

# Incorporating Additional Values

This document is part of a resource series on Local Food Purchasing Incentives (LFPIs), produced through collaboration between the Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems (CRFS) and the National Farm to School Network. This project aims to contribute to the growing body of knowledge on LFPIs and provide more information for farm to school advocates and practitioners nationwide.

**Local food purchasing incentives (LFPIs) are programs that provide additional funding to child nutrition program (CNP) operators to directly offset or incentivize local food purchases. As interest continues to rise in LFPI policies, the conversations around them are expanding beyond prioritizing purchases based simply on whether they are “local” foods.**

**Advocates are also interested in incentivizing other values or attributes related to the foods that are purchased and/or the people producing them. This is called “values-based” or “values-aligned” purchasing. Institutions should consider values-based purchasing not only for the immediate benefits it brings to local communities, but also for its broader societal and environmental impact.**

Incorporating values beyond locality into purchasing decisions can have far-reaching effects on various critical issues. For instance, a staggering one-third of global greenhouse gas emissions stem from the food system (Crippa et al., 2021). This statistic alone underscores the urgent need for institutions to prioritize environmental concerns in their sourcing practices. By favoring producers who employ environmentally sustainable practices, institutions can play a pivotal role in mitigating climate change and reducing their overall carbon footprint. Moreover, prioritizing producers from historically marginalized communities, such as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) individuals, not only promotes social equity but also contributes to economic empowerment and resilience within these communities. This, in turn, fosters a more inclusive and dynamic local food system. When institutions consider factors like nutritional quality, workers’ rights, and animal welfare alongside locality, they are not just making sound business decisions; they are becoming active participants in shaping a more just, sustainable, and resilient food ecosystem for present and future generations.

There is growing grassroots momentum in communities and school districts that are actively embracing these procurement policies and practices, such as adopting the Good Food Purchasing program. State governments

can also play a vital role in incentivizing values-aligned purchasing. In a 2022 national survey regarding LFPIs, stakeholders expressed the most interest in supporting producers that identify as BIPOC, producers that use environmentally sound practices, the nutritional quality of local products, and producers that respect workers' rights and animal welfare, respectively (Matts et al., 2022).

Various strategies, requiring differing levels of commitment and administrative capacity, are available to weave broader values-aligned purchasing into LFPIs. Some states have already integrated diverse values into their programs, situating them at the leading edge of program implementation across the country. By sharing examples of existing and potential approaches to support values-aligned purchasing in LFPIs, this concept paper aims to inspire further conversation and future action.

## OVERVIEW OF VALUES

**In this resource, 'values' can be defined and categorized into two groups: values related to producers and values related to products.**

### PRODUCERS

This document uses a broad definition of "producers," which refers to farmers and ranchers as well as manufacturers of products. It is essential for each LFPI to define what kinds of producers can qualify as values-aligned in its program.

Values related to **producers** can further be broken down into two categories:

- **Values surrounding producer's ownership.**<sup>1</sup> These are often immutable characteristics that describe the ownership of the business. Examples include but are not limited to, BIPOC-owned/led, women-owned/led, business size, emerging/young producers, or producers from other historically marginalized or under-served communities (veterans, LGBTQAI+, etc.).<sup>2</sup>
- **Values based on producer's practices.** These practices describe how food is produced or how the business is operated in alignment with specific values. Examples of practices include those that are environmentally sound, protect animal welfare, and support workers' rights.

### PRODUCTS

**Food products** can also have characteristics that are in alignment with specific values regardless of producer ownership. For example, states can incentivize purchases of food produced with environmentally-friendly growing practices (i.e., organic products), rather than explicitly incentivize purchases from specific kinds of producers (i.e., organic producers). Incentivizing products gives institutional buyers the opportunity to make values-aligned purchases from any vendor, including aggregators such as food hubs and distributors that may carry only some values-aligned products. More information about the verification and certification of values-aligned products can be found on page 16.

<sup>1</sup> "Ownership" is also defined as one of the six key metrics to identify farm impact by the National Farm to Institution Metrics Collaborative: <https://ftimetrics.localfoodeconomics.com/>

<sup>2</sup> The USDA delineates their criteria for categorizing farmers and ranchers as "underserved." For detailed information, visit their website: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/getting-assistance/underserved-farmers-ranchers>.

## DEFINING VALUES

Agencies that administer LFPIs will want to define which producers or products are aligned with their values. Defining values and outlining qualifications for values-aligned purchasing is crucial for program clarity and maintaining program integrity (see page 17).

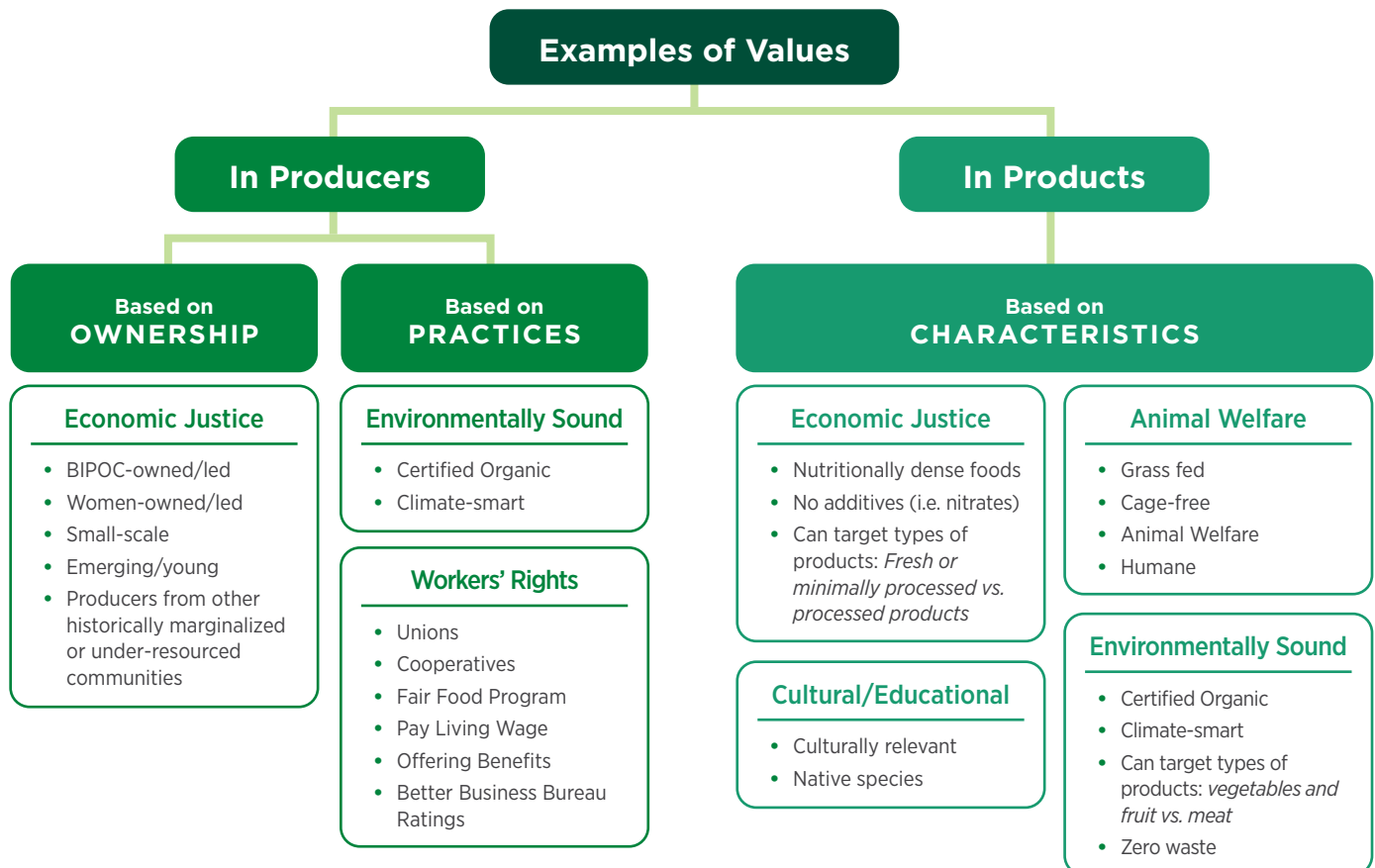
When creating requirements for values-aligned producers and products, policymakers may first look to existing policies in their state related to values-aligned purchasing or other departments implementing similar programs. If applicable, states can align their program requirements with existing definitions.

### EXPLORE HOW OTHER ORGANIZATIONS DEFINE VALUES:

- [The Good Food Purchasing Program](#)
- [National Farm to School Network's Six Community Values](#)
- [The Michigan Good Food Charter](#)

Figure 1 below illustrates how states can categorize values in farm to school purchasing. Many of these categories mirror the National Farm to School Network's Community Values (see above). This graphic is not meant to be comprehensive or prescribe specific values, but rather provide a framework for how policymakers can view and discuss their own values in the context of LFPIs.

*Figure 1. Potential Values in Farm to School Purchasing*



## STRATEGIES FOR INCORPORATING VALUES INTO LFPI DESIGNS

### This section shares examples of eight existing and potential strategies to incorporate values-aligned purchasing in LFPIs.

Figure 2 compares each of these strategies in regard to the level of commitment to implement, the type of commitment required, what additional funding is required to administer, and any additional administration required to implement. We provide greater detail for each strategy in this table, and provide information about how the strategy works, benefits, and examples on pages 5-15.

This resource is meant to offer a wide range of possibilities for policymakers to incorporate values-aligned purchasing. Unless otherwise noted, current program examples are sourced from 2022 LFPI compendium and landscape analysis (Bull 2022a; Bull 2022b). As such, we acknowledge that the following strategies also vary with respect to their political feasibility. Policymakers and authorizing state agencies can combine one or more of these strategies to strengthen and diversify how values are incorporated into LFPI designs.


*Figure 2: Overview of Strategies to Incorporate Values Aligned Purchasing in LFPIs*

	Strategy	Level of Commitment to Implement	Type of Commitment	Additional Funding Required to Administer	Additional Administration Required
1	Explicitly State Values and Goals	Low ● ○ ○ ○ ○	Written	None	None
2	Provide Technical Assistance and Resources on Values	Mild ● ● ○ ○ ○	Educational, monetary depending on design	Additional staff time for agency or partners, possibly additional funding for participants	Programming, technical assistance
3	Require CNPs to Include Values in Food Solicitations	Moderate ● ● ● ○ ○	Administrative	Additional staff time	Technical assistance, possible verification required
4	Identify Producers Based on Values	Moderate ● ● ● ○ ○	Administrative	Additional staff time	Technical assistance, verification processing, database management
5	Track and Evaluate Values-Aligned Purchasing	Moderate ● ● ● ○ ○	Administrative	Additional staff time	Technical assistance, database management, verification processing
6	Prioritize Values in LFPI Application Scoring Criteria	Strong ● ● ● ● ○	Monetary	Additional staff time	Possible verification or follow-up required
7	Establish Higher Reimbursement Rates	Very Strong ● ● ● ● ●	Monetary	Additional staff time, values-aligned reimbursement carve-outs	Technical assistance, verification processing
8	Establish Purchasing Mandates	Very Strong ● ● ● ● ●	Monetary	Additional staff time, values-aligned reimbursement carve-outs	Technical assistance, verification processing

# 1

## Explicitly State Values and Goals

### STRATEGY OVERVIEW

<b>Commitment to Values</b>	 (Low)
<b>Type of Commitment</b>	Written
<b>Additional Funding Required</b>	None
<b>Additional Administration Required</b>	None

### HOW THIS WORKS

Policymakers or administering agencies can list a set of values and goals that the LFPI should promote. These values can be included in legislative language and program materials as goals and statements of purpose.

### BENEFITS

- Explicit guidance offers a clear understanding of goals for agency staff that administer LFPIs
- Explicit guidance helps CNP managers understand the program's objectives and make informed purchasing decisions aligned with those goals
- Explicit guidance gives evaluators insight into program goals to assess whether the program is achieving them

### EXAMPLES

- The purpose of California's Farm to School Incubator Grant Program is to support projects that cultivate equity, nurture students, build climate resilience, and create scalable and sustainable change.
- Washington's Farm to School Purchasing grant seeks to increase purchasing from small and mid-size farmers and food producers, and from historically underrepresented farmers and ranchers.
- One goal for Michigan's 10 Cents a Meal program is to improve daily nutrition and eating habits for children in school and early childhood care and education settings.

# 2

## Provide Technical Assistance and Resources on Values

### STRATEGY OVERVIEW

<b>Commitment to Values</b>	●●○○○○ (Mild)
<b>Type of Commitment</b>	Educational, monetary depending on design
<b>Additional Funding Required</b>	Additional staff time for agency or partners, possibly additional funding for participants
<b>Additional Administration Required</b>	Programming, technical assistance

### HOW THIS WORKS

Administering agencies can provide technical assistance, resources, and training opportunities to encourage values-aligned purchasing. For example, they can offer guidance on why values-aligned purchasing is important or how CNPs can integrate values into their bid, contract, or RFP (request for proposals) language. Additionally, administering agencies can incentivize CNP managers to attend these trainings by offering financial rewards or incentives, in addition to or as part of the LFPI.

### BENEFITS

- Enhances the ability of CNPs to make purchases aligned with their values
- Communicates and emphasizes the specific values that are supported through programming

### 3

## Require CNPs to Include Values in Food Solicitations

### STRATEGY OVERVIEW

<b>Commitment to Values</b>	●●●●● (Moderate)
<b>Type of Commitment</b>	Administrative
<b>Additional Funding Required</b>	Additional staff time
<b>Additional Administration Required</b>	Technical assistance, possible verification required

### HOW THIS WORKS

States have some leeway in setting their own public purchasing laws. Administering agencies can require CNPs to include values in bid language for any local products that may be reimbursed by an LFPI. If using this strategy, the agency should create template guidance for participating CNPs and provide additional training to support food program managers during this process. The Center for Good Food Purchasing has developed a toolkit for developing successful values-driven solicitations (Elliott et al., 2022).

Additional considerations should be given to how verification of values-aligned bids would be verified, if at all, during the solicitation process.

### BENEFITS

- **This strategy is rather simple;** it does not require substantial additional resources by the authorizing agency but can enhance the ability of CNPs to make values-aligned purchases

# 4

## Identify Producers Based on Values

### STRATEGY OVERVIEW

<b>Commitment to Values</b>	●●●●● (Moderate)
<b>Type of Commitment</b>	Administrative
<b>Additional Funding Required</b>	Additional staff time
<b>Additional Administration Required</b>	Technical assistance, verification processing, database management

### HOW THIS WORKS

Administering agencies or nonprofit partners host product databases or buyer-producer matchmaking platforms. On these platforms, administrators can attribute specific values and metrics to the listed producers and products. **This process should involve the consent of the producers being listed.**

### BENEFITS

- **Reduces need for CNP managers to research** values-aligned producers and products individually
- (Depending on LFPI design) **The platform can provide verification** for values-aligned purchases, reducing the administrative burden on CNP managers to gather additional documentation
- **Allows for greater visibility** of values-aligned producers and products

### EXAMPLES

- **The Oregon Harvest for Schools Directory** includes “Producer Identity” as a filter (Oregon Harvest for Schools, n.d.). Producers are able to self-identify these attributes in their profile. Recognizing that identity is complex and not every producer will feel represented by one or more of these categories, the database also allows producers to include more nuanced information in a section called “Additional Notes.”
- **Cornell Cooperative Extension Harvest New York** maintains a 30% NY Eligible Product Database that lists any social, food safety, or animal welfare certifications from vendors (Cornell Cooperative Extension, n.d.).



# 5

## Track and Evaluate Values-Aligned Purchasing

### STRATEGY OVERVIEW

<b>Commitment to Values</b>	●●●●○ (Moderate)
<b>Type of Commitment</b>	Administrative
<b>Additional Funding Required</b>	Additional staff time
<b>Additional Administration Required</b>	Technical assistance, database management, verification processing

### HOW THIS WORKS

Authorizing agencies can integrate values-aligned purchases into their LFPI’s **tracking and reimbursement processes**. They can do this in several ways, including:

- **Externally:** Administering agencies can request information directly from CNPs about values-aligned purchasing. However, without proper support structures in place, such as a values-aligned vendor list, asking CNPs to report values-aligned purchases may add administrative burden and cause confusion among food program managers. Additionally, if the state agency is asking about producer ownership characteristics, this may lead food program managers to make unsubstantiated assumptions about the producers they work with.
- **Internally:** A state agency or nonprofit partner can track values-aligned purchases internally by maintaining a values-aligned producer list or closed producer list with relevant values attributed to each producer. The authorizing agency must require CNPs to submit vendor-level data, or ideally farm-of-origin-level data, in program tracking sheets. Then, the state agency would be able to cross-reference these lists to analyze values-aligned purchasing trends internally without requiring much additional tracking from CNPs.

It is important to minimize the administrative burden on CNPs to ensure that they are not discouraged from making values-aligned purchases due to additional administrative requirements.

### BENEFITS

- **These data can be used as part of program evaluations** to understand the impact of an LFPI on values-aligned purchases
- By needing to track values-aligned purchases, **CNPs can gain insights into the values that are prioritized by the state** and may be implicitly guided to purchase accordingly

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## EXAMPLES

- **The Vermont Agency of Education** has offered an optional template tracking spreadsheet for School Food Authorities that apply for the Local Foods Incentive Grant. In this template, the agency asks for invoice-level information, where applicants share the vendor's name, food product category (dairy, meat, fruits, and vegetables, etc.), and local food format (Raw, Processed, or Unique). These data auto-populate in a separate tab in each CNP's tracking spreadsheet. The Vermont Agency of Education has aggregated these data, providing an indication of the extent to which CNPs are making local purchases based on values of meal quality or nutrition (Floyd, 2023).
- While not an LFPI, the **Center for Good Food Purchasing** shares aggregated results of tracking values-aligned purchases in the Bay Area Good Food Purchasing Program Dashboard (Center for Good Food Purchasing, 2022).



Photo Credit: Sarah Rypma

# 6

## Prioritize Values In LFPI Application Scoring Criteria

### STRATEGY OVERVIEW

<b>Commitment to Values</b>	●●●●● (Strong)
<b>Type of Commitment</b>	Monetary
<b>Additional Funding Required</b>	Additional staff time
<b>Additional Administration Required</b>	Possible verification required

### HOW THIS WORKS

If the LFPI is administered as a competitive grant program, application scoring criteria could prioritize CNPs that either prove they currently engage in values-aligned purchasing or pledge to make values-aligned purchases or serve culturally-relevant meals.<sup>3</sup>

Grant applications may also require applicant CNPs to share their specific plans to make these values-aligned purchases. Applications could ask CNPs to provide letters of support from producers with whom they have relationships or plan to work with in the future. Scoring criteria can give more points to CNPs with robust plans/relationships.

State agency program administrators may want to incorporate a way to verify whether a grantee follows through on their values-aligned purchasing pledges.

### BENEFITS

- **This strategy could promote thoughtful decision-making**, enabling CNPs to develop comprehensive values-aligned purchasing strategies
- Asking CNPs to establish relationships with local producers and provide letters of support may **foster stronger connections** between CNPs and the local food community

### EXAMPLES

- States such as California, Minnesota, Washington, and Oregon (in its competitive grant program) give priority to applicants that pledge to purchase from producers from values-aligned producers. To date, the authors are unaware of research that describes any behavioral change from this approach, or to what extent applicants have made this pledge in their applications. However, a 2023 evaluation of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture Farm to School Grant program inquired about ownership identification when surveying producers impacted by the program (McKee VanSlooten et al., 2023). The survey was sent to 42 of the 53 vendors that sold local food to grantees and had a 43% response rate, for a total of 18 respondents. Of respondents, 39% identified as women-owned businesses, 11% identified as BIPOC-led businesses, and one vendor (6%) identified as a veteran-owned business.

3 The topic of culturally-relevant *meals* is listed separately here. This is because this resource explains how LFPIs can incentivize values-aligned *purchasing*. While LFPIs can incentivize purchasing of culturally relevant crops, such as 'ulu or taro, culturally-relevant *meals* do not have to be explicitly derived from culturally-relevant ingredients. For example, tomatoes and peppers can be used in making mole, but neither ingredient is inherently culturally-relevant. We included culturally-relevant meals in this document because several states already incorporate this into their grant scoring criteria.

# 7

## Establish Higher Reimbursement Rates

### STRATEGY OVERVIEW

<b>Commitment to Values</b>	●●●●● (Very Strong)
<b>Type of Commitment</b>	Monetary
<b>Additional Funding Required</b>	Additional staff time, values-aligned reimbursement carve-outs
<b>Additional Administration Required</b>	Technical assistance, verification processing

### HOW THIS WORKS

This strategy can adapt to work under several different LFPI models:

#### Rebate/match model

In a rebate/match-based LFPI model, CNPs are partially reimbursed for local food purchases they make throughout the year. States can integrate a values-aligned element into their program by providing a higher rebate/reimbursement rate for values-aligned purchases.

#### Per-meal reimbursement model

Some LFPIs employ a per-meal reimbursement model, in which CNPs are provided a set reimbursement for each meal that features a qualifying local food product. Typically, the local product must be a full component of a reimbursable meal, rather than an ingredient within a meal component. When CNPs request this additional reimbursement, they often must submit a claim for the number of meals for which they are seeking reimbursement and invoices for local products. The administering agency could provide higher reimbursement rates for meals that feature values-aligned products or products from values-aligned producers.

#### Performance-based reimbursement model

In a performance-based LFPI model, CNPs must achieve a specific local food percentage to qualify for reimbursement. To integrate values-aligned purchasing, authorizing agencies can provide higher reimbursement rates to CNPs that purchase a specific amount of funds (\$) or spend a specific percentage (%) of their budgets on values-aligned purchases.

### BENEFITS

- **The LFPI creates a stronger market demand** for values-aligned products
- **Producers are incentivized** to adopt or expand their adherence to specific values
- **Values-aligned producers are encouraged to enter the school food market**

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## CONSIDERATIONS

To ensure this strategy is effective and not overly burdensome for CNPs, it is crucial to streamline administrative processes. Otherwise, CNPs may be disincentivized to make values-aligned purchases to avoid additional documentation requirements.

Administering agencies can simplify the tracking and documentation process for CNPs by taking on the responsibility of verifying values-aligned purchases internally, rather than requiring CNPs to submit verification individually (see page 9). A comprehensive producer/product list that includes values-aligned factors can allow for a quicker verification and reimbursement process.



Photo Credit: Sarah Rypma

## 8

## Establish Purchasing Mandates

### STRATEGY OVERVIEW

<b>Commitment to Values</b>	●●●●● (Very Strong)
<b>Type of Commitment</b>	Monetary
<b>Additional Funding Required</b>	Additional staff time, values-aligned reimbursement carve-outs
<b>Additional Administration Required</b>	Technical assistance, verification processing

### HOW THIS WORKS

#### Create Purchasing Limits or Thresholds

States can create purchasing limits or floors for values-aligned purchases. Additionally, states may simply design their LFPI program such that CNPs can **only** purchase values-aligned products. These mandates may either incentivize or disincentivize certain purchasing behaviors.

#### Disqualifying Specific Products

On the other hand, states may completely **disqualify** specific products and products from producers from their LFPIs. Examples of disqualifications could include products that contain artificial dyes, sodium nitrates/nitrites, or genetically modified ingredients, or products from producers that have documented labor or food safety violations or producers involved with concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs).

### EXAMPLES

#### Producer Ownership Characteristics

States can require certain percentages (%) or amounts of funds (\$) to be spent on values-aligned products or on products from values-aligned producers. These set-asides for certain groups exist in federal law but may vary in state law.<sup>4</sup> Any set-aside must have eligibility criteria and a justification for determining which groups to incentivize.

#### Product Types

To support nutritional quality, states can limit certain percentages or (\$) of funds to be used on certain products, such as processed versus fresh and minimally processed products.

- **Colorado's Local Food Purchasing Grant Program** mandates that participants cannot spend more than 25% of the money on processed products.
- **Michigan's 10 Cents a Meal program** only reimburses purchases made for fresh and minimally processed fruits, vegetables, and dry beans.

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<sup>4</sup> For example, the Biden-Harris Administration Justice40 Initiative. See more information: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/environmentaljustice/justice40/>

## BENEFITS

- **Provides a clear framework** for values-aligned purchasing and ensures program consistency
- **Establishes transparency and accountability**, enabling policymakers to monitor compliance and track progress
- **Yields marketing and advocacy benefits**, showcasing the program's impact in an understandable way
- **Creates market demand** for values-aligned products, encouraging producers to adopt these practices

## CONSIDERATIONS

To ensure effective participation in LFPIs, it is important to avoid imposing strict mandates without providing appropriate compensation (i.e., increasing incentive rates) and technical assistance. Burdensome tracking and documentation requirements may also discourage CNPs from fully engaging in values-aligned purchases. Furthermore, CNPs may be disincentivized from tracking more values-aligned purchases than is necessary, which can potentially distort data and outcomes. These additional layers increase administrative labor to verify and regulate these mandates on the state agency. It is crucial to strike a balance in LFPI design that encourages participation and minimizes administrative burdens (on both the administering agency and on CNPs) while still promoting values-aligned procurement.



Photo Credit: Sarah Rypma



## MAINTAINING INTEGRITY OF VALUES IN INCENTIVE DESIGNS

### Integrating values-aligned purchasing into incentive programs introduces complexities that require careful consideration.

If administering agencies focus on encouraging values-aligned procurement through values statements and technical assistance, the need for verifying producers or products may be minimized. However, to demonstrate a stronger commitment to values-aligned purchases, administering agencies might need to allocate additional resources to support implementation. For example, additional staff time might be needed to provide guidance and technical assistance and verify compliance.

### CERTIFICATIONS

To effectively define and regulate values in incentive programs, administering agencies can consider the following approaches:

- **Existing certifications**

Using established certifications such as Women and Minority-Owned Business Enterprise, Certified Organic, Fair Food Program Certified, or Certified Grass-fed can alleviate the administrative burden on the authorizing agency, as they can rely on certification-granting agencies to verify the authenticity of the certifications. However, it is important to acknowledge the equity implications of this approach. For instance, young and new/emerging farmers as well as other business owners may face barriers in qualifying or affording these certifications. To address this, administering agencies may use existing certifications while also allowing for alternative methods, such as trust-based certifications, to verify products and producers. This approach may minimize barriers for emerging producers and promote equity at the same time.

- **Trust-based certifications**

Trust-based certifications can be particularly beneficial for emerging farmers who may face challenges in obtaining traditional certifications. This approach involves creating an affidavit or self-identification process where producers can declare their alignment with specific values. The authorizing agency can maintain a record of values-aligned products or producers for tracking purposes. This method is similar to how some states verify the local status of processed products through “Product Formulation Statements” that detail the individual ingredients in the product and their corresponding origins. Trust-based certifications are valuable when there is no existing certification program or database that aligns with the desired values of the state and its LFPI.

### VERIFICATION

For states that employ trust-based certifications, regular or occasional auditing of producers may be necessary to ensure compliance with program requirements. To minimize administrative barriers, the authorizing agency may collaborate with other administering agencies, nonprofit organizations, or independent consultants to perform verification services. Peer or community audits may also be employed as a means of verifying trust-based certifications. The Center for Good Food Purchasing has released guidance for a new Locally-Led Supplier Verification Pilot Program, that can provide insight into how administering agencies can work with partners to verify values-aligned purchases (Center for Good Food Purchasing, 2023).

By implementing these approaches, administering agencies could define and regulate values in their programs effectively, promoting transparency, accountability, and equity in the procurement process.



## DOCUMENTATION

Policymakers should balance documentation requirements for producers and CNPs in LFPIs, aiming to reduce administrative burden while preserving program integrity. Documentation of values-aligned purchasing can include copies of invoices and copies of trust-based or existing certifications (see page 16). Currently, some states mandate CNPs to collect and manage producer affidavits for specific products, which, although effective, can overwhelm both CNPs and producers with duplicative paperwork. This complexity may lead to confusion about program requirements and result in incorrect claims. To address these challenges, a statewide producer/product database managed by the authorizing agency or a nonprofit partner can centralize information, streamline compliance, and enhance program integrity.

## CONCLUSION

With LFPIs, states have the opportunity to transcend conventional procurement practices, embracing a comprehensive and conscientious approach. This shift is not merely an economic exchange, but a strategic move to address pressing societal issues. In a world grappling with environmental crises and systemic inequities, values-based purchasing emerges as a critical component in forging a just, sustainable, and resilient future. Prioritizing local food is no longer enough – it must be coupled with a broader commitment to values that reflect the evolving priorities of our global community.

Various strategies exist to incorporate values-aligned purchasing into LFPIs, each with varying levels of commitment and administrative feasibility. The approaches outlined in this concept paper can all contribute to the integration of values in LFPIs. While this may introduce complexity to program administration, these challenges are not insurmountable. Additional structures and resources can bolster the regulation and integrity of values-aligned purchasing. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that the potential unintended consequences of these strategies remain uncertain. Therefore, champions of LFPIs should maintain a vigilant stance, actively monitoring implementation challenges and making necessary adjustments if unforeseen adverse effects arise.

Policymakers are urged to think creatively and explore additional possibilities beyond the examples provided, drawing inspiration from successful policies and programs that integrate values. By embracing innovation and learning from the existing LFPI field, policymakers can foster a robust and inclusive food system that reflects and supports the values important to their communities.

## LEARN MORE

- Review the [Farm to School Incentives Toolkit](#), which includes a report of the national landscape of Local Food Purchasing Incentive designs, a compendium of all statewide programs, and folders that include tracking sheets used by states and existing state program evaluations.
- Read about National Farm to School Network's [Values-Aligned Universal Meals Campaign](#).

> See [National Farm to School Network's Webpage on Local Food Purchasing Incentives](#) for an up-to-date list of state programs.

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To find more resources on LFPIs, go to [foodsystems.msu.edu/local-food-purchasing-incentives](https://foodsystems.msu.edu/local-food-purchasing-incentives) and [farmtoschool.org/resources](https://farmtoschool.org/resources). Contact Cassandra Bull at [cassandra@farmtoschool.org](mailto:cassandra@farmtoschool.org) or Colleen Matts at [matts@msu.edu](mailto:matts@msu.edu) for more information.

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