

Testimony of Kate MacKenzie, Executive Director
Mayor's Office of Food Policy
Before the New York City Council Committee on Contracts, Economic Development, &
Oversight and Investigations
June 27, 2022

Good Food Purchasing Program

Good morning, Chair Farias, Chair Won, and Chair Brewer and members of the Economic Development, Contracts and Oversight and Investigations Committees. My name is Kate MacKenzie, and I am the Executive Director of the Mayor's Office of Food Policy (MOFP). Joining me today are my colleagues from Mayor's Office of Contract Services (MOCS) and Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS).

Thank you for inviting me here today to talk about our Good Food Purchasing Program. In 2017, the City began exploring the National Good Food Purchasing Program, a program created by the Center for Good Food Purchasing ("the Center"). That program sets specific standards around five values areas: nutrition, local economies, animal welfare, valued and fair workforce, and environmental sustainability. As one of the country's largest institutional food purchasers, second only to the military, it makes sense to align our purchases with the Administration's priorities and values.

The City sought to learn more about where our food comes from and how it is produced so it could make more informed choices -- for example, about ways to increase participation of New York State and Minority- and Women- Owned Business Enterprises (M/WBE) vendors. Health + Hospitals (H+H) was the first City affiliated entity to engage with the Center followed by the Department of Education (DOE). These entities shared their available procurement data with the Center for Good Food Purchasing for analysis.

In 2019, when I assumed this position, additional City agencies were included into this work: the Administration for Children's Services, the Department of Correction, the Department for Homeless Services, and the Human Resources Administration. The Department for the Aging also began collecting data, but as its food procurement are conducted via sub-contractors and Human Service Contracts, this proved especially challenging. Each agency began the process of asking its vendors for detailed information about the food they provide to the City. While one might think that getting information about the origin and methods of production of the food, we purchase would be straightforward, it is not -- especially because vendors had no requirement to report this information to the City.

Since the establishment of nutrition standards by the City in 2008, the City has required vendor adherence to those standards. Vendors have become accustomed to sharing comprehensive nutritional information with the City at the time of contract award, and throughout the duration of the contract. Our efforts to obtain this detailed information about where the food was coming from were extensive yet did not yield complete results. The City of New York is not unique in that way, for the entire U.S. food system is complex and opaque. It is unfortunately the norm, and something that the City is on a path to shifting.

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In addition to expanding the number of agencies that participated in data collection, MOFP began convening monthly meetings with agencies in November 2019. The purpose of these meetings was to build understanding and awareness of the Good Food Purchasing values and how agencies could support them with their food purchases. At the same time, we also began regularly meeting with the Law Department to build support for the work. With DCAS, we hosted a vendor expo to highlight opportunities for working with M/WBE businesses. MOFP secured philanthropic dollars that resulted in a formal contract with the Center for Good Food Purchasing to do the agency assessments and the overall vendor analysis. We also contracted with Karen Karp & Partners (KK&P) to support agencies and develop agency action plans.

And, in March of 2020, most City programs paused their meal programs as we knew them as a result of the pandemic. In February 2021, the City released its first ever 10-year food policy plan, Food Forward NYC, pursuant to Local Law 40 of 2020, which included knowledge learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and incorporated an integrated approach to the Good Food Purchasing Program. The Food Forward NYC report demonstrated the role of Good Food Purchasing in addressing five goals outlined in that report. MOFP also created a specific City-wide Good Food Purchasing strategy and resumed our efforts with City agencies with a renewed energy and very real food supply chain experiences. MOFP committed to unprecedented transparency, and in September of 2021, this information was shared on our website. To our knowledge, no other City has shared this level of information.

We also released raw data on our food purchases, including prices, to the extent legally possible, and intend to continue doing so on an annual basis. From the extensive engagement the City has conducted with stakeholders across the food system, we learned that a major barrier to the participation of small vendors is the lack of understanding that institutional food contracts look very different from individual food service. So, we shared this information to enable small food vendors to understand what institutional demand looks like: the type of foods needed, and the amount of each food type.

Further, in October 2021, New York City became the first U.S. city to sign the Cool Food Pledge, in which signatories seek to collectively reduce the climate impact of food served by 25% by 2030. Sharing this information aims to help food purchasers, consumers, advocates, and the public more broadly understand the impact of food choices and to encourage the purchase of more climate-friendly food options. As part of signing onto this Pledge, the City provided with definitive metrics and objective data on our food-related carbon emissions.

In February 2022, Mayor Adams formalized the City's commitment to Good Food Purchasing by issuing Executive Order 8, "Commitment to Health and Nutrition: Food Standards and Good Food Purchasing." This Executive Order directs all agencies that procure and serve food to participate in Good Food Purchasing and emphasizes data collection and transparency as the backbone of the program's implementation.

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In April of this year, MOFP launched the City's first interactive food and climate dashboard, which includes information regarding the carbon footprint of the City's food purchases. The dashboard was developed with input from key stakeholders, and it utilizes food purchase data from Fiscal Year 2019. This dashboard will be updated annually.

Throughout this journey, MOFP has learned many things.

First, nearly every agency procures food differently. The types of food, the length of the contract, and the type of contract vary depending on the scope and services needed. Many City agencies adhere to Federal and State grant requirements that restrict what they can purchase. The recipients of food range from young kids to older adults, and serving sizes also vary. In some cases, we buy specific commodities -- like apples -- and in other cases, we buy complete and prepared meals. Every agency procures and serves food differently, so we need to tailor the approach to their needs. This is reflected in the drafting and execution of their contracts and in working with the agency staff who are responsible for developing menus based on the food that is procured pursuant to those contracts. Simply stated, it's not a "one-size fits- all" program. Contracts average about three years, which affects the cadence with which any policy changes is reflected in the text of active contracts. Food contracts alone do not provide many opportunities to affect timely change. We are also mapping the process of solicitation development and implementation for each agency in order to create robust interagency support and accountability. This is vital for timely action on contracting and data collection.

Second, robust and complete data from vendors is essential. This is why Executive Order 8 is so important. For each new food contract direct with vendors, we can require our data template to be completed annually.

We have an informed understanding of the complex and overlapping state and federal legal frameworks that govern the City's purchasing of food. We are committed to pursuing a food purchasing program that is bold and impactful, but any program that the City pursues must be aligned with state and federal law.

We know that agency staff want to advance this initiative. They want to learn and exchange ideas. And we need programmatic opportunities in addition to contractual opportunities for them to do so. City agency staff are the front line of this work. Whether it is nutritionists, program managers, operational staff, chefs, or procurement staff, they are doing the vast majority of the work to implement the program. They also are those coordinating annual data collection from food vendors and holding them accountable to our data collection standards. As we develop and set new performance metrics connected to the five value areas, they will be in charge of working with support from MOFP and their agency towards those goals. They also have the responsibility of promoting inter-agency communications, including sharing best practices, innovative ideas and challenges common to other agencies.

We are ensuring the City's Good Food Purchasing initiative has the greatest possible impact by

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aligning its performance measure framework with other Citywide initiatives. We are also designing a program that works for New Yorkers, which means making sure what we do is understandable to the public. This will promote greater transparency in government but is also critical to another goal of the administration – removing barriers to public engagement in government decision making.

The public-facing dashboard is an important initial step in this process. Through this dashboard, everyone has the opportunity to learn what we buy as a city, and on an agency-by-agency basis.

To achieve faster rates of improvement, we are looking for opportunities for change within existing contracts, such as menu changes, in addition to contractual changes. The Mayor's Office of Food Policy is working with Public Work Partners, a local consulting firm, on identifying opportunities to make it easier for small food vendors, particularly New York State and M/WBE vendors, to do business with the City. My colleagues at the Mayor's Office of Contract Services have also made it a priority to streamline the procurement process and make it simpler for vendors to do business with the City. In partnership with the City Council, they are focused on cutting red tape, bringing visibility for all parties, and updating the regulatory framework to match the new, digital system for procurement.

The Mayor's Office of Food Policy is committed to the success of this work. We will continue to work with the Law Department and agency procurement officers to develop policy pathways for Good Food Purchasing implementation. We will continually develop strategies to support implementation such as the use of data templates, product catalogs, obtaining guidance on solicitations, and helping to connect potential vendors and agencies. We will also work to develop accountability mechanisms by developing performance metrics around process and data completion as well as of course specific program goals. And, as I have stated a number of times, sharing all information we obtain and learn is a priority.

Good Food Purchasing is essential for achieving Mayor Adams' food policy goals for more nutritious, delicious, and plant-powered options. All New Yorkers deserve to know where their food comes from, and we are committed to using the power of procurement to impact our city's and our planet's health. We look forward to continuing to work closely with City Council, the New York Good Food Purchasing Coalition, advocates, businesses, and New York City residents on the implementation of this program.



Asian American Federation

Testimony to the New York City Council
Committee on Contracts
June 27th 2022

Written Testimony

I want to thank Chairs Won, Farias and Brewer and the Council Members of the Committees for holding this hearing and giving the Asian American Federation (AAF) the opportunity to testify on the language access needs of our community. My name is Ravi Reddi, and I am the Associate Director of Advocacy and Policy at AAF, where we proudly represent the collective voice of more than 70 member nonprofits serving 1.5 million Asian New Yorkers.

Since 2010, the Asian population in New York City has increased 34%, growing from over 1.1 million in 2010 to over 1.5 million in 2020, making up 17.3% of our city's total population. Overwhelmingly, Asian New Yorkers are immigrants, with two out of three in the city being foreign-born. Of those Asian immigrants, 47% arrived in 2010 or after. Additionally, language barriers remain high among Asian New Yorkers. Overall, 48% of Asians have limited English proficiency in New York City, compared to a citywide rate of 23%.

As we'll discuss today, language access is essential in the vastly diverse city of New York, and with legislation like Intro 136-A introduced by Chair Won, more can be done to reach the LEP communities of our city and prioritize them in city contracting processes. But first, thank you for advocating on our community's behalf for the inclusion of funding in this year's City Budget for a community interpreter bank and worker-owned language co-ops for our communities. With these proposals, we will see the payoff in multiple ways: from providing employment opportunities in our immigrant communities, to relieving strains on existing CBO capacity to provide interpretation, to addressing the serious gap in quality language interpretation for the communities that need it the most.

When it comes to immigration, Asian communities continue to be unable to navigate complex citizenship processes that are language limited. More than at any other time, immigration policies are in such a state of flux that our communities will need sustained in-language engagement to stay abreast of changing policies, processes, and documents. As we consistently note, good policies mean nothing if the people they're meant to help don't know about them.

And with our community in the midst of a mental health crisis, mental health service delivery in the city's most diverse community is notoriously difficult but very urgent. More than 20 Asian ethnic groups are represented within our city, speaking dozens of languages. Aside from the logistics of mental health service delivery in a crisis, cultural stigma around mental health adds an additional layer of service delivery complexity. The shortage of linguistically and culturally competent mental health practitioners, which is particularly serious in areas of specialty, highlights the urgency to address these gaps and ensure that our community has equal access to mental health services that cater to their unique needs.



Asian American Federation

And one thing is clear when it comes to assisting our small businesses in crisis– even when a service is much needed, it is crucial to provide both outreach and one-on-one support to ensure LEP immigrant business owners can access it.

We are glad the latest version of Intro 136 includes “interpretation” within its ambit, as our community deals not just with the translation of written materials, but more often with verbal interpretation services. As Stephanie mentioned, we would like to see efforts aimed at quality control, including accreditation efforts and a focus on existing capacity within our communities. Our community members, and the organizations that serve them, should be the first called upon and supported to provide translation and interpretation assistance.

In our work and the work of our member and partner organizations, we are consistently reminded that much of the language accessibility issues our community is grappling with relate to issues of capacity. Our communities are often the last to know about key information, and the pandemic has demonstrated that there is still much work to be done in making sure our communities, many of whom are our frontline workers, benefit from the work of our city agencies.

Legislation like Intro 136-A, and proposals like the community interpreter bank and worker co-ops, are steps in exactly that direction and we look forward to working with you to support our community members and the CBOs that so expertly serve them.



THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS®

Michelle Villagomez
NYC Legislative Senior Director

American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

*Hearing before the New York City Council's Committee on Economic Development
Intro. 0517: Creating a Good Food Purchasing Program*

June 27, 2022

Good afternoon. I am Michelle Villagomez, New York City Legislative Senior Director for the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA). On behalf of the ASPCA and nearly 200,000 New York City supporters, we are pleased to be here to testify in support of Int. 0517, which would create a Good Food Purchasing Program (GFPP) in New York City.

The ASPCA is a national partner to the GFPP, which provides a metric based, flexible framework to encourage large institutions to direct their buying power toward five core values: local economies, environmental sustainability, valued workforce, animal welfare and nutrition. We played an integral role in crafting its animal welfare standards, and we support efforts around the country to incorporate GFPP principals into municipal and institutional food sourcing practices. The ASPCA has prioritized the GFPP given the significant potential values-based food procurement has to improve the lives of the nearly 10 billion land animals raised for meat, dairy and eggs in the United States each year. The GFPP offers a practical alternative to many of the welfare problems plaguing animals in today's conventional "factory farming" model, where animals are forced to endure conditions that are cruel and unnatural, such as highly intensive rearing—for example, being packed in housing facilities by the tens of thousands or immobilized in cages and crates. Additionally, there is little to no welfare oversight on most farms – there is no scheme in place for on-site inspections and auditing, which the GFPP aims to add back into the food system.

Public and consumer sentiment has increasingly turned against these practices in favor of higher-welfare products. Public institutions—including schools—are wonderfully positioned to take up this call, serving as crucial partners in building a new and more humane food system. As such, we've seen wide-spread adoption of institutional values-based food procurement. GFPP is being implemented by municipal governments and school districts across the country, including major cities like Los Angeles and Chicago, representing nearly \$1 billion in food spend.

The GFPP offers two avenues for improving animal welfare: institutions may opt to direct a percentage of their food dollars toward animal welfare-certified products, whose meaningfully higher standards are verified by independent on-farm audits; they can reduce their total volume of meat, and eggs purchased by supplementing with plant-based alternatives. The most successful institutions will likely combine these strategies. If the GFPP is enacted in New York City, either option will promote significant and critically needed improvements for animals in our food system while helping to build a robust regional food system that supports farmers producing food more humanely, sustainably and fairly.

The ASPCA and the vast majority of New Yorkers believe all animals deserve respectful and compassionate treatment. The GFPP offers cities the opportunity to build on these sentiments by using their purchasing power to commit to standards that impact food production all the way down the line, including how animals are raised. In adopting this forward-thinking program for New York City's public institutions, you have the opportunity to set a high standard not just for food, but for underlying values like the

thoughtful treatment of people, the planet and animals. The GFPP offers a unique opportunity to align social values with something as tangible as meals served each day, and to see real impact.

With all of this in mind, the ASPCA respectfully asks the City Council to send an important message that food should not only be healthy, sustainable and fair but also ensure compassionate treatment of farm animals. We thank you for your time and consideration of both Int. 0517, and our coalition's suggested amendments to strengthen the bill.

Thank you.



**Testimony of City Harvest
Before the New York City Council Committees on Oversight and Investigations, Economic
Development and Contracts**

Hybrid Hearing on A Good Food Purchasing Program for Citywide Food Procurement

June 27, 2022

Thank you, Chairpersons Gale Brewer, Julie Won, Amanda Farias and Speaker Adrienne Adams, for holding today's Hybrid Hearing on *Developing A Good Food Purchasing Program for Citywide Food Procurement & Developing Preferred Vendor Lists for Community-Based Translation Services*. My name is Keith Carr, and I am the Senior Manager of Policy and Government Relations at City Harvest, New York's largest and longest operating food rescue organization.

Since the start of the pandemic, City Harvest has distributed more than 270 million pounds of food, mostly fresh produce, to a network of over 400 food pantries and soup kitchens. This year, City Harvest will rescue and deliver 75 million pounds of food—more than 20% higher than pre-pandemic levels—for New Yorkers in need. We expect this high level of need to persist through at least 2025.

Our citywide network of food distribution programs serves the 2.4 million New Yorkers who lack the income to afford the cost of food, housing, transportation, child care, and medical expenses in our city. Over 80% of these New Yorkers are BIPOC families. Food insecurity is a clear racial equity issue

As an organization that has tirelessly fought to keep food on the plate of millions of New Yorkers for nearly four decades, we know far too well that charitable food programs cannot end hunger without the foundation of effective public policy.

Beyond our emergency food operations, City Harvest also partners with many of the champions testifying today who have collectively advocated to improve New York City's food system. City Harvest currently participates in Community Food Advocates (CFA) and the CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute's Good Food Purchasing Program Coalition as a member of the Local Economies Work Group and the Policy Strategy Committee. The coalition believes that the city can effectively leverage its purchasing power to source local, sustainable, and healthy food with care for the workers, land, and animals involved in the food procurement process. The success of GFPP is critical for strengthening racial equity and transparency throughout the food supply chain, and in turn, building access to healthy foods for students, patients, our seniors, and other populations who rely on institutions for their daily meals.

Outside of emergency food providers, many of the families that we serve also rely on schools and senior centers as a source of food to meet their daily nutritional needs. Sadly, they, as well as those in our hospitals and incarcerated individuals, have no say as to what goes on their plate, where it comes from, how it was grown, who prepared it, or its nutritional quality.

As New York continues to contend with the economic fallout of the pandemic, food insecurity remains a daily reality for millions of New Yorkers. City Harvest believes that everyone should have access to fresh, nutritious food. The Good Food Purchasing Program's values-based procurement process stimulates local economies, prioritizes healthy nutritious standards, and supports food workers' rights, environment justice, and the humane treatment of animals.

A successful Good Food Purchasing Program will bring everyone to the table and provide opportunities and resources for traditionally marginalized communities—especially Black communities, women, indigenous communities, local and regional small farmers, and family farmers. These opportunities will stimulate and promote job creation and community economic development.

Food access is a basic part of every person's daily survival. Our policies should not deter or frustrate individual healthy choices. To truly lift individuals out of poverty and hunger and improve community health, it is imperative that we shift the paradigm toward food justice. A Good Food Purchasing Program for NYC will strengthen personal and public health, improve environmental sustainability, generate good jobs, and create fewer barriers to healthy food access in our communities.

In conclusion, we thank the Committees for holding this vital hybrid hearing. City Harvest will remain vigilant in our work to provide food for families today, and in our advocacy for legislation that builds resiliency beyond the pandemic. We also remain committed to working with you on supportive budget efforts and policy solutions that help New Yorkers become more food secure.

Keith Carr, Senior Manager, Policy and Government Relations

Kcarr@cityharvest.org - -



Ribka Getachew | Community Food Advocates

Director of the New York Good Food Purchasing Program Campaign

Testimony in Support of Int. 0517-2022, Creating a Good Food Purchasing Program

NYC Council Hearing | Committee on Contracts Jointly with the Committee on Economic Development and the Committee on Oversight and Investigations

June 27, 2022

Madame Speaker Adams, Chairperson Farías, Chairperson Won, Chairperson Brewer, and members of the committees, thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is Ribka Getachew and I am the Director of the New York City Good Food Purchasing Program (GFPP) Campaign at Community Food Advocates. In my position, I have worked closely with our City and with partners around the country who are actively implementing the Good Food Purchasing Program and that is why I am here today to testify in **support of Int. 0517-2022**, a bill which seeks to further codify the City's commitment to the Good Food Purchasing Program.

The **Good Food Purchasing Program** is the first procurement tool of its kind that has been utilized in cities around the United States. It provides a comprehensive set of tools, technical support, and resources to support public institutions in shifting toward a values-based procurement model. Quite simply, this Program **aims to, on one hand, hold large food vendors accountable to better practices, while also ensuring that small and historically marginalized vendors (such as Black, Indigenous & POC farmers and food producers) have more opportunities to contract with our public agencies.**

Working in close partnership with the Food Chain Workers Alliance, CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute, and the Center for Good Food Purchasing, we at Community Food Advocates have been building a [robust coalition](#) of over 30 local and national food system experts that align with the 5 value areas that serve as the pillars of the Good Food Purchasing Program: **Local Economies, Valued Workforce, Animal Welfare, Nutrition, and Environmental Sustainability**. Many of these phenomenal experts are lending their support to this bill, both via verbal and/or written testimony, today.

New York City serves approximately 230 million meals/year across its public, food-serving agencies and they collectively spend about half a billion dollars annually on food. These

agencies serve some of our most vulnerable and food insecure populations, including but not limited to, senior citizens, students, those who are unhoused, incarcerated individuals, and those under medical care. This is why I think of the **Good Food Purchasing Program** as a tool that, in its essence, **seeks to amplify the power of these communities who have historically had the least amount of say in determining their food realities.** We have the power to change this.

Considering our City's tremendous purchasing power, New York City is especially primed and uniquely positioned to become a clear leader on Good Food Purchasing in the country, taking a firm stance in declaring that **good food relies on a values-driven food system: one that is ecologically and economically viable, sustainable, truly racially just and socially responsible, humane, safe, and teeming with nutritious and culturally relevant foods.**

Mayor Adams' has taken a clear stance on the Good Food Purchasing Program by signing Executive Order #8 in February 2022. It is important to lift up the work of the Mayor's Office of Food Policy and the City agencies that have already undergone the Good Food Purchasing Program baseline reporting and action planning.

We also recognize that the City Council codifying the Good Food Purchasing Program via Int. 0517 is instrumental to the longevity and durability of the City's commitment to GFPP, regardless of a change in leadership. The NYC Good Food Purchasing Coalition has been leveraging our expertise to work with the Administration and City Council to advance GFPP. We look forward to continuing to work with the City Council to ensure that we codify the strongest and most substantive policy, and our ongoing work with the Mayor's Office of Food Policy to support the most effective implementation of GFPP. Purchasing Program. We thank Speaker Adams and all of the bill sponsors for their leadership on Introduction #0517-2022.

Please find included as part of this testimony package both an information sheet developed by the NYC Good Food Purchasing Program Coalition as well as a brief overview on the 5 GFPP value areas. I hope you'll all join us in the Good Food Movement.

Sincerely,

Ribka Getachew

Director of the New York Good Food Purchasing Program Campaign at Community Food Advocates



Overview | New York City Good Food Purchasing Policy Campaign

Community Food Advocates (CFA) is a policy, advocacy and organizing nonprofit that fights for high-impact, far-reaching public policy solutions to address poverty and hunger in New York City. Access to nutritious food is a basic income and food equity issue and is essential in ensuring the well-being of communities. To that end, we work to make the resources of government, at all levels, benefit the most economically marginalized people.

Our approach is unique: we build creative, strategic coalitions, guided by solid policy and budget analysis, and fueled by the full partnership and engagement of the people most directly affected by the issues. This strategy achieves real change through high-impact policies that lead to long-term solutions to causes of the City's food access problems.

Since 2016, **Community Food Advocates (CFA)**, **Food Chain Workers Alliance (FCWA)**, **City University of New York (CUNY) Urban Food Policy Institute**, and the **Center for Good Food Purchasing** have been leading the **NYC Good Food Purchasing Program (GFPP) Campaign**. These 4 core partners share a commitment to equity for underserved New Yorkers and are building a broad, strategic **coalition of over 30 grassroots food equity, environmental justice, labor, and animal welfare organizations; advocates; food growers and vendors; and other partners to adopt a Good Food Purchasing Policy in NYC.**

GFPP is designed to do for the food system what LEED certification did for energy efficiency in buildings. It provides a metric-based, flexible framework that encourages public agencies to direct their buying power toward five core values – **Local Economies, Valued Workforce, Nutrition, Environmental Sustainability, and Animal Welfare** – and is the first procurement model to support these food system values in equal measure.



HIGHLIGHT – NEW YORK CITY:

New York City is in a unique position to implement the Good Food Purchasing Program given its tremendous procurement power (amounting to **half a billion dollars spent annually by NYC's 11 food procuring agencies**) but also the far-reaching impact to consumers of food that the agencies reach. More specifically, the NYC-GFPP Campaign is focused on ensuring that all agencies that procure and serve food be mandated to transform their food procurement practices. **NYC agencies serve approximately 230 million meals annually** to the City's most economically vulnerable populations, including students, seniors, homeless persons, incarcerated individuals and patients in NYC's public hospitals.

NYC GOOD FOOD PURCHASING PROGRAM COALITION: The NYC-GFPP Coalition is comprised of over 30 local and national food system experts who represent the five GFPP values categories. These coalition members are committed to:

- collaborating to identify opportunities and strategies for implementing GFPP in NYC
- providing technical expertise and advice to inform stretch goals that extend beyond the baseline standards, with consideration of New York City specific needs
- engage networks in campaign actions
- building out the most effective policy that would support the City through the implementation of the GFPP and holding the city accountable for any GFPP commitments it makes
- collaborating with the public NYC food purchasing and serving agencies as they move through the process of implementing the GFPP

NEW YORK CITY AGENCIES: In 2016, the NYC GFPP core partners met with the Director of the Mayor’s Office of Food Policy (MOFP) to introduce GFPP. After a few meetings the MOFP gathered agency procurement leads to engage them and build interest in GFPP. As a result, the MOFP contracted with the Center for Good Food Purchasing to do baseline assessments for the Department of Education, NYC Health and Hospital Corporation and the agencies who purchase food under the Department of Citywide and Administrative Services.

BACKGROUND – LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY: While we remain enthusiastic by Mayor Adams Executive Order 8 and agency enthusiasm to the implementation of GFPP, to ensure the longevity and durability of the NYC’s commitment to NYC-GFPP must be codified into law. The NYC-GFPP Coalition has been working with City Council since 2019 to develop a bill to ensure NYC commitment to GFPP through legislation. Laying the groundwork for our progress today, in August 2019 a first version of the bill, Intro 1660, was introduced in City Council.

This work has culminated in Speaker Adams’ introduction of [Int. 0517-2022](#) on June 16th, 2022, along with Co-sponsors Amanda Farías, Julie Won, Tiffany Cabán, Shahana K. Hanif, Shaun Abreu, Gale A. Brewer, Sandra Ung, Jennifer Gutiérrez, Nantasha M. Williams, and Alexa Avilés.

NYC-GFPP AREAS OF WORK:

- Coalition building on the city and state levels
- Legislative work on the city and state levels
- Deep learning on the state level about the opportunities and challenges to a statewide GFPP
- Education of potential partners about the GFPP program
- Working with the Mayor’s Office of Food Policy and municipal food-serving agencies to support the implementation of GFPP
- Monitoring NYC and State implementation of GFPP



TRANSFORMING THE WAY PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS PURCHASE FOOD

to create a transparent and equitable food system built on principles of social justice and racial equity and rooted in five core values: local economies, health, valued workforce, animal welfare, and environmental sustainability.



ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Source from producers that employ sustainable production systems to reduce or eliminate synthetic pesticides and fertilizers; avoid the use of hormones, routine antibiotics, and genetic engineering; conserve and regenerate soil and water; protect and enhance wildlife habitats and biodiversity; and reduce on-farm energy and water consumption, food waste, and greenhouse gas emissions. Reduce menu items that have high carbon and water footprints using strategies such as plant-forward menus that feature smaller portions of animal proteins in a supporting role.



NUTRITION

Promote health and well-being by offering generous portions of vegetables, fruit, whole grains, and minimally processed foods, while reducing salt, added sugars, saturated fats, and red meat consumption and eliminating artificial additives.

Improve equity, affordability, accessibility, and consumption of high quality, culturally relevant good food in all communities.



LOCAL ECONOMIES

Support diverse, family and cooperatively owned, small and mid-sized agricultural and food processing operations within the local area or region.



VALUED WORKFORCE

Source from producers and vendors that provide safe and healthy working conditions and fair compensation for all food chain workers and producers from production to consumption.



ANIMAL WELFARE

Source from producers that provide healthy and humane conditions for farm animals.

HOW IT WORKS



BASILINE STANDARD

Each of the five value categories has a baseline standard. To become a Good Food Provider, an institution must meet at least the baseline in each of the five values.

CERTIFICATION-BASED

Standards are based on third party certifications that have been identified as meaningful and ranked by national experts in each category.

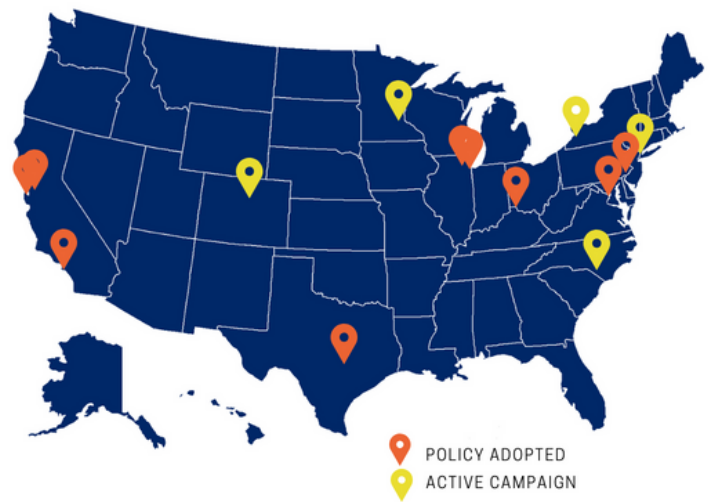
FLEXIBLE, TIERED POINT SYSTEM

More points are awarded for achievement at higher levels in each category, allowing institutions to raise their score by emphasizing their high priority categories.

These cities are on their way to shifting over \$895 million in public food dollars to vendors that reflect the Good Food Purchasing values.

As of May 2019, the Good Food Purchasing Program has been adopted by the City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles Unified School District, San Francisco Unified School District, Oakland Unified School District, Chicago Public Schools, Chicago Park District, the City of Chicago, Cook County, Illinois, Washington D.C. Public Schools, Cincinnati Public Schools, Austin Independent School District, and the City of Boston, including Boston Public Schools.

Local campaigns to support Program expansion are currently active in: Buffalo, Denver, Minneapolis/St. Paul, and New York City. There is growing interest in at least a dozen more cities across the country.



IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS FROM LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT:



ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTS

- **1 billion gallons of water saved annually**
- Decreased overall meat purchasing, **reduced carbon footprint by 22%** as a result



GOOD JOB CREATION

- **220 new well-paying food chain jobs** created in Los Angeles County, including food processing, manufacturing and distribution
- **320 workers are now covered by union contracts** with higher wages, better health benefits, and stronger workplace protections

LOCAL PRODUCE

- **20%** of the school district purchasing toward local food; directing **\$30 million annually** toward buying local



HEALTH & NUTRITION

- **Schools changed recipes to be healthier and use sustainable ingredients**, including low-sodium bread without high fructose corn syrup made from 100% sustainable, local wheat



LESS MEAT, BETTER MEAT

- Commitment to source **100% antibiotic-free chicken** and secured a **\$50 million contract** to help that happen

GOODFOODCITIES.ORG
GOODFOODPURCHASING.ORG

SEE WHERE ACTIVE CAMPAIGNS ARE HAPPENING AND GET INVOLVED LOCALLY
LEARN MORE ABOUT THE GOOD FOOD PURCHASING PROGRAM

Comments of the CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute before the
Committee on Contracts, Committee on Economic Development, and Committee on Oversight and
Investigations

On Int. No. 517-2022, a bill to create a Good Food Purchasing Program for NYC

June 27th 2022

Good afternoon Council Members. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Craig Willingham and I am the Managing Director of the CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute, a research and action center based at the CUNY Graduate School of Public Health and Health Policy. Our work addresses food labor, food security and nutrition, and healthy and just regional food systems, issues that are goals of the Good Food Purchasing Program.

Following the development of its own food policy strategies, in 2020 the City Council passed legislation requiring the creation of the City's first food plan. The Council's legislation was a substantive commitment to addressing many of the serious food related problems that affect New York City. These include high levels of food insecurity and diet-related diseases, lack of access to healthy and affordable food for many New Yorkers, negative climate impacts from our food system, food waste, low wages and limited benefits for the city's food workforce, and persistent racial/ethnic disparities in all food outcomes. The resulting plan, published in 2021, Food Forward NYC: A 10-Year Food Policy Plan, is an example of how the City Council has played a vital role in advancing food planning and policy. Moreover, several key elements of the plan focus on the City's commitment to a values-based food procurement approach and more specifically to using the Good Food Purchasing Program's (GFPP) framework.

Today's hearing is meant to explore codifying, through legislation, the City's commitment to using the GFPP framework for citywide food procurement, a move that has the potential to enable New York City to make significant progress in reducing the inequitable use of public dollars to purchase the City's food. As one of the signatories of the International Milan Urban Food Policy Pact and the Cool Food Pledge, New York City has demonstrated that it has a unique opportunity – and responsibility -- to lead by example when it comes to growing urban food equity. We support Int. No. 517-2022 and want to highlight key factors that we believe the Council should consider as it seeks to improve New York City's approach to food procurement.

The recommendations we discuss here are based on a report researched and written by our Institute on behalf of the NYC GFPP Coalition. The Coalition is a collection of local stakeholders invested in the GFPP's five value categories which includes environmental sustainability, local economies, nutrition, valued workforce, and animal welfare. Our Institute comprehensively assessed the synergistic and cumulative impact of the GFPP in cities around the country and through that work derived recommendations for New York City. Our research found a variety of shared traits among cities that have adopted the GFPP, including existing programs aligned with the GFPP's values, champions and/or political allies within government,

and close coordination with the Center for Good Food Purchasing. These are all elements currently present in New York City and passing Int. No. 517-2022 would build on that strong foundation and set the city on a path for future success in transforming the way it procures food.

Furthermore, one of our other reports, Food Policy in New York City Since 2008: Lessons for the Next Decade, showed that the flurry of food policy activity between 2008 and 2018 set the stage for the sorts of procurement changes proposed in this bill, which will help continue New York City's legacy as a leader in food policy. In that report we looked at progress made on policies that: improve nutritional well-being; promote food security; create food systems that support economic & community development; ensure sustainable food systems, support food workers; and strengthen food governance and food democracy. Each of these areas align closely with the five GFPP value categories, so that passing Int. No. 517-2022 would reinforce and build upon previous successes. Additionally, we found that not only is there a precedent in place for food policy action on procurement, but New York is uniquely positioned to use its size and spending power to change the food system for the greater good.

To ensure the successful implementation of Int. No. 517-2022 we recommend the following supplemental actions:

1. The city should prioritize building partnerships with organizations invested in the five GFPP value categories to help provide oversight and input to ensure that the policy is making substantive progress in changing procurement practices for the better.
2. Provide opportunities for input from City institutions on the implementation of this policy to identify specific strategies for better aligning with existing and related policies.
3. Ensure that prospective vendors have all the information needed to respond to GFPP requirements and provide resources to support their transition from current procurement practices towards a values-based procurement approach.
4. Make clear that the City's meaningful progress on each of the GFPP's five value categories should be the goal, not a piecemeal implementation that organically defaults to unequal progress within categories (e.g. success on local economy metrics but failure on animal welfare)
5. Develop a tracking system to monitor procurement to continually assess alignment with values-based purchasing models.
6. Explore the possibility of a centralized institutional food procurement system.

Some of these steps could be incorporated as requirements for the implementing agencies to carry out and report progress on to the City Council. Moving forward, it will be critical for the advisory board established by Int. No. 517 to assess the opportunities and challenges that emerge once the city formally embraces the GFPP approach. This will involve documenting and developing strategies for overcoming barriers, which includes fragmented or incomplete access to government procurement contract data and breaking down the historically siloed nature of food procurement by city agencies. The CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute, in partnership with many other food civil society groups, including those involved with the NYC GFPP Coalition, offers its academic expertise and research capacities, and the passion and power of CUNY students and faculty, to assist the City Council and the Mayor's Office of Food Policy and the

advisory board required by Int. No. 517-2022 in ensuring that values based procurement has in fact taken root and grown in New York City. If values based procurement provides measurable accomplishments we will be poised to set new, even more ambitious goals for the coming years. Our city has the tools and resources in place to be a leader in values-based procurement. Int. No. 517-2022 formalizes the City's commitment and responsibility to harness those assets to transform the food system into one that is more just and equitable.

Thank You,

Craig Willingham
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Written Testimony of Earthjustice

On Int. 0517 (Adams), A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York,
in relation to creating a good food purchasing program
Before the New York City Council Committees on Economic Development, Contracts, and
Oversight & Investigations

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on the potential environmental benefits of Int. 0517, which would create a Good Food Purchasing Program and advisory board for New York City. Earthjustice strongly supports this initiative, as a key part of the City's efforts to shift to a healthier, more ethical, and more sustainable food system.

Climate change, if left unchecked, will have (and is already beginning to have) disastrous consequences for New Yorkers. On its current trajectory, climate change will cause the sea level along the coast of New York City to rise anywhere from one to four feet in the next century, resulting in billions of dollars in lost property and assets.ⁱ Run-off from increased precipitation will affect the City's supply of clean drinking water, and increasing heat will exacerbate air pollution levels and risks of heat exposure-related deaths.ⁱⁱ

Greenhouse gas emissions from the food sector are often overshadowed by those from the power sector in conversations around mitigating climate change. Yet our industrialized food system is an enormous driver of climate change—a 2019 report by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change found that the production, storage, transport, and consumption of food contribute up to 37% of global greenhouse gas emissions.ⁱⁱⁱ Even if all other emissions sources immediately stopped, emissions from the global food system would still raise temperatures by more than 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels (the target limit for warming under the Paris Agreement) within 30 to 45 years, and might exceed a 2°C increase within 90 years.^{iv}

However, our food system doesn't have to be this way—food production that helps to mitigate climate change and remediate our environment is possible. The agriculture sector can reduce greenhouse gas emissions through improved grazing and animal feeding practices, better manure management, more efficient irrigation, and climate-friendly crop and soil management.^v Consumption of local, seasonal foods cuts down on food transport, packaging, and processing, which reduces carbon emissions and material waste. And finally, we can shift our food system by decreasing our reliance on resource- and emissions-intensive meat and dairy products and increasing access to plant-based foods.



The proposed Good Food Purchasing Program has tremendous power to help promote all of these practices, reducing the City’s contributions to climate change and to incentivizing sustainable agriculture practices regionally and nationwide.

Beyond its environmental benefits, Earthjustice strongly supports the bill’s proposed assessment process for the effects of food contracts on local economies, health, workers, and animals. We envision a holistic food system, of which environmental sustainability is just one component. The Good Food Purchasing Program will invest in local business and promote practices that work for people, animals, and the planet. Further, the City’s enormous buying power can help to influence not only the market not just regionally, but nationwide. By implementing the Good Food Purchasing Program, New York City can help create a food system that is grounded in equity, justice, and sustainability—that nourishes our communities, celebrates our work force, treats animals with compassion, and protects the planet.

ⁱ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. (2016). What Climate Change Means for New York.

<https://19january2017snapshot.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-09/documents/climate-change-ny.pdf>

ⁱⁱ The Nature Conservancy. Climate Change Impacts in New York. Accessed June 25, 2022.

https://www.nature.org/media/initiatives/new_york_factsheet_5.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ Mbow, C. et al. 2019. Food Security. In: Climate Change and Land: an IPCC special report on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security, and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems. In press.

^{iv} Clark, M. A. et al. (2020). Global food system emissions could preclude achieving the 1.5° and 2°C climate change targets. *Science* 370(6517),705-708. doi: 10.1126/science.aba7357

^v Hunt, N. D. et al. (2020). Fossil Energy Use, Climate Change Impacts, and Air Quality-Related Human Health Damages of Conventional and Diversified Cropping Systems in Iowa, USA. *Environ. Sci. Technol*, 54(18), 11002-11014.

<https://doi.org/10.1021/acs.est.9b06929>



LENOX HILL NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE
SINCE 1894

**Testimony of Lenox Hill Neighborhood House Before
The New York City Council**

**Presented by David French
Director of Philanthropy and Healthy Food Initiatives**

June 27, 2022

Lenox Hill Neighborhood House submits this testimony in support of Introduction #0517-2022, sponsored by Speaker Adams with Co-Sponsors Amanda Farías, Julie Won, Tiffany Cabán, Shahana K. Hanif, Shaun Abreu, Gale A. Brewer, Sandra Ung, and Jennifer Gutiérrez, in relation to creating a Good Food Purchasing Program.

Lenox Hill Neighborhood House supports the implementation of the Good Food Purchasing Program for New York City based on our experience operating a model farm-to-institution program serving 400,000 government-funded meals annually. Our expertise is in serving fresh, healthy and local food in an institutional setting – which advances many Good Food Purchasing Program goals. We can also share some takeaways from our experience over the last seven years running a farm-to-institution training and technical assistance program called *The Teaching Kitchen® at Lenox Hill Neighborhood House* that works to help other nonprofit organizations to transform their food services to a farm-to-institution model serving more fresh, healthy and local food. To date, we have trained 400 staff from 170+ nonprofit programs and schools in New York City and State serving 17 million government-funded meals annually.

To reduce the takeaways of our experience as a City-funded meals provider and a training and technical assistance provider to two bullet points:

- It is possible for government-funded food service providers to serve locally procured food aligned with the Good Food Purchasing Program – *and to do it without raising costs*. Lenox Hill Neighborhood House sources 30%-40% of our food locally, including more than 50% of our produce, and we have done this without raising costs.
- City-funded food service providers *want* to serve more healthy, fresh, local and “good” food to their clients but face a wide range of barriers. Getting most of City-funded nonprofits to source locally and adopt other facets of Good Food Purchasing Program will be require legislation, government incentives and training, technical assistance, infrastructure investment and other supports.

Based on this experience, we believe the implementation of the Good Food Purchasing Program in New York City is essential to ensure that the 230 million meals best support the City’s health, environment, economy, workforce and animal welfare.

Background and Relevant Experience

Lenox Hill Neighborhood House is a 128-year-old settlement house that provides an extensive array of effective and integrated human services—social, educational, health, housing, mental health, nutritional and fitness—which significantly improve the lives of 15,000 people in need each year, ages 3 to 103, on the East Side of Manhattan.

We operate a model farm-to-institution food program serving 400,000 meals annually through two older adult centers, a homeless shelter, Head Start program, after school, summer camp and an Alzheimer’s day program. Funding supporting these meals is provided by the Department for the Aging, the Department for Homeless Services and the Child and Adult Care Food Program.

“Good Food” at Lenox Hill Neighborhood House

In 2011, Lenox Hill Neighborhood House hired a new Executive Chef with the mandate to serve more fresh, healthy food to better support the health of our clients and to also source locally whenever possible. With a focus on plant-based food and scratch cooking, we now serve more than 90% fresh produce, local eggs, dairy and meat, and local grains and flour. Overall, 30-40% of Lenox Hill Neighborhood House’s food procurement is now local or regional, and more than 50% of our produce is local. We typically only serve meat once a day, so 66% of our meals are vegetarian and often use much small portions of meat (4 oz.). But our meals are not just healthy and local – they are delicious and culturally appropriate

The single most effective means we have found to successfully serve more healthy and local food to our clients has been the development of creative and delicious menus that our cooks are excited to make, and that our clients enjoy eating. That’s why we have created a 110-page *Farm-to-Institution Cookbook*, available for free download on our website: <https://www.lenoxhill.org/recipes>

A partnership with GrowNYC/Greenmarket Co. has been essential to our ability to source so much food locally. We are Greenmarket Co.’s largest institutional customer and also host one of GrowNYC’s largest Food Box Program sites. Each year we serve or distribute more than 60 tons of fresh, local food.

The Teaching Kitchen Farm-to-Institution Training

We launched *The Teaching Kitchen* in 2015 in response to the enormous interest in our success in transforming to a farm-to-institution model and the many requests for information and assistance from nonprofit peers. *The Teaching Kitchen* is a free food business course for nonprofit food service program directors, nutritionists and lead kitchen staff who design menus, order food, provide nutrition oversight and prepare food. After an initial training in our kitchen and conference rooms, the program provides a full year of technical assistance and support to nonprofits to help them implement change through ongoing goal setting. We train 50-100 nonprofit programs annually and have launched an eLearning version of the program, *The Teaching Kitchen Online*, to expand our impact. A program brochure is attached, and more info is available here: <https://www.lenoxhill.org/teachingkitchen>

Cost Should Not Be a Barrier

Most organizations think that they cannot afford to serve local and “good” food. We have demonstrated in our own program that this is not true. If organizations plan seasonal menus and choose which products they use selectively, it is possible to source many items locally without raising costs. Cutting costs in other areas (meat, processed foods, etc.) can also free up funds for more healthy and local foods that are worth extra expense.

Purchasing food in season ensures the best price and flavor and greatest nutrient density. Items Lenox Hill Neighborhood House buys in season include arugula, asparagus, corn, zucchini, eggplant, peas, spinach, radishes, winter squash, kohlrabi, peaches and pears. At the same time, a wide range of local storage crops are able at competitive prices and can be used year-round: apples, onions, beets, sweet potatoes, carrots, garlic, cabbage and more. We also use (and strongly encourage our trainees to serve) a number of local whole grains that provide variety and exceptional health benefits, without significant cost increase. These include oats, barley, farro, polenta and wheat berries, as well as locally or regionally milled flour.

One key to our success – and a major focus of *The Teaching Kitchen* – is to make strategic decisions that cut costs and make meals healthier. Examples include:

- **Eliminate juice:** Juice is expensive and contains an enormous amount of sugar. It is better to spend the money on leafy greens and citrus fruits, which will provide as much Vitamin C as juice.
- **Serve less meat:** Meat is the most expensive item in most public plate meals, can contribute to diet-related disease, is one of the leading contributors to global warming, and often involves poor treatment of animals. Serving more plant-based food (more vegetarian meals and more stews and other dishes that contain less meat and more vegetables) enables providers to save money, support client health and reduce environmental and animal welfare impact.
- **Reduce processed food:** Fresh food is cheaper and healthier than processed food. Fresh vegetables are more nutrient dense and cheaper than processed, frozen vegetables. Granola made with local oats is delicious, healthier and cheaper than boxed cereal. Scratch-made salad dressings and sauces are significantly cheaper than processed dressings and sauces, which contain sugar, salt, preservatives and food coloring.

One organization we trained cooks about 400 meals daily and served red meat multiple times a week before attending *The Teaching Kitchen*. Switching from red meat to a vegetarian meal saved them \$1 off each plate served. By serving one more vegetarian meal every week, they were able to save \$1,600 a month, redirecting those funds to purchase more local food and investing in affordable kitchen equipment such as knives, cutting boards, hand mixers and food processors that reduce the added prep work for staff.

Beyond Cost – Potential Barriers to Implementation

Serving more “good” food – which really means serving more fresh and local food – requires an organization to make changes to every area of their operations, including menus, vendors, facilities and staffing. Each small change – serving one more fresh vegetable or whole grain – can impact the entire program. Examples are diverse: serving more fresh food will perhaps require an organization to rethink their facilities, with more refrigerators (instead of freezers); more storage space for produce and grains; more prep tools (knives, sinks, counters, cutting boards, food processors); and more space dedicated to compost and waste resulting from processing cases of fresh food. They might have to rethink staffing, as well, adding staff or interns or rearranging schedules to manage increased food prep. Program and administrative changes might follow, adding or changing vendors, redesigning menus, and engaging clients to help them adjust to new foods and new dishes. Many kitchen staff, used to simply opening bags of frozen food, will need training to learn how to prep and cook fresh food.

Most organizations will require significant supports to help them serve more local and “good” food. They will need vendors like GrowNYC who are able to deliver affordable local food to their programs. They will need training and technical assistance such as *The Teaching Kitchen* provides to implement change at a sustainable level. They will need funding to buy equipment and make facilities

improvements. Ideally, they will need a wide range of additional resources – menus and recipes, support from registered dietitians for menu design and client engagement, and more.

Incremental Change is Sustainable

The Teaching Kitchen works with organizations for a full year to help them serve more fresh healthy and local food. We have organizations set three goals at a time (e.g., add a fresh vegetable, add a whole grain, make salad dressing, add a vegetarian meal), help them meet these goals over an initial three months, trouble shoot as needed, and then work to set new ones. We help organizations implement change the same way we did it in our own kitchens – small, incremental change over a long period of time.

After working with 170+ kitchens, we can tell you that sourcing locally is the last goal most organizations reach and the hardest for them to achieve organizationally. It almost always requires top-down organizational will to take on significant organizational change – to not just add a few things to the menu, but to begin to reimagine their food program and to accept that there will be impacts across the organization. Government funded mandates or incentives are almost essential to make this happen.

Conclusion

Local sourcing for government-funded meals is not prohibitively expensive and carries enormous benefits. Lenox Hill Neighborhood House serves 400,000 government-funded meals annually and sources more than 30% of our food locally, including more than 50% of our produce. To date, we have helped 170+ other nonprofit food service programs to serve more fresh, healthy, local and “good” food.

We believe all City-funded meals should include a mandate or strong incentive for local sourcing. Sourcing food locally:

- Benefits public health through increased access to nutritious fresh food;
- Strengthens local farms and the local economy,
- Protects New York City’s watershed, and
- Increases our environmental sustainability and regional resiliency.

Thank you for consideration of this testimony and for your efforts to implement the Good Food Purchasing Program in New York.

THE
**TEACHING
KITCHEN**

AT LENOX HILL NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE

Enroll **NOW** in our award-winning program,
The Teaching Kitchen® at Lenox Hill Neighborhood House,
offered in-person or online in English or Spanish.



Our farm-to-institution training and technical assistance program is **FREE** to most nonprofit staff who design menus, order food, cook and serve meals through older adult centers, homeless shelters, schools, soup kitchens and more.



The Teaching Kitchen is the only program of its kind and has trained **150+ programs** serving more than **12 million meals** annually to serve more healthy and local food through a focus on scratch cooking, plant-based recipes, fresh fruits, vegetables and whole grains—**without raising costs**.



THE TEACHING KITCHEN INCLUDES:

- One-day in-person or six-hour online self-paced training for nonprofit staff
- Full year of technical assistance
- Ongoing skills workshops
- Individualized goal setting and support
- Site visits for NYC organizations
- Free institutional cookbooks and hundreds of recipes, videos and more
- Client engagement lesson plans and materials
- Certificate of completion
- Available in English or Spanish



**JOIN THE FARM-TO-INSTITUTION MOVEMENT
TO SUPPORT THE HEALTH OF YOUR CLIENTS
AND COMMUNITY!**



For more information, to download our Farm-to-Institution Cookbook, watch The Teaching Kitchen Online welcome video and more, visit lenoxhill.org/teachingkitchen.

For questions or to register for The Teaching Kitchen, please contact Evelyn Garcia at egarcia@lenoxhill.org.

Follow us on Instagram @[the_teaching_kitchen](https://www.instagram.com/the_teaching_kitchen)

**Testimony to the New York City Council Committees on Contracts,
Economic Development, and Oversight and Investigations**

**Joint Hearing on the Good Food Purchasing Program
June 27, 2022**

Chairpersons Won, Fariás, and Brewer, as well as the distinguished members of the Committees on Contracts, Economic Development, and Oversight and Investigations:

The New York Health Foundation (NYHealth) is grateful for the opportunity to submit testimony on the Good Food Purchasing Program. NYHealth is a private, independent foundation that works to improve the health of all New Yorkers. Our *Healthy Food, Healthy Lives* program seeks to advance policies and programs that connect New Yorkers with the food they need to thrive.¹ Supporting healthier, culturally responsive food in public institutions—including schools, Head Start programs, senior centers, and homeless shelters—is a core strategy of this program.

NYHealth Has a Long-Standing Commitment to the Good Food Purchasing Program

The Good Food Purchasing Program (GFPP) is a leading model for food systems change, guiding public institutions to make purchases that align with nutrition, local economies, environmental sustainability, valued workforce, and animal welfare. At the State level, NYHealth has invested in efforts to make it easier for municipalities, including New York City, to purchase better quality food—food that aligns with GFPP. At the City level, we are supporting the New York City Mayor's Office of Food Policy (MOFP) to dramatically shift food purchasing for the approximately 240 million meals City agencies serve each year. Currently, NYHealth funds are enabling MOFP to work with a consultant with a deep understanding of the City's procurement processes to help implement GFPP across the City's many food procuring agencies.

New York City Has Taken Important Steps to Implement the Good Food Purchasing Program

In 2021, through its 10-Year food plan, *Food Forward NYC*, the City identified key strategies to implement GFPP.² That same year, a baseline assessment overseen by MOFP helped to determine agencies' food procurement practices. This year, Executive Order 8 formalized the current administration's commitment to implement GFPP.³

To turn these public commitments into action, MOFP is working behind the scenes to develop a detailed workplan that aligns agencies' actions, looking at specific regulations, bidding processes, and infrastructure for each City agency. This workplan, to be published in the next year, will include recommendations for:

- Regulatory language that agencies can use to designate preference for products from local farmers and Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprises (M/WBEs);
- Ways to simplify solicitation language and accelerate review;

¹ New York Health Foundation. *Healthy Food, Healthy Lives*. June 2022. <https://nyhealthfoundation.org/what-we-fund/healthy-food-healthy-lives/>.

² N.Y.C. Office of Food Policy. *Food Forward NYC: A 10-Year Food Policy Plan*. February 2021. <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/foodpolicy/reports-and-data/food-forward.page>.

³ N.Y.C. Office of the Mayor. *Executive Order 8: Commitment to Health and Nutrition: Food Standards and Good Food Purchasing*. February 10, 2022. <https://home3.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/008-002/executive-order-8>.

- Contractual terms that are more inclusive of smaller businesses, including local farmers and M/WBEs;
- Methods to effectively communicate with smaller vendors about potential contractual opportunities; and
- A model to ensure GFPP monitoring and enforcement are consistent across agencies.

The City Should Continue to Invest in Good Food Purchasing Program Implementation

Changing the procurement practices for the more than 240 million meals served each year through New York City public agencies will be no small feat. For MOFP to implement the GFPP workplan and its recommendations, it will need the City's long-term support. To support MOFP in this endeavor, the City Council should:

- **Codify the City's commitment to implement GFPP.** Shifting more than \$500 million in food purchases is likely to take longer than a single Mayoral term. Executive Order 8 has the full force of law under this administration, but subsequent Mayors or City Councils could revoke the City's commitment to implement GFPP. The Council could provide a stronger safeguard to ensure that agencies working to overhaul their procurement practices have the time they need to do so successfully.
- **Ensure that MOFP has the resources it needs to coordinate GFPP implementation.** NYC's public school system serves 200 million meals each year, more meals on any given day than any other institution in the United States besides the military. Coordinating with the New York City Department of Education on school meals alone would be an enormous undertaking, but MOFP will be responsible for working with multiple City agencies, as well as with external parties also interested in GFPP. To successfully coordinate and potentially monitor and enforce GFPP across these numerous entities, MOFP needs adequate funding and staff.
- **Establish a mechanism to help ensure agencies' contracts comply with GFPP.** The aforementioned workplan will propose a mechanism to monitor and enforce GFPP across agencies. The City's public procurement processes are already time-consuming and cumbersome. Any mechanism adopted must strike a realistic balance between the huge volume of food contracts that the City processes each year with fidelity to GFPP's five value categories. And adequate resources should support whichever body (for example, the Mayor's Office of Food Policy) is responsible for this monitoring and enforcement mechanism.
- **Continue to educate State lawmakers on the need for greater flexibility in food procurement.** Public agencies paying the lowest cost for paperclips may make sense, but purchasing the lowest cost food may negatively impact the public's health, environment, workforce, local economy, and animals' wellbeing. State law currently makes it difficult for municipalities like New York City to purchase better quality food. City Council members can join efforts led by New York City advocates to educate State officials on the need for more permissive public procurement laws for food.

Ultimately, harnessing New York City agencies' food purchasing power and practices can help to transform the food system. NYHealth is grateful for the City Council's shared recognition of the important role that GFPP can play in promoting food security and dietary health. We look forward to continuing to partner to strengthen City agency meals.

Rethink Food

The New York City Council Oversight - A Good Food Purchasing Program for Citywide Food Procurement Monday June 26th, 2022 1 P.M.

TO: Committee on Economic Development, Committee on Contracts, Committee on Oversight and Investigations

FROM: Kathleen DiPerna, Rethink Food NYC, Inc.

DATE: Wednesday June 26, 2022 at 1 PM

Chairpersons Farías, Won and Brewer and Committee Members

My name is Kathleen DiPerna, and I am the Director of Government Relations at Rethink, a New York City-based nonprofit with the mission to create a more sustainable and equitable food system - one where every New Yorker has access to dignified, culturally responsive and nutritious food.

We operate in 35 council districts across all 5 boroughs and have plans to expand to 40 council districts by Fiscal Year 2023. Support and partnership with the Council will be critical to ensuring that Rethink can continue to operate its programs to support the lives of our fellow New Yorkers.

Rethink was founded in 2017, operating the Rethink Commissary kitchen by transforming excess food from restaurants, corporate kitchens, and grocery stores into meals delivered to CBOs – a model that concurrently tackles food waste and food insecurity. Today the kitchen prepares an average 7-8,000 meals per week and distributes to 8 CBOs in Queens, Brooklyn and Manhattan.

Our work has evolved to include another innovative solution to address food insecurity – the Rethink Certified restaurant program. Launched at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, with food insecurity escalating and restaurants facing widespread closures, Rethink leveraged its experience to partner with restaurants to prepare meals for the community. In exchange, we provide grants to support food, operating, and staffing costs. We had a unique opportunity to distribute meals to vulnerable communities, and help restaurants stay open and retain staff. **In 2021, Rethink and its partners delivered nearly 3.3M meals to 88 CBOs, invested \$15.7M into 76 restaurants (75% of which were minority and or women owned) and recovered nearly 500,000 pounds of excess food. In 2022, Rethink plans to recover an additional 600,000 pounds of food from the waste stream.**

We testify in support of Int. 0517-2022, to create a good food purchasing program within the City's food procurement process. It is critical that the City recognizes through its purchasing power, that it has the capacity to buy better quality, climate friendly and nutritious food for its agencies and its programs. It is imperative that the City seek to build an inclusive plan where all vendors that wish to apply to work with the city and provide food, can procure and provide food in alignment with the city's plan. Throughout the building of the city's strategic plan around the program, we call on your committees to bring together various stakeholders whom this change would affect to inform how the city implements this plan.

Rethink Food

Additionally, as a growing non-profit organization that provides meals to community organizations that wants to contract more with the City, it can be challenging to be in alignment the various requirements of city contracting (nutritional content, delivery protocols, etc), and by adding another requirement of food purchasing guidelines, we recommend that there are individuals with in MOCs, MOFP or another agency to support organizations to be a competitive bidder within food procurement.

Thank you for reading our testimony, and we look forward to continuing the conversation on how New York City will implement a good food purchasing plan.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathleen DiPerna

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 136 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 6/27/22

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Mat Sullivan

Address: 255 Greenwich St.

I represent: MOCs

Address: 255 Greenwich St.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 6/27/22

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Anne Meredith

Address: 255 Greenwich, 9th Fl, NY, NY

I represent: MOCs

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 6/27/22

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Adam Berman

Address: 1 Centre Street, NY, NY

I represent: DCAS

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 136 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 6/27/22

Name: Kate Mackenzie (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 253 Broadway, 10th Fl.

I represent: MOFP

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 136 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 6/27/22

Name: Kim Yu (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 235 Greenwich St., 9th Floor

I represent: MDCS

Address: New York, NY

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms