

San Francisco COVID-19 Command Center (CCC) Feeding Group Food Gaps Analysis | Summary of Findings

July 23, 2020

The outbreak of COVID-19 has exacerbated existing food insecurity and created new food needs among many San Francisco residents. Individuals with heightened risk of infection – due to factors such as age, health status, living conditions, and/or systemic inequities – face particular challenges in safely getting the food they need. It is imperative that these populations have equitable access to sufficient high-quality and culturally appropriate food resources so that they may continue to shelter in place.

The CCC Feeding Group supports communication and coordination between City and community partners to develop San Francisco's food response to the COVID-19 emergency. To gain greater visibility into the availability and sufficiency of food resources for groups identified as having higher risks related to COVID-19, the Feeding Group has prepared two complementary reports: one regarding site-based food resources, and the other regarding home-delivered food resources. Collectively, these reports attempt to provide a framework accounting for the City's food programs to identify possible areas of unmet food need and offer considerations that may guide policymaking to address those gaps.

Please note that this analysis is best understood as a first iteration of an ambitious undertaking. The food landscape in San Francisco is ever changing, particularly in the current environment, and we recognize that this analysis is not yet complete. In developing this first iteration, we have attempted to establish an approach for assessing services and gaps that is consistent with local public health and equity priorities. Integrating additional food resources, as well as additional information about clients served, will support more complete and timely situational awareness.

While developed as standalone documents, these reports contain complementary information about the reach of existing food programs and areas of unmet need. As such, they are best considered together to capture a more holistic view of food resources in San Francisco. When we consider site-based and home-delivered food resources together, the following key findings and common themes emerge:

- **Over one million meals per week are provided through site-based and home-delivered food resources.** In June, site-based and home-delivered food resources collectively provided the equivalent of 1.2 million meals per week. At this rate of meal provision, food programs Citywide are serving enough meals and groceries to provide individuals at or below 200% of the federal poverty level an estimated equivalent of 6 meals a week.¹
- **Food resources are primarily serving identified high-risk areas and populations.** Both site-based and home-delivered food resources have been developed bearing in mind factors such as geographic access, racial/ethnic and linguistic equity, and functional ability. Further, although not all programs serve exclusively low-income residents, most tend to nevertheless prioritize and serve this population. In many cases, where one type of food resource may not be sufficient to meet community needs, there are other available forms of support.²

¹ Attached to this memo is a table that provides an estimate of total meals provided across site-based and home-delivered food resources by City zipcode. The table also provides an estimated rate of service to normalize trends across neighborhoods of different sizes and concentrations of poverty (as captured in census estimates that pre-date COVID-19). While this initial approach is somewhat blunt, it nevertheless offers a starting point for understanding the reach of services and may help shape conversations about equitable resource allocation.

² For example, although older people in the western part of the city have fewer options for site-based resources, home-delivered meal and grocery services for seniors are well represented in the region.

- **Most food support is site based.** The equivalent of 1,050,000 meals is distributed through distribution sites around San Francisco, mostly through food pantries. While identifying appropriate locations and managing on-site logistics in compliance with public health standards can be challenging, site-based services can be a very effective way to disburse large volumes of food support.
- **Most food support is provided through grocery bags and boxes.** Providing food for over 900,000 meals each week, groceries offer a degree of independence and flexibility to consumers who are able to use them to prepare fresh meals that meet their dietary needs and preferences. Moreover, groceries are economical—dollars go farther in feeding households who receive this form of food support relative to other types of assistance.
- **Citywide, most food support is provided via food pantries open to the general public.** There are also a number of food programs at varying degrees of scale that provide support to specific populations, such as older people, children and youth, and unsheltered individuals. While City food programs tend to serve residents throughout all of San Francisco, various community-initiated efforts provide support to specific neighborhoods or geographic regions.
- **Some populations and neighborhoods appear to be less well-served by the City's major food programs,** although we must develop a more nuanced understanding of why. For instance, Latinx seniors participate in home-delivered grocery programs at lower rates than their peers Citywide. While this trend may reflect insufficient or ineffective community engagement, the prevalence of intergenerational households among this population and consumer preferences for more culturally-specific food support like that offered through the Mission Food Hub may also be contributing factors. We have more to learn about these areas of unmet need and the circumstances that shape effective service engagement so that the City can direct food resources effectively to address identified gaps.
- **There are a number of food resources serving priority populations that lack sustainable sources of funding.** Key among these resources are neighborhood-initiated food programs that have proven especially effective in reaching priority populations, such as SRO residents and Black/African-American and Latinx communities living in the southern and southwestern parts of the City. While these efforts have been supported thus far by varied combinations of private funding, in-kind donations, and City resources, their ability to serve priority populations at or above present levels is contingent upon the ongoing availability of these funds.
- **A lack of sustainable labor threatens the capacity of major food services to maintain or expand service levels** – particularly those provided by the SF-Marin Food Bank (SFMFB). As the City continues its phased reopening, Disaster Service Workers who have been an essential source of staffing for pantry and home-delivery operations will be expected to return to their regular jobs. We might also anticipate that the pool of volunteers on which SFMFB and other community food providers are reliant will be similarly affected as regular business resumes.
- **More data is needed to support future iterations of this analysis.** The food landscape in San Francisco is dynamic, under pandemic conditions more so than ever. As the Feeding Group maintains, improves, and updates this analysis, additional food resources and consumer demographic information that are not reflected in the current reports would improve future versions

As gaps analysis work continues, these findings may change subject to new information and community needs.

We appreciate the collaboration of City and community partners in sharing their program data, and acknowledge the significant contributions of several City staff deployed as Disaster Service Workers that supported the development of this analysis.

Food Resources | June Weekly Snapshot | By Location and Population Served

| Zipcode | Neighborhood(s) | Total Meals | Home-Delivered Meals | Site-Based Meals | Total Population | <200% Poverty* | Meals per Resident | Meals per Resident Below 200% Poverty |
|---------|--|-------------|----------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 94102 | Hayes Valley/Civic Center/ Tenderloin | 78,430 | 19,395 | 59,035 | 29,440 | 13,031 | 2.7 | 6.0 |
| 94103 | South of Market | 60,719 | 10,695 | 50,024 | 26,691 | 11,164 | 2.3 | 5.4 |
| 94104 | Financial District | 153 | 153 | | 436 | 245 | 0.4 | 0.6 |
| 94105 | Rincon Hill | 2,138 | 558 | 1,580 | 7,675 | 900 | 0.3 | 2.4 |
| 94107 | Potrero Hill/SOMA | 30,292 | 2,922 | 27,370 | 29,534 | 5,999 | 1.0 | 5.0 |
| 94108 | Chinatown | 79,302 | 6,109 | 73,193 | 14,649 | 6,116 | 5.4 | 13.0 |
| 94109 | Polk/Russian Hill/Nob Hill | 31,151 | 13,186 | 17,965 | 55,685 | 13,964 | 0.6 | 2.2 |
| 94110 | Mission District/Bernal Heights | 274,770 | 11,670 | 263,100 | 73,006 | 18,592 | 3.8 | 14.8 |
| 94111 | Embarcadero | 1,262 | 1,262 | | 3,356 | 1,007 | 0.4 | 1.3 |
| 94112 | Ingleside/Excelsior | 84,812 | 14,824 | 69,988 | 84,767 | 22,037 | 1.0 | 3.8 |
| 94114 | Castro/Noe Valley | 32,609 | 2,014 | 30,595 | 34,394 | 3,815 | 0.9 | 8.5 |
| 94115 | Western Addition/Japantown | 37,892 | 6,638 | 31,254 | 35,136 | 8,191 | 1.1 | 4.6 |
| 94116 | Sunset/Parkside/Forest Hill | 60,909 | 9,560 | 51,349 | 47,264 | 8,456 | 1.3 | 7.2 |
| 94117 | Haight-Ashbury | 7,994 | 2,351 | 5,643 | 40,290 | 6,285 | 0.2 | 1.3 |
| 94118 | Inner Richmond | 42,845 | 7,176 | 35,669 | 41,277 | 7,684 | 1.0 | 5.6 |
| 94121 | Outer Richmond | 27,484 | 7,801 | 19,683 | 43,311 | 8,671 | 0.6 | 3.2 |
| 94122 | Sunset | 29,903 | 11,856 | 18,047 | 62,018 | 11,319 | 0.5 | 2.6 |
| 94123 | Marina/Cow Hollow | 525 | 525 | | 25,365 | 2,420 | 0.0 | 0.2 |
| 94124 | Bayview/Hunters Point | 76,219 | 7,676 | 68,543 | 35,358 | 14,634 | 2.2 | 5.2 |
| 94127 | St. Francis Wood/Miraloma/ West Portal | 1,728 | 1,728 | | 20,990 | 2,735 | 0.1 | 0.6 |
| 94129 | Presidio | 896 | 494 | 402 | 3,996 | 378 | 0.2 | 2.4 |
| 94130 | Treasure Island | 5,922 | 409 | 5,513 | 3,034 | 2,030 | 2.0 | 2.9 |
| 94131 | Twin Peaks/Glen Park | 6,608 | 2,478 | 4,130 | 28,320 | 3,617 | 0.2 | 1.8 |
| 94132 | Lake Merced/Lakeside | 36,263 | 4,711 | 31,552 | 28,390 | 9,345 | 1.3 | 3.9 |
| 94133 | North Beach | 31,955 | 8,794 | 23,161 | 26,913 | 10,301 | 1.2 | 3.1 |
| 94134 | Visitacion Valley | 64,465 | 7,551 | 56,914 | 42,760 | 12,361 | 1.5 | 5.2 |
| 94158 | Mission Bay | 83,213 | 1,563 | 81,650 | 6,468 | 1,370 | 12.9 | 60.7 |
| 94014 | Daly City (Cow Palace) | 22,364 | . | 22,364 | . | . | . | . |
| TOTAL | | 1,212,823 | 164,099 | 1,026,360 | 850,523 | 206,667 | 1.4 | 5.9 |

*Additionally, it must be noted that census estimates do not represent the most current picture of poverty given the significant economic impacts of COVID-19. Data on unemployment claims in San Francisco since March suggest that many of these low-income neighborhoods are among those hardest hit by job loss. For example, Ingleside/Excelsior (zip code 94112) has filed the most claims of all San Francisco neighborhoods (almost 25,000). This suggests that preexisting poverty trends remain a useful proxy.