

Food Access: Collective Community (care) Plan

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To increase the understanding of impact and accessibility to services and resources for food and nutritionally insecure individuals; 211 San Diego and Community Information Exchange (CIE) in partnership with:

Sheri Briggs, *Bridge of Hope*

Janice Luna Reynoso, *Mundo Gardens*

Claire Groebener, *Olivewood Gardens & Learning Center*

Edna Waller, *Home Start*

Alma Robles-Duran, *Bonita Family Resource Center*

Kristine Stensberg, *Jewish Family Services of San Diego*

Naomi Nolte-Carroll, *American Red Cross (WIC)*

To collaboratively worked together to identify successes, opportunities, challenges and proposed recommendations for supporting people who are food insecure and/or are experiencing hardship attaining nutritional programming/resources:

- From a system/programmatic lens, discussing the provider/agency journey of providing services/programming to nutritionally & food insecure individuals and families
- From a client/lived experience perspective through surveys directly informed by community members who may be directly impacted
- Safety net programs reviewed the CalFresh Community Calendar pilot
- Lastly, this group also identified challenges and systemic barriers, mapped out coordinated care efforts internally/externally, and provided recommendations related to the County of San Diego

The following were completed collaboratively to identify and inform proposed recommendation/solutions:

- 1 Evaluating the 211SD/CIE Framework for Food & Nutrition with service providers and agency related sectors who currently provide resources and access to food & nutritional resources.

- 2 Collected surveys on lived experience (client/community members) to understand and have insight into how resources/programs are accessed and what they want providers to specifically know.
- 3 Created this document to not only give insight into journey of providing/accessing resources but to also gather agreement from all stakeholders regarding proposed recommendations in an effort to bridge the collaborative efforts among different sectors.
- 4 Provided feedback on opportunities to integrate new data sets, to promote even greater coordinated care efforts, among CIE Network Providers.

Understanding the Journey of Food & Nutritional Access

In San Diego, there are many providers that support food & nutritional insecure individuals, including across multiple sectors and community/agency providers. In the current state, there are varying ways in how services, programs, and coordinated care efforts can connect a client/community member to direct support.

Additionally, due to the current barriers and addressing gaps impacting food & nutritionally insecure individuals and families, this report provides guidance on how there could be an even greater leveraging of the community, CIE infrastructure and existing state funded initiatives, to further the direct link to connectivity of care, resources, and supportive services that uplift people who need help.



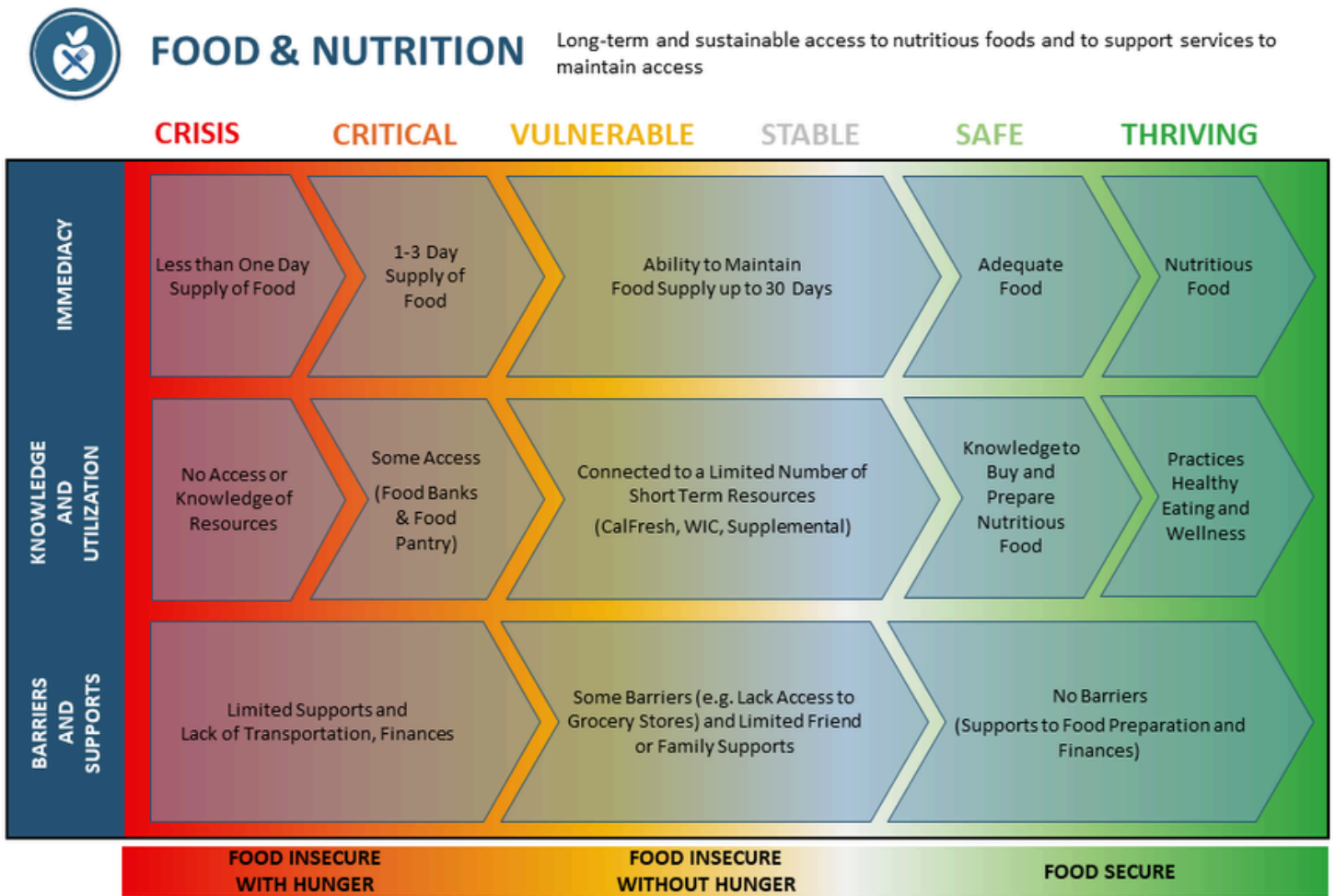
"The help that Cal-Fresh provides makes a big difference in my life. So, I just want to say thank you."

Stakeholder Input:

The following strategies were used to gather input from all stakeholders:

- CIE and providers/agencies in San Diego (BOH, MG, OGLC, HS, BFRC, JFSSD, and ARC-WIC) attended all workgroup meetings and provided input in all areas related to: systems mapping, identifying challenges & barriers, explored current & future collaborative efforts, posed thoughtful questions, supported the crafting of questions for lived experience input and collectively proposed recommendations.
- Lived Experience/client perspective surveys were collected via:
 - 1 In-person interviews were conducted by case managers and community support providers
 - 2 Online survey form accessible via link or QR code

- The following 211 SD/CIE Food & Nutrition assessment chart was used for the group to better articulate needs & identification for improved efforts:



IN COLLABORATION WITH:



Food Banks	Distributes to charities/organization
Food Pantries	Distributes to individuals and families in need
Hot or Congregate Meals	Meals that are prepared and served hot to eat at the location
Home Delivered Meals	Meals prepared and delivered to older adults, individuals with disabilities or those who are bed-ridden due to illness
Public Assistance Programs	Government or related programs to financially support food
Healthy Eating	Medical or educational programs that help individuals and families eat well
Weight Management	Classes that focus on healthy eating, behavioral modification and exercise.

Identification of Challenges/Opportunities

The various stakeholders shared varying levels of challenges and provided insight on the access points throughout processes that could create new opportunities and connection to programs/resources, for food & nutritionally insecure individuals and families.

Provider/Agency Experience

1 Challenges/Barriers

- “Naming the harm caused” and the structural racism/red lined districts by local city officials/leadership and creating a collective of action-oriented steps to support and repair. “Switching from blame to accountability” and acknowledging that change is necessary to grow.
- Equity in the food system- the ability for individuals/families preparing and growing their own food is limited especially in parts of the County of San Diego that are considered “food deserts” in San Diego County and specific to National City & Southeast San Diego.
- Tangible/hard copy resources (i.e. Feeding SD’s list of resources) are helpful for people who don’t have access to technological tools/internet access.



“Lugares donde se comparte información de los eventos en la comunidad, mucha gente no tiene acceso a tecnología y la comunidad de la tercera edad es más complicado acaezar.”

- Lack of “warm” hand-offs or links to people with greater access of food systems.
- Creation of more community gardens- physical challenge/barriers. Takes years of advocacy
- Sometimes land is owned by provide owners, and it is hard to contact them. Lack of investment or care for nutritious food. Priority to food chains/fast food. City/county levels there’s an opportunity for actionable planning around health.
- Challenges to get support for small businesses providing healthy options in the community, to be able to maintain.

2 Organizational Mapping

- Community based organizations support with overall education and with the end goal of ensuring individuals and families don’t “go to sleep without food.”

- Workshops are held with topic experts (i.e. Kitchenistas group at Olivewood Gardens) around supports and resources available to community members (i.e. weekly produce stand and monthly Healthy Culturas Coalition). This information is shared through; “word of mouth”, social media posts, and/or newsletters.
- Partnerships among CBOs: Project New Village and the Mobile Farmer’s Market providing free/fresh local & low-cost produce. Mundo Gardens hosting, Free Fish to Families in partnership with SD Fisherman’s Working Group, providing free gourmet meals to families in National City & flood disaster communities.

3 External Mapping

- Related to recent disaster crisis: emergency food related resources need to be available in the parts of the county most impact with access to transportation
- Community referrals to outside organizations are tricky to navigate as there may be different requirements needed. If a resource is not available, clients are referred to 211 San Diego
- Food/Nutritional access educational reach is in K-12 space for students/families

Client/Lived Experience

1 Reasons for Accessing Support

- For health reasons (i.e. obesity)/family history of health
- Eat healthier meals & learning to prep other types of food (outside of cultural norms)
- Help with family support system & community building
- CalFresh support doesn’t meet the full need of an individual or family
- Financial limitations (limited income)
- Saving money for higher educational opportunities
- Housing insecurity leading to less access to food support/systems
- Inflation/increase in cost of food & housing
- Pandemic relief
- Unemployment (no income)



“He perdido horas en el trabajo y eso a sido algo que ha dañado en mi casa. La renta elevada, el costo de al comida es fuerte.”
-
My work hours were reduced & that has been damaging in my home. With increasing rent, the cost of food is a tough hit.

“Being a college and broke student, financially independent from my parents, it has been hard adjusting.”



“I need to eat to live!!”

2 Challenges/Barriers

- 28 survey participants out of 98 shared that they live 0.5-10 miles from a food source or nutritional access point
- Specific challenges called out with public transportation and the ability to maintain freshness if traveling far distances. Some clients/people with lived experience stated that it can take 1 to 3 hours of travel time to pick-up/drop-off
- Food quality varies at different food distributions (i.e. sometimes food is expired)
- Challenge with finding quality food or at a reduced cost, in immediate area of residence so, traveling by car/public transport is necessary
- Language barriers can impede accessibility at food distribution sites
- Food pantries and Cal-Fresh locations are helpful supplements to accessibility
- Finding consistent food resources is difficult
- Not enough information available to the general public of what is available (outside of technological updates)
- Connection building with neighbors' word of mouth" among community members helps people receive information
- Not enough organic food options available at an affordable cost
- Exclusionary eligibility criteria:

a	For undocumented individuals, it is harder to access food systems/resources like CalFresh as they do not qualify for this specific resource
b	The amount of proof needed to verify needs can be overwhelming and exhausting
c	Some don't qualify for social based food programs based on gross income but rising cost/inflation is making it harder to purchase nutritional food

Zip codes visited for access to nutritional & food related resources

National City 91950
 City Heights 92105
 Serra Mesa 92123
 Mira Mesa 92126
 Rolando 92115
 Logan Heights 92113
 North Park 92104
 Southwest Chula Vista 91911 & Chula Vista 91909, 91910, 91912
 Skyline 92114
 Bonita 91902

Proposed Recommendations

Through these exploratory conversations and the collection of surveys informed by clients/people with lived experience, **2-1-1 San Diego** and the **Community Information Exchange**, in partnership with; **Bridge of Hope SD, Mundo Gardens, Olivewood Gardens & Learning Center, Home Start, Bonita Family Resource Center, Jewish Family Services of San Diego, and American Red Cross (WIC)** have drafted the following recommendations:

1. The promotion and investment in more green spaces and community gardens so community members can gain access to nutritional food resources in their immediate area of residence.
2. Destigmatizing accessing food & nutritional resources/programming to ensure clients/people with lived experience can maintain their dignity
3. More cultivation and access to native/cultural food resource

“My community does not have African food.”

4. Having a direct connection to community-based organization(s) helps fill the gaps and bridge the link of access to clients/community members/people with lived experience
5. Hosting programming/access during non-traditional hours (evening and weekend hours) is helpful for people who work during traditional business hours
6. Continue hosting resource fairs as it is helpful to people in knowing what resources are available and by whom
7. More programming on public safety & financial literacy
8. Free classes to learn how to grow fresh foods or how to make healthier meals

“healthy cooking classes on a budget!”

9. More Farmer's Markets in non-traditional zip codes & not creating barriers for people by having them “trade in” CalFresh benefits for coins in order to access food, *“seems humiliating.”*
10. Access to free transportation opportunities in order to reach destination with food and nutritional resources
11. More Food distribution sites and food pantries in 92115 (Rolando) that offer more vegetables and fresh fruits
12. Free or at a reduced cost: movement classes like Yoga & Tai-Chi in the community paired with food distribution/access to nutritional programming
13. Considerations for CBO's to create a telephone “tree” for mass texts/alerts of what is available in the community in real-time
14. More halal food and nutritional programming

Considerations

The Collective Community (care) Plan is to inform providers and agency sectors who uplift/support coordinated care efforts in San Diego County. The recommendations proposed will help to utilize; lessons learned, insight into journey of providing/receiving care & services, and innovatively rethinking the way coordination could be maximized.

The overarching goal of providing access to programs/services is with a shared understanding of bridging the gap and creating a pathway to greater access of care, to individuals & families needing access to food & nutritional resources. Additionally, there are many other challenges that cannot be solved through these siloed efforts alone. However, this is a first step in understanding how systems map within/externally but also seeking to come up with solutions in improving systems of care and reach.

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