

Food Security in Conard House Supportive Housing

Community Needs Assessment and Recommendations

Conard House: A San Francisco supportive housing agency



Our Mission is to build welcoming communities and caring relationships that empower people and restore hope. 2

How do we define food security?

“physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet dietary needs and food preferences” --(Food and Agriculture Organization)

4 pillars of food security:

Availability

Access

Utilization

Stability

How did we assess food security?

1. SH site tours + key informant interviews

13 sites: 10 SH, 3 Community Services (CS)

Assessment of physical environment, meal prep equipment, food safety needs

2. Focus group with direct service staff

10 staff members from 7 SH and 2 CS sites

Exploration of staff perspectives of food security barriers and needs in resident population

3. SH resident survey

114 residents from 10 SH sites

Exploration of residents' lived experience of food security barriers and needs

Who are Conard House residents?

Income source

Social Security- **63%** of respondents

Earned wages-**10%**

Food resources

Groceries - **81%**

CalFresh - **65%**

On-site food pantry - **45%**

Donated meals - **35%**

Free meal programs - **34%**

Home-delivered meals - **21%**

35% report having meal preparation equipment at home

"It's important that the food I eat...

*...is healthy and good for my body" - **85%***

*...is fresh/not leftover" - **61%***

*...tastes good/appeals to me" - **61%***

*...is simple to prepare" - **60%***

Food security within Conard House

66% of respondents report they do not have enough money to buy food each month

Top 3 services identified by survey respondents to increase their food security

Response	Frequency	Percent (%)
More money to buy food	62	54.4 %
Free groceries available in my building	44	38.6 %
Free meals to eat in my home	40	35.1 %

Survey question: **In the last month, did you ever eat less than you wanted to or miss a meal because you...**

	"Yes" response frequency	Percent (%)
...didn't have enough money?	42	37%
...couldn't get the food you needed for free?	36	32%
...didn't like the food available to you?	40	35%



El Dorado Hotel
community “kitchen”



Lyric Hotel community
kitchen



Jordan Apartments
junior studio unit

What's not working?

Access: Economic resources are too few to maintain food security

Access: Barriers to obtaining food outside the home

- Transportation
- Neighborhood safety concerns
- Physical and mental health symptoms cause periodic home-bound status

Utilization: Available food resources do not always meet residents' cultural and dietary/nutrition needs

Utilization/Stability: Barriers to preparing food in the home

- Inadequate meal prep equipment
- Low skill level for independent food shopping/meal prep

Recommendations

Economic access:

Increase CalFresh and EatSF funds

Physical access:

Provide groceries, pantry goods, prepared meals on site in SH community space

- Vending machine-style, refrigerated storage units
- Secure access through fob (or token/card) provided to each resident; fobs to track food items used per resident—data for future program evaluation
- Signage to encourage appropriate use of resources ("Prevent waste by taking only what you need")
- Signage to encourage healthy choices

Allow purchase of delivered meals and groceries with CalFresh funds (continuation of policy begun during pandemic)

Recommendations

Utilization and stability of resources:

Provide minimum standard meal prep & storage equipment for all SH residents

- Heating element (such as induction cooktop)
- Refrigeration source
- Sink
- Items for cooking and eating (pans, utensils)
- Shelving with sealed bins or closed cupboard spaces (for temperature control and pest prevention)

Offer food resources for varied skills/abilities (no prep, some prep, independent prep)

Offer knowledge and skills development for meal prep and nutrition education

Offer culture- and diet-specific prepared meal and grocery/pantry options

Considerations and Next Steps

Funding

Equipment costs for initial purchase/installation and maintenance

Pest control service costs (increased meal prep in unit = increased pest risk)

Potential electrical system upgrades

Pilot and long-term funding for prepared meals and grocery/pantry items

- Farming Hope-Conard House pilot: prepared meals and grocery items delivered to SRO site

Increase funding for collaborative food security-housing partnerships

Advocacy needed at local/state/federal levels to increase CalFresh and other food funds

*Assessment focused on needs/deficits rather than strengths/assets

Conard House wants to work with you to implement innovative food security programs in supportive housing!

For funding or collaboration inquiries, please contact Anne Quaintance: anne.quaintance@conard.org

Visit us at:
<https://conardhouse.org/>