

Vote to End Hunger Candidate Survey

Marjan Philhour



Running For:
**San Francisco Supervisor,
District 1**

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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?

Firstly, we need to provide support to our small businesses to prevent them from closing. Over 200,000 unemployment claims have been filed in San Francisco - that means over 200,000 San Franciscans are unemployed or under-employed. The more we can encourage businesses to re-hire those workers, the more security we can provide our communities.

I support a second stimulus payment to individuals and expanded and increased unemployment benefits. We must recognize that this pandemic is going to last much longer than just the end of 2020, and people are going to need additional economic support for their households than we originally projected.

It's important that we partner with community non-profits to help identify at-risk households to conduct outreach and deliver food security. At the start of this pandemic, my campaign worked to help connect food insecure people with local resources like the Richmond Neighborhood Center and the Richmond YMCA. We bought groceries and delivered them to home bound seniors in partnership with Together SF, and I facilitated the donation of thousands of pounds of fresh produce to organizations like the Richmond Neighborhood Center to distribute to families and individuals in need.

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?

I would partner with local organizations like the Richmond Neighborhood Center to conduct in language outreach and promote CalFresh to food insecure communities throughout the City. I would advocate for and work with our state leaders to expand access to CalFresh to students and integrate our free school meals program into our CalFresh program. 24% of Californian children participate in CalFresh while 51% of Californian children participate in free school meals. If the free school meal program was integrated into the CalFresh program, it's estimated that these programs would reach 1.6 million more children.

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?

I would increase the number of places like farmers markets that accept SNAP, as well as work with companies to build more affordable grocery store options in food deserts. The Board of Supervisors have passed legislation in the past that made it easier for local small businesses to sell produce without requiring rezoning or new permits. I would expand such legislation to allow even more small businesses and restaurants to be providers of nutritious food. It's important that we also create more community gardens.

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?

At the start of the pandemic, I worked with the Balboa Village Merchants Association to raise money to fund a free meal program for those who recently lost their jobs. The money went to businesses that were struggling to stay open and we were able to feed hundreds of Richmond residents. As Supervisor I would continue to work with our local businesses and organizations to create and fund community programs to fight hunger in our City.

I also believe that food insecurity is a symptom of economic insecurity. One of the most sustainable ways to fight food insecurity is to address the root causes of poverty, as well as promoting economic justice. That means lowering housing costs and supporting our small businesses which provide thousands of San Franciscans with good paying jobs. To support families during this pandemic, I support providing another direct stimulus payment to individuals, as well as increased and expanded unemployment benefits. In addition, I would support the creation of more community gardens, co-ops, and farmers' markets within San Francisco, as well as support existing ones so they can grow.