VOTING FOR FOOD: WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

You may not realize it, but your vote has a huge impact on getting healthy food into your community. Here’s how that happens and why your vote is important:

YOU VOTE FOR THE PEOPLE WHO WRITE THE BUDGETS

Funding for many government food programs like SNAP and school lunch programs is allocated yearly in federal, state, and local budgets using money collected through taxes. These budgets are written and passed by the representatives that we vote into office, like the President, the Governor, and city officials. It’s important to vote for representatives who will work to fund the programs that you care about.

Example: the 2020-21 budget proposed by Governor Newsom includes over $10 million to support a Farm to School Grant Program which will help support California farmers and expand healthy food access in schools.

Another way funds can be allocated is through ballot measures that can be approved or rejected by voters. Though not all measures have to do with funding, measures usually concern very specific changes such as a new tax, for which the voters can vote yes or no.

Example: in 2016, San Francisco voters approved Prop V, a 1 cent-per-ounce tax on sugary drinks, with collected revenue to provide funding for nutrition education and healthy food distribution programs. In 2019 the tax generated over $11 million to fund health programs!

YOUR VOTE REACHES FARther THAN YOU THINK

Many nonprofits are partially funded by taxpayer money through government grants. Money for grants can be designated by lawmakers in federal, state, and local budgets, or approved by the voters through ballot measures. Grants allow the government to support the work of organizations working to bring healthy food and nutrition to communities.

Example: In 2020, 21% of 18 Reasons' budget for cooking and nutrition education programs comes from government grants.

So how can you make sure federal, state, and local governments are working to make sure everyone has access to healthy food?

- Vote for candidates that will work to include funding for food programs in budgets
- Vote for measures that support public health
- Tell your representatives and your community that you care about healthy food and making sure everyone has access to it
VOTING FOR FOOD: HOW TO DO IT

As a voter, you have the power to tell your representatives that ensuring your community’s access to healthy food is important to you. Here’s how to make your voice heard and your vote count:

**VOTE!**

If you are eligible, make sure you are registered to vote so you can support representatives and ballot measures that will ensure access to healthy food. In California, the deadline to register to vote for any election is 15 days before Election Day.

- Check your voter registration status at [www.voterstatus.sos.ca.gov](http://www.voterstatus.sos.ca.gov)
- Not registered or need to update your information? Register or re-register to vote at [wwwregistertovote.ca.gov](http://wwwregistertovote.ca.gov)

**DO YOUR HOMEWORK**

Do research including reading your voter information guide to see what impact candidates or ballot measures might have on healthy food access.

- **Look for:** mentions of SNAP (federal) and CalFresh (state), school lunch and breakfast programs, public health, farming and agriculture.
- **Avoid:** funding cuts for health programs, discriminatory language.

*Remember to always check the source of your information to make sure it is accurate and unbiased.*

**CONTACTING YOUR REPRESENTATIVES**

If you’re not able to determine a candidate or representatives’s position on any issue, ask them!

- For sitting representatives: use your home address at [www.myreps.datamade.us](http://www.myreps.datamade.us) to find out who all of your representatives are and their contact information.
- For candidates running for office: look at your ballot or visit your local department of elections website to see who is running.

**BE THE CHANGE!**

If you are unable to vote, you want to support an issue for which there is no legislation, or there is no election coming up, you can support issues in other ways:

- **Donate** money or time to an organization working on a cause you care about
- **Join** or start a club, activist group, or protest
- **Talk** to people in your community about what’s important to you
WHERE THE CANDIDATES STAND: SAN FRANCISCO COUNTY

These statements are meant for informational purposes only. Voters are encouraged to think critically about each statement and, along with further research, use them to inform their choices in November and beyond.

To read the candidates' full statements visit: bit.ly/31HuqHL

"We must continue to protect the social safety net by supporting initiatives like food stamps, Head Start, Medicaid and Medicare, which benefit the most vulnerable San Franciscans...we have a moral obligation to preserve and advance the health, economic certainty, and food security of millions of American families. It is past time for Congress to come together on policies that lift struggling families out of poverty – not punish them."

- Nancy Pelosi, Incumbent for Congress (CA-12)

"While I am to expand the budgets for established social services, I also ultimately aim to secure a legislative consensus to expand social services beyond means testing to create universal programs. Universal programs reduce administrative costs, and also ensure better and more consistent outcomes. In addition, they can help resolve conflicting interests among classes of included and excluded potential beneficiaries of means tested alternatives."

- Sahid Buttar, Candidate for Congress (CA-12)

"Ending hunger must be an absolute top priority financially as a state. While much of the funding for programs like CalFresh comes from the federal government, as a state and as a city, we must step up to provide food benefits to those in need and ensure our systems make sense and are accessible to as many people as possible."

"I have authored SB 900, 285, SB 278 and SB 282, which supported CalFresh and food access" [see the senators' full statement for a description of each bill]

- Scott Wiener, Incumbent for State Senate (D-11)

All San Francisco city supervisors serving odd-numbered districts are up for re-election in 2020. Try finding out what district you live in and what your supervisor's stance is on issues of food justice!
WHERE THE CANDIDATES STAND: ALAMEDA AND CONTRA COSTA COUNTIES

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"I am a cosponsor of his H.R. 6968, the Meals on Wheels for Kids Act, to establish a pilot grant program to deliver healthy meals to children in rural and difficult-to-reach areas who often rely on nutritious school-provided meals during the school year, but given their geographic location, are unable to get to summer meal sites while they’re not in school.

I support increased funding for programs such as SNAP and school lunches to ensure that our most vulnerable neighbors don’t go hungry. And I’ve long championed our district’s Meals on Wheels and other senior nutrition programs, including “In Your Shoes” visits delivering and serving meals in order to call attention to these agencies’ missions and needs."

- Eric Swalwell, Incumbent for Congress (CA-15)

“As a member of the House Committee on Education and Labor, I regularly work on matters of food security and know how important they are to the health and well-being of Americans... From authoring efforts to put more updated equipment in school kitchens to supporting funding for programs for seniors like Meals on Wheels, I am committed to making sure every family has access to enough healthy food, regardless of whether or not they can afford it.”

- Mark DeSaulnier, Incumbent for Congress (CA-11)