

Vote to End Hunger Candidate Survey

Vallie Brown



Running For:
**San Francisco Supervisor,
District 5**

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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?

Since the start of the pandemic, the number of D5 residents struggling to get the food they need has gone up 40%. I strongly support increasing food access in vulnerable communities by creating city-sponsored collaboratives for nonprofit organizations to share resources from food banks and efficiently serve individuals experiencing food insecurity. Income loss and food insecurity are interconnected, which means San Francisco must be fully prepared to continue providing food resources for vulnerable residents through 2021 and on. Further, we must continue to fund the City programs (through DPH and other agencies) that provide meals already, including the City's partnership with SF-Marin Food Bank. I personally have been working to connect local nonprofit food providers with those in need since the pandemic began—food insecurity is one of the most important issues that the City can address, and as Supervisor I will continue to fight for the health of our most vulnerable residents.

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?

We need to make sure that everyone in San Francisco who's eligible for CalFresh knows they're eligible for CalFresh. That includes expanding outreach to meet potential clients where they are, in their communities, including working with schools and community centers to get information into the hands of parents. Special attention needs to be given to public and affordable housing residents who may not be aware of the resources available to them, including door-to-door visits from outreach workers. We also have to make sure that materials are available in as many languages as possible for San Francisco's diverse population, as well as staff or translation services who can speak to CalFresh applicants in their own language. Cultural competency is critical, as is the funding required to make these improvements happen.

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?

As the pandemic and recession drag on, we need to provide as much support as possible for vulnerable communities through programs like food banks, meal deliveries, and low- or no-cost health care clinics. Residents must have access to proper healthcare while being able to feed their families with healthy food options. The nutritionally-complete meals provided by organizations like Project Open Hand, as well as the meals provided by the City itself through DPH, are critical to making sure residents in need stay healthy, as are youth programs that teach nutritional skills and healthy-eating habits to children and teens. I strongly support funding and potentially expanding these programs and partnerships, especially as we look at how to re-allocate money currently spent on the SFPD.

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?

So many people experiencing food insecurity today, due to the pandemic, have never dealt with food insecurity before and are unaware of the resources available to help them. If elected Supervisor, I'm committed to identifying those most in need, especially families and seniors, and funding the outreach necessary to connect them with services.

The price of housing in the Bay Area is also an enormous contributor to food insecurity and homelessness. As Supervisor I plan to fight for more dense affordable housing in my district, including funding the Small Sites acquisition program so that the City can continue to acquire units as new developments are being built and keep existing tenants, many of them seniors, in their homes. I will explore cutting San Francisco's outside contracting budget in half and prioritizing any resulting funding for entry-level City jobs for San Francisco residents and low-income workers, especially as the City can provide work for people whose jobs no longer exist during a pandemic. From contact tracing to health care to apprenticeships, we must be innovative to get people into high demand and high paying jobs to be even stronger after COVID-19 than before.