marketing of unhealthy foods, neighborhood inaccessibility of healthy foods due to unavailability and/or unaffordability, and disproportionate early-life exposure to ultra-processed foods influencing taste preferences. Transformative change in our food system is possible through a comprehensive approach that addresses household, community, and food environment factors. Community-led, whole-system interventions with broad support and investment from multiple stakeholders and sectors have proven effective in driving systemic change. This approach is endorsed by the LA County Food Equity Action Plan and has long been adopted by the LA Food Policy Council. Investment in these initiatives will put LA County on a promising path to address the food crisis, improve access to healthy food, and reduce food inequities, ensuring nutritious food is accessible to all residents, now and for future generations.

HEALTHY COMMENTARY:

WIC: ADVANCING NUTRITION SECURITY IN LOS ANGELES FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN OVER A DECADE

By Kiran Saluja and Shannon Whaley, PHFE WIC Program

Nutrition security, while a relatively new term, has been the centerpiece of WIC since the program's inception in 1974. WIC is effectively the nation's first Food as Medicine program and differs substantially from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, called CalFresh in California) through WIC's provision of targeted nutritious foods aimed to help vulnerable pregnant and postpartum women and young children meet and exceed dietary intake requirements for nutrient- and vitamin-dense foods. Multiple studies document the impacts of WIC on a broad range of outcomes, including food security, diet quality, healthier birth outcomes, lower rates of childhood obesity and improved developmental outcomes. A recent publication by our own research team documented that every $1 invested in WIC incurs $2.48 in health care savings, an impressive return on investment that uplifts the significance of targeted nutritional intervention from the prenatal period through the early years of life. In 2023, WIC reached nearly half of all children under age 5 in Los Angeles County, contributing substantially to the food and nutrition security of our most vulnerable children.

The year 2024 marks the 50th anniversary of the WIC program, with the last decade marked by particularly important improvements enhancing nutrition security. WIC foods include fruits and vegetables, issued to families on an electronic WIC card in the form of a Cash Value Benefit (CVB). Starting in 2009, this new fruit and veggie benefit offered $6/month for children and $8/month for

WIC, Belen Rediet and Karen Hernandez


WIC, Belen Rediet and Karen Hernandez

women for any type of vegetable or fruit they wanted. In Los Angeles County alone, the addition of the CVB in 2009 provided over $3.1M every month in new purchasing power for WIC participants to purchase vegetables and fruits. Flash forward to 2021, when Congress to increased the WIC CVB for all women and children served by the program.

Through a series of critical legislative efforts, these increases – now $26/month for children, $47/month for pregnant and postpartum women and $52/month for breastfeeding women – have been made permanent. These increases in access to vegetables and fruits have been a tremendous win for nutrition security among low-income families in Los Angeles and across the US. Our team has documented that increases to the CVB have significantly improved food security by at least 10% among Los Angeles County WIC participants, and significantly increased vegetable and fruit intake among children who were not previously meeting produce intake recommendations. In Los Angeles County alone, over $8M/month in CVB are currently issued for WIC participants to purchase vegetables and fruits from local vendors, contributing substantially to advancing nutrition security for low-income families with young children.

Advances in nutrition security are not complete without recognition of the critical importance of an infant's first food: human milk provides newborns and young infants with the most nutritionally tailored and secure form of early nutrition.

Unfortunately, access to breastfeeding support is not equitable across all populations, contributing to significant disparities in who achieves their breastfeeding goals and, overall, few women meet their breastfeeding duration goals. While the WIC program in California provides a broad array of breastfeeding services, including prenatal education, early post-partum breastfeeding support, breastfeeding peer counselors, support groups, and hands on help with Lactation Consultants, it is imperative that the medical system and all systems touching young families work together to ensure all women can achieve optimal nutrition security and achieve their breastfeeding goals.

Finally, despite WIC's reach to nearly half of all children under age 5 in Los Angeles County, there are tens of thousands of eligible children not accessing the program. A critical strategy for ensuring nutrition security for ALL low-income children in Los Angeles County is to link every pregnant and postpartum woman and child under age 5 who receives Medi-Cal to WIC. Improving data sharing efforts between systems of care in order to facilitate cross-program enrollment is a promising opportunity for continued nutrition security through the next decade.

HEALTHY CASE STUDY:

HEALTHY MARKETS LA OVER THE PAST 10 YEARS

By Valeria Velazquez Duenas, LA Food Policy Council

Healthy Markets LA (formerly the Healthy Neighborhood Market Network) partners with neighborhood market and corner store owners, transforming them into successful healthy food retailers in historically redlined and underserved communities. Since launching in 2014, the program has reached over 85 food retailers. At the heart of HMLA's efforts are dedicated Program Associates who offer personalized technical assistance and connect entrepreneurs to vital resources. The program's mission is clear: tackle food insecurity, support small businesses, and promote healthy eating in communities that have long faced barriers to accessing nutritious foods.

The need for HMLA's work is evident in the stark statistics surrounding food access in Los Angeles. **A staggering 31% of residents lack reliable access to affordable fresh fruits and vegetables, while 72% of fast-food restaurants are concentrated in low-income communities of color**. Furthermore, 28% of diabetes cases are found in Latinx and African American populations, highlighting significant health disparities that demand attention. In South and East Los Angeles, the presence of convenience and liquor stores outnumbers that of grocery stores by a disturbing 40% when compared to West Los Angeles, further exacerbating the problem of healthy food accessibility. HMLA's core principles address these issues through a model that engages corner stores as assets in the fight for healthy food access . One of these key principles is the empowerment of store owners. The program provides Healthy Retail business training rooted in best practices for small scale grocery retail and invests in vital store upgrades like refrigeration, signage, and marketing. This entrepreneur-centered approach is designed to boost sales while simultaneously improving access to healthy foods.

Moreover, by targeting areas without full-service grocery stores, HMLA and store owner collaborations lead to enhanced shopping experiences for community members and improved access to fresh produce and other healthy foods. Over the years, HMLA has made a substantial impact on the community, supporting a diverse group of entrepreneurs. The program boasts a remarkable statistic: **100% of the businesses served are BIPOC-owned, with 58% being woman-owned, 92% immigrant-owned, and 70% Latinx-owned.** The results speak for themselves. Since its inception, over 85 store owners have completed the program, and participating businesses have seen an average produce revenue increase of 124%. In terms of profitability, these businesses have reported an average profit increase of $1,453 per week when compared to pre-program figures. Additionally, HMLA has completed six store transformation projects with the support of dedicated funders.

Through its work, HMLA has connected businesses to critical opportunities such as the ARP Market Match nutrition incentive program and Healthy Refrigeration Grants. The program's partnerships extend to organizations like Inclusive Action for the City and the National Health Foundation, as well as corporate partners such as Northgate Gonzalez Markets and Whole Foods. These collaborations have not only enhanced HMLA's impact but have also fostered community engagement, creating a ripple effect that supports the transformation of local stores and the communities they serve.

STATE OF GOOD FOOD:

AFFORDABLE

Ensuring that all Angelenos have access to affordable food is essential for achieving both food security and equity across Los Angeles. Affordable food access means more than mere availability; it also entails food costs that align with the high living expenses in the region. Programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, known locally as CalFresh) and the Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) play an essential role by expanding food budgets for low-income children, families, and seniors, directly addressing food affordability for the residents who need it most.

Income plays a significant role in determining food security, with lower-income households facing the greatest challenges in accessing adequate nutrition. In Los Angeles County, households earning less than $40,000 annually have declined as a proportion of the population, but they remain disproportionately affected by food insecurity.

Almost half of low-income households struggle to afford enough food. While more people in this group say fruits and vegetables are more affordable now than a decade ago (rising from 66% in 2013 to 74% in 2024), the high cost of other nutritious foods remains a major challenge. In 2024, over half of families living below the poverty line said they couldn't consistently afford enough food, compared to about 4 in 10 families earning just above the poverty line. These financial pressures often push low-income households to buy cheaper, unhealthy foods, which can lead to long-term health problems. Programs like CalFresh and free or reduced-price school meals are essential in bridging the gap for low-income families. The increased CalFresh participation rate demonstrates the program's effectiveness in reaching those most in need. Similarly, school meal programs are vital for ensuring children from low-income households receive consistent nutrition.

Food insecurity is taking a toll on health. Rates of diabetes, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol have all gone up among low-income families. For example, diabetes in the lowest-income group increased from 10% in 2013 to 15% in 2024, and hypertension rose from 20% to 26% in the same period. Obesity is also a growing concern. Among families living below the poverty line, obesity rates climbed from 30% in 2013 to nearly 40% in 2024—much higher than rates among families with slightly higher incomes. These health disparities highlight the critical intersection between food affordability, nutrition, and public health. Households with limited budgets often prioritize caloric quantity over quality, opting for inexpensive, calorie-dense foods rather than nutrient-rich options, which exacerbates chronic health conditions over time.

Our network includes 22 organizations actively addressing affordability in the food system. These organizations are committed to ensuring equitable access to affordable food options for all communities.

For a comprehensive list of these organizations, refer to Appendix D.

THIS REPORT SUMMARIZES DATA TRENDS WITHOUT SHOWING STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT CHANGES OR CAUSAL RELATIONSHIPS.

AFFORDABLE

INDICATOR	2013	2017	2020	2024
FOOD INSECURTY[2]				
All households (LA County)	30.6%	29.2%	26.8%	25.4%
Households living at 0-99% FPL	40.8%	41.1%	37.1%	52.8%
Households living at 100-199% FPL	28.7%	25.4%	25.9%	41.4%
Households living at 200-299% FPL	15.2%	13.7%	13.0%	27.5%
Latino	33.2%	34.1%	30.2%	36.4%
Foreign Born	not updated	34.8%	32.7%	37.7%
US Born	not updated	32.2%	24.7%	35.6%
White	24.1%	25.4%	21.2%	14.1%
Foreign Born	not updated	16.7%	not updated	16.9%
US Born	not updated	27.7%	22.9%	13.5%
African American	39.6%	33.0%	33.3%	35.2%
Foreign Born	not updated	27.6%	not updated	25.9%
US Born	not updated	33.5%	33.4%	36.2%
Asian	21.7%	14.1%	16.4%	17.5%
Foreign Born	not updated	13.70%	14.40%	18.3%
US Born	not updated	16.20%	19.20%	15.8%
Nativa Hawaiian and/ or Pacific Islander	not updated	not updated	not updated	36.3%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	not updated	not updated	not updated	50.7%

INDICATOR	2013	2017	2020	2024
FOOD INSECURITY[2]				
Ages 18-24	25.7%	21.8%	25.7%	38.0%
Ages 25-29	34.4%	32.5%	26.5%	36.2%
Ages 30-39	36.2%	29.7%	29.9%	29.1%
Ages 40-49	37.8%	36.1%	31.3%	25.9%
Ages 50-59	37.3%	36.9%	34.5%	26.9%
Ages 60-64	28.9%	30.0%	26.3%	21.6%
Ages 65+	12.9%	19.9%	14.4%	13.1%
ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME[1]				
<$5,000 -$20,000	21.0%	19.5%	18.7%	18.0%
$20,001- $40,000	27.3%	21.1%	18.9%	16.7%
$40,001- $60,000	14.3%	14.2%	14.2%	13.3%
$60,001- $80,000	9.6%	9.1%	10.9%	10.0%
$80,001-135,000+	27.7%	36.1%	37.2%	41.9%

[3] California Department of Public Social Services, 2013, 2014, 2017, 2024
[4] Los Angeles Department of Public Social Services, 2012, 2015, 2019, 2024
[5] National Center for Educational Statistics, California Department of Education, 2012, 2014, 2017, 2023

INDICATOR	2013	2017	2020	2024
CALFRESH PARTICIPATION				
LA County CalFresh participation rate as compared to all CA counties	21.0%	27.3%	18.7%	18.0%
LA County CalFresh Participation Rate (adjusted for SSI and undocumented)	27.3%	21.1%	18.9%	16.7%
LA County percent of CalFresh Participants	27.3%	14.2%	14.2%	13.3%
INDIVIDUALS ENROLLED IN WIC[24]				
Infant (0-1)[24]	93946	75678	48575	46469
Child (1-4)[24]	325662	233980	177038	166150
Women[24]	102006	77731	53565	55454
Total[24]	521614	387389	279178	268073
SCHOOL LUNCH PARTICIPATION[5]				
Percentage of low-income students who participate in school lunch in LA County	62.0%	27.3%	18.7%	18.0%
Percentage of low-income students who eat breakfast in school daily in LA County	29.0%	21.1%	18.9%	16.7%
Number of children eligible for free or reduced school meals in LA County	1,017,717 67%	1,030,344 68%	1,034,525 69.3%	928,394 68.7%
FRUIT AND VEGETABLE AFFORDABILITY[1]				
Adults living at 0-199% FPL	65.9%	66.5%	70.1%	74.2%
All Adults	76.5%	75.7%	79.2%	80.8%

[3] *California Department of Public Social Services, 2013, 2014, 2017, 2024*
[4] *Los Angeles Department of Public Social Services, 2012, 2015, 2019, 2024*
[5] *National Center for Educational Statistics, California Department of Education, 2012, 2014, 2017, 2023*
[24] *WIC Data LA County*

INDICATOR	2013	2017	2020	2024
FRUIT & VEGETABLE CONSUMPTION[2]				
Adults living at 0-99% FPL	21.0%	19.5%	18.7%	18.0%
Adults living at 100-199% FPL	27.3%	21.1%	18.9%	16.7%
Adults living at 200-299% FPL	14.3%	14.2%	14.2%	13.3%
Adults living at 300% or above FPL	9.6%	9.1%	10.9%	10.0%
Children living at 0-199% FPL	27.7%	36.1%	37.2%	41.9%
All children	25.8%	31.2%	24.6%	38.9%
DIABETES[2]				
Adults living at 0-99% FPL	10.5%	13.2%	16.2%	15.1%
Adults living at 100-199% FPL	10.4%	10.7%	13.3%	15.8%
Adults living at 200-299% FPL	10.2%	10.3%	10.3%	12.6%
Adults living at 300% or above FPL	8.1%	7.1%	7.9%	8.1%
Ages 18-24	1.1%	1.2%	1.1%	0.6%
Ages 25-29	2.4%	2.0%	3.4%	1.6%
Ages 30-39	3.7%	3.0%	3.3%	6.0%
Ages 40-49	7.9%	8.3%	10.1%	9.8%
Ages 50-59	13.4%	15.6%	17.4%	17.4%
Ages 60-64	18.9%	21.7%	22.6%	16.7%
Ages 65+	24.1%	21.2%	23.3%	22.0%

INDICATOR	2013	2017	2020	2024
HYPERTENSION				
Adults living at 0-99% FPL	20.4%	23.2%	27.0%	25.5%
Adults living at 100-199% FPL	25.8%	24.0%	25.8%	28.7%
Adults living at 200-299% FPL	24.8%	24.2%	25.4%	31.0%
Adults living at 300% or above FPL	24.9%	23.0%	23.3%	26.9%
Ages 18-24	4.1%	6.2%	3.5%	3.5%
Ages 25-29	5.0%	7.9%	6.6%	10.6%
Ages 30-39	10.0%	11.4%	13.1%	12.9%
Ages 40-49	22.9%	17.6%	22.2%	21.5%
Ages 50-59	34.5%	31.1%	32.6%	34.9%
Ages 60-64	42.9%	42.5%	43.9%	45.7%
Ages 65+	57.7%	54.2%	53.1%	57.5%
HIGH CHOLESTEROL RATES[2]				
Adults living at 0-99% FPL	23.2%	23.7%	28.6%	28.9%
Adults living at 100-199% FPL	24.5%	23.7%	26.9%	29.7%
Adults living at 200-299% FPL	23.3%	26.2%	24.5%	35.8%
Adults living at 300% or above FPL	28.3%	26.7%	26.7%	34.9%

INDICATOR	2013	2017	2020	2024
HIGH CHOLESTEROL RATES[2]				
Ages 18-24	4.3%	5.6%	5.7%	8.7%
Ages 25-29	6.8%	11.8%	8.2%	16.0%
Ages 30-39	15.9%	15.0%	15.6%	18.2%
Ages 40-49	27.2%	24.8%	27.7%	28.5%
Ages 50-59	37.2%	34.5%	36.8%	41.3%
Ages 60-64	43.9%	41.2%	46.6%	54.2%
Ages 65+	50.2%	47.5%	47.5%	58.5%
OVERWEIGHT [2]				
Adults living at 0-99% FPL	34.7%	33.8%	30.0%	31.0%
Adults living at 100-199% FPL	38.4%	34.2%	32.8%	31.4%
Adults living at 200-299% FPL	36.7%	36.8%	37.7%	35.5%
Adults living at 300% or above FPL	37.8%	37.9%	35.0%	34.0%
OBESITY[2]				
Adults living at 0-99% FPL	30.2%	29.4%	35.1%	39.7%
Adults living at 100-199% FPL	25.7%	26.8%	33.0%	34.3%
Adults living at 200-299% FPL	23.2%	22.3%	23.2%	29.9%
Adults living at 300% or above FPL	18.9%	18.4%	22.5%	24.4%

AFFORDABLE CASE STUDY:

LA CITY'S BASIC INCOME PILOT: BRIDGING ECONOMIC GAPS AND ENSURING FOOD SECURITY FOR ANGELENOS

By Aaron Strauss, LA City Community Investment for Families Department

BIG:LEAP (Basic Income Guaranteed: Los Angeles Economic Assistance Pilot) is one of the largest Guaranteed Income programs in the United States. Launched by the City of Los Angeles in 2022, the initiative provided 3,200 low-income families with monthly payments of $1,000 over 12 months, with no strings attached. The program was administered by the Community Investment for Families Department, whose goal is to break the multi-generational cycle of poverty that impacts many disadvantaged communities within Los Angeles. By providing direct financial assistance to families facing economic hardship, BIG:LEAP helped families improve their long-term stability and assisted in their recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic's economic impacts while reinforcing the role that municipal governments can play in reshaping the social safety net.

In addition, the program implemented a robust research component. The University of Pennsylvania Center for Guaranteed Income Research (CGIR), in partnership with the University of Southern California (USC) Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work and the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) Fielding School of Public Health, launched a mixed-methods randomized controlled trial to evaluate the impacts of Guaranteed Income on participants' wellbeing, contributing qualitative and quantitative data that can help shape future policy discussions on poverty alleviation and economic justice. This study was led by Dr. Stacia West, Dr. Amy Castro, and Dr. Elizabeth Kim, and all supporting statistics provided below come from their final report, which can be found here. BIG:LEAP participants experienced overwhelmingly positive outcomes. They were more likely to save for the future, improve their financial wellbeing, reduce stress and anxiety, maintain their physical health, escape intimate partner violence, keep their children in enrichment activities, feel safer in their communities, and both set and take action towards future goals.

Some of the most encouraging program findings came in the area of food security. According to the USDA's Los Angeles County Health Survey, in 2022, about 24% of all LA County residents were food insecure. This number rose to 37% when only considering low-income residents. At the outset of BIG:LEAP, over 50% of both the treatment group and control group reported that they had been worried about having enough food at some point in the past 4 weeks. Many of the positive trends in responses to questions of food security - worries about food insecurity, ability to eat preferred foods, ability to avoid eating unpreferred foods, and eating less because of a lack of food - persisted at the 18-month mark, 6 months after the cash disbursements had ended. Qualitative data also

demonstrated that participants leveraged their Guaranteed Income to acquire healthier food options and increase the number of fruits and vegetables in their diets, attributing the space, time, and funds that BIG:LEAP afforded to increase healthy behaviors. This suggests that Guaranteed Income cannot only alleviate immediate hardship and food insecurity but also stabilize program participants' ability to meet their basic needs on a longer-term basis. As such, Guaranteed Income is emerging as a critical way for the City of Los Angeles to meaningfully address poverty while demonstrating trust and reinforcing the dignity of economically disadvantaged communities.

LA City Community Investment for Families Department, Jahmal Corner

AFFORDABLE CASE STUDY:

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES: FOOD ACCESS LA'S ROLE IN MAKING FARMERS' MARKETS AFFORDABLE

By Jennifer Grissom, Food Access LA

The non-profit organization Food Access LA (formerly known as Sustainable Economic Enterprises of Los Angeles - SEE-LA) is **addressing the lack of access to local produce by operating eight weekly farmers' markets that include Market Match**. This program helps make these foods affordable for low-income families, as well as nutrition programming. Los Angeles is home to a diverse population with many culturally unique neighborhoods that struggle to access affordable, fresh produce. In these areas, residents often rely on convenience stores that primarily offer processed foods, leading to poor health outcomes and increased rates of diet-related diseases.

Food Access Los Angeles, Food Access LA Staff and Matt Kennedy

Farmers' markets offer fresh produce and culturally relevant foods and provide a place for local, small food entrepreneurs to offer prepared foods that can help busy families or residents without access to cooking spaces maintain a healthy diet. Still, prices and other barriers can be prohibitive for low-income families. Recognizing that these barriers exist, Food Access LA advocates for food equity and community empowerment through increased access to healthy food options and nutrition education. In 2004, Food Access LA led a countywide promotional effort for the use of CalFresh-EBT cards at farmers' markets in LA County. By facilitating the use of these benefits at markets, low-income families are able to purchase fresh produce using government assistance, broadening their options and promoting healthier eating. To further enhance accessibility, Food Access LA has implemented subsidized produce programs, primarily through Market Match, at farmers' markets through their Benefits and Incentives programming. In 2010, the Market Match Program, California's nutrition incentive program for low-income farm-direct shoppers, was implemented across all of Food Access LA's markets. When this program commenced, it provided customers spending CalFresh benefits at

Food Access Los Angeles, Food Access LA Staff and Matt Kennedy

farmers' markets with $2 in Market Match for every $5 they spent per day, up to $10 in extra funds. These subsidies allow families to have agency over which nutritious foods they choose to purchase and contribute to the support of the local farmers and vendors.

Food Access LA also conducts educational workshops aimed at informing community members about the importance of healthy eating and how to utilize the produce available at farmers' markets. These workshops often include cooking demonstrations, budgeting tips, and nutrition education, equipping families with the knowledge they need to make healthier choices. By demystifying healthy cooking and shopping practices, Food Access LA fosters a culture of health within the community. Collaboration is central to Food Access LA's approach. The organization partners with local schools, health clinics, and community organizations to promote farmers' markets and ensure that information about the subsidies reaches those who need it. These partnerships also help to extend the reach of educational programs and create a network of support. Food Access LA makes sure that markets and programs work together to support the communities it serves continuously.

The initiatives implemented by Food Access LA have significantly impacted local communities in Los Angeles. Data collected from farmers' markets show a marked increase in the number of low-income families shopping at these markets, and many families report that they are now able to buy fresh fruits and vegetables regularly, a practice that was previously unaffordable. Of the Market Match participants surveyed in 2023, 69% lived in households experiencing food insecurity, 91% reported that Market Match has improved their health, and 92% reported adding more produce to their diet.

AFFORDABLE COMMENTARY:

HUNGER ACTION LA & MARKET MATCH: A DECADE OF DOUBLING DOWN ON HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS

By Frank Tamborello, Hunger Action LA

Market Match had an inauspicious beginning in Los Angeles in April of 2010. Hunger Action LA was one of eight experimental programs around California, following a structure created by the International Rescue Committee in San Diego. From a booth at the Adams Vermont Farmers Market, we tried to give away bonus coupons worth $5 for produce because we weren't sure people would trust a system of matching their EBT purchases. And on those first few days, our suspicions were well founded; people didn't even want to take them for free. Eventually, they began to accept the coupons for extra fruits and vegetables, and by the end of that year, we had established the matching program that exists today.

Because the budget was limited, in the early days, we would sometimes run out of funds; for this reason, some of the markets only had one "Market Match" per month, and all markets had a daily limit. The funding uncertainty led to a behavioral change of large numbers of people coming at the beginning of the market, which persists to this day.

Hunger Action LA, Frank Tamborello

From Adams/Vermont, we expanded to Echo Park, Long Beach, and East LA. All the funding in the early years was a subcontract to Roots of Change, which came from a Specialty Crop Block Grant from the US Department of Agriculture. This was supplemented with funding from private sources, especially Kaiser Permanente.

In 2012, we added 7 markets for one month as an experiment and kept them on the program after discovering we had enough funding.

We soon began hearing that people appreciated the program for all kinds of obvious reasons. Still, in particular, they saw it as something helpful rather than something that would be a chore to keep up with bureaucratically or have to give up a lot of information to be a part of: 2013 brought a five year contract with First 5 LA that allowed us to expand the program to WIC participants as well as CalFresh, and for the first time we offered Market Match weekly at all participating markets.

Our advocacy to expand the program to SSI recipients using federal money did not succeed. Still, we were able to serve this group with private funding, especially from the Archstone Foundation. In 2018, our parallel advocacy as part of the California Hunger Action Coalition and Californians for SSI groups paid off as SSI recipients became eligible to participate in CalFresh. This led to even larger numbers of seniors participating in Market Match.

In 2016, the state groups united as the California Market Match Consortium began our annual advocacy campaigns, first of all, to bring state funding to match the federal dollars for the program. The Specialty Crop money for Market Match increased as more programs popped up all over the United States. The state funding known now as the California Nutrition Incentive Program began in 2018, providing a substantial match to the federal dollars and freeing us from having to use private funding for the required matching money . This allowed for a large increase in the number of markets.

In 2022, County ARPA funding was made available for Market Match, allowing us to increase the match to $20 to fight inflation. Over the years, we estimate we have served approximately 300,000 persons with a total of $3,794,231.00 in benefits. Nearly 20% of that came in 2023 alone, testifying to the growth of the program with the influx of state, federal, and county funding and our ability to raise the amount of Market Match to $20 per transaction. Market Match has been a four-way win-win-win-win, fighting hunger, facilitating healthy eating, supporting the local farm economy, and, in the long run, contributing to the move to sustainable agriculture and climate change-mitigating activities.

Hunger Action LA, Frank Tamborello

AFFORDABLE COMMENTARY:

SUPPORTING AFFORDABILITY: BRIDGING IMMIGRANT FAMILIES TO ESSENTIAL FOOD BENEFITS WITH BAILA NETWORK

By Lena Silver, Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles County

For families to access healthy and culturally appropriate foods, they must be able to afford them. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), known as CalFresh in California, is a food assistance cash benefit for low-income people and the most effective anti-hunger program in the United States. Studies have shown that SNAP reduces food security by up to 30% for families who have received benefits for at least 6 months. SNAP participants are more likely to report "excellent or very good" health than low-income people who do not participate in SNAP. In the County of Los Angeles, roughly 1.6 million people receive CalFresh benefits with an average of about $310 per household per month. Despite being the single most important anti-hunger and food-affordability program, only an estimated 66% of eligible households utilized CalFresh in 2020.

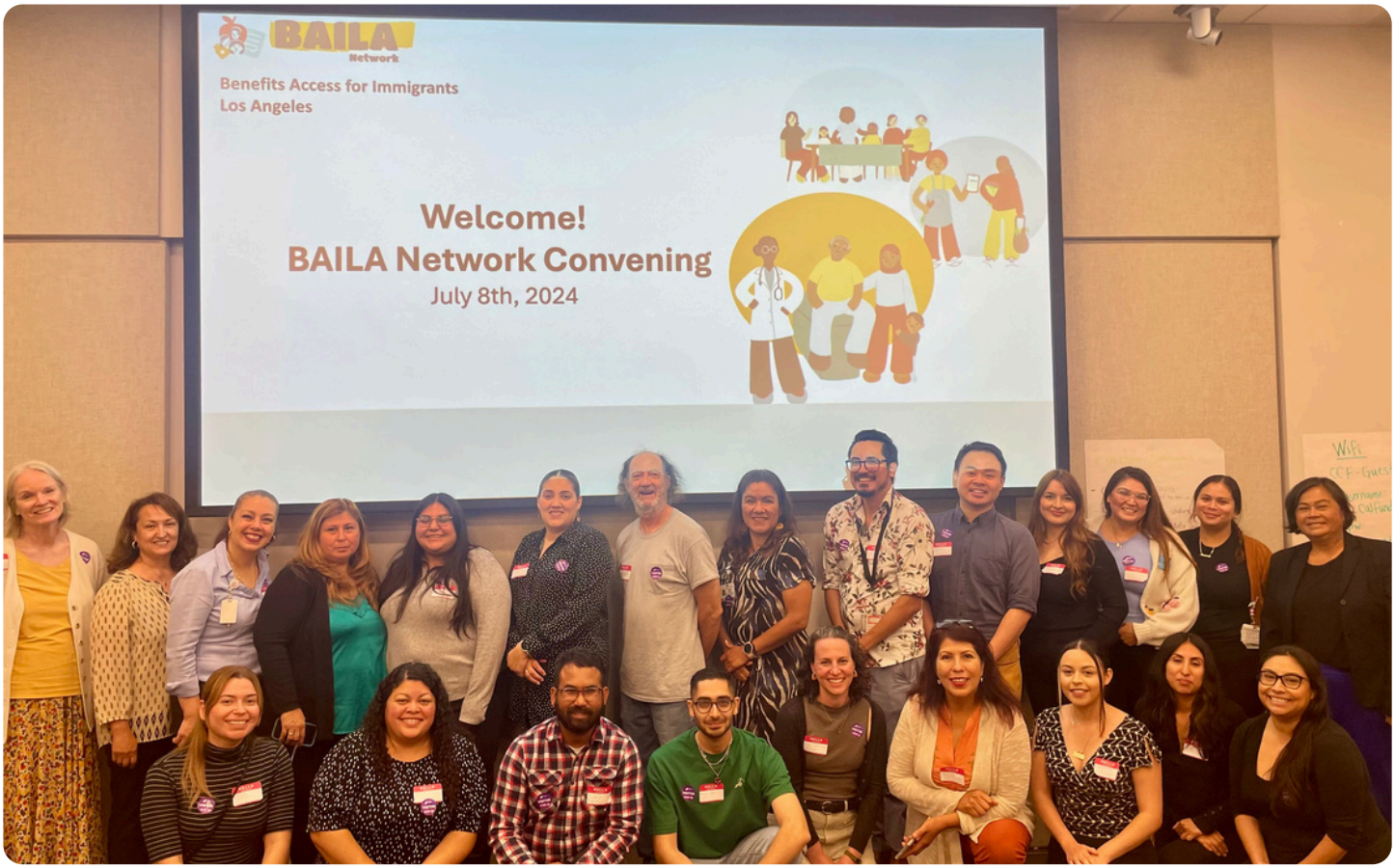
BAILA

A big piece of this puzzle is the immigrant underutilization of CalFresh and other benefits. According to statewide data from 2017, roughly 93% of eligible English speakers were enrolled in CalFresh, while only 58% of eligible Spanish speakers and 16% of eligible Mandarin speakers were enrolled. There are many reasons an immigrant household may avoid public benefits, but, in general, they face unique barriers, including eligibility restrictions, language barriers, and a fear of immigration consequences. This is where the Benefits Access to Immigrants Los Angeles (BAILA) network steps in. Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles County, in collaboration with nine partners and with support from the California Community Foundation, launched BAILA in 2021 to strategically address the barriers that suppress immigrant enrollment in essential benefits.

The BAILA Network addresses immigrant barriers to public benefits through community training, outreach, and easily accessible application assistance supported by public benefits attorneys. A large barrier we address is that noncitizen eligibility for CalFresh is complicated, and eligible immigrants often do not know they are entitled to benefits. Further, even though green card holders (numbering 900,000 in LA County) are eligible,

they face special hurdles related to reporting the income of their sponsors when applying for CalFresh, limiting their access, and often requiring legal advice to overcome.

Most importantly, the immigrant community has legitimate concerns about how using benefits such as CalFresh may impact their immigration status, a fear related to the "public charge" test that some immigrants face when applying for a green card. In 2017, the first Trump Administration began the process of expanding the public charge test to include a consideration of the use of not only cash assistance but also SNAP, Medicaid, and subsidized housing; the rule became final in 2019 and briefly was implemented. The Biden Administration halted the Trump-era public charge regulations in 2021. It implemented a final rule in December 2022 that excludes SNAP as a benefit considered in the public charge test, among other improvements. Even with that change, fear and hesitance remain. According to a survey conducted in December of 2022 by the Urban Institute, about 25% of adults in "mixed-status" families reported avoiding of adults in "mixed-status" families reported avoiding public benefits like Medicaid, SNAP, and housing subsidies because of immigration concerns. A critical strategy in combating public charge fear and other barriers is community-based application assistance, which the BAILA network provides in a framework designed just for immigrants. Data shows that immigrant households are more than twice as likely as those in US-born families to receive enrollment assistance at a community-based organization (20 versus 8 percent), which is better positioned to meet linguistic and cultural needs. With the return of the Trump administration, we anticipate seeing a new spike in the public charge chilling effect, causing disenrollment and hesitancy to apply. The BAILA Network is needed now more than ever. We hope to continue working with the immigrant community and other partners to ensure access to public benefits that enable people to afford healthy food, medicine, and rent.



BAILA

STATE OF GOOD FOOD:

SUSTAINABLE

Sustainable food systems ensure that food is produced, processed, distributed, and reused in ways that support environmental health, economic stability, and social equity for current and future generations. Over the past decade, initiatives across the LA region have sought to address the impacts of industrial agriculture by embracing sustainable practices such as urban farming, community-supported agriculture, and food recovery programs. The sustainability of the Los Angeles Foodshed has seen notable trends in land use, farming practices, and local food systems. Over the years, agricultural land in the region has remained relatively stable, with a slight increase from 7.96 million acres in 2020 to 8.34 million acres in 2024. However, the conversion of agricultural land to urban use has been rising steadily, highlighting the challenges of maintaining farmland in an increasingly urbanized area. The decrease in farm numbers, from 23,001 in 2013 to 15,716 in 2024, reflects broader shifts in farming practices, including the consolidation of smaller farms and a focus on larger-scale operations. Despite these challenges, the region continues to prioritize sustainable agriculture through initiatives like certified organic farms, which represent 6.1% of the total in the LA Foodshed in 2024, supporting the transition to more environmentally friendly farming practices.

Senate Bill (SB) 1383 has played a transformative role in shifting California's approach to food recovery and waste management. This legislation mandates the diversion of edible food from landfills, which not only reduces organic waste but also helps address food insecurity by redirecting surplus food to those in need. The bill is a pivotal piece of policy in reducing food waste while simultaneously tackling hunger in California, with a focus on food recovery rather than simply composting. LAFPC plays a crucial role in convening stakeholders across sectors to create actionable strategies that align with SB 1383's goals. By bringing together food recovery organizations, local governments, and other community groups, LAFPC fosters collaboration and ensures effective implementation of edible food recovery systems through the LA Food Recovery Alliance. Key actions include advocating for stronger food recovery infrastructure, providing technical assistance to food businesses to comply with the law, and developing partnerships to increase food recovery capacity. These efforts are essential in reducing food waste while addressing food insecurity, ultimately contributing to a more sustainable and resilient food system. In LA County, Food Finders recovered and redistributed 4,153,471 tons of food in 2024, contributing to a cumulative total of over 16.15 million tons over the past decade. Similarly, in LA City, Food Finders recovered 642,940 tons in 2024, bringing the total to more than 13.46 million tons redistributed to date.

Meanwhile, Food Forward has focused on recovering fresh produce, collecting over 23.1 million pounds of fruits and vegetables in 2024 and amassing a total of 87.2 million pounds since its inception. These efforts not only combat food insecurity by redirecting surplus food to communities in need but also significantly reduce methane emissions from organic waste in landfills, aligning with broader climate goals. LAFPC hosts the Food Recovery Alliance with 133 members actively working on solutions to divert edible foods from landfills better and build out a comprehensive

food recovery action plan. Direct sales from farms, such as those at farmers' markets, have also experienced fluctuations, with a notable decrease in the value of direct sales in the LA Foodshed from $218 million in 2020 to $160 million in 2024. However, the rise in women-operated and minority-operated farms, which reached over 10,000 and 4,800 farms, respectively, in 2024, reflects a more inclusive approach to food production and distribution. These operations are increasingly focused on connecting directly with consumers, helping build a more resilient local food system that supports sustainable agriculture and equitable food access. Farmers' markets are playing an essential role in this, with more accepting EBT payments and making healthy, locally grown food more accessible to underserved communities.

While there are challenges, such as the ongoing use of pesticides and the increasing emissions from agricultural activities, there is a clear effort to address these issues through more sustainable practices. The LA Foodshed has taken steps to reduce its environmental impact, with programs focused on reducing food waste and improving recycling efforts. However, much work remains, particularly in addressing the emissions from livestock production, which make up the majority of agricultural greenhouse gasses in California. By continuing to support sustainable farming practices, local food systems, and food waste reduction, the LA Foodshed is working towards a more sustainable and resilient food future.

Our network includes 50 organizations actively advancing sustainability in the food system. These organizations are dedicated to supporting environmentally friendly practices and fostering long-term food security.

For a comprehensive list of these organizations, refer to **Appendix D.**

Photo by Steven Weeks on Unsplash

THIS REPORT SUMMARIZES DATA TRENDS WITHOUT SHOWING STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT CHANGES OR CAUSAL RELATIONSHIPS.

SUSTAINABLE

INDICATOR	2013	2017	2020	2024
LAND USE				
Acres of agricultural land in LA Foodshed	8,046,054	8,011,770	7,964,494	8,338,693
Acres of agricultural land converted to urban and built land in LA Foodshed[6]	12,599	10,660	15,577	20,133
Land in farms in LA County	108,463	91,689	67,809	69,224
Acres of grazing land in LA County[6]	231,287	235,826	239,037	260,697
FARMS				
Farms in LA Foodshed[7]	1,120; 4.9%	1,062; 5.2%	1,211; 6.7%	958 6.1%
Farms in LA County[7]	28	27	30	28
Farms in LA City[8]	396296	398	408	456
Certified Organic Farms in LA Foodshed[7]	63	71	56	90
Certified Organic Farms in LA County[7]	469	130	99	105
Avg. farm size in LA Foodshed (acres)[7]	396	398	408	456
Avg. farm size in LA County (acres)[7]	63	71	56	90
Farms transitioning into USDA National Organic Program in LA Foodshed[7]	469	130	99	105
MICRO-FARMS (1 - 9 ACRES)[7]				
Micro-Farms in LA Foodshed	7,675	7,369	8,998	7252
Micro-Farms in LA County	446	510	722	517

[6] *California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, 2008-10, 2010-12, 2014-16, 2018-2020*
[7] *NASS Census of Agriculture, 2007, 2012, 2017, 2022*
[8] *Cultivate LA + UCANR, 2013, 2016, 2021*

INDICATOR	2013	2017	2020	2024
SMALL FARMS (<180 ACRES)[7]				
Percent of Small Farms in LA Foodshed	87.0%	87.0%	86.0%	83.0%
Acres harvested in Small Farms in LA Foodshed	173,266	167,308	142,844	154,813
MID-SIZED FARMS (180 - 499 ACRES)[7]				
Acres of agricultural land in LA Foodshed	6.0%	5.0%	6.0%	7.0%
Acres of agricultural land converted to urban and built land in LA Foodshed[6]	156,992	153,007	155,679	152,631
LARGE FARMS (>500 ACRES, OVER $500,000 IN AGRICULTURAL SALES) [7]				
Percent of Large Farms in LA Foodshed	7.0%	8.0%	8.0%	10.0%
Acres harvested in Large Farms in LA Foodshed	1,380,895	1,464,320	1,443,227	1,713,251
Percent of acres harvested in Large Farms	80.7%	82.1%	82.9%	84.7%
Percent of Large Farms by Agricultural Sales in LA Foodshed	9.0%	10.0%	11.4%	11.8%
Percent of Agricultural Sales made by Large Farms	93.0%	94.0%	94.2%	94.2%
FARM OPERATIONS[7]				
Farms with direct sales in LA Foodshed	2,043	2,330	2,264	1,552
Farms with direct sales in LA County	168	210	105	109
Farms in LA City	$45,842,000	$44,916,000	$218,719,000	$160,060,000
Value of direct sales in LA Foodshed	$3,541,000	$3,541,000	$1,384,000	$2,707,000
Value of direct sales in LA County	$11,387,907,856	$12,566,318,008	$8,146,710,000	$17,084,595,000
Total fruit, vegetable, and nut production value in LA Foodshed	$325,880,000	$193,097,000	$154,608,000	$199849000
Honey Operations with production in LA County	18	33	33	36

INDICATOR	2013	2017	2020	2024
FARM OPERATORS[7]				
Women-Operated Farms in LA Foodshed	5,098	4,176	8,334	10,154
Minority-Operated Farms in LA Foodshed	3,181	1,840	2,842	4,828
Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish Origin Operated Farms	not updated	not updated	236	195
American Indian or Alaska Native Operated Farms	not updated	not updated	1,071	1,012
Asian Operated Farms	not updated	not updated	$8,146,710,000	$17,084,595,000
Black or African American Operated Farms	not updated	not updated	115	138
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander operated farm	not updated	not updated	81	147
FARMERS MARKETS (FMS)[9]				
Certified FMs in LA County	148	138	132	140
Certified FMs in LA City	72	56	40	46
Percent of FMs in LA County that accept EBT	39.0%	63.0%	81.0%	74.0%
Percent of FMs in LA City that accept EBT	38.0%	96.0%	88.0%	87.0%
GARDENS & NURSERIES[9]				
Community Gardens in LA County	118	158	not updated	100
Community Gardens in LA City	48	77	not updated	45
Nurseries in LA County	268	368	not updated	428
Nurseries in LA City	89	97	not updated	96

[9] Ecology Center 2019, 2024
[10] California Department of Pesticide Regulation, 2011, 2014, 2017, 2021

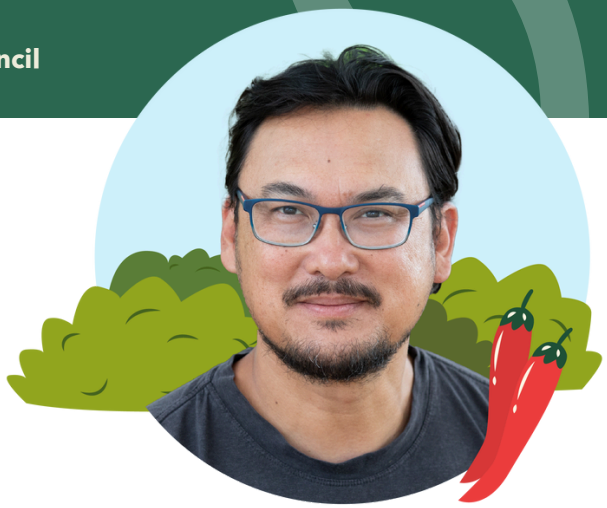
INDICATOR	2013	2017	2020	2024
PESTICIDES & EMISSIONS[10]				
Total tons of pesticides applied in LA Foodshed	27,945	26,979	23,386	26,597
Percent of agricultural pesticides applied in LA Foodshed	87.0%	85.0%	86.0%	86.0%
FOOD WASTE				
Amount of Residential Food Waste Recycled (Tons) through Bureau of Sanitation Waste Reduction and Recycling Programs[11]	20	57	not updated	not updated
Amount of Restaurant Food Waste Recycled (Tons) through Bureau of Sanitation Waste Reduction and Recycling Programs[11]	15,492	43,303	not updated	not updated
Estimated tons of food waste in California's Overall Disposed Waste Stream[12]	5,083,364	5,591,179	not updated	11,013,398
Estimated percent of food waste in California's Overall Disposed Waste Stream[12]	16.5%	18.1%	not updated	10.9%
Tons of food recovered and redistributed in LA County by Food Finders[13]	4,153,471	3,805,447	not updated	16,151,873
Tons of food recovered and redistributed in LA City by Food Finders[13]	642,940	2,953,459	not updated	13,459,894
Pounds of produce recovered in the LA Foodshed by Food Forward[13]	2,083,546.25	8,811,283	23,100,000	87,198,895
Percent of agricultural greenhouse gas emissions in CA[14]	7.6%	7.9%	7.6%	8.1%
Percent of agricultural greenhouse gas emissions for livestock production in CA[15]	67.7%	66.1%	70.0%	71.0%
Tons of agricultural greenhouse gas emissions for livestock production in CA	23.4	23.9	22.7	25.8

[11]LA Sanitation, 2019, 2024
[12]CalRecycle Disposal-Facility-Based Characterization of Solid Waste in California, 2014, 2021,2024
[13]Food Finders Annual Report, 2013, 2015, 2023
[14]Food Forward Annual Report, 2013, 2015, 2018, 2023
[15]California EPA Air Resources Board, 2010, 2013, 2019, 2021

SUSTAINABLE CASE STUDY:

COMMUNITY GARDENS: FROM VACANT LOTS TO VIBRANT SPACES

By Omar Brownson, Los Angeles Community Garden Council



Over the past decade, the Los Angeles Community Garden Council (LACGC) has played a pivotal role in reshaping the urban landscape of Los Angeles by establishing and supporting community gardens that serve as hubs for health, sustainability, and community resilience. As part of the broader urban agriculture movement, LACGC's network of 47 community gardens reaches over 2,000 households and impacts more than 6,000 Angelenos across the city.

Community gardens are much more than spaces for growing food. They are places where neighbors can gather, learn, share, and cultivate a healthier future together. LACGC's decade of work offers valuable insights into how sustainable food systems can be developed with an emphasis on resilience, self-governance, and cultural relevancy. Over the past decade, LACGC has worked to enhance the capacity of these gardens, not just as food-growing spaces but as centers for education, leadership development, and environmental stewardship. This shift reflects the evolving role of community gardens in addressing systemic issues related to health, sustainability, and climate change.

LA Garden Council, Omar Brownson and Jesse De La Cruz

As of December 2024, over the previous 18 months, the gardens used 15,869 HCF (Hundred Cubic Feet) of water, equivalent to 11.87 million gallons. This water consumption supported the growth of approximately 237,400 pounds of vegetables—an average of 79 pounds per member across more than 2,000 members. An HCF represents 748 gallons of water. To put this into perspective, that's roughly enough to fill 15 bathtubs. By focusing on resource-efficient gardening practices, the network has maximized the yield of fresh produce while minimizing environmental impact. We have recently made all of our water data available on our website to continue to give our gardeners real-time and transparent information to be both good food and good water stewards. Beyond environmental resilience, LACGC's gardens have become pillars of social resilience. During the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, community gardens became vital spaces where families could access fresh produce while maintaining social distancing. In some cases, gardeners organized mutual aid networks, sharing surplus food with neighbors.

A key element of LACGC's approach to sustainability is fostering self-governance within the community gardens. Each garden is encouraged to develop its own leadership and decision-making structures, allowing gardeners to take ownership of

LA Garden Council, Omar Brownson and Jesse De La Cruz

their space and its operations. This decentralized model not only promotes democratic participation but also ensures that gardens are managed in ways that best meet the needs of their specific communities. One of the most powerful aspects of LACGC's community gardens is their cultural relevancy. Los Angeles is one of the most diverse cities in the world, and its community gardens reflect this diversity. In many LACGC gardens, you will find an array of culturally significant crops being grown, from Mexican chiles and tomatillos to Southeast Asian herbs and African leafy greens. Culturally relevant crops not only provide gardeners with food that resonates with their traditions, but they also foster a sense of belonging and pride within the community. These gardens become spaces where gardeners can celebrate their heritage while learning new practices from their neighbors. Additionally, cultural relevancy helps gardens remain meaningful to the people they serve, ensuring that they continue to thrive and be valued by the local community.

In the past ten years, LACGC has demonstrated that community gardens can be powerful agents of change, fostering environmental sustainability, community resilience, and cultural connection. These spaces do more than grow food; they nurture relationships, empower communities, and build resilience against the many challenges facing our city.

As we look forward, with the Olympics and the world's attention, the lessons learned from LACGC's decade of experience will continue to shape the future of urban agriculture in Los Angeles. By prioritizing resilience, self-governance, and cultural relevancy, we can create a sustainable food system and policy structure that not only feeds our communities but also strengthens them.

SUSTAINABLE CASE STUDY:

SUSTAINABLE FARMING IN LOS ANGELES: STRENGTHENING FOOD SYSTEMS AND RESILIENCE

By Anna Hopkins, Farm2People

Farm2People's is a Los Angeles non-profit whose mission is to secure local harvests and fight hunger in Greater LA. We are a values-driven, non-traditional farm hub promoting equity along the local food supply chain. Our direct action programs match surplus, regeneratively-grown farm harvests with food insecure people at no cost to the food seeker. We always pay our farmers their wholesale rate, and in that way, our work puts farmers first. Our work is currently remote and empowered by collaboration along the food supply chain with growers, transporters, aggregators, and hunger relief organizations. Farm2People was established in 2020 as a grassroots and volunteer-led effort to promote local food security as well as farm and community health in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We started by sourcing surplus grain from Tehachapi and met numerous CBOs and future partners through small distributions. Shortly after, we began crowdsourcing funds and using grants to purchase produce for distribution. While cold chain logistics are complex, our impact has grown exponentially thanks to a mix of philanthropy, corporate partnerships, and government funding. In 2024, our work experienced its most profound expansion thanks to the Farms Together/Local Food Purchasing Agreement which has made Farm2People a repeat vendor for the California Association of Food Banks.

Farm2People's view is that our current food supply chain was not built to promote local foodways or regional food security or to support local farms. The food supply chain we have inherited was designed to benefit large-scale industrial players with global reach and competitive scarcity mindsets. In Los Angeles, our local food supply chain is also obscured by the ports and terminals that flood our markets with inexpensive commodity products from all over the world.

' Farm2People

Farm2People is committed to reimagining the local food supply chain with a values-driven, collaborative approach. Farm2People believes that nutritious and culturally appropriate food is a human right. We believe farmers deserve adequate compensation for their labor, which is particularly essential if they are growing food in ways that reduce harm and are respectful of natural ecosystems. We also believe that regenerative agriculture is the key to both a climate-resilient and a food-secure future. We envision a thriving local food supply chain that values seasonal, sustainably grown produce from small- and mid-sized farmers. We envision a local food supply chain that considers the nutritional needs of a diverse urban population and builds pathways for surplus to benefit that population at low or no cost rather than going to waste. Since 2020, Farm2People has reached over 70 independent California farmers, from Fresno to Imperial County, with economic support. We've contributed over 1 million pounds of fresh food for free food distribution in Greater LA. That's 4.5 million individual servings of nutrient-dense fruits and vegetables served and counting!

Farm2People and Jeremiah Chapman

SUSTAINABLE CASE STUDY:

SUPPORTING SB 1383 IMPLEMENTATION AND COMPLIANCE: A COLLABORATIVE GRANT-MAKING PROGRAM

By Ana-Alicia Carr, Los Angeles Food Policy Council

Over the last two years, Los Angeles City, LA Sanitation & Environment has supported a micro and macro grant program guided by community feedback and rooted in collaboration to support local implementation of SB 1383. Working closely with the Los Angeles Food Policy Council and Rising Communities, to distribute over $600,000 to food recovery organizations in the forms of three macro-grant collaborations and thirteen micro-grant projects. The aim of the project was to increase capacity and resources to improve food recovery and distribution across Los Angeles. Micro-grantees included Grass Roots Neighbors, Karmic Action, All Peoples Community Center, South LA Community Foundation, Proyecto Pastoral Seeds of Hope, Watts Labor Community Action Committee, LA Family Housing, Islamic Center of Southern California, FEAST, Mutual Aid Action Los Angeles and Union de Vecinos de Pico Alisa. Microgrant projects focused on increasing capacity and efficiency within food recovery operations. Funding was used for equipment such as forklifts, pallet jacks, trucks, compost bins, safety equipment, structural improvements like refrigerators, flooring, and sheds, as well as tools, inventory and volunteer management software, training and certifications, transportation services, and fuel. Three macro grant collaborations were also funded with the primary goal of fostering intentional collaboration among food recovery organizations.

With the goal of fostering collaboration within food recovery efforts, each of the macro-grantee projects included a Food Rescue non-profit organization coupled with smaller food recovery partners.The funded projects included Feast with partners United University Church and Esperanza Housing, Hollywood Food Coalition with Polo's Pantry and Food Cycle LA, and South LA Food Recovery Alliance, each of the funded projects infused collaboration into their work in unique ways.

Feast's collaboration in food recovery emphasized nutrition and wellness education with cross-sector partners, ensuring edible food was not only recovered but distributed along with health education, cooking demonstrations, and recipe information. Hollywood Food Coalition leveraged this opportunity to explore a collaborative co-location and physical space for a food hub model centered on food recovery and distribution. FoodCycle zeroed in on its shared-infrastructure and technology approach to food recovery by investing in cold storage and its transportation-based model to supporting food recovery. Cumulatively, **the macro-grant projects recovered 3,348,709 million pounds of surplus food during the grant period.**

Throughout this time, LAFPC has continued to host the LA Food Recovery Alliance for food recovery organization information sharing, peer-to-peer learning, collaboration, and resource sharing through in-person and virtual meetings.

SUSTAINABLE COMMENTARY:

URBAN FARMING FOR THE FUTURE: ALMA BACKYARDS AND THE PATH TO SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS.

By Erika Cuellar & Richard Garcia, Alma Backyard Farms

As a nonprofit, community-based organization centered around food justice and healthy reentry in South LA County, ALMA Backyard Farms understands sustainable food systems through a lens we call "relational farming". Urban Agriculture is the tool we use to grow healthy, organic food, create jobs and build relationships. We start by listening—to the soil, plants and community members—seeking out people and places who are routinely despised and neglected such as persons formerly incarcerated and vacant lots. This philosophy stems from caring equally for people, plants and place, recognizing the inherent dignity in each piece of this self-reinforcing triad. Once these connections are made, we work together toward healing lives and land. This approach allows ALMA's programs and services to move with intention, operate in reciprocity and right relationship with the natural world. The seeds of how we practice land stewardship reach back in time and place, invoking and honoring our agrarian ancestors across the world including Mexico, the Philippines, El Salvador, Cuba, Korea, and simultaneously extend forward in time to provide seeds, climate resiliency and nourishment for future generations. Embracing a long view cognizant of interspecies and intergenerational time horizons provides ALMA a path toward Sustainable Food Systems in Los Angeles, Southern California and beyond.

ALMA Backyard Farms

In one way or another, each seed marks the potential of an infinite amount of seeds; ALMA believes a seed sown is a seed shared. Our urban farms have taught us that growing seasonal food requires commitment. The land we farm continues to provide us with the lesson that anything worth growing will take years to bear fruit. ALMA has been growing for over ten years. To date, our relationally-intensive way of growing food on 1.5 acres in urban Los Angeles has produced over half a million pounds of fresh food that we distribute at our Farm Stand. Using best organic growing methods and urban farming practices, ALMA focuses on raising heirloom varieties of vegetables, fruits, herbs and flowers that hold cultural relevance for our patrons. Our farm and distribution

ALMA Backyard Farms

operations are responsive to the dynamic needs of our community, which we assess regularly and implement feedback whenever possible. Given the disparities of our city and the persistent rate of food insecurity since the pandemic, 90% of ALMA's distribution is at the onsite Farm Stand, currently open twice a month, but soon to increase in frequency and expand across sites. Most of ALMA's regular patrons are from the communities immediately surrounding the farm in Compton as well as from South and East Los Angeles.

In light of creating a sustainable food system, ALMA finds it useful to ask ourselves daily: "How can we facilitate growth at our farms and in the surrounding communities for people, plants and place to unlock their potential?" Since growth often starts below our feet, buried in soil, a daily practice of attention and care for land and one another stimulates healing from the ground up. We instruct our crew to be cognizant that planting seeds or seedlings is a gesture of simultaneous gratitude and welcome as the plants take root in their new "home." ALMA's vision of an abundant, reciprocal food system and nourished community is at work when we recognize that in preparing the soil, these energetic inputs matter as much as compost, fertilizer and soil amendments; climate-appropriate irrigation and sunlight are as essential as gathering in community green space. From here, we gently remind the land of its latent potential, tending to the ground and growth, while helping the team and community members tap into their own.

ALMA Backyard Farms

SUSTAINABLE COMMENTARY:

RESCUING FOOD, NOURISHING PEOPLE: FOOD FORWARD'S IMPACT ON FOOD WASTE AND HUNGER IN LOS ANGELES

By Rick Nahmias & Nkemdilim Nwosu, Food Forward

Community health is multi-generational. 38% of all food within the U.S is unsold and uneaten—resulting in waste that has a tremendous impact on the health and environment of the communities we live in. In California alone, 1 in 5 households are food insecure. For over fifteen years, Food Forward, Inc.'s responsive and efficient produce recovery operation partners with the produce industry, farmers markets, and private properties to rescue surplus produce and donates to more than 250 hunger relief partners and underserved communities free of charge to provide more equitable access to healthy food across the region.

California farmers grow nearly three-quarters of the nation's supply of fruits and more than a third of its vegetables. Los Angeles County is home to North America's largest wholesale produce market, one of the nation's busiest international ports, and more than 150 weekly farmers markets.

Food Forward, Eron Rauch, Serena Creative, and Caroline Chou

The county is also home to over 1 million households that experience food insecurity. As a produce terminal home, port city, agricultural hub, and site of high hunger rates, Los Angeles has both the excess produce and the community need for large-scale food recovery intervention.

Through three award-winning programs, Food Forward's large-scale intervention in the food system is transforming how we understand food insecurity and food waste in Los Angeles County and across the region, resulting in more nourished communities and a healthier environment.

The communities served by Food Forward and its partners–low-income communities and communities of color–are disproportionately affected by the impacts of climate change.

Food Forward, Eron Rauch, Serena Creative, and Caroline Chou

In addition, to the immediate outcome of addressing food insecurity in communities, Food Forward's recovery work has significant climate impacts. As one of the largest inputs to our nation's landfills, food waste emits methane gas into the atmosphere as it decomposes, which is 80 times more potent than carbon dioxide at trapping heat over a 20-year period.

Diverting perfectly edible produce from landfills at scale reduces the volume of greenhouse gases entering the atmosphere and reduces a major contributor to near-term climate change that disproportionately affects the low-income communities Food Forward serves. By diverting fresh produce from becoming food waste in landfills, Food Forward prevented the emission of over 83,000 metric tons of CO_2 equivalent in 2024 alone. And in 2024, Food Forward distributed more than 93 million pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables to communities experiencing food insecurity.

Food Forward, Eron Rauch, Serena Creative, and Caroline Chou

STATE OF GOOD FOOD:

FAIR

A truly fair food system values everyone involved, from farm workers and grocery store employees to those who distribute, prepare, and serve our food, as well as the animals within it. Fair food is produced, manufactured, distributed, sold, and recycled through fair labor practices and humane treatment of animals. It is essential that at every point in the food supply chain, workers receive fair compensation regardless of their ethnicity, age, gender, ability, or documentation status and are free from exploitation.

In the LA Foodshed, the number of food system jobs has surged from 1.12 million in 2020 to nearly 1.74 million in 2024. **In Los Angeles, where 1 in 10 workers are employed in food-related jobs, nonsupervisory food system workers earn an average of just $18.93 an hour.** This is a stark reality in one of the most expensive cities in the world, leaving food workers facing a gap between their average hourly wage and the living wage needed to support a family. These low wages directly impact the quality of life for workers and their families, contributing to increasing rates of food insecurity and homelessness among those who serve our communities.

Fair food also includes the humane treatment of livestock. As the average number of dairy cows per farm has risen to over 1,100 in 2024, concerns about animal welfare have intensified. Higher concentrations of livestock can lead to crowded and stressful living conditions, highlighting the need for standards that promote humane treatment and healthier environments for both animals and workers. Ethical treatment of animals not only benefits their well-being but also creates safer working conditions for those who care for them.

In terms of worker well-being, there have been fluctuations in the rates of reported injuries and illnesses in the LA Foodshed due to agricultural production and pesticide exposure. In 2024, 112 such incidents were reported, showing a significant decrease from 176 in 2017. However, the overall trend in worker well-being is still concerning, especially given the prevalence of food insecurity among workers. In California, 11.6% of workers are experiencing food insecurity in 2024, a decrease from 20.8% in 2017, yet still a stark reminder of the challenges that food system workers face in securing access to nutritious food for themselves and their families. A fair food system must prioritize both the economic security and health of its workers to be just and equitable for all involved.

Twenty organizations in our network are actively promoting fairness in the food system. These organizations advocate for equitable labor practices, fair wages, and rights for workers throughout the food supply chain.

For a comprehensive list of these organizations, refer to Appendix D.

THIS REPORT SUMMARIZES DATA TRENDS WITHOUT SHOWING STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT CHANGES OR CAUSAL RELATIONSHIPS.

FAIR

INDICATOR	2013	2017	2020	2024
OCCUPATION[16]				
Total Food System Jobs in LA County	520,493	586,061	619,200	1,123,740
Total Food System Jobs in LA Foodshed	1,311,483	1,464,450	1,122,740	1,740,470
WAGES[16]				
Average hourly wage of nonsupervisory food system worker in LA County	$10.62	$12.59	$13.09	$19.82
Average hourly wage of nonsupervisory food system worker in LA Foodshed	$10.50	$12.55	$12.94	$18.93
Average hourly wage of supervisory food system worker in LA County	$18.17	$19.23	$21.66	$33.98
Average hourly wage of supervisory food system worker in LA Foodshed	$18.46	$19.80	$21.97	$32.22
Gap between the living wage and minimum wage for a household with 2 adults & 1 child in LA County	$12.07	$16.16	$16.91	$19.66
Gap between avg hourly wage of all food system workers and all workers in LA Foodshed	$13.26	$12.72	$13.50	$13.94
Gap between avg hourly wage of all food system workers and all workers in LA County	$14.13	$13.52	$14.45	$12.74

[16]*Occupational Employment Statistics Survey, 2012, 2015, 2018, 2023*

INDICATOR	2013	2017	2020	2024
ANIMAL WELFARE[17]				
Average number of chickens used for meat per farm in CA	118,675	50,998	66,669	72,544
Average number of hens used for eggs per farm in California	4,138	2,818	2,169	4,187
Average number of pigs per farm in California	111	78	69	60
Average number of cows used for dairy per farm in California	851	941	1,059	1,117
WORKER WELL-BEING				
Reported injuries & illnesses due to agricultural production and pesticide exposure for agricultural workers in LA Foodshed[18]	60	176	34	112
CA workers experiencing food insecurity[19]	17%	20.8%	not updated	11.6%

[17]NASS Census of Agriculture, 2007, 2012, 2017, 2022
[18]California Department of Pesticide Regulation, 2010, 2013, 2016, 2021
[19]Current Population Survey, 2011, 2014, 2023

FAIR COMMENTARY:

BUILDING A JUST AND SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEM: THE ROLE OF HEALTH, FAIR WAGES, AND COMMUNITY WELL-BEING WITH LAANE

By: Amardeep Gill, LA Alliance for A New Economy

In our current food system, there is tension between health, sustainability, affordability, and fairness. We often hear that we must choose one over the other: if we want affordability, it comes at the expense of healthy options and fair wages, and vice versa. However, we need to envision a food system where we don't have to make these sacrifices.

A living wage allows farm workers, distribution staff, and grocery workers to enjoy the fruits of their labor. Every worker is part of the community, and their struggles with food insecurity are interconnected with the broader issues we face. It's worth repeating that when workers are paid a living wage, communities prosper, leading to healthier and thriving environments.

A 2022 study by the Economic Round Table, commissioned by the United Food and Commercial Workers locals 7, 21, 324, and 770, who together represent over 36,000 Kroger workers in Colorado, Washington State, and Southern California, surveyed over 10,000 workers. Locals 324 and 770 jurisdictions border each other and cover much of Southern California. Local 324 covers Orange County and the Long Beach area of Los Angeles County. Local 770 covers the balance of Los Angeles County, Ventura County, and Santa Barbara County. Over 78% of our members reported that they were food insecure, meaning they ran out of food before the end of the month, skipped meals, and sometimes went hungry. Imagine being a grocery store employee or a farm worker and not being able to afford food. This reality highlights the urgent need for fair labor practices. A fair and just Food System is one where we all come together and work to create more opportunities and improve conditions for workers, emphasizing that fair wages and community well-being go hand in hand.

We are living in a world where very few corporations control our food systems from every part of the supply chain. We can use their unchecked power to impact the quality of our food, how we grow our food, reliance on factory farms, and the race to the bottom when it comes to labor from the farm worker to your neighborhood grocery clerk. As we approach the 5th anniversary of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2025, we remember that food workers along the entire supply chain were deemed essential. They provided us with a lifeline, ensuring that the majority of us remained nourished while they risked exposure to a life-threatening virus. Many of them lost their co-workers, and many suffer from long-term health effects. We need to consider the role that community organizations, the LA Food Policy Council, and labor unions can play in ensuring that workers have dignified jobs and that our communities do not lack basic needs such as food. There is no single solution, but how can we harness our power, knowledge, and will to create better and more just food systems for all?

FAIR COMMENTARY:

BUILDING STABILITY BY BUILDING CAREERS: HOW THE HOSPITALITY TRAINING ACADEMY CONTRIBUTES TO ECONOMIC MOBILITY IN LA

By: Adine Forman, Hospitality Training Academy, Los Angeles

You can't have a robust food ecosystem in Los Angeles without ensuring that workers in the hospitality industry are paid fair wages and treated with dignity and respect. For too long, the cost of living has outpaced wages, especially in the service industry. Growing economic inequality, rising rents, and inadequate affordable housing stock create conditions of poverty and insecurity that lead to homelessness. But in Southern California, the quality of hospitality and tourism sector jobs are improving. Today, there are thousands of jobs with family-sustaining wages, healthcare benefits, and the security that comes with union protection.

Workforce development and apprenticeship programs are vital for building a thriving and equitable food ecosystem. Training for high-road jobs fosters economic stability, upward mobility, and community resilience. Homelessness—extreme poverty in cities like Los Angeles—can be mitigated by high-quality workforce development programs that act as interventions to address its root causes.

Since its founding in 2006, the Hospitality Training Academy (HTA) has created life-changing career opportunities for vulnerable populations, including individuals experiencing homelessness, justice-involved individuals, foster youth, transgender individuals, veterans, and low-income youth and adults from marginalized communities.

As the labor-management partnership between UNITE HERE Local 11 and participating employers, HTA provides no-cost, best-in-class registered apprenticeship and workforce training. We place people into life-changing union culinary and hospitality jobs at hotels, convention centers, stadiums and cafeterias across Southern California. To date, HTA has trained and placed thousands of students into good jobs while also upskilling existing workers to advance their careers and maximize their earning potential.

Hospitality Training Academy

Hospitality Training Academy

Our programs meet industry needs by developing a highly skilled workforce, creating pathways to good jobs, advancing racial and gender equity, and strengthening the economy. By building the pipeline of trained, ready-for-success workers for the in-demand hospitality, food service, and tourism sectors, we stimulate local and regional economies while providing transformational, long-term pathways for worker advancement.

HTA puts individuals on a trajectory where they will not only be able to afford housing but also save enough to survive life emergencies or surprise bills. We not only provide hard skills training, but also a cadre of support services, network to community organizations, and an approach that allows us to effectively match employers with employees.

Los Angeles is home to a booming hospitality sector—the city's largest job generator—and is a top destination for both international and domestic travelers. Between now and 2028, as Los Angeles hosts the Olympics and FIFA World Cup, the development of dozens of new hotels will create thousands of additional jobs. HTA is primed to meet this demand, strengthening our community, supporting the culinary and hospitality industries, and empowering job seekers with opportunities for economic mobility.

STATE OF GOOD FOOD:

ACCESSIBLE

An accessible food system ensures that everyone, regardless of their economic status, location, or ability, has the opportunity to obtain the nutritious food they need. It's not just about having food available, it's about creating a holistic environment that supports physical, economic, social, and cultural access to healthy food. Everyone, including families and individuals facing financial hardships, should have equal access to food that supports their health and well-being. Access to healthy food often starts in the home. The type of housing structure plays a role in the food system, as it can influence whether families have space for food storage, cooking, and preparation. Between 2013 and 2024, there have been shifts in housing patterns in Los Angeles. The number of households in single-family homes decreased from 64.3% to 56.0%, while those living in buildings with three or more units increased from 28.7% to 35.0%. Vehicle ownership also shifted. In Los Angeles, the data reveals that renters are more likely to have no vehicle, with 258,039 renter households reporting no vehicle available in 2024. On the other hand, homeowners are more likely to own at least one vehicle, with 357,339 homeowner households reporting vehicle ownership in 2024. However, for renters without vehicles, food access remains a challenge, particularly when relying on public transportation or nearby convenience stores that may not offer a wide range of nutritious options. Access to food also depends on the availability of retail outlets that provide fresh, nutritious options. Grocery store availability in LA County has steadily increased from 2,011 stores in 2013 to 2,706 in 2024. This is especially evident in areas like South LA, where the number of grocery stores has grown significantly, from 86 in 2013 to 206 in 2024. However, some neighborhoods, like East LA, still face challenges, with only 61 grocery stores in 2024. However, some neighborhoods, like East LA, still face challenges, with only 61 grocery stores in 2024 compared to 20 in 2013. Convenience and liquor stores, which often lack fresh produce and healthy options, have also seen an increase, indicating that while access to food outlets is improving, the quality and variety of available food may not meet the needs of all residents. Farmers markets, an important resource for fresh produce, have seen fluctuations in the past decade. LA County's certified farmers markets have remained relatively stable, with 140 in 2024 compared to 148 in 2013. However, the number of farmers markets accepting EBT, WIC, and WIC fruit and veggie checks has increased, providing better access for low-income residents. In 2024, 81.1% of LA County's farmers markets accepted EBT, up from 39% in 2013. Community gardens, which provide both access to fresh produce and opportunities for urban food production, have also grown in number. LA County saw an increase in community gardens from 118 in 2013 to 100 in 2024. Although urban farming has made strides in providing fresh food options, these efforts are not yet widespread or large-scale enough to meet the food needs of the entire population. The continued growth of grocery stores, farmers markets, and community gardens offers hope. However, there is still a need for better integration of these resources with support for low-income residents. Ensuring that food access is truly equitable requires not just physical availability but also consideration of cultural needs, economic access, and the removal of barriers that limit opportunity.

84 organizations in our network are actively working to improve accessibility in the food system. These organizations are focused on removing barriers to ensure that all communities can access the food they need. For a comprehensive list of these organizations, refer to Appendix D.

ACCESSIBLE

INDICATOR	2013	2017	2020	2024
TYPE OF HOUSING STRUCTURE[20]				
House	64.3%	62.0%	53.6%	56.0%
Duplex	5.4%	7.0%	6.4%	6.9%
Building with 3 or more units	28.7%	29.1%	37.6%	35.0%
Mobile Home	1.6%	2.0%	2.3%	2.1%
VEHICLE OWNERSHIP[20]				
No Vehicle (House Owner)	44,972	44,433	45,352	54,416
No Vehicle (Renter)	266,020	248,085	247,974	258,039
Own At least 1 Vehicle (owner)	344,457	338,399	335,384	357,339
Own At least 1 Vehicle (Renter)	802,462	778,438	771,816	850,631

INDICATOR	2013	2017	2020	2024
RETAIL OUTLETS[21]				
GROCERY STORE[21]				
Grocery Stores in LA County	2,011	2,056	2,637	2706
Grocery Stores in South LA	86	88	91	206
Grocery Stores in East LA	20	19	22	61
Grocery Stores in West LA	48	54	47	92
CONVENIENCE & LIQUOR STORES[21]				
Convenience Stores in LA County	621	648	657	804
Liquor Stores in LA County	1,135	1,172	1,198	1,305
Liquor Stores in South LA	106	114	119	121
Liquor Stores in East LA	19	13	13	15
Grocery Stores in West LA	34	29	32	31
FARMS[22]				
Farms in LA City	26	31	not updated	31
Urban Farms in South LA	1	9	not updated	5
Urban Farms in East LA	21	09	not updated	1
Urban Farms in West LA	2	4	not updated	3
Farms with direct sales in LA County	168	210	not updated	109
Value of direct sales in LA County	$3,541,000	$2,369,000	$1,384,000	$2,707,000

[20]UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, California Health Interview Survey, 2011, 2015, 2017, 2023
[21]US Census: County Business Patterns, 2011, 2015, 2016, 2022
[22]Cultivate LA + UCANR, 2013, 2016, 2021

INDICATOR	2013	2017	2020	2024
FARMERS MARKETS[23]				
Certified Farmers Markets in LA County	148	138	132	140
Certified Farmers Markets in LA City	72	56	40	46
FMs in South LA	9	8	5	9
FMs in East LA	2	1	1	1
FMs in West LA	16	13	12	13
GARDENS & NURSERIES[22]				
Community Gardens in LA County	118	158	not updated	100
Community Gardens in LA City	48	77	not updated	45
CGs in South LA	10	19	not updated	13
CGs in East LA	1	3	not updated	3
CGs in West LA	4	5	not updated	3
School Gardens in LA County	479	425	not updated	not updated
School Gardens in LA City	312	188	$1,384,000	not updated
Nurseries in LA County	268	368	not updated	428
Nurseries in LA City	89	97	$1,384,000	96

[23]*Ecology Center 2019, 2024*

INDICATOR	2013	2017	2020	2024
FRUIT & FRUIT AND VEGETABLE ACCESSIBILITY[20]				
Adults living at 0-199% FPL	81.9%	79.7%	79.8%	81.9%
All Adults	86.7%	86.5%	86.5%	87.1%
FARMERS MARKETS (FMS)[22]				
City of LA FMs accepting EBT	27 38%	54 96%	35 87.5%	38 82.6%
City of LA FMs accepting WIC	33 46%	32 57%	23 54.5%	26 56.5
City of LA FMs accepting WIC fruit & veggie checks	not updated	not updated	13 32.5%	13; 28.2%
LA County FMs accepting EBT	58 39%	87 63%	107 81.1%	103; 73.5
LA County FMs accepting WIC	78 53%	77 56%	72 54.5%	75; 53.5%
LA County FMs accepting WIC fruit & veggie checks	not updated	not updated	31 23.5%	52; 37.1%
LA County FMs accepting Market Match	18 25%	22 39%	37 28%	59; 42.1%

ACCESS CASE STUDY:

HOFOCO'S MEALS FOR ALL: EXPANDING PREPARED MEAL ACCESS

By: Asher Landau, Arnali Ray, Linda Pianigiani, & Sofia Flores-Rojas, Hollywood Food Coalition

Since 1987, Hollywood Food Coalition (HoFoCo) has demonstrated the power of food to nourish people while building community and connection. Serving free meals for unhoused and low-income neighbors seven nights per week, HoFoCo strives to reimagine the traditional meal service model through the Community Dinner program. This program began by serving volunteer-assembled casseroles in Plummer Park and now prepares over 250 chef-prepared, multi-course meals per night, with an emphasis on nutritious food and individual choice. In 2023, HoFoCo served over 91,000 meals, including vegetarian, vegan, and meat options. HoFoCo minimizes barriers to accessing its meals and requires no proof of need or other identifying documents to receive a meal.

As meal production grew and connections with guests increased, HoFoCo aimed to provide their guests with a more dignified dining experience as a next step. They hired a Head Chef with culinary expertise, including experience at Michelin-star restaurants, who greatly improved meal quality. He was able to creatively meet guests' needs and preferences by adjusting spices, improving the variety of dishes, and expanding the types of proteins offered, such as baked ginger tofu filets and braised chicken with arrabbiata sauce. Ingredients are sourced by their Community Exchange program, which rescues perfectly edible food that would otherwise be wasted, allowing HoFoCo to produce high-quality meals at a very low cost per meal. Alongside increasing the quality of the nightly meal, the Head Chef also offered guests more agency in their selection of meal options.

In 2023, HoFoCo's next step was satisfying the need for culturally relevant food, which plays a key role in an individual's nutritional health, identity formation, and community building. People experiencing homelessness often have very limited food options, and offering more choices increases feelings of dignity, well-being, and social connection. Additionally, Black and Latino individuals are overly represented within the unhoused and food-insecure populations, and therefore, offering culturally relevant food is essential for improving food access.

Through a new initiative called Culinary Collaborations, HoFoCo guest chefs collaborate on a new recipe with their Head Chef to be prepared and served to dinner guests that night. Not only would HoFoCo create deeper connections with dinner guests through food, but they would also have access to new cuisines that reflect the diversity of their city. HoFoCo also aimed to educate chefs on the value of food recovery by supplying guest chefs with rescued ingredients to use in meal preparation. Hosting seven guest chefs since 2023, Culinary Collaborations has fostered a deeper connection between the culinary community and the organization. Twelve unique, high-quality recipes were crafted by each chef, from Peruvian Ají de Gallina to Ethiopian Misir Wot, and enjoyed by HoFoCo's guests. Leading into 2025, HoFoCo continues to prioritize access to high-quality, culturally relevant food for underserved and under-resourced communities. The Community Exchange program is moving to a larger warehouse space in early 2025. It will be able to recover even more food and increase the variety of ingredients available for its Dinner program and for distribution within its network of over 160 nonprofits throughout Los Angeles. By improving access to fresh, high-quality, and culturally relevant food, HoFoCo moves closer to achieving its vision for a city where everyone has food, community, and support.

Hollywood Food Coalition, Linda Pianigiani

ACCESS CASE STUDY:

LA REGIONAL FOOD BANK AND FOOD RX: IMPROVING ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD FOR BETTER HEALTH OUTCOMES

By Ani Aratounians

The Anthem Food Rx Pilot Program, launched in January 2024, exemplifies a comprehensive approach to addressing food insecurity and chronic health conditions through accessible nutrition education, reliable food access, and community partnership. This pilot program targets adults aged 18 and older who are food insecure and diagnosed with Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus or hypertension, aiming to improve health outcomes by integrating nutritional support directly into participants' lives. This program is funded by the Anthem Foundation.

The program enrolled a total of 106 participants, with 73 individuals completing the 12-week curriculum by June 2024. The current cohort of 33 participants represents the program's final phase, during which a consistent, evidence-based approach is applied to mitigate barriers to health and nutrition among vulnerable populations. Participants attend weekly, in-person classes at partner sites such as FEAST and Providence Health, where 38 nutrition education and cooking demonstrations have been held to date. These classes focus on practical skills for preparing nutritious meals, understanding dietary choices, and making budget-friendly purchases that align

FEAST

with health goals. Food distribution is another cornerstone of the program, which provides consistent access to fresh, high-quality food to alleviate immediate nutritional deficiencies while educating participants on sustainable practices to support long-term health. The Anthem Food Rx Pilot Program has made significant strides in both its educational and food distribution efforts. By June 2024, 13,650 pounds of fresh produce and healthy, shelf-stable foods were distributed. Each food box was curated to meet the dietary needs of participants with chronic conditions, promoting not only the concept of "food as medicine" but also empowering participants to adopt healthier eating habits.

Preliminary feedback from participants highlights the positive effects of the program, particularly in terms of physical and mental well-being. One notable testimonial came from an 81-year-old participant who shared his transformative experience, explaining how the program had not only given him energy but also a renewed sense of purpose. He commented, "I didn't lose weight, but I feel revived. Instead of lasting ten more years, I believe I'll last 20. The vegetables fit me like a ring on my finger. The teachers taught me everything, from preparing food to making healthier choices at the grocery store. They were simply unforgettable." This participant's experience encapsulates the program's success in improving quality of life through knowledge and sustained access to healthy food. While weight loss may not be the primary outcome, the program's benefits are felt in improved energy levels,confidence in food choices, and hope for longevity, all key indicators of wellness beyond conventional health metrics. Although still in its final stages, the Anthem Food Rx Pilot Program has demonstrated substantial benefits for food-insecure individuals with chronic health conditions. The program's holistic design, incorporating education, accessible food, and supportive community partnerships, highlights a scalable model for addressing food access and chronic disease management in underserved populations. As the program concludes, the success of this pilot paves the way for future initiatives that leverage food access as a vehicle for public health transformation.

LOS ANGELES REGIONAL FOOD BANK

Fighting Hunger. Giving Hope.

Anthem Foundation

ACCESS COMMENTARY:

LA CAN: TEN YEARS OF ENHANCING FOOD ACCESS FOR THE UNHOUSED COMMUNITY (2014-2024)

By Todd Cunningham, LA CAN

For the past decade, LA CAN has been at the forefront of improving food access for our unhoused neighbors in Skid Row. Our mission centers on amplifying the voices of those who have been silenced and overlooked by society. We believe that addressing food access is essential in the broader struggle for justice and liberation. Our focus on community organizing and power-building helps us respond to the needs of those disproportionately affected by food insecurity and the lack of clean water.

The intersectionality between food access and housing insecurity complicates the challenges faced by our community as Los Angeles continues to address its houselessness crisis. Unhoused populations often encounter persistent gaps, such as limited shopping and storage options, full pricing at food outlets, and vulnerability to price gouging. Despite these hurdles, our community's resilience has fostered innovative food programs that aim to bridge these gaps and promote self-sufficiency.

Over the past ten years, LA CAN has initiated several successful programs to enhance food access, including:

- **EBT Acceptance:** We led the charge for EBT/SNAP acceptance at farmers' markets, helping to recruit new merchants to accept EBT/SNAP.
- **Mutual Aid Initiatives:** During the pandemic, we co-developed popular mutual aid events to provide food and health information when traditional outlets diminished.
- **Justice and Wellness Marketplace:** Our monthly marketplace not only offers healthy food but also creates space for community organizing, community healing and artistic expression.
- **Sustainability Efforts:** We've implemented leading-edge climate-friendly projects like atmospheric water generators and rooftop farms, growing close to 200 different crops every year.

As we look to the future, we explore new partnerships for fresh food distribution and advocate for community-centered policy changes. We emphasize that food access is a human right that must be recognized as integral to housing security. Our focus includes advocating for the passage of the Farm Bill and supporting the growth of SNAP food assistance. LA CAN remains committed to shaping food justice in Los Angeles. Our leadership role emphasizes immediate food access solutions as well as long-term structural changes that empower our communities. Together, we can ensure that everyone has access to nutritious food, fostering a thriving, resilient community in Skid Row.

ACCESS COMMENTARY:

NOURISHING ANTELOPE VALLEY: INCREASING ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD IN LOS ANGELES

By Jacqueline Johnson, Antelope Valley Partners for Health

Antelope Valley, a region situated in the northern part of Los Angeles County, faces significant challenges when it comes to food access and health outcomes. With a population of 413,966– where 74% are adults, this community exhibits some troubling statistics. A striking 36.7% of adults are classified as obese. Alarmingly, only 9% of residents are meeting the recommended guidelines for fruit and vegetable intake. Additionally, about 41.2% of the population lives in poverty, underscoring the urgent need for initiatives aimed at improving access to nutritious food.

In response to these pressing concerns, the Antelope Valley Food Access Network (AVFAN), formerly known as the Antelope Valley Wellness Coalition, has continued to be a resource aimed at fostering a thriving community by ensuring access to fresh produce and providing resources for overall health and wellness. The prevalence of chronic illnesses in Antelope Valley, which exceeds rates found elsewhere in Los Angeles County, emphasizes the necessity for strategic actions aimed at improving access to healthy food options.

Antelope Valley Partners for Health, Karina Lopez

It is within this context that Antelope Valley Partners for Health (AVPH) spearheaded the establishment of a food hub, an innovative response to the escalating food insecurity and accessibility challenges faced by our community.

This collaboration resulted in a proposal outlining the delivery logistics and the types of produce that could be offered. The college's Board of Directors agreed to fund one year of deliveries to assess the impact on students. This initial investment demonstrated a growing recognition that access to healthy food could significantly enhance students' academic success and overall well-being. Presently, AVC continues to fund these deliveries of 10 pallets for a total of over 20,000 pounds of extra produce to the community, which have proven invaluable. Our food hub has established partnerships with 15 local food pantries that pick up fresh produce from the college two times a month, ensuring that not only students but also families and individuals throughout the community can access nutritious food. This network significantly expands our reach and impacts the address of food insecurity.

Antelope Valley Partners for Health, Karina Lopez

Moreover, the ongoing partnership with Food Forward enables us to continue receiving surplus food, which reduces food waste while simultaneously addressing hunger. This model demonstrates the power of collaboration in combating food insecurity, showing that with the right connections, we can create a sustainable system that nourishes our community. As we look to the future, the lessons learned from establishing the Antelope Valley Food Access.

The network can serve as a blueprint for similar initiatives in other underserved areas. By prioritizing partnerships, engaging the community, and focusing on healthy food access, we can tackle the underlying issues of food insecurity and chronic illness in Antelope Valley and beyond. By connecting local organizations, schools, and food distributors, we have created a vital resource for our community. The road to improved health is challenging, but through continued collaboration and commitment, we can nourish the people of Antelope Valley and build a healthier future for all. By fostering a culture of health, wellness, and collaboration, we can ensure that every resident has the opportunity to thrive.

STATE OF GOOD FOOD:

POLICIES 2019-2024

POLICY TRACKER

Policies at the local, state, and federal levels profoundly shape the food system, influencing access, affordability, and sustainability. During the pandemic, initiatives such as the USDA's Farmers to Families Food Box Program, the SNAP Online Purchase Pilot, and Los Angeles County's American Rescue Plan Market Match and Grocery Voucher programs significantly improved food access for Angelenos. However, systemic disparities in food access remain and many of these programs will complete their funding within the next few years. These challenges underscore the need for adaptable, equity-driven policies to ensure long-term food security and resilience.

Good Food policies are essential for promoting equity, food security, and public health. They impact food pricing, agricultural practices, distribution networks, and food assistance programs, shaping how and where nutritious food is available. These policies prioritize affordability, accessibility, and sustainability while addressing structural barriers faced by low-income and marginalized communities. As a key driver of systemic change, effective food policies support the long-term health, fairness, and resilience of the food system.

The Food Policy Tracker, spanning from 2019 to 2025, offers a detailed record of food-related legislation and policies across California. Structured around our five value categories, the tracker highlights key policy trends, successes, and gaps in food system governance. It captures essential details such as policy name, bill number, legislative body, sponsoring legislators, policy goals, funding sources, and key stakeholders, providing a comprehensive view of legislative efforts at the local, state, and federal levels. USC Master of Public Administration students supported our efforts by focusing specifically on state-level food policies, conducting an in-depth analysis to provide critical insights into how legislation impacts food access, sustainability, and equity across California. Please see the comprehensive policy table at the link here.

STATE OF GOOD FOOD:

POLICY PLATFORM 2017-2024

Overview: The current version of the policy platform of the Los Angeles Food Policy Council is derived from the Good Food for All Agenda (2017). These recommendations were identified through broad stakeholder engagement and feedback including focus groups, key stakeholder interviews, working group input and surveys.

Beginning in 2025, an updated version of the Good Food for All Agenda will be completed and subsequently a new version of the policy platform is intended to be released in early 2026.

In 2023, the Los Angeles Food Policy Council adopted three strategic pillars to guide its work in advancing food equity:

1. Food and Nutrition Security – Ensuring all Angelenos have access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food.
2. Economic Development – Supporting food businesses, creating equitable job opportunities, and strengthening local food economies.
3. Environmental Sustainability – Reducing food loss and food waste, promoting sustainable agriculture, and mitigating the environmental impacts of the food system.

While the policies in this platform were originally developed under the Good Food for All Agenda (2017), they have been realigned under these three pillars to reflect LAFPC's current priorities. The upcoming 2026 policy platform update will further refine these strategies with input from stakeholders.

Los Angeles Food Policy Council

1. FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY:

Policy recommendations under the food and nutrition pillar aim to promote availability, accessibility, affordability and promotion of nutritious foods across the food system and supply chain including within schools, health care, retail, charitable feeding, safety net and housing.

1. **Public Health & Nutrition Programs**
   a. Support insurance and Medical/Medicaid coverage for diabetes prevention programs, including lifestyle modification programs that empower people to adopt healthy diets.
   b. Support a state or local tax on sugar-sweetened beverages which would generate funds in Los Angeles for public health and community food projects.

2. **Expand Good Food Purchasing Program through the adoption of policy** by Los Angeles County, including LA County Health Services, Recreation and Parks, and Senior and Community Services Departments.

3. **Food Access & Affordability**
   - Grow Market Match and other voucher programs to increase fresh fruit and vegetable purchases by SNAP participants at farmers' markets, healthy neighborhood markets, grocery stores, community-supported agriculture (CSAs) and pop-up markets
   - Establish a Good Food Retailer recognition program for stores that sell healthier food options, accept nutrition subsidies (SNAP, WIC) and abide by Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) food waste standards.
   - Link enrollment to MediCal or MedicAid to automatic enrollment in SNAP.
   - Encourage all cities in LA County to adopt policies that require SNAP acceptance at farmers' markets.
   - Promote enrollment in supplemental nutrition programs such as SNAP and WIC and reduce barriers to participation (e.g.: program eligibility requirements for employment—particularly for students, documentation status and receipt of other social programs such as Supplemental Security Income).

4. **Institutional & Charitable Food Programs**
   a. Improve quality and sourcing of meals served to food insecure populations receiving public food assistance, including seniors, youth, hospital patients, and the incarcerated
   b. Improve quality and oversight of charitable food and public meal programs for seniors and those with restricted diets.
   c. Promote Summer Lunch Program in public parks to feed children from low-income families.
   d. Develop services at local public colleges and universities to address rising food insecurity amongst college students.

5. **Housing & Food Security**
   a. Increase public and affordable housing as a way to address rising rates of food insecurity and crisis of homelessness.
   b. b. Ensure that supportive housing has more community kitchens to help overcome cooking barriers for high need residents.

2. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

Policy recommendations under the Economic Development pillar consider healthy food retail from a business, employment and healthy food access perspective and spans diverse businesses including street vending, brick and mortal and urban farming operations.Policies within this pillar support pathways for food entrepreneurs and business owners to enter and sustain the food business, foster thriving employment opportunities and fair labor standards with the food business sector, as well as building market opportunities for supply chain actors.

1. **Food Business & Entrepreneurship Support**
    a. Establish Good Food Zones around historically impacted neighborhoods that prioritize healthy, high-road food businesses, while discouraging nuisance activity. Tools of the Good Food Zone can include incentives like subsidies, tax reductions, expedited permitting, or requirements such as minimum amount of staple and/or fresh foods as a condition for a liquor license.
    b. Fund healthy food business attraction programs and focus on establishments that offer living wage employment, local hire, workforce development for people with barriers to employment and expand access to culturally relevant healthy food options.
    c. Expand opportunities and remove regulatory barriers for home-based or cottage food entrepreneurs.
    d. Establish new zoning and permitting categories for innovative food production activities and enterprises (e.g. growing and/or selling food in shipping containers, hydroponics, aquaponics, mixed use food growing and processing, etc.).
    e. Legalize sidewalk food vending, establish a Healthy Food Cart program to incentivize healthy sidewalk food vending, assist with public health requirements, and educate about new sidewalk food vending regulations.

2. **Food Industry Labor & Equity**
    a. Uphold fair labor standards and prioritize local hiring of disadvantaged workers and people with barriers to employment, whom often are people of color.
    b. Prioritize contracts, subcontracts and investment opportunities for minority and women-owned businesses in food waste.
    c. Support living wage policies and fair employment opportunities for those most vulnerable to poverty and hunger including foster youth, homeless and formerly homeless, formerly incarcerated, veterans, and people with disabilities.
    d. Ensure that employment opportunities emerging from new food waste industry provide living wages.

3. **Infrastructure & Market Development**
    a. Build more multi-tenant processing, distribution and kitchen facilities accessible to small, mid-size and start-up farm and food businesses.
    b. Invest in emerging market opportunities that address gaps in the food supply chain (e.g. COMPRA Foods, a produce delivery service for corner stores).
    c. Collaborate across local and regional governments to better connect mid-sized farms, processors and manufacturers, to urban and regional market opportunities.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Policy recommendations under the environmental sustainability pillar focus on the intersection of our food system and environmental impacts. Policies within this pillar emphasize opportunities to expand urban agriculture within Los Angeles by addressing common barriers related to land access, cost of water and restrictive zoning regulations while additionally diverting organic waste from landfills through food waste prevention measures such as recovery and composting.

1. Food Waste Prevention & Recovery

a. Utilize technology such as online databases or phone apps to better coordinate food recovery and track diversion from landfills.
b. Implement state and federal food waste mandates through local plans, infrastructure and outcomes—including AB 1826 (organics plans), AB 1036 (composting infrastructure), SB 1383 (organic waste methane emission reductions) & AB 954 (accessible food labeling).
c. Offer free kitchen-top food scrap bins for residential waste collection.
d. Ensure all food businesses have food recovery options available through their waste hauling service.
e. Standardize food donation options for businesses that want to donate food to shelters and food banks within City of Los Angeles RecycLA franchise system, and standardize compensation for food recovery organizations involved.
f. Invest in constructing local waste management infrastructure including new industrial facilities to compost or repurpose food (e.g. anaerobic digestion).
g. Allow and encourage food businesses to repurpose surplus food and food scraps into "upcycled" products (e.g: baked goods with nut or juice pulp, animal feed, compost tea fertilizers, etc.)
h. Expand community compost hubs so that neighborhoods can compost food scraps at community gardens, schools, churches or other neighborhood places.
i. Encourage schools to reduce food waste through programs like "Shared Table," "Save It for Later," food donation or school garden composting, which provide a model for students in surplus food management.
j. Offer food scrap drop off at farmers markets for transfer to compost sites

2. Sustainable Agriculture & Land Use

a. Mitigate negative impacts of increased water rates on low-income growers by offering rebates on water-saving technology, such as drip irrigation.
b. Develop land-use strategies and incentives that support smart growth, preserve farming in the region, and protect urban farming locally.
c. Encourage first "right-of-refusal" option for tenant farmers who wish to buy their farm when the land owner decides to sell.
d. Increase access to land for urban agriculture by securing suitable parcels and promoting programs like Urban Agriculture Incentive Zones.
e. Streamline permitting and leases for community gardens and urban farms on both public and private land. Remove barriers to accessing land, for example by expanding the Urban Agriculture Incentive Zone to more cities in LA County.
f. Create joint-use policies at school gardens, libraries, and parks for urban farms, compost hubs and other activities supporting Good Food production.
g. Establish clear guidelines and encourage food growing in public housing

POLICY COMMENTARY:

SUSTAINABILITY ON THE MENU: LA COUNTY'S COMMITMENT TO REDUCING ITS CARBON FOOTPRINT

By Supervisor Lindsay Horvath

Addressing the climate crisis urgently requires change across sectors. From production to waste disposal, the global food system accounts for about one-third of greenhouse gas emissions, with animal products generating 90% more greenhouse gases than plant-based alternatives.

Los Angeles County's food footprint is substantial, with 111 food contracts across its hospitals, facilities, schools, and institutions. This presents an opportunity to lead by example in encouraging plant-based options. In one calendar year, the food items purchased by the Department of Health Services produced 742,111.708 kg CO2e equivalent. That's like driving a car for nearly 2 million miles!

Changing the County's food procurement practices is the most direct way to reduce its food-related water, land, and climate impact. In 2019, the Board of Supervisors adopted the Our County Sustainability Plan, which includes strategies that promote a sustainable food system, including the need to promote plant-based foods.

This year, the Board took steps to overhaul the County's outdated food policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and expand healthier food options at County facilities by approving the motion entitled "Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions through Food Procurement." As a result, the Department of Public Health has updated its Nutrition Standards for Prepared Foods, Snacks, and Beverages, which reduces the allowable amount of animal-based products while increasing the amount of plant-based options. These standards will now be integrated into all new and renewing County food service contracts.

Creating a system that prioritizes and promotes plant-based menu options ensures the County is on course to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Going forward, we will ask our departments to make their food purchasing data available to the public while setting target goals for reducing food-related greenhouse gas emissions.

Essential to this work is equipping our departments with resources, such as recipes and toolkits, to help support the integration of more plant-based food options on menus. We also want to work with the Department of Public Health to develop evaluation criteria for use in all food service Requests for Proposals to encourage plans that incorporate more plant-based options. Solutions like this are necessary as we tackle the climate crisis head-on.

POLICY CASE STUDY:

CALFRESH HEALTHY LIVING: EXPANDING ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD IN LOS ANGELES

By Dipa Shah and Cara Elio, County of Los Angeles, Department of Public Health, Division of Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention, Nutrition and Physical Activity Program

The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (BOS) has taken bold steps for establishing cross-sector coordination in support of a sustainable and just food system. Over the past decade, the BOS has adopted several motions to improve food security, increasing healthy food access to reduce diet-related chronic disease, improving the quality of food sold in grocery stores located in geographic areas most impacted by systemic inequities, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions through changes in food procurement practices and edible waste diversion. Due to the high degree of interdependence across the different sectors of the food system, efforts aimed at making the food system more equitable and sustainable necessitate extensive collaboration between public, private, and nonprofit organizations.

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (Public Health) Nutrition and Physical Activity Program has responded to BOS directives through the strategic implementation of its CalFresh Healthy Living Program (CFHL), funded by the United States Department of Agriculture and administered by the California Department of Social Services, and the California Department of Public Health, to provide a comprehensive public health approach that brings together multi-sector partners to advance nutrition security goals with a health and racial equity lens.

In October 2020, Public Health formed a network of 18 organizations that represented diverse sectors, including early childhood education, school districts, health centers, charitable feeding, and community-based organizations to implement the CFHL program throughout Los Angeles County. In addition to providing evidence-based, culturally appropriate, and linguistically tailored nutrition education and physical activity classes, Public Health and partners implemented a variety of policy, systems and environmental change strategies, including improving access to healthy food and daily quality physical activity. In addition, the network of partners are instrumental in advancing food recovery and redistribution efforts to improve food access among communities in need and reduce food waste in efforts to mitigate climate change. Early childhood education centers, schools, parks, and healthcare sites throughout the County facilitate the distribution of free, fresh surplus fruits and vegetables in communities with over 50% of households with incomes less than or equal to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level. CFHL partners provide recipe demonstrations and cookbooks to highlight healthful preparation techniques for the produce provided, share nutrition education materials and resources, and invite participants to join nutrition education and physical activity classes.

The impact of the food redistribution efforts has been staggering. Since the launch of this network, from October 2020 to October 2024, Public Health and CFHL funded partners have coordinated nearly 2,000 produce distribution events, served almost 900,000 people, and facilitated the distribution of approximately 8 million pounds of recovered produce to families in need of assistance.

Key findings from a survey conducted in 2021-2023 by Public Health and Harder+ Company Community Research showed that participants ranked high satisfaction with the recovered food at events, noting that the produce provided included fruits and vegetables that they "grew up eating", "know how to cook", and/or "include in [their] meals". Participants also consistently ranked high satisfaction with the quality, freshness, and variety of produce provided. The model incorporating nutrition education demonstrates promising results with participants reporting increased consumption of fruits, whole grains, dairy, fewer sugar sweetened beverages, and higher levels of physical activity compared to those who participate in produce distributions alone.

Among event participants surveyed, it was discovered that over 60% of participants experienced household food insecurity across the three years, despite high employment, showing there is an ongoing, persistent need for greater access to fresh fruits and vegetables among low-income communities. Based on these findings, Public Health is committed to building on the success of this multi-sector stakeholder partnership to expand access to fresh fruits and vegetables while simultaneously diverting edible food waste and strengthening supports for a strong, healthy, equitable and local food system. Future strategies to increase reach and impact include strengthening collaboration with partners to offer wrap around services at produce distribution events and diversifying ties to the food system to encompass community-based organizations and local farms to divert food scraps into animal feed and nutrient dense compost.

Northeast Valley Health Corporation, a CFHL funded partner

ABOUT THE LOS ANGELES FOOD POLICY COUNCIL

MISSION

The Los Angeles Food Policy Council (LAFPC) is dedicated to ensuring that food is healthy, affordable, sustainable, fair, and accessible for all Los Angeles residents.

VISION

We believe that Good Food for All is achievable, and that every community deserves access to food grown in a way that respects both people and the planet. Our vision is to create a local food system that is free from hunger, rooted in equity and access, supportive of farmers and food workers, and guided by principles of environmental stewardship and regeneration. To realize this vision, we actively catalyze, coordinate, and connect stakeholders across the LA region, including government, business, and community groups, who are committed to improving our food systems.

WHAT WE DO

The LAFPC serves as a backbone organization for a vast network of over 400 organizations and agencies that work towards healthy, sustainable, and fair food. By employing a collective impact model, we strategically unite people and organizations to create meaningful social change. We are making transformative progress in three key areas:

- **Cultivate:** We cultivate a diverse network of changemakers across the food system, from farm to fork and beyond. Through cross-sector working groups, network events, and civic engagement activities, we bring together voices and perspectives to foster collaboration.

- **Coordinate:** We provide strategic guidance to our stakeholder network through facilitation, research, policy development, and training. We aim to align efforts and maximize impact in the fight for food equity.

- **Catalyze:** We translate collaboration into tangible policy outcomes and help incubate, launch, and lead innovative food system initiatives. Our work focuses on addressing food insecurity, improving working conditions for food workers, and promoting sustainable practices that benefit our environment and community.

At the LAFPC, we understand that fair food practices encompass not only the health and welfare of individuals but also the humane treatment of animals and sustainable farming practices. We advocate for equitable policies that support all participants in the food system, including small farmers, agricultural workers, and low-income food entrepreneurs. By fostering collaboration and driving impactful change, we are working towards a more just and resilient food system in Los Angeles, ensuring that all residents have access to the nutritious food they deserve.

APPENDIX A:

REPORT METHODOLOGIES

The State of Good Food in Los Angeles Report brings together data from a wide array of sources, including federal, state, regional, county, and local government agencies, as well as academic institutions and non-profit organizations across the spectrum. Many of these contributors are part of the Los Angeles Food Policy Council network. Best practices from regional and national reports on food systems, public health, and environmental sustainability inform our report's framework and methodology.

The indicators used in the State of Good Food in Los Angeles Report were initially selected for the first edition in 2013. As we update the report each year, we refine our indicators to better align with our mission and the evolving needs of our communities. For the 2024 Report, we are committed to sourcing data exclusively from reputable databases and reports that are regularly updated. This approach ensures that the indicators we track can be consistently measured over time, allowing us to evaluate trends effectively.

The 2017 Good Food for All Agenda established six priority action areas that continue to guide our work and inform the indicators included in the report:

- Promote a Good Food Economy for All
- Create a Culture Shift for Good Food
- Eliminate Food Waste and Reclaim the Resource
- Eliminate Hunger
- Strengthen Environmental Resiliency and Regeneration
- Deepen the Impact of the Good Food Movement

The State of Good Food in Los Angeles Report is structured around our Five Good Food values: Healthy, Affordable, Sustainable, Fair, and Accessible. Within each of these values, we prioritize indicators that tell the story of our food system equitably. In the 2024 Report, we've expanded our focus on health outcomes to include not only racial disparities but also insights based on the countries of origin of those races. Additionally, we delve deeper into the issue of minority farm ownership, highlighting the percentages of ownership by race and ethnicity.

At the LA Food Policy Council, we believe that all Angelenos must have equal access to Good Food to foster a just food system in Los Angeles. Our ongoing commitment to transparency and inclusivity enhances our understanding and improvement of the food landscape for everyone.

APPENDIX B:

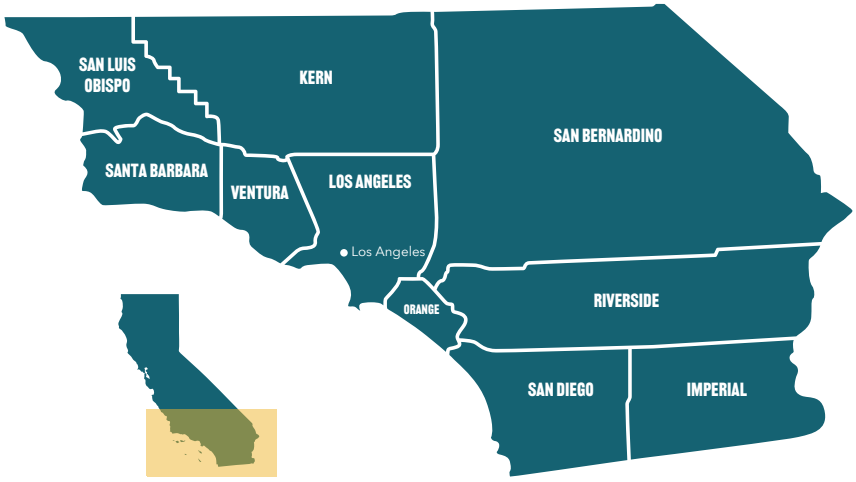
DATA VARIABLES

LOS ANGELES FOODSHED AREA

A Foodshed is defined by the Los Angeles Urban Rural Roundtable as an area linked by a common local food source. Just as a watershed describes an area of land bounded by a common water source, a foodshed describes a geographic area bounded by its capacity to produce food for its occupants.

The LA Foodshed includes ten counties in Southern California.

Imperial
Kern
Los Angeles
Orange
Riverside
San Bernardino
San Diego
San Luis Obispo
Santa Barbara
Ventura

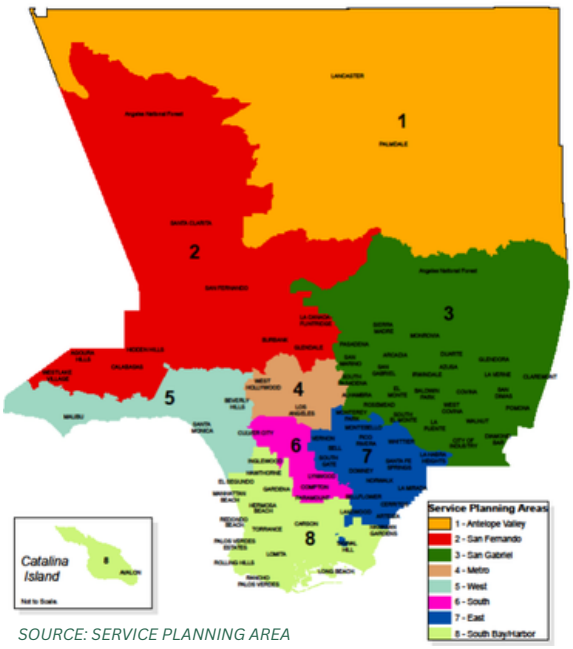


NEIGHBORHOOD DATA

Data in the State of Good Food in Los Angeles Report that refers to neighborhoods is divided by zip codes. The organization is as follows:

South LA	East LA	West LA
90001, 90002, 90003, 90007, 90008, 90011, 90016, 90018, 90037, 90043, 90044, 90047, 90059, & 90067	90022, 90023, & 90063	90024, 90025, 90034, 90035, 90045, 90049, 90056, 90064, 90066, 90067, & 90077

SERVICE PLANNING AREA (SPA) DATA



SOURCE: SERVICE PLANNING AREA (LA COUNTRY DEPT. OF HEALTH)

Antelope Valley (SPA 1): The Antelope Valley is the northernmost region of Los Angeles County and covers communities such as: Acton, Agua Dulce, Gorman, Lake Hughes, Lake Los Angeles, Lancaster, Littlerock, Palmdale, Quartz Hill, and others.

San Fernando Valley (SPA 2): The San Fernando region includes the northwest portion of LA County and covers communities such as: Burbank, Calabasas, Canoga Park, Canyon Country, Encino, Glendale, La Cañada-Flintridge, San Fernando, Sherman Oaks, Sun Valley, Van Nuys, Woodland Hills, and others.

San Gabriel Valley (SPA 3): The San Gabriel Valley includes the central east portion of LA County and covers communities such as: Alhambra, Altadena, Arcadia, Azusa, Baldwin Park, Claremont, Covina, Diamond Bar, Duarte, El Monte, Glendora, Irwindale, Monrovia, Monterey Park, Pasadena, Pomona, San Dimas, San Gabriel, San Marino, Temple City, Walnut, West Covina, and others.

Metro (SPA 4): The Metropolitan region of LA County primarily includes the central city portion of Los Angeles and covers communities such as: Boyle Heights, Central City, Downtown LA, Echo Park, El Sereno, Hollywood, Mid-City Wilshire, Monterey Hills, Mount Washington, Silverlake, West Hollywood, and Westlake.

West LA (SPA 5): West LA is the most affluent region in LA County and covers communities such as: Beverly Hills, Brentwood, Culver City, Malibu, Pacific Palisades, Playa del Rey, Santa Monica, and Venice.

South LA (SPA 6): South LA covers communities such as: Athens, Compton, Crenshaw, Florence, Hyde Park, Lynwood, Paramount, and Watts.

East LA (SPA 7): East LA includes the southeast portion of LA County and covers communities such as: Artesia, Bell, Bellflower, Bell Gardens, Cerritos, City of Commerce, City Terrace, Cudahy, Downey, East Los Angeles, Hawaiian Gardens, Huntington Park, La Habra Heights, Lakewood, La Mirada, Los Nietos, Maywood, Montebello, Norwalk, Pico Rivera, Santa Fe Springs, Signal Hill, South Gate, Vernon, Walnut Park, Whittier, and others.

South Bay (SPA 8): The South Bay is the southernmost border of LA County and covers communities such as: Athens, Avalon, Carson, Catalina Island, El Segundo, Gardena, Harbor City, Hawthorne, Inglewood, Lawndale, Lennox, Long Beach*, Hermosa Beach, Manhattan Beach, Palos Verdes Estates, Rancho Dominguez, Rancho Palos Verdes, Redondo Beach, Rolling Hills, Rolling Hills Estates, San Pedro, Wilmington, and others.

RETAIL OUTLET DATA

Grocery stores were defined as having a NAICS code of 445110. Operations with less than 5 employees were excluded from this count. Liquor stores were defined as having a NAICS code of 445310. Convenience stores were defined as a NAICS code of 445120.

FOOD SYSTEM WORKER DATA

Data that refers to food system workers refers to the following occupations, as defined by the Occupational Employment Survey:

Nonsupervisory Workers	Supervisory Workers
• Cooks, Fast Food • Cooks, Institution and Cafeteria • Cooks, Private Household • Cooks, Restaurant • Cooks, Short Order • Cooks, All Other • Food Preparation Workers • Bartenders • Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food • Counter Attendants, Cafeteria, Food Concession, and Coffee Shop • Waiters and Waitresses • Food Servers, Nonrestaurant • Dining Room and Cafeteria Attendants and Bartender Helpers • Dishwashers • Hosts and Hostesses, Restaurant, Lounge, and Coffee Shop • Food Preparation and Serving Related Workers, All Other • Graders and Sorters, Agricultural Products • Agricultural Equipment Operators • Farmworkers and Laborers, Crop, Nursery, and Greenhouse • Farmworkers, Farm, Ranch, and Aquacultural Animals • Agricultural Workers, All Other • Bakers • Butchers and Meat Cutters • Meat, Poultry, and Fish Cutters and Trimmers • Slaughterers and Meat Packers • Food and Tobacco Roasting, Baking, and Drying Machine Operators and Tenders • Food Batchmakers • Food Cooking Machine Operators and Tenders • Food Processing Workers, All Other • Dietetic Technicians	• Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers • Food Service Managers • Food Scientists and Technologists • Agricultural and Food Science Technicians • Chefs and Head Cooks • First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers • First-Line Supervisors of Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Workers • Agricultural Inspectors • Dietitians and Nutritionists

APPENDIX C:

DEFINITIONS RELATED TO FOOD SYSTEMS

TERM	DEFINITION	SOURCE
Farm-to-Fork	A food movement emphasizing the direct connection between local food producers and consumers, promoting fresh, seasonal, and sustainably sourced foods.	USDA
Food Access	The ability of individuals to obtain food, influenced by physical availability, economic affordability, and logistical factors.	USDA
Food Desert	Areas with limited access to affordable and nutritious food, often characterized by a lack of grocery stores and fresh produce markets, contributing to diet-related health issues.	USDA
Food Equity	The principle that all individuals, regardless of socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, gender, health, or any status, should have equal access to nutritious food.	Food Equity Movement
Food Hub	A centralized facility that facilitates the aggregation, distribution, and marketing of local food products, connecting farmers with consumers and institutions.	USDA
Food Insecurity	A household-level condition characterized by limited or uncertain access to adequate food due to financial constraints.	USDA

Food Justice	A movement that seeks to address inequities in the food system, ensuring that all communities have access to healthy, affordable, and culturally appropriate food.	Food Justice Movement
Food Policy	The laws, regulations, and practices that govern the production, distribution, and consumption of food, influencing food systems and public health outcomes.	Food Policy Council
Food Quality	A measure of the safety, nutritional value, and overall appeal of food products, influenced by factors like freshness, sourcing, and processing methods.	FAO
Food Recovery	The process of redirecting surplus food from being wasted to those in need, often involving food banks, charities, and other organizations to help alleviate food insecurity.	EPA
Food Resilience	The capacity of a community or system to adapt to and recover from disruptions in food supply, ensuring continued access to nutritious food.	FAO
Food Supply Chain	The interconnected processes involved in producing, processing, distributing, and consuming food, from farm to table, impacting food safety, quality, and sustainability.	USDA
Food Swamp	Areas where unhealthy food options, such as fast food and convenience stores, are prevalent, leading to higher consumption of ultra-processed and low-nutrient foods.	Urban Food Systems research
Food Waste	The discarding of food that is safe for consumption, often occurring at various stages of the food supply chain, contributing to economic loss and environmental degradation.	FAO

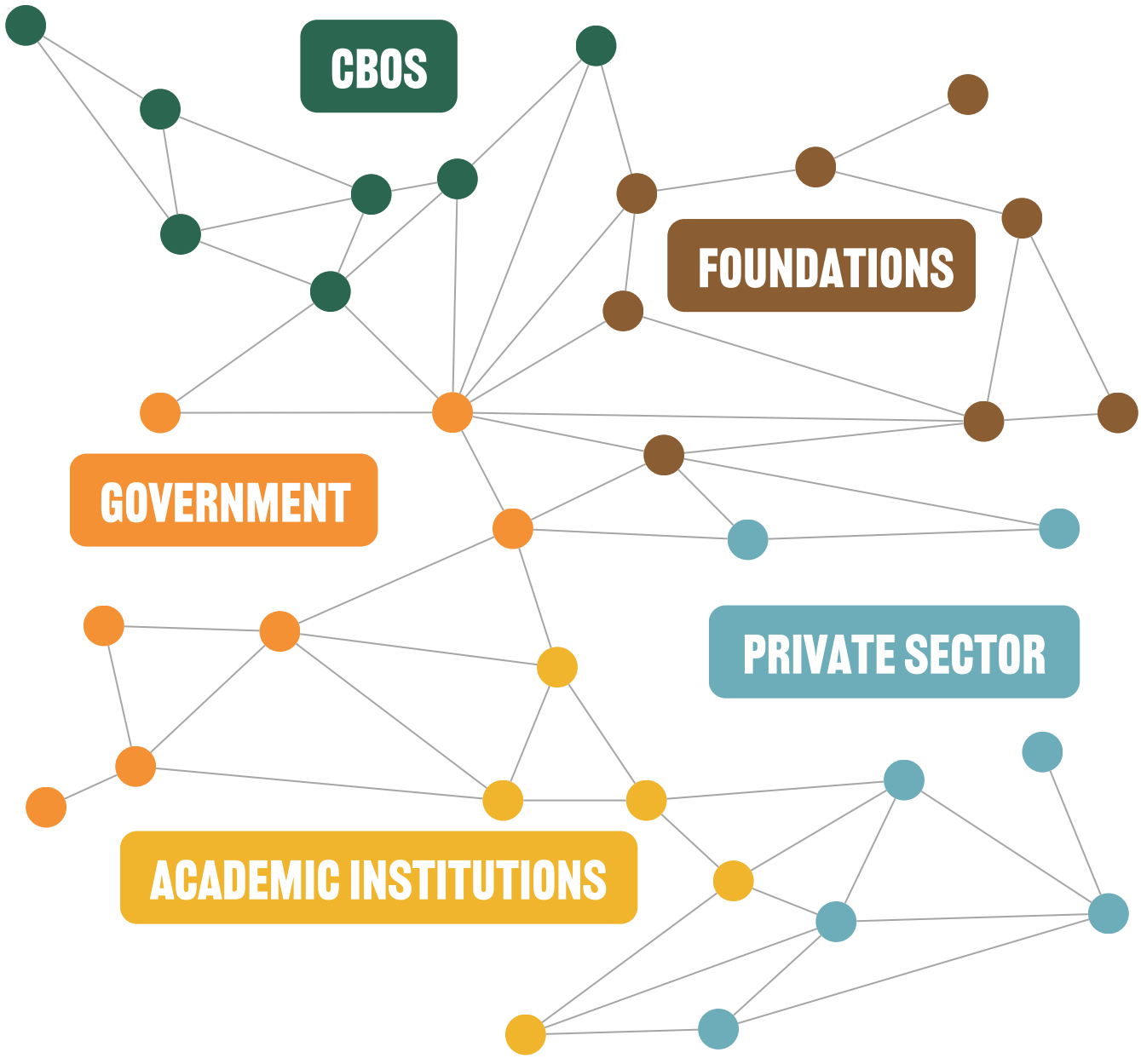
Local Food System	A network of food production and distribution that focuses on sourcing food from within a specific geographic area, promoting sustainability and community resilience.	USDA
Macronutrients	Nutrients required in larger amounts for energy and bodily functions, including carbohydrates, proteins, and fats.	WHO
Nutrient-Dense Foods	Foods that provide a high amount of nutrients (vitamins, minerals, etc.) relative to their calorie content, such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and legumes.	USDA
Nutrition Insecurity	A condition where individuals or households have insufficient access to or consumption of healthy, nutritious foods, often leading to poor health outcomes.	FAO
Sustainable Food System	A food system that is ecologically sound, economically viable, and socially responsible, ensuring food security for current and future generations while minimizing environmental impact.	FAO
Ultra-Processed Foods	Highly industrialized food products that typically contain additives and preservatives, often low in nutrients and high in sugars, fats, and salt, associated with negative health outcomes.	WHO
Urban Agriculture	The practice of cultivating, processing, and distributing food in urban areas, contributing to local food systems and promoting community engagement.	FAO

APPENDIX D:

NETWORK ORGANIZATION LIST

For full list of partners please see link here

SOCIAL NETWORK OF STAKEHOLDERS



APPENDIX D:
SOURCES

DATATABLE SOURCES

1 UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, California Health Interview Survey, 2011, 2015, 2017, 2023
2 LA County Key Indicators of Health, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, 2011, 2016, 2018, 2024
3 California Department of Public Social Services, 2013, 2014, 2017, 2024
4 Los Angeles Department of Public Social Services, 2012, 2015, 2019, 2024
5 National Center for Educational Statistics, California Department of Education, 2012, 2014, 2017, 2023
6 California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, 2008-10, 2010-12, 2014-16, 2018-2020
7 NASS Census of Agriculture, 2007, 2012, 2017, 2022
8 Cultivate LA + UCANR, 2013, 2016, 2021
9 Ecology Center 2019, 2024
10 California Department of Pesticide Regulation, 2011, 2014, 2017, 2021
11 LA Sanitation, 2019, 2024
12 CalRecycle Disposal-Facility-Based Characterization of Solid Waste in California, 2014, 2021,2024
13 Food Finders Annual Report, 2013, 2015, 2023
14 Food Forward Annual Report, 2013, 2015, 2018, 2023
15 California EPA Air Resources Board, 2010, 2013, 2019, 2021
16 Occupational Employment Statistics Survey, 2012, 2015, 2018, 2023
17 NASS Census of Agriculture, 2007, 2012, 2017, 2022
18 California Department of Pesticide Regulation, 2010, 2013, 2016, 2021
19 Current Population Survey, 2011, 2014, 2023
20 US Census: County Business Patterns, 2011, 2015, 2016, 2022
21 UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, California Health Interview Survey, 2011, 2015, 2017, 2023
22 Cultivate LA + UCANR, 2013, 2016, 2021
23 Ecology Center 2019, 2024
24 WIC Data LA County, 2025

REPORT SOURCES

1 2020 LAFPC Dashboard
https://static1.squarespace.com/static/647863710ebec7148b64e18d/t/64bcb1fc0df4aa3432a75273/1690087941839/2020+Food+System+Dashboard.pdf2

2 Racial Equity Plan
https://ceo.lacounty.gov/ardi/racial-equity-strategic-plan/

3 USC Food Insecurity Report
https://publicexchange.usc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/FoodInsecurityinLACounty_ResearchBrief_October2024_Final.pdf

4 LA County Dept of Mental Health, Service Planning Area
https://dmh.lacounty.gov/about/service-areas/

THANK YOU

FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT OF

OUR WORK

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