




A New Structure for Food Security & Coordination in San Francisco

Why is food an important issue in SF? ¹

Food insecurity is a persistent inequity in SF. Examples of groups experiencing food insecurity include:

-  2/3 of people who earn <200% of the federal poverty level (116,000+ residents)
-  30% of households with children <17 years of age
-  44% of Black and 33% of Hispanic birthing individuals
-  39-83% of clients of City funded food programs

Nutrition-sensitive health disparities are prevalent and increasing in SF. For example:



Compared to the general SF population, hospitalization due to diabetes, hypertension, or heart disease is:

- 9x higher for Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander residents
- 4x higher for Black/African American residents



The Treasure Island, Bayview-Hunters Point, SOMA, Tenderloin, Fillmore, and OMI neighborhoods experience highest age-adjusted hospitalization rates for diabetes, hypertension, and heart disease.

Why does SF need a new structure to address food security and coordination?

Lessons from SF's ongoing food equity work, the COVID-19 pandemic, and food structure models across the U.S. provide an opportunity for SF to create an even more long-term, impactful, holistic, and collaborative approach to food.

The Food Security Task Force (FSTF) is the public body that has led SF's food security work since 2005. FSTF members make annual recommendations for policies and programs that improve food security.

Through its work, FSTF has identified **key food needs voiced by the community**:

- Improved coordination between City agencies to reduce siloes, streamline services, information, referrals, and data collection.
- Hold City agencies accountable to serving the greatest number of people possible with the highest quality of food that meets nutritional needs in a culturally appropriate and dignified way.
- Greater leadership from people with lived experience of being food insecure.
- A broader framework to address food issues, such as food sovereignty.

Food sovereignty: Principles include local control over food systems, the right of communities to define their own agricultural and food policies, and access to culturally responsive, nutritious, and sustainably produced food.

Food insecurity rates in San Francisco are the **highest they've ever been** since being recorded by the California Health Interview Survey in 2001. We need to address the extensive, persistent, and immediate food needs while also developing a long-term strategy to address root causes of food insecurity.

The emergence of COVID-19 has exacerbated inequities in food insecurity and prompted a broader City investment in food, including **calls by City leaders to "reimagine food security"**.

Moving toward these goals **requires collaboration across all sectors**, including community organizations and coalitions, businesses, faith-based groups, and City agencies.

Many U.S. cities have implemented successful food structures (e.g., offices of food and advisory bodies) **that can inform SF**.

Now is the time for SF to implement innovative changes to how it approaches food security and food coordination.

How was this proposal for a new food structure developed?

This proposal was developed through an 11-month process that involved the engagement and contributions of FSTF members and community stakeholders. The process included three phases*:

- 1** FSTF convened a **Subcommittee on Reimagining Food Coordination** to guide the work.
- 2A** FSTF conducted background research on best practices for food structures by interviewing food offices, food councils, and food networks across the country.
- 2B** FSTF identified criteria for evaluating strengths and weaknesses of potential food structures.
- 3** FSTF developed recommendations for a new food structure for SF.

See next page for proposed structure.

*Phases 2A and 2B took place concurrently.





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Details of the Proposed New Food Structure

The new structure would have two components: (i) Office of Food and (ii) Food Advisory Council.

	OFFICE OF FOOD	FOOD ADVISORY COUNCIL
Entity Type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permanent public body that advises BOS, Mayor, and other City Departments
Primary Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create and oversee implementation of citywide integrated plan for improving food security in SF Facilitate systems coordination (e.g., interdepartmental, regional, and multisector partnerships) to address food security in SF Influence city policy, resource allocation, and enforcement (e.g., food policy standards, budget advising, standardizing RFPs, priority setting) Build infrastructure for information/referral for food services Track data about SF's food systems Staff the Food Advisory Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advise on and ensure accountability of city plans and processes related to food security (review and discuss plans, implementation, and resource allocation) Make resolutions and recommendations for food-related policies or procedures Provide input and oversight into the City's food security data and reporting, as well as budget Advise policymakers in San Francisco (including on all food related legislation) Meet with the Mayor's Office quarterly Ensure community input into recommendations Partner with community coalitions to advocate on issues related to food security and food sovereignty
Staffing & Composition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staffed by contributing departments throughout the city Four positions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> politics/policy liaison community liaison data/evaluations specialist logistics support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-chaired by one government member from the Office of Food and one community member Dedicated seats for residents with lived experience of food insecurity, community organizations, and experts. Membership filled via streamlined application Stipends for residents with lived experience of food insecurity that are not associated with an organization Should be designed to maximize participation among community members
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assign staff working on food from current City agencies Opportunity to look for non-City funding 	

Strengths of the Proposed New Food Structure

-  Rooted in best practices from food offices across the country, including successful food offices in New York City, Boston, Indianapolis, and LA County.
-  Integrates accountability and coordination across city agencies and with community.
-  Is interdepartmental and free from departmental self-interests.
-  Advisory Council ensures transparency in decision-making.

-  Directly addresses community calls for (i) food policy development by people with lived experience of food insecurity and (ii) broader frameworks to address food issues like food sovereignty.
-  Creates a formalized, long-term, city-wide integrated plan for and response to food security in SF.
-  Builds infrastructure for streamlined information & referral.