



Food and Nutrition Policy

Purpose and Guidelines

The Lopez Island Family Resource Center (LIFRC) provides equitable access to healthy and nourishing food. The LIFRC is committed to preventing hunger and building a more resilient hunger relief network in our rural, remote community. We strive to provide equitable access to high-quality food and firmly believe that food justice is social justice. We envision and are committed to cultivating a community where all people have access to high-quality food, no matter their age, physical ability, race, gender, sexuality, or socio-economic status.

Our food and nutrition policy demonstrates this commitment by emphasizing our values around food and social justice.

Overall Nutrition Commitments

We will aim to increase fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean protein, low-sugar and low-sodium options. We will source and offer foods familiar to the diverse and traditional diets of our clients. In order to understand and cater to the needs of our clients, we will continue to involve our community by administering annual surveys and conducting informal interviews.

With the feedback that was most recently received in January 2024, we have identified our current nutrition commitments:

- With over 30% of our clients reporting they have been diagnosed with high blood pressure and need a low-sodium diet, we will offer low-sodium options when possible.
- Additionally, over 30% of our clients request a heart-healthy and/or diabetes-friendly diet, so we will offer low-sugar options when possible.
- Moreover, over 65% of our clients are interested in seeing fewer offerings of sweets and desserts or food with added sugars. We commit to educating our donors in an effort to decrease these categories of foods in our offerings.

We commit to putting in place an inventory tracking system and will develop a process that will

1) Schwartz M, Levi R, Lott M, Arm K, Seligman H. Healthy Eating Research Nutrition Guidelines for the Charitable Food System. Durham, NC: Healthy Eating Research; 2020. Available at <http://healthyeatingresearch.org>

allow us to identify the different categories of foods we receive as well as the different sources from which we receive them. We will utilize the categories from the HER guidelines within this new system. This will allow us to establish a baseline from which we can evaluate our goals and set new goals each year.

At each distribution, we commit to providing supplementary food to allow each family member (up to a family of 4) enough food to create 3 meals for 3 days. For families with 5 or more members, we commit to adding 1 additional item from each food group as inventory allows.

Food Purchases

With our available and often limited funding, we commit to responsible stewardship. This means we will purchase items that are aligned with our commitment to nutrition and reflect the cultural diversity of our clients. We will purchase the items below from the “choose often” list of the HER guidelines, prioritizing those foods that were identified as most needed by our clients from our 2024 client survey. These include:

- Fresh fruits and vegetables such as apples, plums, pears, berries, figs, and peaches; salad greens, tomatoes, carrots, string beans, sweet onions, sweet peas, potatoes
- Proteins such as tuna, cage-free eggs, beans, meat, and peanut butter
- Dairy products such as milk, yogurt and cheese
- Non-dairy alternatives such as soy milk or oat milk
- Home cooking ingredients such as oils, flours, herbs/spices

Food Donations

We will steer donations toward our clients' food needs by providing donors with a guide that highlights popular items that clients request and prioritize, such as low-sodium and low-sugar options. We will educate the community (donors) about nutritious foods that our clients are requesting so that we can increase our distribution of those foods and receive fewer of the foods clients do not want. We will re-evaluate whether to actively turn away donations that do not meet the needs of our clients in the coming years.

Special Programs

Our home delivery program and Heart & Soul Cafe meal program will also adhere to the nutrition guidelines outlined in this policy.

1) Schwartz M, Levi R, Lott M, Arm K, Seligman H. Healthy Eating Research Nutrition Guidelines for the Charitable Food System. Durham, NC: Healthy Eating Research; 2020. Available at <http://healthyeatingresearch.org>

As we begin to plan our food processing program, we will work alongside Locavores and Taproot Lopez Community Kitchen to create freeze-dried, frozen or dehydrated nutritionally dense food options in response to the need outlined by our clients in a survey in early 2023. Of 82 survey respondents, 12.2% indicated having no access to a medium- or large-size fridge and 92.6% expressed interest in being able to access preserved food offerings (dehydrated and canned produce, meat, and vegetarian jerky) at the Food Share. In addition to increasing access to fruits and vegetables for our clients, this program will utilize extra produce from our pantry, effectively reducing our food waste.

In our summer meals and after-school kid's program we will provide healthy snacks that are high in fiber and protein and are filling and sustaining. We will refer to the USDA's National School Lunch Program's After School Snack Service as our nutrition standards guide. This states all snacks will include at least 2 components from the 4 options including dairy/dairy alternative, protein, fruit/vegetable or whole grain/enriched bread categories (milk and juice cannot be combined to make a snack).

Broader Commitments (Community Partnerships)

We will continue to pursue collaborations with partners that help us meet the needs of our clients and community, support local agriculture, and reduce our food waste. We also commit to providing ongoing nutrition education and support to our clients (including recipe demos, taste testing, and providing meal ideas based on Food Share inventory) with the generous support of SNAP-Ed and local culinary students.

Administration and Implementation

This policy, approved by our Board on 5/20/2024 will take effect on 3/6/2025 at which time it will become part of our organizational policies and procedures. The Lopez Island Family Resource Center Directors' team will review this policy on an annual basis with all food pantry staff and volunteers. All staff and volunteers will be given a copy of the policy and provide an orientation including an overview of its purpose and intention.

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