

Establishing Healthier Food Service Guidelines for Government Facilities

Government agencies buy food to provide meals for people in child care centers, public hospitals, jails, and senior programs. Agencies also purchase food or contract with vendors to sell to employees and the public from vending machines, cafeterias, and concession stands. Government procurement policies provide guidance on how agencies purchase goods and services.

Many state and local governments incorporate food service guidelines (FSGs) into food procurement policies and contracts to ensure that food served and sold is healthier. FSGs provide standards for nutrition, facility efficiency, environmental support, community development, food safety, and behavioral design for use in food service concession and vending operations.



TYPE OF POLICY

States and localities use executive orders, legislation, and/or rules and regulations to institutionalize healthier food service practices. The choice of policy depends on state and local law and practice.

Executive Order: At the state or local level, the chief executive can issue an executive order requiring government agencies to follow FSGs for all food served and sold on government property. The chief executive is the governor, the mayor or the county chief executive officer. Generally the health department takes the lead developing the FSGs or applying existing guidelines such as the [Food Service Guidelines for Federal Facilities](#).

Legislation: A state legislature can enact a statute or city or county council can enact an ordinance requiring that all food sold or served on government property meet FSGs. Again, they typically direct the health department to establish the guidelines or incorporate existing guidelines.

Rule or Regulation: In some cases, the legislature or local council enacts a law requiring foods to meet FSGs and then directs an agency to write specific requirements. The designated agency, usually the health department, lays out detailed requirements by rule or regulation.



CONTRACTS

Local and state governments often contract with businesses that provide food services (vendors). Policies establishing requirements for food service are implemented through contracts between the government and the vendor. FSGs need to be included in government solicitation for bids or proposals. The final contract needs to include a requirement to comply with the guidelines.



PERMITS

Local governments may use a permit process to regulate the sale of food on government property. The permit can require that vendors comply with FSGs.

RESOURCES

- Understanding Healthy Procurement: Using Government's Purchasing Power to Increase Access to Healthy Food
- Key Components of Food Procurement and Vending Policies
- Food Service Guidelines for Federal Facilities