

S.6955 / A.7264

## IN SUPPORT OF GOOD FOOD NY: Enabling Municipalities to Engage in Values-Based Food Procurement



SPONSORED BY

*Senator Michelle Hinchey | Chair of NYS Senate Agriculture Committee*

*Senator Liz Krueger | Chair of NYS Senate Finance Committee*

*Assemblywoman Crystal D. Peoples-Stokes | Majority Leader, NYS Assembly*

***Advancing Local Economies; Environmental Sustainability; Worker Well-Being; Nutrition; Animal Welfare; Racial Equity; and Transparency in New York’s Food System***

### BACKGROUND

Municipalities across New York State purchase enormous amounts of food to feed their residents through schools, hospitals, senior centers, shelters, child care centers, and correctional facilities. NYC alone serves 230 million meals annually and Buffalo serves approximately 10 million meals just in the Buffalo Public Schools each year. This robust purchasing power can be leveraged to strengthen and create a more equitable food system in NYS and the region.

However, municipalities are unable to fully realize the potential of leveraging their purchasing power because of New York State procurement laws, which are among the nation’s most restrictive. In most circumstances, municipalities are allowed to consider only the “lowest responsible bidder” in making purchasing decisions. To allow municipalities to consider other factors when determining best value, Senator Michelle Hinchey and Assembly Majority Leader Crystal Peoples-Stokes introduced Bill #S.6955/#A.7264, which seeks to amend the General Municipal Law 103 to permit municipalities to consider whether a businesses’ practices support local economies; environmental sustainability; worker wellbeing; nutrition; animal welfare; racial equity; and supplier transparency, while also offering preference to Minority and Women Owned Businesses (MWBE’s).

The Good Food NY Bill reflects and builds on the values of the groundbreaking national efforts of the Good Food Purchasing Program (GFPP). The **Good Food Purchasing Program** provides a comprehensive set of tools, technical support, and resources to support public institutions shifting to a values-based procurement model. It centers 5 food system values – **Local Economies, Animal Welfare, Environmental Sustainability, Nutrition, and Valued Workforce** – in equal measure. The Program aims simultaneously to hold large vendors accountable to better practices and to increase opportunities for small and historically marginalized vendors (such as Black, Indigenous & POC farmers and food producers) to contract with public agencies. Public institutions in NYC and Buffalo are already participating, with 40+ regional and national food systems experts advocating for the Program’s formal adoption and robust implementation in both municipalities.

## IMPACT

By allowing municipalities to engage in values-based procurement, and to prefer small and midsize farms that utilize better labor, animal welfare, and environmental practices over their mega-agribusiness counterparts, the Good Food NY bill promotes two outcomes: (1) improving the practices of the largest producers and suppliers along the value areas; and (2) expanding access to institutional contracting opportunities for small and midsize farmers, producers and suppliers.

The Good Food NY bill will be groundbreaking for NYS municipalities interested in advancing values-based food procurement practices. It will allow municipalities already implementing GFPP – such as New York City and Buffalo – to formally adopt GFPP and to maximize its impact of GFPP, and it will allow other municipalities to participate in values-based food procurement.

## ADVANCING RACIAL EQUITY IN THE FOOD SYSTEM

This bill presents exciting opportunities to address racial inequities in the NYS food system. Food and agriculture are two of the most racially inequitable sectors in NYS. Longstanding institutionalized racism has manifested in discriminatory lending practices and generations of inadequate access to land and capital. The USDA's agricultural census counts 57,865 farmers in NYS. Of those total farms, 710 are non-white and 139 are Black-owned. Complex procurement processes and lack of access to information about and awareness of institutional opportunities prevent Black farmers and food business owners from successfully competing for institutional food contracts. Access to institutional markets is a critical link to access to capital and resources to increase income, capacity, and scale.

By expanding the ways that public institutions might procure food that is produced and sourced in ways that align with the values of those the institutions serve, the Good Food NY bill will offer a critical first step towards opening pathways for BIPOC-owned businesses and farmers to access institutional contracts and will generate exciting opportunities to begin developing a racially just food system in NYS.



*The NYS Good Food Purchasing Program Coalition is composed of over 65 grassroots leaders and advocates working to improve public procurement policies.*

**To cosponsor the Good Food NY bill or for questions, please contact Ribka Getachew, Community Food Advocates' Director of the NY Good Food Purchasing Program Campaign, at [rgetachew@foodadvocates.org](mailto:rgetachew@foodadvocates.org)**