

**COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
TUESDAY, JUNE 04, 2024**

MINUTE ORDER NO. 12

SUBJECT: CREATING A REGIONAL COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN TO ADDRESS FOOD JUSTICE FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO REGION (DISTRICTS: ALL)

OVERVIEW

Access to healthy foods affects a person's nutrition, health, dental, physical and mental well-being, longevity and quality of life. Unfortunately, many communities, particularly those in low-income areas or rural regions, lack access to affordable and nutritious food options, which can lead to disparities in health outcomes. Healthy food options are vital in ensuring that individuals can lead a healthy life and reduce the risk of chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and certain cancers. The Centers of Disease Control (CDC) report that in 2022 702,880 individuals, or 21.4%, have died because of diseases of the heart and 101,209, or 3.1%, have died because of diabetes. In 2020 cancer, heart disease and stroke, diabetes, and lung disease caused 45% of all deaths in San Diego County. Healthy food options are vital in ensuring that individuals can lead a healthy life and reduce the risk of chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and certain cancers.

Studies have shown that without access to healthy and affordable food, individuals may consume foods that are higher in calories and lower in nutritional value. Healthy food choices in food retailers and food service settings give people the autonomy over their diets, rather than having the choice made because of access. Beyond healthy food options, food access involves other aspects of healthy living such as transportation and proximity. Unfortunately, differences in food access vary across race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status further reinforcing health disparities between communities. Grocery chains often determine that they will not be profitable in low-income or low-density areas, leaving low-income and rural residents to travel longer distances to shop for groceries or buy from expensive outlets, like convenience stores or fast-food restaurants.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines a food desert as an area with limited access to affordable and nutritious food, particularly in low income neighborhoods, low-income census tracts where residents lack easy access to a supermarket or large grocery store, areas with a poverty rate greater than or equal to 20% or a median family income not exceeding 80% of the median family income in urban areas, or 80% of the statewide median family income in nonurban areas, and census tracts where at least 33% or 500 people of the population live 1 mile (10 miles for rural areas) from a large grocery store or supermarket. Per the US Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food Access Research Atlas, approximately 25 percent of all census tracts in San Diego County are food deserts.

As the County of San Diego continues to work to address food insecurity, which is a household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food, and food deserts in the region it is vital that we work with partners and stakeholders who have been working to address these issues. There are numerous Community Base Organizations (CBOs), non-profit, and organizations that are working tirelessly to reach a food secure region. Today's board actions will contribute to increasing healthy food access throughout the region by ensuring we are continuing to foster a collaborative network between the County of San Diego and stakeholders, service providers, community leaders, local farmers, and other governmental agencies working to address food insecurity.

Through a collaborative effort, we can identify gaps in service needs and barriers for low-income and disadvantaged communities' access to healthy and locally grown food. This collaborative approach ensures that interventions are tailored to address specific challenges faced by different communities. These policy actions foster collaboration, accountability, and resource mobilization, laying the groundwork for sustainable solutions to improve food access and reduce food insecurity in San Diego County.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

CHAIRWOMAN NORA VARGAS AND SUPERVISOR MONICA MONTGOMERY STEPPE

1. Direct the Interim Chief Administrative Office, or designee, to return back within 150 days with recommendations for Board consideration:
 - a) Convene a regional summit of stakeholders, service providers, community leaders, local farmers, and other governmental agencies.
 - b) The recommendations should include creation of a community action plan which would include staff recommendations for the County of San Diego to implement. This action plan should also provide a clear path informed by best practices and include continued community engagement to further understand the gaps in service needs and barriers for low income and disadvantaged communities' access to healthy and locally grown food.
2. Direct the Interim Chief Administrative Office, or designee to provide a 90-day report back, on the status of the regional summit, community action plan, and next steps.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

Low-income and rural people in the United States may have limited access because of their distance to affordable food options. Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) experience the highest rates of poverty, food insecurity, and diet related illness. BIPOC communities also experience significant disparities in farm, business, and land ownership, limiting opportunities for community wealth building, power, and leadership. Prior research shows that food insecurity varies based on demographic characters. Black and Hispanic people, immigrants, and people with disabilities are more likely to be impacted by food insecurity. In 2021 in San Diego County, 10.2% of residents were enrolled in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) with 20.2% of enrollees being Black or African American, 17.1% Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, 15.7% Hispanic or Latino, and 12.5% of Some Other Race. In comparison, only 5.8% of the enrollees were White. Enrollment in SNAP was also higher among immigrants compared to non-immigrants and people with reported disabilities compared to people without reported disabilities. By identifying County programs and establishing ongoing revenue streams, we are ensuring that we are building healthier and stronger communities.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT

Today's actions contribute to the County of San Diego's Sustainability Goals of engaging the community in meaningful ways and continually seek stakeholder input to foster inclusive and sustainable communities and providing just and equitable access to County services by investing in building resilience to vulnerable populations in partnerships with communities, and protecting the health and wellbeing of everyone in the region by expanding the market for healthy, sustainable, and local food for communities who have long been underserved and may be affected by the impacts of living in a food desert or having other barriers like income or transportation access.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with today’s recommended actions through they may result in future fiscal impacts. Staff will return to the Board of Supervisors for consideration and approval of any such impacts. At this time, there will be no change in the net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

ACTION:

ON MOTION of Supervisor Vargas, seconded by Supervisor Montgomery Steppe, the Board of Supervisors took action as recommended.

AYES: Vargas, Anderson, Lawson-Remer, Montgomery Steppe, Desmond

State of California)
County of San Diego) §

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true and correct copy of the Original entered in the Minutes of the Board of Supervisors.

ANDREW POTTER
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors



Signed
by Andrew Potter