



Allied People Offering Year-Round Outreach

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 community's nutritional needs and health. In addition to breaking down barriers to food access, we are committed to offering choices that enable positive health outcomes, help prevent diet-related chronic illnesses, and honor the cultural needs and dietary preferences of those we serve. Our Food and Nutrition Policy demonstrates our commitment to the quality of food we offer and guides our work. We utilize the [Healthy Eating Research \(HER\) Nutrition Guidelines](#).

Food Purchases

We prioritize acquiring fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean protein, cooking staples, and items on the “choose often” list of the [HER Guidelines](#). We distribute food items that meet both the cultural and dietary needs of the community that we serve. We offer lactose-free, gluten-free and vegetarian options when funding permits. We choose not to purchase sugary beverages, candy, or other items on the “choose rarely” list. Our goal is to acquire at least 50% of the food we distribute from Washington-state producers and distributors.

Food Donations

We aim to guide donors to support our community's health needs. We share a donor guide at our website that reflects our values and helps donors better meet the nutritional and cultural needs of our members. We 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. 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 fresh fruit, shelf-stable milk, canned fruits, vegetables, meat, beans and low-sodium soups, breads, cereals, and granola bars. By promoting options that provide the same level of convenience without negative health impacts, we avoid perpetuating health

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

Broader Commitments

We offer nutrition education and intercultural information on cooking to encourage people to use foods they might not be familiar with because of their cultural identities. Providing information resources in Spanish is a priority. In order to understand our community's needs, we survey community members periodically. As a part of our larger efforts to empower people by connecting them with essential services, we also connect members to other food resources to fit their needs as appropriate, such as SNAP and WIC programs.

Administration and Implementation

Our food services manager is responsible for reviewing the policy with food services staff and keeping it up to date with community needs. New staff will be provided an orientation to the policy. This policy, approved by our Board on 4/25/2022, took effect on 6/1/2022 and became part of our organizational policies and procedures. It was updated 12/11/2024.

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>
- 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>