



# Food Security in San Francisco

- **1 in 4 San Francisco residents (28%) are at risk for food insecurity**, due to low income (below 200% of poverty) and therefore struggle to attain and prepare enough nutritious food to support their basic physical and mental health. For a family of four in 2013, 200% of poverty is \$47,100.
- **San Francisco's low-income residents collectively are lacking 74 million meals annually**, according to a 2013 study by the Stanford Center on Poverty & Inequality commissioned by the San Francisco and Marin Food Banks. (<http://www.sffoodbank.org>)
- **Nonprofit food programs continue to struggle to meet demand.** The number of meals provided by San Francisco nonprofits grew from 27.1 million in 2007 to 34.3 million in 2011, according to the study commissioned by the San Francisco and Marin Food Banks.
- San Francisco **Districts with the greatest risks for food insecurity** among residents based on income below 200% of poverty:
  - District 6 (includes Tenderloin, SOMA, Mid-Market) – 46%
  - District 3 (includes Chinatown, North Beach, Financial District) – 42%
  - District 10 (includes Bayview/Hunter's Point, Potrero, Visitacion Valley) – 39%

## What is Food Insecurity?

- Food insecurity exists when someone is unable to attain and prepare enough nutritious food to support their basic physical and mental health. Food insecurity manifests itself in a wide variety of unhealthy ways, including worrying that food will run out, buying cheaper and nutritionally inadequate food, rationing meals or skipping meals completely. It is associated with poor health outcomes in all populations.
- Food security is a state in which all persons obtain nutritionally adequate, culturally acceptable diet at all times through local non-emergency sources.
- Hunger is a physical sensation that results from a lack of food.

## The Three Pillars of Food Security

**Food Resources + Food Access + Consumption of Nutritious Food = Good Health**



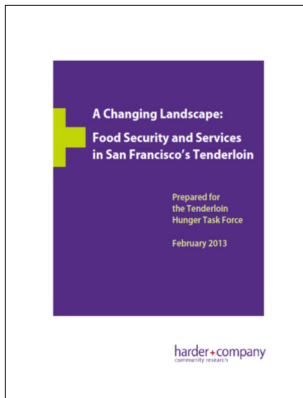
**Food Resources** - A person has the ability to secure sufficient financial resources to purchase enough nutritious food to support a healthy diet on a consistent basis.



**Food Access** - A person has the ability to obtain affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate foods safely and conveniently.



**Food Consumption** - A person has the ability to prepare healthy meals and the knowledge of basic nutrition, safety, and cooking.



# Food Security in the Tenderloin

## The Tenderloin: Our Neighborhood, Our Neighbors

- Home to the largest population of homeless and marginally housed individuals in the city.
- More than 1/3 of households live on less than \$15,000 per year.
- More than 10% are unemployed.
- Over 1/3 of residents live with disabilities, and that number is expected to grow as the population ages.

## Key Challenges to Food Security

- People who are homeless, including those living in shelters rely on meals from service providers.
- 15% of housing units in District 6 lack complete kitchen facilities.
- 74% of St. Anthony's guests and 55% of Glide's guests say they do not have access to cooking facilities.
- The neighborhood lacks a full grocery store, which means residents must have means to travel outside the neighborhood or pay more for food staples at convenience stores.
- Residents who participated in focus groups lack nutrition education and have little knowledge on how to prepare foods.

## Recommendations

- **Expand services and advocate for additional public benefits programs** at the government level to address the needs of the Tenderloin's growing population of older adults and people with disabilities.
- **Develop a Single-Room-Occupancy (SRO) cookbook** to help residents prepare healthy meals with alternative cooking methods.
- **Expand nutrition and food preparation programs**, such as cooking classes for parents, youth and SRO residents.
- **Expand access to publicly-available cooking facilities** in group housing.
- **Expand participation in CalFresh restaurant meals program.**
- **Strengthen interagency coordination** and innovation by standardizing information and data collection and developing common policy agenda.



## Key Challenges to Food Security

- San Francisco's high cost of living** - According to the Insight Center for Community Economic Development's Self-Sufficiency Standard, a family of three (one adult, one preschooler, one school-aged child) needs \$73,000 annual income (more than three, full-time San Francisco minimum wage jobs) to make ends meet in San Francisco. The cost-of-living, as measured by the Consumer Price Index, increased more than 10% between 2007 and 2012.
- Insufficient healthy and affordable food retail outlets** - Many food retail locations are inaccessible in terms of affordability, CalFresh EBT or Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) acceptance, cultural appropriateness, healthy food options and in many cases, safety. For example, 31% of the City's supermarkets and grocery stores do NOT accept CalFresh EBT, while 85% do NOT accept WIC.
- Lack of kitchens** - According to the U.S. Census, more than 19,000 housing units in the City do not have complete kitchens, making storage and preparation of healthy meals extremely difficult or impossible. A "complete kitchen" contains a sink with a faucet, a stove or range, and a refrigerator.
  - Districts with greatest percentage of households that lack complete kitchens:
    - District 3 (includes Chinatown): 15% (6,831)
    - District 6 (includes Tenderloin): 15% (6,482)
- Nonprofit food programs at capacity while demand increases.**
  - The number of meals provided by San Francisco nonprofits grew from 27.1 million in 2007 to 34.3 million in 2011, according to a study by the Stanford Center on Poverty & Inequality commissioned by the San Francisco and Marin Food Banks (<http://sffoodbank.org>). These agencies are also experiencing rising food and fuel costs, federal, state and local funding cuts, and decreasing private donations.
  - Meals on Wheels of San Francisco, which provides about 80% of the city's home-delivered meals to seniors increased its service by 43% over the last five years to meet growing demand, without government support keeping pace.
- CalFresh is inaccessible, underutilized, and inadequate.**

Also known as SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) or Food Stamps

  - Number of CalFresh recipients in San Francisco (all individuals): 50,815
  - Number of Seniors on CalFresh (60+): 5,372
  - Number of Children on CalFresh (0-17): 19,297
  - **Inaccessible** to over 45,000 low-income seniors and disabled adults in San Francisco who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI). California is the only state that exempts SSI recipients from receiving food stamp benefits. In addition, undocumented immigrants and residents whose gross income exceeds 130% of poverty (\$14,940 annually) are ineligible.
  - **Underutilized** by many who are eligible. Only about 50% of San Francisco's eligible residents participate in the program. The "working poor" may believe they are not eligible because they are employed and/or may have difficulty securing time off work to apply. Mixed immigration status households may not know their children who are U.S. citizens are eligible, or they may have concerns about identifying themselves to a government agency.
  - **Inadequate** to sustain food security. In 2012, nationally, the average individual CalFresh benefit was approximately \$149.05 per month, which calculates to approximately \$1.60 per meal.
- Low participation in school meal programs.** 60% of children enrolled in SFUSD are eligible for free or reduced-price breakfast and lunch. About 58% of eligible students eat subsidized lunch and only 16% eat subsidized breakfast. Only 1 in 4 children who qualify for free or reduced-price meals participates in the free Summer Lunch program, hosted at 127 sites.



# Together, We Can Solve this Problem

San Franciscans' ability to acquire healthy, nutritious food is limited by circumstances we can collectively alter. Key recommendations from the San Francisco Food Security Task Force:

- Increase CalFresh participation in San Francisco.
- Support local San Francisco organizations to meet the growing need for food resources.
- Create a local food supplement that can be used to purchase healthy food.
- Significantly increase the number of housing units in San Francisco with complete kitchens.

## What's Working

San Francisco has the **infrastructure** and the **will** to achieve food security and end hunger in the city:

- **Collaboration and common agendas** between nonprofit groups, city agencies, and businesses. In particular the San Francisco Food Security Task Force and the Tenderloin Hunger Taskforce foster networking and collective action.
- **Robust network of nonprofit food programs** that specialize in meeting needs of vulnerable populations (homeless, disabled, families, seniors).
- **Sizeable donated food system** supporting food programs and pantries, primarily through the San Francisco and Marin Food Bank—distributing an estimated 23 million pounds of free fresh produce annually.
- **Strong local CalFresh outreach program.**
- Innovative and continually **improving school meal programs.**
- Increased **focus on nutrition quality and healthy food education** (including urban agriculture) by service providers and collective groups.

## Key Recommendations

- Increase usage of federal nutritional programs.
- Support community partners' ability to meet the growing need for food.
- Work with the public and private sector to create a local food supplement to support healthy eating and food security for all San Franciscans.
- Significantly increase the number of housing units in San Francisco with complete kitchens.



# Food Security Among Vulnerable Populations in San Francisco

## Seniors and Disabled Adults

- By the year 2020, **San Francisco's senior population is estimated to swell by almost 20%.**
- **17% of San Francisco seniors (19,000 people 65 years+) live with the threat of hunger**, according to the San Francisco Department of Aging and Adult Services and many more are food insecure.
- Of San Francisco's 109,800 seniors over 65 years, **38% live below 200% of poverty at \$21,661.** More than 12,000 have incomes below poverty level of \$10,830.
- Unlike every other state, seniors and adults with disabilities who live in California and receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits are **not eligible for CalFresh even though they live below the federal poverty guidelines.** The maximum SSI benefit for seniors covers only 62% of the basic costs of living for a San Franciscan senior who owns a home outright, and 38% of those costs for a renter, according to the California Elder Economic Security Index.

## Children from Low-income Households

- **CalFresh is underutilized by families with children** in San Francisco. In 2012-13, approximately 26,000 SFUSD school children were eligible for free school meals based on income, and many of these children may be income-eligible for CalFresh benefits. Yet as of mid-2013 only 13,000 school-aged children were enrolled in CalFresh.
- **School meals are underutilized:** 60% of all children enrolled in SFUSD are eligible to receive free or reduced-price breakfast and lunch (2011-12). Of these, only 58% participate for lunch, and only 15.8% participate for breakfast. This figure has remained steady over the last several years.
- **Children are concentrated in neighborhoods where food insecurity is high.** Almost 40% of all San Francisco's children live in the southern part of the city, in Districts 10 (Bayview/Hunters Point), 11 (Excelsior/OMI) and 9 (Mission).

## People who are Homeless

- The number of unsheltered and sheltered homeless residents in San Francisco has remained steady since 2005 at approximately 6,500.
- Approximately 2,090 literally homeless or sheltered homeless people in San Francisco are "single individuals who are not disabled." **Almost all are food insecure based on very low or no income and a lack of food preparation and storage facilities.** Chronic homeless individuals are particularly food insecure as are those with physical, mental health, or substance abuse problems.
- **Almost 60% of homeless people in San Francisco utilize free meal programs.** This is up from 55% in 2011. Even with free food resources such as dining rooms and shelter meals, homeless people experience high rates of food insecurity.
- **One-third of homeless persons receive CalFresh benefits**, 13% receive SSI (down from 22% in 2011) and are not eligible for CalFresh, leaving a potential gap of up to 54% of people who are homeless and eligible for but not accessing CalFresh benefits.
- For a nondisabled homeless person living on the streets, **the average CalFresh benefit of \$6.50 a day is not sufficient to meet nutritional requirements;** other income benefits are too insignificant to offer a meaningful economic supplement.