

Food Insecurity

Response & Advocacy of the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano

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Manages the Advocacy Team at the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano and directs local, state and federal policy agenda & advocacy efforts for both Contra Costa and Solano counties

Agenda:

- ❖ What we do at the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano
- ❖ Hunger is real: Data
- ❖ What is Food Insecurity
- ❖ Visuals
- ❖ COVID-19 and Hunger
- ❖ Advocacy
- ❖ Call to Action: Be an advocate

Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano

- ❖ Operating since 1975
- ❖ Stores and distributes donated and purchased perishable and non-perishable food directly to members at community sites and through our agencies
- **THANK YOU FOR YOUR VIRTUAL FOOD DRIVE EFFORTS!**
- ❖ 1,000 volunteers/monthly, 80+ staff, truck fleet and two warehouses over 70,000 sq. feet
- ❖ For every \$1 donated, the FBCCS provides enough food for two meals

Facts about our service area (pre-COVID-19)

- ❖ 1 in every 8 people within Contra Costa and Solano relied on the Food Bank for emergency and supplemental food
- ❖ ~182,000 people in Contra Costa and Solano were food-insecure (pre-COVID-19)

To meet this need...

- ❖ Offer programs 7 days a week
- ❖ Partner with ~200 non-profit agencies
- ❖ Distributed over 39 million pounds of food in 2020
- ❖ Coordinate over 100k volunteer hours/year
- ❖ Serve $\frac{1}{8}$ residents
- ❖ $\frac{1}{4}$ recipients are children

Our Work Beyond Food Distributions

- ❖ 60+% of food distributed is fresh produce
- ❖ Low-sodium and reduced sugar options
- ❖ Follow “highest industry standards” for food safety/audits
- ❖ Grocery Recovery, reduce food waste
 - 120 retailers (Safeway, Whole Foods, Walgreens, etc)
- ❖ Legislative Advocacy strives for long-term solutions
 - Speaker Series, Community Advisory Panel
- ❖ Cal Fresh Eligibility and application assistance

Since COVID-19 has begun...

- ❖ We are serving 65% more people than we were prior to the pandemic
 - Approx. 250,000+ people a month
- ❖ Created Emergency Supplemental Food Boxes
 - Boxing help from the National Guard
- ❖ Implemented drive-thru food distributions

“The state of being without **reliable** access to a **sufficient** quantity of **affordable, nutritious** food”

More than 800 million people live everyday with **hunger** or **food insecurity** as their constant companion
-Feeding America

WHAT IS FOOD INSECURITY?

**Food Insecurity: Contra Costa County
13.4% and Solano County 15.4%**

(projected COVID-19 data)

Hunger vs. Food Insecurity

-Hunger: personal, physical sensation of discomfort

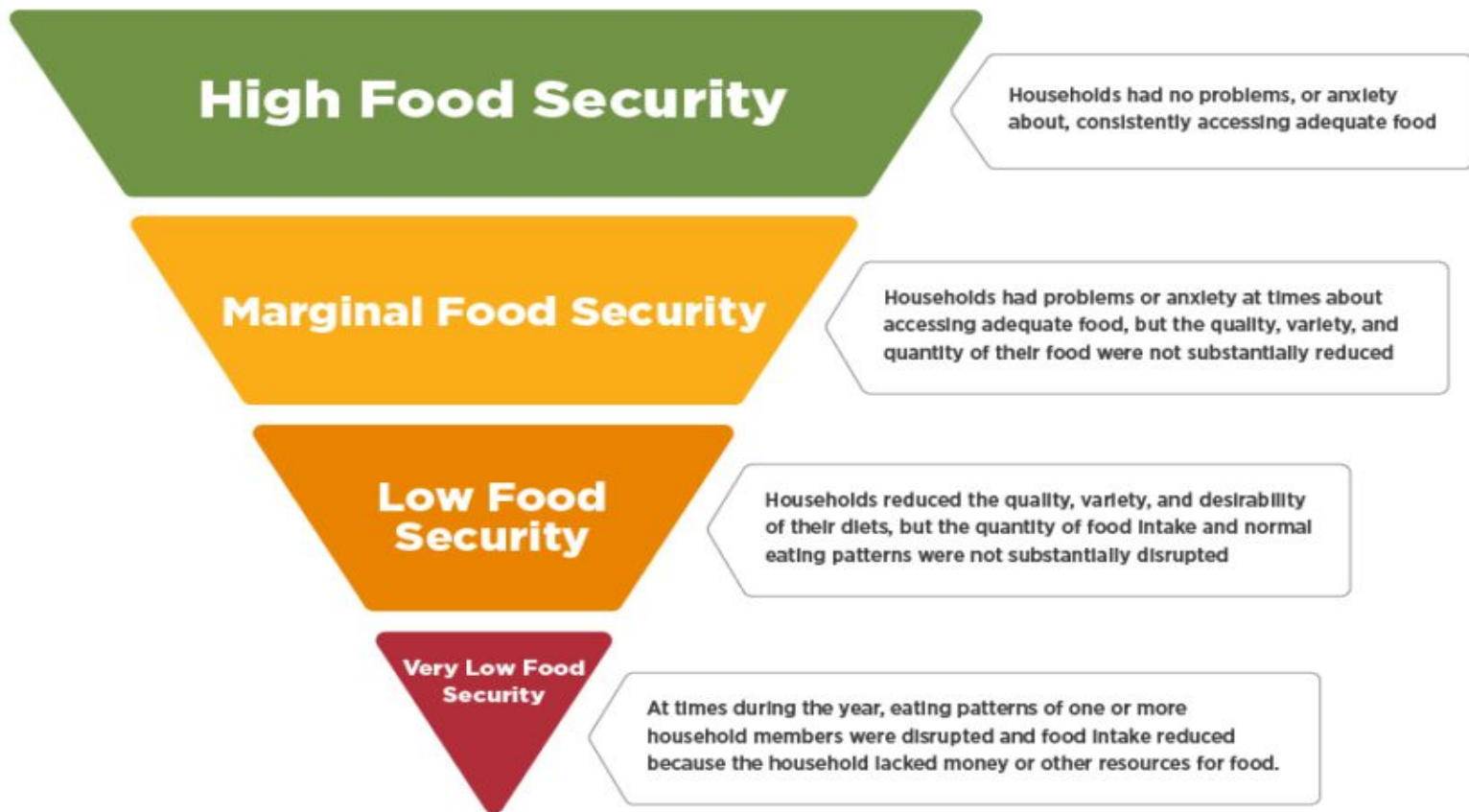
-Food Insecurity: a lack of available financial resources for food at the household level

Specific Food Insecurity factors in Contra Costa County

- ❖ Geographic location: Bay Area i.e. High Housing Cost
- ❖ California COLA compared to nation-wide standards
 - Risk of “blanket” federal policies not sufficient in California
 - Minimum wage isn’t enough here
- ❖ Necessity of transportation
 - Lack of public transport/affordability
 - Distance between vital destinations (school, work, grocery store)
- ❖ Working families not qualifying for benefits & benefits cliff
- ❖ Complex, cyclical, societal (*see chart*)

A Conceptual Framework: Cycle of Food Insecurity & Chronic Disease





Source: Adapted from the USDA Economic Research Service.

Understanding Food Insecurity & COVID-19

- ❖ Understanding the **underlying causes** which have been worsened
 - **Poverty**
 - **Un/underemployment**
 - Either working a job you're overqualified for or you cannot find work
 - Many who have been laid off do not have those same jobs to return to
 - **Inconsistent access** to enough food
 - **Geographic location** of home
 - Food desert
 - High prices
- ❖ 58% of FI households participated in at least 1 federal food assistance program (SNAP, WIC, etc.)
 - What about other 42%?
- ❖ **COVID-19 pandemic unprecedented situation**

What is Advocacy:

- > activity by a group or person that aims to influence a decision
- > public support for a recommendation for an issue
- > increase awareness of the issue

Being an Advocate

>as an advocate **YOU** have the ability to be the voice for those who don't feel they are being heard & ensure they are being respected

Current need for
advocacy:
**+57% increase in food
insecurity in Contra Costa
& Solano Counties since
onset of COVID-19**

Our Advocacy Goal is to identify the root causes of hunger, specific to our region while integrating the experiences and voices of our community members to most effectively advocate for sustainable change in our food systems to eliminate food insecurity

What does our Advocacy Look Like?

- > Meetings with Elected Officials
- > Community Outreach Programs
- > Supporting / Opposing Legislation
- > County Partnerships & Workgroups
 - > Research on Root Causes
- > Education of food insecurity and advocacy

How You Can Join Our Advocacy:

- engage with elected officials and advocate for anti-hunger policies
 - >Letters of Support
 - >Town Halls
- increase awareness of food insecurity and advocacy

Thank you for having
me!