

San Francisco
Board of Supervisors
**Food Security
Task Force**

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Press Release

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Despite strong response to hunger, demand is growing for food programs

SAN FRANCISCO, CA December 8, 2010 In spite of a strong and growing network of food programs and the City's efforts to end hunger, the economic downturn has left many San Franciscans struggling to put food on the table this holiday season.

A report released today by the San Francisco Food Security Task Force reinforces the need to recommit ourselves to continue improving the food assistance safety net for all San Franciscans. The report highlights success stories in San Francisco's work to end hunger including:

- San Francisco's Food Stamp program now offers an online application process and has seen a fourfold increase in applications in recent months and a 60% increase in the number of food stamp households with children;
- Since 2008, San Francisco's free meal programs have increased the number of meals they serve on a daily basis – some by over 22%;
- A public/private partnership has implemented a successful free grocery delivery program for homebound seniors;
- Alemany Farmers Market partnered to offer an incentive program to increase food stamp recipients' ability to purchase fresh produce from local farmers.

The report argues that because of the high cost of living in San Francisco, federal poverty guidelines do not accurately demonstrate need. Because of this, many residents who earn too much to receive federal benefits nevertheless need food assistance. The report also highlights the growing demand for nutrition programs. For example, the demand for home delivered meals for seniors and the disabled continues to exceed allotted funds. Task Force member Deloris McGee from the Community Living Campaign commented, "There are seniors who are 89 years old wanting to get on our [home delivery pantry] program because their asthma medication is costing them \$200.00 a month. If they pay for medication then they are not able to pay for food. They aren't able to stand in line at a food pantry, and need extra assistance to ensure they have food".

The Task Force recommendations build on the significant work already accomplished including:

- Maintain adequate staffing and improved application processes for food assistance programs;
- Support senior and disabled adult nutrition programs and community based food programs;
- Support improved nutrition in free and low cost meal programs;
- Continue to prioritize affordable housing, job creation, training and living wages;
- Advocate for a federal poverty measure that adjusts for regional costs of living;
- Promote public/private collaborations and sharing of resources.

Task Force Chair, Gail Priestley from St. Anthony Foundation added "Addressing hunger and improving access to healthy food for all takes a strong partnership between the public and private sector. We encourage City agencies give nutrition and food security top priority, and ask all San Franciscans to support local food assistance programs, to join in advocacy efforts and to educate themselves about hunger."

The Food Security Task Force (FSTF) was established in 2005 and includes City agencies and community based organizations. The Task Force was recently profiled in the US Conference of Mayor's report "Strategies to Combat Childhood Hunger in Four U.S. Cities: Case Studies of Boston, New Haven, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C."

The FSTF report is available online at: www.sffood.org
The US Conference of Mayor's report is available at: www.usmayors.org

