



RECORDING PRESENTATION

SONOMA VALLEY FOOD SECURITY ASSESSMENT

FEBRUARY 2, 2023 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY PRESENTATION

Prepared by:



Prepared for:



Welcome & Overview



Catalyst Co-Chairs

Katherine Fulton
Dub Hay



Catalyst’s **mission is to mobilize philanthropic support** and innovative approaches to address urgent, emergent and chronic challenges no Sonoma Valley donor or organization can solve alone.

Pandemic response was our first initiative. We raised \$1.6M to fund 44 grants supporting local nonprofits. We are now a permanent fund of Community Foundation Sonoma County.

Food security—a problem that is both urgent and chronic—will be our second initiative.

We fund where gaps exist to provide the “extra” nonprofits need: collective problem-solving, innovation, capacity building, and rapid crisis response.

Purpose of Food Security System Assessment

Pre-Pandemic

- Base level safety net
- Local programs = primarily pantries/ groceries

Pandemic

- Exploding Needs
- Temporary increases in safety net benefits
- Expanded Local Services
- Increased Philanthropy

Post-Pandemic?

- Strengths and Assets
- Needs and Resources
- Opportunities and Challenges

Post Pandemic ... How can ongoing and changing food needs of the community be met in a way that is effective and sustainable over time?

Sonoma Valley: Drivers of Food Insecurity



- ▷ Cost of Living significantly (~50%) above national average*
- ▷ Government safety net programs not adjusted for regional cost of living
- ▷ Government safety net programs exclude some residents
- ▷ Pandemic Impacts: Work, School, Home
- ▷ Inflation: Food prices up 10% in past year **

**Sonoma County 51.8% above national average (Sperling's Best Places index); SF Urban Area 78.6% above national average; Oakland Urban Area 45.9% above national average (C2ER 2022); **Bureau of Labor Statistics*

1 in 5 = 8,000 neighbors



An estimated 1 in 5 Valley residents struggles to have enough to eat or is chronically worried about having adequate food.

Sonoma Valley's Local Food Assistance Providers

- 15+ active food assistance providers
- 500+ community volunteers
- Extensive community connections
- Massive effort in response to pandemic
- Many effective partnerships
- High level of trust and value from clients
- Often provide info & referrals to other kinds of services

**You guys do an amazing job!!!!
Seriously, you help me raise my kids.**

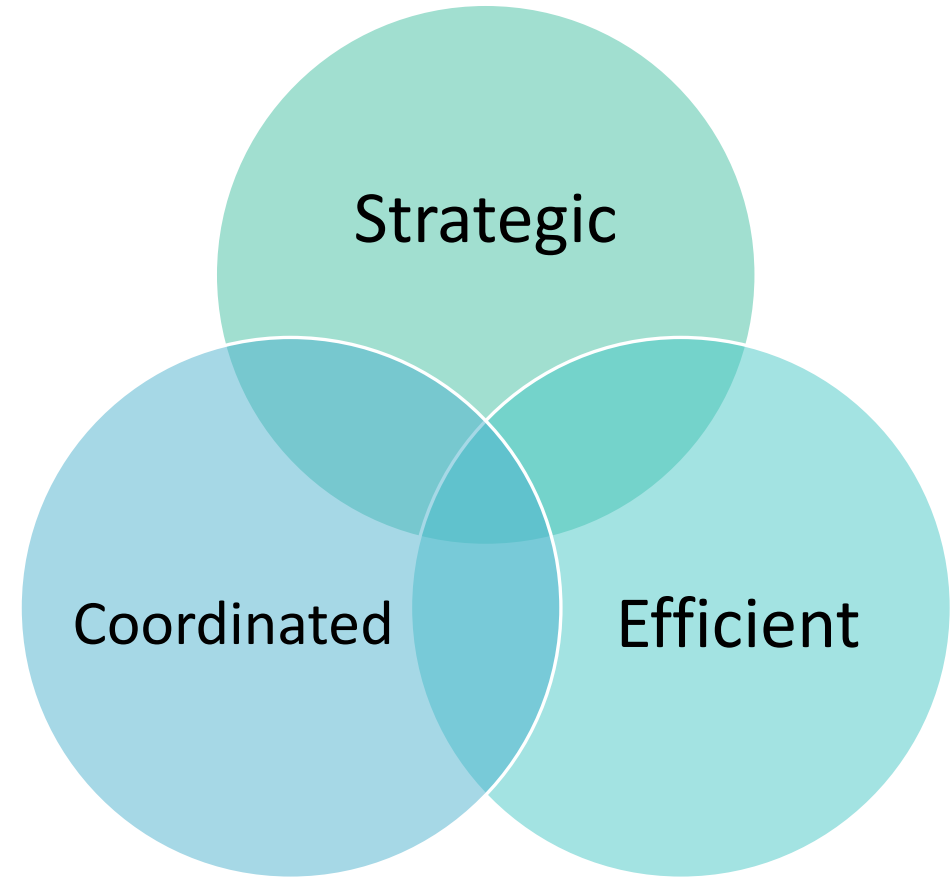
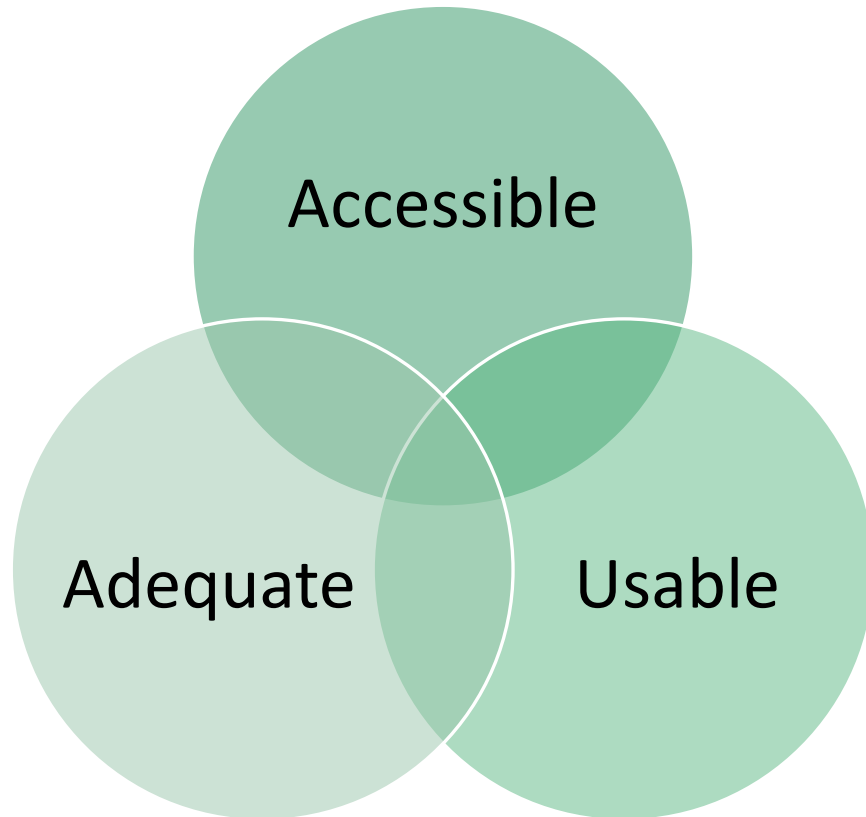
*Sample comments
from survey*

Would like for all the volunteers and staff to hear and know how they are appreciated every day.



Catalyst Funded a Food System Study to Identify Opportunities for:

Meeting local needs for **food security**... in a way that can be **sustained** over time



Consultant Presentation



Cathy Capriola



Laurie Decker



AGENDA



01

PICTURE OF FOOD INSECURITY IN SONOMA VALLEY

02

FINDINGS

- Food Insecure Residents
- Local Food Security System
- Local Food System Ingredients

03

OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE THE LOCAL FOOD SECURITY SYSTEM

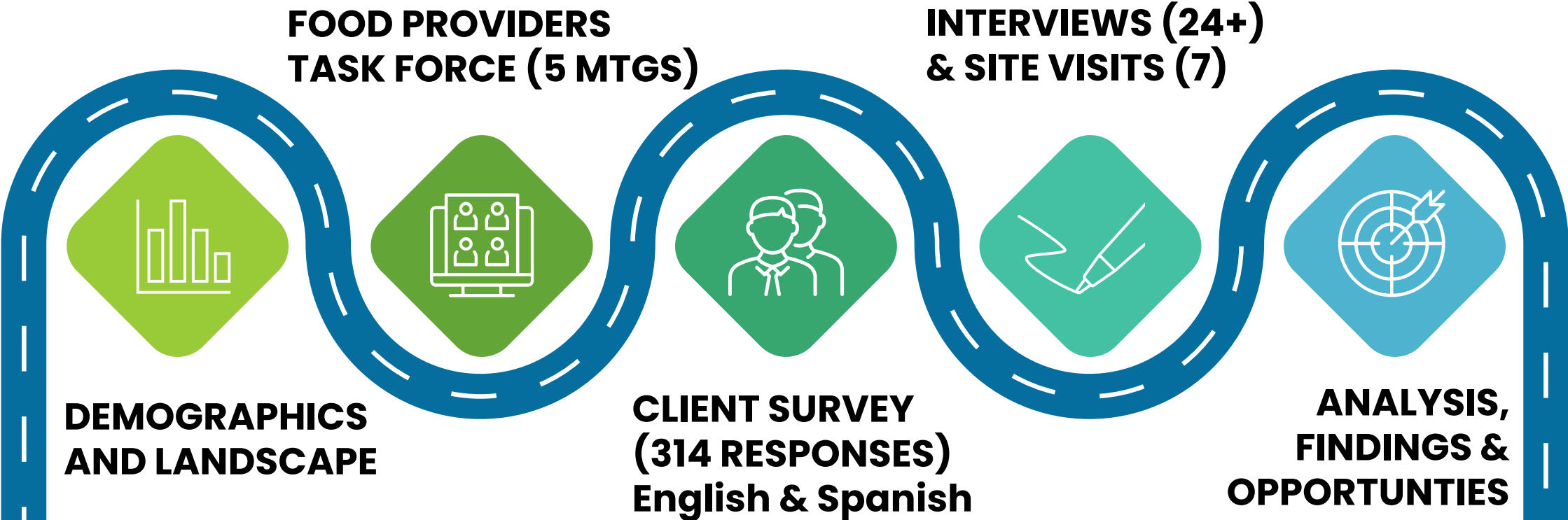
04

CATALYST: WHAT'S NEXT

05

QUESTIONS / DISCUSSION

Assessment Roadmap – Approach & Process



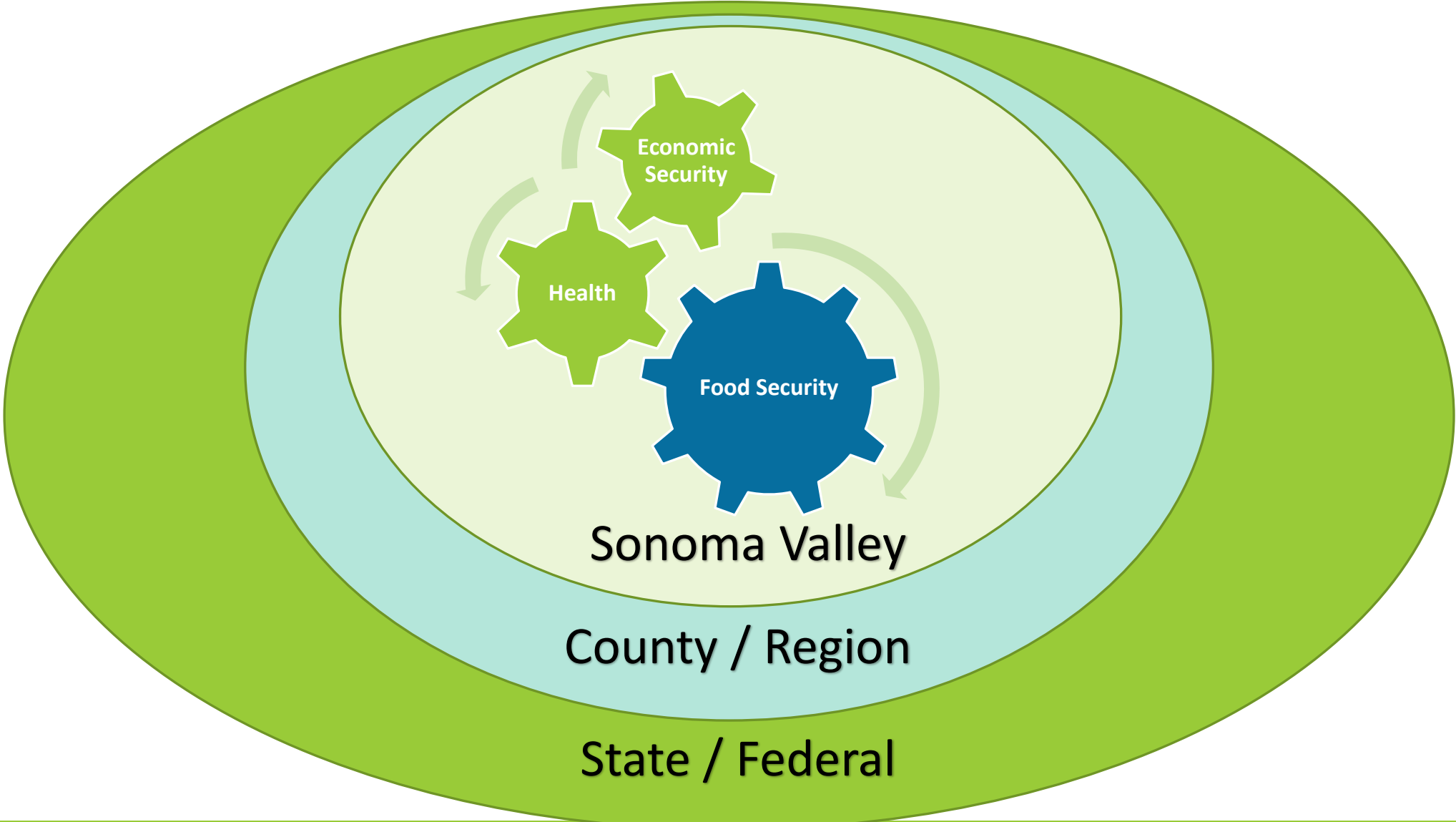
What does “Food Insecurity” mean?

The USDA defines food insecurity as a **lack of consistent access to enough food for every person in a household to live an active, healthy life.**

This can be a temporary situation for a family or can last a long time.

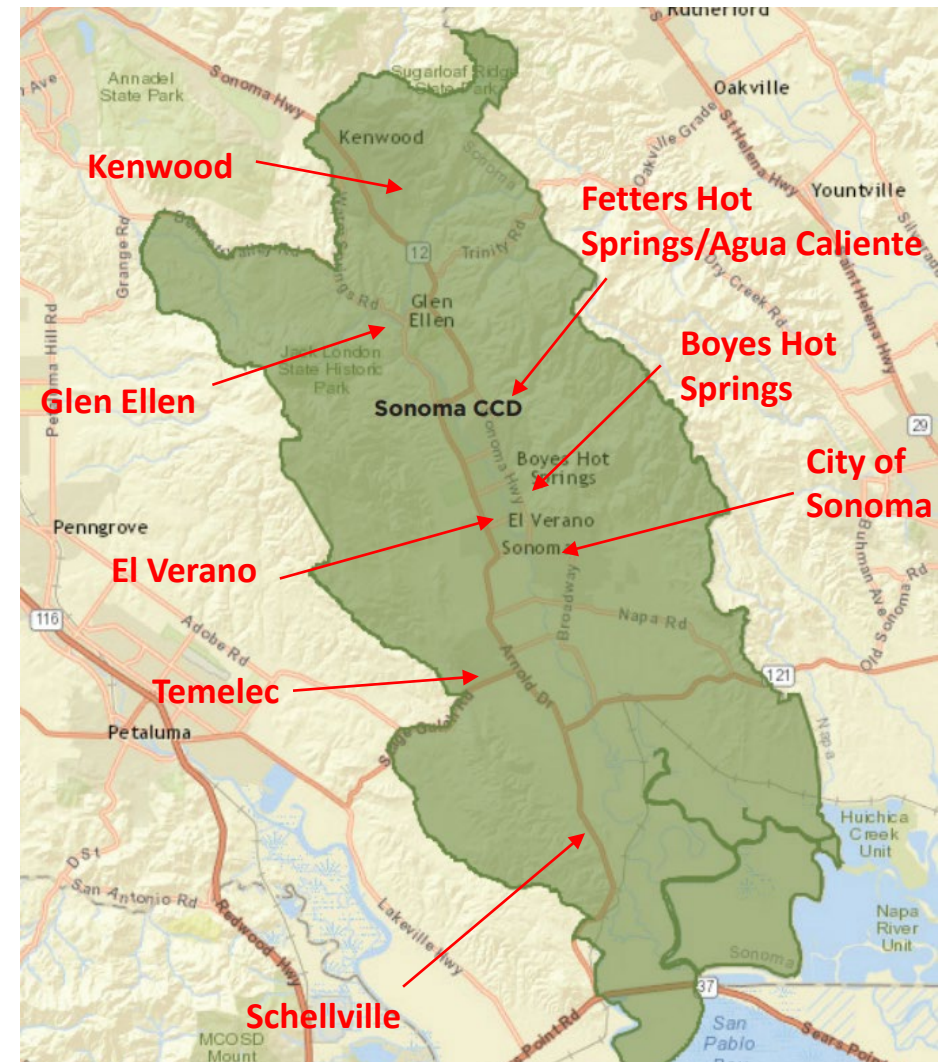


Local Food Security – part of a bigger puzzle



Sonoma Valley Demographics

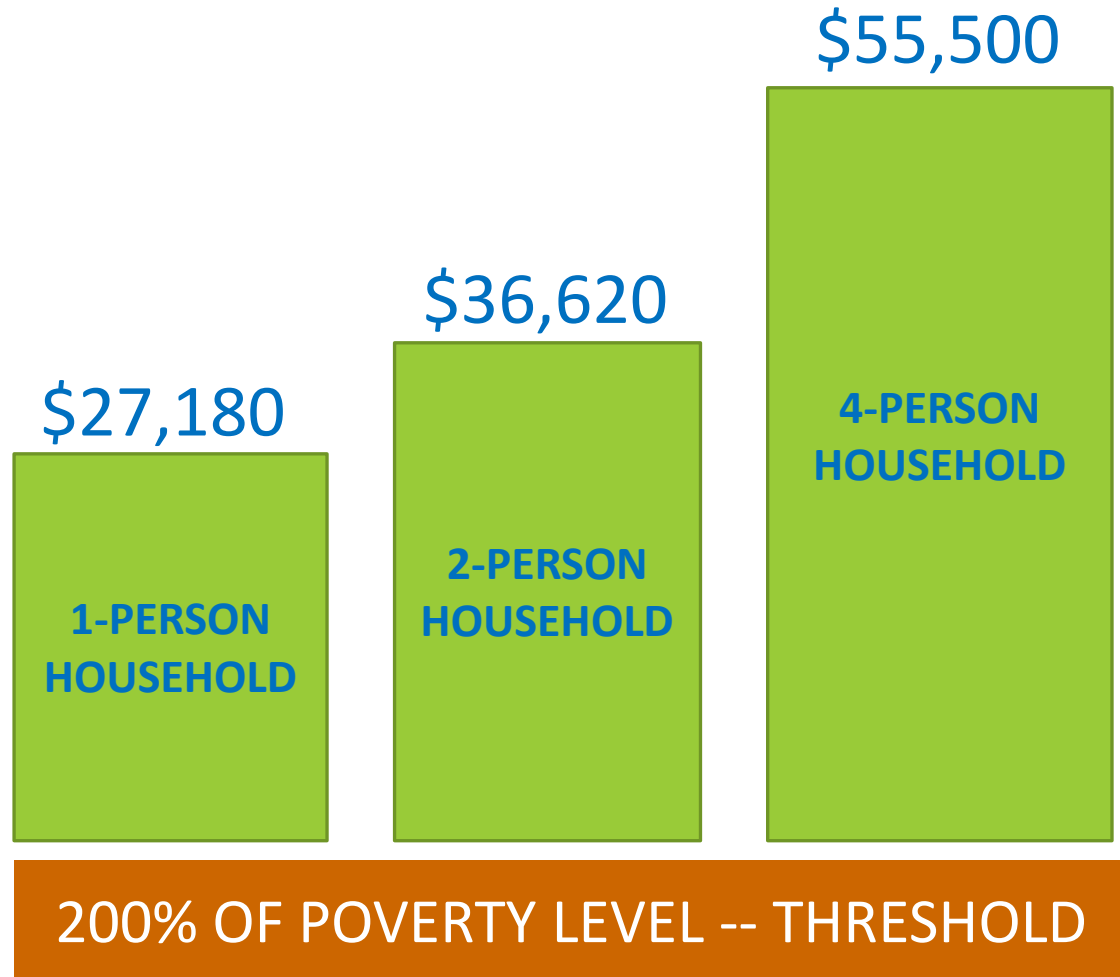
- 40,000 residents in 16,000 households
- Estimated 25% - 30% Latino
- Senior population growing (+9% in 5 yrs)
- Youth population shrinking (-20% in 5 yrs)
- Large variation in age and income among neighborhoods



City of Sonoma population: 11,000
Sonoma Valley population: 40,000

Sonoma Valley CCD = census county division

1 in 5 Valley households (20%) live below 200% of poverty level



“Given the high cost of living in Sonoma County, it is generally accepted that an annual income under 200% of FPL ... is inadequate to meet basic needs for food, clothing, shelter, transportation, health care and other necessities.”

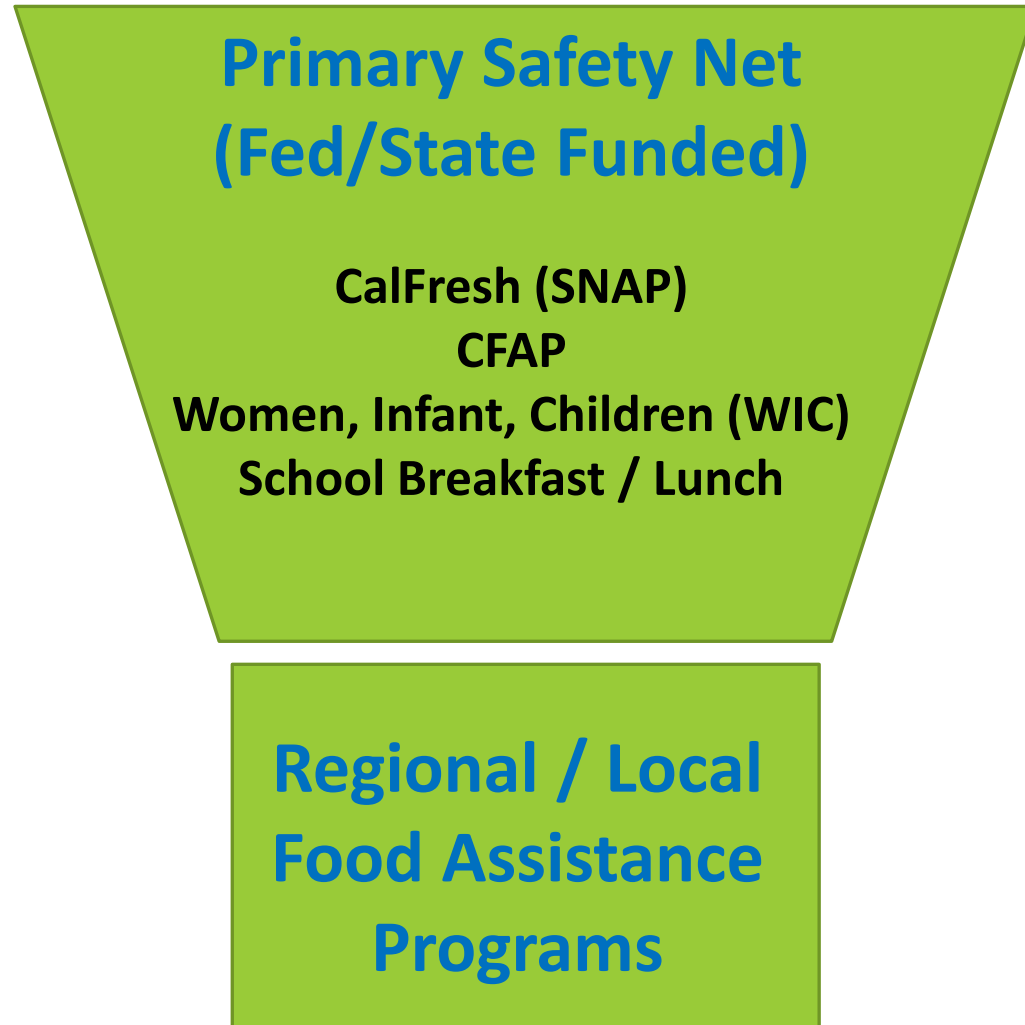
- Sonoma County DHS website

About 8,000 residents live below 200% of the poverty level.

Disproportionately living in poverty:

- Children (<18)
- Young adults (<35)
- Latino residents
- Female residents

Expanded Primary Safety Net - But Big “Holes” Remain



Expansions in the Safety Net

- Temporary increases in benefit levels during pandemic
- Permanent 25% increase to CalFresh benefits (Oct 2021)
- California: CFAP benefits being added for all age 55+, regardless of immigration status
- Universal School Meals made permanent in California
- Ongoing national Summer EBT for schoolchildren added
- Medi-Cal to include medically supportive foods

Holes in the Safety Net

- Income thresholds not adjusted for regional cost of living
- Ineligibility based on immigration status
- Under-enrollment by eligible residents due to lack of information and outreach, issues of trust/fear among immigrant population, general issues of pride/stigma, and real and perceived logistical hurdles

**Estimated
8,000+**
Food insecure
Sonoma Valley residents



1,778
Sonoma Valley residents enrolled



366
Sonoma Valley residents enrolled
(average month)



1,200+
Low-income students served School Meals daily
(2,800 meals total, all free under Universal School Meals)

Clients of these
programs use 2 – 3
programs on
average



5,588
Sonoma Valley residents enrolled
(1,455 households served each month on average)

Total unique clients served are currently not being tracked at a system-wide level, but based on available data, we estimate that:

1,700 Valley residents (unique)
are served each month by other programs
and up to 4,000 unique residents annually.

Client Segments: Differing Needs, Challenges



**Families with
Children**



**Working Age
Adults**



Seniors

Additionally, three groups cross demographic segments ...

- Those experiencing homelessness**
- Those with transportation or mobility limitations**
- Those with medically-related food needs**

314 Households Surveyed:

Key Differences

	Took survey in English	Took survey in Spanish
<i>Household Characteristics</i>	Smaller (average: 1.9 people)	Larger (average: 4.2 people)
	Older (76% have someone age 65+)	Younger (87% have someone < age 18)
<i>Most Difficult Times</i>	Beginning/end of month	Late fall and winter months
<i>Biggest Barrier to Food Assistance</i>	Food items provided are often ones I don't like, or typically use (31%)	Days/times food help is available (22%)
<i>Programs Used in Past Year</i>	REFB (45%), FISH (26%), MoW/Sonoma Home Meals (20%)	Comida Para Todos (45%), St. Leo's/St. Francis (35%), REFB (33%)
<i>Preferred Way to Communicate</i>	Text (33%), Phone (31%), Email (30%)	Text (77%), Facebook (26%)

314 Households Surveyed:

Common Barriers to Food Assistance

Transportation and Mobility (29% English, 21% Spanish)

“Transportation problems make it hard to get to the places where food assistance is available, or limit how much I can carry”

Lack Information on Food Resources (21% English, 18% Spanish)

“I am not sure what kind of help is available to me, and how or where to get it.”

Hesitancy in Accepting Help (21% English, 18% Spanish)

“I don’t want to take food if there are others that might need it more.”

No barriers (29% English, 15% Spanish)

“It is not hard to get food assistance”

“I don’t know that we are eligible. We are not low income but we’re having an awfully hard time making ends meet.”

- Comment by survey respondent

314 Households Surveyed:

Most Requested Changes

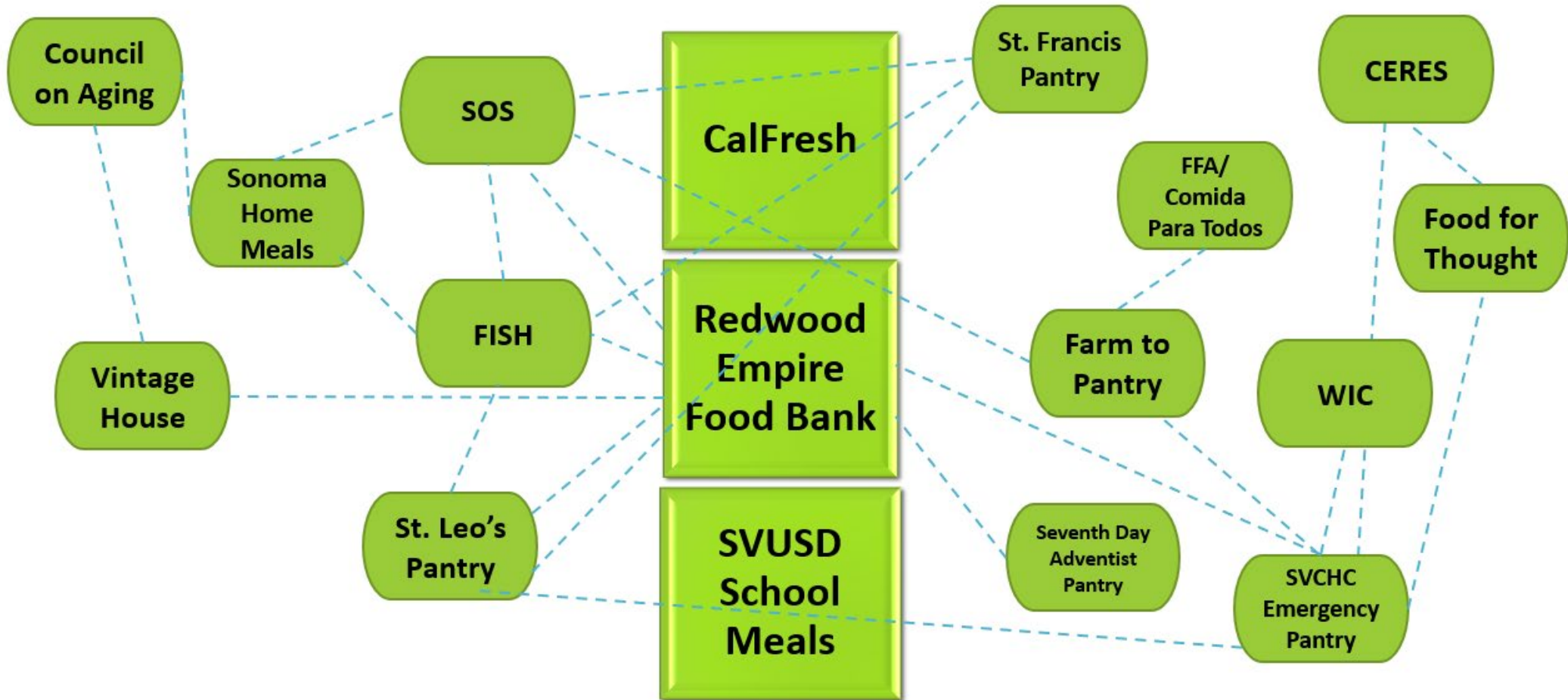


According to the CDC, diet is a leading risk factor for mortality, with more than 1.5 million deaths linked to poor diet annually. (CDC 2015).

- **More vegetables** (*#1 request by far!*) & fruit
- **More choice / more variety**
- **More “healthy” food / less processed and canned food**
- **Accommodation for special needs**
E.g. less salt/sodium, less sugar, less spicy/acidic, softer foods
- **More prepared foods** (*English survey respondents*)

A LOOSE NETWORK OF STRONG AND COMMITTED PROVIDERS

Decentralized and Relationship-Based



Food Security "Backbone"

The Critical Role of Community Support

It takes a village (or a Valley)...



Strong support from local donors, churches and civic groups

500+ community volunteers

Collaboration with markets, businesses and nonprofits

Community-based agriculture/farms/gleaners

Photo: REFB food distribution at St. Leo's

Local Food Providers: Sources of Food

Food Source #1

**Redwood Empire
Food Bank**



Food Source #2

**Donated &
Recovered Food**



Food Source #3

**Directly Purchased
Food**



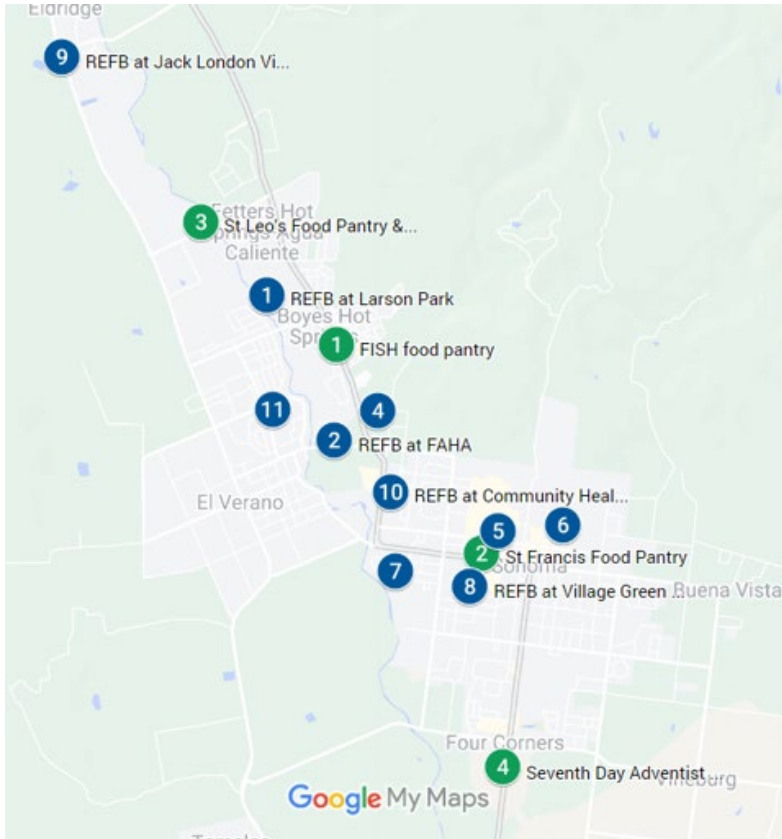
Summary of Key Findings: Food Insecure Residents



- Regular, Intermittent, and Seasonal Needs
- More People Need Help than are Currently in the System
- Combining Resources to Meet Needs
- Client Segments with Different Needs/Wants/Barriers
- Comprehensive, Current Information on Resources Hard to Find
- Weekday Focus, Transportation/Mobility Issues Limit Access
- Barriers of Language, Culture & Generations
- Text has Become a Preferred Communication Tool
- Clients Seek More Choice / More Produce

Summary of Key Findings:

Local Food Security System



Food Pantries and REFB Grocery Distribution sites

- Service Locations Generally Well-Distributed
- Supportive Community is Foundational, and Proven in Crisis
- High-Trust, High Value Programs, Strong Client Relationships
- No System-Level Data On Clients, Usage, or Capacity
- No “One Stop Shop” or Entry Point for Accessing the System
- Underutilized Capacity in Pantries; Little/no Client Choice
- Many Programs are Difficult to Scale
- Missed Opportunities, Potential for Partnerships

Summary of Key Findings:

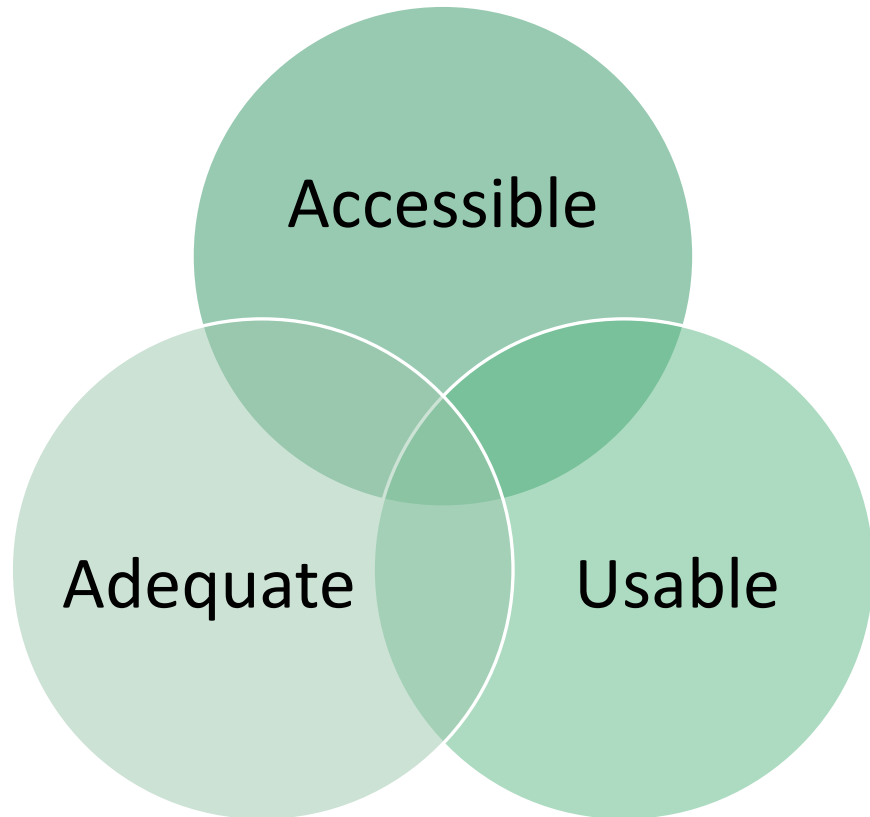
Local Food System Ingredients



- Lean Organizations – Funding, Leadership
- Food recovery is critical – but requires high level of coordination
- Powerful food bank able to partner
- Opportunity to increase food procurement options for savings
- Opportunities to further tap into programs providing healthy food (e.g., “food as medicine” and farmers market nutrition programs)
- Reliance on workforce of 500+ volunteers
- Limited space hinders storage, sorting & distribution, pantry choice
- No dedicated commercial kitchen (long term)

Opportunities for:

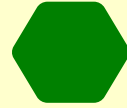
Meeting local needs for **food security**... in a way that can be **sustained** over time.



ACCESS to Available Food Resources

Recommendations & Opportunities

Increase Enrollment in
Safety Net Programs



Expand Bilingual Services
& Bicultural Training



Resource Guide
& REFB Web Site



Build Awareness for
“prescriptions” to
Food As Medicine



Coordinated Outreach,
Marketing & Education



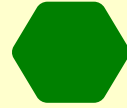
Pilot Expansions to Improve
Access (weekend, evenings)



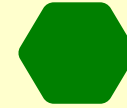
CLIENT EXPERIENCE

Recommendations & Opportunities

Expand Choice in
Food Pantry Programs



More Fresh Produce



Enable Clients to
Adjust Quantity of
Food Provided



Client resources on
food safety, nutrition
and recipes



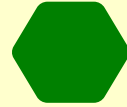
Add or Adapt Client
Communication Tools
(Texts, Apps)



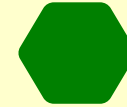
COORDINATION, Connectivity & Strategic Initiatives

Recommendations & Opportunities

Food Roundtable



Embrace REFB's Client Data System – better info and easier client intake



Part-Time Food Coordinator (bilingual)



Expand Volunteer Pipeline



Integrate Regional Food Providers



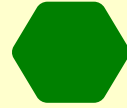
“Next Step” Task Forces – food recovery, purchasing, Pantry choice



SYSTEM Resources, Cost Effectiveness & Sustainability

Recommendations & Opportunities

Maximize Food Sourcing
from REFB



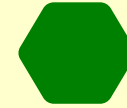
Maximize Local Food
Recovery & Usage of
Recovered Foods



Explore Food
Hub Facility



Permanent Commercial
Kitchen



Invest in Sustainable
Sources of Local
Produce



Support Initiatives to
Increase Effectiveness and
Program Reach



What is the RECIPE for strengthening food security in the Sonoma Valley?



We have all the key ingredients

Ingredients:

- ✓ Dedicated local and regional food assistance providers
- ✓ Strong regional food bank
- ✓ Effective community partnerships
- ✓ Generous markets and food businesses
- ✓ Strong local agriculture, farmers and gleaners
- ✓ 500+ community volunteers
- ✓ Support from local donors, churches and civic groups
- ✓ Local foundation and fundraising
- ✓ Community culture of coming together to help those in need



We know what the recipe is for success

Recipe:

- ❖ Ensure access without barriers to everyone who needs food.
- ❖ Meet people where they are at (location, language, communication tools) and provide them with choice whenever possible.
- ❖ Use a food provider network to coordinate, share, and learn, and to foster collaboration, innovation and problem solving.
- ❖ Foster connections on a regional basis to tap into available resources.
- ❖ Maximize cost-effective food sourcing and recovery.
- ❖ Have facilities for efficient storage, sorting, distribution & meal prep.
- ❖ Develop “pipelines” – volunteers, leaders, ongoing funding.

Let's get cooking!

1) Building understanding, awareness and momentum

- Please share and use the full report and today's deck, available immediately on Catalyst website: www.sonomavalleycatalystfund.org.
- Press coverage
- Presentations

2) Catalyst will create an initial strategy and a multi-year initiative

- We first have to organize ourselves internally and with you. This will take time.
- We know we can work together in crisis. Can we come together to address an acute but chronic issue—building programs, developing organizations and working as a system?
- We will likely need to hire a part-time coordinator to drive action with you and we anticipate supporting an ongoing food roundtable to facilitate coordination.

QUESTIONS / DISCUSSION

