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THE SF MARKET Food Recovery Program

Transforming Surplus into Sustenance for a
Thriving Food System

Creating an integrated, community-empowering food system that transforms rescued food into nourishment for families, advances food equity, and builds long-term stability for the Greater Bay Area.

The Opportunity: Applying a High-Impact Food Recovery Model Amid Growing Hunger

Across the nation, food insecurity is rising amid economic instability, leaving tens of millions of Americans uncertain about their next meal. In the Greater San Francisco Bay Area, the crisis is **rapidly worsening**. San Francisco's food insecurity rate climbed from **11% in 2020 to 12.7% in 2023**, surpassing pandemic levels (Feeding America, Map the Meal Gap, 2025).

Simultaneously, community food banks and nutrition programs across the Bay Area are facing **reduced funding and record demand**. Unlike many food-relief providers whose operations fluctuate with federal nutrition budgets, **The SF Market's Food Recovery Program is positioned to remain steady and resilient**. Because our **produce is donated** and flows through **long-standing merchant and wholesale infrastructure**, our program operates at minimal cost while delivering substantial, reliable impact for local families.

Through the Food Recovery Program, The SF Market rescues fresh surplus, culturally diverse produce that would otherwise be diverted to the landfill. Thanks to our merchants and on-site logistics capacity, this rescued food moves seamlessly to our network of community-based partners, who distribute it to households across the region experiencing food insecurity. This model functions as a coordinated ecosystem: merchants contribute consistent volumes of surplus food, The SF Market provides the operational backbone, and trusted service organizations bring nourishing, culturally relevant produce directly into their communities. By prioritizing neighborhoods and communities that face the greatest barriers to accessing fresh, affordable produce, the Food Recovery Program advances food equity—ensuring that families in historically under-resourced areas have the same access to nourishing food as those in higher-income communities.

Since its launch in 2016, The SF Market Food Recovery Program has scaled to recover more than **10 million pounds of food**, translating to over **8.4 million meals**. With an integrated, collaborative approach, the program **advances food security, reduces waste, and lowers disposal costs** for family-owned merchant businesses — while remaining highly cost-effective. In 2026, we project recovering 1.25 million pounds of produce.

Our Request: \$160,000 for 2026 Programmatic Support

To maintain the program's momentum and expand its capacity, The SF Market seeks **\$160,000 in funding** for 2026. Resources will support **essential program staff** responsible for day-to-day coordination with merchants, scheduling and logistics, and continuous communication with community food partners. As demand for fresh, reliable food access increases, **expanded personnel capacity strengthens planning, delivery, partner support, and long-term impact tracking**.

Because the produce is donated and warehouse operations are covered by the organization, **every dollar contributed directly supports program delivery and local food security**. This investment strengthens a proven, cost-efficient model for hunger relief, waste reduction, and community resilience.



Return on Investment

At a **cost of roughly \$0.12 per pound recovered**, SF Market's Food Recovery Program is highly cost-efficient. This allows for **every \$1 invested to generate more than \$2.30 in recovered food value***—plus additional economic and environmental benefits, including reduced disposal expenses and avoided greenhouse gas emissions.



Sustainability Plan

Long-term program resilience is supported through expanded staff capacity and a multi-faceted fundraising strategy that includes **targeted grant applications to local and philanthropic foundations, California state funding, and future fundraising campaigns**. This work is anchored by a longstanding public partnership with the City and County of San Francisco. Since 2018, SF Environment has invested in the program through consecutive grant cycles. Combined with philanthropic support this provides a stable foundation and reduces reliance on any single funding source, creating a diversified and durable funding base.



Program Impact: Past Performance and 2026 Projections

Historic Results (2016-2025)

- Recovered and distributed **10M+ Pounds** of fresh produce, equal to **8.4+ million meals** across five Bay Area counties
- Partnered with **25 merchants, 350+ growers, and 81 community organizations**, offering 182 types of produce
- Prevented **1,465.97 tons of CO₂ emissions** and conserved **114 million gallons of water**, equivalent to **174 Olympic-sized swimming pools** (ReFED Impact Calculator)
- Recognized by the SF Department of the Environment as **"the best ROI in the city"** (Tyrone Jue, Director, SF Environment 2025)

Projected 2026 Impact with \$160,000 in Support

- **1.25 million pounds** of fresh, culturally relevant produce recovered
- **1.05 million meals** provided to families across the Bay Area
- **\$375,000** in food value redistributed
- **183 tons** of CO₂ emissions prevented, comparable to removing **40 passenger vehicles** from the road for one year



Strengthening Four Pillars of Community Resilience

1) Healthy Food Access

Your support connects nutritious, culturally relevant produce to families facing rising food costs and reduced SNAP/EBT and CalFresh benefits, strengthening community health and stability and advancing food equity for households most impacted by these gaps.

2) Environmental Sustainability

Funding supports program operations that divert surplus produce from landfill, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and advance California's SB 1383 food waste reduction goals.

3) Economic Efficiency

Your contribution helps small merchant businesses save on waste-disposal costs while reducing food expenses for lower-income households.

4) Community Collaboration

Your investment supports a distribution network built on trusted nonprofit partners who reach families directly, reduce stigma, and expand local capacity without duplicating services.



Join Us in Sustaining San Francisco's Food Future

Your partnership strengthens one of the Bay Area's most cost-effective and trusted food recovery programs. The SF Market remains deeply committed to operating and expanding the Food Recovery Program so that fresh, nourishing food continues flowing into neighborhoods during times of economic volatility and federal funding uncertainty. Philanthropic investment plays a pivotal role in growing the program's reach and long-term sustainability.

We welcome collaboration and shared opportunity through:

- **Grant funding** to strengthen the Food Recovery Program
- One-time or recurring **financial contributions**
- **Introductions** to aligned funders, partners, and community champions



"Not having this Food Recovery Program would be devastating financially — it would mean cutting our program budgets and serving fewer people."

Haley Nielsen

Development Director,
Farming Hope (2025)

*ROI based on recovered food value: ~\$0.30/lb (USDA) ÷ \$0.128/lb (program cost from \$160k/1.25M lbs) = ~\$2.34 per \$1 invested (rounded to \$2.30+)



To Learn More

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The SF Market is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. EIN #45-4849844. Contributions are tax-deductible as permitted by law.