

## Candidate Hunger Action Challenge

# Jen Nossokoff



Running for:  
**San Francisco Board of Supervisors, District 1**

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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?

The root causes of hunger are deeply intertwined with economic inequality, housing insecurity, and systemic barriers to employment and education. In areas like the Richmond District, rising costs of living have outpaced wages, leaving many families unable to afford nutritious food. Additionally, vulnerable populations, such as seniors, immigrants, and low-wage workers, often face difficulties accessing food due to language barriers, social isolation, or lack of mobility.

The government's role should focus on creating policies that tackle these root causes. This includes ensuring a living wage, affordable housing, and accessible healthcare, as well as strengthening social safety nets like SNAP (CalFresh in California). Government must also invest in local food systems and support programs that directly serve communities in need. Expanding access to CalFresh, funding food pantries, and creating incentives for grocery stores to operate in underserved areas are all crucial actions.

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

As a proactive advocate for food security, I believe that coordination between government departments is critical to ensuring that no one in our city goes hungry. If elected, I will push for greater collaboration between city departments and local community-based organizations (CBOs), making sure that programs like CalFresh, senior meal services, and school meal initiatives are fully integrated and reach all who need them. I will advocate for expanding the work of the Food Security Task Force and the Reimagining Food Coordination Subcommittee, which are already working to streamline food programs across San Francisco, and push to implement their recommendations for a more centralized and efficient food distribution system .

In addition to advocating for greater government investment in food assistance programs, I will actively engage local businesses and individuals to be part of the solution. Through the Richmond Neighborhood Center's Home Delivered Goods program, I have seen firsthand how community engagement can make a profound impact on food security. By leveraging the resources of local grocery stores, restaurants, and farmers markets, I would work to create public-private partnerships that bring more fresh, nutritious food to our pantries and home delivery services. For example, I would propose initiatives like tax incentives for businesses that donate surplus food or provide discounts to food-insecure households.

Service leadership is at the core of my approach. I've been delivering groceries to homebound seniors for years, and I will continue to lead by example in office—ensuring that both government departments and local communities work hand-in-hand to solve food insecurity. My vision involves building stronger community networks, activating volunteer efforts, and encouraging every resident to play a role in addressing this critical issue. We have a shared responsibility to make sure that everyone in San Francisco, especially our seniors, families, and vulnerable neighbors, has access to healthy and nutritious food.

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

As a Physician Assistant, and if elected, the only member of the Board of Supervisors with a medical background, I know firsthand how much our healthcare system leans heavily on pharmacology, often sidelining the critical role nutrition plays in overall health. Western medicine's narrow focus on drugs as the primary form of treatment does a disservice to our community, especially when we know that food can be a powerful form of medicine. The connection between nutrition and health is undeniable, and it is essential that we integrate food as a part of public health.

I would advocate for expanding nutrition prescription programs, allowing healthcare providers to prescribe healthy foods that can be accessed through local pantries or farmers markets. Partnering with local health clinics in the Richmond District, we can ensure food-insecure residents receive the nutritional support they need. Furthermore, I would push for increased funding for programs like CalFresh Healthy Living, which provides both food and education on how to prepare nutritious meals. In neighborhoods like the Richmond, where culturally relevant nutrition education is key, working with local organizations like Self-Help for the Elderly and the Richmond Neighborhood Center can significantly reduce health disparities, particularly for managing chronic illnesses like diabetes and hypertension.

## 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 am deeply disappointed to learn about the closure of the San Francisco-Marin Food Bank's Pop-Up Pantries, which have served as a lifeline for thousands of households, including many vulnerable families in the Richmond District. The fact that 75% of these 11,400 households may lose access to free weekly groceries is not just heartbreaking—it is unacceptable. Access to nutritious food is a basic human right, and we cannot allow these essential services to disappear without a plan to support those in need.

If elected, I would immediately advocate for restoring funding to support these vital food programs. First, I would push for emergency budget allocations from the Board of Supervisors to bridge the funding gap. Re-engaging state and federal assistance would also be a priority, especially for programs that were boosted during the pandemic but have since been reduced. As we recover from the economic impacts of the pandemic, it is crucial that we don't leave behind those who are still struggling to put food on the table.

In addition to seeking government support, I would work to activate local businesses and residents to contribute directly to this cause. I envision expanding public-private partnerships, where grocery stores and restaurants can donate surplus food to local pantries or offer discounted groceries to low-income residents. I would also explore launching community food drives in collaboration with local schools, businesses, and neighborhood associations, ensuring that no family or senior in San Francisco falls through the cracks.

My years of volunteering with the Richmond Neighborhood Center's Home Delivered Groceries program have shown me the power of community involvement, and I would continue to model service leadership as a Supervisor. By bringing together government, businesses, and community members, we can prevent the closure of these crucial services and ensure that everyone has access to nutritious, culturally relevant food.

Ultimately, I believe that sustainable, long-term solutions are needed. This includes advocating for more support for food banks, streamlining food assistance programs like CalFresh, and continuing to work with local CBOs such as the Richmond Neighborhood Center and Self-Help for the Elderly, to ensure that food security remains a priority for our city.