Healthy Food Procurement in the County of Los Angeles

UNC Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention
Center for Training and Research Translation
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Learning Objectives

• Provide background on the intent, development and implementation of DPH’s healthy food procurement initiative.

• Discuss DPH’s 5-phase process framework to assist food service institutions in operationalizing healthy nutrition standards.

• Identify key lessons learned and resources to program implementation.
Healthy Food Procurement

- **Food Procurement** encompasses the process of procuring, distributing, selling, and/or serving food.
  - Nutrition Standards
  - Food Purchasing Standards
  - Environmental Approaches

Creating Healthier Food Environments

• Increase access to healthy food and beverage options.

• Improve the quality of food and increase food security.

• Leverage the purchasing power of large institutions.

• Support local economies.

• Improve the health of employees, and community members who use government programs and facilities.
DPH Healthy Food Procurement Initiative

2010 – DPH launched its initiative to create healthier food environments in the County of Los Angeles with support from the CDC through *Communities Putting Prevention to Work* and *Sodium Reduction in Communities Program* funding.

2011 – County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors implemented a requirement for DPH to review and make nutrition recommendations for all new/renewing food service contracts in County Departments.

2011-2014* – DPH has partnered with 6 County Departments to operationalize nutrition standards:

- Chief Executive Office
- Department of Beaches and Harbors
- Department of Health Services
- Department of Parks and Recreation
- Department of Public Works
- Probation Department

DPH is also working with other private institutions to develop healthy food procurement standards for food venues.

*Made possible with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention through the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health*
County of Los Angeles Board Motion:  
*Healthy Food Promotion in County of LA Food Services Contracts*

- Introduced by Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas and adopted on March 22, 2011.

- Impacts County departments that purchase, distribute, and/or sell food.

- Requires Departments to consult with DPH prior to the release of any request for proposal (RFP) for County food services contracts.

- Promotes healthy nutrition in the contracting process.
Organizational Food Environment and Capacity Assessment

2009: Needs assessment conducted to explore the facilitators and barriers of a proposed food procurement policy to reduce sodium.

2011-12: Organizational food environment and capacity assessment conducted to support implementation of the County Board motion.
County of Los Angeles Departments

Food Service Environments

~37 departments

~101,000 staff

~12 departments purchase, sell, or distribute food

Food Service Contracts
Baseline Estimated Reach
Needs Assessment Results, 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting/Program</th>
<th># of meals served per day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Worksite Cafeterias (e.g., Public Works, Hall of Administration, Health Services Headquarters)</td>
<td>1,820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Trucks</td>
<td>2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snack Shops</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jails</td>
<td>80,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probation camps</td>
<td>11,050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitals</td>
<td>3,589</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Estimates based on needs assessment findings, 2009.

County of Los Angeles Government ~ 37 million meals per year
Types of Food Venues

- Jails, juvenile detention centers, probation camps
- Worksite cafeterias, concession stands, and snack shops
- Distributive food programs (e.g., senior, children’s meals)
- Mobile vending
- Vending machines
## County of Los Angeles Food Environments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food Service Category</th>
<th>County Department (s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>I. Meals and Snacks Served to Dependent Community Members</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distributive meals (e.g., senior meals, after-school snacks)</td>
<td>• Parks and Recreation, Community and Senior Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meals served to institutionalized populations</td>
<td>• Probation, Sherriff’s Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitals</td>
<td>• Department of Health Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (e.g. public safety)</td>
<td>• Fire Department, Children &amp; Family Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>II. Food Sold on Government Property</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concession Operations (e.g. cafés, snack bars)</td>
<td>• Beaches and Harbors, Parks and Recreation, Chief Executive Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Food Trucks</td>
<td>• Chief Executive Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work-site Cafeterias</td>
<td>• Department of Health Services, Public Works, Chief Executive Office, Sheriff’s Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vending Machines</td>
<td>• Beaches and Harbors, Chief Executive Office, Public Works, Parks and Recreation, Community Development Commission, Fire Department</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Highlighted = Departments Implementing Nutrition Standards*
5-Phase Process Framework
*Operationalizing Healthy Nutrition Standards*

- DPH developed a 5-phase process framework to assist food service institutions in operationalizing nutrition standards and other recommended food procurement practices.

Key Elements to Implementation

• Venue-specific nutrition standards and promotional strategies.

• DPH-led environmental scan of selected food setting (s).

• One-on-one meetings and technical support (e.g., menu review and nutrition technical advice).

• Implementation guides, trainings and promotional signage.

• On-going monitoring and compliance.

• Annual Food Policy Forum.

• Quarterly advisory committee meetings.
Food Procurement Advisory Committee

American Diabetes Association
American Heart Association
California Dietetics Association
California Center for Public Health Advocacy
California Food Policy Advocates
Los Angeles County Department of Public Health
Los Angeles Food Policy Council
Kaiser Permanente
Urban Environmental Policy Institute
Food Service Contracting Process

Institution (e.g., Hospitals, School Districts, Worksite Cafeterias)

Develop Request for Proposal (RFP) or Invitation for Bid (IFB)

- Release RFP or IFB
- Mandatory Proposers Conference
- Facility Site Visit

Vendor(s) Submit Proposals

Final Food Service Contract Awarded by Board of Supervisors

Approach to Integrating Nutrition Standards in Food Service Contracts

DPH Recommended Nutrition Standards and Healthy Purchasing Practices
Sample Food Service Requirements
Worksite Cafeteria

• At least 50% of entrées, side options, and snacks/desserts to meet healthy nutrition standards.

• At least three fresh fruit options per meal service, served without added sweeteners.

• At least two non-starchy vegetable items per meal service, prepared without fat or oil.

• No menu items shall be deep fried.

• Reduced portion size for sugar sweetened beverages.

• Gradual sodium reduction plan.

• Purchase locally grown food.

• Product placement & promotional strategies.
Product Placement & Promotion Strategies

- Display healthy food and beverage options within five feet of all checkout registers.

- Display only water, diet drinks, 100% fruit juice or low-fat dairy products in eye-level sections of all beverage cases.

- Move salad bars closer to the checkout registers or at point-of-purchase.
Utilize 10” plates or smaller.
Display fruit in brightly colored bowls or woven baskets.
Promote water consumption by providing access to fresh, cold tap water.
Discuss healthy food options with food service staff and post visible copies of policy and implementation guidelines.
Add symbols to the menu for items that feature local produce or vegetarian menu items.
LA County Sodium Reduction Initiative

- CDC Sodium Reduction in Communities Program (SRCP) Grant
  - 2nd round of funding received in 2013

- **Goal**: to reduce population sodium consumption in Los Angeles County

- Implementing strategies to improve food-service venues (e.g., sodium reduction, menu labeling, smaller portions, placement, pricing strategies)

Too much salt can raise blood pressure and lead to heart attack and stroke.

CHOOSEHEALTHLA.COM
County of Los Angeles Vending Machine Nutrition Policy

• Adopted by County of LA Board of Supervisors on August 8, 2006.

• Revised in October 2010.

• Ensure that County employees and the public have access to healthy food options at County facilities.
Beverage Guidelines

ALL BEVERAGES SOLD IN COUNTY-CONTRACTED VENDING MACHINES MUST ADHERE TO THE FOLLOWING NUTRITION GUIDELINES

1. Drinking water (including carbonated water products).
   - Vending machines with beverages should include bottled water as an option.
   - The price of the bottled water should be no higher than the prices of the other beverage options.

2. Fruit-based drinks that are at least 50% fruit juice without added sweeteners.

3. Vegetable-based drinks that are at least 50% vegetable juice without added sweeteners.

4. Milk products, including 2%, 1%, non-fat, soy, rice and other non-dairy milk without added sweeteners.

5. Sugar-sweetened or artificially sweetened beverages that do not exceed 25 calories per 8 ounces. (Fresh coffee and tea dispensed from vending machines are exempted.)

EXAMPLES OF BEVERAGES THAT COMPLY WITH THE NUTRITION POLICY

- Water
- Flavored Water ≤25 calories per 8 ounces
- 100% Juice (no added sweeteners)
- Unsweetened 1% or Non-fat Milk
ALL SNACKS SOLD IN COUNTY-CONTRACTED VENDING MACHINES MUST ADHERE TO THE FOLLOWING NUTRITION GUIDELINES:

AN INDIVIDUALLY SOLD SNACK THAT HAS NO MORE THAN:

1. 35% of its calories from fat (excluding legumes, nuts, nut butters, seeds, eggs, non-fried vegetables and cheese packaged for individual sale).

2. 10% of its calories from saturated fat (excluding eggs and cheese packaged for individual sale).

3. 35% sugar by weight (excluding fruits and vegetables).

4. 250 calories per individual food item or package if a pre-packaged item.

5. 360 milligrams of sodium per individual food item or package if a pre-packaged item.

EXAMPLES OF SNACKS THAT COMPLY WITH THE NUTRITION POLICY:

- Baked chips
- Unsalted nuts
- Pretzels
- Granola and Energy bars
- Dried fruit (no sugar added)
Other Vending Machine Guidelines

• Bottled water in eye-level sections of beverage machines.

• Only products that meet the County Policy should be advertised on vending machines.

• Display Choose Health LA signage that promotes healthy options.

• DPH may periodically monitor License Agreements to ensure compliance.
Signage for Vending Machines

![Vending Machine](image1)

**ALL SNACKS IN THIS MACHINE ARE 250 CALORIES OR LESS**

[ChooseHealthLA.com](http://ChooseHealthLA.com)

![Vending Machine](image2)

**ALL DRINKS IN THIS MACHINE ARE HEALTHY CHOICES**

WATER, 100% JUICE OR LOWER-CALORIE BEVERAGES

[ChooseHealthLA.com](http://ChooseHealthLA.com)
Evaluation

Purpose

• Evaluate potential effectiveness of expanding access to healthy food options for County staff, clients, and community members.

Activities

• Examine compliance with nutrition standards.
• Review inventory of food sold or consumed at facilities.
• Gauge patron acceptability of new menu changes.
• Document barriers and facilitators to implementation.
Evaluation Tools and Data Sources

Tools
- Validated Nutrition Environment Measures Survey for Vending Machines (NEMS-V) tool
- Environmental scan tool for cafeterias
- Vendor and consumer surveys
- Self-assessment tool for County departments

Data Sources
- Nutritional analysis
- Food production records
- Sales records
Compliance with Vending Machine Nutrition Policy

- Department of Public Works: 8 snack and beverage machines at 1 location
- Environmental scan conducted using validated vending machine measurement tool (NEMS-V)
- Compliance summary reports developed including lessons learned
  - On-going technical support & training is critical

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department of Public Works (DPW): Compliance Results</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Baseline</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 41% healthy snacks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 30% healthy beverages</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 30% healthy beverages</td>
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*Note: These results are not representative of all machines in the County and only reflect a sample of 8 snack and beverage machines at one location.*
Compliance with Vending Machine Nutrition Policy

• Chief Executive Office
  – 421 Snack and Beverage Machines
  – 200+ locations

• Environmental scan conducted using validated vending machine measurement tool (NEMS-V)

• Baseline Data Collection (Pre-Implementation)
  – 27% healthy snacks
  – 57% healthy beverages

• 6 & 12 month follow-up data collection (2014)
Implementation: DPW Worksite Cafeteria
Food and Beverage Environment

- Environmental scan conducted using validated measurement tool.
- Collecting nutritional analysis, food production and sales records.

Progress to Date:
- Offer side salad or fruit as a side instead of fries.
- Reduced-size portions of sugar sweetened beverages.
- Variety of smaller fountain drink sizes.
- Bottled water price incentive.
- Access to free tap water and promotional signage.
- Nutritional information & signage.
- Produce and food purchased within 25 miles.
## Lessons Learned

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facilitators to Success</th>
<th>Challenges to Implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Build upon what came before and on lessons from successful nutrition and/or policy, systems, and environmental change interventions.</td>
<td>• Differences among department’s internal administrative processes, contracts divisions, and unique needs and concerns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Assess institutional readiness to operationalize new approaches.</td>
<td>• Variance among department’s interest level and understanding of nutrition concepts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Establish strong partnerships with key stakeholders.</td>
<td>• Concerns about cost, availability and acceptability of healthier food options.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Build on national momentum and support (e.g., CDC, GSA/HHS).</td>
<td>• Issues with County budgets and contracting processes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide technical assistance to support ongoing implementation.</td>
<td>• Challenges with data collection efforts for evaluation.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Adoption and implementation of healthy nutrition standards and other procurement practices is a potentially high-yield/high-impact, sustainable system change in Los Angeles County.
Healthy Food Procurement Initiative
Lessons Learned in the County of Los Angeles

Publications:


- Integrating Sodium Reduction Strategies in the Procurement Process and Contracting of Food Venues in the County of Los Angeles Government, 2010-2012
CASE STUDY: IMPLEMENTING HEALTHY NUTRITION GUIDELINES FOR VENDING MACHINES IN THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES GOVERNMENT

Background
In 2005, the County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors took an important step towards improving employee health and the health of its clients by establishing a Blue Ribbon Task Force on Childhood Obesity. This Task Force systematically examined a variety of public policy and public health practice issues related to child and adult obesity, including the need for more uniform institutional food policies that integrate healthy nutrition standards in County-operated or contracted food services. The Task Force’s recommendation to establish uniform nutrition standards for food and vending services affected many people broadly,” said Dr. Paul Simon, Director of the Division of Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention in the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. “The County of Los Angeles is a major purchaser of food for vending machines, concessions, cafeterias, snack shops, and other programs that serve or distribute foods.

The Board motions on healthy food promotion
Since 2006, the County Food Policy has been reviewed and revised periodically to ensure it meets current dietary science and takes into consideration program implementation factors. Although the original Board motion prohibited all sugar-sweetened beverages, this was revised in February 2009 to match the State of California beverage standards, which were already in place in schools. This change made the standards more consistent across vendors, but allowed electrolyte replacement beverages – also known as sports drinks, which contained no more than 42 grams of added sugar per 20-ounce serving, to be sold. In August 2009 this motion was amended again, eliminating the phased-in approach and streamlining the requirements to 100% healthy products for all vending machines. Further revisions in 2010 led to the elimination of electrolyte replacement beverages that exceed 25 calories per 8 ounces and provisions that ensure a bottled water option is made available in every vending machine, that bottled water is priced no higher than other beverages, and that snack products contain less than 360 mg of sodium per individual food item or package if prepackaged. The revised policy also allows sugar-sweetened or artificially sweetened beverages with less than 25 calories per 8 ounces.

KEY STATISTICS IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

- There are 9.8 million children and adults living in the region.
- The prevalence of childhood obesity has increased from 18.6% in 1999 to 22.4% in 2011.
- The obesity prevalence among adults was 23.6% in 2011, up from 14% in 1997.

In collaboration with California Project LEAN
Implementation

Resources
Acknowledgements

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health

Dr. Paul Simon, MD, MPH
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Patricia Cummings, MPH
Resources & Contact Information

Procurement resources:
http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/chronic/

Public education resources:
www.choosehealthla.com/

Salt shocker videos
http://www.youtube.com/user/ChooseHealthLA

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