

COMPASSION
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nutrition
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food
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health
VALUES

SAN FRANCISCO FOOD SECURITY TASK FORCE **2023 RECOMMENDATIONS**



FOOD SECURITY TASK FORCE



INTRODUCTION

The **Food Security Task Force** (FSTF) was created by the Board of Supervisors with the purpose of making recommendations on policies and programs to improve food security. Membership of the task force consists of community-based organizations and city departments. Established in 2005, FSTF is one of the longest-standing task forces in the city demonstrating San Francisco's belief that a core responsibility of the government is to ensure its residents are fed and nourished. The longevity of the FSTF also underscores the continued need for policies, resources, and organizational structures to address San Franciscans' lack of access to adequate nutritious and culturally relevant food.

The 2023 recommendations were developed by reviewing and adjusting our previous recommendations based on current conditions. **San Francisco cannot achieve economic recovery nor our shared vision of a just and prosperous city without a food-secure population.**

HEALTH ISSUES IMPACTED BY FOOD INSECURITY Food insecurity contributes to poor health and health disparities through multiple pathways: **stress, depression, trauma, poor diet quality, and malnutrition.** Food insecurity **increases the risk of multiple chronic conditions, including diabetes, heart disease, and hypertension, and exacerbates existing physical and mental health conditions.** It impairs child development and limits academic achievement. Food insecurity and hunger impact our community in many direct and indirect ways, and the social and economic costs are passed on in many ways, including higher healthcare costs.

The COVID-19 pandemic response is scaling down on the local, state, and federal level, leaving many San Franciscans with fewer food resources. At the same time, the effects of the pandemic are ongoing and heavily impact San Franciscans' ability to access healthy food. Additionally, high inflation rates, a looming state deficit, and a probable economic recession exacerbate a challenging climate. Local data reveal that **food insecurity rates remain high, and families may need to access more than one food program to meet their nutrition needs.**



2023 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Support funding structures that promote a holistic approach to food and nutrition security in San Francisco.**
- 2 Eliminate barriers and invest strategically in neighborhoods where structural racism and disinvestment have led to low access to healthy and culturally-relevant food.**
- 3 Increase coordination of local governments' programs and policies related to food systems.**
- 4 Elevate the community's voice and participation in the development and implementation of food policy.**
- 5 Engage the health and housing sectors around food security.**

CURRENT LANDSCAPE

Since 2017, the FSTF has recommended the adoption of a consistent, city-wide food security screening protocol using validated questions from the USDA's Household Food Security Survey Module and asked of adults in the household. Consistent assessment of food insecurity across diverse settings allows San Francisco to more effectively track progress toward eliminating hunger, coordinate services, and assess the impact of new policies and programs.

Current local data reveals that food insecurity remains high, even among households with incomes above San Francisco's median income level, and critically high for low-income San Franciscans. The data also demonstrates that people of color continue to be disproportionately affected by food insecurity. Currently, food programs are not designed or funded to meet all of the food needs of the household, so families may use multiple food programs to obtain the nutrition they need.

The recent RAPID-SF survey administered by the San Francisco Department of Children, Youth, and Their Families (DCYF) to over 600 households in San Francisco with children ages birth to 17 years revealed overall, 30 percent were food insecure, despite an average household income of \$130,000 among survey respondents. Food insecurity rates were highest among recipients of Medi-Cal (57%) and CalWorks (90%), and Black/African American families (77%). **Families with full-time jobs and benefits are struggling to meet their nutritional needs.**

“As a public school teacher and single mother, I struggle financially but don't qualify for any government assistance because I make above the poverty line. Low income in San Francisco is different from other places in the US. There need to be more programs for people like me

RAPID survey respondent 2022

Participation in federal nutrition programs remains much higher than before the pandemic.

Between 2020 and 2022:

CalFresh/EBT participation increased 52%

WIC participation increased 30%

SFUSD served 20% more meals

There are over **101,000 San Franciscans in 74,000 households receiving CalFresh**, almost **9,000 residents receiving WIC** (Special Supplemental Program for Women, Infants and Children), and in the 2021-2022 school year, San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) served **8.5 million meals**.

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Most food programs are not designed or funded to meet all of an individual's or family's daily nutritional needs

80%

of surveyed San Francisco Marin Food Bank participants are food insecure

72%

of surveyed participants of Human Service Agency's City-wide Food Access Programs are food insecure

65% participate in other programs like CalFresh, WIC, and food pantries

45%

of surveyed participants served by the Department of Disability and Aging Service's meal and grocery programs are food insecure

THREATS

Due to converging factors, including the high cost of housing, inflation, and historically high food costs, more San Franciscans continue to need food support. In 2022, prices for all goods and services increased by almost 5 percent. Food prices increased 10.2 percent overall, and the increase was higher for some items such as dairy and related products which increased 17.4 percent, and eggs increased 32.2 percent.

“All the meals and brown bags we receive really help us who live on a fixed income. Prices are so high, everything is always so expensive”

Client of a senior nutrition provider

During the pandemic, many federally-funded food programs have provided increased benefits, and all have been operating under waivers to allow more flexibility. The White House declared its intention to end the Federal Public Health Emergency on May 11, 2023. Because of this, these flexibilities and expanded funding will end, impacting child nutrition programs for pregnant women and babies, children and youth, as well as SNAP/CalFresh for college students. College students who gained CalFresh eligibility solely due to the Temporary Student Exemptions will be able to stay on CalFresh until their recertification month. During their recertification month, they will be assessed to see if they meet other eligibility criteria to remain on the program or if they will be discontinued from the program.

With the passing of the 2023 Consolidated Appropriations Act by the Federal government, SNAP/CalFresh will see the end of COVID-19 related benefits known as “Emergency Allotments.” The last Emergency Allotment will be for February 2023 and will be issued to households in March 2023. Starting in March 2020, Emergency Allotments raised a household’s CalFresh benefits to the maximum amount for their household size. Approximately \$12 million of Emergency Allotments were issued per month to CalFresh households in San Francisco. On average, a CalFresh household in San Francisco received an additional \$160 CalFresh benefits monthly as an Emergency Allotment ranging from \$95-\$1,400 per household. Beginning April 2023, CalFresh benefit amounts received by a household will return to being based on eligibility criteria such as, but not limited to, income, household size, and expenses.

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Starting in April 2023

the majority of **74,000**
CalFresh households in San Francisco
will lose between

\$95 and \$250

in monthly CalFresh benefits

Retail food businesses will lose

\$12 Million monthly

Compounding the end of emergency nutrition assistance, key programs such as San Francisco Rental Assistance Program (SF ERAP) are being overburdened with requests for assistance. Currently, SF ERAP is temporarily closed to process a backlog of current requests and when it reopens, financial assistance will not be guaranteed to new applicants who meet minimum eligibility criteria (<https://sf.gov/renthelp>).

Recent changes in the tech sector in the Bay Area have resulted in decreased financial and in-kind support for food programs. With free delivery support, the city’s largest home-delivered grocery program was able to expand services to 8,000 households comprised of older adults, people with disabilities, pregnant people, and families with young children. The loss of this support will increase the cost per delivery from \$0 to \$4.50. Inflation and economic uncertainty has been a factor in the decrease some community organizations have experienced in monetary contributions by clients. For example, DAS congregate and home-delivered meal partners collectively have experienced a 33 percent reduction in total voluntary client contributions over the past three years while at the same time increasing the number of meals and clients served.

THREATS (continued)

While the programs implemented to address the impacts of the pandemic have reduced hunger, significant needs remain. A report published by the California Department of Aging in the fall of 2021 found that during the COVID-19 response, the number of meals that low-income older adults struggled to afford shrank notably due to significant **temporary** investments in public and non-profit programs. **However, a significant gap remained.** Approximately 370 million meals were still beyond the budgets of low-income adults after accounting for meals distributed through prepared meal programs, meals from food bank distributions, meals purchased using CalFresh, and meals that people were able to afford with their available income.

“The food here is good and healthy, especially the fruits and vegetables - that's what we normally eat. Plus the rice, lentils, beans, tomato, and onion. But things are difficult right now, everything is so expensive. I don't have CalFresh, just WIC for my kids. I'm really grateful for the program, it covers a percentage of my costs, but truthfully people need more (money).”

Client of San Francisco Marin Food Bank food pantry

The majority of City programs created during the pandemic to meet the increased need of San Franciscans are only funded until June 2023. The Human Service Agency created multiple nutrition programs to supplement the City's food security network including: Innovative Neighborhood Food Support (localized food access points in low-income & underserved neighborhoods), Prepared Meal Support Services (support low-income households with young children by helping to alleviate some of the financial and time demands associated with grocery shopping and cooking), and Community Grocery Access (improving food access and security). These programs support 20 direct service community-based organizations throughout the City. Program data indicates that the programs have been successful in reducing hunger, and organizations are operating at capacity indicating the sustained level of need.



In the Years 2021 thru 2022
Human Services Agency citywide
temporary Food Access Programs
reached roughly

100,000

San Franciscans
providing them with over:

1.3 Million
grocery bags

220,000
meals

145,000
grocery vouchers

SUCCESSES

When we invest in food support, food insecurity among San Francisco residents improves. San Francisco made significant food security investments to meet the immediate needs of San Franciscans since 2020. City departments also moved funds into the community as quickly as possible through new and existing food programs, and they reduced barriers to participant access (such as leveraging state and federal waivers).

Expanded funding and reduced barriers to access likely impacted food insecurity rates among low-income San Francisco residents. Data from the California Health Interview Survey (CHIS) indicates food insecurity rates lowered from 59 percent food insecure in 2019 to 35 percent food insecure in 2021 among San Francisco respondents with incomes below 200% FPL, despite the negative economic impact of the pandemic.

“My health was at risk, due to lack of balanced meals before... After being a part of this program, my health is much better.
Client of a senior nutrition program provider

“Thank you [to] everybody involved for helping me have a more nutritious life. I'm a disabled veteran with mobility issues. And I really appreciate what you do for me...You are all champions.

Client of a senior nutrition program

In addition to increased investments, other positive actions have been taken to address food security in San Francisco such as: the passage of new legislation requiring a Biennial Food Security and Equity Report; establishment of a Food Empowerment Market pilot; the development of a food plan for District 10 (in process); and the forming of several coalitions to elevate community voice and collaborate in addressing the needs of food insecure San Franciscans.

SAN FRANCISCO FOOD SECURITY TASK FORCE 2023 RECOMMENDATIONS



San Francisco made great strides in combating food insecurity during the public health emergency. We must continue this focus and build on the momentum to ensure that all San Franciscans are food secure.

The following pages contain the full 2023 Recommendations from the Food Security Task Force.



RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Support funding structures that promote a holistic approach to food and nutrition security in San Francisco.

- Invest adequate City resources to support coordinated and long-term solutions to food and nutrition security for San Franciscans
- Multi-year funding for community and neighborhood-based organizations to provide food support
- Ensure adequate and equitable funding through the City's procurement (RFP) process and streamline funding processes
- Commitment to long-term, institutionalized funding (food + coordination)
- Fund smaller neighborhood organizations
- Utilize special revenue funding to address the food and nutrition needs (i.e. Prop C-homeless services)
- Ensure adequate funding levels to continue existing programs
- Support programs and policies that consider the whole household
- Provide direct financial support to households

2. Eliminate barriers and invest strategically in neighborhoods where structural racism and disinvestment have led to low access to healthy and culturally relevant food.

- Require and fund programs to provide nutrition supports that are culturally relevant, high quality, and dignified
- Support delivery and transportation solutions
- Support outreach to underserved communities
- Invest in outdoor public spaces for food programs and urban agriculture
- Support multilingual food referrals through 311 and CCSF website

3. Increase coordination of local governments' programs and policies related to food systems.

- Establish a Centralized Food Policy Office in City Government
 - Eliminate department silos
 - Coordinate food system objectives and programs within and among departments
 - Track laws and regulations' impact on nutrition programming



- Ensure DPH completes biennial Food Security & Equity Report, including coordination with departments, community organizations & FSTF
- Reduce data collection burden on consumers and organizations by leveraging existing data and preventing duplicative reporting requirements across funding departments
- Advocate for state and federal flexibility and loosening of requirements that streamline service provision for city agencies and community organizations
- Ensure San Francisco's implementation of SB1383 does not result in expired food or food that is not culturally relevant or labeled

4. Elevate the community's voice and participation in the development and implementation of food policy.

- Initiatives should be grounded in and led by community wisdom that already exists
- Establish a Food Coordination/Advisory Body Led by communities most impacted
 - Ensure adequate staffing
 - Compensate community members for participation
- Support community coalitions

5. Engage the health and housing sectors around food security.

- Encourage the Managed Care Plans to adopt and implement the full spectrum of medically supportive food interventions available under California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM)
- Support Housing + Food Initiatives
- Fund food programs for supportive and SRO housing
- Ensure sufficient food storage and meal preparation equipment



SAN FRANCISCO FOOD SECURITY TASK FORCE 2023 RECOMMENDATIONS



Cissie Bonini, Chair
UCSF Center for Vulnerable Populations, and
Vouchers 4 Veggies/EatSF



Paula Jones, Vice-Chair
San Francisco Department of Public Health



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Geoffrey Grier
SF Recovery Theatre



Raegan Sales
Children's Council of San Francisco



Meg Davidson
SF Marin Food Bank



Guillermo Reece
San Francisco African American Faith Based Coalition

Meredith Terrell

APPENDIX A - FOOD SECURITY TASK FORCE STATE & FEDERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Child & Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

STATE:

- Support state efforts to end child hunger through increased funding for compensation for the increased cost of food and food service for providers operating the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) during the pandemic and during the recovery.
- Make permanent the policy to issue subsidy Reimbursement Based on Enrollment Rather than Attendance, otherwise referred to as "hold harmless" (CBB No. 21-07).
- Work with the California Department of Education (CDE) to expand its definition of "recognized medical authority" to include registered nurses, so that school nurses can work with families to determine if a child would benefit from lactose-free milk or another alternative that does not meet the definition of "cow's milk equivalent." This would allow SFUSD child care centers and schools to purchase lactose-free milk or other alternatives for only those children who have been identified as needing it and would not require a visit to the child's doctor.

FEDERAL:

- Improve CACFP area eligibility and acknowledge high food costs by making the current regulation of reimbursing all participants at Tier I permanent
- Increase CACFP reimbursement rates to support CACFP sponsoring organizations
- Allow additional meal or snack for CACFP reimbursement
- Make permanent the CACFP waivers issued throughout the pandemic that made it easier for individuals to access services and organizations to provide services, including, but not limited to:
 - Non-Congregate Feeding Waiver
 - Meal Service Time Flexibilities Waiver
 - Nationwide Waiver of On-site Monitoring Requirements for Sponsors in the CACFP
 - CACFP At-Risk Area Eligibility Waiver
 - Parent or Guardian Pick-up
- Allow annual eligibility for proprietary (for-profit) child care programs
- Streamline program requirements, reduce paperwork, and maximize technology to improve program access
 - Align CACFP administrative requirements with those of the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)
 - Allow fewer monitor visits
 - Allow direct certification, eliminating enrollment forms, and creating community eligibility options



- Use the Consumer Price Index for Food Away from Home as the cost-of-living adjustment for family child care home CACFP reimbursement rates
- Continue funding the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) Team Nutrition CACFP nutrition education and program efforts
- Streamline CACFP milk requirement and waivers
- Increase CACFP Family Day Care Home Administrative Reimbursement

School Meals

STATE:

- Ensure full funding for CA Meals for All now & in perpetuity
- Appreciate the current funding model
- Move CA Meals for All to include CACFP
- Continue KITs (Kitchen Infrastructure and Training) Funding so Districts can fully implement CA Meals for All and retain qualified staff

FEDERAL:

- Adopt statewide Community Eligibility Provision
- Continue supply chain assistance funds and/or re-establish meal pattern flexibilities

APPENDIX A - FOOD SECURITY TASK FORCE STATE & FEDERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

CalFresh STATE:

- Increase the minimum CalFresh benefit (currently \$23/month) to smooth out post-COVID “benefit cliff” while also providing a permanent supplement to the minimum benefit
- Support programs that enhance the purchasing power of SNAP recipients through nutrition incentive programs:
 - Extend and expand CalFresh Fruit & Veggie Supplemental Benefits Pilot
 - Ensure continued support of the California Nutrition Incentive Program (CNIP) at California Department of Food & Agriculture (CDFA) Office of Farm to Fork, including programs like the statewide Market Match nutrition incentive program

FEDERAL:

- Leverage Farm Bill renegotiation to protect and strengthen the SNAP program:
 - Make permanent proven efficiencies provided during the pandemic to streamline SNAP access and administration, including reductions in interviews and client reporting requirements, allowance of telephonic signatures without requiring state request, elimination of mid-certification period reports, standardization of same-day card issuance, and streamlined verification
 - Increase benefit adequacy by using the low-cost food plan to calculate benefits
- Improve Disaster SNAP: permanently allow remote interview options so that the program can be more responsive to ensure benefits are easy to access during natural disasters (e.g. droughts and wildfires) as well as prolonged crises such as pandemics
- Limit overpayment claims to a look-back period of only one year and raise the threshold for which states can pursue claims
- Expand the accessibility of using the SNAP to purchase hot and prepared food and meals, the SNAP PLUS Act. This will increase accessibility to nutritious meals for people who have limited food preparation space or physical ability
- Create a national Technical Assistance Center supporting states and vendors to expand the Restaurant Meals Program, and allow SNAP application assistance to include restaurants participating in RMP



Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

FEDERAL:

- Ensure that Child Nutrition Reauthorization includes changes outlined in marker bills (WIC Act, WIC for Kids Act, and Modern WIC Act):
 - Extend WIC to cover children up to age 6
 - Expand postpartum eligibility to 2 years
 - Extend certification periods
 - Streamline certification, removing the in-person requirement
- Extend funding for online shopping pilot and an increase in fruit and vegetable Cash Value benefit