

DISH & LA COCINA

An Equitable, Inclusive, and Innovative Food Partnership

APRIL 6, 2022



Illustrations by [Storyset](#)

ABOUT THE DISH-LA COCINA PARTNERSHIP



A TWO-SIDED EQUITY CHALLENGE

Supportive housing residents in San Francisco face persistently high levels of food insecurity, with implications for physical and mental health, housing stability, and wellbeing.



Working-class women of color and immigrant women are often excluded from the mainstream job market, including the formal food industry. These challenges have only been exacerbated during the pandemic.



TWO SAN FRANCISCO ORGANIZATIONS



Tenderloin, South of Market, Mission

- 100%** chronically homeless with complex health issues
- 74%** residents age 50+
- 60%** people of color
- \$800** average monthly income (under the poverty line)



La Cocina

- 94%** women
- 94%** people of color
- 70%** immigrants
- 100%** low-income

A TWO-PRONGED EQUITY SOLUTION

70,000 meals delivered
to 516 residents



La Cocina entrepreneurs
grow their businesses with
stable revenue, skill building,
and culinary autonomy.

These businesses allow
entrepreneurs to **support
themselves**, their families,
and the city as a whole.

DISH residents benefit from
a flexible, free food delivery
system that is high-quality
and culturally-relevant.

Food security and a sense
of community and human
dignity all contribute to
housing stability.



WHAT WE'RE LEARNING

DISH residents and La Cocina entrepreneurs are working with Engage R+D on a **participatory evaluation** of this partnership



DISH resident advisors are involved in study design and advising on a **resident survey**



La Cocina advisors are involved in study design and sharing & gathering **entrepreneur testimonials**

EARLY FEEDBACK

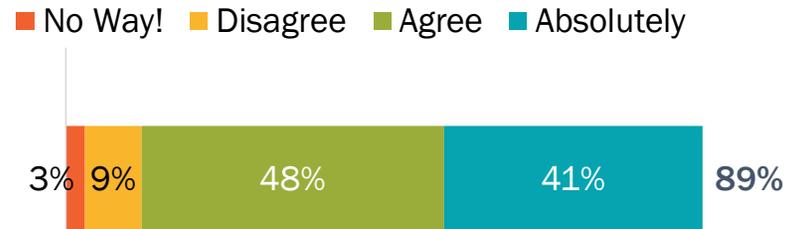
(DISH ANNUAL TENANT SURVEY)



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Accessible:

La Cocina meals are easy to get when I want them.



Culturally-Relevant:

La Cocina meals are a good fit for my community.



High Quality:

La Cocina meals are high quality.



n=331-337 out of 506 residents

Note that these results are preliminary and are subject to change pending final data audit

KEY TAKEAWAYS



FOOD IS KEY TO HEALTH AND HOUSING



- **Housing is just the first step** to recovery from homelessness
- Adequate nutritional support through community **meal programs have a ripple effect on the overall stability** of residents and their community
- While shelter in place hotels provide lodging and meals, supportive housing does not include **food as a core service**

SUPPORT FOR BIPOC WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

- Provides businesses with **steady revenue**
- Promotes skill-building and **culinary autonomy**
- Creates and sustains **jobs** for low-income people
- Creates **community** among La Cocina businesses and residents



A successful, cost-efficient solution for improving the health and well-being of vulnerable populations while supporting the economic recovery and sustainability of BIPOC women-owned businesses



- Success of privately-funded innovations during COVID provide a **roadmap** for future City policy on food security
- **Aligned** with multiple City Department priorities
- Ensures food access for many of the City's most vulnerable utilizing **existing staffing and infrastructure**
- Small food business owners, particularly low-income WOC, are still feeling the effects of COVID and need **steady revenue** opportunities to survive and allow for growth and innovation



DISCUSSION



QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- How might we work with the Food Security Task Force to advocate for this program?
- What additional information do you need?

APPENDIX: SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES FROM ADVISORS

DISH ADVISORS



DISH residents rely on the meals: “When you don’t have a kitchen to cook in, it’s really easy to go through those food stamps. I know the last two weeks I really relied on [the La Cocina meals].”

They enjoy the quality of the food: “The meals are so good – I sometimes wonder where I can buy them.”

“This food really tastes good and is what you would go out and buy. [Other services] are flavorless with lots of restrictions.”

The meals are convenient and accessible: “The convenience is that it’s already prepared so all you need to do is reheat it or warm it up.”

“It’s nice that you don’t even have to leave the building. We have a number of people who are shut-ins or for medical reasons aren’t ambulatory.”

La Cocina entrepreneurs gain access to a stable income that supports their business during unpredictable times: “It was a lifesaver in the darkness of the pandemic. There was no other income.”

“When we don’t have it, we miss it a lot. It helps a lot with payroll.”

They appreciate the opportunity to give back: “I’m doing this for the people who are underserved. There is an element of family here – like cooking for an uncle who can’t cook or take care of himself.”

They build skills while cooking culturally-relevant food: “We develop skills through this project. We need to think about quantities and how to work on a larger scale.”

“I like to share the taste of [my country’s] cuisine with as many people as possible.”

LA COCINA ADVISORS

