

Progressive Los Angeles Network



Food and Nutrition Priorities for Los Angeles

Picture a Los Angeles where no one goes hungry, where fresh food from local and regional farms can be found in school lunchrooms, and all communities have access to food markets and farmers markets. A City where the Parks and Recreation Department serves a salad bar in their Summer Food Program, utilizing produce from the farmers' markets that the City helped start. Where vacant City-owned land is utilized by community groups for community gardens, with the Department of Water and Power waiving water fees. Picture, as a result, a healthier and more livable Los Angeles.

To make this vision a reality, the City should take the following priority actions:

1. Launch an Annual Report, Plan of Action, and Policy Council on food, hunger, and nutrition in Los Angeles. The City should produce an Annual Report examining the state of food, hunger, and nutrition in LA. To address findings from the Report, the City should help establish a joint City-County Food Policy Council to identify the issues and help develop policies on food, hunger and nutrition issues.
2. Attract food markets to under served neighborhoods. The City should set a goal of attracting at least four new full service markets and four new farmers markets to low-income neighborhoods over the next four years, by, among other things, easing parking requirements,¹ aiding land acquisition, providing incentives, and working with community organizations.
3. Promote community gardens. The City should help community organizations acquire land for at least ten new community gardens over the next four years, help existing gardens gain land tenure, and immediately create and fund at least one city staff position responsible for organizing and assisting community gardens.
4. Link local farms to City programs. The City should facilitate the collection of food from local farms and farmers' markets for delivery to public schools, child care centers, after school programs, and other city education and social service programs, reaching at least 20 schools and facilities in the first year.

¹ Current zoning rules require new commercial buildings to be accompanied by a certain number of parking spaces based on the size of the store. This increases the size of the lot needed to build a new food market, making it even harder to locate space in dense, urban neighborhoods. (Parking requirements also encourage people to drive to stores rather than walk or take transit).