

Vote to End Hunger Candidate Survey

John Avalos



Running For:
**San Francisco Supervisor,
District 11**

"As we move deeper into this pandemic and economic crisis, I will create a public health legislative framework that puts the well being of people over property and profits so that the property owners and profit makers cannot assert their rights over the more important right to live and thrive with the basic rights of housing, healthcare, and mental healthcare, education, and opportunity. In this way, do I hope to be part of a City actively working to end poverty."



COVID-19 has caused a rapid and historic spike in food insecurity, especially among communities of color. If elected, what will you do to increase economic opportunity and food access for our hardest-hit communities?

District 11 is over 50% foreign-born and home to many immigrant-run businesses and to people who as immigrants are not able to join the traditional neighborhood commercial corridor economy. A good part of our Latinx residents continues to work in essential services and come home to crowded multi-generational and multi-family households where the spread of covid19 is dangerously common. As Supervisor, I will work to build up our mutual aid networks; support the development of cooperative small business models enabling the immigrant community to work together for self-sufficiency and community resilience. I will fight for grants, start-up subsidies, and the suspension of business fees so that businesses can have a better chance of getting started and making it with the downturn. I will fight for a city that proactively assesses food needs, expands urban agriculture in my district to support neighborhood nutrition. I will also work to create higher standards for neighborhood access in bodegas and neighborhood markets. District 11 is home to over a dozen schools and several senior centers that can be used for mutual aid hubs and networks that concentrate social services for families with children and seniors aging in place. I will hold hearings to set targets for the recovery in my district and assess how we are meeting our goals and propose adjustments to meet our goals so that no one is left behind.

San Francisco ranks 46th of 58 counties in enrolling eligible people in the CalFresh program. If elected, what actions will you take to improve CalFresh program access and utilization?

Again, I will hold hearings on the CalFresh program to hear from City Departments -- the Human Services Agency and the Department of Public Health to learn how SF is meeting our goals and how we can work to make improvements. I want to understand the barriers that prevent people from accessing these entitlements. I live and have served in a district where 4 main languages are spoken -- English, Spanish, Chinese, and Tagalog and will make sure that the HSA has staff available in all of these languages. Immigrants are under attack and I will do all I can to make sure people know their rights and can avail themselves of this important program. I will also work to ensure that our neighborhood/school mutual aid hubs have the ability to sign register people up for CalFresh and other vital human services programs.

Food insecurity is a major contributor to poor health and higher healthcare costs. What steps or legislative actions would you take to ensure that food insecure people with diet-related diseases have access to nutritious food?

In District 11, we have a high population of people with diet-related diseases -- hypertension, diabetes, etc. As Supervisor, I will pass legislation to ensure the highest standards for our neighborhood markets and bodegas. Our neighborhood markets must provide information on nutrition as well as products for people in need to alternative and healthy options.

I will also work to support in-home support service workers' training and knowledge on nutritious food and how to prepare so that elder residents aging in place and residents with disabilities will have greater access to nutrition.

In SF and Marin, 1 in 5 people experience food insecurity. What other steps or legislative actions would you take to address poverty and hunger in your community?

I am a social worker and community organizer who studied the War on Poverty and Great Society programs of the 1960s. I received my MSW from San Francisco State University in 1997. I have made it my life's work to fight for communities struggling against oppression-- environmental justice, lack of housing, limited access to healthcare and mental healthcare, underfunded schools and over policing. Poverty is always the outcome of marginalization. As a social worker, I have fought to build the power of people and communities to act towards self-determination. As a legislator, I will pass budgets allocating resources for community planning and development. I will work with my colleagues to create a public bank to ensure that our \$13B City budget does not go towards the profits of Wall St banks but to the people and neighborhoods of San Francisco. In 2010, I passed the nation's strongest local hiring program. It is based on the City having an interest in controlling the market of the construction industry so that the entire City can benefit from public investments. As we move deeper into this pandemic and economic crisis, I will create a public health legislative framework that puts the well being of people over property and profits so that the property owners and profit makers cannot assert their rights over the more important right to live and thrive with the basic rights of housing, healthcare, and mental healthcare, education, and opportunity. In this way, do I hope to be part of a City actively working to end poverty.