



## **Guide for Vision 2025 Empathy Educators**

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## Introduction

According to Global Shapers Survey 2017, the Climate Change is world's biggest challenge of 21<sup>st</sup> century. This challenge comes along with the on-going destruction of scarce natural resources like agricultural land, forest and freshwater. Humankind's well-being is interdependent on environment, natural resources and biodiversity in highly interconnected Earth's ecosystem. The livestock industry is one of the biggest economic sectors resulting in destruction of Earth's environment and natural resources. But very few programs have been developed to establish sustainable food systems. This economic sector is also one of the major lobbyists in United States allowing them to influence federal programs and regulations. As a result, the local Cities have a huge role to play in stepping up for replacing the meat and dairy food consumptions with sustainable plant-based options. Vision 2025 is a program developed for the City residents who are passionate about passing sustainable food regulations in their Cities for environment, sustainability, social equality, community health and animal rights.

## Values

Most of us think the top global challenges are global warming, degradation of natural resources and world hunger. Empathy Educators are unique group of volunteers with the understanding that apathy, greed and selfishness are the root causes of social and environmental deterioration which ultimately give forth humanity's top global challenges in 21<sup>st</sup> century. As Empathy Educators, we understand to address social and environmental challenges in a way that could shift our cultural mindset. This unique approach doesn't only promise to transform the cultural mindset but also enables us to effectively address the global challenges through projects like Vision 2025. Below is therefore the list of values that we can incorporate in our efforts for passing Vision 2025.

### 1) Empathy

Your City Council is a group of hard-working people with minimal salaries in most cases. Sometimes, they work in two jobs for a living. If you see flaws in their priorities and strategies, remember that they are working in our imperfect social, political and economic system with their own beliefs and background. As a result, we request that you stay empathetic while working with your local government officials. Empathy is the foundation of all the other qualities listed below without which success of Vision 2025 is not possible.

### 2) Listening

Listening is the act of hearing with full attention. Our judgement may prevent us from listening the Councilmembers and the issues they deeply care for. If we deeply listen to

our Council Members, we can more strategically persuade them to support, and possibly to become champions of Vision 2025.

3) Patience

It may take a long time for Council Members to respond to your correspondence, to prioritize your concerns, or to understand your agenda. Patience is the direct outcome of cultivating empathy and it is the key to successfully working with government. Patience helps us avoid unnecessary frustration and overwhelm which could become a huge obstacle for us doing this work to bring positive change.

4) Persistence

The City Council hears from thousands of residents, but the persistent ones have a greater chance of gaining their attention. Show up, reach out, and don't give up!

5) Relationship building

The City Council members are always interested in listening to their constituents who are affected by their decision making. Building a relationship with your Councilmembers opens up more opportunities for meaningful conversations. It makes them identify you and your concerned issue.

6) Research

Learning about animal agriculture's impact on the environment, sustainability, health and social equity can help build a stronger case for passing Vision 2025 in your city. Councilmembers often need facts and data to back up their decisions. By doing research you are making their job easier for them and increasing the likelihood that they will prioritize Vision 2025.

7) Collaborate

One resident is good enough to educate the City Council on a given issue and bring the desired political outcome. But collaboration with local organizations, activists from different areas and residents can significantly reinforce your message and increase the effectiveness of political advocacy. It also sends the message that this issue is important to many of their voting constituents and local community members.

<https://rid.org/advocacy-overview/advocacy-toolkit/building-relationships-with-your-state-and-local-legislators/>

## **Strategic Guide for Empathy Educators**

The most important step in passing Vision 2025 is to include it in the City Council's meeting agenda. Vision 2025 will then need majority votes at the City Council meeting to get passed in your City. This guide will walk you through the two main strategic ways to introduce Vision 2025 in your City Council's agenda.

### **1) City Councilmember Sponsors Vision 2025**

- i. Visiting the City website will provide basic information about your City Council including their names, districts and email addresses. Find out your own district and the Councilmember representing it.
- ii. The City website also has the schedule for the Council meetings along with the agenda items that will be discussed and/or voted. If possible, attend your City Council meeting regularly and try to learn about priority issues of your City Councilmembers. This could be valuable information when communicating negative impact of animal products on environment and social inequity.
- iii. If your City Council allows public comment on non-agenda items (topics not in the agenda), it will be an effective approach to prepare a 2-minute speech communicating the impacts of the meat and dairy industry and making the case for considering Vision 2025. It will be even more effective to bring other activists, City residents and local organization representatives to deliver the same message. More people bringing in similar concerns always draws the City Council's attention and encourages them to consider the shared information. Consider writing a follow-up email to each of the Councilmembers the next day summarizing what you said, thanking them for listening the next day and including more information on the topic if they want to do further research.
- iv. During City Council meetings utilize the breaks to approach City Council Members. This is a great chance to continue building your relationship with them and encouraging them to prioritize Vision 2025.
- v. Once your Council knows you and the issue you are concerned about, the next step is now to contact the individual Councilmembers' offices and request one-hour appointment. After receiving the confirmation, prepare for 30 minute presentation showing the impact of animal agriculture on different social and environmental aspects. Explain Vision 2025 as a way your City could reduce its negative footprint and ask them to sponsor the item. Please bring the copies of Vision 2025 Proposal and request them to review it.

- vi. Prioritize the Councilmembers who support environment protection and sustainability while scheduling the appointment for presentation. It is always a good approach to bring one or two constituents of the Councilmember you are meeting with.
- vii. Write a follow up email to the Councilmember the day after your presentation summarizing your conversation and including the Vision 2025 Proposal.
- viii. If a Councilmember agrees to sponsor Vision 2025, it will be on the Council's agenda item in a future meeting for the Council to discuss and vote on the item. Make sure you and supportive constituents attend this meeting to show support.

## **2) City Commission or Council Committee to Introduce Vision 2025**

- i. City Councilmembers may form a Committee or appoint representative forming a Commission. These advisory bodies take on specific community issues and propose policies to the City Council.
- ii. The City website lists such advisory bodies, their mission and meeting schedule. Prioritize advisory bodies that deal with environment and/or sustainability. Similar to the steps outlined for the City Council, you can attend those advisory body meetings and speak about passing Vision 2025. You may also choose to write follow up emails providing further information on the topic. If the advisory body passes Vision 2025, it will then go on to the Council's agenda for a vote. You may choose to address Vision 2025 at the Council and advisory body simultaneously depending on the time and resources you have.

## Case for Vision 2025

- 1) In 2017, U.S. withdrew from Paris Agreement that demands countries to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emission (<https://www.foxnews.com/politics/paris-agreement-on-climate-change-us-withdraws-as-trump-calls-it-unfair>).
- 2) 438 U.S. Cities stood against the decision and declared to uphold Paris Agreement by developing Climate Action Plan (CAP) to reduce GHG (<http://climatemayors.org/actions/paris-climate-agreement/>)
- 3) U.S. Cities account for 80% of the country's population and have a choice to protect or destroy environment through their consumption power (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2018/12/18/americans-say-theres-not-much-appeal-big-city-living-why-do-so-many-us-live-there/>).
- 4) But U.S. Cities are following traditional production-based GHG inventory that fails to account for GHG contributed through community's consumption of goods & services. As a result, it is extremely important for these Cities to review consumption-based GHG inventory while formulating policies to reduce GHG emission.
- 5) Consumption-based inventory reveals the food sector mainly meat & dairy industry generate majority of GHG emission (<https://coolclimate.berkeley.edu/inventory>).
- 6) It is nearly impossible to keep global surface temperature <2C without addressing meat & dairy consumption (<https://foe.org/resources/meat-of-the-matter/>). Just top 20 meat & dairy companies generate more GHG than Germany, Canada or Australia (<https://www.iatp.org/emissions-impossible>).
- 7) Environmental impact of animal agriculture also includes excessive consumption and pollution of our natural resources.
  - i. More than 2 Billion people around the world don't have access to clean drinking water and wealthy nations like United States uses significant portion of freshwater for meat and dairy. For example, an average California resident consumes 1500 gallons of water per day and 50% of this water is associate with consumption of meat and dairy ([https://pacinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/ca\\_ftprint\\_full\\_report3.pdf](https://pacinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/ca_ftprint_full_report3.pdf)).
  - ii. Animal agriculture is the leading cause of deforestation. 75% of Amazon rainforest destruction in Brazil is associated with animal agriculture (<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0048969715303697>).
  - iii. U.S. alone could resolve world hunger if crops were grown directly to feed human mouth instead of producing feed for the livestock. In U.S., 41 million tons of plant protein is being used to produce 7 million tons of animal proteins

<https://news.cornell.edu/stories/1997/08/us-could-feed-800-million-people-grain-livestock-eat>).

- iv. Plant-based diet plays an important role in reducing the most common chronic illnesses like heart disease <https://www.pcrm.org/news/health-nutrition/vegan-diets-reduce-risk-chronic-disease>). This can significantly reduce the country's healthcare cost.

## **Proposal Template: Vision 2025 for Sustainable Food Policies**

**Recommendation:** Join San Francisco, Chicago and Austin in developing environment friendly, socially equitable and healthy food programs by adopting a Vision 2025 for Sustainable Food Policies through 1) signing Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (<http://www.milanurbanfoodpact.org/text/>) and 2) passing Climate Friendly Food Purchase Policy described by Friends of the Earth (<https://foe.org/resources/meat-of-the-matter/>).

**Summary:** Our food sector is strongly associated with environmental sustainability, community health and social equality. What we put on our plates every day either contributes to or harms our physical wellbeing, our local economy, and our global resources. [Summarize if you City already has passed any programs like Green Monday to increase plant-based options]. But there is certainly a need to develop broader policies for significant improvement. Vision 2025 is designed to achieve this significant change over the next five years without causing a financial burden to the City of [name of your City]. By passing Vision 2025, the City would be agreeing to the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP) developed by the United Nations Farm and Agriculture Organization (UN FAO). The MUFPP suggests forming an advisory committee that would include city residents, activists, local organizations, city staff and other stakeholders to propose sustainable food policies and programs. The second action item under the resolution is to pass Climate Friendly Food Purchase policy that requires the City to spend 50% of food purchasing fund on providing plant-based food and milk options.

**Background:** According to Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP), our food choices are directly linked to our environmental, health and social wellbeing. Approximately, 80% of the U.S. population lives in urban areas.<sup>1</sup> This means that urban cities are responsible for a significant portion of the national food consumption, and with it, the environmental and social impacts of those food choices. As a result, the C40 cities like San Francisco, Chicago and Austin have signed MUFPP agreement to develop environment friendly, healthy and socially equitable food policies.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> United States Census Bureau [Website](#)

<sup>2</sup> Milan Urban Food Policy Pact [Website](#)

Multiple agencies are reporting the devastating impacts of a meat- and dairy-based diet for our physical and environmental health. The UN FAO reports that animal agriculture is responsible for emitting 14.5-18% of total greenhouse gas (GHG).<sup>3</sup> These numbers are larger than GHG emission from the global transportation sector. [Explain GHG emission from your City's food sector. Example: According to consumption based GHG inventory described in Berkeley's Climate Action Plan, the food sector contributes more than 7 metric tons of CO2 Eq. per household<sup>4</sup>]. Most of these emissions are from animal products like meat and dairy. Globally, animal agriculture is the leading cause of deforestation and it has massive impact on climate change, biodiversity and social equity.<sup>5, 6</sup> In a draught affected state, the average Californian consumes 1,500 gallons of water, 80% higher than the global average, and 50% of it is associated with meat and dairy consumption.<sup>7</sup> According to UN FAO, we have enough cropland to feed 9 billion people by 2050 if 40% of all crops produced today for livestock is directly used for human consumption.<sup>8</sup> Animal products are also associated with causing most common illnesses in the U.S. like Type2 diabetes and heart disease. It significantly increases our healthcare costs, disproportionately jeopardizing the well-being of low-income families. The growing livestock biomass in confined space demands increased use of antibiotics. In countries like United States, 70% of antibiotics are used in animals for meat and dairy.<sup>9</sup> As a result, we are facing uphill battle of antibiotic resistance with World Health Organization (WHO) declaring Antibiotic Awareness Week in November.

According to multiple reports, the single solution to overcome environmental sustainability issues attributed to the food sector is by reducing the number of livestock and increasing plant-based food options. [Explain the dollar amount spend by your City on purchasing food. Example: The City of Berkeley purchases \$5 million worth of food for places like senior centers, Police Department's jail facility, public meetings and events]. As a result, [name of your City]'s purchasing power has a huge role to play in increasing plant-based food options. The municipal guide of Friends of the Earth (FOE) on Climate Friendly Food Purchasing is the effective tool for increasing plant-based food options in the city-controlled properties. It provides stepwise process for municipality to meet their target of increasing plant-based food options. Berkeley's potential on providing sustainable food is beyond the city's purchasing power. It includes but not limited to city parks, public schools, restaurants and other food business.

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Farm and Agriculture Organization (UN FAO) [Website](#)

<sup>4</sup> Berkeley Climate Action Plan Update [Website](#)

<sup>5</sup> NASA Earth Observatory [Website](#)

<sup>6</sup> UN FAO report, Cattle Ranching and Deforestation [PDF](#)

<sup>7</sup> Pacific Institute Report [PDF](#)

<sup>8</sup> UN FAO report, Livestock and Landscape [PDF](#)

<sup>9</sup> Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy, University of Minnesota [Website](#)

[Your City name] would be in good company by adopting Vision 2025. Recently, U.S. legislators have identified the importance of increasing plant-based food and milk options across various cities, counties and states. California Assembly Bill 479 encourages public schools to provide healthy climate friendly (plant-based) food and milk options with annual funding worth \$3 million. This active bill has been well received by both State Assembly and Senate. The County of San Diego formed an advisory body to formulate Eat Well Practices. It emphasizes on increasing plant-based food and milk options along with providing guidelines for cafeterias and cafes. New York City Council recently passed legislation to cut 50% of beef consumption in city-controlled facilities like schools, hospitals and prisons. The decision was part of the City's efforts in meeting with Paris Agreement. More locally, Oakland Unified School District decreased carbon footprint by 14%, water consumption by 6% and saved \$42,000 through increasing fruits, vegetables and legumes purchase and reducing meat and dairy consumption by 30%.<sup>10</sup> The low carbon meals by one of California's largest school districts have shown the potential for protecting the environment and natural resources through healthy and cost-effective plant-based food options.

**Review existing programs, policies and laws:** [Review your City's current programs, policies and laws intended to increase plant-based options. Example: Vision 2025 aligned well with Berkeley's Green Monday initiative and Good Food Purchasing Program (GFPP). Green Monday recommends serving plant-based food once a week along with raising awareness about the positive impact of plant-based food choices on the environment. Various reports suggest that animal products alone can jeopardize the Paris Agreement to keep the global surface temperature below 2C and could threaten scarce natural resources by 2050. Significant changes in our food choices need to happen for the wellbeing of our environment and global sustainability. It demands us to extend our efforts in increasing plant-based options through specific policies in next 5 years. GFPP is certification-based program that also promotes antibiotic free and grass-fed beef. The increasing demand for animal products due to improving lifestyle and growing population requires livestock to be kept in confined space making them vulnerable to contracting diseases. Therefore, it is unsustainable to harvest animal products without using antibiotics in livestock. The excessive use of antibiotics has already resulted in many antibiotic resistance bacteria pushing countries like India and China to use last resort antibiotic drugs like colistin.<sup>11</sup> It will also be social inequitable if we were to use excessive resources like pastureland to harvest grass fed and antibiotic free animal products only for wealthy families and developed nations. Additionally, the grass-fed livestock have shown to generate less emission, but it also takes longer for them to reach slaughter weight resulting in no less emission compared to livestock from concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs). As a result, these existing initiatives and programs require Berkeley to extend plant-based option through other programs and policies].

<sup>10</sup> Good Food Purchasing Program [Website](#)

<sup>11</sup> The Statesman [Website](#)

**Rational for Recommendation:** The City of [your City's name] understands the impact of our food sector on environment, sustainability of natural resources, health and social equity. By adopting Vision 2025 for Sustainable Food Policies, [your City's name] will sign MUFPP and join C40 Cities in developing sustainable food system through forming a committee with city residents, organizations and city staff.

The City of [your City's name] is committed to making food purchasing decisions that protect animal welfare, environment sustainability and provide healthy food options. By adopting the proposed Vision, [your City's name] will also pass Climate Friendly Food Purchase Policy and commit to spending 50% of the City's annual food budget on plant-based food and milk options.

**Fiscal Impacts:** There is no imposed cost or saving associated with this recommendation.

**Environmental Sustainability:** The adoption of Vision 2025 for Sustainable Food Policies will significantly reduce [your City's name]'s food sector associated GHG emission, deforestation, fresh water and antibiotic consumption. It will also help [your City's name] to transition towards globally sustainable food practices.

**Outcomes and Evaluations:** [Your City's name] Council will receive policy recommendations from the established Advisory Body for increasing climate friendly, healthy and sustainable plant-based food options. The City Staff will evaluate and update contracts to direct 50% of the annual food purchasing budget for providing plant-based food and milk options.

## Webinar on Vision 2025

The webinar below provides more information on negative impact of animal agriculture, Vision 2025 and the strategy to pass it in your City. This webinar was conducted in collaboration with Vegan Justice League (VJL) and Social Compassion in Legislation (SCIL).

Webinar link: <https://www.facebook.com/338239040280627/videos/922239994776608/>

Questions regarding the webinar? Contact [nilang@cultivateempathyforall.org](mailto:nilang@cultivateempathyforall.org)



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## **Animal Ag's Impact on Sustainability**

### **CIMATE CHANGE:**

- **Animal products like meat & dairy emits more greenhouse gas than entire transportation sector (UN FAO).**
- **In City like Berkeley, single household contributes >3 metric tons GHG from meat & dairy (Berkeley's Climate Action Plan, 2018).**

### **DEFORESTATION:**

- **Animal agriculture is linked to 75% deforestation in Amazon rainforst (ClimateNexus).**

### **FOOD:**

- **70% of U.S. crops are consumed by livestock for meat & dairy (OneGreenPlanet).**

### **Health:**

- **Major chronic illnesses are associated with consumption of animal products (PCRM).**

### **Water:**

- **Californian consume 1500 gal water/day. Half of it comes from meat & dairy consumption**

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