



“...To meet the needs of the current generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

- United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development
(The Brundtland Commission), *Our Common Future*, 1987

Health and Wellness Position Paper

Bay Area Community Services recognizes our responsibility, as part of the larger community, to model and actively practice through policies and procedures the promotion of community health, family health, physical activity, good nutrition, sustainable agriculture, and environmental restoration, vital to a healthy society and citizenry.

We further understand that the sharing and enjoyment of food and participation in physical activity, are fundamental experiences for all people and are a primary means to nurturing and celebrating our cultural diversity. These fundamental human experiences are vital links for building friendships, forming intergenerational bonds, and strengthening community at large.

While, fresh, seasonal, local, sustainability produced foods are a primary and recommended source of nutrition for all of our citizens, prepackaged, highly processed foods are not only lacking in nutrition but also create a solid waste management problem and expense for our community, and are potentially damaging our local agriculture and economy.

The knowledge and skill-base for farming, gardening, food preservation, cooking, and the ritual of the table are fading from American life, and with it a portion of our community and social history and cultural practices. In addition, our small and midsize farms and America’s rural communities are under economic stress. The dollars from institutional farm-to-table programs create a steady and reliable source of revenue for local farmers, and help to preserve a way of living that would otherwise disappear.

An economically sustainable meal program makes available healthy and nutritious breakfasts, lunches, and snacks and facilitate each client’s participation in our local community, promoting longevity and continued optimum health.



The Bay Area Community Services understands that using the local food system is a framework within which we can facilitate both community building and support for our local economy¹. For our food service personnel, the renovation of our strategies and methods to include cooking from scratch, using local ingredients, and developing new menus based on these practices requires new ways of purchasing, preparing, and presenting foods. The transition to a healthier model that makes food and health the central parts of our mission requires new skills for all of us.

Waste Reduction

Bay Area Community Services recognizes that a senior meal program using prepackaged, processed foods consistently generates more solid waste than one that uses whole ingredients. A shift to cooking meals with fresh, whole ingredients usually leads to a reduction in solid waste, and therefore a reduction in the expense associated with waste disposal. BACS will ensure that:

- Meals prepared for our clients will use fresh, whole, unpackaged, unprocessed, or minimally processed ingredients to the fullest extent possible, in order to preserve nutritional content and reduce packaging waste;
- Our cafeterias model environmentally sound practices and educate and involve clients and staff in reducing waste, composting, recycling and purchasing recycled material²;
- Post-consumer food waste is composted and returned for use in local community and city garden programs;
- Packaging containing client meals is made of recycled content and should be recycled.

Nutritional Guidelines for All Food Served by BACS

- The nutritional value of the food served will significantly improve through provision of nutritious, fresh, tasty, locally grown food that reflects community and cultural diversity.
- The Nutrition Services Director will develop and implement a plan, based on availability and acceptability, that serves clients meals that support local sustainable agriculture by integrating local, organic foods, as defined by the USDA National Organic Program.
- Senior Nutrition Services will coordinate our menus with the seasonal production of local farm products, so that client meals will reflect seasonality and local agriculture.

¹ Oakland Food Systems Assessment for Oakland, CA: Toward A Sustainable Food Plan; pg. 4; May, 2006;
<http://oaklandfoodsystem.pbwiki.com/f/Oakland%20FSA_6.13.pdf>

² Oakland City Council, Zero Waste Strategic Plan, December 2006



- Food served to clients will carry sufficient nutrition information to allow clients to make informed dietary choices. Information must clearly indicate appropriate dietary requirements, such as vegetarian, vegan, or kosher, and include food processing methods, such as organically grown, irradiated, bovine growth hormone (rBGH), or genetically modified.
- The exposure of clients to potentially harmful residues of toxic agricultural chemicals such as pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers, waxes, and fungicides will be reduced and/or eliminated by increasing the purchase of foods that are grown sustainably, without the use of toxic chemicals.
- Foods exposed to potentially harmful food additives and processes, such as bovine growth hormone (rBGH), irradiation, high fructose corn syrup, excessive salt, artificial flavors and colors, hydrogenated oils (transfats), preservatives, and genetic modification, shall be reduced and/or eliminated.
- BACS congregate sites and Meals on Wheels clients will be offered a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, at least two non-fried vegetables and two fruit choices each day (breakfast, lunch and snacks), and five different fruits and five different vegetables over the course of each week.
- The Senior Nutrition Services Director will review this policy and ensure that the policies are not less restrictive than those required by the state or federal governments.



Sources

Bertino, E., Brown, K., Cooper, A., Evans, A. M., Gussow, J. D., Hawlweil, B., Nestle, M., Wootan, M. (September 1, 2005). *Model Wellness Policy Guide*. Retrieved September 5, 2007, from http://www.ecoliteracy.org/programs/wellness_policy.html

Valliantos, M., (June 2005). *Healthy School Food Policies: A Checklist*. Retrieved December 4, 2007, from http://departments.oxy.edu/uepi/cfj/publications/healthy_school_food_policies_05.pdf

Larson, C., Pepper-Kittredge, C., Twiss, J. M. (2006). *A Healthy Community: Perspective On Aging Well*. Retrieved July 31, 2007, from http://www.civicpartnerships.org/docs/publications/aging_brief/Aging_Brief_Final71406.pdf

