



Food and Nutrition Policy

Purpose and Guidelines

At APOYO, we believe that our connection to community and our cultural competence are at the heart of our work to support our members' nutritional needs and health. In addition to breaking down barriers to food access, we are committed to offering our members choices that enable positive health outcomes, help prevent diet-related chronic illnesses, and honor their cultural needs and dietary preferences.

Our Food and Nutrition Policy will demonstrate our commitment to the quality of food we offer our participants and serve as our guiding principles. We will utilize the [Healthy Eating Research \(HER\) Nutrition Guidelines](#) as a tool to guide our nutritional priorities and the food we distribute. We will aim to increase fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean protein, and low-sodium options. We also strive to distribute items that meet the cultural and dietary needs of the community that we serve.

Food Purchases

When funding is available, we will purchase items that are aligned with our commitment to nutrition and meeting the cultural needs of our community. We will prioritize fresh vegetables and fruit, cooking staples, and items on the "choose often" list of the [HER Guidelines](#). We choose not to purchase sugary beverages, candy, or other items on the "choose rarely" list.

Food Donations

Rather than turn away donations, we aim to guide donors to support our community's health needs. To that end, we will share a donor guide to reflect our values and better meet the nutritional and cultural needs of our members. We will highlight popular items from our program or that participants request, prioritizing items that align with the "choose often" standards of HER, and aim to limit foods in the "choose rarely" category to support better health. (Refer to donor guide.)

Special Programs

As we expand our programs and/or build partnerships with other organizations, we acknowledge the barriers our community faces to preparing meals, including limited kitchen capacities, time restrictions and transportation challenges. As such, we aim to increase the abundance of healthy convenience items that are nutrient dense and align with the "choose often" standards of the HER Guidelines, including canned vegetables, beans and low-sodium soups. By promoting options that provide the same level of convenience without negative health impacts, we avoid perpetuating health inequities that contribute

- 1) Schwartz M, Levi R, Lott M, Arm K, Seligman H. Healthy Eating Research Nutrition Guidelines for the Charitable Food System. Durham, NC: Healthy Eating Research; 2020. Available at <http://healthyeatingresearch.org>

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to diet-related chronic disease, including hypertension and Type 2 diabetes. As resources allow, we will work to address transportation barriers through programs including home delivery to provide healthy food to our most vulnerable community members.

Broader Commitments

We will aim to incorporate nutrition education and culturally relevant recipes to provide an experience to our members that meets their needs. Providing access to these resources in Spanish is a priority. In order to understand our community's needs, we will survey members periodically.

As a part of our larger efforts to empower people by connecting them with essential services, we will also connect members to other food resources to fit their needs as appropriate, such as SNAP and WIC programs.

Administration and Implementation

This policy, approved by our Board on 4/25/2022 will take effect on 6/1/2022 at which time it will become part of the organizational policies and procedures. Our food bank manager is responsible for an annual review of the policy with food bank staff in order to keep it up to date with community needs. All new staff and volunteers will be provided an orientation to the policy by the food bank manager.

Supporting documents:

- <https://www.heart.org/en/about-us/diversity-inclusion/latinx-at-heart>
- <https://newsroom.heart.org/news/stay-fuerte-for-all-campaign-aims-to-reduce-health-disparities-in-the-hispanic-community>
- <https://www.heart.org/en/news/2021/05/21/discrimination-may-change-heart-structure-in-hispanic-adults>
- <https://www.heart.org/en/news/2021/03/04/heart-and-stroke-risk-factors-inadequately-treated-in-hispanic-stroke-survivors>
- <https://newsroom.heart.org/news/healthy-eating-linked-to-better-heart-structure-and-function-among-latino-adults>
- <https://newsroom.heart.org/news/self-perceived-social-standing-may-affect-cardiovascular-health-of-hispaniclatino-adults>

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