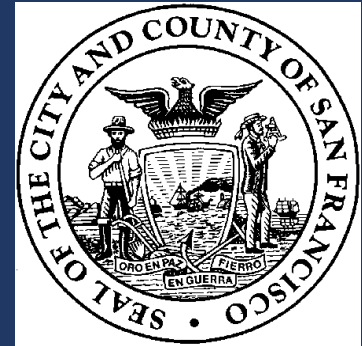


# San Francisco Food Security Task Force 2022 Recommendations



Preparation - December 2021

## 2021 FOOD SECURITY RECOMMENDATIONS

San Francisco Food Security Task Force

**The Food Security Task Force (FSTF)** was established by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors and charged with making recommendations to the City to improve food security. The task force requested input from members and community stakeholders on: 1) Immediate threats to food security, 2) Food security innovations during the response to COVID19, and 3) Policy recommendations to improve food security. This document summarizes the FSTF recommended response to the unprecedented need for food in San Francisco during this public health and economic crisis.

**Background:** Even prior to COVID19, food security in San Francisco was a pressing and widespread issue. At least 1 in 4 San Franciscans were at risk for food insecurity and its negative impacts including poor health, elevated stress, exacerbation of mental health and other chronic health conditions, and impairment to child development and academic achievement. Previous reports from the FSTF (2018, 2019) highlight San Francisco's residents most vulnerable to food insecurity. The COVID19 pandemic has resulted in a rapid increase in food insecurity in the United States, California, and across San Francisco.

### COVID19 Impact on Food Security and Community Response

Many individuals and families are newly food insecure due to unprecedented unemployment as well as the closure of organizations that previously offered food programs. The widespread impact of COVID19 has required immediate solutions to minimize hunger and support residents to safely shelter in place. Many food programs pivoted their models to support their clients' food and household needs, and innovative models emerged from public agencies, community organizations, and newly formed spontaneous feeding groups. Food providers have been lifelines to the community, and these efforts have played a key role in supporting vulnerable populations to shelter in place and minimize the community transmission of COVID19.

With new variants of COVID19, existing health and racial disparities, and the ongoing economic impact of the pandemic, we must be even more vigilant in sustaining support for vulnerable populations - especially those at highest risk of serious illness and economic devastation from COVID19. These populations include communities experiencing health disparities and structural racism, immigrants who are undocumented, older adults, people with disabilities, and people who are unhoused. People living in congregate settings and in multigenerational households including many children are also of concern, as well as low wage essential workers who have been heavily impacted by COVID19.



Mayor Breed's 2020-21 budget included \$45.8 million to support food security as part of the City's response to COVID19. This historic investment has been critical, yet the food insecurity crisis in San Francisco will require additional public and private investment. The City's efforts on this front must be ongoing and responsive to changing needs. Food insecurity will not end with vaccination.

The City deployed an unprecedented response to the sudden and enormous increase in food insecurity due to COVID19. Yet, there are still gaps in service that must be met now, and we need a plan to sustain food supports for as long as they are needed. Confronting rising food insecurity in San Francisco also requires ongoing centralized food coordination, ongoing assessment of food needs, and information and referral systems.

## 2021 FOOD SECURITY RECOMMENDATIONS

San Francisco Food Security Task Force



**Immediate threats:** Economic uncertainty and heightened racial inequities exacerbate existing food insecurity. Below is a summary of some of the most immediate threats to food security.

### Economic distress

- Wealth inequality;
- High rates of unemployment;
- Missed work due to remote school and lack of childcare;
- Expiration of enhanced federal unemployment benefits;
- Increasing lack of health insurance for the unemployed;
- High cost of living combined with workers earning above the income threshold for federal nutrition benefits.

### Community trauma

- Structural racism;
- Violence, trauma, and mental health crisis;
- Increased homelessness;
- Suspension of Muni lines leave gaps in access to food and jobs.

### Inadequate government support

- Anticipated budget cuts at the federal, state, and local level;
- Lack of ongoing comprehensive federal COVID19 relief package;
- Immigrants are often not eligible for federal benefits;
- Inequitable and erratic federal Farmers to Families Food Box program.

### Food programs face high demand, changing service environments and unstable funding

- Limited, short-term, and unstable funding for food programs;
- Closure of schools and childcare increases food insecurity among children and their families;
- Uncertainty about renewal of USDA waivers that have allowed SFUSD and DCYF to serve all children in San Francisco for free;
- Food service providers required to address holistic community needs in addition to food (mental health, etc.);
- Increased operating costs due to COVID19 (food, staff, facility, packaging, distribution, etc.);
- Loss of congregate dining and anticipated loss of some pop-up pantries;
- Volunteer and staffing shortages, and increasing rates of staff and volunteer burnout;
- Limited and underutilized public space for urban agriculture.





**Sustain Innovations:** Of utmost importance is to proactively plan to fill the gaps that will be left after the expected roll back of emergency food supports. In the immediate response to COVID19, innovations helped mitigate widespread hunger and should be sustained and scaled to meet the ongoing need. Examples include:

**Resources (ability to purchase food)**

- Direct cash benefits;
- Gift cards;
- Grocery and restaurant vouchers; Market Match
- Rapid enrollment for CalFresh/SNAP and WIC through administrative waivers;
- Pandemic EBT.

**Access (ability to obtain food safely and conveniently)**

- Food support for the entire household;
- Culturally and religiously appropriate food;
- Higher quality food;
- Increased access points to pick up free groceries and meals;
- Increased home delivery of meals and groceries;
- Meals and water for unsheltered residents delivered to encampments;
- Food for households isolating and quarantining;
- Meals for medically vulnerable people without kitchens living in SROs;
- Household needs such as personal protective equipment, cleaning supplies, baby formula, diapers, adult incontinence supplies.

**Consumption (ability to prepare and store food)**

- Programs that provided a hybrid of groceries and prepared meals to meet food needs over time;
- Localized, high quality, and culturally appropriate food from neighborhood groups, stores, and restaurants;

Reduced frequency of delivery and pickup of food to eliminate unnecessary



**Recommendations:** A sustained commitment, by all levels of government, to end systemic racism and address structural barriers to health, including food insecurity.

**Local**

- Maintain and expand city investments in food through a health equity framework;
- Ensure food delivered to all communities is high quality and appropriate to cultural and religious needs;
- Food programs should provide for the food needs of the entire household including unsheltered populations;
- Ensure continued funding for programs serving families with children;
- Housing providers should coordinate with food providers;
- Target economic stimulus recovery through direct cash support, jobs, and business development, with a focus on food for vulnerable communities and provided by businesses owned by communities most impacted by COVID19;
- Funders and city contracts should be flexible to allow grantees to reallocate funds to respond to needs;
- Maintain and improve integrated food referral and resource list through 311 and city website;
- Expand localized solutions such as neighborhood task forces and resource hubs;
- Increase utilization of outdoor public spaces for food distribution and urban agriculture;
- Conduct a consistent and ongoing food security assessment and implementation plan with regular public updates to the Board of Supervisors and Mayor.

**State**

- Support state efforts to end child hunger through increased funding for:
  - o Universal School Meals where federal rules would otherwise make such programs unachievable or unsustainable;
  - o Compensation for the increased cost of food and foodservice for providers operating the CACFP program during the pandemic and during the recovery;
- Support state legislative efforts to expand immigrant access to food through state-funded food benefit programs;
- Support state legislative efforts to reduce administrative burden for CalFresh application and recertification process.

**Federal**

- Advocate for the extension of the 15 percent SNAP benefit boost for all recipients for the duration of the economic downturn to stimulate the economy while addressing increased need and higher grocery prices;
- Advocate for the extension of enhanced unemployment benefits and additional direct cash payments;
- Extend and expand Pandemic EBT through the summer and for future school closings when children would miss school meals.

# 2022 Recommendations

## **Process:**


- FSTF Survey (November)
- Preliminary Survey Results (FSTF Meeting December)
- Add info from presentations & public comment & finalize (December)
- Present for final feedback (January FSTF Meeting)
- Graphic design & disseminate (January)
- Meetings with City Departments (January)
  - Prepare slides
- Meetings with Major's office, BOS (February)
  - Prepare slides

# 2022 Recommendations

## Outline:

- Intro
- Current landscape (include relevant data)
- Re-thinking Food Security
  - Equity
  - Pathways to food sovereignty
  - Community led/community input - need to improve and fund
  - Address food security as a broader perspective (cost of living, housing, employment, health care, child care, income, etc.)
- Adequate community resources, including new programing/innovations
- Barriers
- Recommendations
  - Local
  - State
  - Federal

# FSTF Survey Questions

1. Since the beginning of COVID-19, there have been changes in regards to food programs and **food resources** in San Francisco. What supports & resources should be maintained and/or expanded going forward?
  2. Are there any **barriers** to food security in San Francisco that are not currently being addressed?
  3. What are some **opportunities** for improving food security throughout San Francisco? (These opportunities can be through policy, programs (existing and new), non-food programs, etc.)
  4. What can be done to better **promote equity and address systemic racism** in regards to food security in San Francisco?
  5. How can the San Francisco Food Security Task Force support community efforts in addressing food security in San Francisco?
  6. (San Francisco Food Security Task Force Members Only) If the Food Security Task Force could accomplish just 1 or 2 goals in the next year, what would they be (please be specific and measurable, if possible)
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# FSTF Survey

- Survey of FSTF members, stakeholders, and community
- Approximately 46 full responses (50 partial)
- Responses will inform recommendations (along with presentations, public comment, data etc.)
- Detailed and informative responses – recommend reviewing actual responses (summarized here)

# Resources

## Resources:

Delivery

Culturally appropriate

Funding

Small/local CBO connected to communities

Restaurants

Take away meals

Housing + Food

Flexibility

Fruit and vegetable

Food Hub (Mission Hub)

Food Delivery Assistance (Food Runners)

Groceries

Pop up pantry

Ready to eat meals

Vouchers

- Meal and grocery *delivery* (especially for those with impairments, families with young children, older adults)
- Take-away/ready-made meals -- especially continuing this flexibility for congregate meal programs
- Support smaller and local organizations that can respond to the unique needs of their community
- Meals prepared by restaurants
- Culturally relevant and quality food.
- Increase city investment, grants, and funding for food supports (beyond just one year)
- Flexibility and loosening of requirements that made it easier for individuals to utilize services and organizations to provide services (example: CACFP food sent home with family, XX)
- More ....



# Barriers

## Barriers:

Lack of transportation

Lack of kitchen facilities & storage

Not enough food for the whole household (including multi-generational)

Cultural appropriateness of food, staff, services

High food costs

Lines/waits/waitlists

Food desert: lack of access to fresh healthy food and/or grocery stores

Families/individual don't qualify (income restrictions)

High housing costs

Language barriers

Need for choice, options

Ready to eat meals that are healthy and appealing

Technology

Under resourced

Unhoused need food supports

# Opportunities

## opportunities: Services & Funding

Housing, Housing + Food

Basic guaranteed income/grants to individuals

Child care, tax credits, health care

Cal-Fresh outreach strategies - especially for students, non-english speakers, and seniors

Co-locating food with services like medical care; Food + healthcare

Food Empowerment Markets/co-ops

Funding per meal (nonprofit vs private sector, traditional and new) - ensure equal

Healthy retail/corner stores

infrastructure and technology improvements for nonprofits, schools, clinics

Gardens - like Food Corps; urban agriculture

Good food procurement

Fund solutions that meet specific community needs

## opportunities: Structure

Coordinate/ eliminate silos

Create an Office of Food Policy with a mandate beyond just ending hunger (whole system approach)

Food justice - entailing relationships among retailers, restaurants, food providers and the community

Centralized intake system for older adults

# Promote Equity & Address Systemic Racism

- Input/Decisions
  - Invest in community led solutions and networks; let community groups recommend/determine the food their clients receive
  - Create seats at the table for people with lived experience
  - Create council comprised of marginalized communities
- Funding/Pay
  - More resources for low income clients, people of color.
  - Support increased funding to large organizations to improve quality and equity
  - Pay folks for their time in participating in collaboratives; compensate community members who are vital to the distribution of food at pantry sites.
  - Don't only use cost when evaluating programs or amount of food distributed
- Culturally relevant food and services

# Promote Equity & Address Systemic Racism

- Address
  - Role of discrimination in food security
  - Changing white dominate culture in orgainzations and in "normal business" (resource these efforts)
  - Racial tensions at food pantry sites
- CBOs in communities
  - Invest in CBOs; utilize CBO infrastructure; continous engagement with grassroots CBOs
  - Support orgs lead by people who need food services; and/or who hire and serve low-income people of color.
- Collaboration
  - Support cross neighborhood relationships and networks; develop new community partnerships

# Promote Equity & Address Systemic Racism

- FSTF
  - Review input for reauthorization and Propose framework and public body that will advance more equitable solutions and food security
  - Promote inclusion by changing the venue/structure of task force meetings
  - Create linkages with Office of Racial Equity
  - Increase diversity in Food Security Task Force leadership roles
  - FSTF membership should include people with the lived experience of being food insecure
  - The Taskforce should discuss and learn about how white supremacy has impacted food access and health in the US.
- Language and language translation in outreach materials and meetings (live interpretation)
- Services
  - Bring nutritious, culturally appropriate food supports to accessible locations that can shift the dynamic in food swamps,
  - Delivery, no scratch cooking, (overlap with resources survey results)
  - Rather than breaking up the system, the system should be funded and supported to change to provide more choice and person centered support.

# FSTF Survey Questions