



MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT
S.4364 Fernandez/A.6720 (Solages)
Food Service Guidelines for State Facilities

The New York State Public Health Association strongly supports S.4364/A.6720, which would direct the Department of Health, in consultation with the Office of General Services, to develop science-based guidelines for serving healthier foods and beverages in all state facilities and state-supported programs.

Too many New York residents struggle to eat healthfully. Poor diet is linked to diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer, and other chronic diseases, which are among the leading causes of death in New York State.¹ The high burden of chronic diet-related disease has also made us more susceptible to severe outcomes from COVID-19 infection.²

Given these downstream consequences of poor diet quality, keeping New Yorkers healthy should be a state priority. Though New York State agencies purchase, serve, and sell food to millions of employees, visitors, students, recipients of state services, and people in state custody, the state currently does not have a comprehensive policy ensuring the healthfulness of the food purchased, served, or sold across all state agencies, facilities, and programs.

As recommended by state,³ national,⁴ and international⁵ health authorities, establishing nutrition guidelines for state agencies could promote healthier diets for millions of New Yorkers. To the extent that the guidelines promote healthy, fresh, minimally processed food products grown in New York State, they would further leverage public spending to support local economies and the regional food system.

Most importantly, New Yorkers *want* state agencies to serve more healthy and local food. Of 1,000 state residents polled by the Center for Science in the Public Interest in September 2020, 71% said the food that state-supported programs and institutions serve should include mostly or only healthy options; 88% said they would favor the state adopting guidelines for state-supported programs and institutions to serve more healthy foods; 65% said they would favor the state adopting guidelines for state-supported programs and institutions to serve fewer unhealthy foods; and 85% said they would favor a goal that state-supported institutions and programs spend 25% of their food dollars on healthy food produced by New York State farms, such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and milk.

We urge the full legislature to pass this bill as soon as possible. For more information, please contact Advocacy@NYSPHA.org

¹ New York State Department of Health. New York State Leading Causes of Death. January 2022. https://apps.health.ny.gov/public/tabvis/PHIG_Public/lcd/reports/#state.

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *People with Certain Medical Conditions*. COVID-19. August 20, 2021. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html>; Hearn M, et al. Coronavirus Disease 2019 Hospitalizations Attributable to Cardiometabolic Conditions in the United States: A Comparative Risk Assessment Analysis. *J Am Heart Assoc*. 2021;10:e019259.

³ A Report and Recommendations by the Workgroup on Food Procurement Guidelines to the New York State Council on Food Policy. September 2012. https://www.albany.edu/cphce/prevention_agenda/ns_fp_guidelines.pdf; The New York Academy of Medicine. Policy Brief: Healthy Food Procurement Policy for New York State. March 2012. https://nyam.org/media/filer_public/82/0d/820d460d-9c05-48c3-b44b-fad6511bf5da/healthyfoodprocurementpolicy.pdf.

⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Food Service Guidelines: Easy Access to Healthy Foods*. October 20, 2021. https://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/food-service-guidelines/easy-access-to-healthy-foods.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fnutrition%2Fhealthy-food-environments%2Feasy-access-to-healthy-foods.html.

⁵ World Health Organization. WHO urges governments to promote healthy food in public facilities. January 12, 2021. <https://www.who.int/news/item/12-01-2021-who-urges-governments-to-promote-healthy-food-in-public-facilities>.