

Model Policy Language

Model Policy Declaration
Model Statutory/ Policy Language

**Adapted from the white paper:
Bridging Regional Food Systems and Healthcare**



Model Policies for Action

This paper offers adaptable model policies as templates that can be used to inform and guide legislative, regulatory, or programmatic action. These models embed principles of local procurement, community investment, and equitable access into the design and implementation of publicly supported food and nutrition programs.

By adopting or adapting these frameworks, jurisdictions can strengthen regional supply chains, support historically underserved producers, and ensure that food and nutrition investments deliver health, economic, and climate benefits. Leaders are encouraged to tailor this model language to reflect their community's specific needs, challenges, and opportunities.

Put These Model Policies to Work

Transforming food systems and building community health requires bold, equity-centered action grounded in community leadership. The model policies provide adaptable language for policymakers at all levels to strengthen local and regional economies, invest in trusted community-based organizations, and integrate support for local and regional food system infrastructure into Food as Medicine and emergency nutrition programs to build resilience and responsiveness to community disruptions and stressors.

Model Policy Declaration

The model policy on page 24 provides a foundational declaration that jurisdictions—state, local, tribal, or regional—can adapt into resolutions, executive orders, or legislative language to catalyze comprehensive food system transformation.

Local Procurement and Community-Based Investment Policy

The model policy on page 29 offers statutory or regulatory language that cities, counties, or states can integrate into policies establishing Food as Medicine or emergency nutrition programs. Each jurisdiction should define “local or regional producers” according to its unique geography, infrastructure, climate, agricultural diversity, and economic goals.



Model Policy Declaration

1. Model Policy Declaration

This following model language is provided as an example of a comprehensive declaration that can serve as the foundation for meaningful local, state, or regional food system transformation. The intention is that state, local, and community leaders can incorporate language from this model and tailor for their specific jurisdiction (e.g., a state, city, a tribal nation, or a county government) and advance as a formal resolution, executive order, or legislative language for policy adoption.

[State/City/County Name] Declaration of Commitment to Building a Resilient, Healthy, and Equitable Food System

WHEREAS, access to healthy, affordable, and culturally appropriate food is essential to the health, well-being, and economic security of all people in **[State/City/County]**;

WHEREAS, the current dependence on outdated, centralized, and extractive food supply chains poses a risk to the long-term health of communities, the sustainability of local economies, and the ability to respond effectively and efficiently to economic, environmental, and public health crises;

WHEREAS, these industrial food systems often fail to deliver fresh, nutritious food to all communities equitably, rely heavily on ultra-processed food products, and overlook the potential of local and regional producers, including regenerative farmers and ranchers, to contribute to food access, climate resilience, and local economic development;

WHEREAS, the climate crisis and the increasing frequency of disasters – including wildfires, droughts, extreme weather, and pandemics – demand proactive investment in local food systems, climate-smart agriculture, and regional food infrastructure to strengthen public health, economic sustainability, and disaster preparedness, and promote overall community resilience.

Model Policy Declaration

WHEREAS, Regenerative Practices in food systems and agriculture are defined as holistic approaches to farming, ranching, and food production that enhance ecosystem health and biodiversity, improve soil fertility and water retention, reduce greenhouse gas emissions through carbon sequestration, promote animal welfare, prioritize equitable community engagement and participation, and support economic sustainability and resilience by working with natural processes rather than relying on synthetic inputs or extractive practices;

WHEREAS, community-based organizations (CBOs), local growers, ranchers, food hubs, cooperatives, community gardens, Indigenous and traditional food practitioners, and regional food businesses are critical to building a resilient, equitable, and climate-smart food system;

WHEREAS, the Good Food Purchasing Program, developed by the Center for Good Food Purchasing, provides a comprehensive framework for public institutions to align their food procurement practices with five core values: local and community-based economies, environmental sustainability, a valued workforce, animal welfare, and community health and nutrition. By adopting this program as a framework **[State/City/County]** can commit to enhancing transparency, equity, and accountability in institutional supply chains, thereby promoting a more just and sustainable food system that benefits people, animals, and the environment;

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved / ordered / declared that **[Governor/Mayor/County Executive/Legislative Body]** affirms the following commitments on behalf of **[State/City/County Name]**:

Section 1. Commitment to a Resilient, Healthy, and Climate-Smart Food System

[State/City/County] affirms its commitment to developing and supporting a food system that is:

- Resilient to climate, economic, and public health shocks;
- Health-promoting, prioritizing access to fresh, whole, minimally processed, and culturally appropriate foods;
- Equitable, ensuring that systemically marginalized and excluded communities benefit from investments and leadership roles;
- Sustainable and resilient, supporting environmental stewardship, community wealth-building, democratic engagement, and local economic development.

Section 2. Strengthening Local and Regional Food Supply Chains

[State/City/County] will promote policies and programs that:

- Encourage and prioritize procurement from local and regional producers, ranchers, and growers;
- Reduce dependency on long-distance, industrial food supply chains;
- Build capacity for local producers to serve institutional and emergency food markets.

Section 3. Establishing Minimum Thresholds for Local Procurement and CBO Investment

To ensure public investment drives systemic transformation, **[State/City/County]** shall establish minimum standards for its publicly funded food programs, including but not limited to Food as Medicine initiatives, disaster and emergency feeding programs, school meals, and health system nutrition programs:

- Local Food Purchasing: A minimum threshold shall be established for the percentage of total food procurement to be sourced from local or regional producers, with clear definitions and timelines aligned to program capacity and market readiness.
- CBO Investment and Distribution: A minimum percentage of program funds shall be distributed directly to community-based organizations engaged in food distribution, nutrition services, community outreach, and emergency response, with a focus on those serving high-need and historically marginalized communities.

Section 4. Building Local and Community Capacity Now

Recognizing that meeting these thresholds requires significant preparation and long term planning, **[State/City/County]** commits to immediate and ongoing investment in:

- Community-Based Organizations (CBOs): Multi-year, flexible funding beyond the immediate needs of crisis or emergency response to strengthen infrastructure, staffing, operations, and strategic growth;
- Local Food Infrastructure: Development and support of food hubs, cold storage, transportation systems, processing facilities, and mobile markets to serve regional aggregation and distribution needs;

Model Policy Declaration

- Technical Assistance and Capacity Building: Training, business development, food safety and regulatory support, and land access resources for small and mid-sized growers, ranchers, Indigenous producers, and BIPOC- and women-led enterprises to expand their market reach and participation in public programs.

Section 5. Job Creation and Economic Development

[State/City/County] will leverage food system transformation to create economic opportunity by:

- Supporting good-paying jobs in agriculture, food production, processing, distribution, and retail;
- Encouraging entrepreneurship and ownership within historically marginalized communities;
- Aligning workforce development programs with local food economy growth.

Section 6. Healthy Food Access and Procurement Reform

All publicly supported nutrition and food programs shall:

- Increase availability of healthy, nutrient-dense foods – including fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, legumes, and responsibly sourced meats and dairy;
- Reduce reliance on ultra-processed foods in food distribution and public procurement contracts;
- Promote culturally relevant food access and community-designed nutrition strategies.

Section 7. Integration with Climate, Health, and Emergency Preparedness Plans

Food systems policy shall be integrated into **[State/City/County]**'s:

- Climate action and sustainability plans;
- Public health and chronic disease prevention strategies;
- Emergency preparedness, response, and recovery planning – including wildfire, drought, extreme weather, and pandemic response scenarios.

Section 8. Advancing Equity and Community Leadership

[State/City/County] commits to:

- Centering equity in all food system strategies and funding decisions;
- Prioritizing support for BIPOC-led, Indigenous, immigrant, and historically underserved producers and organizations;
- Embedding community leadership, co-governance, and inclusive design in program planning and oversight.

Section 9. Implementation, Accountability, and Transparency

The **[relevant department(s) or agency(ies)]** shall:

- Integrate this framework into policy, procurement, and program implementation;
- Develop and publicly report annual progress metrics, including benchmarks for local procurement, CBO investment, healthy food distribution, and equity outcomes;
- Establish advisory structures inclusive of community stakeholders, producers, and CBOs to guide implementation, monitor progress, and adapt strategies over time.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED / ORDERED / DECLARED, that **[State/City/County Name]** calls on partners in the public, nonprofit, philanthropic, and private sectors to join in building a resilient, equitable, and healthy food system that serves all people, supports local economies, and protects community and environmental health for generations to come.

Model Statutory/Policy Language

2. Model Statutory/Policy Language to support Local Procurement and Community-Based Organization (CBO) Investment Requirements

The following model language can be tailored as needed and included in the specific enabling statute or policy language enacted by a city, county, or state to establish Food as Medicine and/or emergency nutrition programs.

Jurisdictions should define the threshold and criteria for "local or regional producers" based on their unique context and needs. Factors to consider may include geographic boundaries, transportation infrastructure and limitations, climate conditions, agricultural diversity, economic goals, and community preferences.

Section [X]: Local Procurement and Community-Based Distribution Requirements

(a) Local and Regional Procurement Threshold

1. A minimum threshold shall be established for the percentage of total food procurement under the program to be sourced from local or regional producers.

2. For the purposes of this section, "local or regional producers" shall include:

- Agricultural producers and ranchers operating within **[state/region/local jurisdiction]**;
- Community gardens, urban farms, and Indigenous or culturally specific food producers;
- Food hubs, cooperatives, and small- to mid-scale aggregators sourcing from within the defined local or regional area.

3. The threshold shall be no less than **[xx]%** of total annual food purchased with program funds by **[Year xx]**, with a clearly defined implementation timeline and benchmarks aligned to program capacity and market readiness.

4. The **[Designated Department or Agency]** shall establish clear definitions, reporting requirements, and criteria for exceptions due to seasonal availability or capacity constraints.

(b) Community-Based Organization (CBO) Distribution Threshold

1. A minimum of **[XX]**% of total program funds shall be allocated directly to community-based organizations (CBOs) engaged in food distribution, nutrition education, culturally responsive outreach, case management, or emergency feeding services. This may include, where appropriate, the use of fiscal sponsors, fiscal intermediaries, or other administrative partners that support the participation of small, emerging, or unincorporated community-based efforts.

2. Priority shall be given to CBOs that:

- Are led by or serve communities disproportionately impacted by food insecurity, systemic inequities, or environmental injustice;
- Demonstrate deep community trust and engagement;
- Provide linguistically and culturally appropriate services tailored to the populations they serve.

3. The **[Designated Department or Agency]** shall develop equitable funding criteria, application processes, and technical assistance resources to ensure small and under-resourced and grassroots organizations can fully participate.

4. Multi-year, flexible funding models shall be encouraged to build long-term CBO capacity, support workforce development, strengthen organizational sustainability, and reduce administrative burden.

(c) Capacity Building and Market Readiness

In order to meet the thresholds described above, the **[State/City/County]** shall:

- Invest in technical assistance, infrastructure, and training for local and regional producers and aggregators to meet food safety, procurement, and volume requirements;
- Support the development and expansion of food hubs, cold storage, transportation systems, and cooperative processing facilities;
- Provide grant funding, contracting set-asides, and other supportive measures to enable CBOs and local producers to build capacity to meet program needs.

(d) Implementation and Accountability

1. The **[Designated Department or Agency]** shall adopt regulations or program guidelines to implement this section, including measurable annual benchmarks, timelines, and performance indicators.
2. The agency shall publish an annual report documenting:
 - The percentage of food sourced from local and regional producers;
 - The percentage of funds distributed to community-based organizations;
 - Investments made in producer and CBO capacity;
 - Any barriers encountered and recommendations for improvement.
3. A stakeholder advisory body composed of community-based organizations, local producers, public health and equity experts, and consumers shall be consulted in the development and review of program implementation and reporting.