

TEMPLATE FOR BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS



BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

(Austin-Travis County Food Policy Board)

Recommendation Goal 6.1, 6.5, 6.6:

- Actively establish culturally relevant, affordable, community-backed or -driven retail options in areas experiencing food insecurity or facing barriers to food access, including replication and expansion of existing food retail initiatives in the City and County
- Expand benefits and access to nutritious foods through programs that amplify and supplement the purchasing power of individuals and households facing food and nutrition insecurity and explore the feasibility of creating a locally funded nutrition incentive program with less restrictive eligibility criteria than SNAP/WIC
- Increase utilization of publicly administered programs that improve food access, such as SNAP, WIC, the national school breakfast/lunch program, and summer food service program.

WHEREAS, food insecurity disproportionately affects vulnerable populations in Austin/Travis County, creating significant barriers to nutritious food access for individuals and households with limited resources;

WHEREAS, where value multiplying programs are an effective model of extending purchasing power for nutritious foods, allowing SNAP recipients to double their spending on fruits and vegetables at local farmers markets;

WHEREAS, the need for culturally relevant nutrition education and cooking skills training, can empower community members to make healthy, affordable food choices;

WHEREAS, current food assistance programs often have restrictive eligibility criteria that exclude many community members experiencing economic hardship;

WHEREAS, technological barriers and limited digital literacy can further complicate access to food assistance resources and online food shopping options;

WHEREAS, language and disability barriers continue to create additional challenges for individuals seeking food assistance and nutrition support;

WHEREAS, existing successful local programs like Double Up Food Bucks and The Happy Kitchen provide valuable frameworks for expanding food access and nutrition education; new programs can and need to be created;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Austin-Travis County Food Policy Board recommends the following actions:

1. Expand and Enhance Nutrition Incentive Programs:
 - Build upon the successful value purchasing models to create a locally funded nutrition incentive program
 - Develop more flexible eligibility criteria that complement existing federal/state/local assistance programs
 - Provide additional purchasing power for nutritious foods, particularly fresh produce and local agricultural products
 - Create mechanisms to support both farmers and food-insecure households
2. Strengthen Nutrition Education and Skill-Building:
 - Expand programs that provide culturally relevant food and cooking/nutrition education
 - Multilingual cooking classes
 - Nutrition education workshops
 - Skill-building for affordable, healthy meal preparation
 - Develop technology-integrated education modules to support online food shopping and benefit management
 - Create culturally responsive nutrition education materials
3. Reduce Barriers to Food Assistance:
 - Develop multilingual application materials and support services
 - Create accessible digital and in-person application processes
 - Provide technology literacy programs specifically focused on:
 - Online benefit application
 - Online grocery shopping
 - Digital benefit management
 - Ensure accommodation for individuals with disabilities in all food assistance program communications
4. Establish a Technology and Access Support Initiative:
 - Provide free or low-cost technology training workshops

- Offer device access programs for low-income households
- Create dedicated support channels for navigating online food shopping and benefit utilization
- Partner with community centers, libraries, and local organizations to expand program reach

5. Conduct Comprehensive Barrier Assessment:

- Analyze current program participation rates
- Identify demographic groups with lowest assistance program access
- Map technological and linguistic barriers
- Develop targeted interventions based on research findings

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Austin-Travis County Food Policy Board encourages the City Council to:

- Allocate dedicated funding to expand and enhance existing successful food access programs
- Provide sustainable funding for ~~Double Up Food Bucks and The Happy Kitchen~~
- Establish a cross-departmental working group to implement and monitor progress
- Develop transparent reporting mechanisms to track program effectiveness and community impact

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that these recommendations align with the city's commitment to equity, health, and community support, recognizing that access to nutritious food is a fundamental human right.

Date of Approval: _____

Record of the Vote: _____

Attest: _____