

A Guide for UC Berkeley Departments on Sustainable and Just Catering

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As UC Berkeley provides refreshments for hundreds of meeting and events weekly, catering plays a significant role in the UC Berkeley food procurement landscape. Our campus has an opportunity to provide “sustainable and just” catering by working with vendors who meet a matrix of values. The Berkeley Food Institute has put together the following guidelines based on the combined values of **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Environmental Sustainability; Food Recovery; Health and Nutrition; and Labor.**

We acknowledge that these guidelines are a high ceiling, and that food service is very challenging business with a low margin of profit. We also recognize that campus departments are often working with a small budget for catering. These recommendations are an aspirational guide to assist departments in working with vendors to provide sustainable and just food.

[See a list of suggested vendors](#) who meet a minimum of one of these values. Have suggestions of a caterer to add to this list? [Let us know here.](#)

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Ensure equal contract opportunities for small, diverse, and disadvantaged businesses, such as:

- Disabled Veteran-owned Business:** The business is at least 51% owned, operated, and controlled on a daily basis by veterans with service-related disabilities.

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- Disadvantaged Business:** The business is at least 51% owned, operated, and controlled on a daily basis by minorities, socially and economically disadvantaged women, and individuals who are qualified for DBE certification.
- Immigrant-owned Business:** The business is at least 51% owned, operated, and controlled on a daily basis by foreign-born persons.
- Woman-owned Business:** The business is at least 51% owned, operated, and controlled on a daily basis by one or more women.
- Minority-owned Business:** The business is at least 51% owned, operated, and controlled on a daily basis by Asian, Black, Hispanic, or Native American persons.
- Locally-owned Small Business:** Small, locally-owned, or community-based business as opposed to large national chains/corporations.
- Social Enterprise:** For example, a business that supports job training programs for disadvantaged communities such as formerly incarcerated people, homeless people, at-risk youth, etc.

Go Deeper:

- [Minority and Women Business Enterprise Certifications Overview](#)
- [Social Enterprises: Food Service and Catering \(Australia-based resource\)](#)

Environmental Sustainability

Support vendors who procure ingredients that are local, organic, and socially and environmentally responsible. Ensure your department conforms to Zero Waste event guidelines.

Sustainable Ingredients

- Local and Community-based:** Support small and mid-size community-based farms and food businesses; foods can be traced to nearby farms, ranches, and businesses that are locally-owned.
- Ecologically Sound:** The food production practices conserve biodiversity and minimize toxic substances, gas emissions, natural resource depletion, and environmental degradation (such as certified organic practices).
- Humane:** Animals are raised in a low-stress environment allowing to express natural behavior, and are raised with no added hormones or non-therapeutic antibiotics.

Zero Waste

- Work with vendors to bring catered food in reusable, recyclable, and compostable containers. Ensure that department-provided serviceware and other event materials (such as decorations) also meet these standards.

Go Deeper:

- [Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education Criteria](#)
- [Real Food Challenge Standards](#)
- [Zero Waste Catering Guideline Checklist](#)
- [Zero Waste Event Recommended Product List](#)
- [Zero Waste Facility Guidelines](#)

Food Recovery

Support vendors who practice food waste reduction and recovery. Encourage your department to reduce

food waste: participate in the UC Berkeley Food Recovery Program to divert edible food waste to the campus Food Pantry, and compost non-edible waste.

Food Waste Reduction

- Reduce the volume of surplus food generated by working with vendors to order reasonable quantities for event needs.

Food Reuse

- Alleviate Food Insecurity:** Support vendors who donate extra food to food banks, soup kitchens, and shelters. As a department, participate in the Food Recovery Program to safely recover small amounts of edible food internally to department staff and students and to divert large amounts of leftover food to the campus food pantry.
- Compost:** Compost non-edible food waste to create a nutrient-rich soil amendment.
- Industrial Reuse:** Support vendors who divert food scraps and non-edible food waste for animal feed, energy production, etc.

Go Deeper:

- [UC Berkeley Food Recovery Protocols](#)

Health and Nutrition

Choose healthier food and beverage choices to improve the diet and health of our campus population.

- Offer tap water rather than bottled water.
- Offer a variety of fresh vegetables.
- Serve small, right-sized portions.
- Serve fresh fruit as a side or dessert.
- Select whole grain breads and baked goods.
- Select healthy proteins and at least one plant-based, vegetarian option.
- Serve dressings and condiments on the side.

Go Deeper:

- [Eat Well Berkeley](#)
- [Berkeley Food and Beverage Choices Policy](#)
- [Healthy Meeting and Event Guide](#)
- [Healthy Meeting and Event Webpage](#)

Labor

Support vendors who provide equal, decent, and humane working conditions for their employees. Consider using cooperatively-owned businesses.

Food Business Labor Conditions

- **Basic Benefits:** All employees have legally required basic benefits: medicare, unemployment insurance, workers' compensation insurance, and family and medical leave. Prioritize vendors who provide their employees health insurance, which is legally required for businesses with 50+ employees.
- **Fair Promotion Policy:** Have a clear promotion policy to prevent discrimination, retain good employees, and ensure promotion is based on qualification.
- **Living Wages:** Wages minimally match the living wage for the city where the vendor operates; provide the same wages for people who work for tips and those who do not.
- **Non-discrimination:** Eliminate any policy, practice, attitude, and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes based on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, pregnancy, physical or mental disability, medical condition, ancestry, marital status, age, sexual orientation, citizenship, service in the uniformed services, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law.
- **Sexual Harassment Policy:** Have a sexual harassment policy providing disciplinary measure and procedure for lodging complaints about sexual harassment, and investigate related claims. Do not support vendors who have binding arbitration or

non-disclosure clauses in employment contracts related to sexual harassment or other misconduct.

Cooperative Businesses

- Support worker-owned businesses—those that are owned and controlled by the people who provide the products, supplies, or service.

Fair Trade Products

- Ask vendors to provide Fair Trade-certified products for internationally-sourced items such as coffee, sugar, chocolate, tea, honey, and fruit.

Go Deeper:

- [UC Berkeley Office for the Prevention of Harassment and Discrimination Policies](#)
- [Restaurant Opportunity Center United “High Road” Standards for Food Service](#)
- [National Association of Attorney Generals Letter to Congress on Mandatory Arbitration of Sexual Harassment Disputes](#)
- [City of Berkeley Living Wage Ordinance](#)
- [Fair Trade Standards](#)

Ease of Payment to Caterers

Departments can pay for catering through three methods: A purchase order set up in advance with a vendor; an after-the-fact payment to a vendor; or via reimbursement to staff, faculty, or students who pay for catering through their personal credit cards. There is a disincentive for caterers to do business directly with the University, as Berkeley's default payment time is Net 30 days, an inequitable burden on small businesses. Yet it is also a strain on Berkeley employees to pay upfront. To address this issue, departments can request that vendors be set up as Net Zero in Berkeley's Supply Chain Management System. When filling out the [UC Berkeley Substitute W9 and Supplier Information Form](#) note that the vendor should be set up as Net Zero. To change an existing vendor to Net Zero, email [Lorane Washington](#).