

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE FOR VENDORS, BY VENDORS

Report Summary - April 2025

Challenges



Vendors are chronically exposed to poor air quality: NYC's ambient pollution and generator emissions (**PM2.5**, **CO**, and **NOx**).

But despite contributions to environmental resilience and the fabric of NYC, vendors are often excluded from environmental efforts to manage air quality, waste, and climate change.

Policy and Funding

Technological and infrastructural advances must be paired with **policy solutions**:

- More licenses and permits
- Partnerships with City agencies and institutions
- Vendor health education

Funding opportunities must motivate green tech and address accessibility for vendors.

Financial supports include:

- low-interest/forgivable microloans
- miniature grants
- equipment/license discounts
- Public or private contracting agreements
- Community-led non-extractive funds

Survey

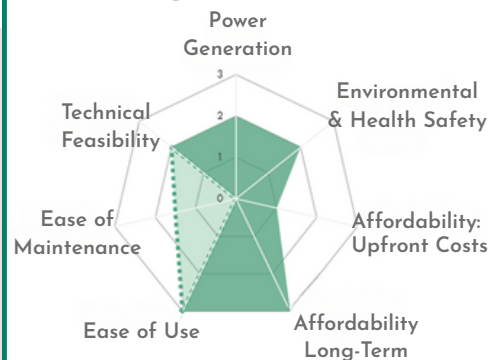
EJV surveyed 200 vendors in NYC on energy usage and environmental justice:

- **Generator use:** 97% of street food vendors rely on gasoline generators.
- **Interest in alternatives:** 90% of vendors expressed interest in direct grid connection; vendors are generally not familiar with affordable alternatives.
- **Weather:** Vendors are exposed to disruptive/unsafe extreme weather events.
- **Waste:** Vendors do not have the resources to separate waste onsite.

Technical Analysis

EJV analyzed technologies in their abilities to meet vendor needs and improve environmental health. The study identified **rechargeable batteries** as a feasible near-term solution. **Grid connection** remains a long-term goal for vendors despite political and financial challenges.

Rechargeable Batteries



In 2023, SVP launched a **pilot program** to test batteries as alternatives to generators. The pilot led to the following findings:

Positive Experiences:

- Emission-free operations
- Noise-free, more pleasant vending
- Significant operating cost savings
- Potential from hybrid solutions

Challenges:

- Limited battery capacity
- High upfront costs
- Weight and size
- Commissary charging constraints
- Lack of technical support

Opportunities and Next Steps

The following **next steps** should be taken to make street food vending more just and more environmentally friendly:

- Test the impacts and feasibility of more batteries in more street food carts
- Design funding, financing, and incentives that create affordable green tech
- Prepare info that equips vendors to be savvy consumers of green tech
- Assemble an investment plan that includes vendor needs
- Provide legal and business planning support to vendors in green street vending
- Long term goal: Electrify energy-intensive food trucks
- Long term goal: Invest in infrastructure to scale green street food vending