

Proclaim October 24th as National Food Day in Los Angeles County

National Food Day is an annual opportunity to highlight and champion food access, food justice, and sustainable food systems. Founded by the Center for Science in the Public Interest, National Food Day inspires positive change in food policies and highlights the importance of nutritious, culturally relevant food for all.

In Los Angeles County (County), nearly 1 in 3 households (33.2%) face chronic food insecurity¹, lacking consistent access to healthy and affordable foods essential for preventing and managing certain chronic conditions such as heart disease, kidney disease, and diabetes.² Food insecurity has increased steadily since 2021 and disproportionately impacts low-income households, women, young-adults, and communities of color in the County.³ Much of this is due to high food costs, confusion about food assistance eligibility, barriers in language access, and limited healthy options in local stores. These disparities highlight the urgent need for equitable food access for

¹Los Angeles County Office of Health Assessment and Epidemiology. (2023). Los Angeles County Health Survey. Nutrition Insecurity, Reason for Not Eating Healthy Food-Too Expensive. Retrieved October 2, 2024 from <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/ha/LACHSDataTopics2023.htm#N1>

² National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. "About Chronic Disease." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/. Accessed October 9, 2024.

³ USC Dornsife. (2023). Food Insecurity in Los Angeles County, July 2023. Retrieved October 9, 2024 from https://publicexchange.usc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/FoodInsecurityinLACounty_ResearchBrief_July2023_Final.pdf

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all communities. They also highlight the County's need to ensure its efforts to promote food justice incorporate cultural and linguistic strategies since Los Angeles is home to the largest number of Indigenous residents from Mexico or Central America statewide.⁴ The County must strengthen outreach efforts to reach individuals who experience food insecurity and qualify for assistance, but are not enrolled in benefits.⁵

We must strengthen our local food systems in historical food deserts, to promote food sovereignty, which is defined as the right of communities to access sustainable, culturally appropriate food and have control over local food systems⁶, through programs like the Urban Agriculture Incentive Zone. These programs are currently inaccessible to many urban farmers and farmers of color.

To address these challenges, the County Food Equity Roundtable has identified key strategies including enhancing access to local farmers' markets and urban agriculture, reducing food waste, expanding food assistance programs, and promoting food sovereignty. These initiatives not only empower communities, but also work to create a more equitable food system that nourishes everyone in our diverse County.

National Food Day in the County is a time for celebration and action. This year, the Department of Public Health is partnering with the Los Angeles Food Policy Council and the County Food Equity Roundtable to spotlight the importance of food access. Together, they will host engaging educational activities and honor organizations who lead the way in improving food access by recognizing them as Good Food Champions. These efforts emphasize the importance of collective action in advancing food and nutrition equity across the County and taking steps towards a future where nutritious food is a right, not a privilege.

⁴ Lee, Joanna, Lupe Renteria Salome, and Janet Martinez. "Indigenous Migrants in Los Angeles County." USC Equity Research Institute and Comunidades Indigenas en Liderazgo (CIELO), July 2024.

⁵ USC Dornsife. (2023). Food Insecurity in Los Angeles County, July 2023. Retrieved October 9, 2024 from https://publicexchange.usc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/FoodInsecurityinLACounty_ResearchBrief_July2023_Final.pdf

⁶ SeedChange. "Food Sovereignty." WeSeedChange, weseedchange.org/food-sovereignty/. Accessed 9 Oct. 2024.

I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

- 1) Declare October 24, 2024, as National Food Day throughout the County of Los Angeles.
- 2) Direct the Director of the Department of Public Health to encourage community members to participate in Food Day events hosted by the Department of Public Health and partners and learn more by visiting <http://ph.lacounty.gov/nut/>
- 3) Direct the Director of the Department of Public Social Services to report back to the Board in writing within 90 days on the following:
 - a) Lessons learned from the American Rescue Plan funding expended to increase public awareness of food assistance programs, especially on how to best target outreach materials for underserved populations, including, but not limited to Latin American indigenous communities.
 - b) Zip-codes experiencing high food insecurity, but low food assistance program enrollment rates, as well as implementation steps taken to expand CalFresh enrollment access in high need areas.

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(EA/VG/YV/ME)