



Farm to Care Centers: Building Local Procurement Resources for the Child and Adult Care Food Program in Washington

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Background

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) is a federally funded nutrition program that reimburses child and adult sponsors, or care centers, for serving nutritious meals. The Washington Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) Child Nutrition Services (CNS) provides administrative support and regulates use of federal funds for CACFP. Sponsors have diverse sizes, geography, populations served, and levels of administrative support. Because of this, they may require resources that differ from other CNS programs. This project took place as a part of the Harvest of the Season initiative to support local purchasing.



Methods

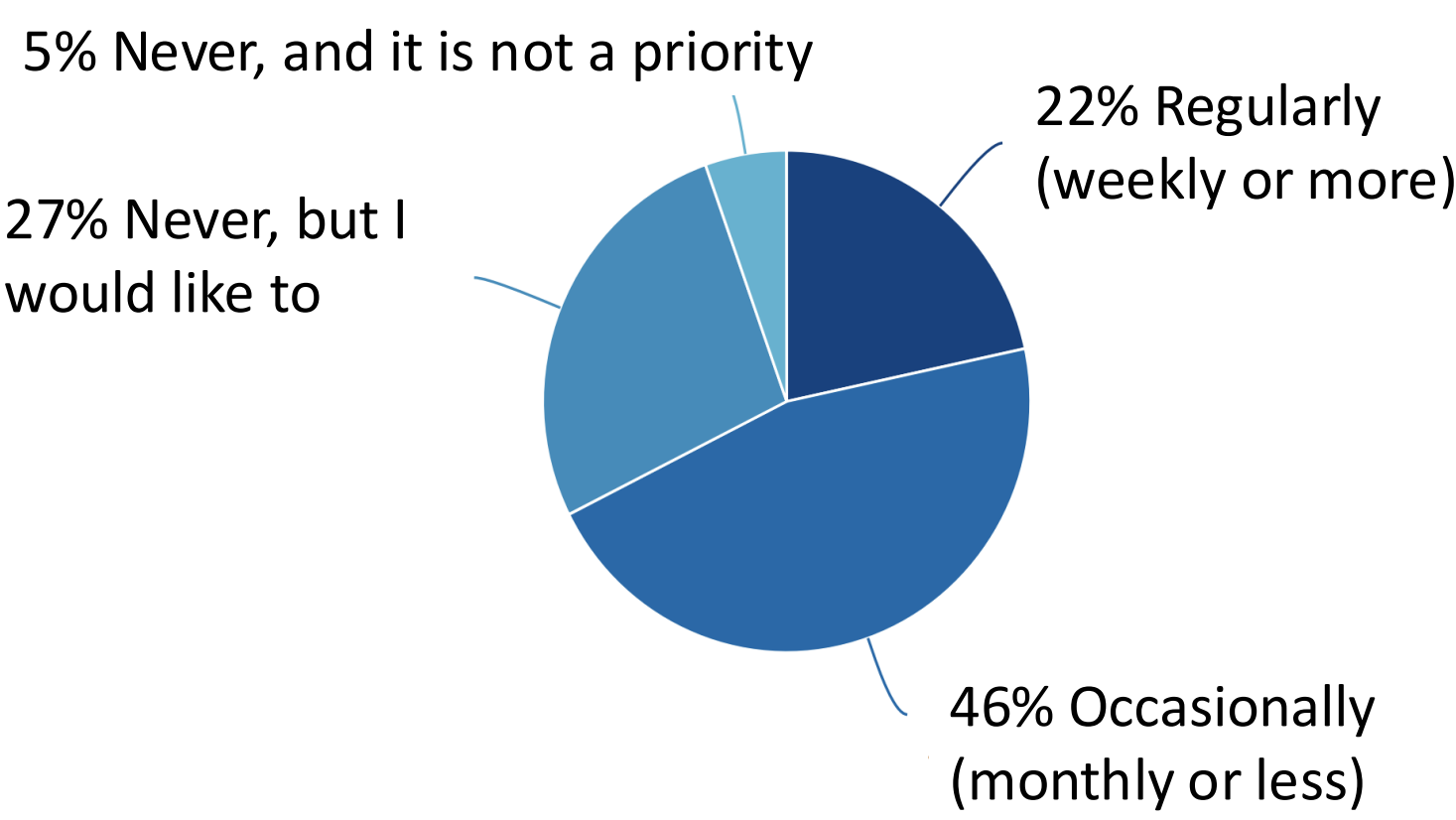
Data collection for this needs assessment occurred in four phases:

1. **Focus group discussion** with CACFP Specialists (n=12).
2. **Interview** with Procurement Specialist (n=1).
3. **A survey** for all CACFP sponsors about experiences with procurement and local purchasing (n=42).
4. **Review** of literature and current resources.

Interviews and focus groups were reviewed using qualitative descriptive analysis, and survey data provided summary statistics. Results informed recommendations for a resource toolkit.



Current Frequency Local Sourcing



Needs Assessment

The needs assessment identified that...

- Sponsors need to **improve general procurement knowledge** before participating in local purchasing.
- **Existing sponsor resources focus on school food**, which have nuanced differences in regulations and unfamiliar jargon for CACFP sponsors.
- Materials for local producers are **directed at selling to schools**.
- Most sponsors **shop in small quantities** for local produce at grocery stores or farmers' markets.

Resource Toolkit

The resource toolkit recommendations included three central components:

1. **Create an overview document** that would guide sponsors through the main steps of procurement and local purchasing according to CACFP regulations.
2. **Create new documents**, including resources on budgeting and forecasting, templates for cost comparisons, and a cycle menu reference sheet. **Incorporate local purchasing where possible.**
3. **Reorganize and update current materials** to center user experience and include language surrounding local procurement. **Translate resources to Spanish.**

The toolkit prioritized recommendations according to lift and need.

Acknowledgements

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Practicum Aims

- > **Conduct a needs assessment and gaps analysis** of general procurement and local purchasing resources to better support sponsors
- > **Create toolkit recommendations** based on identified gaps