

# Good Food Purchasing Program Cook County Update

2024

FEBRUARY 2025



Cook County DEPT of  
Public Health

**BUILDING  
HEALTHIER  
COMMUNITIES**



**CHICAGO  
FOOD POLICY  
ACTION COUNCIL**



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We would like to thank the following food system stakeholders for contributing photos to this report:

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Photo Credit: Mother Carr



# Introduction

## **About Cook County Department of Public Health**

Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH) is the state-certified public health department serving 2.3 million residents in suburban Cook County, the second largest county in the nation. It is an affiliate of Cook County Health, one of the largest public safety-net health care systems in the country. CCDPH is responsible for protecting the health and optimizing the conditions for health and wellness for residents of its jurisdiction through regulatory enforcement, monitoring and responding to public health threats, policy and systems change, referrals to health and social services, and community partnerships to address upstream drivers of health.

## **About the Chicago Food Policy Action Council**

The Chicago Food Policy Action Council (CFPAC) is a local non-profit organization that co-develops, facilitates, advocates for, and supports implementation of policies that advance food justice for all residents across Chicago and the region. CFPAC specifically focuses on advocacy, network building, resource sharing and cooperative movement to dismantle systemic racism in the food system and lift Black, Indigenous, and Communities of Color. CCDPH has partnered closely with CFPAC on Cook County's Good Food Purchasing Policy implementation since the resolution was approved in May 2018 (Resolution 18-1650), which specifically identified CFPAC as a key implementation partner.

## **About this report**

CCDPH and CFPAC collaborated on this report to provide a public update on progress made with advancing the Cook County Good Food Purchasing Program (Resolution 18-1650), 2022-2024.

In this report, we provide an overview of Cook County GFPP, including a summary of progress made in the following areas:

- **Implementing GFPP** at Cook County departments, including Cook County Health, Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center and Cook County Sheriff's Office
- **Convening stakeholders** to provide GFPP oversight and direction
- **Building capacity** of local food producers and businesses to support their sustainable growth
- **Accelerating this work** by leveraging the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding
- **Looking ahead** to what's next for Cook County GFPP
- **Staying connected** with the local good food movement

This report also includes a one-page overview of the Cook County Good Food Purchasing Program on page 14.

# About Cook County GFPP

In May 2018, Cook County became the third local government in the U.S. to adopt the Good Food Purchasing Program (GFPP), aligning with a national movement to create a more equitable and sustainable food system. In partnership with the Center for Good Food Purchasing, the Chicago Food Policy Action Council, and Cook County's public meal programs, the County is actively implementing the GFPP framework, which prioritizes racial equity, transparency, and accountability in food procurement.

Cook County Government, the City of Chicago, Chicago Public Schools, and Chicago Park District all committed to the GFPP between 2017 and 2018. Now, the County and City oversee more than \$118 million in food purchases annually through meal programs and vending – with total food-related expenditures likely exceeding \$300 million annually, with concessions and special events.

## GFPP CORE VALUES

### EQUITY \* ACCOUNTABILITY \* TRANSPARENCY

The GFPP guides institutions to shift food purchasing dollars toward five core values:



**1**

#### Local & Community-Based Economies

Support diverse, small to mid-sized food producers in the region.

**2**

#### Animal Welfare

Work with producers who provide healthy and humane conditions for farm animals.



**3**

#### Environmental Sustainability

Reduce carbon footprint and source from producers that use sustainable methods.

**4**

#### Fair Treatment of Workers

Source from suppliers that provide safe working conditions and fair compensation for food chain workers.



**5**

#### Community Health & Nutrition

Promote health and well-being through meals provided in public settings.



## **GFPP Process**

Public departments and agencies work with CCDPH, CFPAC, and the Center for Good Food Purchasing to:

- **Assess:** Analyze their current food spend.
- **Goal-set:** Set goals to increase purchases aligned with Good Food Purchasing Standards.
- **Codify:** Insert GFPP expectations and requirements into new vendor solicitations and contracts; when appropriate.
- **Act:** Take actions toward meeting GFPP goals.
- **Track:** Track progress and celebrate success.

## **Participating Cook County Departments and Agencies:**

The following departments and agencies procure food for public meal programs, concessions, vending, catering, and special programs:

- Cook County Health
- Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center
- Cook County Sheriff's Office



# Implementing GFPP

## Cook County Health

### **Commitment to GFPP**

Cook County Health (CCH) has been a dedicated participant in the Cook County GFPP since 2018. CCH participated in the Good Food in Healthcare Cohort with other Chicagoland hospital systems. CFPAC and the Alliance for Health Equity at the Illinois Public Health Institute, with support from The Doula Part, launched the cohort in May 2021. The goals of this cohort were to explore hospital food procurement processes and good food purchasing strategies, as well as strengthen relationships between farms and businesses owned by local Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) and hospitals.

### **Progress Assessment**

CCH completed their baseline assessment in 2022, despite the challenges the COVID-19 pandemic response presented. According to their first assessment, CCH has made strides in local investments, directing \$145,331 toward locally processed and manufactured goods. Further, CCH purchased approximately \$359,069 from a local distributor.

### **Solicitations and Contracts**

CCDPH and CFPAC will continue to work with CCH and Morrison Company, their Food Service Management Company (FSMC), to identify additional opportunities to align food purchasing with GFPP values, like local and community-based economies.

### **Looking Ahead**

In 2024, CCH, in collaboration with CCDPH, CFPAC, and the Center for Good Food Purchasing, began to develop an action plan to align food procurement, preparation and service practices to meet GFPP standards. CCH will prepare for a progress assessment in 2025 and will continue to work with Morrison Company to set targets to meet GFPP standards.





# Implementing GFPP

## Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center

### **Commitment to GFPP**

The Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center (JTDC) has been a dedicated participant in the Cook County GFPP since 2018. JTDC completed their first GFPP assessment in Fall 2020. Baseline findings included investing over \$144,000 in local food businesses, supporting Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (MWBE), and sourcing from unionized companies in their supply chain.

### **Progress Assessment**

In their second GFPP assessment ('21-22), JTDC collected purchasing data from contracted food vendors, with a food spend of \$1.9M. Their evaluation covered the provision of over 322,000 self-operated meals. JTDC earned extra points in the Nutrition Value Category for serving culturally relevant meals and providing nutrition education.

### **Solicitations and Contracts**

JTDC successfully integrated GFPP language in a variety of their food solicitations, including frozen food, poultry, and meat.

### **Looking Ahead**

JTDC is developing an updated GFPP action plan based on the recent progress assessment with a goal of implementing further improvements, including working with a technical assistance provider to conduct scratch cooking training for food service staff and identify opportunities to offer more whole, minimally processed food on the JTDC menu between 2024-2026.



# Implementing GFPP

## Cook County Sheriff's Office

### Commitment to GFPP

The Cook County Sheriff's Office (CCSO) has been a dedicated participant in the Cook County GFPP since 2018. CCSO completed their first GFPP assessment in fall 2021 and the baseline findings highlighted significant achievements, including investing over \$208,848 into locally processed and/or manufactured goods from family- or cooperatively owned suppliers. In 2022, CCSO also executed a new food service management contract with CBM Premiere that included GFPP implementation and reporting expectations (that became a national model for carceral institutions).

### Progress Assessment

In 2024, CCSO collected food purchasing data with CBM Premiere, their Food Service Management Company (FSMC), as part of their second GFPP assessment. This assessment analyzed about \$6 million of annual food purchases. Significant progress was made towards the GFPP goals, including:

- \$651,000 invested in locally processed foods and partnered with small suppliers from the Greater Chicago area.
- CCSO furthered its support for ethical sourcing by investing \$228,000 in suppliers with union contracts, promoting safe and healthy working conditions in the food supply chain.

### Solicitations and Contracts

CCSO began sourcing from The Common Market, a nonprofit food hub that connects local farmers with institutional buyers. In 2023, CCSO purchased over 30,000 lbs of apples from a local Michigan orchard, securing a year-round supply of fresh produce for their menu.

### Looking Ahead

CCSO will initiate an action planning phase to advance their GFPP goals based on the recent assessment. CCSO will continue to work with CBM Premiere to set targets to meet GFPP standards.



The Common Market making a local apple delivery to CCSO from Flamm Orchard (Cobden, IL)



# Convening Stakeholders

## Cook County Good Food Taskforce

### About the Cook County Good Food Taskforce

Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH) and the Chicago Food Policy Action Council (CFPAC) convene the Cook County Good Food Taskforce. Taskforce members include relevant Cook County departments and agencies as well as local leaders in the Cook County food system. The goal of the County Good Food Taskforce is to discuss challenges, share solutions, celebrate successes, and identify collective opportunities to advance GFPP implementation in Cook County.

Since 2018, CCDPH and CFPAC co-host quarterly Cook County Good Food Taskforce meetings to guide the County's GFPP implementation forward and share updates. During recent meetings, we shared information regarding the [new GFPP standards 3.0](#) released by the Center for Good Food Purchasing and highlighted the [Metro Chicago Impact Dashboard](#) that launched in 2023. Participants were also able to learn about GFPP expansion efforts regarding good food culture building activities, upcoming buyer and supplier events, and the transition of GFPI to a [coalition model](#) overseen by the inaugural Metro Chicago GFPI Steering Council.

**Looking ahead:** CFPAC and CCDPH will continue to convene quarterly meetings of the Cook County Good Food Taskforce to develop strategies for greater GFPP implementation and compliance.



# COOK COUNTY GOOD FOOD TASKFORCE MEMBERS

## County Departments and Agencies

- Cook County Bureau of Economic Development
- Cook County Commissioner Alma Anaya's Office
- Cook County Department of Environment & Sustainability
- Cook County Department of Public Health
- Cook County Health
- Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center
- Cook County Land Bank Authority
- Cook County Office of the President
- Cook County Sheriff's Office
- Forest Preserve District of Cook County



Photo Credit: Opportunity Knocks courtesy of Chicago Food Policy Action Council

## Food System Stakeholders

- Chicago Botanic Gardens, Windy City Harvest
- Chicago Food Policy Action Council
- Chicago Zoological Society
- Cook County Land Bank Authority
- HEAL Food Alliance
- IFF
- Illinois Food Justice Alliance
- Illinois Stewardship Alliance
- Illinois Public Health Institute, Alliance for Health Equity
- Illinois Tech, Food Systems Lab
- Opportunity Knocks
- Proviso Partners for Health
- Real Foods Collective
- Roosevelt University Policy Research Collaborative
- South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association
- The Conservation Fund
- University of Illinois Extension - Cook County Local Food & Small Farms and SNAP-Ed Program
- Urban Growers Collective
- USDA
- West 40

# Building Capacity

Helping local food producers and businesses grow

## About the Suburban Cook County Microgrant Program

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, CFPAC launched the [Suburban Cook County Microgrant Program](#) in 2022 and distributed \$234,000 of CDC Health Equity Grant funding, in partnership with CCDPH, to six Cook County food businesses. These microgrants supported the local food businesses during approximately a 12-month period (2022-2023) to expand access to healthy, locally sourced emergency meals and produce in food insecure communities in suburban Cook County, with the longer-term aim of building more permanent, sustainable infrastructure and opportunities.

The microgrant program awardees include:

- Centro de Trabajadores Unidos based in Chicago
- Food Hero based in Chicago
- It Takes a Village Community Farm based in Sauk Village
- Mother Carr's Farm based in Lynwood
- Roots, Eggs & Greens based in Chicago Heights
- Street Vendors Association of Chicago based in Chicago

## Suburban Cook County Microgrant Program Impact

Collectively, these six food businesses distributed nearly 52,000 additional healthy emergency meals in west and south suburban Cook County communities most impacted by COVID-19. They also provided nutrition education to more than 13,000 individuals. As a part of their award, each microgrant recipient also received tailored technical assistance from business support organizations: the Southland Development Authority, University of Illinois Extension's Local Food & Small Farms team, and Real Foods Collective.



# Building Capacity

Helping local food producers and businesses grow

## About the Metro Chicago GFPI Community Fund

CFPAC launched the [Metro Chicago Good Food Purchasing Initiative \(GFPI\) Community Fund](#) in 2023 to increase access to GFPP-aligned produce and food products in the Metro Chicago region by financially supporting systematically marginalized, local farms and food businesses striving to meet GFPP standards. Food producers and businesses within a 250-mile radius of Chicago are eligible to apply for grants between \$40,000-\$80,000. Recipients also receive tailored technical assistance and training.

The Metro Chicago GFPI Community Fund is being funded, in part, by CCDPH American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding that was awarded to CFPAC, in addition to funds from the Rockefeller Foundation, Builders Initiative, and the Chicago Community Trust and Kinship Foundation's Food:Land:Opportunity Grant. CCDPH provided over \$1 million in ARPA funding for the Metro Chicago GFPI Community Fund to be awarded over three years (2023-2026) to local farmers and food businesses based in suburban Cook County.

## Metro Chicago GFPI Community Fund Recipients

The 2023 fund recipients received more than \$100,000 total in funding and included two food businesses that serve suburban Cook County:

- **Food Hero**, the first Latino-led culinary school with a focus on communities like Little Village, Pilsen, Cicero, Berwyn, and Blue Island.
- **Roots, Eggs, and Greens**, a nonprofit organization providing healthy sustainable food resources, nutritional education, and employment to people in Ford Heights and Chicago Heights.

In 2024, nearly \$400,000 in GFPI Community Fund awards were giving to seven farm and food businesses serving suburban Cook County:

- **Chicago Urban Farm Solutions** based in Lynwood
- **Hope Center** based in Blue Island
- **Just Roots Chicago** at It Takes A Village Community Farm based in Sauk Village
- **Mother Carr's Farm** based in Lynwood
- **Real Foods Collective** based in Maywood
- **CoGro Biodynamic Growers (Roots, Eggs, and Greens)** based in Chicago Heights
- **Urban Growers Collective** based in Chicago Heights

# Accelerating This Work

## Leveraging American Rescue Plan Act Funding

### **About Cook County NT042 Good Food Purchasing Program Project**

On March 11, 2021, President Joseph R. Biden signed the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA). ARPA is an ambitious federal initiative to stimulate the American economy, support residents, and curb the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Cook County received more than \$1 billion through ARPA. The County managed a robust process to develop a responsible, comprehensive, and equitable spending plan to use ARPA one-time resources to support both immediate recovery needs and long-term transformative initiatives.

CCDPH received \$4.5 million dollars in ARPA funding to support Cook County Good Food Purchasing Program through 2026, including the following project goals:

- Continue to advance Cook County GFPP implementation in partnership with food-procuring Cook County departments and agencies to support a more just, equitable, sustainable and healthy food system in suburban Cook County
- Accelerate implementation of Cook County good food purchasing by further aligning Cook County's procurement regulations with GFPP and transforming institutional procurement processes
- Provide suburban Cook County Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) food workers, producers, and suppliers more opportunities for sustainable growth

### **NT042 Project Activities**

This investment has increased staff capacity to support GFPP implementation at Cook County departments/agencies as well as conduct additional assessments to track the progress being made toward the GFPP goals of County's meal programs. We are bringing additional resources like scratch cooking training and food waste diversion planning to County departments to further advance their GFPP goals. Funding is also be used for deeper research to identify opportunities to shift Cook County's procurement policies and process to align better with GFPP.

### **Our NT042 GFPP Partners**

CCDPH has subcontracted with the following organizations to support this project:

- Chicago Food Policy Action Council
- The Center for Good Food Purchasing
- ChangeLab Solutions
- Roosevelt University Policy Research Collaborative
- Beyond Green Partners
- Illinois Sustainable Technology Center



# Looking Ahead

## What's Next for Cook County GFPP

### **Advancing Cook County GFPP Implementation**

CCDPH and CFPAC will continue to work with CCH, JTDC, and CCSO to track and analyze their food purchases, update their GFPP action plans, and tackle plan recommendations. CCDPH will continue to leverage ARPA funding to offer additional resources and support to County departments, including scratch cooking training and food waste prevention/diversion planning.

### **Developing an Equitable Supply Chain**

CFPAC will launch an updated [GFPI Guide for Growers & Food Businesses](#) to include additional information around food production policies and certifications as well as more case studies and information relevant to food producers looking to supply community food access sites and/or institutional markets.

CFPAC will expand the [Buyer/Supplier Mixer Series](#) and continue providing Equitable Supply Chain Development assistance, hosting events aimed at supporting the various needs of producers while connecting institutional partners to our GFPP aligned producers.

The [Metro Chicago GFPI Community Fund](#) will continue to support the awardees with technical assistance throughout their grant period in support of their community meal site and institutional selling goals.

### **Building a Good Food Culture**

CFPAC and CCDPH will be partnering to host the [20th Annual Chicago Food Justice Summit](#), March 12-14, 2025, which will serve as a gathering point for Cook County farmers, food justice advocates, and public officials to dig into the challenges and opportunities for building a more just, sustainable, healthy, and racially equitable food system.



Photo Credit: Food Hero

# Cook County Good Food Purchasing Program (GFPP)

## At-a-Glance Fact Sheet



GFPP is a nationally recognized, cross-cutting procurement strategy that the Cook County Board approved by resolution in 2018. Cook County Department of Public Health and Chicago Food Policy Action Council are leading County implementation.



Cook County spends more than \$15 million annually on food to serve and sell at Cook County Health, Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention, and Cook County Sheriff's Office. Each department is implementing strategies to align food purchases with GFPP core values.



**\$750K**

INVESTED IN LOCAL MINORITY-OWNED FOOD BUSINESSES

Nearly \$750K has been invested between 2022-2024 in local food businesses serving suburban Cook County communities, with additional investments to be made through 2026.



**\$4.5M**

IN ARPA FUNDING TO ADVANCE GFPP WORK

CCDPH is leveraging \$4.5 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding through 2026 to accelerate County's GFPP implementation, while also developing a more equitable supply chain and good food culture.

## GFPP CORE VALUES

EQUITY \* ACCOUNTABILITY \* TRANSPARENCY

The GFPP guides institutions to shift food purchasing dollars toward five core values:



**1**

### Local & Community-Based Economies

Support diverse, small to mid-sized food producers in the region.

**2**

### Animal Welfare

Work with producers who provide healthy and humane conditions for farm animals.



**3**

### Environmental Sustainability

Reduce carbon footprint and source from producers that use sustainable methods.

**4**

### Fair Treatment of Workers

Source from suppliers that provide safe working conditions and fair compensation for food chain workers



**5**

### Community Health & Nutrition

Promote health & well-being through meals provided in public settings.



# Staying Connected

Join our local good food movement



Photo Credit: Chicago Urban Farm Solutions  
courtesy of Chicago Food Policy Action Council

## Key Partners

Cook County's GFPP implementation is led by Cook County Department of Public Health in partnership with the Chicago Food Policy Action Council

## Contact

**Amy O'Rourke, MPH**

Director, Chronic Disease Prevention & Control

Cook County Department of Public Health

Phone 708-446-4141

Email [aorourke@cookcountyhhs.org](mailto:aorourke@cookcountyhhs.org)

Funding for Cook County's Good Food Purchasing Program implementation is made possible with federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds allocated to CCDPH.



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**Metro Chicago Good Food**  
**Purchasing Initiative**