“We are not in a food desert, we are in a nutritional desert. Because of peoples economic hardships they can’t afford nutrient rich foods. Thanks to Mi Mercado families can ditch the artificial sugary juice, and instead nourish themselves with fresh pressed natural juices by our neighborhood business partners”
The Community Collaborative Effort
Mi Mercado
Transformative Vision

- Nutritional food desert...
- Triple bottom-line: Families, Small Businesses & Community
- Put the Excelsior on the map...
- Invest in small businesses
Mi Mercado: Excelsior Food Empowerment Program provides a monthly stipend for families who need support to achieve healthy food security. The funds are available for SF low-income households who live, work, or go to school in District 11. This program is operated by Excelsior Strong, a collaboration of community based organizations whose mission is the wellness of our most vulnerable Excelsior neighborhood families. The program was born out of the neighborhood Covid-19 food security response that provides healthy, culturally relevant groceries and goods to families in D11.
How It Works:

- Debit Cards are issued by member organizations Community Well, Casa De Apoyo, Excelsior Works and Denman Beacon
- Families receive on average a monthly balance of $400
- Personal information are not disclosed to any third parties
- Cards can only be used at participating local mom & pop businesses
- Funds may not be used for sugary drinks, alcohol, or tobacco
- Participants are assisted with the activation & use of their cards
- Required monthly check-ins with staff; and optional participation in monthly wellness classes hosted by Community Well
- Program runs from December 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022
Mi Mercado: Excelsior Food Empowerment Program
Participant Agreement

The undersigned agrees to the following:

1. I confirm the reception of a debit card, preloaded with four hundred dollars ($400.00).
2. I understand that the Card will be reloaded on a monthly basis to a balance of four hundred dollars ($400.00).
3. I understand that the program will run until June 30th, 2022.
4. I agree and understand that I am not to use the provided funds to purchase alcohol, tobacco, or sugary beverages.

Client Name

Staff Name

Client Signature

Staff Signature

Date

Date
Partnership w/ Local BIPOC-owned Businesses:

- San Francisco Farmers Market
- Casa Lucas
- Cafe Guatemalteco
- Manila Oriental Market
- El Rincon Latino
- Tortas Boos Voni
- Rancho Grande
- El Corazon Furniture Gallery
Reinvesting & Recirculating Public Dollars

- DPH resources are supporting 200 Families
- Participants get $400 monthly for 6 months, 420K Total
- Surveys are conducted monthly in 3 languages
- Investing in BIPOC & Women-owned local small businesses
- 68 cents of every dollar stays in community *
  - $285,600 of the $420,000 stayed in community
- Disinvesting from harmful sugary drinks, alcohol, and tobacco
Our Local Merchant Partners

1. What is your Immigrant business origin story?
2. How has the COVID pandemic impacted your business?
3. How has Mi Mercado program benefitted your business?
4. Do you have advice for the program?
Cafe Guatemalteco

Prior to becoming a business owner, Karla Aguilar worked in the Cafe industry in San Francisco for over 10 years. She was originally looking into opening just a cafe for her community, but when she found 4794 Mission St, she was told that the business had to operate as a restaurant due to compliance issues.

She reports that her business was at good standing pre-pandemic. Throughout the pandemic, her sales went down about 60-70%. As the pandemic continuously shifted, and with the help of online orders, her business is able to maintain and stay afloat.

With the help of the Mi Mercadito program, a lot more families have been coming in to try their food. She is very grateful for this opportunity, and is always excited to help her community members out as much as possible through her restaurant.
Manila Oriental Market began operating in the early 90s. Jason Lai, shift manager, shared that at the beginning of the pandemic business has increased but due to high inflation rates and ending of government stimulus business has suffered. MOM has historically served Excelsior residents, many are low-income working families, with its range of Asian produce and low prices.

High inflation has caused the business to raise prices in recent months. He is happy to support the Mi Mercado program as he is aware of the challenges many families are facing and hopes that programs like this can continue to support families and local businesses.
Prior to purchasing the store from his friends, Leo Buendia was working professionally as an Electrical Engineer at Ericsson Corp. He opted to take the early retirement package to buy the San Francisco Farmers Market without having any prior business owner or retail experience. He has applied his engineering knowledge to create new systems, resulting in the capacity to analyze business trends, order materials efficiently, and cut down on waste and unused raw materials.

He reports that pre-pandemic his business was running at a 6 (1-10 scale). Throughout the pandemic to now, he has seen his business grow and strengthen with a current rating of a 9 (1-10 scale), thanks to programs like Mi Mercado, his customer rewards program, & his business being an essential business through the pandemic.

He happy that this program allows his business to take payments easily and says the following about the Mi Mercado program, “This program is well designed and a great way to help families not worry about food when times are tough, and for us it brings in more customers.”
Me Siento Bien!

Un Curso Gratis de 6 clases que se concentrara en métodos naturales para prevenir enfermedades crónicas como el cancer, la diabetes y enfermedades cardiovasculares

*Este es un evento familiar al que sus hijos pueden asistir con usted.*

Este curso es para usted si quiere:
- Reducir la posibilidad de un diagnostico de enfermedades crónicas en el futuro
- Crear un estilo de vida saludable
- Aprender métodos naturales para prevenir enfermedades crónicas

Las 6 Clases interactivas se centraran en los siguientes temas:
- Educación y prevención de enfermedades crónicas
- Bienestar holístico
- Alimentos curativos
- Comidas faciles y saludables para la familia
- Auto cuidado

Lugar donde serán le Clases: En Zoom
Información para inscribirse: Pueden hacerlo en el correo electrónico nancy@communitywellsf.com o llamar al (415) 349-4088

Mi Mercado and food pantry participants are invited to monthly zoom classes on healthy cooking in Spanish
Participant Surveys

Food Health Benefits:
- Increase in fruits/vegetables
- Enriched bread vs. white bread
- Fresh fish & meats vs. cold cuts
- Reduced stress over food security
Things we learned:

- 90% of people saw an increase in wellness as result of program
- 100% of people are satisfied with diverse options of fresh cultural foods
- Program is easy to use
- The local businesses “speak our language & are in our neighborhood”
- Utilized partnership coordinating resources
Food Task Force Alignment

Food insecurity caused by the pandemic was associated with an increased risk of mental illness. A recent study examining the association between food insecurity and mental health during the pandemic showed that food insecurity is associated with a 257% higher risk of anxiety and a 253% higher risk of depression. Comparatively, the study found that losing a job during the pandemic is associated with a 32% increase in risk for anxiety and a 27% increase in risk for depression. (Fang et al. 2021) (Food Security Task force Report 2022)

- Considered this when submitting Mental Health Budget ask of $6,048,056
We Are Seeking Funding For 2022-2023

- $840,000 to sustain this program for 200 families + $70,000 Funding for Coordinator Position
- $4,000,000 to sustain this program in Excelsior for 1000 families in our LTF/Foobank pantries