

Vote to End Hunger Candidate Survey

Emily Murase



Running For:
**San Francisco Supervisor,
District 7**

"To solve food access issues, we must address social determinants of health in historically underserved communities as well as the lack of nutritious foods and food costs found in food deserts."



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?

To solve food access issues, we must address social determinants of health in historically underserved communities as well as the lack of nutritious foods and food costs found in food deserts. I would encourage expanding a healthy living program for San Francisco children with an emphasis on healthy eating. As a school board member, I had a very constructive meeting with Paul Ash, Director of the San Francisco-Marín Food Bank, and the school district has enjoyed a very robust partnership with the food bank where many families relied on school-based food pantries. City-run health clinics should have an expanded focus on nutrition that is culturally relevant to communities of color.

Also, if elected, I will invest in workforce development programs to provide economic relief and financial stability for low-income communities. It's astounding to think that in Marin and San Francisco, low-income families missed approximately 1 in 8 meals before the pandemic, demonstrating just how important long-term solutions will be to addressing food insecurity. Similar to President Obama's American Recovery & Reinvestment Act of 2009, we need a San Francisco Recovery & Reinvestment Act of 2020, an overarching strategy to get people back to work and create new jobs. I strongly support developing a job pipeline for contract tracers and testing support staff from our local colleges. We should also invest in trades such as construction management and carpentry, and training for mechanics and electricians, for example. It's important that students have the opportunity to acquire skills that will always be in demand, despite economic ups and downs, and that these opportunities are made widely available to underserved and marginalized groups.

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?

That statistic is a travesty. Enrolling eligible participants hinges on trusted relationships. As a city Department Head for over 15 years, I partnered with nearly 40 local non-profits working to end violence against women and their families that, with a City investment of grant funds over \$9 million, annually served over 18,000 individuals, many low-income. These non-profits have trusted relationships with these individuals. The City should require that city-funded non-profits make available enrollment information to all clients. This would expand CalFresh participation exponentially.

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?

The Board of Supervisors has failed to live up to the 2020 resolution committing the City and County of San Francisco to a food secure and hunger free San Francisco by 2020. If elected, I will work with the Department of Public Health's Food Security Task Force, the San Francisco-Marín Food Bank, and other stakeholders to significantly accelerate the blueprint to realize this important goal. Given the City's budget deficit, we will need to markedly expand private-public partnerships to reach the goal.

In addition, I would foster the Culture of Health framework established by RAND Corporation and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to achieve health equity. This framework lays out an ambitious agenda that strikes at the root of health disparities, of which addressing food insecurity is a key component.

The agenda hinges on four key principles:

- (1) Making health a shared value.
- (2) Fostering cross-sector collaboration.
- (3) Creating healthier, more equitable communities.
- (4) Strengthening integration of health services and systems.

We must address food insecurity as part of the overall problem of health disparities.

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?

The pandemic has shown us how important it is to know and be in touch with our neighbors and to establish a network which supports that. Earlier this year, I co-founded Resilient Lakeshore, a neighborhood response to the pandemic, and organized volunteers to deliver 1200 door hangers about COVID-19 resources to residents, donated 1200 gloves to Kaiser and UCSF, and conducted wellness checks for seniors.

If elected, I will invest heavily in neighborhood associations as they increase our ability to care for and connect with each other, especially seniors. I also believe expanding the City's existing Empowered Communities Network is an essential step to better support our neighborhoods.

It also has driven home for me how important our mental and physical health are, and access to nutritious food is a big part of that. I have become a regular volunteer at the Food Bank pop-up hosted by the Stonestown YWCA that prepares 900 grocery bags weekly for distribution. Supporting local food banks year-round and not just during emergencies is key to strengthening thriving neighborhoods, one of my highest priorities.