

Candidate Hunger Action Challenge

Dylan Hirsch-Shell



Running for:
San Francisco Mayor

"I am committed to working alongside organizations like the San Francisco-Marin Food Bank to create a San Francisco where everyone has access to nutritious food and no one goes hungry."



What do you think are the root causes of hunger, and what do you see as the government's role in addressing them?

The root causes of hunger are complex and interconnected, but they often stem from systemic issues such as poverty, lack of affordable housing, unemployment, and inadequate access to healthcare and education. These factors create a cycle of disadvantage that makes it difficult for individuals and families to meet their basic needs, including access to nutritious food.

I believe the government has a moral obligation to address these root causes and ensure that everyone has the opportunity to thrive. This includes:

- Providing a robust social safety net: I support policies that provide a financial foundation for all San Franciscans, such as my proposal for a Universal Basic Income. This guaranteed income would alleviate poverty, reduce economic insecurity, and empower individuals and families to afford basic necessities, including food.
- Creating truly affordable housing: I am committed to building tens of thousands of units of Universal Social Housing, ensuring that everyone has access to safe, stable, and affordable housing. By addressing the housing affordability crisis, we can reduce the financial strain on families and free up resources for other essential needs, like food.
- Investing in education and job training programs: We need to provide pathways to good-paying jobs and ensure that all San Franciscans have the skills they need to succeed in the 21st-century economy. By creating economic opportunities, we can reduce poverty and food insecurity.

If elected, how would you ensure coordination between the multiple government departments that fund and administer food assistance programs?

I recognize the important work that the San Francisco Food Security Task Force (FSTF) has been doing for almost two decades to address food insecurity in our city. As Mayor, I will build upon their efforts by:

- Strengthening the FSTF: I will ensure that the FSTF has the resources and support it needs to effectively coordinate food assistance programs across different city departments. This includes providing adequate staffing, funding, and access to data.
- Improving Data Sharing and Collaboration: I will work to enhance data sharing and collaboration between city departments and community organizations, using technology to create a more centralized and efficient system for tracking food assistance programs, identifying service gaps, and allocating resources effectively.
- Streamlining Application and Enrollment Processes: I will prioritize simplifying and standardizing application and enrollment procedures for food assistance programs, reducing bureaucratic hurdles and making it easier for eligible individuals and families to access benefits.

By strengthening the FSTF, improving collaboration, and streamlining processes, we can create a more effective and equitable food assistance system that reaches those most in need.

Studies have shown food can be medicine. If elected, how do you plan to use your position to improve food-related health disparities?

I believe that access to nutritious food is essential for public health. To address food-related health disparities, I will:

- **Expand Access to Healthy Food Options:** Support programs that increase access to fresh produce and healthy foods in low-income neighborhoods, such as farmers' markets, community gardens, and healthy corner store initiatives.
- **Integrate Nutrition Education into Healthcare:** Promote programs that integrate nutrition counseling and education into healthcare settings, empowering individuals and families to make informed choices about their diet and health.
- **Address the Root Causes of Health Disparities:** My broader social justice platform, including my proposals for a Universal Basic Income and Universal Social Housing, will address the underlying factors that contribute to health disparities, such as poverty, lack of affordable housing, and economic insecurity.

The San Francisco-Marin Food Bank will be closing all Food Bank-run Pop-Up Pantries by June 2025 due to cuts in government pandemic funding. This program currently serves 11,400 households, 75% of which are estimated to lose access to free weekly groceries when the funding ends. If elected, what would you do to ensure that all San Franciscans have access to nutritious foods?

The closure of the Pop-Up Pantries program is a significant loss for our community, particularly for the thousands of households who rely on this vital resource. To ensure continued access to nutritious food, I will:

- **Prioritize Funding for Food Assistance:** I will work to restore funding for food assistance programs, including exploring options within the city budget, seeking state and federal support, and advocating for increased philanthropic investment.
- **Expand Partnerships with Community Organizations:** I will strengthen partnerships with organizations like the San Francisco-Marin Food Bank and its network of member agencies to expand the reach of existing food assistance programs and identify innovative ways to fill the gap left by the closure of the Pop-Up Pantries.
- **Address the Root Causes of Food Insecurity:** My broader platform, including my proposals for a Universal Basic Income and Universal Social Housing, will address the underlying economic and social factors that contribute to food insecurity, creating a more just and equitable city where everyone has the resources they need to thrive.

I am committed to working alongside organizations like the San Francisco-Marin Food Bank to create a San Francisco where everyone has access to nutritious food and no one goes hungry.