

Prepared Meals Delivery Program Proposal



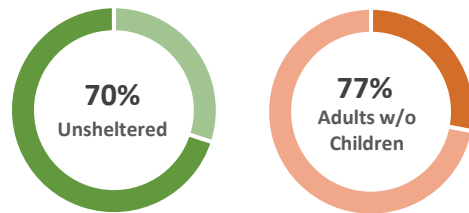
Creating and Funding Meal Services for the Unhoused and Food Insecure



The “Prepared Meals Delivery Program” Proposal

This proposed statewide program will support local accessible meal programs for the unhoused. It uses a restaurant-based accessible meal model to distribute prepared meals directly to unhoused encampments, in partnership with community groups currently providing the unhoused with services, including Project Roomkey. Total funding requested is \$6 million State General Fund (GF) annually for 4 years.

UNHOUSED DEMOGRAPHICS



Sources: 2022 Alameda County PIT Count; California Budget & Policy Center

Proposed Program Criteria

- Direct distribution of meals to encampments, including homeless individuals residing at Project Roomkey,
- CalFresh enrollment assistance
- Partnership with nonprofit housing organizations and government agencies
- One standard per-meal price paid to participating restaurants at \$12 per meal, exclusive of delivery costs
- Equitable meal funding to restaurants preparing meals
- Preference for restaurant surcharge model that provides ongoing funding for meal programs
- Maximum state funding per county based on unhoused population size as a percent of total funding

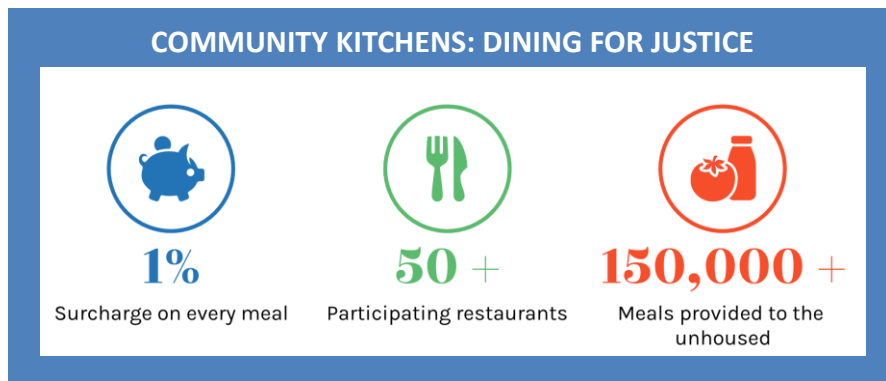
Meal Equity and Housing Outreach

The majority of California's unhoused population are unsheltered adults between the ages of 25-60. The free congregate meal programs (aka “soup kitchens”) available to them are inaccessible and tend to increase marginalization of the unhoused. The CalFresh Restaurant Meals Program (RMP) is similarly limited, providing access to few meals other than fast food in many counties. Government funding for prepared meals is focused on youth and senior meal programs, for which the majority of the unhoused are ineligible.

Meal provision is a critical tool in nurturing trust and collaborative partnership with the unhoused. Supportive services with free meal programs have proven to be effective at establishing trust with the unhoused community; building this rapport is essential for housing outreach teams to effectively offer safe, suitable housing options. The Prepared Meals Delivery Program would provide counties with resources to enhance their work with community groups currently providing services with the unhoused, and help ensure that committed resources contribute to lasting food security and a path to stable, permanent housing.

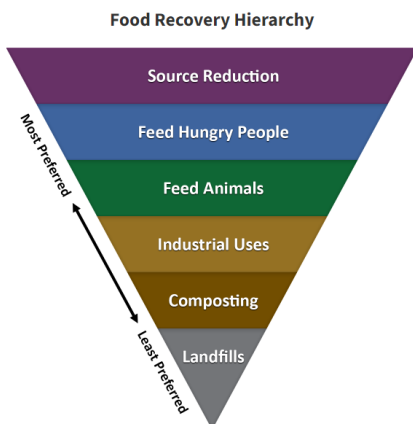
The Restaurant-Based Model

The proposal is based on prior experience with prepared meal programs during the COVID-19 pandemic, during which local restaurants participated in feeding and supporting, and were in turn supported by, their communities. By bringing together the restaurant community, local businesses can build a similar model that provides sustainable funding to meal programs for the unhoused. This model is currently being proven by the success of the Oakland-based Community Kitchens' Dining for Justice initiative, in which participating restaurants contribute directly towards feeding the unhoused.



Reducing Food Waste

According to the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), approximately 30-40 percent of the food supply is wasted in the United States and 6 million tons of food is wasted in California, costing approximately \$218 billion. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s Food Recovery Hierarchy prioritizes actions organizations can take to prevent and reduce food waste and identifies the redistribution of food to feed individuals and families who are food insecure as the second tier in the Hierarchy. Our proposal will aid in reducing food waste, food insecurity, and the billions of dollars spent on wasted food.



Source: United States Environmental Protection Agency

References:

- 2002 Alameda County PIT Count: homelessness.acgov.org/data
- California Budget & Policy Center: calbudgetcenter.org/resources/who-is-experiencing-homelessness-in-california/
- Community Kitchens Statistics: ckoakland.org
- CDFA Food Recovery Hierarchy: epa.gov/sustainable-management-food/food-recovery-hierarchy