



# THE NATIONAL WESTERN CENTER FOOD ETHOS PROGRAM

## WHY A FOOD ETHOS?

The National Western Center is a year-round urban hub for food and ag discovery, in the heart of the American West. The campus brings together some of the biggest names in ag, food, education and entertainment – to lead, inspire, create, educate and entertain in pursuit of global food solutions.

The National Western Center will be an international model for how industry, higher education and community come together toward a common goal. The National Western Center has an unprecedented opportunity to “walk the walk” when it comes to campus-wide food and beverage offerings – pushing the boundaries of what’s possible, sparking conversation and helping to educate and unite visitors of the campus around the future of feeding our planet. Insisting on quality and sustainability in concessions is not in conflict with creating a joyful, meaningful and accessible visitor experience. On the contrary – for the National Western Center, it should be integral to that experience.

## FOR THE LOVE OF FOOD

As the long-term steward of a master-planned campus that is in many ways built around agriculture, the National Western Center Authority has developed a food ethos – a platform designed to push forward sustainability and wellness through local sourcing, and the use of sustainably-grown food and zero-waste packaging. The food ethos also promotes affordability and sets standards for accessibility by encouraging vendors to account for allergies and dietary restrictions.

Our food ethos is guided by our founding documents – including the National Western Center Master Plan and Framework Agreement – which draw from the wisdom of our local communities, and our partners the City and County of Denver, the National Western Stock Show and Colorado State University. It lays a foundation for future partnerships with food and beverage providers.

Food is a common experience and language that unites us all. When done right, campus food and beverage offerings will attract and bring together diverse audiences, help to educate and build bridges, and deepen our connection to food, community, and the planet. They will showcase the Colorado brand and help create deliberate and meaningful connections to – and economic opportunities for – local and rural Colorado communities. And they will be a focal point of the visitor’s experience. In short, providing food and beverage options with a mission-driven purpose is an opportunity we can’t afford to miss.

## THE NWC FOOD ETHOS

We ask that the parties responsible for bringing food and beverage to the campus sign the food ethos platform as a signal of their commitment to embracing the values described below. While we do not expect that every individual food or beverage product on offer adhere to these principles, parties should demonstrate a holistic and concerted approach to embracing them throughout all campus concessions.



|                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Accessibility</b>               | Making menus accessible in both English and Spanish; catering to those with physical, visual and aural impairments.   |
| <b>Affordability</b>               | Providing a range of affordable menu items that fit every visitor's budget.   |
| <b>Animal Welfare</b>              | Sourcing from providers who prioritize healthy and humane care of their animals.  |
| <b>Culturally Representative</b>   | Offering a range of food options representative of many different cultures.   |
| <b>Educational</b>                 | Making the food consumption experience educational for consumers: showcasing where food comes from and how it was made.   |
| <b>Local Procurement</b>           | Prioritizing local sourcing within the state of Colorado or 250 miles of the National Western Center; showcasing the Colorado brand and driving connection between consumers and Colorado's producer communities.                         |
| <b>Nutritionally Dense</b>         | Offering healthy food and beverage options.   |
| <b>Options for Special Diets</b>   | Providing a range of options for those with dietary restrictions including vegan, vegetarian, Celiac disease (gluten-free), halal, and kosher.  |
| <b>Sustainable Food Production</b> | Sourcing from providers who employ sustainable and regenerative agricultural practices and prioritize soil health and water conservation.   |
| <b>Sustainably Packaged</b>        | Using only recyclable and compostable food and beverage packaging materials; no single-use plastics.  |
| <b>Transparent Sourcing</b>        | Tracing and being transparent around where the food is sourced from.  |
| <b>Valued Workforce</b>            | Providing safe and healthy working conditions and fair compensation for all food chain workers and producers from production to consumption; policies around local hire and minimum wage, as well as minority and women-owned businesses. |
| <b>Waste</b>                       | Targeting zero food- and food-packaging waste to landfill through composting, recycling and food recovery programs across campus.   |

Providers are also encouraged to meet more ambitious targets in areas such as food and packaging waste. This could include donating excess food to local food banks and food recovery organizations or implementing technologies to track and reduce waste.

## **PARTNERSHIP AROUND THOUGHTFUL FOOD**

Our intent is not to limit creativity, but to galvanize and inspire best practices and forward thinking when it comes to campus food and beverage offerings and sustainability, and to create an unparalleled competitive advantage for the National Western Center and its partners.

We look forward to developing standards in partnership with the campus's future food and beverage providers related to the procurement, preparation, sale, and disposal of food and beverage. Together, let's make the National Western Center an international model for what's possible.

