

**Health Commission  
City and County of San Francisco  
Resolution No. 19-2**

**Resolution supporting food security in San Francisco and endorsing the recommendations of the Food Security Task Force 2018 Assessment of Food Security in San Francisco**

WHEREAS, in 2013 the San Francisco Board of Supervisors declared that access to safe, nutritious, and culturally acceptable food is a basic human right and is essential to human health, and that hunger, food insecurity, and poor nutrition were pressing health issues that required immediate action; and

WHEREAS, food security is access by all people at all times to enough nutritious, culturally acceptable foods for an active, healthy life; and food insecurity is a household level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food; and

WHEREAS, the Food Security Task Force was reauthorized by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in July 2018, and charged with tracking data on food insecurity and providing the city with recommendations for policy, programs and funding to improve food security; and

WHEREAS, the Food Security Task Force estimates that 1 in 4 San Franciscans are at high risk of food insecurity due to low income<sup>1</sup>;and

WHEREAS data from the California Health Interview Survey indicate that the prevalence of food insecurity among low income San Franciscans is a growing problem; and

WHEREAS, the San Francisco Food Security Task Force 2018 Assessment of Food Security identifies the following groups as being at high risk for food insecurity: low income residents, pregnant women and families with children, transitional aged youth, immigrants, older adults, people with disabilities, people experiencing homelessness, and communities facing a disproportionate burden of diet-sensitive chronic disease ; and

WHEREAS, the Food Security Task Force has identified the following key challenges to San Franciscans' ability to afford nutritious food on a consistent basis: the high cost of living, rising food costs, low benefit levels, underenrollment in CalFresh, ineligibility of many food insecure San Franciscans to receive CalFresh, and insufficient affordable food retail outlets; and

WHEREAS, food insecurity results in poorer nutritional intake, coping strategies that are adaptive in the short-term for preventing hunger but that often result in increased risk of chronic disease, stress, and poor health outcomes including diabetes, heart disease and hypertension; and

WHEREAS, food insecurity contributes to health disparities in all populations across the life course (i.e. children from before birth through adolescence, pregnant women, and adults of all ages); and

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<sup>1</sup> 27% of San Franciscans have incomes below 200% of the federal poverty level (\$40,840 for a family of 3)

WHEREAS, adults in food insecure households have more emergency room visits and hospital admissions<sup>2</sup> and higher health care expenditures than adults in food secure households, resulting in an additional \$77.5 billion health care expenditures annually;<sup>3</sup> and

WHEREAS, Medi-Cal enrollees are at very high risk of food insecurity, both nationally and locally; and

WHEREAS health care settings, particularly those that reach low-income populations, provide an opportunity to engage food insecure people who may not be reached by other food security support programs that could improve their health<sup>4</sup>; and

WHEREAS, the Food Security Task Force *2018 Assessment of Food Security* revealed that while there have been important gains in the food safety net, the infrastructure for many food programs is at capacity and some programs have wait lists; there have been declines in food programs serving children and families; and there is a growing concern that some communities may not be accessing food programs due to immigration status; and

WHEREAS, it will take sustained collaboration and collective action among the public and private sectors to change policies, systems, and the environment to ensure that all San Franciscans are food secure and hunger free; and

WHEREAS, the Food Security Task Force *2018 Assessment of Food Security* provides recommendations that include:

1. Attain Sustainable Funding and Infrastructure Investments to Eliminate Waitlists and Other Barriers to Services
2. Develop a Client-Centered Approach to Nutrition Services
3. Endorse Food Security Values and Accountability to Secure the Food Safety Net

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Health Commission endorses the recommendations in the 2018 Food Security Assessment issued by the Food Security Task Force; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Health Commission recognizes the need for the Department of Public Health to address food security as a priority public health issue; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Health Commission supports the Department of Public Health to work with the Food Security Task Force and other city departments, community groups, private organizations and residents to ensure there are adequate food resources for all food insecure San Franciscans, and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Health Commission recognizes the critical role of the healthcare sector in ensuring that San Franciscans are food secure; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Health Commission encourages all health systems, health insurance companies, and health plans, particularly Medi-Cal health plans, to collaborate with their networks and the Food Security Task Force to address food insecurity through prioritization of screening, connection to community food resources, and implementation of additional programs and policies to support food security.

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<sup>2</sup> Berkowitz, Seligman, and Basu. JAMA Int Med, 2018.

<sup>3</sup> Berkowitz, Basu, and Seligman. Health Services Research: 2017.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.foodinsight.org/FHS>

I hereby certify that at the San Francisco Health Commission at its meeting of January 15, 2019 adopted the foregoing resolution.

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Mark Morewitz  
Executive Secretary to the Health Commission