

# County of Santa Clara

Office of the County Executive

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**DATE:** January 30, 2023

**TO:** Honorable Board of Supervisors  
Jeffrey V. Smith, County Executive

**FROM:** Ky Le, Deputy County Executive

DocuSigned by:  
*Ky Le* 1/30/2023  
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**SUBJECT:** Food System Workplan Governance and Funding for Food Assistance

During the Board of Supervisors meeting on November 15, 2022 (Item No. 26), the Board received a progress report on the County of Santa Clara Food System Workplan (Workplan) and recommendations in response to a referral relating to funding for food assistance providers. At the same meeting, at the request of Supervisor Chavez, the Board directed Administration to report in January 2023 regarding:

- 1) A governance structure for food assistance and food system resiliency programs, including recommendations for a cross-agency working group or task force to collaborate with County non-profit partners; and,
- 2) Funding recommendations for food assistance programs during the FY 2023 Mid-Year Budget Review.

## **Food System Workplan Governance**

Consistent with the Workplan, the Administration is taking steps to formally establish a **Food System Leadership Collaborative** (“Leadership Collaborative”), a working group consisting of key leaders from the County, cities, community-based organizations, other public agencies, and food policy stakeholders to strengthen the capacity for food system coordination and Workplan implementation. Community members have indicated the preference that these groups adopt a non-Brown Act working group structure; however, the progress of the Leadership Collaborative and the Workplan could be presented biannually or annually. Administration and the Leadership Collaborative could also provide reports as part of study sessions scheduled by the Board.

The Leadership Collaborative would be formed by restructuring and expanding the Food Security Working Group which was formed in October 2021. The working group included staff from the cities of San Jose, Gilroy, and Morgan Hill, and various non-profit organizations. The group also included County staff from various departments and offices (e.g., the Social Services Agency and the Public Health Department). The Food Security Working Group’s priorities were to refine food insecurity needs by location and demographic characteristics and to develop a shared understanding of food insecurity measures. Administration anticipates convening the first meeting of the Leadership Collaborative by the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2023-2024.

The Leadership Collaborative would guide and support the work of the **Food System Kitchen Cabinet** consisting of staff from key County Departments, agencies, and offices to institutionalize and streamline coordination between key County-administered food assistance and resiliency programs. County staff have been meeting periodically since October 2021. Additionally, the County has been directly coordinating on funding strategies to address insecurity with the City of San José (City).

The Workplan also recommended establishing a **Resident Food Equity Advisory Council** (“Advisory Council”) to build trust and partnership with communities so that implementation of the Workplan truly reflects community needs and is bolstered by the support of communities and individuals. As with advisory groups for other initiatives such as the Office of Disability Affairs and the San José PEACE Partnership, establishing the Advisory Council will require considerable time investments by staff and/or consultants. Administration is identifying consulting and staffing resources to start this process and will provide updates to the Board as part of annual or biannual Workplan updates.

#### **Funding Recommendations for Food Assistance Programs**

Initially, Administration planned to include a funding allocation to support food assistance organizations as part of the FY 2023 Mid-Year Budget Review because the City planned to discontinue funding for various food assistance organizations on December 31, 2022. These organizations were funded with one-time funds that the City received as part of the pandemic response. However, in early January 2023, City staff confirmed that they would continue funding through June 30, 2023. The City’s revised plan will continue funding for food assistance at various interim and temporary housing facilities for homeless individuals, home delivered meal programs, food assistance programs serving lower income households, and food distribution programs by organizations such as Second Harvest.

The continued availability of one-time funding through the City allows Administration to refine a funding proposal for the FY 2024 budget process. The proposal would include a grant program to support the operations of food assistance and/or food distribution organizations. Including the food assistance grant program in the FY 2024 budget process, allows the Board to consider this request along with other food system-related needs which may include continuing the Senior Nutrition Program at service levels higher than pre-pandemic levels, continuing the Strengthening Summer Meals program, Workplan governance needs, and food assistance programs for sheltered and unsheltered unhoused persons. In the meantime, Administration is moving forward with the strategies identified in the November 15, 2022, report including, but not limited to, increased support of Second Harvest through the San Jose Conservation Corps, increasing access to Medically Tailored Meals, and distributing \$914,000 in one-time funds to support SNP sites with equipment, technology and facility needs.

Cc: Chief Board Aides  
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