

REPORT OF THE CHIEF LEGISLATIVE ANALYST

TO: Honorable Members of the
Jobs and Business Development Committee

FROM: Gerry F. Miller ^{KEK}
Chief Legislative Analyst

Council File No.: 09-2858-S1
Assignment No.: 10-01-0047

Overview of the City's Food Assistance Programs

SUMMARY

On November 24, 2009, Councilman Paul Koretz introduced a Motion (Koretz-Alarcón) (C.F. 09-2858-S1) addressing hunger and food security in Los Angeles. The Motion references a November 2009 Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles report entitled "*Hungry No More: A Blueprint to End Hunger in Los Angeles*" (*Blueprint*) which calls attention to the problems associated with hunger and food insecurity and to the lack of access to fresh and healthy foods in the Los Angeles area. The Motion instructed this Office to review the Blueprint and to report to Council on the following:

- 1) City departments that are coordinating anti-hunger and food security programs;
- 2) Steps necessary to expand the reach of such programs;
- 3) Recommendations included in the Blueprint that should be explored; and
- 4) Which City departments are best suited to carry out these efforts.

The Blueprint presents an overview of various issues associated with hunger and establishes goals and strategies to reduce hunger, increase food availability, and provide healthier food choices. The Blueprint consists of an action plan which sets forth three primary goals which the authors believe create a matrix of solutions that would not only end hunger, but would also lead to sustainable food, food distribution systems and nutrition-based health. The following broad goals are identified in the Blueprint which call for the City and County to take action along with community stakeholders such as individuals, government, and the business industry:

- Goal #1- Become a "Hunger Free Community;"
 - Establish a Food Policy Council;
- Goal #2- Improve food assistance programs;
 - Ensure full participation and increased levels for federal nutrition programs;
 - Strengthen food nutrition programs;
- Goal #3- Increase access to nutritious, quality food;
 - Ensure access to fresh and healthy food sources and increase funding for emergency food providers;
 - Provide healthy, fresh and affordable food;
 - Increase volunteer efforts to address the hunger crisis;
 - Strengthen and expand fresh food access and anti-hunger programs;
 - Create gardens and edible landscapes; and
 - Support efforts for a sustainable food system.

The City has historically implemented nutrition programs, within its departments, that assist seniors, youth and families. Most recently, the City has taken an active role in funding programs related to healthier nutrition, community gardens and food retail assistance. While there is room for expansion and improvement, the City's current efforts address the three stated goals. Attachment A includes a description of the City's current efforts which address the issues mentioned in the Blueprint.

We recommend that City departments be instructed to report to Council with more detailed information on any programs associated with hunger and food availability, including funding levels, funding sources, and opportunities for expansion. Similarly, the preliminary Food Policy Task Force should be requested to report their findings to the Council. This information could assist the Council and community stakeholders in refining the effort to further reduce hunger and increase healthy food options for City residents.

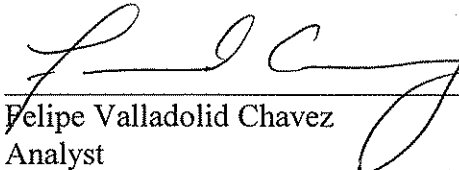
RECOMMENDATIONS

That the City Council:

- 1) Instruct the Department of Recreation and Parks, Community Development Department, Department of Aging, and the Community Redevelopment Agency, to:
 - A) Report on current efforts to address hunger issues including funding levels, funding sources and opportunities for expansion; and
 - B) Review the November 2009 Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles report entitled "*Hungry No More: A Blueprint to End Hunger in Los Angeles*," and report with recommendations for a strategy to achieve the goals included in the report.
- 2) Request the members of the preliminary Food Policy Task Force (the Urban and Environmental Policy Institute of Occidental College, the Los Angeles Conservation Corps and City representatives) to provide to the Council: A) A report that outlines the research and findings associated with food access and healthier food options; and, B) Recommendations for the potential formation of a Food Policy Council.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no impact to the General Fund as a result of this action.


Felipe Valladolid Chavez
Analyst

- Attachments:
- 1) City Food Assistance Programs
 - 2) Resolution (Koretz-Alarcón-Perry)
 - 3) Motion (Koretz-Alarcón)
 - 4) Motion (Garcetti- Reyes)
 - 5) Motion (Huizar- Koretz)

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City Food Assistance Programs

Preliminary Food Policy Task Force

In September 2009, the Mayor announced a partnership with the Urban and Environmental Policy Institute of Occidental College and the Los Angeles Conservation Corps (preliminary food policy task force) to research and develop policies that address the hunger crisis and to examine the adequacy of establishing a formal Food Policy Council (Goal #1). According to City staff, the preliminary food policy task force is in the process of developing recommendations on topics such as food retail and marketing issues; urban agriculture and community gardens; emergency food networks; sustainable agriculture, water use and pesticides; food waste; and school feeding and nutrition educational programs. The preliminary food policy task force is due to report to the Mayor in June. We recommend that preliminary food policy task force be requested to report to the Council.

City Departments

The following City departments/agencies are currently implementing programs that offer food access, healthier food choices or assistance to food retailers:

- Community Development Department (CDD)
The CDD reports that assistance in the form of food baskets is provided by Special Service For Groups, Inc./Hurting & Hungry, funded through Community Services Block Grant American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (CSBG0R) (\$72,000) (C.F. 09-0560). Additionally, through its Supportive Services Unit, all FamilySource Centers are required to provide short-term or emergency food assistance to a total of 1,000 participants funded with Community Development Block Grant funds.

- Department of Recreation and Parks
Recreation and Parks reports that over 500,000 meals are served annually to community members. Recreation and Parks reports that it offers quality and nutritious food choices and zero trans-fats in most foods available in its programs. Recreation and Parks is currently implementing the following programs:
 - Summer Lunch Program-
Meals are served at 94 recreation sites during the summer and 15 sites throughout the year. In 2009, 250,000 lunches and 250,000 healthy snacks were served.

 - Community Gardens-
Eleven community gardens are operated City-wide. The food grown in these gardens is consumed by the community members who grow it.

 - Summer Night Lights Program-
Summer Night Lights Program is part of the City's Gang Reduction and Youth Development initiative. In 2009, over 60,000 meals were served at 15 sites four days per week for eight weeks. Recreation and Parks anticipates that the program will expand to 24 sites in 2010.

- Department of Aging and Recreation and Parks

- Senior Nutrition Program-

- This program, consisting of two components, is administered by the Department of Aging which contracts with Recreation and Parks to staff the programs:

- 1) Congregate Meals- Served at eight Recreation and Parks sites and five additional sites not directly operated by Recreation and Parks.
 - 2) Homebound Meals- Meals delivered to participating seniors. Over 300,000 meals per year to senior residents of the City.

36th Year Housing and Community Development Consolidated Plan (Consolidated Plan)

The City also allocates funds to City departments for food programs through the Consolidated Plan. Consolidated Plan funds are allocated through four grants: Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnership (HOME), Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG) and Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) programs. Below is a list of City programs that receive Consolidated Plan funds and offer food services to the community (funds are not exclusively for food services):

- LA's BEST (\$628,000)
Funding is provided to this program for after school program at Los Angeles Unified School District elementary schools that provide enrichment, education, recreation, and a snack at no cost to parents for children with the greatest needs and fewest resources.
- Youth Recreation and Nutrition Program (\$1,357,189)
Provides school-age youth with a wide variety of recreational opportunities. The program includes after-school recreation activities, off track nutrition and enrichment programs, and specialized sports academy programs. This free program is available to youth in qualifying areas of the City to receive comparable recreation that families in more affluent areas of the City can afford.
- FamilySource Centers (\$2,104,243)
Through the program, the Centers provide core services such as English as a Second Language (ESL), workplace English, computer education, food distribution, etc.
- Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) (\$500,000)
Emergency Shelter for Chronic Homeless- Downtown
This program funds emergency shelter beds, meals, and supportive services to people who are chronically homeless.
- Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) (\$625,000)
Emergency Shelter for Chronic Homeless- Hollywood
This program funds emergency shelter beds, meals, and supportive services to people who are chronically homeless.
- Fresh Food Access Program (\$128,655)
The Los Angeles Conservation Corps, operator of the Fresh Food Access Program, develops and maintains community gardens in order to increase the self-reliance of low-income community members to provide for their food needs.

- Day Laborer (\$1,206,472)
Funding is to provide fixed hiring sites in selected areas of the City where persons participating in the casual labor force can safely congregate to solicit employment. Funding provides basic amenities in addition to coffee, bread and water.

Access to Healthier Foods

- Community Redevelopment Agency of Los Angeles (CRA/LA)
To increase healthy food options in targeted areas of the City, the City partnered with the CRA/LA to develop an incentive package to attract new food retailers to neighborhoods in South Los Angeles. The incentives are offered in three general areas: 1) financing, 2) energy, and 2) planning and entitlement and are offered to the following types of establishments:

- 1) Grocery stores with at least 12,000 square feet (sf.),
- 2) Restaurants with seating capacity for at least 30 patrons,
- 3) Produce markets that dedicate 80 percent or more of their floor space to fresh fruits and vegetables.

Additionally, the City Council recently adopted a Resolution (C.F. 10-0002) to amend Community Redevelopment Law (CRL) to amend the definition of “physical blight” to include areas unhealthy for persons to live or work by (1) high incidences of obesity, diabetes, an other diseases which are affected by poor access to fresh food; (2) or high incidences of asthma, lung cancer and other respiratory diseases which are affected by are pollution or the presence of contaminated properties.

In a separate report, the CRA/LA has requested Council authorization for funding in the amount of \$49,300 for a website to promote activities and programs that foster development and investment in restaurants and healthy food within the Council District Nine Corridors South of the Santa Monica Freeway Recovery Redevelopment, Mid-City Corridors, Crenshaw, Vermont/Manchester, Watts Corridors, Broadway Manchester and Exposition/University Park Project Areas (C.F. 09-3063).

The CRA/LA conducted a Request for Proposals (RFP) process and selected JesseJames Creative Inc. as the recommended vendor. This request is pending in the Housing, Community and Economic Development Committee (C.F. 09-3063).

Related Motions

- C.F. 09-2858 (Koretz- Alarcón-Perry)
On December 16, 2009, the City Council adopted a Resolution declaring the City a “Hunger-Free Community” and instructed City departments to “fulfill the Blueprint to End Hunger in Los Angeles” (Goal # 1). Through this Resolution, the City reaffirms its commitment to battling hunger in the City.
- C.F. 09-1685 (Garcetti-Reyes)
The Motion instructs the Planning Department to report on the feasibility of allowing for the cultivation of flowers, fruits, nuts, or vegetables defined as the food product on any tree, vine or plant, and that these products be allowed for use on-site or sale

off-site. This Motion is pending hearing in the Planning and Land Use Management Committee.

- C.F. 09-2326 (Huizar-Koretz)

The Motion instructs City departments that provide food programs or services, including the Convention Center, the Department of Recreation and Parks, and the Department of Aging, to adopt policies that would require surplus food to be donated to a local food bank, pantry, or other service agency accepting food donations. It also instructs the CRA to report on how it might work with private business owners in its various Project Areas to entice them to participate in such a program. This Motion was adopted by the Council on November 4, 2009.

Other Sources

In February 2010, the Los Angeles Regional Foodbank released a report which provides a snapshot of charitable food assistance in Los Angeles. The report indicates that nearly 10 percent (one million) of Los Angeles County residents received food assistance from food pantries, food kitchens and shelters served by Foodbank in 2009. Additionally, the report highlights the following findings:

- 46% increase in the number of individuals receiving food assistance from 2005 to 2009
- The number of children receiving food assistance has more than doubled from 185,000 in 2005 to 393,000 children in 2009.
- Nearly 40 % of recipients of food assistance are children under 18.
- More than 49 % of pantries report “problems with funding.”

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ARTS, PARKS, HEALTH & AGING
JOBS & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

09-2858

NOV 24 2009

Resolution

Whereas, recent statistics and studies show that at least 1 in 8 residents of Los Angeles suffer from hunger and other issues related to food insecurity; and

Whereas, the economic downturn has greatly magnified the effects of hunger and food insecurity on people from all walks of life in our City, with devastating impacts on children and seniors, our community's most vulnerable citizens; and

Whereas, Federal Nutritional Programs, such as Food Stamps, offer eligible individuals and families critical resources to purchase adequate, nutritious food and, at the same time, stimulate the local Los Angeles economy with the additional purchasing power of the recipients, yet these programs are severely underutilized in Los Angeles with research showing that of eligible families and individuals, Los Angeles only has a 52% participation rate in this program, one of the worst in the nation; and

Whereas, this rate of participation in the Food Stamp program not only leads to unnecessary hunger in nearly one million families, but also to a loss of about \$1 billion in Federally allocated funds, \$1.84 billion in lost local economic activity and millions in local tax revenue; and

Whereas, a number of Los Angeles communities are known as "food deserts" (communities that lack access to a major supermarket) or "food swamps" (communities surrounded by a glut of energy-dense but nutrient poor foods), both of which include a disproportionately high percentage of residents suffering from chronic, preventable diet-related diseases, including diabetes, high blood pressure and obesity; and

Whereas, in addition to providing local communities with greater access to healthier, locally grown food, a local and sustainable food approach in Los Angeles would also expand green jobs for Angelinos throughout the City's parks, gardens, urban farms, and local food processing, storage and distribution facilities; and

Whereas, The Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles and its partners issued a report in 2009 entitled "The Blueprint to End Hunger in Los Angeles" which called attention to the protracted nature of the problems associated with hunger, food insecurity, and the lack of access to healthy and fresh foods in our City; and

Whereas, this Blueprint recommends the City of Los Angeles declare a goal of making itself a "Hunger-Free Community" to increase awareness of the scourge of hunger and to begin applying comprehensive solutions to this complex problem through city planning, education initiatives, the expansion of urban agriculture, supporting existing local food development and infrastructure, and setting benchmarks for the achievement of these goals;

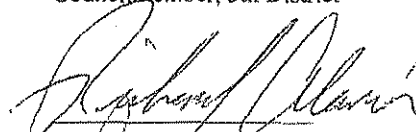
NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES does hereby declare its intention that Los Angeles become a Hunger-Free Community and that City departments work to fulfill the Blueprint to End Hunger in Los Angeles.

PRESENTED BY:



PAUL KORETZ
Councilmember, 5th District

SECONDED BY:





NOV 24 2009

ORIGINAL

09-2858-51

JOB & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

MOTION

NOV 24 2009

Recent statistics and studies show that at least 1 in 8 residents of Los Angeles County suffer from hunger and other issues related to food insecurity. Moreover, the economic downturn has greatly magnified the affects of hunger and food insecurity on people from all walks of life in our City, with devastating impacts on children and seniors.

Federal Nutritional Programs, such as Food Stamps, offer eligible individuals and families with critical resources to purchase adequate, nutritious food and at the same time, stimulate the local Los Angeles economy with their additional purchasing power. These programs are severely underutilized in Los Angeles with research showing that of eligible families and individuals, Los Angeles only has a 52% participation rate in this program, one of the worst in the nation.

Additionally, a number of Los Angeles communities are known as "food deserts" (communities that lack access to a major supermarket) or "food swamps" (communities surrounded by a glut of energy-dense but nutrient poor foods) where a disproportionately high percentage of residents suffering from chronic, preventable diet-related diseases, including diabetes, high blood pressure and obesity. In addition to providing local communities with greater access to healthier, locally grown food, a local and sustainable food approach in Los Angeles would also expand green jobs for Angelinos throughout the City's parks, gardens, urban farms, and local food processing, storage and distribution facilities.

The Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles and its partners issued a report in November of 2009 entitled "The Blueprint to End Hunger in Los Angeles" which called attention to protracted nature of the problems associated to hunger, food insecurity, and the lack of access to healthy and fresh foods in our City. This Blueprint carries with it a number of recommendations on how the City can work on this critical issue, including action through city planning, education initiatives, the expansion of urban agriculture, supporting existing local food development and infrastructure, and setting benchmarks for the achievement of these goals. Working toward these strong policy goals is an important step in addressing hunger and food insecurity in Los Angeles.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Chief Legislative Analyst report to the City Council in 30 days on: 1) which City Departments are already coordinating anti-hunger and food security programs and initiatives, and, where possible, what steps could be taken to expand the reach of these existing programs and initiatives, and 2) which recommendations the City should explore from the Jewish Federation Council of Greater Los Angeles' "Hungry No More: A BLUEPRINT TO END HUNGER IN LOS ANGELES," and which Departments are best suited to carry out these efforts.

PRESENTED BY:

Paul Koretz
PAUL KORETZ
Councilmember, 5TH District

SECONDED BY:

Richard Allen
[Signature]

AAJ

NOV 24 2009

ORIGINAL

09-1685

PLANNING & LAND USE MANAGEMENT
EDUCATION & NEIGHBORHOODS

MOTION

JUL 08 2009

The Municipal Code allows "truck gardening" to take place in various zones. The definition of "truck gardening" is not clear in the code, in terms of what kinds of produce (fruits, vegetables, flowers, nuts, etc) it applies to, nor the quantity of produce that may be grown for consumption on-site or sale off-site.

This ambiguity in the code has led to questions about what can and cannot be grown in these zones, and what can and cannot be grown on-site or sold off-site (at, for example, a farmer's market).

It is in the interest of the city to promote the growth, harvest, on-site consumption and off-site sale of fruits, vegetables, flowers, and other urban gardening products in the city. The growth of these products, and their sale at local farmer's markets and other fresh food access programs, are directly related to the city's efforts to green Los Angeles (by reducing the carbon footprint of food imported from other parts of the country and world), promote nutrition (by providing fresh produce in the city), and foster stronger bonds in the community (by encouraging local participation in farmer's markets and other fresh food access programs), and create local sustainable job opportunities. Clarifying what activities are, and are not, allowed in appropriate zones is important in achieving these goals.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Council instruct the Planning Department to prepare a report, in consultation with the City Attorney, relative to the feasibility of allowing for the cultivation of flowers, fruits, nuts, or vegetables defined as the food product of any tree, vine or plant, and that these products be allowed for use on-site or sale off-site.

PRESENTED BY:

E. G. Arcetti

ERIC GARCETTI
Councilmember, 13th District

SECONDED BY:

Ed P. Reyes

ORIGINAL

JUL 8 2009

09-2326

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MOTION HOUSING, COMM & ECON. DEVELOP.

The UCLA Center for Health Policy Research reports that hunger and the lack of adequate food (food insecurity) not only leads to malnutrition and other health related problems, but also contributes to anxiety and worry. Food insecurity forces people to adjust their household budget to forego other basic needs in order to ensure that one's family is fed. The U.S. Department of Agriculture is responsible for monitoring food security in the nation and reports that there are millions of people nationwide who suffer from food insecurity. A recent report titled "Fed up with Hunger" by the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles found that 36.3% of low-income Los Angeles County residents were food insecure in 2007, a figure that is likely much higher today.

Hunger Action Los Angeles (Hunger Action LA), a non-profit organization whose goal is to fight hunger, reports that hunger in Los Angeles exists because of various factors including high utility costs, high healthcare costs, lack of living wage jobs, lack of discount supermarkets in the inner city, and low participation in public assistance programs. Hunger Action LA reports that there are several public assistance programs that alleviate food insecurity including food stamps, school meals, and senior nutrition programs, such as home-delivered meals.


Hunger Action LA states that to further combat hunger the City should donate surplus food from its facilities to help bolster the supply of emergency food in Los Angeles available to low income people. The City's willingness to donate surplus food could also set an example for local businesses to donate. Hunger Action LA proposes that the City adopt an ordinance or policies that would allow City facilities to donate food. Several local groups (Food Finders, Angel Harvest, LA Regional Food Bank, and Westside Food Bank, etc.) would be happy to assist in this effort and even pick up the food.

Hunger Action LA proposes that the ordinance or policies adopted should:

- Emphasize the need for healthy and nutritious food such as fruits and vegetables and non-perishable proteins like dry beans and tuna;
- Include mandatory participation by the largest entities controlled by the City, including the Convention Center, parks and recreational facilities, and golf courses;
- Establish a method for distributing the food, such as an internet database, adopting local food pantries, or using the 311 phone system; and
- Determine the best method to distribute the food to areas of the most need and ensure an equal distribution of the surplus food.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council request that City departments that provide food programs or services, including the Convention Center, the Department of Recreation and Parks, and the Department of Aging, adopt policies that would require surplus food to be donated to a local food bank, pantry, or other service agency accepting food donations.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Council request the Community Redevelopment Agency to report back on how it might work with private business owners in its various project areas to entice them to participate in such a program as well.

PRESENTED BY: 
JOSE HUIZAR
Councilmember, 14th District

SECONDED BY: 

SEP 23 2009

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