

## Candidate Hunger Action Challenge

# Autumn Looijen



Running for:  
**San Francisco Board of Supervisors, District 5**

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

Families are struggling financially in this expensive city. Growing up, my own family struggled whenever my father lost his job. We were lucky that my mom had a steady job... and though we ate a lot of potatoes, we never went hungry. The government should set up incentives to create jobs, and also provide food for people who would otherwise go hungry.

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

Food assistance agencies should meet regularly, sharing best practices and strategies for feeding those in need. We should judge all food assistance programs by the same metrics so we know what's working. And this information should be made public.

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

The Fillmore Safeway is slated to close right after I take office. I plan to help the community with food, banking, and pharmacy services while the site is empty, rezone the site for a grocery store, and create incentives to build affordable housing on top of that grocery store — quickly. This will also mean streamlining processes at Planning and DBI so construction can happen in a timely and predictable manner. I'd also exempt grocery stores from restrictions on chain stores.

In the meantime, I've connected local activists who want Black-owned groceries to return to the Fillmore with the appropriate people in OEWD to try to get that off the ground. Community grocery stores like this would be a huge benefit to the neighborhood.

These initiatives could be a template for addressing food deserts across the city.

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?

I'd work with our state representatives to expand Cal-Fresh payments, and look find private donors to fill the gap, while monitoring the families who use Pop-Up Pantries to see whether they're now going hungry.

We're facing an \$800m deficit over the next few years and I will look to ensure food security as much as possible in these challenging times.