

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HOLLY J. MITCHELL

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Made in Los Angeles Program Pilot: Harnessing Los Angeles County’s Purchasing Power to Support Local Manufacturing

The Los Angeles County (County) Board of Supervisors (Board) has a long-standing commitment to ensuring that its \$6-\$8 billion in annual purchasing supports small, local, and diverse businesses. In 2021, the Board adopted the Equity in County Contracting motion¹ to expand access for small businesses, community-based organizations, and nonprofits, and to strengthen transparency and accessibility in the County’s procurement processes.

The County has taken several important steps toward increasing transparency and accessibility in County contracting, including establishing the Office of Countywide Contracting within the Internal Services Department and standing up a modern e-procurement system to centralize and streamline contracting and bidding.² The County has also adopted inclusive contracting goals in key industries, including signing on to the Equity in Infrastructure Project Pledge³ to promote equitable contracting processes for infrastructure projects and expand access to wealth-building through County contracting for historically excluded communities.

As the region’s largest market participant, the County has untapped potential to support the growth of local manufacturing businesses that provide high-road career

¹ <https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/157521.pdf>

² <https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/207596.pdf>

³ <https://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/173256.pdf>

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pathways for residents. For example, the County is home to the nation's largest garment manufacturing industry, employing approximately 45,000 garment workers. However, the industry is also notorious for exploitative, unsafe, and unhealthy working conditions – including excessive heat, poor ventilation, unclean workspaces, and inadequate health and safety protocols and equipment. Additionally, though piece-rate pay was outlawed by California in 2022, some garment factories continue to use illegal piece-rate pay systems, paying workers per item produced rather than an hourly wage at or above minimum wage, and the industry is notorious for wage theft and wage and hour violations.⁴

Manufacturers and suppliers that fail to uphold fair and safe workplace practices may be at a competitive advantage when competing for County contracts, as currently structured, because they may be able to underbid responsible contractors who produce or source goods from manufacturers who pay fair wages and maintain humane working conditions. This means contractors providing responsible, safe, and healthy workplace conditions that provide high-road career pathways are at a competitive disadvantage in the marketplace and potentially when competing for County contracts.

The County has an opportunity to pilot an approach to shift this dynamic by harnessing the County's power as a market participant to support and grow a responsible local manufacturing sector. The County has the opportunity to purchase goods that Departments already need from these local manufacturers, both meeting the needs of Departments while fostering the sustainability and growth of responsible local manufacturers at the same time. By helping to build the base of local manufacturers, the County also helps shore up the region's resiliency to market shocks, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic, when local governments had to shift procurement to local manufacturers to access essential personal protective equipment for workers amid international supply chain disruptions.

This approach follows best practices from other jurisdictions to support responsible manufacturing through public procurement. The San Francisco Board of Supervisors passed the Sweatfree Contracting Ordinance in 2005, requiring city contractors to comply with minimum human rights and labor standards. Other jurisdictions, including the cities

⁴ <https://garmentworkercenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/DirtyThreads.pdf>

of Los Angeles, Seattle, and Austin have adopted similar ordinances to foster the marketplace of responsible production facilities through their rental and purchase of products, such as uniforms and clothing, and ensure public procurement does not inadvertently support irresponsible workplace conditions and manufacturing practices.

The Board has unanimously deepened its commitment to equity in contracting as a tool for economic justice. We must prioritize using the County's purchasing power not only to expand access, but also to drive high-road employment, support local businesses, and build resiliency to economic shocks. By piloting a *Made in Los Angeles Program*, we can advance this vision.

I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

1. Direct the Director of the Internal Services Department (ISD), in coordination with the Director of the Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO), to design the *Made in Los Angeles Program* pilot (pilot) and report back to the Board in writing in one hundred and twenty (120) days. The pilot should be implemented for twelve months, and the pilot design should be inclusive of, but not limited to:
 - a. A recommended program to cultivate a pool of qualified businesses that manufacture goods in Los Angeles County (County). This program could include a Master Agreement of qualified manufacturers in the County.
 - b. A recommended definition of what qualifies as a business establishment that manufactures their goods in the County. This definition should include minimum criteria a local manufacturer must meet to qualify, such as adherence to responsible labor practices and compliance with applicable laws and regulations. The definition should also include what manufacturers qualify as local to Los Angeles County.
 - c. A list of products currently produced in the County that meet the needs and requirements of County departments. From this list, ISD should recommend product(s) to procure from qualified local manufacturers for the duration of the pilot.
 - d. A recommended targeted percentage, dollar amount, or other portion of

departmental procurement funding to be reserved by County departments for the pilot. This portion should come from existing and available funding already allocated for the procurement of goods and should be manageable within current departmental budgets, such as being budget-neutral or resulting in cost savings.

- e. Recommended department(s) to participate in the pilot. These departments should include one or more that currently procure goods from outside the County (such as from manufacturers in other counties, states, or foreign countries or through a Group Purchasing Organization), but for which products are also produced by qualified local manufacturers. For the duration of the pilot, ISD will partner with the identified department(s) to shift procurement of those goods to qualified local manufacturers, subject to recommendations in the report.
 - f. A recommended outreach and communications strategy to engage local manufacturers and invite them to apply to participate in the pilot.
 - g. A recommendation for how to align with efforts underway by DEO to establish and promote a “Locally Owned” label for products manufactured in the County as part of the “Shop Local LA County” campaign.
 - h. A recommendation that ISD regularly report to the Board on implementation and findings, in collaboration with participating departments, as well as a final report with recommendations for a permanent program based on learnings from the pilot.
 - i. Recommended metrics to track pilot program implementation and impact.
2. Direct the Director of DEO, in coordination with the Director of ISD, to convene a stakeholder working group to advise on the design and structure of the pilot to ensure it reflects the reality of manufacturing in the County and meets the needs and requirements of the County departments, and to report back to the Board in writing in 120 days. The stakeholders should include industry

organizations such as the Alliance for Responsible Apparel Manufacturing and Purchasing and the Made in LA Coalition; worker organizations such as the Garment Worker Center and Labor 411; and key County department staff such as procurement and contracting managers, especially those in departments with comparatively large procurement of goods, such as the Department of Health Services.

3. Direct the Director of DEO, in coordination with the Director of ISD, to create an online interest form on the DEO, ISD, "Doing Business With," or other County webpage where local manufacturers and stakeholders can express interest in participating in the pilot and sign up to receive updates on the pilot and any future actions related to this motion or the pilot, and report back to the Board in writing in 120 days on the completion of the form.

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