

# EXPANDING THE MENU



May 2013

Maximizing Vendor Enrollment in the  
San Francisco Restaurant Meals Program

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# Executive summary

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For 10,620 aging, disabled and homeless CalFresh clients in San Francisco, the Restaurant Meals Program (RMP) aims to promote food security by allowing these individuals to use CalFresh benefits to purchase prepared meals at 64 participating vendors. However, **vendor enrollment in the program is limited in two critical ways: 1) vendors are concentrated downtown, making it difficult for clients living outside this area to access meals and 2) healthy and/or culturally diverse meal options are few.** The San Francisco Food Security Task Force (FSTF) – charged by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors with citywide food security – has requested our assistance remedying these limitations to improve the program’s ability to serve clients.

To understand the factors restricting vendor enrollment in San Francisco RMP, we analyzed client and vendor data, interviewed staff from five other RMP programs in California, and conducted two focus groups with RMP clients. Our subsequent analysis identified four challenge areas that relate to vendor participation in RMP: vendor outreach, enrollment support, ongoing program support, and vendor diversification.

Mindful of cost, program priorities, and anticipated effectiveness of possible actions, we crafted two tiers of recommendations to expand vendor participation in the program: a core strategy and supplemental strategies. Our **core strategy** integrates actions that address four challenge areas and is meant to be implemented in entirety in order to most immediately and substantially expand vendor participation in San Francisco RMP:

## **Vendor outreach**

- *Develop promotional materials* to assist outreach efforts.
- *Employ vendor outreach based on data-driven spatial targeting* to improve meal accessibility in neighborhoods with high levels of unmet need.

## **Enrollment support**

- *Create vendor web page* to make information about RMP and the enrollment process more accessible for vendors.
- *Provide application assistance* to streamline enrollment of new vendors.

## **Ongoing program support**

- *Develop internal progress report system* to support spatial targeting efforts and track program progress towards improving meal accessibility and variety.

- *Implement vendor renewal process* to help ensure RMP vendors operate within program guidelines and provide opportunity to gather vendor feedback about program operations.
- *Provide customer service to client and vendors* to sustain program integrity and quality.

### **Vendor diversification**

- *Expand vendor outreach to include grocery and corner stores* to improve meal accessibility and potentially increase healthy and culturally diverse meal options.
- *Provide clients with nutritional information* to identify healthy meal options that exist within the program.

We have also identified the following **supplemental strategies** that will further support the program but may require additional time or resources:

### **Vendor outreach**

- *Partner with associations and community-based organizations* to tap into existing vendor networks and gain assistance with outreach efforts.

### **Enrollment support**

- *Outsource tasks* to other CalFresh staff to maximize efficient use of RMP staff time on complex tasks and provide multilingual services as needed.

### **Ongoing program support**

- *Expand internal progress report* by including more data points, increasing the frequency of reports or presenting to a wider audience to further improve understanding of program needs.

### **Vendor diversification**

- *Target vendors providing healthy and culturally diverse meals* to improve meal variety and encourage client utilization of program benefits.
- *Hire temporary staff* to support more time-intensive outreach efforts to vendors offering healthy and culturally diverse meal options.

Finally, our report includes a three-phase implementation guide and a brief review of client-facing strategies that are not directly related to expanding vendor enrollment but were identified during our analysis and may be helpful for further improvement of San Francisco RMP.

# Introduction

For 10,620 elderly, disabled and homeless people in San Francisco, the Restaurant Meals Program (RMP) promotes food security by providing a prepared meal for these vulnerable populations who may otherwise be unable to prepare or store food on their own. As part of the San Francisco CalFresh program, the RMP allows aging, disabled and homeless San Francisco clients to use CalFresh benefits to purchase prepared meals at 64 participating vendors.<sup>1</sup> Potential vendors include individual restaurants, franchise restaurants, corner stores with prepared food, and supermarkets with deli counters.

The purpose of this report is to develop a set of feasible recommendations for the San Francisco RMP office to expand vendor enrollment and address concerns about limited meal accessibility and meal choice within the context of existing resource restrictions.

## Project motivation

Though the RMP has been in operation since San Francisco piloted the program for California in 2003, vendor enrollment is limited. Program staff have expressed difficulty with growing the program due in part to limited program resources and the absence of a cohesive vendor enrollment strategy.

Concerns with current vendor enrollment center on two key factors: **limited meal accessibility** for clients who reside outside

of the downtown area and **limited meal choice** for clients who prefer more healthy and culturally diverse meals. The expansion of vendor enrollment to address these concerns has been identified by the FSTF and San Francisco CalFresh office as a critical area for attention in order to improve program functionality and maximize benefit to vulnerable client populations.

### RMP BACKGROUND

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, commonly known as “food stamps,” is a federal program administered at the state level. In California, these benefits are branded as CalFresh and managed at the county level. RMP is an optional program that California has made available for counties. Out of 58 counties in the state, six have opted to provide the benefit: Alameda County, Los Angeles County, Sacramento County, San Diego County, City and County of San Francisco, and Santa Clara County.

RMP benefits are intended to promote food security by permitting elderly, disabled, and homeless individuals (who may have difficulty preparing or storing food) to use CalFresh benefits to purchase prepared meals. RMP vendors can be restaurants, corner stores with prepared food, or supermarkets with deli counters. Meal costs typically range from \$5 to \$8, and a seating area must be provided for patrons. To enroll in RMP, vendors must sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the county and submit a federal application to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

<sup>1</sup> CalFresh clients who are not or cannot be enrolled in RMP can otherwise only use CalFresh benefits for unprepared food items at participating markets.

# Methodology

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To understand the context of the problem and provide recommendations on how to expand vendor enrollment for San Francisco RMP, we completed qualitative and quantitative research and identified relevant criteria to evaluate strategies and guide our analysis.

## Research

For our analysis, our quantitative and qualitative research consisted of the following discrete tasks:

- Information gathering at meetings with San Francisco CalFresh program staff and FSTF members.
- Analysis of client demographic data received from San Francisco Human Services Agency planning staff
- Assessment of currently enrolled vendors in San Francisco RMP
- Interviews with program staff from the five other RMPs in California
- Moderation of two focus groups with RMP clients in San Francisco

## Evaluative criteria

Recommendations to expand RMP vendor participation to increase accessibility and diverse food options were evaluated and prioritized based on the following three criteria: anticipated cost, projected effectiveness, and importance to San Francisco RMP. Included in Appendix 1 is a chart depicting our evaluation of potential actions using these criteria.

### *Anticipated cost*

Given the limited resources allocated to maintain RMP, we defined “cost” as a determinant of both monetary and staff hours anticipated to perform the action. Each action was weighted on grades:

- High: substantial monetary and time investment
- Medium: moderate to little monetary and time investment
- Low: minimal monetary and time investment required

### *Projected effectiveness*

We also assessed the ability of each action to significantly impact vendor expansion efforts. Some actions require simultaneous implementation to maximize effectiveness, which is noted in the report. Each action was weighted on grades:

- High: large impact on vendor expansion
- Medium: effective dependent on implementation
- Low: little effect in reaching goal

***Program priority***

Finally, our analysis assigned “priority” levels to the range of actions we considered based on capacity to support overall program operations, as well as meet the specific goal of expanding vendor enrollment. An action may be characterized as “high” priority if it is integral to ongoing operations, even though it may not directly affect vendor expansion. Each action was weighted on grades:

- High: immediate need and action required
- Medium: vital as secondary implementation
- Low: requirement for improvement but not time sensitive



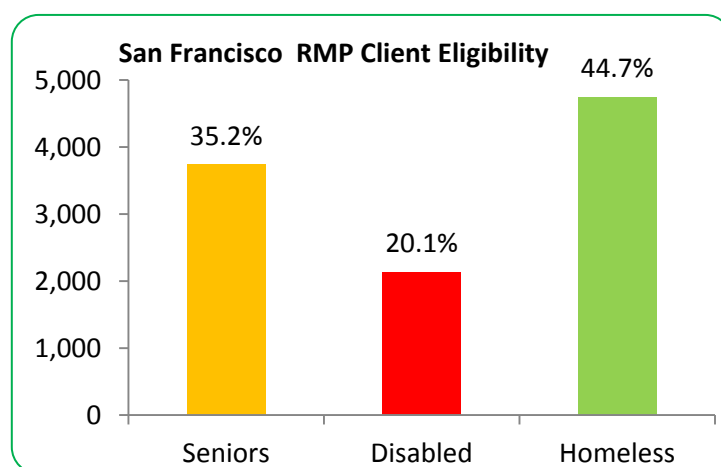
# State of San Francisco RMP

## Who are the RMP clients in San Francisco?

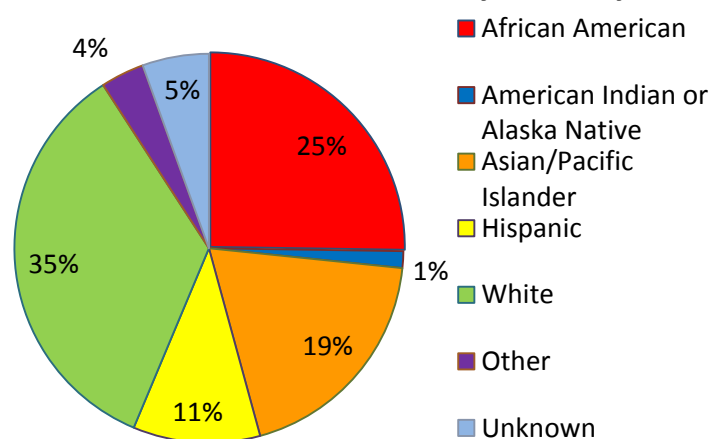
Out of the 38,604 individuals enrolled in San Francisco CalFresh, more than one in four CalFresh clients, or 27.5 percent, is eligible for RMP benefits.<sup>2</sup> Client demographics show that the program serves a variety of age and ethnic groups throughout the city.

### How do clients qualify for RMP?

Among the three eligibility types, the most common qualification for the program is homelessness. Approximately 4,744 clients are eligible due to homelessness. Being a senior is the next most common qualification with 3,743 RMP clients. At 2,133, the number of disabled individuals enrolled in RMP is the smallest group, which is less than half the number of homeless RMP clients. The small percentage of disabled RMP clients may be due in part to state regulations preventing recipients of Supplemental Security Income from receiving SNAP benefits.



### San Francisco RMP Clients by Ethnicity



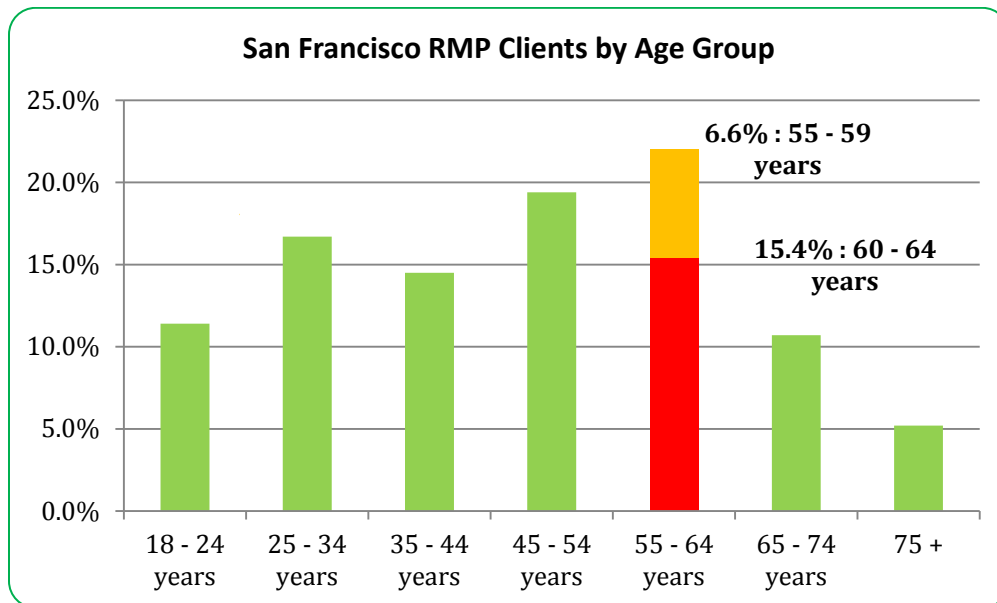
### What is the ethnic breakdown of RMP clients?

RMP clients represent a wide array of ethnic groups in San Francisco. The ethnic groups with the highest representation are white (35 percent), black (25 percent), Chinese (12 percent), and Hispanic (11 percent). If combined into one category, Asian/Pacific Islander clients would constitute 19.1 percent of San Francisco RMP clients. These breakdowns differ by neighborhood, which will be discussed with regard to zip code data and program implications.

<sup>2</sup> Client demographic data provided by the San Francisco Human Services Agency in January 2013

### How old are RMP clients?

RMP clients are fairly evenly distributed throughout age categories. Though it seems that individuals between 55 and 59 make up a smaller percentage of RMP clients (6.6 percent) compared to its counterparts, please note that age group spans fewer years than the others. This data was meant to draw a delineation in the data at age 60, which is the age eligibility threshold for seniors in CalFresh.



### What is the gender breakdown of RMP clients?

Data on RMP clients in San Francisco indicate that male clients (65%) outnumber female clients (35%) by almost double. This may be due to the fact that homeless individuals – who make up a significant portion of the program – tend to be male.

## Who are RMP vendors in San Francisco?

### *What types of vendors are enrolled in the program?*

All 64 vendors in San Francisco RMP are restaurants. Of these vendors, 49 are fast food chains and the remaining 15 are independent local restaurants. Fast food chains include Subway, Pizza Hut, Taco Bell/Kentucky Fried Chicken, Carl's Jr., and Domino's Pizza. For a complete list of San Francisco RMP vendors, please see Appendix X.

### *How has vendor enrollment changed over time?*

Since the program's inception in 2003, San Francisco RMP has experienced fluctuation in vendor enrollment and relied primarily on word-of-mouth to publicize and attract new vendors to the program. This table depicts the number of vendors in the program for each year of its existence. The large increase in 2011 is attributed to the enrollment of additional Subway vendors after a regional manager with the franchise coordinated the enrollment of multiple owners, as well as the enrollment of local independent restaurants. Per San Francisco RMP staff, the drop in 2012 is explained by lost leases and rent increases in San Francisco that may have forced vendors to close.

San Francisco RMP Vendor Enrollment History		
Year	# of RMP vendors	Change from previous year
2003	15	--
2004	22	7
2005	29	7
2006	29	0
2007	24	-5
2008	29	5
2009	30	1
2010	32	2
2011	60	28
2012	53	-7
2013	64	11

### *How much is spent at San Francisco RMP vendor locations?*

According to CalFresh program staff, approximately \$130,000 is spent each month at RMP vendors.

## How is San Francisco RMP operated?

### *What resources are allocated to the program?*

San Francisco RMP is operated by a CalFresh program specialist who devotes one-third of her time to the program. She uses the other two-thirds of her time on other special projects and training support for CalFresh.

### *What is the program strategy?*

The program strategy for San Francisco RMP is largely reactive. The program specialist assigned to the program focuses primarily on responding to customer service issues that arise, such as questions related to EBT cards, and responding to requests for assistance with the vendor application as needed.

### *How does the program solicit vendor participation?*

Due to the focus on customer service issues and lack of time to create a structured outreach strategy, San Francisco RMP relies primarily on word of mouth to attract new vendors. Proactive vendor outreach efforts have been intermittent and typically take the form of direct phone calls and visits to vendors that have been identified as fitting the profile of an ideal RMP vendor.

# A closer look: Meal accessibility in San Francisco RMP

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In identifying the expansion of vendor enrollment as a critical area in which we may provide assistance, there are two key concerns with current vendor enrollment. The first is **limited meal accessibility** for clients who reside outside of the downtown area.

The majority of RMP vendors are concentrated in downtown San Francisco neighborhoods (Tenderloin, South of Market, and Polk Gulch). While analysis of zip code data suggests that the majority of RMP clients reside in these areas, a significant number of RMP clients reside in neighborhoods outside of the downtown area and lack accessible vendors.

## Where are RMP clients?

About one in three RMP clients with known zip codes reside in the Tenderloin, South of Market, and Polk Gulch neighborhoods in downtown San Francisco.<sup>3</sup> Other key neighborhoods in which RMP clients reside include Ingleside/Excelsior (9.9 percent of clients), Bayview-Hunters Point (9.5 percent of clients), the Mission (8.1 percent of clients), and Visitacion Valley (5.8 percent of clients). For a complete breakdown of RMP clients by zip code, please review Appendix 3.

An unusual data point is that almost 40 percent<sup>4</sup> of RMP clients have unknown zip codes, which suggests that these clients are homeless without a mailing address or a known location. However, data from the 2011 San Francisco Homeless Count and Survey indicates that 40 percent of San Francisco homeless live in supervisorial district six, which includes the zip codes from the Tenderloin and South of Market, and 33 percent live in supervisorial district ten, which includes Bayview-Hunters Point and Visitacion Valley.<sup>5</sup> It is likely that a significant portion of RMP homeless clients reside in these neighborhoods.

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<sup>3</sup> Approximately 40% of RMP clients have no zip code on record with CalFresh, which San Francisco CalFresh staff identify as likely homeless individuals. While information from a local homeless count allows estimation of homeless RMP clients' location, we are unable to definitively identify the location of RMP clients with unknown zip codes. Consequently, in order to understand where clients are concentrated in San Francisco, we calculate client location percentages based on known zip code data.

<sup>4</sup> Calculation based on clients listed without a zip code or using the proxy 94142 zip code used by San Francisco CalFresh for homeless clients.

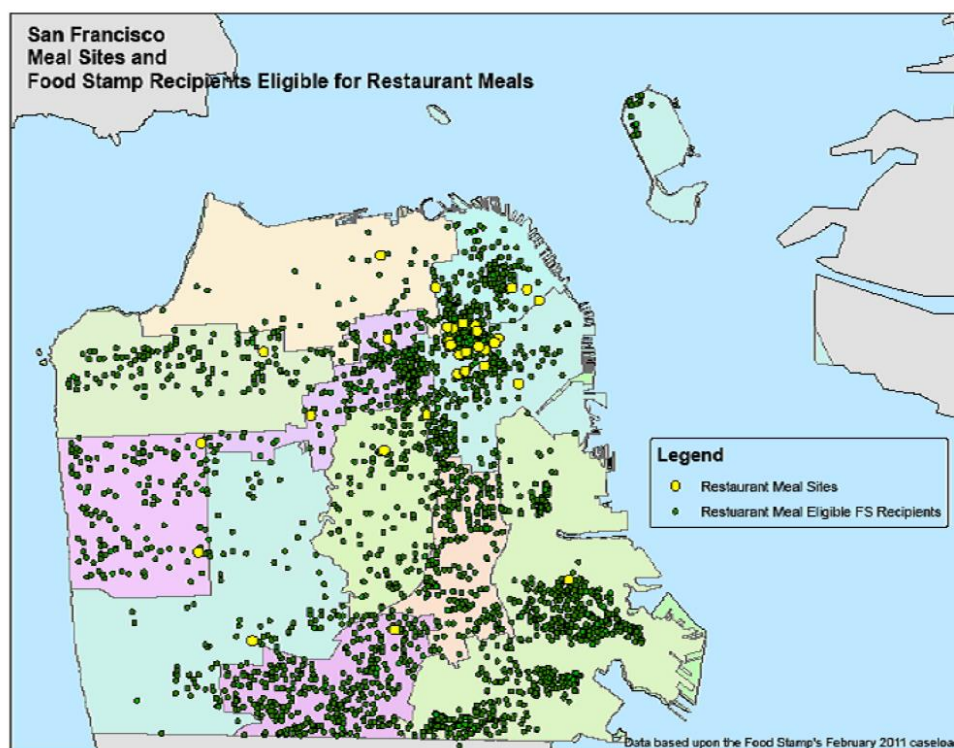
<sup>5</sup> "2011 San Francisco Homeless Point-in-Time Count & Survey," Applied Survey Research, 2011.

### Where are the RMP vendors?

Thirty-three of San Francisco RMP's 64 vendors are located in the Tenderloin, South of Market, and Polk Gulch neighborhoods. Other neighborhoods with significant client levels include Bayview-Hunters Point and Western Addition, which have four RMP vendors each. However, the remaining key neighborhoods that cumulatively serve 24.1 percent of RMP clients with known zip codes have limited meal accessibility: Ingleside/Excelsior and the Mission each have only two RMP vendors and Visitacion Valley hosts only one RMP vendor. Moreover, zip codes with less RMP clients often lack RMP vendors altogether.

### Implications

The implications of the spatial mismatch of RMP clients and vendors are illustrated well by a map created by San Francisco HSA planning staff. Based on the map, it is clear that a significant proportion of RMP clients reside in areas with limited or no RMP vendors.



It is likely that many RMP clients may struggle with mobility and inability to travel to neighborhoods in which vendors accept RMP benefits. The inaccessibility of meals for these clients reduces program effectiveness and suggests San Francisco RMP is not maximizing its potential positive impact on disabled, homeless, and elderly individuals residing in San Francisco.

# A closer look: Meal variety in San Francisco RMP

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The second key concern with current vendor enrollment is **limited meal choice** for clients who prefer healthier and more culturally diverse meals.

Most San Francisco RMP vendors are fast food restaurant chains. Diversifying vendor type could especially be helpful for increasing RMP client participation by expanding options for clients interested in more healthy meals or food more typical of cultural cuisine.

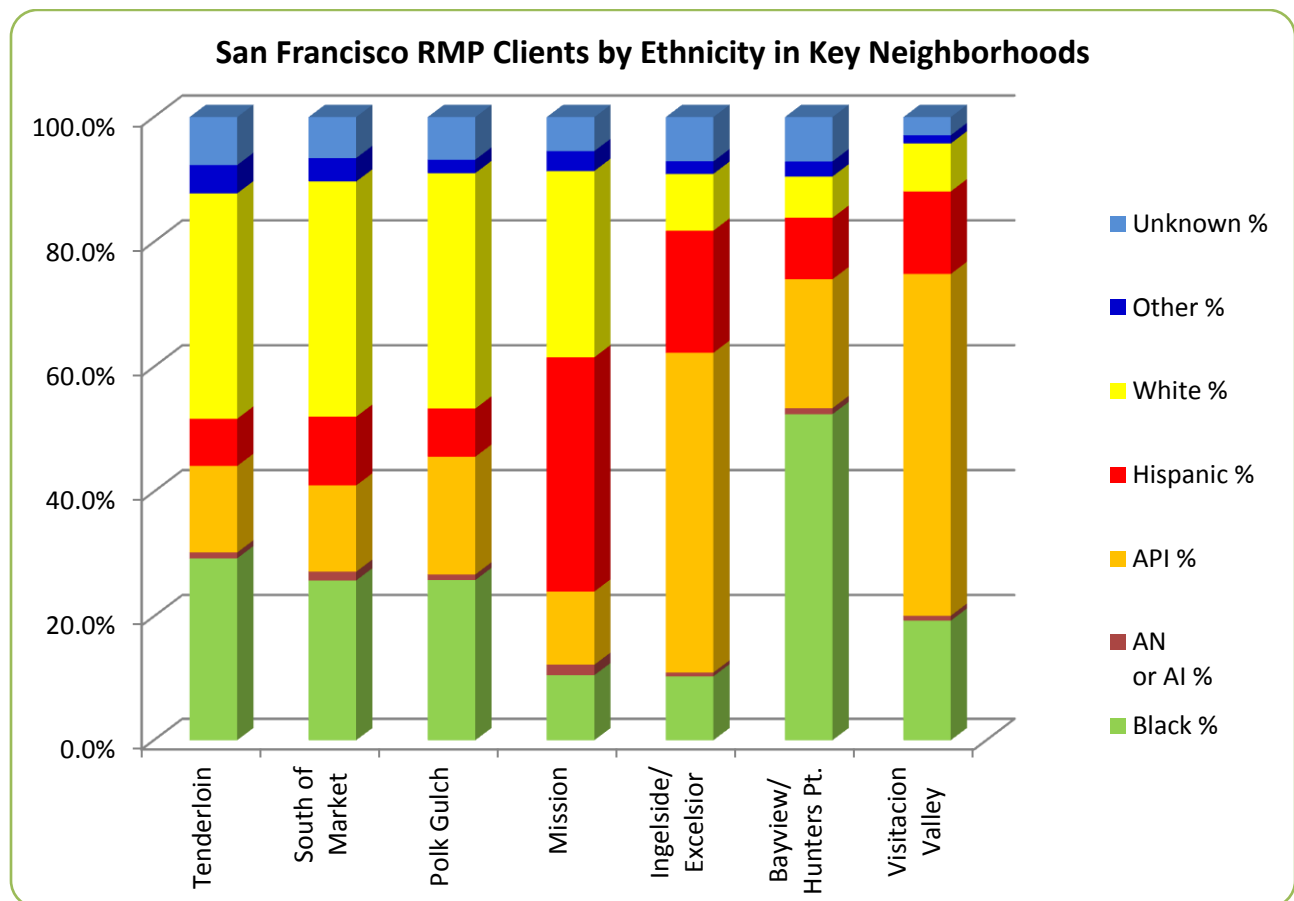
## *Nutritious and healthy meals.*

As mentioned, all 64 San Francisco RMP vendors are restaurants and, of these vendors, 49 are franchise restaurants and 15 are independent restaurants. Food offered by these vendors consists largely of fast food American cuisine – such as pizza and burgers – that is typically high in cholesterol, sodium, and fat content. Certain vendors are perceived as offering healthier meal options, such as Subway sandwiches that are made to order with fresh ingredients. While these healthier options exist within RMP and clients can also select more healthy menu items at participating fast food franchises (such as chicken and fish sandwiches), the variety of healthy options at current RMP vendors is limited.

Increasing healthy meal options has been expressed as a priority by San Francisco RMP, the FSTF and RMP clients. San Francisco RMP and THE FSTF have indicated a desire to provide more nutritious meal options to promote the overall health of RMP clients. Similarly, a dominant theme in focus groups with RMP clients was the desire for healthy meal options; clients also expressed that current healthy meal choices through RMP vendors are limited and that food quality is often poor. Due to these concerns, seniors and disabled individuals with access to cooking facilities expressed a preference for using CalFresh benefits at local markets to purchase fresh produce and other healthy items to prepare at home when possible. One client specifically cited health concerns and the need to lose weight he gained when he became disabled as reason to avoid nearby fast food franchises and purchase fresh items from the local farmers market.

### Culturally diverse cuisine.

Client demographic data suggest potential demand for diverse cuisine options. Ethnic minority groups make up a significant portion of clients within the seven neighborhoods with the highest concentration of RMP clients. For example, Chinese clients are 33 percent of clients in Excelsior and almost 40 percent in Visitacion Valley, while Hispanic clients make up almost 20 percent of clients in Excelsior and 37.5 percent of clients in the Mission. San Francisco RMP and the FSTF have indicated a desire to provide culturally appropriate cuisine to increase client satisfaction with the program and support use of RMP benefits. Secondary benefits from such efforts may include the promotion of program viability and encourage additional vendor enrollment. For more detailed data regarding ethnic breakdown within these key zip codes, please see Appendix 4.





# Shared challenges and strategies

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In addition to San Francisco, five counties have opted to implement RMP: Alameda, Los Angeles, Sacramento, Santa Clara, and San Diego counties. Conversation with staff in each of these counties offered insight into the strategies that RMP programs employ to meet the challenges associated with vendor expansion and program maintenance. Through these conversations, we identified four key challenge areas: vendor outreach, enrollment support, ongoing program support and vendor diversification.

It is pertinent to note that differences in program history, client profile, and allocated resources shape how counties experience and respond to these challenges. For example, counties with newer RMPs were required to meet requirements that older RMPs did not have to fulfill to obtain program approval, such as an analysis of client demographics. Moreover, Los Angeles County now has over 17 times the number of RMP clients as San Francisco and maintains a larger staff to serve a CalFresh program that is over 28 times larger than San Francisco CalFresh. In addition, the number of hours assigned to RMP vary greatly and range from less than 10 percent of a single staff member's weekly hours (Santa Clara) to small teams of staff each allocating up to 20 hours a week (Los Angeles). Our analysis has taken the variation in context and resource level into account and identifies generalizable strategies that may be transferrable to San Francisco.

## Vendor outreach

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Effective vendor outreach strategies increase vendor awareness of RMP, educate vendors about the application process, and help cultivate a relationship between RMP staff and vendors. This section focuses primarily on general vendor outreach, while the Vendor Diversification section provides additional detail on soliciting specific types of vendors and cuisine.

**CHALLENGE:** Most counties describe limited staff resources as a significant barrier to engaging in vendor outreach. It can be laborious to identify and contact restaurants that provide low-cost meals and are well-positioned to serve nearby RMP clients. Direct outreach, such as phone calls, can require a significant time investment to make contact with the appropriate staff. Indirect outreach, such as mass mailings, allows RMP staff to contact many vendors with minimal action but relies on vendors to read materials and respond. Even after identifying vendors to approach, there is no silver bullet outreach method that guarantees success.

***Strategy: Promotional materials***

Promotional materials provide the foundation for vendor outreach efforts for counties and if well-designed, can be adaptable for a formal outreach plan or informal requests for information. Many counties prepare a letter with program information that describes the rules and benefits to enrollment, while others design marketing pamphlets for widespread distribution. Some counties have created branded county RMP logo placards for vendors to affix to storefronts, in order to brand the program and promote client participation and utilization.

***Strategy: Spatial targeting***

Due to resource limitations, outreach methods are often paired with a spatial targeting strategy to focus on neighborhoods with unmet need. Many counties pull and analyze demographic data from CalWIN to determine zip codes with high concentrations of RMP clients. From there, RMP staff contact vendors within those zip codes. Several programs work with their county's Department of Public Health (DPH) to obtain a list of restaurants; as the certification body for food handlers, DPH maintains a database of vendors within a county. Typically, counties send mass mailings to targeted vendors to provide information about the program or to invite them to a forum to promote RMP.

***Strategy: Establish community and agency partnerships***

Another strategy is development of relationships with restaurant, small business, or neighborhood associations and using that as an entry point into a broader network of vendors. Restaurant and small business associations may offer access to vendors throughout an entire county, while neighborhood associations can provide access to vendors within specific neighborhoods. RMP staff have typically tapped into these networks by presenting at association meetings, though activities could also potentially include announcements about RMP on association websites or in association newsletters. Local DPH offices may also offer potential partnership opportunities related to healthy meal choices, which will be discussed further with regard to Vendor Diversification.

## Enrollment support

Once a vendor demonstrates interest in the program, support from RMP staff is often necessary to guide the vendor through an enrollment process that can be tedious and complex. Providing this enrollment support can help sustain vendor interest in the program and support application completion.

**CHALLENGE:** The federal application for RMP has been described as demanding in the time and detail it requires to complete. Some vendors have gone so far as to characterize the application as invasive for requiring information like spousal social security number. Many counties indicated that the extensive enrollment process deters vendors from participating in RMP; vendors may start the application but quit mid-way due to frustration, which can be disheartening to program staff who have invested time and effort to guide the vendor through the enrollment process. Moreover, once vendors finally complete and submit the application, it can take months for the USDA to review the application and issue judgment. If any part of the application is missing or deemed insufficient, the application is returned to the county and must be resubmitted in full.

### *Strategy: Application assistance*

All counties report providing assistance by phone and/or email to clarify questions regarding the enrollment process or application form, as well as to review the completed application form for errors or incomplete information. Some counties, including Santa Clara and San Francisco, also provide in-person assistance either at the local office or on-site at the vendor location. Such support is described as necessary to promote approval of vendor applications and prevent vendors from becoming discouraged and abandoning applications due to the form's complexity.

### *Strategy: Task specialization*

Efficient utilization of office resources can allow RMP staff members to focus on providing quality extensive application assistance to vendors. Most counties have one staff member responsible for all enrollment-related tasks, but Los Angeles County and Santa Clara County notably employ more specialized enrollment processes. Los Angeles RMP has three auditors who are tasked with performing clerical functions associated with vendor enrollment. In Santa Clara RMP, the county contract department reviews the MOU and federal application, whereas clerical staff is responsible for photocopying and mailing the application. By delegating administrative tasks to clerical staff, RMP staff

in Santa Clara and Los Angeles have more time to perform complex tasks related to the program, such as responding to client and vendor inquiries.

### **Strategy: Online presence**

Some counties have also found that posting enrollment resources online has led to fewer instances of vendors starting and abruptly quitting the enrollment process, as well as reduced RMP staff time spent explaining basic program information. When MOU templates and federal application are posted online, vendors can quickly access these materials and better understand the application process. Posting a “Frequently Asked Questions” for prospective vendors can reduce redundancy in questions asked and ensure consistency in questions answered. The Los Angeles RMP website features an interest form that vendors can complete to request more information about RMP, which allows RMP staff to follow up with interested vendors but avoid task interruption caused by phone calls. Used together, these resources help ensure that committed and qualified vendors apply with realistic expectations for the enrollment process.

## **Ongoing program support**

Once in existence, programs demand staff attention to respond to client and vendor concerns that arise. Moreover, client needs and the vendor landscape are constantly evolving, and RMP programs can benefit from staff effort to adapt the program as needed. While not directly related to expanding vendor enrollment and increasing variety of meal options, structured ongoing program support helps promote client and vendor satisfaction with the program and is essential to maintaining program integrity.

**CHALLENGE:** Given the fact that local CalFresh offices do not receive additional funding for operation of RMP, counties may struggle to dedicate staff and resources to tasks related to ongoing program operations in a systematic manner. More noticeable tasks that require attention and response, such as customer service issues, may take precedence over internal evaluations and review of enrolled vendors. However, these tasks are also critical for program integrity and the quality of services provided by the program.

***Strategy: Customer service***

Many counties cite customer service issues as a key responsibility of RMP staff. Most counties report that customer service issues from vendors and clients are infrequent. However, should a customer service issue arise counties typically prioritize the issue and resolve the concern by phone. Examples of customer service issues include clients questions about benefits and vendors requests for help with POS devices. Los Angeles RMP tracks client spending by vendor in order to identify locations with little RMP spending and offers assistance to increase vendor utilization by RMP clients.

***Strategy: Quality control***

Quality control typically consists of putting out “fires” when necessary and occurs when staff are alerted to issues, such as fraudulent vendor activity, most often reported by RMP clients. Resolution of such situations is considered a priority to prevent perpetuation of client abuse and avoid jeopardizing the political viability of the program. Most counties lack resources to monitor vendors after they are enrolled and may rely on the state or clients for notification when vendors move or close business. Los Angeles RMP is unique in that it renews vendor MOUs annually and conducts site visits as part of this process. However, given the large number of vendors enrolled in the program, the county is planning to switch to biannual MOU renewals.

***Strategy: Internal reporting***

Some counties employ internal evaluation processes to review program status and identify trends or problems that require action to promote client and vendor satisfaction. The formality of such review varies by county. Sacramento RMP reviews demographic data to identify underserved areas that may require specialized attention, while Los Angeles RMP staff compile quarterly reports that focus on program activity and liability issues, including statistics on vendor monitoring activities and turnaround time for newly enrolled vendors to become operational.

## Vendor diversification

San Francisco RMP expressed a desire to increase meal variety, specifically highlighting enrollment of vendors that provide healthy and culturally diverse cuisine as a priority. Given the racial and ethnic diversity of RMP clientele, offering culturally diverse meals may increase program utilization. Provision of healthy meal options aligns with broader city wide goals of improving public health. We also identified grocery stores as another method of diversifying meal options, as well as increasing accessibility in neighborhoods that have corner stores but no or few restaurants. Vendor diversification may better serve clients who want more variety in meal choice.

**CHALLENGE:** Enrollment of grocery stores and vendors that provide healthy or culturally diverse meal options may require more personalized outreach efforts. Consequently, most counties viewed vendor diversification as a secondary goal to be pursued after initial outreach and have not yet been able to focus attention on meeting these goals.

There are unique barriers to each vendor type that may impede enrollment. Grocery stores may not provide the seating areas required by the USDA and may be wary of prompting staff and client confusion by operating both CalFresh and RMP. Additionally, RMP staff have experienced difficulty making contact with the appropriate person in large-scale supermarkets. There are fewer vendors that provide low-cost, healthy meals, which may require more specialized outreach. Vendors that provide more culturally diverse cuisine may need additional assistance with the English-only USDA form.

### *Strategy: Partnerships to pursue healthy meal options*

As mentioned in the Vendor Outreach section, partnerships can be formed with community-based organizations and government agencies to provide healthy meal options. Partnerships can be utilized to recruit specific vendors providing healthier meal options, including Santa Clara RMP with its local DPH (using funds from an obesity prevention grant awarded to DPH) and San Diego RMP with the San Diego Hunger Coalition. Additionally, rather than looking outward toward new vendors, some counties are working with community-based organizations (CBOs) to compile information on healthy meal options within existing RMP vendors, in order to help clients identify healthier dietary choices and improve nutritional outcomes.

***Strategy: “Healthy choice” local requirement***

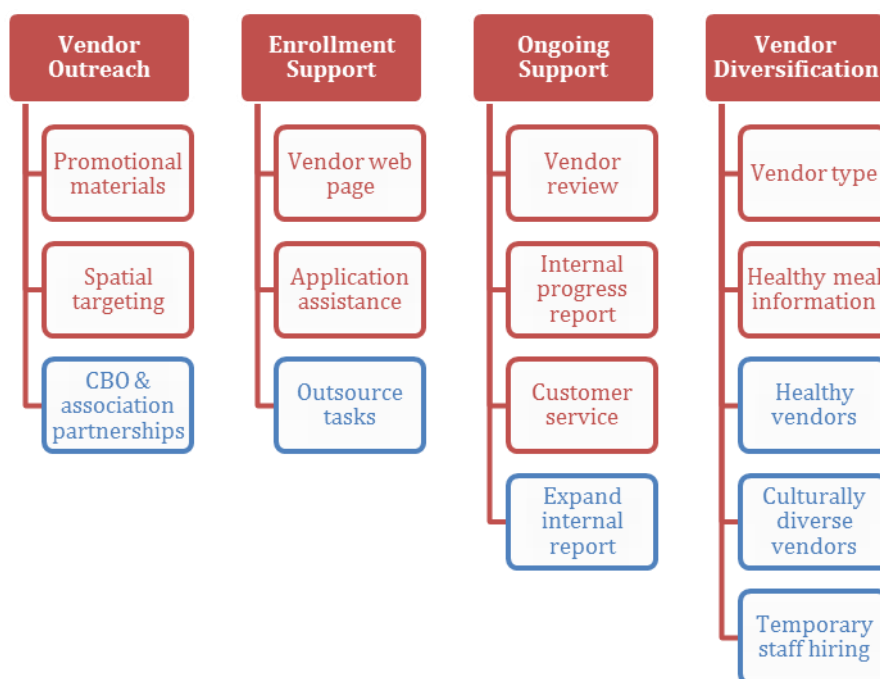
Another strategy to increase healthier options is being developed in Los Angeles County in conjunction with the DPH. Through development of a healthy choice rating, Los Angeles County plans to require new vendors to meet this standard for enrollment and will soon institute the rating as a condition of MOU renewal for existing RMP vendors. However, Los Angeles County’s situation is unique because the high level of vendor enrollment and interest in the program may allow the imposition of additional requirements.

# Recommendations

After careful consideration of resource constraints, program goals, and client needs, our team has crafted a comprehensive **core strategy** for expanding vendor participation that integrates actions in each of the four challenge areas discussed previously in this report. The objectives of the core strategy are to increase meal accessibility and provision of healthy, diverse meal options for clients throughout San Francisco neighborhoods. Secondary results of this strategy may include increased support for local commerce, enhanced program visibility among the community, and higher client utilization of RMP benefits.

Recognizing that program resources are limited, we have identified additional actions as **supplemental strategies**. These strategies can further support vendor expansion but are not as critical to the immediate goals of expanding vendor enrollment to meet RMP client needs and ensure access to vendors throughout San Francisco.

The graphic below represents a summary of the **core** and **supplemental** recommendations that will be discussed in this section. A larger version of this graphic is available in Appendix 5.





## ∞ Core strategy ∞

### Challenge area: Vendor outreach

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#### **Action: Develop promotional materials**

Developing promotional materials that are adaptable, attractive, and informative lays the foundation for vendor outreach efforts. Information provided by these documents should describe program regulations, the application process, and benefits to vendor participation. Such promotional materials should appeal to various vendor types, including independent and franchised restaurants, small corner stores, and large markets. To reduce cost and capture attention, it is advisable for these promotional resources to be limited in length. Having these materials on-hand will be useful in a variety of ways. For example, digital versions of these materials may also be used to respond to electronic vendor inquiries about the program and printed materials can be distributed at in-person meetings or vendor fairs.

**Implementation:** We suggest that San Francisco RMP create the following materials:

- **Vendor outreach letter.** A template outreach letter with program information can be used in mass mailings to target specific neighborhoods and solicit interest in the program. By providing information about program regulations and purpose, San Francisco RMP allows vendors to assess interest and suitability for the program and then self-select to begin the enrollment process. Moreover, providing information about the enrollment process encourages clear expectations of the enrollment process and may reduce incidences of application abandonment related to frustration with the application. Including a note in multiple languages that translation assistance is available may increase response from vendors for whom English is not the primary language.
- **Frequently Asked Questions.** A list of frequently asked questions and answers about RMP and vendor participation can expand on the outreach letter and offer information in a more easily digestible, conversational format for vendors. San Francisco RMP's experience with the program has also provided insight into common concerns that arise when vendors first learn about the program. Anticipating and addressing these concerns may alleviate fears and encourage vendors to continue forward with an application, as well as reduce RMP staff time spent responding to these issues. Key focal areas may include the application process, enrollment and ongoing support from RMP staff, and misperceptions associated with RMP clientele.

### **Action: Employ data-driven spatial targeting for vendor outreach**

Using demographic data to identify and target outreach to neighborhoods with high levels of unmet need is a critical step in increasing meal accessibility in San Francisco. More specifically, comparison of client location by neighborhood with vendor location data can reveal areas in which RMP clients have limited or no access to RMP meals. Mailing promotional materials to vendors in these areas has the potential to dramatically improve accessibility for a large portion of RMP clients without requiring the same level of time and effort associated with more individualized outreach strategies, such as calling and visiting vendors directly.

**Implementation:** We recommend San Francisco RMP employ the following actions:

- **Identify neighborhoods with unmet need.** Comparing client location by neighborhood with vendor location data can help identify areas where clients face limited meal accessibility. Collection and comparison of this data is a component of the internal progress report we recommend as part of ongoing program support and can support spatial targeting efforts. While San Francisco RMP may wish to primarily target neighborhoods with high levels of RMP clientele, it may also be pertinent to periodically focus efforts on neighborhoods with smaller numbers of clients that lack an RMP vendor or that have not been the subject of prior outreach efforts.
- **Obtain contact information for vendors in underserved areas.** After identifying zip codes for targeted outreach, San Francisco RMP can obtain data on vendors through San Francisco DPH's registry of certified food facilities.
- **Distribute promotional material to vendors in target neighborhoods.** Mailing promotional materials to vendors in underserved areas may promote vendor awareness of the program and increase vendor enrollment without requiring extensive time or effort. However, we note that it may also become evident that alternative outreach methods and different types of communication may be necessary in certain neighborhoods. It is important that San Francisco RMP remain flexible and consider other methods of distributing promotional materials, such as partnering with community organizations – a supplemental strategy for vendor outreach – or visiting vendors in person to drop off promotional materials.

## Challenge area: Enrollment support

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### **Action:** *Create vendor web page*

A page on the San Francisco CalFresh website that provides program information specifically for vendors may both capture vendor interest and streamline the enrollment process. Content from the promotional materials may be useful as a framework for the web page and minimize costs associated with web page creation. The web page can also provide additional information about enrollment to better prepare vendors for the application process, minimize mistakes in applications, and expedite application submissions. An added benefit of the web page is the opportunity to make clear that San Francisco RMP staff are available to assist vendors throughout the enrollment process. Moreover, the lack of an online presence may result in missed opportunities when vendors who search online for information are unable to learn more about the program.

**Implementation:** In addition to information about program purpose and regulations, we suggest that the materials provided online include:

- **Vendor interest form.** A fillable online form soliciting basic contact information from vendors will help generate a list of interested vendors for San Francisco RMP to contact.
- **USDA application.** Providing a copy of the application form will allow vendors to understand the information required by the USDA and begin completing the form without delay.
- **An example MOU.** A sample MOU can show vendors a typical agreement between San Francisco RMP and a participating vendor.
- **“Steps to Enrollment” guide.** This guide can provide vendors information pertaining to the enrollment process, including an estimation of time to application process and the action steps (ideally less than 8) required of vendors from initiation to completion of application.
- **Frequently Asked Questions.** San Francisco RMP can provide a digital version of the FAQ that is included with their promotional mailings to alleviate vendor concerns.
- **Contact information for the San Francisco RMP staff member.**

## Challenge area: Ongoing program support

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### **Action: Institute internal progress report**

A structured and regular internal progress report will help maximize San Francisco RMP ability to serve RMP clients by promoting staff knowledge of current client and vendor demographics. Completing this report annually will support detection of shifting client and vendor needs and the creation of strategies to respond to these changes. For example, this action can allow San Francisco RMP staff to regularly identify neighborhoods in need of targeted outreach to improve meal accessibility and inform future spatial targeting vendor outreach efforts. These reports can also help the program recognize successful efforts to replicate elsewhere and identify areas for improvement. Moreover, this internal progress report system will help San Francisco hold itself accountable to its goals and offer an opportunity for RMP staff to share challenges, receive help, and set new goals with CalFresh management to continue strengthening the program.

**Implementation:** We suggest that the San Francisco RMP staff member meet with the CalFresh director and program manager at least once per year to review program progress and plan action steps for the next period. Key pieces of performance data to review may include:

- ***Number of CalFresh clients, RMP clients and enrolled vendors for the current review period, as well as previous review periods.*** This basic program information will provide a high-level understanding of client and vendor enrollment and track changes over time. This data may also inform resource allocation decisions. For example, if RMP enrollment grows over time as a percentage of CalFresh, it may justify increased funding for RMP.
- ***Eligibility status of RMP clients.*** Review of client eligibility data may offer insight into particular needs associated with the three populations served by RMP and provide direction for logical outreach partnerships (e.g., Coalition on Homelessness).
- ***Number of RMP clients and RMP vendors in San Francisco neighborhoods.*** Such information can help inform spatial targeting vendor outreach efforts to improve meal accessibility in underserved neighborhoods.
- ***Notable incidents and/or feedback received in the review period.*** Recording positive and negative incidents and feedback received from vendors and clients in order to track program trends and repeating occurrences.

### **Action: Vendor review**

By providing San Francisco RMP with regular opportunities to ensure that RMP vendors are operating within program guidelines, a formal vendor review process can reduce occurrence of fraud, support

program integrity and improve the quality of services for clients. Moreover, this recurring review can also provide an opportunity to gather vendor feedback about the program. RMP vendors are on the ground level of the program, interacting daily with RMP clients, and may have helpful insight into areas for program improvement to better serve clients or support participating vendors.

**Implementation:** We suggest that San Francisco RMP review each vendor after one or two years in the program, continuing this evaluation throughout the duration of a vendor's enrollment. We recommend that this review include the following three components:

- **Evaluation of transaction history.** Addressing fraudulent activity is a key priority for San Francisco RMP. Evaluating transactional history for abnormal charges provides a critical opportunity to identify fraudulent behavior and remove delinquent vendors from the program or provide training when clarification of program regulations is needed. This evaluation can transform San Francisco RMP efforts related to fraud prevention from a reactive to proactive strategy and improve its ability to protect the vulnerable populations served by the program.
- **Appraisal of San Francisco DPH health rating.** Though San Francisco RMP currently requires vendors to have a DPH health rating of 90 or above at the time of enrollment, health scores are not regularly re-appraised. San Francisco RMP may wish to provide vendors that fall below this threshold with a window of time to meet the standard or decide to remove the vendor from the program. Integrating this step into the vendor review process will increase the significance of this requirement by helping ensure that RMP clients receive meals prepared in healthy, clean environments.
- **Solicitation of vendor feedback.** San Francisco RMP constantly strives for improvement. Sending out a brief survey or even simply a request for feedback about vendor experience may provide insight into ways in which the program can be further improved to encourage continued vendor participation and best serve RMP clients.

### **Action: Provide customer service to clients and vendors**

Responding to client and vendor concerns is a key responsibility of RMP staff. While this action does not directly increase the number of enrolled vendors, maintaining smooth program operations supports the reputation of the program, client utilization of program benefits, and vendor desire to participate.

**Implementation:** San Francisco RMP should continue to provide the following:

- **Response to client and vendor concerns.** Both clients and vendors with concerns related to RMP should continue to be directed to San Francisco RMP staff for investigation and resolution. RMP staff can communicate with vendors and eligibility workers as necessary to resolve any issues.

## Challenge area: Vendor diversification

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### **Action: Include enrollment grocery and corner stores for targeted outreach**

As of May 2013, all 64 vendors participating in San Francisco RMP are restaurants. Despite some effort to enroll Safeway, there are no grocery or corner stores participating in the program. Expanding outreach efforts to include these vendors may increase meal accessibility in underserved neighborhoods with corner stores but no or few restaurants. Enrollment of grocery and corner stores may also provide healthier meals, such as sandwiches and salads, in comparison to fast food chains. Moreover, ethnic grocery and corner stores may offer culturally diverse food options.

**Implementation:** The following actions may facilitate enrollment of grocery and corner stores for San Francisco RMP:

- **Include grocery stores in targeted mailings.** Our core strategy for vendor outreach suggests that targeted mailings be sent to vendors in underserved neighborhoods, and we recommend including grocery stores on that mailing list. Promotional materials can be designed to address program-specific concerns and rules for grocery stores to participate in the program.
- **Contact existing CalFresh vendors.** San Francisco RMP staff can expand outreach to all grocery and corner stores already participating in CalFresh. These vendors have demonstrated a willingness to invite these populations into their business, indicating that social stigma associated with these populations is unlikely to be a barrier to program participation. Sending promotional program materials to these vendors has the potential to significantly improve vendor accessibility throughout the city without requiring significant effort, as contact information for CalFresh vendors is already readily available on the USDA website.
- **Explore the possibility of a waiver for the seating requirement.** The federal requirement that RMP vendors provide seating areas may restrict participation of grocery stores in the program. It may be worthwhile to explore the possibility of obtaining a waiver for this rule or suggesting a change in program requirements.

### **Action: Provide clients with healthy meal information within RMP**

Because there are fewer vendors that provide low-cost, healthy meals, more resource-intensive outreach efforts are needed to identify and recruit these vendors. Alternatively, a less costly approach to improve nutritional outcomes may be to work within the program directly with clients by providing information on healthier meal options at participating San Francisco RMP vendors. San Francisco CalFresh is currently working with Leah's Pantry, a CBO, to develop healthy meal information for CalFresh clients to access online, and it may be possible to build on these efforts to create RMP-specific

suggestions. As a benefit for vendors, this action may increase client utilization of RMP benefits at locations that offer healthier meal options.

**Implementation:** To develop materials about healthier meal options within the program, San Francisco RMP may wish to take the following actions:

- ***Develop healthy meal information flyer.*** Work with San Francisco CalFresh staff and Leah's Pantry (or CBOs with similar capacity) to develop examples or a list of healthy meal options that match the \$5-7 cost of an average RMP meal.
- ***Provide healthy meal information directly to San Francisco RMP clients.*** San Francisco CalFresh plans to provide nutritional information through personal online CalFresh accounts. However, it may be more effective for RMP clients – who may be less likely to have internet access and computer skills – to receive this information through postal mail or from eligibility workers.
- ***Distribute healthy meal information through partnerships.*** CBOs and THE FSTF members may be able to share this healthy meal information with clients through a flyer distribution or poster displays.



## ∞ Supplemental strategies ∞

In combination with the core strategy, these supplemental strategies can be considered a “super-strategy” for the program. However, unlike the core strategy that should be implemented comprehensively, the supplemental strategies in this section can be performed individually as program resources permit.

### Challenge area: Vendor outreach

#### *Action: Partner with associations and community-based organizations*

Developing partnerships with associations and CBOs can offer access to networks of vendors. Building relationships with restaurant, neighborhood, and business associations may allow for direct outreach to prospective vendors and help San Francisco RMP increase its visibility in these communities. Moreover, partnerships with CBOs, including the FSTF, can also be developed to leverage outreach efforts in neighborhoods served by these organizations. Circulating program information through distribution of promotional materials to partners may be instrumental to this strategy. We identify this recommendation as supplemental because building partnerships is a time-intensive and ongoing process.



**Implementation:** We suggest that San Francisco RMP consider identifying and developing partnerships with the following associations and CBOs:

- **Identify relevant associations.** San Francisco RMP can identify restaurant, neighborhood, and business associations with membership that may be able to provide low-cost meals to RMP clientele. Associations may serve the entire city or specific neighborhoods; it may be relevant to target associations that serve neighborhoods identified as underserved by the program. RMP staff may consider using the San Francisco General Services Agency’s list of 49 merchant business associations – some of which are neighborhood-focused – to generate an initial list.
- **Distribute promotional materials.** San Francisco RMP can use partnerships to circulate information about RMP and increase vendor awareness of the program. CBOs can be provided with hard copies of promotional materials to post or distribute. Additionally, associations can be asked to email promotional materials to members or include information about RMP in association newsletters and websites.
- **Attend meetings and events.** In-person efforts can offer additional ways to publicize the program. For example, San Francisco RMP staff may attend an association meeting and make either a formal presentation or a brief announcement about the program. Another option may



be to host a booth at a vendor fair and provide promotional materials, answer questions, and engage vendor interest in the program.

- **Partner with CBOs for outreach assistance.** CBOs that serve RMP populations may be able to help RMP staff in a number of ways. For example, these organizations may help deliver presentations and attend vendor fairs to promote the program. Furthermore, these organizations may be able to assist with more direct outreach efforts associated with vendors that provide healthy and culturally diverse meals, which is discussed further with regard to vendor diversification.

## Challenge area: Enrollment support

**Action: Outsource tasks as needed to support most efficient use of RMP staff time.**

To maximize use of San Francisco RMP staff time on complex tasks, such as vendor outreach, and to provide linguistically-appropriate assistance, we propose that some tasks be outsourced to the CalFresh staff. Having clerical staff assist with administrative tasks, like photocopying and mailing applications to the USDA, can help ensure the efficient use of RMP staff program knowledge and time. Making bilingual CalFresh staff available to provide support to vendors who may not speak English as their primary language and have difficulty completing the English-only USDA form may be vital for successful application completion. We suggest this action is supplemental because such task sharing may only be necessary during times of high application volume or when vendors require bilingual assistance, this action is not expected to significantly increase vendor enrollment, and CalFresh resources are limited.



### Implementation:

- **Cross-train selected CalFresh staff.** San Francisco RMP can designate CalFresh clerical staff for task sharing and provide basic training on administrative RMP tasks. RMP staff can also identify CalFresh staff who can provide translation assistance during the enrollment process for vendors who may not speak English as their primary language.
- **Alert staff and supervisors when task sharing is needed.** When anticipating high volumes of applications, San Francisco RMP staff should give advance notice of the change in workload to cross-trained staff and supervise clerical workers in completion of tasks. Multilingual staff may be asked to make phone calls or provide in-person assistance.

## Challenge area: Ongoing program support

### **Action: Expand scope and frequency of internal progress report.**

The internal progress report suggested in the core strategy provides a foundation for assessing program status and planning future actions, which should be sufficient. However, a more comprehensive progress report may further improve San Francisco RMP program operations. Providing additional data points may deepen understanding of program status. Compiling the report more frequently can support timely assessment and response to fluctuating client needs. Presenting this information to a larger audience, such as the FSTF, may provide opportunities for group problem-solving and assistance.

**Implementation:** We suggest San Francisco RMP consider the following options to build upon the internal progress report suggested in the core strategy:

- **Additional data points.** While San Francisco RMP staff may find a need for a variety of data points in the future, we have identified two key areas that may be relevant at this time. Race and ethnic data by neighborhood may support more targeted outreach efforts to increase culturally diverse meal options available in diverse neighborhoods. Compiling vendor survey feedback in progress reports may also inform program strategies.
- **Obtain client data more frequently.** San Francisco RMP relies on HSA planning staff to provide client data. To complete the internal progress report more frequently, San Francisco RMP may need to negotiate a more frequent data pull and compose a basic data template to make it easier for planning staff to provide the requested information. San Francisco RMP may also consider re-examining its ability to pull this data internally.
- **Present report findings to the FSTF.** Making annual presentations to the FSTF may provide valuable opportunities for collective brainstorming on program concerns and areas for improvement. FSTF members represent a variety of organizations that have different perspectives, which may result in creative ideas that San Francisco RMP may not generate alone. Moreover, FSTF members that assist with outreach and enrollment efforts may be interested to learn about how these efforts have improved the program.



## Challenge area: Vendor diversification

### *Action: Increase the number of vendors with healthy meal options*

Healthy meals tend to have higher costs, and vendors providing these meals may not select into the program. It may take additional RMP staff effort to identify and recruit vendors that provide healthier meal choices within the RMP price range. This targeted effort can be time consuming and more resource-intensive, which is why this action is considered a supplemental strategy. However, if this outreach successfully increases the number of vendors providing healthy meal options, client experience and utilization of the program may be significantly improved.

**Implementation:** The following actions may increase the number of vendors with healthy meal options in RMP:

- **Target vendors providing low-cost, healthy cuisine.** Ideas for identifying low-cost, healthy vendors include: searching on Yelp using terms like “fresh” or “homemade” and filtering for low-cost meals; asking eligibility workers for suggestions based on client interactions and neighborhoods; and finding vendors through community partnerships, which was discussed as a supplemental strategy for vendor outreach. After compiling a list of vendors, RMP staff can personally reach out to vendors through phone calls or site visits to share information about RMP and the benefits of enrollment.
- **Contact restaurant chains with healthy cuisine.** Enrolling a chain restaurant can substantially expand an RMP program, as these vendors often have multiple locations citywide that may enroll simultaneously. One example of that is Subway, which enrolled multiple franchises at once and currently has 21 RMP locations in the city. While it may take some time to identify the appropriate contact person and work through the chain of command, enrolling a chain restaurant with healthy options, such as Chipotle, can greatly improve both nutritious outcomes and accessibility within the program.



### *Action: Increase the number of vendors offering culturally diverse cuisine*

Despite the ethnic and racial diversity of RMP clientele, there are few culturally diverse options in San Francisco RMP. This supplemental strategy mirrors the strategy above in that it involves direct outreach to vendors. Though this strategy can be time-consuming and costly, it may significantly expand meal variety, improve client satisfaction, and increase participation.

**Implementation:** The following actions may increase the number of vendors offering culturally diverse cuisine:

- **Identify neighborhoods with substantial ethnic and racial participation in RMP.** Client and vendor demographic data from the expanded internal progress report can be used to target neighborhoods that lack culturally diverse meal options but have significant concentrations of minority populations. Identifying these neighborhoods can help guide targeted outreach, as described below.
- **Targeted outreach to vendors providing culturally diverse food.** Ideas for identifying low-cost, culturally diverse cuisine include: using Yelp to search for ethnic food at low costs; asking eligibility workers for suggestions based on their experience with clients and knowledge of neighborhoods; and identification of vendors through community partnerships, as described with regard to supplemental vendor outreach strategies. After compiling a list of vendors, San Francisco RMP can personally reach out to vendors through phone calls or site visits to share information about RMP and the benefits of enrollment. RMP staff may consider sharing information about RMP client demographics within that neighborhood and ways in which the community may benefit from a vendor's participation in the program.
- **Provide translation assistance as needed.** Vendors that offer culturally diverse meal options may be owned or managed by individuals for whom English is a second language. Providing linguistically-appropriate assistance may support and increase enrollment of these vendors, ultimately diversifying the meal options available through RMP. This assistance may be needed primarily during enrollment, as referenced by the supplemental strategy of outsourcing tasks, but may also be helpful throughout a vendor's participation in the program.

**Action: Hire temporary staff to support vendor diversification goals**

In order to complete a one-time project that may be beyond the scope of current program resources, San Francisco RMP has indicated it may be able to hire one to two temporary staff to work on a short-term, concrete project to expand vendor enrollment. If supplemental strategies to recruit healthy and culturally diverse vendors are pursued, we suggest employing temporary staff for these direct outreach efforts.

**Implementation:** In addition to the steps outlined for the supplemental strategies for outreach to healthy and culturally diverse vendors, San Francisco RMP can take the following actions to hire temporary staff:

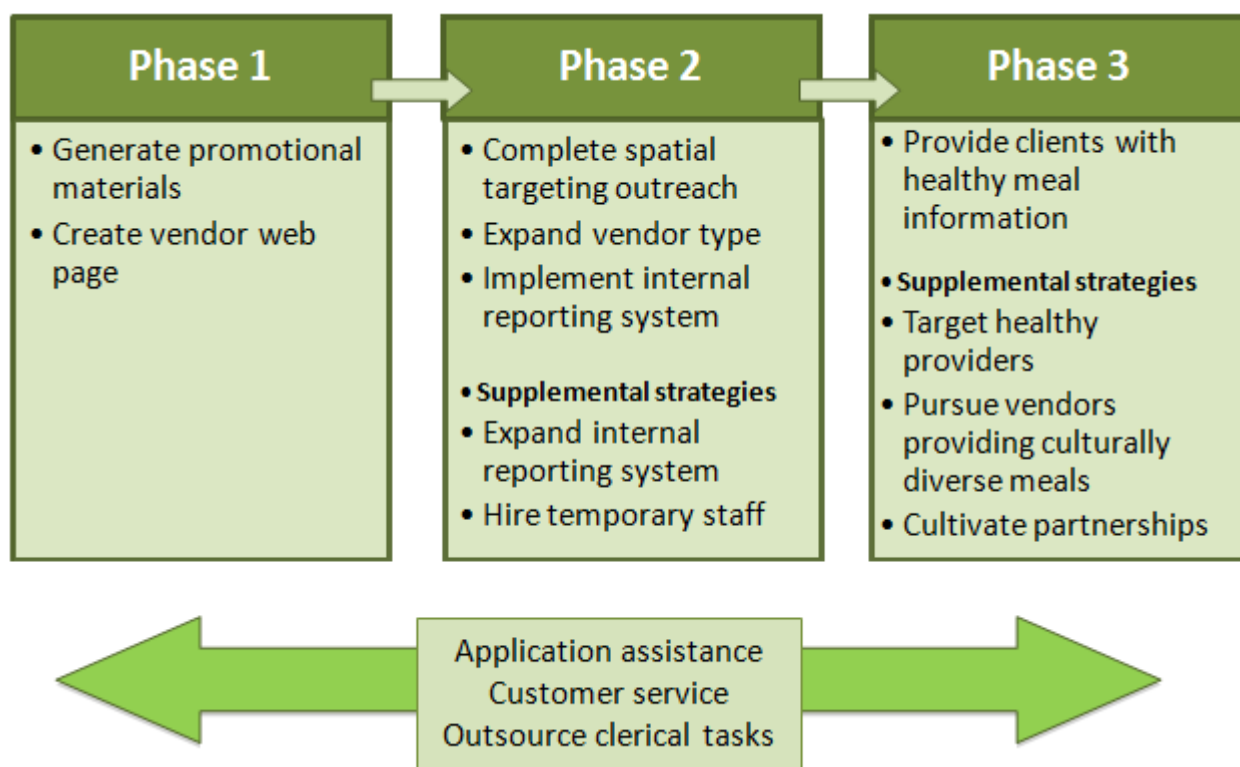
- **Hire temporary staff with skills needed for outreach.** In addition to being adaptable, persuasive, and persistent, hiring temporary staff with specialized skills may be helpful with recruiting healthy and culturally diverse vendors. For example, outreach to vendors offering culturally diverse cuisine may require language skills to communicate with vendors who do not prefer English as their first language.

- ***Prepare materials for temporary staff prior to arrival.*** Because temporary staff have a shortened timeframe for outreach to these vendors, RMP staff should prepare materials ahead of time to allow temporary workers to focus on the task at hand. Underserved neighborhoods should already have been identified during a prior analysis of vendor and client demographics, and promotional materials should already be prepared, as mentioned for the core strategy for vendor outreach.

## ∞ Implementation framework ∞

We suggest that our recommendations be implemented in three phases. Structuring implementation in this way is necessary because it would be unfeasible to perform every action at once. We have structured the implementation guideline to prioritize actions anticipated to more immediately expand vendor enrollment. For example, spatial targeting efforts are scheduled to occur before creation of healthy meal information flyers.

Moreover, given the breadth of actions within the core and supplemental strategies, it is necessary to carefully proceed through the recommendations to ensure that foundational actions can set the stage for later actions. For example, developing promotional materials is identified as a Phase 1 action because it serves as the basis for the vendor outreach efforts that take place in Phase 2 and 3. We note that although this implementation guide includes supplemental strategies, we strongly recommend that San Francisco RMP commit to implementing the core strategy in entirety before adding in supplemental strategies.



# Client-facing recommendations

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During the course of this project and analysis, we generated a short list of possible strategies that focus on improving RMP client experience and utilization of the program. At the request of our FSTF contacts, we are providing a list of these ideas.

- ***Organize RMP vendor list by neighborhood.*** Providing information about RMP vendors by neighborhood may help RMP clients better identify nearby locations at which benefits can be used. We suggest that this information be displayed by neighborhood, rather than zip code, as RMP clients are likely to be more familiar with this type of data.
- ***Regularly update CalFresh eligibility workers on program developments.*** Eligibility workers interact with CalFresh clients who qualify for RMP and may provide an opportunity to improve client awareness of RMP benefits and participating vendors. We suggest that RMP staff circulate information about the program, including changes to RMP vendor enrollment, so that eligibility workers can pass along this information to clients. More specifically, RMP staff may wish to announce enrollment or new vendors or compose a “State of RMP” email for eligibility workers that highlights newly enrolled vendors and provides vendor information by neighborhood so that eligibility workers can help ensure RMP clients are aware of program improvements.
- ***Ask CBOs that serve RMP clients to educate clients about the program.*** Through our focus groups with RMP clients, it became apparent that client awareness of the program may be limited. Some clients did not distinguish the program from regular CalFresh benefits and did not recognize the RMP program title, while others were unsure where benefits could be used outside of their immediate residential location. Because RMP clients may lack a reliable mailing address or internet access, CBOs may present a strong and important opportunity to reach RMP clients, improve awareness and understanding of the program, and increase benefit utilization.
- ***Strengthen RMP branding.*** As was briefly mentioned with regard to promotional materials, some counties have created RMP specific logos to publicize the program and highlight participating vendor locations. This approach may help increase client familiarity with where meals can be purchased and community awareness of the program.
- ***Create “Cake and Candles” mailer to announce program eligibility to newly eligible CalFresh seniors.*** San Francisco CalFresh has considered creating a program announcement letter for CalFresh clients who have recently reach 60 years of age and automatically been enrolled in RMP. This strategy may significantly improve client awareness and utilization of program benefits.

# Conclusion

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Though this report has focused primarily on expanding vendor enrollment for San Francisco RMP, these recommendations are important only to the extent that they promote the well-being of the clients they intend to serve. Through writing this report, it became clear that this program has the potential to significantly improve the food security and consequently, the lives of the seniors, disabled, and homeless people in the program. The positive impact of this program was a theme that resonated during the focus groups we conducted with clients, and this message helped drive the development of a two-tiered set of recommendations that we believe can address client needs by increasing meal accessibility and providing more meal choice.

Being the pilot RMP in California is indicative of San Francisco's broader commitment to homeless, disabled, and senior populations, and we have seen this dedication mirrored in the staff and community partners we worked with to develop this report. If the recommendations we have presented can be adopted and implemented, we strongly believe that the RMP – with the support of its FSTF partners – can improve the ability of San Francisco to meet the needs of its vulnerable citizens.



# Appendices

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**Appendix 1. Analysis of actions using evaluative criteria.**

**Appendix 2. San Francisco RMP vendors by neighborhood.**

**Appendix 3. San Francisco RMP clients by zip code.**

**Appendix 4. Ethnic breakdown of San Francisco RMP clients within key zip codes.**

**Appendix 5. Summary of recommendations.**

## Appendix 1. Analysis of actions using evaluative criteria.

### Challenge Area: VENDOR OUTREACH

Actions	Steps	Cost	Priority	Effectiveness
Spatial targeting	Analysis of client demographic data	<b>LOW</b> - Requires time on regular basis - Medium cost at onset to develop template	<b>HIGH</b> - Need to target low access areas	<b>HIGH</b> - But only if coupled with effective outreach and enrollment support
	Analysis of current vendor data	<b>LOW</b> - Requires time on regular basis	<b>HIGH</b> - Need to target low access areas	<b>HIGH</b> - But only if coupled with effective outreach and enrollment support
Vendor outreach methods	Create promotional materials	<b>HIGH</b> - Requires time to develop and design materials, as well as obtain approval by relevant staff	<b>HIGH</b> - Must be done before doing other outreach	<b>HIGH</b> - Basis for doing other outreach
	Mail promotional information to vendors	<b>LOW</b> - Can be outsourced to CalFresh mailroom - Mailings included in budget	<b>HIGH</b> - Shown in other counties to be key outreach method	<b>MEDIUM</b> - Can solicit some vendors, but is usually just one of several outreach methods employed
	Send digital versions of promotional materials as needed	<b>LOW</b> - No new resources - Requires very little time	<b>LOW TO MEDIUM</b> - Done as needed	<b>MEDIUM</b> - Can solicit some vendors, but is usually just one of several outreach methods employed
	Present at events with attending vendors	<b>MEDIUM</b> - Requires staff time to develop and make presentation	<b>MEDIUM</b> - Can be done as a second stage strategy because of labor-intensive nature and time taken to build relationships	<b>MEDIUM</b> - Depends on if events are attended regularly, and promotional material are clear and distributed
	Advertise with local associations	<b>LOW</b> - May be low if advertising on newsletter or website, but cost may depend on the association	<b>LOW TO MEDIUM</b> - Depends on relationship with associations	<b>LOW TO MEDIUM</b> - Relatively indirect approach that depends on how well-read these channels are
	Partner with CBOs for outreach help	<b>LOW TO MEDIUM</b> - Leveraging existing relationships will be less costly than developing new relationships - Can help with time spent on vendor outreach	<b>LOW TO MEDIUM</b> - Depends on CBO relationships with associations	<b>LOW TO MEDIUM</b> - Depends on CBO relationships with associations

### Challenge Area: ENROLLMENT SUPPORT

Strategy	Activity	Cost	Priority	Effectiveness
<b>Expand information availability</b>	Create page for RMP vendors on HSA website	<b>LOW TO MEDIUM</b> - Adapting materials that have already been developed (i.e., promotional materials) - Tech writer will upload text	<b>HIGH</b> - Relatively easy way to provide information and save time for RMP staff	<b>MEDIUM TO HIGH</b> - Depends on how easily accessible information is and if it is clearly communicated
<b>Application assistance</b>	Facilitate application process by providing direct support for vendors	<b>HIGH</b> - Requires staff time and knowledge of program	<b>HIGH</b> - Most direct, effective way for RMP to support vendors through application process	<b>MEDIUM TO HIGH</b> - Helps vendors get through an intensive process with few hiccups
<b>Task sharing</b>	Outsource clerical tasks as needed to support most efficient use of RMP staff time	<b>LOW TO MEDIUM</b> - Initial cost to designate and train CalFresh clerical staff, but should provide savings in staff time	<b>LOW</b> - Depends on how applications flow in throughout the year	<b>LOW TO MEDIUM</b> - If many applications come in, this could save significant time

### Challenge Area: ONGOING PROGRAM SUPPORT

Strategy	Activity	Cost	Priority	Effectiveness
<b>Vendor review</b>	Create and implement more comprehensive renewal process	<b>MEDIUM</b> - Requires staff time - Vendor reviews can be staggered to spread out work over time	<b>MEDIUM</b> - Could create a process that helps maintain program integrity but does not directly expand vendor enrollment	<b>MEDIUM</b> - Depends on what specific actions / checks are rolled into vendor review process
	Review health ratings	<b>LOW</b> - Requires very little staff time - Can be delegated to other staff if many reviews done at once	<b>MEDIUM</b> - Part of a process that maintains program integrity but does not directly expand vendor enrollment	<b>LOW TO MEDIUM</b> - Useful quality control check, but depends overall on what other actions are rolled into vendor review process
	Review individual vendor transaction data to spot suspicious or illegal activity	<b>LOW TO MEDIUM</b> - Requires staff time to pull data, understand data, and spot unusual data points	<b>MEDIUM</b> - Part of a process that maintains program integrity but does not directly expand vendor enrollment	<b>LOW TO MEDIUM</b> - Useful quality control check, but depends overall on what other actions are rolled into vendor review process
	Visit grocery stores to review adherence to requirements	<b>LOW TO MEDIUM</b> - Requires staff time to visit grocery stores - May not be costly if few grocery stores enrolled	<b>LOW TO MEDIUM</b> - Part of a process that maintains program integrity but does not directly expand vendor enrollment - No grocery stores currently enrolled as vendors	<b>LOW</b> - Seating area requirement is a bit unclear, so depends overall on what other actions are rolled into MOU renewal process
	Check in with vendors about program functionality and other concerns	<b>LOW TO MEDIUM</b> - Additional staff time needed to develop and approve letter - Ongoing mailing costs will be minimal	<b>MEDIUM</b> - Easy way to provide information, solicit feedback, and check in with vendors	<b>MEDIUM</b> - Supports enrolled vendors
<b>Internal progress report</b>	Periodically collect and review information on program progress and operations	<b>MEDIUM TO HIGH</b> - High initial cost to negotiate regular data pull from HSA, develop data template - Staff time required to analyze data and present high-level findings on ongoing basis	<b>HIGH</b> - Need to understand how program is operating and how it is progressing	<b>MEDIUM TO HIGH</b> - Can be used to anticipate problems or re-tool program strategies
<b>Customer service</b>	Provide ongoing support for vendors and clients	<b>MEDIUM TO HIGH</b> - Staff time required as issues arise	<b>HIGH</b> - Needs to be able to respond directly to vendor and client concerns	<b>MEDIUM</b> - Necessary for efficient program operation

### Challenge Area: VENDOR DIVERSIFICATION

Strategy	Activity	Cost	Priority	Effectiveness
<b>Vendor type</b>	Include grocery/corner stores in outreach efforts to expand accessibility and meal choice for clients	<b>LOW</b> - Additional mailings can be outsourced to CalFresh mailroom - Mailings included in budget - List of grocery and corner stores generated from DPH	<b>MEDIUM TO HIGH</b> - Would meet goals of addressing spatial mismatch of vendors and clients, and may provide more nutritious and culturally diverse meal options.	<b>MEDIUM TO HIGH</b> - Including grocery and corner stores in targeted outreach broadens the number of vendors that RMP can reach at once during mailings
<b>More healthy meals</b>	Create list of healthy meal options for RMP clients	<b>MEDIUM</b> - Staff time required to identify healthy meal suggestions, but partnering with DPH or CBOs may reduce time and workload	<b>MEDIUM</b> - Helps meet goal of improving nutritional outcomes for clients (within existing program)	<b>MEDIUM</b> - Improves nutritional outcomes at relatively lower cost
	Target vendors providing healthy meals	<b>HIGH</b> - Requires manually creating list of vendors to target - Requires contacting vendors directly through phone or in-person	<b>MEDIUM</b> - Helps meet goal of improving nutritional outcomes for clients (by expanding program)	<b>LOW TO MEDIUM</b> - Can directly expand vendor enrollment by providing more meal variety
<b>More culturally diverse meals</b>	Target vendors that provide culturally diverse cuisine	<b>HIGH</b> - Requires manually creating list of vendors to target - Requires contacting vendors directly through phone or in-person	<b>MEDIUM</b> - Helps meet goal of expanding meal variety for clients who may prefer more culturally diverse cuisine	<b>LOW TO MEDIUM</b> - Can directly expand vendor enrollment by providing more meal variety
<b>More locally-owned vendors</b>	Target independent vendors	<b>HIGH</b> - Requires manually creating list of vendors to target - Requires contacting vendors directly through phone or in-person	<b>MEDIUM</b> - Promotes local economic development	<b>LOW TO MEDIUM</b> - Can directly expand vendor enrollment by providing more meal variety
<b>More temporary staff</b>	Hire temporary staff for direct outreach to vendors	<b>MEDIUM</b> - Temporary staff hiring may already be part of budget	<b>MEDIUM</b> - Provides capacity to pursue goals of enrolling more vendors that offer healthy and culturally diverse cuisine	<b>MEDIUM</b> - Provides specialized attention to outreach

## Appendix 2. San Francisco RMP vendors by neighborhood.

Vendor Name	Street Address	Zip Code	Neighborhood
Domino's Pizza	320 Bay Shore Blvd.	94124	Bayview/Hunters Pt.
KFC/Taco Bell	1610 Jerrold Ave.	94124	Bayview/Hunters Pt.
Frank BBQ Seafood	4712 - 3rd St.	94124	Bayview/Hunters Pt.
Golden City Inn	5131 - 3rd St.	94124	Bayview/Hunters Pt.
Subway	653 Kearny St.	94108	Chinatown
Subway	30 2nd St.	94105	Downtown SF
Subway	215 Fremont St.	94105	Downtown SF
Subway	483 Sacramento St.	94111	Embarcadero
Subway	5 Embarcadero Ctr.	94111	Embarcadero
Subway	160 Broadway St.	94111	Embarcadero
Subway	2375 Market St.	94114	Eureka Valley
Burger King	4780 Mission St.	94112	Ingleside/Excelsior
KFC/Taco Bell	4285 Mission St.	94112	Ingleside/Excelsior
Domino's Pizza	5200 Geary Blvd.	94118	Inner Richmond
Burger King	3900 Geary Blvd.	94118	Inner Richmond
KFC/Taco Bell	4150 Geary Blvd.	94118	Inner Richmond
KFC/Taco Bell	2101 Lombard St.	94123	Marina
KFC/Taco Bell	2040 Ocean Ave.	94127	Miraloma Park/West Portal
Pizza Hut	3349 Mission St.	94110	Mission
Burger King	1690 Valencia St.	94110	Mission
Subway	2698 Mason St.	94133	North Beach
Subway	5650 Geary Blvd.	94121	Outer Richmond
Burger King	724 La Playa St.	94121	Outer Richmond
KFC/Taco Bell	1150 Taraval St.	94116	Parkside
Pizza Hut	728 Geary St.	94109	Polk Gulch
Domino's Pizza	876 Geary Blvd.	94109	Polk Gulch
Subway	2001 Van Ness Ave.	94109	Polk Gulch
Subway	753 Polk St.	94109	Polk Gulch
Burger King	819 Van Ness Ave.	94109	Polk Gulch
KFC/Taco Bell	691 Eddy St.	94109	Polk Gulch
La Rosa Taqueria	709 O'Farrell St.	94109	Polk Gulch
Irving Pizza	928 Geary Blvd.	94109	Polk Gulch
Napoli Pizza	1045 Polk St.	94109	Polk Gulch
What A Grind	881 Post St.	94109	Polk Gulch
Subway	1099 Mission St.	94103	South of Market
Subway	11 - 3rd St.	94103	South of Market
Subway	804 Bryant St.	94103	South of Market
Subway	187 - 6th St.	94103	South of Market
Burger King	2978 - 16th St.	94103	South of Market
Burger King	1298 Howard St.	94103	South of Market
KFC/Taco Bell	200 Duboce Ave.	94103	South of Market

<b>Chico's Pizza</b>	131 - 6th St.	94103	South of Market
<b>SF Pizza</b>	1270 Mission St.	94103	South of Market
<b>Domino's Pizza</b>	3116 Noriega St.	94122	Sunset
<b>KFC/Taco Bell</b>	1900 Irving St.	94122	Sunset
<b>Carl's Jr.</b>	1 Hallidie Plaza	94102	Tenderloin
<b>Carl's Jr.</b>	10 United Nations	94102	Tenderloin
<b>Subway</b>	940 Market St.	94102	Tenderloin
<b>Subway</b>	1250 Market St.	94102	Tenderloin
<b>Subway</b>	376 Larkin St.	94102	Tenderloin
<b>Subway</b>	147 Mason St.	94102	Tenderloin
<b>Subway</b>	77 Van Ness Ave.	94102	Tenderloin
<b>Burger King</b>	1200 Market St.	94102	Tenderloin
<b>TAJ</b>	288 Golden Gate	94102	Tenderloin
<b>Milan Pizza</b>	606 Geary Blvd.	94102	Tenderloin
<b>Munch Haven</b>	1244 Market St.	94102	Tenderloin
<b>New Supremo Pizza</b>	491 O'Farrell St.	94102	Tenderloin
<b>Pranzo Pizza</b>	32 - 6th St.	94102	Tenderloin
<b>New York Pizza Kitchen</b>	127 Eddy St.	94102	Tenderloin
<b>Queens Louisiana</b>	3030 San Bruno Ave.	94134	Visitacion Valley
<b>Domino's Pizza</b>	1408 Fillmore St.	94115	Western Addition
<b>Subway</b>	1500 Fillmore St.	94115	Western Addition
<b>Burger King</b>	1701 Fillmore St.	94115	Western Addition
<b>KFC/Taco Bell</b>	1881 Geary Blvd.	94115	Western Addition

### Appendix 3. San Francisco RMP clients by zip code.

San Francisco RMP clients by zip code				
Neighborhood	Zip code	Total RMP clients (#)	Total RMP clients (%)	Total RMP clients with known zip codes (%)
Tenderloin	94102	859	8.1%	13.3%
South of Market	94103	717	6.8%	11.1%
Financial District	94104	7	0.1%	0.1%
Downtown SF	94105	3	0.0%	0.0%
Potrero Hill	94107	142	1.3%	2.2%
Chinatown	94108	134	1.3%	2.1%
Polk Gulch	94109	557	5.2%	8.6%
Mission	94110	533	5.0%	8.2%
Embarcadero	94111	17	0.2%	0.3%
Ingleside/Excelsior	94112	649	6.1%	10.0%
Eureka Valley	94114	122	1.1%	1.9%
Western Addition	94115	210	2.0%	3.2%
Parkside	94116	179	1.7%	2.8%
Haight/Lower Western Addition	94117	183	1.7%	2.8%
Inner Richmond	94118	120	1.1%	1.9%
Outer Richmond	94121	169	1.6%	2.6%
Sunset	94122	192	1.8%	3.0%
Marina	94123	30	0.3%	0.5%
Bayview/Hunters Pt.	94124	620	5.8%	9.6%
Miraloma Park/West Portal	94127	50	0.5%	0.8%
Presidio	94129	13	0.1%	0.2%
Treasure Island	94130	40	0.4%	0.6%



<b>Twin Peaks/Glen Park</b>	94131	85	0.8%	1.3%
<b>Lake Merced</b>	94132	133	1.3%	2.1%
<b>North Beach</b>	94133	237	2.2%	3.7%
<b>Visitacion Valley</b>	94134	378	3.6%	5.8%
--	94142	97	0.9%	1.5%
--	Other	64	0.6%	--
--	No zip	4,080	38.4%	--
<b>Grand Total</b>	--	10,620	--	6,476

## Appendix 4. Ethnic breakdown of San Francisco RMP clients within key zip codes.

Ethnic breakdown within key zip codes													
Neighborhood		Black	AN or AI	Chinese	Filipino	Vietnamese	Other API	Hispanic	White	Other	Unknown	% of total RMP	% of total RMP with known zip code
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<b>Tenderloin</b>	94102	29.3%	0.9%	5.0%	4.9%	1.5%	2.4%	7.6%	36.1%	4.5%	7.7%	8.1%	13.3%
<b>South of Market</b>	94103	25.8%	1.4%	4.5%	6.6%	0.6%	2.2%	11.0%	37.7%	3.8%	6.6%	6.8%	11.1%
<b>Polk Gulch</b>	94109	25.9%	0.9%	11.7%	3.9%	1.3%	2.0%	7.7%	37.7%	2.2%	6.8%	5.2%	8.6%
<b>Mission</b>	94110	10.5%	1.7%	4.1%	5.8%	0.4%	1.5%	37.5%	29.8%	3.2%	5.4%	5.0%	8.2%
<b>Ingelside/ Excelsior</b>	94112	10.3%	0.6%	33.1%	15.4%	1.7%	1.1%	19.6%	9.1%	2.0%	7.1%	6.1%	10.0%
<b>Bayview/ Hunters Pt.</b>	94124	52.4%	1.0%	14.8%	1.9%	1.0%	2.9%	9.8%	6.6%	2.4%	7.1%	5.8%	9.6%
<b>Visitacion Valley</b>	94134	19.3%	0.8%	39.7%	8.7%	3.2%	3.2%	13.2%	7.7%	1.3%	2.9%	3.6%	5.8%

## Appendix 5. Summary of recommendations.

