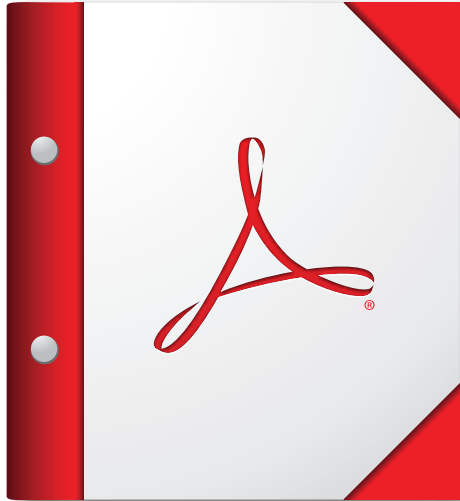




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SF·MARIN FOOD BANK

Date: 12/9/24

Dear Supervisor, Peskin, Walton and Safai and Board Clerk,

The establishment of the San Francisco Office of Citywide Food Coordination, Dissolution of Food Security Task Force aims to help provide dignity, choice, and access to nutritious food options for our most marginalized community members experiencing food insecurity. However, while this proposed ordinance is well-intentioned, policy and program efforts centered on equity and access must not fail to be based upon processes and systems of equity and access that welcome and include community input.

In June of 2024, the San Francisco Food Security Task Force, in collaboration with community leaders and community-based organizations, published a report that included recommendations that ordinance 241119 does not include in its final legislation. For example:

- Build regional collaboration for food purchasing and distribution systems
- Proposed to shift (when FSTF sunsets) to a permanent Food Advisory Council
- Provide resources for people with lived experiences of food insecurity to participate in the council
- Develop shared city priorities for equitable resource allocation regarding food security
- Sustaining the Food Security Task Force biennial report on Food Insecurity

Ordinance 241119 also failed to go through a comprehensive planning and community participation phase that should have occurred before its launch and or consideration of any new, comprehensive initiative. **Considering these critical concerns and the absence of transparency, equity, and community input in this measure, the San Francisco-Marin Food Bank and the undersigned organizations oppose this legislation.**

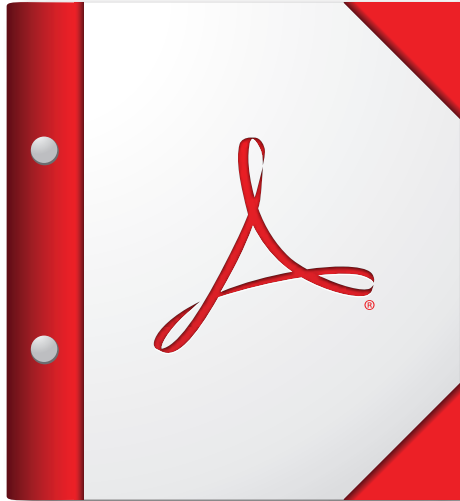
Marchon Tatmon
Associate Director, Policy and Advocacy



SF·MARIN
FOOD BANK

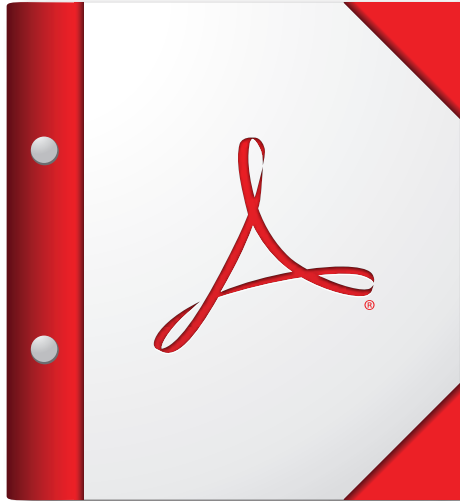
The Undersigned Organizations and Individual

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5. brunettroy@aol.com – SFMFB Community Advisory Committee
6. hkseligman@yahoo.com – SF-Marin Food Bank Board of Directors
7. kate@tlcbd.org – TLCBD – Tenderloin Community Benefit District
8. Crivecca@tndc.org – TNDC – Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corporation
9. freespiritluves@gmail.com – SFAAFBC – San Francisco African American Faith-Based Coalition
10. mtatmon@sfmfb.org – San Francisco-Marin Food Bank



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Current State Overview: Food Security in SF

December 2024

Food Insecurity in San Francisco

Food security is achieved when a person has access to enough nutritious, high-quality, and culturally appropriate food to lead an active, healthy life.

In the absence of a population-level measure of food insecurity, the benchmark of 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) is commonly used as a proxy for quantifying food insecurity. Using this measure, approximately 116,000 people are considered at risk of experiencing food insecurity in SF. Food insecurity prior to the pandemic was high, and it has only increased since the cessation of COVID-era income and food support programs. [The 2022 California Health Interview Survey \(CHIS\)](#) found that among residents at or below the 200% FPL threshold, food insecurity increased 32% and now stands at its highest level in over twenty years.

CHIS data also reveal San Francisco's food insecurity rate to be significantly higher than the statewide average of 44%; two-thirds (67%) of adults in San Francisco earning less than 200% of the FPL are food insecure. According to the [SF Biennial Food Security and Equity Report](#), 20% of San Francisco residents earn less than 200% FPL, with Black/African American residents and residents earning less than 100% of the FPL experiencing the highest rates of food insecurity. This report also found high rates of food insecurity among individuals experiencing homelessness (47%), college students (42%) and households that have children under 17 years old (30%).

San Francisco Biennial Food Security and Equity Report

The [San Francisco Biennial Food Security and Equity Report 2023](#) (BFSER) highlights key trends and challenges in addressing food insecurity within the city, particularly among low-income and marginalized groups. The report, a result of advocacy by the SF Food Security Task Force, was mandated by the SF Board of Supervisors in a [2021 Ordinance](#). The first Biennial Food Security and Equity Report was published in Dec. 2023, pulling together data from the nine city departments that worked on food-related programming or provided food resources, community-based organizations, and existing research on food insecurity.

Summary of Food Access Programs – FY22-25

According to the BFSER, community feeding programs supported 16.5 million meals and 2.4 million grocery bags in FY 2022-23. Total funding for food programs in FY 2022-23 was \$200.7 million, with 45% from local sources, but funding declined dramatically in FY24-25.

The analysis revealed significant cost variations per unit for both grocery bags and meals. For programs providing daily or weekly meals, the cost per meal ranged from \$1.88 to \$11.22 while the cost per grocery bag ranged from \$7.54 to \$45. The City's largest grocery program, HSA's Community Centered Grocery Access Program, funded 70% of the City-funded grocery bags and had a cost per bag of \$21.87. As funding for this program decreases, the program projects a cost per grocery bag of \$56.04 in FY 24-25. It is critical to gain a clearer understanding of the variation in

costs to ensure that City funds are used effectively to provide high-quality food to the greatest number of people.

Despite this significant effort and investment in charitable food provision, not all of the 116,000 San Franciscans at risk of food insecurity are accessing food programming offered in their communities. Due to a lack of integrated data management and participant tracking across the city, we do not have an unduplicated count of individuals who have participated in food programming and thus do not know how many people in need are not accessing services.

With the conclusion of federal and state pandemic funding and ongoing City budget constraints, over \$35 million in food-related funding is projected to be reduced over the next two years, with the majority of cuts stemming from local funding sources. The largest reductions are anticipated in the HSA's CFAT Grocery Access and Meal Support programs (including the Pop-Up Pantry Program), and CalFresh administration.

Charitable Food Landscape Has Evolved Since Onset of COVID

San Francisco charitable food providers have seen persistently elevated demand for their services since 2020, while food costs have surged and revenues have declined. The pandemic dramatically altered the charitable food environment in San Francisco, pushing non-profits who operate charitable food programs to continuously adapt to changing conditions:

- Charitable food providers now operate in a highly political environment with municipalities facing significant budgetary pressures
- SFMFB's direct-to-participant program (Pop-Up Pantry Program) lost its City/County funding source and is scaling down over two years (full program closure by June 2025).
- As a result of an influx of COVID-era Federal funding, more community-based organizations entered the charitable food space in 2020.
 - This expanded pool of food providers has increased the complexity for funders and low-income residents and increased competition for resources
 - With the end of pandemic-era funding at all levels of government, many of these organizations are no longer able to continue serving their communities and are turning to the Food Bank for support.
- New local players are gaining influence with a focus on food sovereignty and equity, utilizing City/County of SF funding to purchase food at wholesale prices
- Food costs at both the consumer and commercial levels are historically elevated

Biennial Food Security and Equity Report Recommendations

The Report acknowledged that the city of San Francisco is grappling with a range of complex challenges that require integrated and strategic approaches to help residents cultivate healthy and thriving communities. Insights from two Special Meetings of the Food Security Task Force (which included community-based organizations, government staff, and community members) emphasized several key strategies: advocating for increased federal and state resources, maintaining local funding, designing food programs and interventions tailored to populations facing health disparities, streamlining data systems, and enhancing coordination between City departments, community organizations, faith-based groups, and residents experiencing food insecurity.