

**WHEREAS**, food insecurity – defined as limited or uncertain access to adequate food resources – is a key determinant for both physical and mental health, affecting children’s ability to learn, grow, and thrive; and

**WHEREAS**, in New Mexico over 350,000 residents, including nearly one in four children, live in food-insecure households, with the state ranking fourth in the nation for high rates of food insecurity, and food costs have risen dramatically in recent years; and

**WHEREAS**, lack of access to fresh, healthy food contributes directly to hunger, malnutrition, obesity, diabetes, and other chronic health conditions such as asthma and depression, increasing long-term health care costs and reducing quality of life; and

**WHEREAS**, some food insecure households report having to skip meals whereas others depend on calorie-dense and lower-quality foods that do not satisfy basic nutritional requirements; and

**WHEREAS**, lower-cost foods and those with processed grains, fats, and sugars are associated with higher rates of childhood obesity and diabetes; therefore, children in food-insecure households are at a higher risk of being overweight and having diabetes, in part due to frequent consumption of calorie-dense, nutritionally poor foods, which are generally lower cost; and

**WHEREAS**, limited access to nutritious food and fresh produce is a significant barrier to healthy dietary choices, and studies show that improving access to fresh produce significantly increases consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables; and

**WHEREAS**, childhood obesity remains a pressing concern in New Mexico, with nearly one in three children ages 10-17 classified as overweight or obese, creating long-term risks for diabetes, heart disease, and other chronic illnesses; and

**WHEREAS**, disparities in childhood obesity rates reflect disparities in access to fresh, healthy food in certain areas; and

**WHEREAS**, heart disease is the leading cause of death in New Mexico, driven in part by poor nutrition, diet-related risk factors, and limited access to fresh, healthy food; and

**WHEREAS**, New Mexico ranks among the most food-insecure states for older adults, with the 13th largest senior population in the nation and nearly one in five seniors experiencing food insecurity while another one in five are at risk, placing New Mexico third in the United States and well above the national average; and

**WHEREAS**, food insecurity also affects college students, as 58% of college students in New Mexico were food insecure in 2023, including 37% of University of New Mexico students, some of whom go days at a time without any food; and

**WHEREAS**, a “food desert” is a geographic area with limited access to nutritious, affordable food, at least one mile in urban settings from the nearest supermarket or large grocery store; and

**WHEREAS**, 79% of households in Bernalillo County are located in a food desert, and many neighborhoods in Albuquerque, including parts of the International District and South Valley, are identified as food deserts, where access to fresh, healthy foods is severely limited; and

**WHEREAS**, federal nutrition assistance programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) have faced deep funding cuts and stricter eligibility requirements, impeding critical access to fresh, nutritious food for low-income families; and

**WHEREAS**, multiple programs supporting local food procurement, including school meals and food bank partnerships, have been terminated or scaled back by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, reducing opportunities for schools and food banks to source healthy, locally grown food; and

**WHEREAS**, rising food and grocery costs resulting from inflation and disruptions in supply chains are placing additional financial burdens on families, especially those with limited incomes, thereby deepening food insecurity; and

**WHEREAS**, the erosion of trust in federal food and economic systems has underscored the need for cities like Albuquerque to build self-reliant, community-based solutions that can respond quickly to residents' needs regardless of federal timelines or political shifts; and

**WHEREAS**, a resilient and self-sustaining local food system rooted in local production, community distribution, and equitable access reduces dependence on outside systems and strengthens public confidence in the City's ability to provide stability during national or global disruptions; and

**WHEREAS**, food systems comprise interconnected components including production, processing, transport, distribution, marketing, consumption, and waste management, all of which play vital roles in feeding communities and influencing sustainability; and

**WHEREAS**, the loss of arable land in recent decades directly impacts food production and can lead to shortages or increased food prices; this issue can be managed through the production of more arable land, increasing the productive capacity of existing arable land, and conserving arable land to prevent degradation; and

**WHEREAS**, food access challenges are not normally limited to one section of the food system, and if only one part of the system is addressed, food access problems may persist; and

**WHEREAS**, reducing food waste in Albuquerque presents an opportunity to lower household costs, strengthen food security, and cut methane emissions from landfills, advancing the City's environmental and economic goals; and

**WHEREAS**, strengthening Albuquerque's local food system can expand access to fresh produce, support healthier diets, reduce food waste, contribute to the local economy, and build resilience against climate-related challenges; and

**WHEREAS**, New Mexico's agricultural sector is a multibillion-dollar industry, yet 95% of products leave the state, creating an opportunity to connect local producers with local consumers; and

**WHEREAS**, local governments play a vital role in building sustainable, inclusive, and resilient food systems through removing regulatory barriers, building partnerships, and engaging deeply with communities; and

**WHEREAS**, Albuquerque benefits from a robust local agricultural and food system, with dozens of individuals and organizations working daily to address food insecurity and expand healthy food access across the community; and

**WHEREAS**, the Mayor has committed to advancing the City’s Food and Agriculture Plan and Climate Action Plan, including the historic establishment of a Local Agriculture Community Coordinator position dedicated to supporting and strengthening Albuquerque’s agricultural community, and to addressing the growing impacts of federal nutrition program cuts and funding reductions by building local capacity and self-reliance within the City’s food system.

**Therefore I, Timothy M. Keller, Mayor of the City of Albuquerque, do hereby order and affirm the following:**

**A COMMITMENT TO SUPPORTING A LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM AND ECONOMY; AND STABILIZING OUR FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES**

*The City of Albuquerque is committed to supporting a stronger local food system that is affordable, sustainable, inclusive, equitable, and safe. Our goal is to ensure that every resident has access to affordable, fresh, and healthy food, regardless of income or neighborhood. At a time when families are facing increased financial strain from rising food costs, ongoing inflation, and federal cuts to nutrition and social support programs like SNAP, the City recognizes that access to affordable food is more than a matter of choice, it is a matter of stability and health.*

In response, the City of Albuquerque will:

1. Use every legal tool available to restore and protect federal funding for food programs that families depend on.
2. Take immediate action to support residents through enhanced coordination between City community centers, health and social service centers, senior centers, local food banks, pantries, and mutual-aid networks to address food insecurity.
3. Fortify a self-reliant, affordable, and sustainable local food system through coordinated policy, planning, and community partnerships. This approach will strengthen the connection between local producers and consumers, expand neighborhood-based food access, and grow the City’s local food economy.
4. Align zoning, procurement, and education initiatives with community-driven goals to significantly reduce household food insecurity, stabilize costs, and support the vitality of local farmers and small businesses.

The City’s long-term vision is to make “buying local” synonymous with “buying affordable,” ensuring that fresh, healthy, and locally produced food is accessible to every household while fostering a stronger, self-reliant regional food system for future generations.

## **SUPPORT AND EXPAND LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM OPPORTUNITIES**

*City of Albuquerque departments will immediately update or develop rules, policies, programs, and practices to strengthen the local food system and support access to affordable, fresh, healthy, and local food in Albuquerque. Affordability depends on reducing costs at every step — from production to distribution to the point of purchase — while creating efficiencies that allow farmers, small businesses, and families to thrive together.*

1. In furtherance of the City's commitment to legalize and incentivize neighborhood micro-markets (bodegas), the Environmental Health Department shall immediately promulgate rules for food establishment permits to provide for bodegas, mobile food markets, and uncut produce mobile retail. Permitting will be streamlined with zero fees.
2. In furtherance of the City's commitment to making City property available for urban agriculture and other activities that support a local food system:
  - a. The Parks & Recreation Department shall update and develop policies and procedures for existing and new parks facilities to support local food system activities, including but not limited to allowing for public use of parks facilities for community gardens, edible landscaping, pollinator gardens, growers' markets, and other food retail and distribution opportunities, water capture, and community education.
  - b. The City's Child Wellbeing Impact Officer shall collaborate with the Parks & Recreation Department and Albuquerque Public Schools to establish school community gardens for on-site, hands-on education about sustainable diets.
  - c. The Department of Family & Youth Services shall work with the Parks & Recreation Department to update and develop policies for existing and new community facilities to further support local food system activities including through community gardens, edible landscaping, pollinator gardens, growers' markets and other food retail and distribution opportunities, water capture, community refrigerators, and community education.
3. The Environmental Health Department shall develop and adopt rules and/or policies for the establishment and operation of community refrigerators to reduce food waste and increase access to fresh, nutritious food.
4. The Parks & Recreation Department Open Space Division shall update or develop policies and practices for existing and new Open Space urban agriculture and composting sites to improve access to affordable local food and compost.
5. The Economic Development Department shall develop programs and identify funding sources to support local food system businesses, from farmers to retailers, including but not limited to incentives, business assistance, training, marketing assistance, and/or waste reduction strategies education.

6. The Planning Department shall revise and/or develop policies to support urban agriculture, food production, food processing, markets, and retail food sales through zoning and zoning flexibility, development incentives, fast-track permitting, develop process assistance, and other means.

## **CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE OPERATIONS OPPORTUNITIES**

*The City of Albuquerque will lead by example through an internal transformation of food policies and procurement practices. By changing how we buy, serve, source, and manage food products within city government, we're investing directly in our local growers, supporting small businesses, and helping families — especially those hit hardest by inflation with access to fresh, affordable food close to home.*

7. The Sustainability Office shall develop food waste prevention, separation, and diversion plans for the City of Albuquerque and individual departments, incorporating as practicable waste reduction strategies, food rescue and redistribution programs to improve food access, and food waste diversion from landfills to composting partners to support a more sustainable local food system model.

The Sustainability Office shall:

- a. Work with the Environmental Health Department to develop guidelines for food rescue at municipal facilities, prioritizing those with kitchens.
  - b. Work with the Department of Senior Affairs, Department of Youth & Family Services, and the Department of Health, Housing & Homelessness to scale the 2024 CASA Kitchen food waste pilot program.
  - c. Work with the Arts & Culture Department to develop a food waste prevention and separation plan for their facilities, programs, and concessions that include visitor education.
  - d. Work with the Aviation Department to develop and implement a food waste prevention and separation plan that includes visitor education at the Sunport and Double Eagle concessions.
  - e. Develop and implement a food waste prevention and separation plan for City Hall.
  - f. Collaborate with the Office of Civic Engagement to connect OneABQ Volunteers with opportunities to support food rescue through apps or other means.
8. The Arts & Culture Department and Parks & Recreation Department shall increase options of fresh, nutritious, and local food within their food concessions.
  9. The Senior Affairs Department, Youth & Family Services, and the Department of Health, Housing & Homelessness shall incorporate more fresh, nutritious, local food into department programs and promote sustainable diets through relevant education, health promotion, and communication programs.
  10. The Purchasing Division and Sustainability Office shall adopt policies that improve the City's ability to prefer locally grown/made products, consistent with the City's Buy Local Initiative and 2024 Sustainability Resolution. The Purchasing Division shall also work with all City departments requiring procurement or service contracting of foods to develop Good Food Purchasing Standards or similar guidelines to encourage the procurement of healthy foods.

11. Parks & Recreation Open Space Division shall identify lands in the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District (MRGCD) that are available for agriculture and food production and shall work with the MRGCD to protect these properties.

## **TASK FORCE ON IMPLEMENTATION AND INVESTMENT**

*The City shall establish a cross-departmental task force, coordinated by the CABQ Local Agriculture Community Coordinator, to oversee continued implementation of the Executive Order, ensure accountability across City departments, secure future funding and resource alignment to sustain and scale the initiative's impact, and ensure equitable community engagement with a focus on neighborhoods most affected by food insecurity.*

12. City departments will seek alignment of policies and programs that impact the food system across multiple sectors and administrative levels. An interdepartmental Local Food System City Task Force shall be formed with designated liaisons from the following departments and offices:

- Arts & Culture Department
- Economic Development
- Environmental Health Department
- Health, Housing & Homelessness
- Mayor's Office
- Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency
- Office of Equity & Inclusion
- Office of Civic Engagement
- Open Space Division
- Parks & Recreation Department
- Planning Department
- Purchasing Division
- Real Property
- Senior Affairs Department
- Sustainability Office
- Youth & Family Services

13. The Task Force shall identify, map, and evaluate local initiatives and community food movements to transform best practices into relevant programs and policies and to identify partnership opportunities.
14. The Task Force shall identify all vacant City properties and complete an assessment as to suitability for various food systems related uses including but not limited to urban agriculture, farming/growing, production, storage, commissary, distribution, wholesale, farmers' markets and retail sales to activate vacant lots for local urban agriculture and food system activities as supported by the Climate Action Plan and the and the Albuquerque Food and Agriculture Action Plan.
15. The Task Force shall work with the Office of Civic Engagement to develop a plan for community input and collaboration with the private sector along with research, educational, and community-

based organizations for further review of municipal policies and regulations, and proposing changes to and/or development of new policies and regulations.