

## Candidate Hunger Action Challenge

# Nelson Mei



Running for:  
**San Francisco Mayor**

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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?

Hunger is not just a symptom of poverty but a complex issue rooted in systemic inequality, economic instability, and the lack of access to essential resources. As your mayor, I will confront these root causes head-on, ensuring that no one in San Francisco has to choose between feeding their family and paying rent. By investing in job creation, promoting affordable housing, and reforming food distribution systems, we can bridge the gap between abundance and need. I will work to empower small businesses and local farms, ensuring that fresh, nutritious food is accessible to all our residents, not just those who can afford it.

The government has a moral obligation to fight hunger and ensure food security for everyone. Under my leadership, San Francisco will take bold steps to expand social safety nets, improve access to essential resources, and reduce food waste. I will advocate for sustainable farming practices, ensuring our city adapts to climate change while continuing to provide for our communities. By addressing hunger at its core, we will not only create a healthier, stronger city but also restore dignity to every resident. Together, we can build a San Francisco where no one goes to bed hungry.

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

If elected, I will prioritize creating a streamlined, cohesive approach to managing food assistance programs across all relevant government departments. First, I will establish an interdepartmental task force dedicated to food security, bringing together representatives from agencies like public health, social services, housing, and economic development. This task force will meet regularly to ensure that each department is aligned in its efforts, sharing data, resources, and strategies to maximize the effectiveness of food assistance programs. By fostering open communication and clear accountability, we can eliminate redundancies, fill gaps, and improve access to services for those in need.

Additionally, I will leverage technology to improve the coordination of services, integrating platforms where departments can share real-time information about program funding, eligibility, and utilization. By centralizing data, we can identify trends and respond quickly to any inefficiencies or emerging challenges. Furthermore, I will work closely with community organizations and nonprofits that are on the ground, ensuring that government programs complement their efforts rather than duplicate them. This comprehensive, coordinated approach will make sure that every dollar spent on food assistance is used efficiently and reaches those who need it most.

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

If elected, I will prioritize tackling food-related health disparities by expanding access to nutritious, affordable food in underserved communities. I will partner with local farmers, healthcare providers, and community organizations to provide fresh produce and even integrate food prescriptions into healthcare programs, ensuring that residents with diet-related conditions receive the healthy food they need. Through educational initiatives, we will empower families to make healthier choices, creating a stronger, healthier San Francisco for everyone.

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?

If elected, I will work closely with both the state and federal government to secure additional funding to ensure that no San Franciscan loses access to nutritious food. I will advocate for increased support for food assistance programs, emphasizing the critical need to sustain services like the Pop-Up Pantries that serve thousands of households. By partnering with state and federal agencies, as well as leveraging local resources and private sector collaboration, we can protect our most vulnerable residents from food insecurity and build a long-term, sustainable safety net for all.