



## San Francisco-Marín Food Bank Food Sourcing Policy

### **Purpose of Policy**

The San Francisco-Marín Food Bank (SFMFB) has been following a number of intentional practices around food sourcing for several years as we have moved toward a more nutritious food offering. The purpose of this Food Sourcing Policy is to formalize these best practices. This policy will be used as a guide for our food sourcing decisions, including the consistent acquisition of nutritious foods for distribution. This policy will be shared with staff, participants, agency partners, donors and community members, to communicate our commitment to providing nutritious food to our participants.

This policy ensures that our organizational commitment to distributing healthful foods is a part of our institutional memory and provides staff with a basis for clear and consistent decision making about the types of foods and beverages they should source, encourage, and prioritize in their work. The policy also serves as a tool for management and provides accountability on moving towards the provision of more healthful foods.

### **Nutrition Beliefs**

SFMFB's mission is to end hunger in San Francisco and Marin. We recognize that good nutrition is essential for health, and we strive to increase the nutritious food choices available to people living on a low income. Below are the four main beliefs behind the creation of the Food Sourcing Policy.

#### **Good food and good health are inextricably linked**

In recent years, SFMFB has become concerned about the increasing rates of diabetes, obesity, high blood pressure and other serious diet-related diseases and conditions. We know that many people who are food insecure are also struggling with health problems. A diet rich in fruits, vegetables, lean proteins and whole grains may be connected to better overall health (Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2015). These foods contain vitamins, minerals and fiber necessary for good health. Conversely, a poor diet can contribute to chronic diseases like obesity, hypertension and diabetes (Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010). Unfortunately, dietary-related diseases are on the rise in our communities; the rate of ER visits due to diabetes among adult San Francisco residents has been increasing over the past 7 years (Food Insecurity in San Francisco Dashboard).

#### **Everyone should have access to nutritious, affordable food**

Those who are living on a low income often have to make difficult decisions about what food to buy. Less healthy, processed food is often cheaper per calorie, and some may feel that purchasing perishable fruits and vegetables that may be wasted if not eaten in time is not a smart financial decision. Many of our participants also have multiple demands on their time, so participants select processed and fast foods, which take less time to access, to meet the food needs of themselves and their families. Additionally, according to the SF Food Security Task Force Assessment of Food Security in San Francisco, some neighborhoods with a high concentration of people with a low income do not have access to many, if any, stores that sell nutritious foods.

#### **Participants prefer receiving nutritious food products**

Many Food Bank participants prefer nutritious foods over less nutritious foods. According to researchers, food pantry participants prefer receiving animal protein, vegetables and fruits over sugar

sweetened beverages, treats and snacks (Campbell, et. al, 2011). By providing nutrient-dense foods, the SFMFB is meeting participant demand, and encouraging nutritious eating.

### **We encourage balance across food groups**

We encourage balance in the menus we create and the products we source. Occasionally, we do receive mixed loads of donated items that may include treats such as pastries. While our nutrition philosophy is based on the USDA'S Dietary Guidelines for Americans and promotes consumption of nutritious foods from the five food groups, we do occasionally share treats with agencies that utilize them in their programming. Typically, these agencies are practicing a harm reduction model for their participants who are undergoing substance abuse rehabilitation. We do not distribute these items weekly via our cook pantry menu.

### **Our Nutritious Food Goals and Guidelines**

The guidelines (menus) we use to distribute food to community members:

- Are rooted in the USDA'S Dietary Guidelines for Americans, and aim to provide:
  - A variety of fruits and vegetables
  - Whole grains
  - A variety of lean proteins (including dairy when available)
  - Foods low in added sugar, sodium, trans fat, and saturated fat
- Are respectful of participants' experience; Our menus:
  - Recognize that participants prefer different culturally appropriate foods
  - Recognize that a challenging housing market means that many people on a low-income do not have access to cooking facilities
  - Take into account nutritional needs of specific populations like seniors and children
- Maximize our resources
  - In order to reach as many people in need as possible, we prioritize purchasing food that will allow us to stretch our financial resources
  - We purchase foods that have universal appeal across the various cultures we serve
- Acknowledge everything in moderation can be appropriate
  - With the understanding that the occasional treat is appreciated
  - With the belief that introducing unfamiliar highly nutritious products on occasion, such as brown rice, can build acceptance
- Are accompanied by recipes and cooking ideas whenever appropriate and especially with unfamiliar or unpopular products

### **Applicability/Scope**

This policy covers all of San Francisco-Marín Food Bank's food sources. Sources include donated food, food supplied by the government (USDA), and purchased food. Our current food sourcing breakdown is as follows:

- Donated product accounts for approximately 75% of the food we distribute
- Government programs provide approximately 15% of the food we distribute
- Purchased product accounts for approximately 10% of the food we distribute

### **Definition of Terms**

- **CHEW:** An acronym that stands for Choosing Healthy, Eating Well. This is our internal ranking system that uses the Nutrition Facts Label to determine the nutritional value of each bulk product that enters our warehouse
- **Cook Menu:** A menu for sites serving clients with access to cooking facilities. The majority of our sites receive this menu.

- **High Added Sugar:** Foods that contain sugar (or another name for sugar) as one of the first three ingredients on ingredient list
- **High Nutritional Value Food:** A food that has been given a score of 3 on our internal Choosing Healthy, Eating Well (CHEW) algorithm
- **High Sodium:** Foods containing more than or equal to 20% daily value sodium per serving
- **Limited Cook Menu:** A menu for sites serving clients without access to cooking facilities
- **Low Added Sugar:** A product that does not include sugar (or an alternate name for sugar) in its first three ingredients
- **Low Nutritional Value Food:** A food that has been given a score of 1 on our internal Choosing Healthy, Eating Well (CHEW) algorithm
- **Low Sodium:** Foods containing less than or equal to 5% daily value sodium per serving
- **Moderate Nutritional Value Food:** A food that has been given a score of 2 on our internal Choosing Healthy, Eating Well (CHEW) algorithm
- **Moderate Sodium:** Foods containing 5-19% daily value sodium per serving
- **No Nutritional Value Food:** A food that has been given a score of 0 on our internal Choosing Healthy, Eating Well (CHEW) algorithm
- **Whole Grain:** A food with a whole grain listed as the first ingredient on its ingredient list

### Baseline Pantry Menu Breakdown

Given that our nutrition policy is rooted in the USDA’s Dietary Guidelines for Americans, we will do our best to provide and encourage the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins. To that end, every weekly pantry distribution to participants with access to cooking equipment includes, at a minimum:

- Fresh fruits and vegetables
  - Nearly 70% of our pantry distribution is comprised of fresh produce. (60% of our distributions across all of our programs is produce). This figure is up from 50% in 2008
- A lean protein source
  - About 10% total distribution is dairy and protein
  - Common protein options include chicken, eggs, fish, peanut butter, canned tuna, etc.
- A grain
  - Grain rotation includes rice, oats, pasta, brown rice, tortillas, and low added sugar cereal
- Occasional additional Items/beverages
  - Dairy (Including non-dairy milks such as almond and soy), canned/frozen fruit or vegetables, entrées, prepared meals, and other items as available
  - Please note that we send beverages in accordance with SFMFB’s sugar-sweetened beverage (SSB) policy. Please see Appendix A for this policy.

Modifications to the above baseline pantry menu breakdown are made to distributions for our participants with limited or non-existent access to cooking equipment, but we remain committed to a menu that strives for balance and prioritizes nutritious food.

### Shop Floor

Our shop floor holds both purchased products and donated products. We aim to purchase only high nutritional value foods, and our shop floor has a constant supply of free fresh fruits and vegetables for our shoppers to select. Though we distribute a large volume of our donated products through our pantry menu system, we retain a portion for our shopping agencies, including products that either do not fit into our pantry menu system or that come to us in too small a quantity to be included in our menu system. We accept donations of mixed products that can, on occasion, include less healthy products. Many of the less healthy products make it to our shopping floor. Given the broad range of self-guided shopping agencies and their variety of programs/clientele, we provide a broader nutritional range of items comparable to a range that could be found in retail establishments where it is presumed agencies are complementing our product selection. However, we do not knowingly accept sugar sweetened beverages. We remove these donations in the most responsible way possible, and they are not present on our shop floor.

Shop floor inventory selections are led by product availability and shopper preference. That said, we strive to provide high quality, nutritious food on our Shop Floor. In order to encourage the selection of high nutritional value products, we create CHEW signs highlighting the nutrients in which a given food is highest. We provide tips on our low and moderate nutritional value foods to improve their benefits, such as draining and rinsing canned fruits and vegetables, or adding fresh vegetables and lean proteins to boxed pastas and rice. We also have a table with product information and nutritious recipes to encourage shoppers to select nutritious foods with which they are less familiar.

### **Overview of Policy Implementation and Review**

This policy has been created by representatives of Programs, Food Resources, Operations, Policy and Advocacy, and Marketing departments and has been approved by management and shared with the SF-Marin Food Bank's board of directors as of September 30, 2017. The Executive Director sanctions the internal Food Sourcing Policy Committee to oversee the internal policy dissemination to relevant existing and new staff members as well as policy adherence. The Nutrition Education Program Manager, with support of Marketing and Communications staff, will oversee the external dissemination and communication to relevant external agency partners.

This policy will be shared with staff members by September 2017. The Nutrition Education Program Manager, with support from members of the internal Food Sourcing Policy Committee, will share this policy with staff via a Community Catch Up (CCU) all staff meeting.

The implementation of this policy will require ongoing review and collaboration. The policy will be reviewed 6 months after the initial implementation and annually thereafter by the internal Food Sourcing Policy Committee, with substantive changes reviewed by senior leadership. Questions or comments about this policy should be directed to the Senior Manager of Nutrition Education.

### **Conclusion**

San Francisco-Marin Food Bank recognizes that good nutrition is essential for health, and we strive to increase the nutritious food choices available to the community members who are in need. Thus, we have formalized our commitment to providing nutritious food items via this Food Sourcing Policy. We will continue to look to this policy for guidance as we work toward our mission of ending hunger in San Francisco and Marin counties.

**Appendix A:**



San Francisco-Marin Food Bank  
Beverage Policy

In order to comply with our nutrition philosophy, we will align with efforts to reduce the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages in the city of San Francisco. The San Francisco-Marin Food Bank began full implementation of this strategy in July 2014.

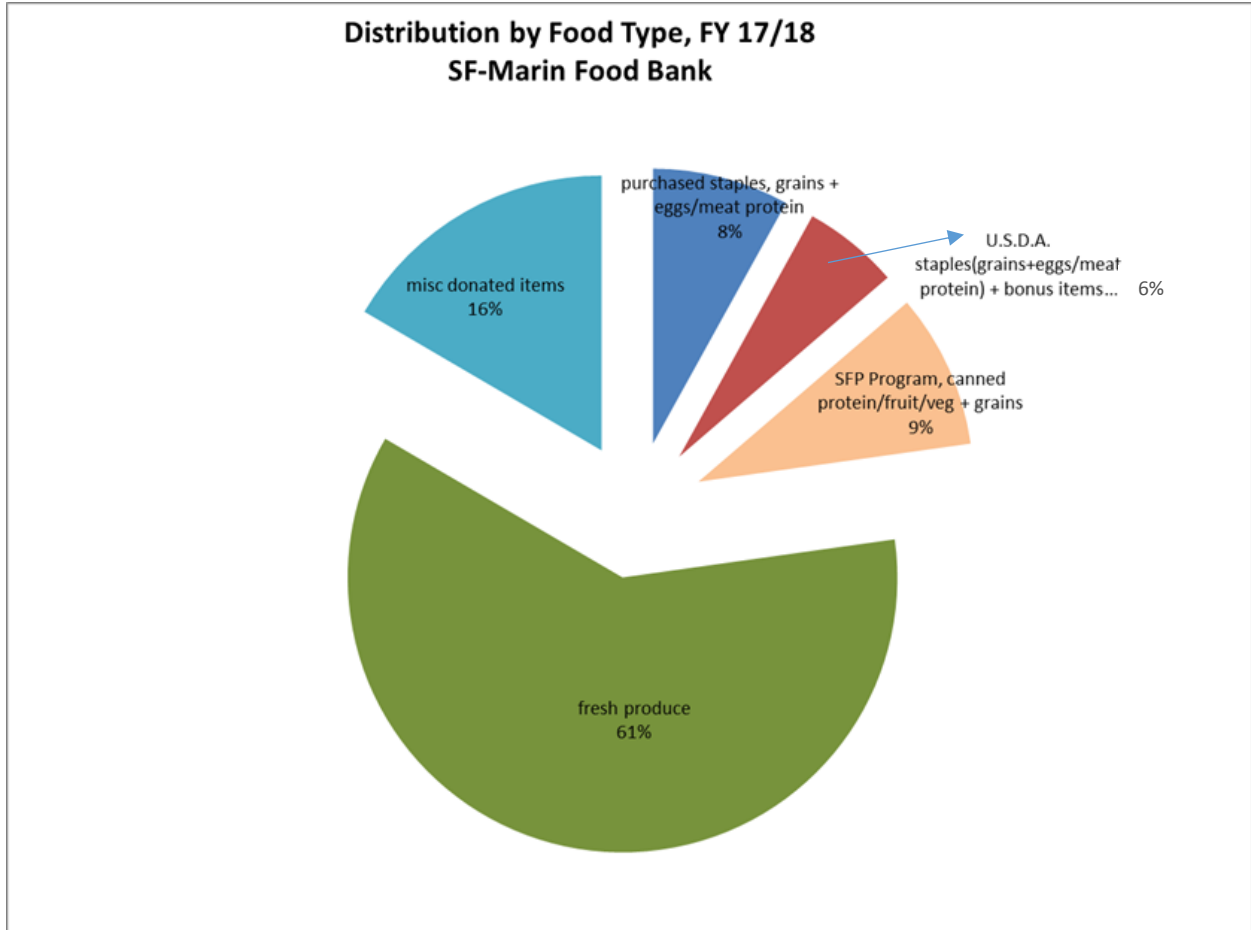
- The San Francisco-Marin Food Bank will never knowingly accept or distribute soda, energy drinks or sports drinks (collectively known as “sugary beverages”).
- The San Francisco-Marin Food Bank will never knowingly accept or distribute any food or beverage that contains alcohol
- The only drinks available on the Shop Floor will be:
  - Water (plain or carbonated with no added sweeteners)
  - Coffee (with no added sweeteners)
  - Tea (with no added sweeteners)
  - Other, plain or carbonated beverages containing 50% or greater real fruit or vegetable juice
  - Milk
  - Milk substitutes (plant-derived such as rice, almond or soy)
- Water, coffee, tea, milk and 100% fruit or vegetable juice beverages will be the only beverages distributed to our pantry network, with the following exceptions:
  - On occasion we receive donations of diet (artificially sweetened or calorie reduced) drinks mixed with healthier donations that we distribute to agencies that request these products and for the limited cook menu only
- We understand that because we handle such a large volume of food donations, at the speed that we must, we will not always be able to adhere to this policy. We will distribute/dispose of donations non-compliant with this policy in the most responsible way possible.



### San Francisco-Marín Food Bank (SFMFB) Food Sourcing Policy Frequently Asked Questions

- **Which types of food does SFMFB distribute?**

Please see below for a visual of our food sources:



- **Is the food SFMFB distributes organic?**

Organic food comes with a premium price tag. While we do encourage donations of organic foods (and foods with other nationally recognized certifications), our goal is to serve the needs of the highest number of people we can. With that in mind, organic food is usually out of our price range.

- **As a donor, how can I support getting higher amounts of nutritious food into communities?**

**Food & Fund Drives** are a great, fun way to raise awareness about hunger and mobilize your community to provide food for our neighbors in need.

**Raise money** for the Food Bank and boost your impact. By collecting funds instead of (or in addition to) filling food barrels, your efforts go further. For every \$1 raised, we can distribute \$5 worth of food.

**Collect food** to provide nutritious staples for our pantry menu. Our most-needed items are low-sodium, shelf-stable proteins, such as canned meats (chicken, tuna), low-sodium canned soups or peanut butter. Download a flyer of our most needed items [here](#).

- **Does SFMFB give out expired food?**

SFMFB does not give out food past its code date extension. However, we know that best by/sell by and use by dates are neither regulated nor are they food safety dates. They indicate peak flavor and quality of a product but do not indicate if that food is safe to consume. Therefore, we pay close attention to code date extension windows. Please see our code date extension flyer in Appendix C.

- **How does the San Francisco-Marin Food Bank work with grocery stores?**

In both San Francisco and Marin counties, we employ drivers to pick up extra food from grocery stores as part of our “Fresh Rescue” program. While this program occurs in both counties, we receive higher amounts of Fresh Rescue food in Marin. This food is brought back to our warehouses and equitably shared with pantry agencies and shop accounts.

- **How is SFMFB fighting food waste?**

The San Francisco-Marin Food Bank has been recovering and redistributing surplus foods for nearly 30 years. Our motivation was to source large amounts of nutritious fruits and vegetables for our participants in the most efficient way possible. In addition, as a natural byproduct, about 65% of all the food we provide is considered rescued. In the late 1990s, we saw an opportunity; California is home to an enormous bounty of surplus produce, and before we came along, that perfectly nutritious produce was left in the field to rot or be plowed under. In response, we developed a program that is now called Farm to Family, spearheaded by Food Bank Board Member Gary Maxworthy. Through the program, farmers donate truckloads of fresh fruits and vegetables to the Food Bank. Farm to Family now serves a statewide network of 43 food banks, providing 150 million pounds of produce every year. In April 2016, Farm to Family shipped its one billionth pound of produce! We also help our pantry participants make the most out of the food they receive by educating them about how to preserve and prepare the food — ensuring that every ounce of nutrition goes as far as possible.

- **Does SFMFB distribute sugary beverages or junk food?**

We do not distribute sugary beverages. Please see our beverage policy in Appendix A. While our nutrition philosophy is based on the USDA’S Dietary Guidelines for Americans and promotes consumption of nutritious foods from the five food groups, we do occasionally share treats with agencies that utilize them in their programming. These agencies are practicing a harm reduction model for their participants who are undergoing substance abuse rehabilitation. We do not distribute these items via our cook menu.

- **How does SFMFB serve people who have food allergies?**

Any food item that has a known allergen in it is appropriately labeled so that participants who have food allergies can make a decision about whether or not to consume it. We also follow good manufacturing practices that make sure our clean rooms are cleaned and sanitized after every project.

- **Does SFMFB pick up leftover food from retail partners, restaurants or events?**

We only pick up from retail partners that allow us to confirm and control the cold chain, to ensure food is handled safely. In addition, picking up food in full truckload quantities from growers, packers, and manufacturers is the most efficient way to handle food in the quantities that we need for our programs; therefore, we only pick up, from retail partners where volume and quality of product is appropriate for our programming needs and efficiencies can be realized.



**Appendix C: Code dates on products do not mean that food is unfit for consumption!  
Please refer to these handy guidelines for code date extensions.**

<b>Shelf-Stable Foods Extensions</b>		
<b>Product</b>	<b>Storage Life Past Code Date</b>	
<b>Staples</b>		
Beans, Dried (pinto, red, black, etc)	12 months	
Canned Goods	Low Acid (meats, beans, corn, soup, etc.)	5 years
	High Acid (pineapple, tomatoes, pickles, etc.)	18 months
Cereal (hot and cold varieties)	12 months	
Coffee, (and Decaf)	Ground in Cans	2 years
	Instant	5 years
Egg Noodles, Dry	2 years	
Flour	White	12 months
	Whole Wheat	1 month
Pasta, Dry (spaghetti, macaroni, penne, etc.)	2 years	
Rice	Brown Rice	12 months
	White or Wild	2 years
Sugar	Brown, Raw	4 months
	White, Granulated	2 years
<b>Beverages</b>		
Bottled Water (all varieties)	12 months	
Capri Sun	2 months	
Cocoa, Cocoa Mixes	indefinitely	
Crystal Light	2 months	
IZZE Sparkling Beverage	12 months	
Juice Boxes/shelf stable bottled juice	6 months	
Powdered Drink Mix	6 months	
Powdered (Dry) Milk	2 Years	
Sodas	Diet (cans or bottles)	3 months
	Regular (cans or bottles)	9 months
Tetrapak: Milks, juices, broths	1 year	
<b>Condiments &amp; Snacks</b>		
Beef Jerky	12 months	
Chocolate Syrup	2 years	
Condiments (bbq sauce, jam/jelly, ketchup, mayo, mustard, salsa, salad dressing, syrup, olive/vegetable oil)	12 months	
Cookies, Packaged	2 months	
Crackers (Saltines, Ritz, Triscuits, etc.)	8 months	
Evaporated Milk	12 months	
Extracts	4-5 years	
Granola Bars (Nutrigrain, Nature Valley, etc.)	12 months	
Microwave Popcorn	18 months	
Peanut Butter	9 months	
Popcorn (dry kernels)	2 years	
Slim Jims	18 months	
Spices	Fresh Spices	5-7 days
	Ground or Dried Spices	2-3 years
	Whole Spices	3-4 years
Vegetable Oil Spray	2 years	
Vinegar	2 years	

Information is to be used as a guide only. It was developed based on general knowledge, industry practices, and the understanding that best before dates are about sensory quality. All information taken from the Food Marketing Institute [www.fightbac.org](http://www.fightbac.org), EatByDate LLC [www.eatbydate.com](http://www.eatbydate.com), Food Banks Canada [www.foodbanksbc.com](http://www.foodbanksbc.com), and Feeding America "Donor Requirements & Restrictions"

## Bakery Items

Product	Shelf Storage Past Code Date	Refrigerator Storage Past Code Date	Freezer Storage Past Code Date
Bagels	1 day	7 days	6 months
Bread Sliced	4 days	14 days	6 months
French, loaf, etc.	1 day	14 days	6 months
Cakes	2 days	7 days	2 months
Chocolate (unfrosted)	2 days	7 days	4 months
Pound cake	4 days	7 days	6 months
Cookies	3 weeks	2 months	10 months
Croissants	1 day	7 days	2 months
Danish	2 days	7 days	2 months
Muffins	2 days	7 days	2 months

## Refrigerated Foods Extensions

Product	Storage Life Past Code/Consume by Date
<b>Beverages</b>	
Juices	
High acid, pasteurized (tomato, orange, grapefruit, etc.)	7 days
<i>Odwalla, Naked Juice</i> (100% juice and smoothies)	7 days
Punches, juice blends	14 days
<b>Dairy Products</b>	
Butter	1-3 months
Cheeses Hard cheese (cheddar, swiss, etc.)	6 months
Shredded Cheese (parmesan, mozzarella, etc.)	1 month
Cottage Cheese	21 days
Cream Cheese	60 days
Dips (sour cream based)	14 days
Eggs (whole)	5 weeks
<i>EggBeaters</i> (egg substitute)	60 days
Margarine	1-3 months
Milk (dairy)	7 days
Milk (non-dairy soy, rice, almond, coconut)	10 days
Sour Cream	21 days
Whipping Cream/Aerosol Whipped Cream	30 days
Yogurt	10 days
<b>Ready to Eat Products</b>	
Fruit, cut	1 day
Hot Dogs, Lunch Meats (bologna, Ham, etc.)	1 day or up to 6 months if frozen
<i>Lunchables</i>	7 days
Pesto	1 day
Salsa	1 day
Salads/Sandwiches NOT from Mercado or Amazon Go	1 day
Starbucks Mercado or Amazon Go Products	2 days
Sushi	1 day
<b>Dough Products</b>	
Cookie Dough	consume/freeze by code date
Pasta (fresh)	2 days
Pie Crust (ready-to-bake)	consume/freeze by code date
Tube Cans (biscuits, rolls, pizza dough, etc.)	consume by code date
<b>Soy Products</b>	
Dips (soy/tofu based)	7 days
Soy Milk	7 days
Tofu (all varieties)	21 days

## References

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