



Metropolitan Washington  
Council of Governments

## COG LOCAL FOOD PROCUREMENT CHALLENGE

A Regional Initiative to  
Strengthen Our Food System



The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) Food and Agriculture Regional Member (FARM) Policy Committee [launched the Local Food Procurement Challenge](#) ([“the Challenge”](#)) [on December 5th, 2025](#). The Challenge invites member jurisdictions to strategically shift a portion of their existing food budgets toward locally and regionally grown and produced foods\*, advancing economic resilience, food security, environmental stewardship, and regional agricultural vitality.

Regional coordination on food procurement creates a multiplier effect for producers and food system stakeholders, allowing them to make investments in their operations and infrastructure to scale up to meet sustained market demand for local and regional food. The Challenge is designed to meet jurisdictions where they are; whether experienced with local procurement or just getting started.

### Why the Challenge Matters

Local and regional food procurement is a practical, high-impact strategy to:

- Support local farmers, watermen, and food businesses and strengthen the region’s economy.
- Keep agricultural land in production and disincentivize the loss of farms and farmland.
- Build supply chain resilience and improve healthy food access, especially as food insecurity remains elevated in the region.
- Advance climate and sustainability goals by encouraging procurement of products grown closer to residents.



*\*For the Challenge, local foods are products harvested in the District of Columbia, Maryland, or Virginia. Regional foods include products from DC, MD, VA, Delaware, New Jersey, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, or West Virginia.*

## Benefits of Joining

- Access to a network of local governments, institutions, distributors, and food system partners
- Guidance, technical assistance, and increased capacity to implement forward contracting, cooperative purchasing, and values-based procurement strategies
- Public recognition in Summer/Fall 2026 and visibility at FARM meetings and annual regional summits for participating jurisdictions

## HOW TO JOIN THE CHALLENGE

### Step 1 — Designate a Local Food Investment Point Person

Identify a qualified staff member, or team of staff, to coordinate your jurisdiction's involvement. Your jurisdiction's food policy and/or security staff or council can help.

### Step 2 — Join the Community of Practice

Notify COG staff of your assigned Point Person to connect them with subject matter experts in bimonthly discussions, trainings, and peer learning sessions through the [Challenge's Community of Practice](#) (CoP). The CoP is for all jurisdictions —large, small, rural, or urban and whether they are just getting started or regularly investing in local food. The CoP provides technical assistance and shared tools (e.g. sample RFP language, contracting insights, and data support).

### Step 3 — Pass the Resolution

Download and customize [the local resolution template](#). Resources, including [a procurement strategy menu](#), and staff are available to support you.

### Step 4 — Procure Regionally and Locally Grown Foods

Depending on your interest, work with COG staff and the Community of Practice to:

- Review procurement data on local and regional food purchases to assess where your jurisdiction currently stands on local food purchases;
- Identify early opportunities (e.g., substituting regional produce, leveraging cooperative contracts, piloting small initiatives);
- Provide annual updates to your local governing bodies.
- The Challenge will run until December 2027.

### Step 5 — Report & Celebrate Progress

Share your achievements, connect with peers, and gain regional recognition.

## GET STARTED

For templates, guidance, and to discuss participation, contact:

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