# Workshop #1: Addressing Food Insecurity and Available Resources

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- **Frequently asked questions**
San Mateo County Human Services Agency

Contact Information:
- Phone: 1 (800) 223-8383
- E-mail: hsa_calfreshoutreach@smcgov.org
- Webpage: https://www.smcgov.org/hsa
- Representatives are available Monday through Friday from 8am – 5pm
- Automatic case information is available 24 hours a day 7 days a week in the system

Eligibility:
- Low-income individuals and families; this income is dependent on household size and monthly expenses
- Individuals and families living in San Mateo County can apply with the San Mateo County Human Services Agency, but this program is available statewide
- Someone in the household must be a U.S. citizen or legal resident

Overview of eligibility criteria:
- Household composition – people who buy and prepare food together, for example, if there are two families who share a home, but buy and prepare separately then only one family is evaluated on the form
- Identity – verify people, this can be a driver's license or a document with photo ID
- Residence in San Mateo County – can be obtained through a letter where address appears (e.g., electricity bill, medical bill, etc.)
- Social Security Numbers – asked to find out if people who have a social security number can qualify for benefits
- Immigration status or citizenship – see what legal status they have
- Income(s) – verify or check the monthly income of the person applying, this can be done with check stubs or written and signed letter from the person who is applying

Available Resources:
- CalFresh (known at the federal level as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or SNAP): a nutrition program that helps low-income individuals and/or families purchase healthy foods
  - Monthly financial assistance with a debit card known as the EBT card or food stamps
  - Having CalFresh maintains food security in low-income individuals and/or families, can help individuals and/or families purchase nutritious foods including fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, low-fat protein, and more
**Additional Information:**

**Where to register for CalFresh:**

- You can go in person to a County Human Services Agency (HSA) office. Currently, the Belmont, Redwood City, Daly City, and South San Francisco offices are open for limited services. Hours: 8am – 12pm and 1pm – 5pm
- Complete request by phone: 1 (800) 223-8383
- Submit request online: [www.benefitscalwin.org](http://www.benefitscalwin.org) the [www.GetCalfresh.org](http://www.GetCalfresh.org)
- Mail application: 460 Harbor Blvd. Building C, Belmont, CA 94002
- Fax request: (650) 620-9732

**The process can take up to 30 days**

1. The application is submitted and has an initial evaluation
2. An interview is done in person or by phone (this is only for CalFresh); because of the COVID-19 pandemic everything is being done by phone, the number that appears in the application will be called to complete the interview
3. Review or follow-up through a letter sent to the client asking for some documents necessary to verify certain things (for example, household income)
4. The caseworker makes a final determination of eligibility, and the client is given a notice of action – this may be a letter approving or rejecting the application.
   - If approved this letter will have information about when your benefits begin and end, also how much you will receive monthly
   - If it is not approved the letter will have information on why not

**Places that accept the EBT card**

- Amazon, Trader Joes, Costco, Walmart and more
- Farmers markets via Market Match
  - Market Match gives additional funds to a buyer who uses their benefits to buy at the farmers' market, this means that if you use $10 of your EBT card at a farmer's market then CalFresh will give you an additional $10 to use on more fresh produce
  - You can find farmers markets at the following link: [https://marketmatch.org/about/](https://marketmatch.org/about/)
- To see all the places that accept the card in your area, enter your zip code at this link: [https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/retailer-locator](https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/retailer-locator)

**Immigrant Benefits**

- Receiving CalFresh for qualified family members will not put undocumented family members at risk of public charge. For more information on public charge visit: [https://keepyourbenefits.org/es/na/](https://keepyourbenefits.org/es/na/)
- If you are receiving CalFresh, you can request an official Verification of Benefits letter for the Citizenship Waiver
- CalFresh will not share your information with ICE/Immigration and Customs Enforcement
- You can still visit local pantries while receiving CalFresh benefits
You may also qualify for discounts with PG&E (through the CARE program), phone, museums, zoos, and national parks. For more information visit:

**Second Harvest of Silicon Valley**

**Contact Information:**

Maria Huerta
- Phone: (408) 266-8866 ext. 448
- E-mail: mhuerta@shfb.org

Food Connection Hotline
- Phone: 1-800-984-3663
- Webpage: https://www.shfb.org/es/
- Request a call by completing the form found on the following link: https://form.jotform.com/70614816451959 if needed in another language please select from the following:
  - Spanish: https://form.jotform.com/20247610375957
  - Vietnamese: https://form.jotform.com/202447482584966
  - Chinese: https://form.jotform.com/202448146934963
  - Tagalog: https://form.jotform.com/202448611946963

**Eligibility:**

- Any person living in or a resident of Santa Clara or San Mateo County
- People in need of food, including families tried to make ends meet, seniors on a fixed income, college students juggling tuition and housing, unhoused community members
- Undocumented immigrants are also eligible

**Available Resources:**

- Free food resources:
  - More than 450 sites for nutritious food, including more than 130 self-service sites which means they take the boxes directly to your car
- Assistance filling out Cal Fresh applications available. Assistance in filling out the SAR-7 and re-determination is also available.
- Food Delivery Program:
  - Available to disabled and homebound clients who do not have someone who can pick up food for them
- Hot meals:
  - Hot prepared meals for people who don't have a kitchen or people who can't prepare food, this is available at 30 locations in Santa Clara or San Mateo County
Nutrition Center:
- Offers recipes, nutrition tips, and food safety information
  - https://www.shfb.org/es/nutrition-center/

Food Connection Hotline:
- For assistance connecting to meal programs, they have 18 bilingual employees who can assist you.
  - For help call 1 (800) 984-3663 Monday through Friday from 8am – 5pm
  - To request a call from one of the workers please complete this form:
    - https://form.jotform.com/202447610375957
  - You can use the following link to find free food near you: https://www.shfb.org/es/get-food/

Summer meals for children under 18:
- List of places in the following link: https://www.shfb.org/es/mealsforkids/?c_src=dm-owned&c_src2=btn-hero

Additional Information:
- 50% of the food items clients receive are fresh produce and 25% are lactose and protein products

Sunnyvale Community Services

Contact Information:
- Phone: (408) 738-4321
- E-mail: info@svcommunityservices.org
- Webpage: https://svcommunityservices.org/
- Address: 1160 Kern Avenue Sunnyvale, CA 94085
- Hours: Monday through Friday 9am – 12pm and 12:30pm – 4pm

Eligibility:
- Proof of residence in Sunnyvale (for example, you can use your PG&E bill)
- Identification:
  - 18 years or older: driver's license or any other identification
  - Under 18: birth certificate, vaccination card, school registration card, or health insurance
- Income requirements, we usually rely on 80% of Sunnyvale's median income (meaning a family of 4 can have an income of $112,000 and still be eligible)

Available Resources:
- Food program with delivery directly to the customer's car/vehicle:
  - 4 times a month the customer can come, and we take food to their cars without them having to get out of their cars
Food is supplemental, not designed to support a family for an entire month, but a family is eligible to come receive produce 2 times a month and can come 1 time a month to receive other groceries.

Children’s Summer Nutrition Program:
- For children who receive free or reduced-price lunch during the school year
- Designed to provide food while children do not receive school lunches

Back to School program:
- Delivery of school supplies and a $100 gift card to Target to purchase more supplies needed to return to school

Holiday Cheer:
- Gift cards in November and December and food to celebrate the holidays
- Gifts for holidays depending on the size of the family

Additional Information:
- To register you must fill out 2 forms at the Sunnyvale Community Services office. No appointment is needed to go to the office
- The organization has two goals: (1) to prevent homelessness, and (2) to prevent hunger or food insecurity
- Financial Support Program:
  - Program designed for people needing rental assistance, rental deposit, help paying utility bills, or other essential needs
  - Clients needing financial support must go to the office and meet with a caseworker who will collect any information and will help them plan a budget for the future
  - Some documents necessary may be rental agreement, verification of monthly income, photo ID, eviction notice, etc.
  - For more information about this program call, email, or visit the office

Valley Verde

Contact Information:
- Phone: (408) 831-1481 or (408) 6737338
- E-mail: info@valleyverde.org or rita@valleyverde.org
- Webpage: https://www.valleyverde.org

Eligibility:
- Resident of San José
- Must attend monthly workshops
- Commit to picking up your gardening materials
- 2-hour volunteer work at the Valley Verde site
- Quarterly Valley Verde visits to help your garden in case of pest or other problems

Available Resources:
**Free shared gardening program:**
- Assists low-income families in gardening and provides materials for gardening at home
- Applications for 2023 are open to San Jose residents
  - You can make your request at the following link: [https://forms.gle/jw2Py6VtGyBFw1f66](https://forms.gle/jw2Py6VtGyBFw1f66)

**We work in partnership with schools:**
- First year: essential workshops plus materials
- Second and third year: advanced workshops

**Additional Information:**
- For San Mateo County residents, Fresh Approach is a similar program
  - [https://www.freshapproach.org/collectiveroots/](https://www.freshapproach.org/collectiveroots/)
- You can use the EBT card to buy vegetable plants, autumn plants will be available in August

**Veggielution**

**Contact Information:**
- Phone: (408) 753-6705
- E-mail: info@veggielution.org
- Webpage: [https://veggielution.org](https://veggielution.org)
- Locations:
  - Veggielution: 647 S King Rd, San Jose
    - Hours: Saturday 10am – 2pm
  - SoFA Pocket Park: 540 S 1st St, San Jose
    - Hours Thursday 3pm – 6pm

**Eligibility:**
- Resident of San Jose

**Available Resources:**
- Environmental education:
  - Takes place in the Youth Garden on Saturdays from 10am – 12:30pm
  - On the 1st Saturday of the month there are opportunities for young teenagers, and they can also join as volunteers
  - Includes family activities
- Community Engagement
  - 1st Saturday of each month
  - You can participate in activates such as harvesting and attending cooking classes (arrive before 10am to check in)
- Eastside Connect
  - Distribution of local and fresh food weekly
  - To be added to the waiting list, please send an email to info@veggielution.org
Vegetable stand:
- Accepts cash, debit, credit, and EBT
- Offers fresh pesticide-free, organically harvested, freshly cut farm-fresh produce

**Additional Information**
- Assistance filling out CalFresh applications available. Please email solandyi@veggielution.org for more information.

### Frequently asked questions

1. If there was a person or family who says, "I'm worried about the public load, have I heard that if I apply CalFresh or other resources I'm going to have to pay them later," how should we answer?

   ⇒ Don't worry. Apply for both food assistance and health insurance benefits. It's a myth that one must repay it. The federal government does not consider CalFresh as part of the public charge decision; therefore, receiving this benefit does not hurt your chances of getting a green card or becoming a US Citizen. All information we collect about people and the home is confidential and not shared with other agencies.

2. Is there an age requirement for the family member filling out a CalFresh application?

   ⇒ The family member must be 18 years old to fill out the application for the family. Minors can be counted with their parent up to age 22 under CalFresh, afterwards they need to file a separate form.

3. How long can a person receive CalFresh benefits?

   ⇒ You can receive benefits every year. All applicants must fill out forms every 6 months and undergo redetermination annually to continue receiving CalFresh.

4. What happens if the person does not have an income (e.g., is an elder or someone over the age of 65), how can they apply for CalFresh benefits?

   ⇒ People who have no income can still apply. There is a form (C163) where they can declare that they have no income.

5. If in the family there are children or youth (minors under 18) with a social security number, but the parents do not have a legal status in the US, can the family still qualify for CalFresh benefits?

   ⇒ Yes, a household can receive CalFresh if at least one person (including children) has a U.S. citizen or a permanent resident (has a green card). Beneficiaries of DACA or TPS (Temporary Protected Status) do not qualify.

6. Are income requirements for CalFresh the same for students?
7. Are people who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) eligible for CalFresh?

- Effective June 1st, 2019, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients are eligible for CalFresh.

8. Is Veggielution’s food sovereignty program a free program where you offer meals and help families and the community?

- It is a vegetable food box that is given weekly. There is a currently a long waiting list, and we are in the process of expanding the program. Therefore, we recommend that you signup. To qualify you need to be low-income, not be eligible for federal programs/aid, OR simply need food. Not a lot of information/verification is asked from the clients.

9. What is the relationship between EBT (also known as food stamps) and the cards sent by school districts and school directly to our homes? And are they still giving those cards in schools or is that program no longer active?

- These are different programs. The Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) card sent by school districts was given to children. A child may have received P-EBT if they qualified for free or reduced-price meals at school. Please note using P-EBT/the school issued cards, will not hurt your immigration status, and does not create public charge. P-EBT is almost the same as a regular EBY, but these are different programs. They approved a third iteration of this program, so those will start again soon. More information available at: https://www.cdss.ca.gov/home/pandemic-ebt.

10. Which organizations can help individuals and families complete the recertification reports or the SAR-7 for CalFresh?

- The San Mateo County Human Services agency can give presentation at organizations or to the community explaining how to do this. Second Harvest of Silicon Valley can help the community with recertification and the SAR-7. Veggielution currently cannot provide this service, but can help with the initial application.

11. What income requirements make individuals or families qualify for CalFresh benefits? Depending on the size of the household, what is the maximum income that family can receive monthly?

- The income qualifications table is publicly available and can be accessed at the following link: https://www.smcgov.org/hsa/calfresh-eligibility.