FINDING FOOD

Mapping Food Procurement Strategies in the City of Chicago and Cook County, IL

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The Good Food Purchasing Policy (GFPP) is a values-based procurement system that serves as a commitment from local government departments and agencies to ethically source food for their meal programs. Enacted in 2017 by the City of Chicago and 2018 by Cook County, the Good Food Purchasing Policy is being implemented by the Chicago Food Policy Action Council (CFPAC).

The City of Chicago and Cook County purchase more than $118 million in food for their institutional meal service programs annually (1). CFPAC’s role in supporting and continuing the implementation and expansion of GFPP is one of collaboration between stakeholders, local government agencies, food service management companies, and local farmers and business-owners.

GFPP also acts as a mechanism to drive supply-chain development. As more bids are submitted for food vendors by local governments under the structure of the Good Food Purchasing Policy, the contract and food landscape for City-funded and County-funded food service programs will shift in support of the values established by the Center for Good Food Purchasing.
Good Food Purchasing Values

The Good Food Purchasing Policy follows five core values established through the Center for Good Food Purchasing (2). These values include target certifications and methods to measure success in program implementation. The five core values guide agencies and departments to procure nutritious, ethically produced food from local food service management companies and vendors.

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<th>Local Economies</th>
<th>Support diverse, family and cooperative owned, small and mid-sized agricultural and food processing operations within the local area or region.</th>
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<td>Environmental Sustainability</td>
<td>Source from producers that employ sustainable production systems to reduce or eliminate synthetic pesticides and fertilizers.</td>
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<td>Valued Workforce</td>
<td>Ensure that food suppliers respect workers' rights to freedom of association and to bargain collectively for better wages and working conditions, free from retaliation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal Welfare</td>
<td>Ensure that food suppliers respect workers' rights to freedom of association and to bargain collectively for better wages and working conditions, free from retaliation.</td>
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<td>Nutrition</td>
<td>Promote health and well-being by offering generous portions of vegetables, fruit, whole grains, and minimally processed foods, while reducing salt, added sugars, saturated fats, and red meat consumption and eliminating artificial additives</td>
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Values and Visions of the Good Food Purchasing Policy, adapted from the Center for Good Food Purchasing
Good Food Purchasing Kumu Map

To make GFPP-related data and contracts available, shareable, and transparent to the public, CFPAC created a dashboard system to track changes and updates as they become available. To further this goal, a kumu asset map was created as a public facing tool to visualize departments, agencies, and food providers that are covered under the GFPP.

Plotting this data in an asset map shows the connections between the stakeholders involved in GFPP and presents it in a form similar to a flow chart. As contract information became available, data was entered into the CFPAC databases for Cook County and the City of Chicago, which was then transferred to the kumu map.

The Good Food Purchasing Program Connections map created by CFPAC staff visualizes data from local government and food service management partners engaged in GFPP in 2021. Click the hyperlink to view the interactive map.
Visualizing Connections and Contracts in kumu

Data democratization and transparency is important for any local government system. When addressing policies that impact food and agriculture, it is important that data remains accessible to researchers, other government officials, as well as the public that benefit from those programs. Visualizing the contracts from the departments and food service management companies engaged in GFPP builds off the flow of information between these agencies and CFPAC. Contractual information is mostly accessible online through the City of Chicago and Cook County Government procurement websites. However, many food-related contracts may not be as easily found, particularly those that have a long lifespan.

The GFPP Connections map shows contract relationships between local government agencies and food vendors. This graphic shows the relationship between Chicago Public Schools (Local Government) and Aramark (Food Service Management).

Each entity involved in food purchasing at the City or County level is represented by a circle that changes size in relation to the contract amount in dollars. Local government agencies and departments flow into food service management companies and vendors.

Food service management companies and vendors that are awarded contracts with local government departments are shown receiving funds from the local government agency.
Pop-ups are generated when users click on each department, food service management company, or vendor. Each vendor, department, or agency involved with GFPP can be located using the search feature, or by selecting a tag, which filters out certain entities that procure or provide specific goods. The graphic below shows the information collected for the Aramark contract with Chicago Public Schools.

Each pop-up contains the annual contract amount, expiration date, and whether or not GFPP is active in the contract.

Aramark

FOOD SERVICE MANAGEMENT

Aramark Corporation, known commonly as Aramark, is an American food service, facilities, and uniform services provider to clients in areas including education, healthcare, business, prisons, and leisure.

Type and Tags are filter-features provided for users to sort and search through the map for companies and departments procuring and producing certain foods.
To what extent have City and County government agencies that purchase food implemented GFPP?

The Good Food Purchasing Initiative Evaluation Framework developed in 2019 established goals for the implementation process within Chicago and Cook County. Within the timeframe that GFPP has been adopted at the City and County levels, multiple departments and agencies have solicited Requests for Proposals (RFPs) and awarded contracts within the guidelines.

It is important to note that the COVID-19 pandemic stalled opportunities for implementation and growth of the Good Food Purchasing Program within Chicago and Cook County. Between 2020 and 2021, GFPI Coordinators and local government agencies worked to re-evaluate their RFPs to include standards for GFPP adoption for new food-related contracts (1).

The GFPP Connections kumu map provides visual confirmation of compliance with the Good Food Purchasing Initiative and can serve as an indicator to evaluation teams as well as the public to track agencies that have awarded contracts.
Institutional Partners Implementing GFPP

Currently, the kumu map reflects institutional partners in Cook County and the City of Chicago that are in different stages of implementation. Sister agencies and departments that have active GFPP contracts with vendors are colored in, while departments that have not yet implemented contracts are grey. Contracts continue to be updated and awarded. As of 2020, these local public agencies and departments within the City of Chicago and Cook County are implementing or are in the process of implementing GFPP:

- Chicago Public Schools
- Chicago Parks District
- Chicago Department of Family and Support Services
- Chicago City Colleges
- Chicago Housing Authority
- Chicago Department of Aviation
- Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events
- Chicago Department of Assets, Information & Services
- Cook County Office of the Chief Procurement Officer
- Cook County Department of Corrections
- Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center
- Cook County Health
- Cook County Bureau of Asset Management

Source: Good Food Purchasing Initiative of Metro Chicago 2020 Annual Report
Created in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the protests for the Movement for Black Lives in the summer of 2020, the Food Access Hub is CFPAC’s resource for researchers and the public to source information and data pertaining to food procurement in Chicago and Greater Cook County. The project is in partnership with local government agencies and university research groups.

The Food Access Hub features the Chicago and Cook Food Locator Map, which will host an interactive web map using ArcGIS Online, hosts a collection of grocery stores, WIC Clinics, farmers markets that accept and match SNAP, food pantries, and other agencies where food is distributed. The data are collected from organizations such as the Chicago Department of Public Health, the Cook County Department of Health, and the Chicago Park District.
The Food Locator Map in the Food Access Hub will host the data that contains the locations of sites for food distribution and sale. The 2020 Food Locator Map contains data listing grocery store locations, food pantries, WIC Sites, pickup sites for Chicago Public Schools’ pandemic meal service program, Chicago Farmers Markets, and Love Fridges.

Organizing and compiling this data provides benefits for researchers and the public alike. Currently, the data for these food and hunger-related sites are not compiled in one location. In comparison to maps created in other states, this Food Access Hub will act as a food system mapping and reporting tool. Researchers and the public alike will have access to this data, and it will primarily serve people in Chicago or Cook County to identify sources for food assistance.
StoryMaps

One of the other features in the Food Access Hub will host StoryMaps created with ArcGIS Online to uplift stories featuring community partner organizations around Chicago and Cook County. StoryMaps is an app within the ArcGIS Online suite that allows users to create blog-like narratives that incorporate text, images, audio, and geolocated data on maps to share information. StoryMaps is an accessible tool that can add narrative to more complex web-based maps. As a part of CFPAC’s goal for the Food Access Hub, these stories and data will paint a picture of the foodscape in Chicago and Cook County.

Two StoryMaps were created to feature community organizations and businesses in Chicago. Emerson National Hunger Fellows, Fatima Wahidi and Artis Trice, created these StoryMaps to feature minority-owned businesses, gardens, and co-operatives.

These screenshots show the title slides of StoryMaps that will be featured in the Food Access Hub.
As contracts continue to expire within the Cook County Government and the City of Chicago’s agencies and departments and Requests for Proposals are launched, the institutional purchases will continue to shift towards the values outlined within the Good Food Purchasing Policy. Although some contracts will not expire for many years, CFPAC staff continue to work with both local government departments on the purchasing side and local vendors on the supply side to support implementation.

With the launch of the Food Access Hub, people in Chicago and Cook County will be able to use the tools to find food, research and analyze food procurement resources, and learn about community organizations and local businesses that are transforming the food system around them.
1) **The Center for Good Food Purchasing** established values and target certifications to measure success in program implementation. The five core values guide agencies and departments to procure nutritious, ethically produced food from local food service management companies and vendors.

2) **The Good Food Purchasing Initiative of Metro Chicago 2020 Annual Report** details the successes and challenges of implementation. This report contains data and information compiled by CFPAC, Cook County Department of Public Health, and the Chicago Department of Public Health.