



LOS ANGELES COUNTY
OFFICE OF FOOD SYSTEMS

2025

YEAR IN

REVIEW



LOS ANGELES COUNTY OFFICE OF FOOD SYSTEMS

The very existence of the Los Angeles County Office of Food Systems (OFS) is a recent and significant milestone in a sixteen-year history of stakeholder informed food policy in the LA region, starting with the LA City-led LA Food Policy Task Force (2009) and the LA Food Policy Council (2011). Six years ago, the need for a greater level of County coordination on food policy was amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Board of Supervisors partnered with philanthropy to establish the Los Angeles Food Equity Roundtable, whose Action Plan guided the eventual creation and launch of the Office of Food Equity. One year ago, the Office launched just as disaster swept the County. Soon thereafter, it was renamed the Office of Food Systems to reflect the fundamental need to address systemic flaws in our food supply chains, which cause our status quo at high levels of food insecurity and chronic disease, while we suffer a decline in the local food economy. With the name change, the core mission is reinforced and remains steadfast: to create a sustainable food system that is resilient - especially in crisis - and respects the health of people and planet.

This charge in an intensely urbanized setting calls for cross-cutting initiatives to transform the system at the root cause level. It calls for new approaches in zoning and land use planning; for local supply chain infrastructure; utilization of public purchasing incentives; economic and workforce development strategies; and public awareness of the need for the deeper economic shifts that must take place in order for the seemingly insoluble issue of food security, to be solved.

Our work, as a County office, is just underway. But the good news is: **it is underway**, as shown in these pages.

Join us, and in time we will see, as Nelson Mandela once said: it always seems impossible, until it is done.





LAUNCHING INTO AN EMERGENCY

The first day of
the LA County
Office of Food
Systems was:

January 6
2025

On January 7 an unprecedented, disastrous firestorm swept through Los Angeles County.

While setting up our own new operations and building our team, we also immediately created the **Urgent Food Needs** network, a rapid response network to coordinate response to food needs due to the January 7 firestorms in Los Angeles.

We coordinated the delivery of produce donations to disaster relief events held by LA County Parks and Recreation and LA County Library; worked with local restaurant organizations to assist those who suffered business losses; and helped secure funding for the fire damaged Altadena Community Garden.

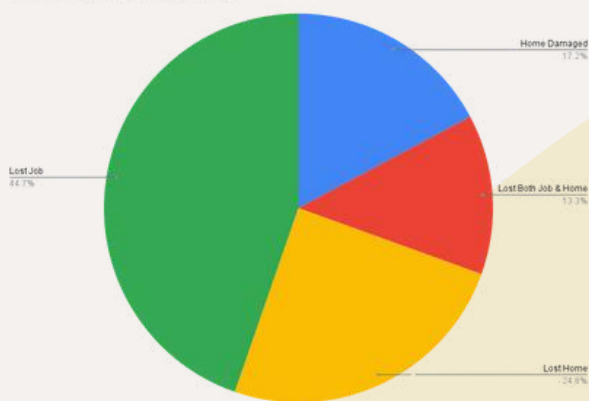


Produce donations from **Food Forward**, **FarmLink**, and the **Fresh Produce and Floral Council**, at County disaster response events

DISASTER RESPONSE

In February, thanks to a grant from **FireAid**, we began work on our grocery voucher program. We distributed \$500 grocery gift vouchers to **1,800 households** impacted by the January wildfires.

How were you affected by the fires?



The impacts to the 1,800 households were in both job and home losses



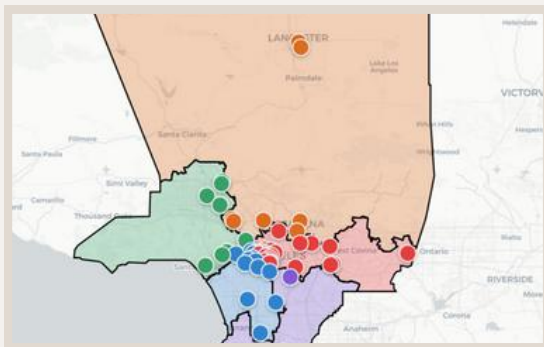
Our survey information, showing where people were before, how they were damaged, and how scattered they are now

Photos from the distribution event at UFCW in May, 2025

For distribution, we partnered with the **Labor Community Services of the LA County Federation of Labor**; **LA County Dept of Economic Opportunity** and **Aidkit**; the **City of LA Community Investment for Families Department**, and **YWCA San Gabriel Valley**.

ESTABLISHING THE FOUNDATION

Throughout the year, we built our networks and partnerships. We established a regular meeting cadence around core initiatives with county departments, supervisor teams, and kept our ear to the ground on state and federal activities impacting food policy.



We mapped out food system stakeholder relationships, discerning geographic patterns and connections among the hundreds of organizations doing work in aspects of food systems throughout LA County.

We created a network meeting structure, and with the support of the intermediary team at **Community Partners**, we shared information and best practices across the network, including grantees of the LA Food Equity Fund.





ESTABLISHING THE FOUNDATION



For our key initiatives, throughout the year we cultivated partnerships with entities such as **AltaSea**, **Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation (LAEDC)**, the **Milken Institute**, **UFCW**, **UC Cooperative Extension**, **UC Davis**, **USC**, **UCLA** and many more.



SUSTAINED READINESS

The **Urgent Food Needs** network we created on January 8 was again activated in the fall, as a response to disruption in CalFresh benefits. We applaud the work of our network partners **LA Regional Food Bank, Food Forward, LA Food Policy Council** and many more, whose work on the ground made a difference to so many in need.

Overall, our Office was able to secure donations of well over 25,000 pounds of produce from the **Fresh Produce and Floral Council**, for distribution via **County Parks and Recreation, Libraries, and LA Unified School District** for the emergency events.



25,000 LBS
of produce distributed

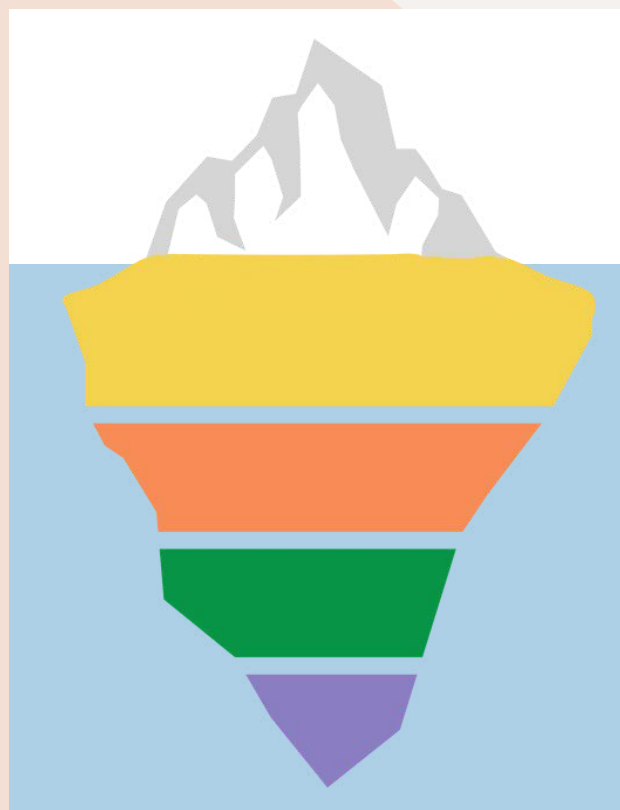


ADVANCING PRIORITIES

Our focus all year, even while responding to urgent food needs, has been to develop our priority initiatives derived from the Action Plan of the LA Food Equity Roundtable. We made progress on our priorities, including development of an aquatic food economy initiative, and deepened our groundwork on food hubs, urban agriculture, community gardens, regenerative sourcing for Food as Medicine programs, and public market strategies.

We produced policy research and delivered strategic guidance to county leadership on federal budget impacts; facilitated alignment on food access efforts; monitored urgent food delivery response; and participated in collaborative work in Food as Medicine policy, and to address food security for children 0–5.

- ✓ **HEALTHY FOOD SUPPLY CHAINS**
- ✓ **VALUES ALIGNED PROCUREMENT**
- ✓ **COMMUNITY GARDENS & FARMS**
- ✓ **REGENERATIVE SOURCING**
- ✓ **AQUATIC FOOD**



Much of what we do is below the waterline; that is, not as visible, but nonetheless a big part of our work

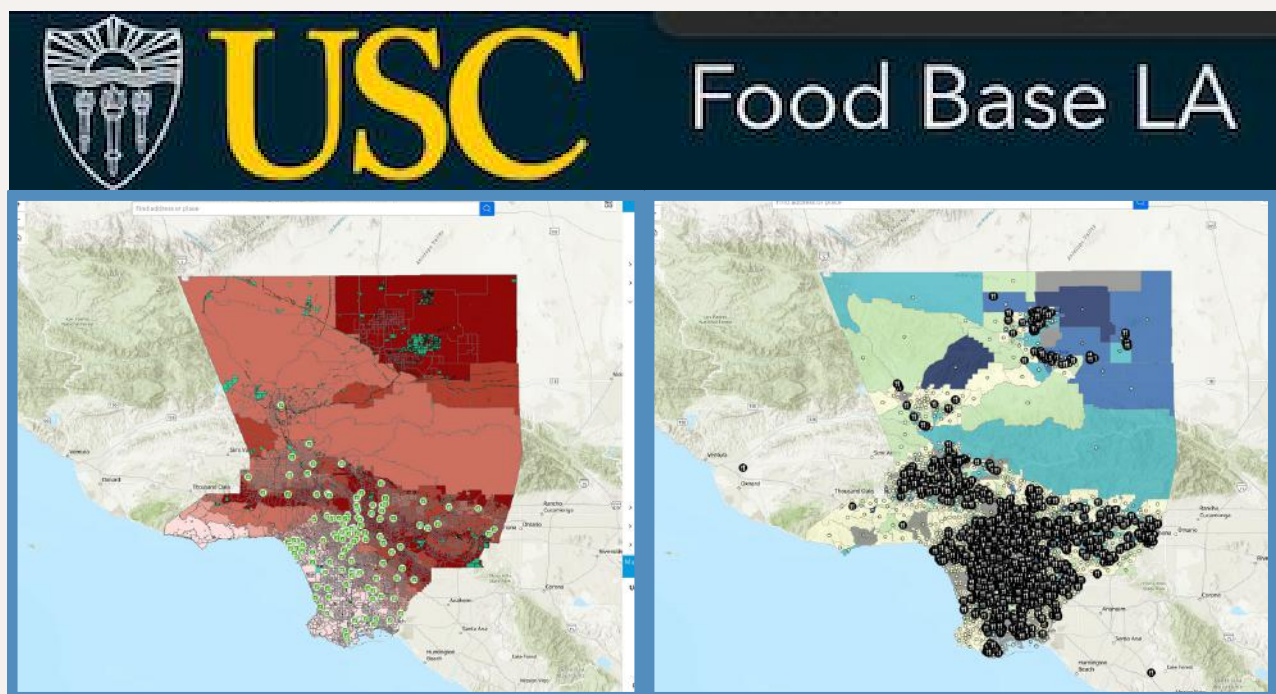


DATA & ANALYSIS: FOOD BASE LA DASHBOARD

Thanks to a grant from the **Annenberg Foundation**, we formed an official partnership with **USC Public Exchange** for the finalization and launch of an interactive, data rich dashboard, called Food Base LA. During the response to the disruption in SNAP benefits, the Food Base LA Dashboard was helpful in showing the geographic distribution of CalFresh cases as well as food pantries.

Thanks to funding from **Cedars Sinai**, we worked with USC Public Exchange to add data layers useful to urban agriculture planning, including layers that show: the urban heat island effect; agricultural zoning; locations of vacant lands, schools, libraries, churches, and existing community gardens.

We have been beta testing the **Food Base LA Dashboard** and are pleased to announce that it will be publicly available early in 2026.



Left: selected layers showing extreme heat days, community gardens, and vacant publicly owned parcels.

Right: selected layers showing food insecurity, CalFresh cases, and food pantries.

DATA & ANALYSIS: LOCAL FOOD AS AN ECONOMIC ENGINE

We also completed a study on the greater job and economic potential from increased localization of our regional food system, thanks to a grant from the **From Now On Fund** and the analytic work of economic consulting firm Econsult Solutions, Inc. (ESI).

The highlight: there could be an increase of 103,000 new jobs, and an increase of \$3.8 billion in tax revenues to LA County with greater localization of our food systems.

**GREATER
LOCALIZATION OF
OUR FOOD SYSTEMS**

=

103,000

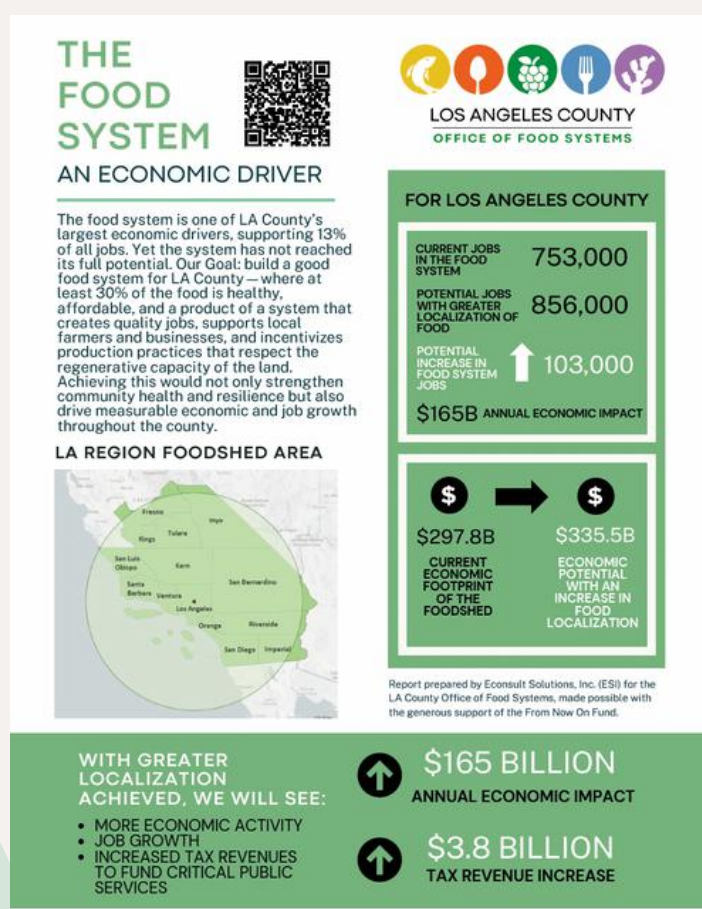
NEW FOOD RELATED JOBS

+

\$3.8 BILLION

IN TAX REVENUES

FOR FULL REPORT



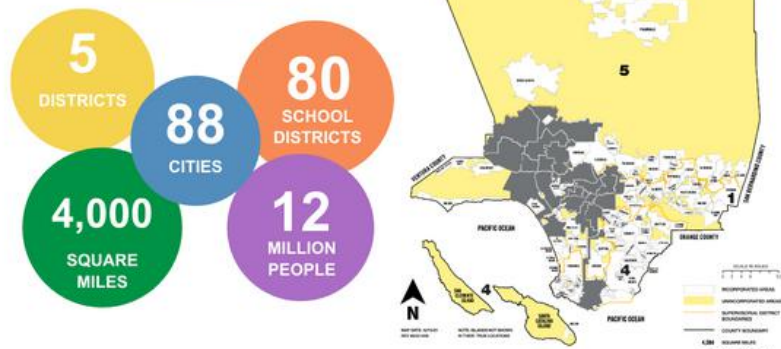


ALIGNING BEST PRACTICES ACROSS THE COUNTY

We aim to have all of LA County join in best practices from around the world, where governments:

- Manage food insecurity as a systemic issue, and coordinate across departments and sectors;
- Reduce the exploitation of smaller farmers and food system workers by using fair contract terms and incentivizing high road businesses;
- Address widespread environmental impacts of the industrial food system by contractually supporting best farming practices;
- Develop non-profit food hub operations that assure equitable sourcing and distribution of food;
- Use government purchasing power to optimize the affordability of healthy food, ideally from local businesses that treat the environment and workers with the utmost respect.

ALIGN ALL OF LA COUNTY



Around 300 global cities have signed the The Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, which is an international agreement and Framework for Action including 37 recommended policy steps in the areas of Governance, Sustainable Diets and Nutrition, Social and Economic Equity, Food Production, Food Supply and Distribution, and Food Waste. The Milan Pact Awards are given to municipalities leading with best practices. The City of LA has signed the Pact, and we hope to have more of LA County enrolled.



STAYED TUNED

This year was one of laying the foundation, building the team and the infrastructure of our office, and developing partnerships for the work ahead. We did this while supporting the county through firestorm recovery and through girding against the drastic changes in the federal government which have impacted so many Angelenos.

We will continue to build our Office through next year, to solidify our partnerships, and to advance our key priorities. Stay tuned for more news in the year ahead on urban agriculture, community gardens, and supply chain innovations - to include large scale food hubs and public procurement strategies - that will create a healthier food system, more resilient in the face of natural and other disasters. We look forward to working with you in 2026!



Lisa Cleri Reale and Paula Daniels at the May 2025 in person convening led by OFS, celebrating the work of the LA Food Equity Roundtable. Also included was a panel discussion on the impacts of the federal budget cuts.



At the May 2025 distribution of grocery vouchers. From left: Paula Daniels, Kathy Finn (President, UFCW 770), Lisa Cleri Reale, Larry Frank (Senior Advisor to Mayor Karen Bass)



Richard Garcia, Executive Director and Co-founder of Alma Backyard Farms, and Leah Ross, Operations and Outreach Coordinator of OFS



ABOUT US



LOS ANGELES COUNTY
OFFICE OF FOOD SYSTEMS

The LA County Office of Food Systems was established as a directive of the LA County Board of Supervisors, and created through an official partnership agreement between LA County and leading philanthropic organizations (**Annenberg Foundation, California Community Foundation, and Weingart Foundation**).

The Office works to cultivate a fair, flourishing, resilient, and healthy food system for all County residents. We are an innovation and R&D center for the County, working in collaboration with a diverse network of stakeholders to address food system challenges across LA County.

Originally called the Office of Food Equity, early on we changed our name to Office of Food Systems to better reflect the fundamental need to address the root cause of food insecurity, public health, worker well being and environmental impacts of the food system.

Our Board:



ANNENBERG
FOUNDATION



JANICE HAHN
Los Angeles County
Supervisor,
4th District



HOLLY J. MITCHELL
Los Angeles County
Supervisor,
2nd District



MIGUEL A. SANTANA
President & CEO,
California Community
Foundation



JOANNA S. JACKSON
President & CEO,
Weingart Foundation



ABOUT US

Our Staff:



PAULA DANIELS
Executive Director



LEAH ROSS
Operations &
Outreach
Coordinator



ELLAH RONEN
Programs & Partnerships
Team Lead



MARISA BRAMWELL
Social Media

We are cultivating a fair and resilient food system that creates jobs and ensures healthy, affordable food for all from farms and businesses that respect workers and the environment.

Our goals are to: improve the affordability of and access to healthy foods; build market demand and consumption of healthy foods; support sustainability, economic opportunity, and resilience in food systems and supply chains.

Thanks to our sponsors and funders:





THANK YOU

The grocery store or restaurant is only the final stop on a vast continuum of how we eat. Follow your imagination along those last points of purchase, and you'll see the countless workers who touch our food, the vast distances it travels to your plate, and, above all, the staggering capacity of the earth to sustain us and supply everything we need to feed ourselves.

After all, the earth is the original source of food for all the people on the planet. Yet, in the modern era, the health of the ecosystems that produce and deliver that food has not been prioritized, such that wholesome food is not easily available to all. The system is out of balance - favoring quantity over quality - but we can bring it back into proportion and create a community oriented food system that prioritizes well-being and increases fairness all along the food chain.

We are grateful for the opportunity to serve in this important role for Los Angeles County, and thankful for the support of the community and its leadership. We applaud the Board of Supervisors for their vision in creating this Office, and their continued support - including a recently passed motion titled "Support for the Office of Food Systems."

We look forward to even more progress in the year ahead.

Thank You!

Paula Daniels
Executive Director,
LA County Office of Food Systems



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