

Candidate Hunger Action Challenge

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Running for:
San Francisco Board of Supervisors, District 5

"I will focus on public-private partnerships to leverage all resources available to help our city create long-term sustainable models for food access."



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

High cost of living, lack of affordable housing options, and systemic inequalities all contribute to hunger.

It is the government's responsibility to constituents to track these issues, identify demographics most impacted, and allocate resources and investments to ensure progress is made to support and uplift vulnerable communities being impacted most.

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

Ensure effective coordination between government departments requires collaboration and accountability. The SF Food Security Task Force did the important work of lobbying for a citywide report to be created to do exactly this — hold our departments accountable in ensuring equitable and affordable access to nutritious foods.

This is a salient issue in San Francisco District 5, as many neighborhoods in District 5, from the Tenderloin to the Fillmore, have become food deserts as we lose access to full-service grocery stores. This necessitates urgency for equitable access to food for our families, children, and seniors. The cause of this food insecurity is a lack of leadership from City Hall in building public-private partnerships to find sustainable models for food access. As the cofounder of 13 Fund, a community impact fund that has supported restaurant workers, and a Board Member of the Tenderloin Community Benefit District, I know how to partner with our communities to create solutions together.

As Supervisor, I will:

- Invest in Co-Ops for long-term food access: Push forward legislation and tax incentives to expand co-operative grocery stores - democratically controlled and member owned businesses to ensure community stability and guaranteed affordable food price
- Ensure pharmacy access in new co-ops: Bridge partnerships between co-ops and local pharmacies to ensure access to medicine needed for seniors and affected communities
- Expand farmers markets for short-term food access: Partner with farmers markets to implement expanded hours in empty lots throughout District 5, while long-term stores are rebuilt

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

To improve food-related health disparities, we must build more affordable and middle-income housing, as workers, nurses, teachers, and many young families cannot afford to live here. However, we are the slowest city to approve new buildings in the entire state. Further, the 2023 RAPID-SF survey reported that 30% of families with an average \$130k in household income were experiencing food insecurity. We must address our housing crisis to lower rents and make our city more affordable.

My vision for championing housing equity includes a concerted focus on both permitting reform and affirmatively building housing - affordable and middle income. We must tackle the bureaucracy holding us back, and I will advocate for initiatives from parallel permitting to technological investments to the reduction of discretionary permits to cut the time it takes to build housing in half.

Overall, we must make progress on both equity of values and equity of outcomes, and that requires making progress on our housing and food security goals so all communities can affordably and equitably remain in our city.

The San Francisco-Marín 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?

With 1 in 4 San Francisco residents are at risk of hunger, as mentioned previously, I will focus on public-private partnerships to leverage all resources available to help our city create long-term sustainable models for food access.

In the short-term, I will advocate for expanding farmers markets that accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits so residents have affordable access to fresh fruits, vegetables, and other healthy foods.