

# LA PLATA COUNTY FOOD PLAN

## FARM TO SCHOOL & INSTITUTIONAL PROCUREMENT

Procurement is the buying of goods and services, whether it be in schools, hospitals, prisons, or other businesses and organizations. There are many forms of procurement methods that include purchasing agreements, bid processes, directly buying from farmers. Farm to school and farm to institution typically work through aggregators and distributors to meet their volume demand and establish contracts for regular distribution. Procurement can lead to positive impacts in economic development and financial capacity for farmers, nutrition education, and interest in local and regional food sourcing.



### BENEFITS

- Increase market opportunities for farmers, fishers, ranchers, and local food system entrepreneurs
- Increase consumption of fruits and vegetables
- Support community and economic development
- Strengthen knowledge and attitudes toward agriculture, food, nutrition, and the environment
- Incentivize local business connections
- Support local farmers + business owners
- Include nutrition program development within organizations
- Improve sustainable and resilient food systems



### CHALLENGES

- Increasing cost for local and regional foods
- Lacking processed food availability
- Requiring kitchen labor to process procured raw foods
- Needing training and education on production, delivery, and invoicing procedures
- Decreasing knowledge on food-grading, packaging and food safety

Local food procurement can strengthen local businesses, create jobs and generate income that stays in the community. When incorporated with branding, it helps create more access to consumers, and further elevates farmers, aggregators and businesses in the local economy.

When offered within schools and educational settings, teachers and food service staff can use local procurement to assist in activities such as cafeteria taste-testing and nutrition education. Creating "how-to" guides for buying from local businesses can help with future processes for other organizations interested in transitioning practices, which may include: meal planning, preparation of raw foods, food safety protocols and food waste reduction strategies.

There are numerous environmental impacts from sourcing locally and regionally. The number of miles food travels from where it is grown to where it is purchased or consumed, are lower for locally grown and purchased foods. Local food procurement can also help highlight environmental stewardship concerns like reducing food waste and introduce practices such as composting or food donation as alternatives to throwing food away.

Partnering local food procurement with other activities can help foster healthy eating habits. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states that nearly 1 in 5 school age children and young people in the United States are obese. Childhood obesity has immediate and long-term effects on physical, social and emotional health (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, n.d.). Local food procurement creates opportunities for students to increase their fruit and vegetable intake and lower amounts of additives making it a healthier option.



Policy also plays a critical role in procurement, whether federal policy, like the Child Nutrition Reauthorization: Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act, the Buy American Provision, which requires schools to purchase domestically as much as possible, and the DoD Fresh Program, run by the Department of Defense; or state legislated policies and specific wellness activities. **Within focus groups, the "desire for healthy meals for school 2.0" was named as a goal with needed coordination and advocacy.** Determining to how best source and initiative local food contracts could be a strategy for the future of increasing local food access and increasing economic development opportunities.



IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY  
Extension and Outreach

This institution is an equal opportunity provider. For the full non-discrimination statement or accommodation inquiries, go to [www.extension.iastate.edu/legal](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/legal).

VEA ESTE PÓSTER  
EN ESPAÑOL

[bit.ly/LPCespañol](http://bit.ly/LPCespañol)

