



Called to Care So That **Everyone Has Enough Nutritious Food to Eat**

Called to Care is committed to ending hunger and malnourishment in California. Food insecurity—specifically, lack of access to affordable, nutritious food—impacts millions of Californians and can have negative impacts on many aspects of overall well-being, including physical, mental and emotional health.

Called to Care supports health care providers and community organizations that are working together to understand and address social, environmental and racial inequities so that communities of color, low-income, Indigenous tribal, rural and agricultural communities, and others that are most vulnerable among us have equitable access to healthy foods.



Overview: Food Insecurity in California

On average, 1 out of every 5 Californians—about 8 million people—currently struggle with food insecurity, with greater levels of hunger experienced by Black, Latino and Indigenous families.¹

While food insecurity impacts every county in California, areas of the Inland Empire, Central Valley and North Coast are experiencing some of the highest rates.² Often, families experiencing food insecurity must choose between food, medical care and other basic necessities. Food insecurity can lead to Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease and obesity. Children at risk of hunger are more likely to be in poor health, as well as struggle in school and other social situations. Family members in food-insecure households are also more likely to struggle with psychological and behavioral health issues.³

The extension and expansion of federal food assistance programs, including Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), have had a positive impact on low-income Californians, but not all hungry Californians qualify for or are able to access these programs. California's immigrant and rural communities continue to face barriers to getting the food they need.

Addressing Food Insecurity

Called to Care supports the approach of California's safety net health care providers, many of which are Catholic health care sites, to address food insecurity. In many communities across California, these providers are at the core, navigating challenges posed by food insecurity as well as other barriers to basic needs. These organizations are uniquely positioned to serve as a hub for coordinating access to health and social services in under-resourced communities and are taking steps to specifically address food insecurity in the following ways:

- **Supporting Food Banks.** Working with the California Association of Food Banks to increase local food-bank capacity.
- **Providing Community Grants and Investments.** Supporting community-prioritized solutions by funding programs that directly serve food-insecure individuals and families; providing community investments that support local farmers and minority-owned suppliers who are critical to building a strong and equitable food system in our state; and supporting food-waste recovery programs.
- **Helping Underserved Communities.** Collaborating with community organizations and businesses to provide direct meals, nutrition and other assistance to those who are vulnerable, older adults, Black, Latino and Indigenous populations; and advocating for their greater access to healthier food.

To impact food insecurity the entire food continuum from production to procurement to direct services, as well as access to healthy and affordable food, must be addressed.

¹ <https://www.cafoodbanks.org/hunger-data>

² <https://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2019/overall/california>

³ <https://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/impact-of-hunger>



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Community Engagement in Action

Dignity Health Partners with CityServe in the Central Valley

In the Central Valley, Dignity Health actively seeks out community partners who can help extend their reach beyond the hospitals, and provide resources for families before they need medical care. These partnerships help prevent illness by addressing some of the socioeconomic barriers to health, including access to healthy groceries, nutritious meals, clothing and necessary household supplies.

Providence Little Company of Mary Partners with Wilmington Certified Farmers Market

Since 2018, Providence Little Company of Mary has hosted the Wilmington Certified Farmers Market weekly at the Wellness and Activity Center. This farmers market supports local agriculture and ensures access to nutritious food in the Wilmington neighborhood, serving approximately 6,000 customers in 2021. In addition to offering health promotion programs and group exercise classes, staff at the Wellness and Activity Center assist residents with enrolling in health insurance coverage and other benefits, including CalFresh. The farmers market features Market Match, allowing families with EBT to stretch their benefits further with an additional \$10 credit for fresh fruits and vegetables.



We try to find many different solutions and innovative ways to address food challenges. For example, we have provided vouchers to many families so that they can go to the farmers market and shop for fresh and healthy foods themselves, or even have these foods delivered by a partner organization who has identified a family in need.

Jim Tehan

Community Health Investment Regional Director, L.A. Market



About Called to Care

Called to Care aims to improve the health of every person in our state by supporting strong connections between safety net health care providers and the organizations in our communities tackling our most urgent health and social challenges.

Called to Care is a project of the Alliance of Catholic Health Care, together with members Dignity Health and Providence.



Connect with Us.

Connect with Called to Care to help build stronger ties between health care providers and community organizations to address California's most pressing social challenges.

<https://calledtocareforall.org/register>