



## **CAFPC Case Study in Collaboration: Mendocino Food Policy Council - Approved Source Code**

The Mendocino County Food Policy Council (MFPC) identified that the lack of a local level Approved Source code was a policy barrier to increasing local food procurement in schools and institutions such as hospitals in Mendocino County. MFPC approached the Environmental Health Division of the Department of Public Health and the County Agricultural Commissioner to develop an Approved Source code. Developing an Approved Source code was of interest to the Environmental Health Department, because of their interest in food safety and traceability, and was of interest to the County Department of Agriculture because of their interest both in food safety and supporting agricultural producers in the county.

Working together, MFPC, Environmental Health, and Department of Agriculture were able to effectively write and pass a policy that worked for each entity and for community stakeholders, including producers and buyers, across Mendocino County. The program is free and voluntary for producers, requires minimal staff time from county regulators, and allows for more local product to be legally delivered from farm to fork through institutions in the county—benefiting the local economy and public health. The program is accessible to all producers, including community and school gardens in addition to commercial farmers.

To develop the Approved Source Code a series of stakeholder meetings were convened. The three entities that developed the code were able to leverage complimentary skills and capabilities throughout the process of developing the code. MFPC was primarily responsible for engaging stakeholders to turn out for the convenings. MFPC has relationships and established trust with both growers and purchasers that enabled them to bring a robust turnout. Working with the Department of Environmental Health and the Department of Agriculture was important for MFPC in turning out stakeholders—working with the governmental agencies added weight and credibility to the convenings. Community members showed up to provide their input because they knew that by engaging with these three entities working together, they would have an opportunity to make a real impact. With buy-in from the Environmental Health and Agriculture Departments, the code developed would actually manifest into law. The Environmental Health and Agriculture Departments benefited from MFPC drafting and revising policy language, and convening community stakeholders. The governmental agencies were able to weigh in with their expertise, but did not have to dedicate excessive staff time to moving the process forward.<sup>i</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> For more information on the Approved Source Code, go to:  
<http://www.co.mendocino.ca.us/agriculture/approvedSource.htm>