



Request for Proposal



Food is a basic human right;
this is the principle upon
which all ACCFB's work
is founded.

Assessing Unmet Food Need in Alameda County

RFP release: May 24, 2018

Letter of intent: May 31, 2018

Deadline for Proposals: June 28, 2018

Confidentiality

The information provided in this document is considered proprietary to ACCFB and is being provided solely for assisting you in proposal preparation. We ask that you treat the details we have shared accordingly. ACCFB reserves the right to request a signed confidentiality disclosure in the event your organization is selected for this project.

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Key information



Context

This Request for Proposal (RFP) is an invitation to researchers and academics to prepare and submit a proposal with estimated funding needed to complete deliverables.

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Our timeline

Steps in RFP process:

Proposal released

Letter/email of intent

DEADLINE FOR PROPOSAL

Notification of decisions

Date:

May 24, 2018

May 31, 2018

June 28, 2018

Week of July 23



How to contact us

Please direct inquiries to our Point of Contact.

Name: Kate Cheyne

Title: Research Manager

Email address: kcheyne@accfb.org



Address for submitting your proposal

PLEASE: submit proposal electronically

Proposals must be submitted by email/electronically to the following addresses:

Kate Cheyne: kcheyne@accfb.org

Allison Pratt: apratt@accfb.org

Quotes sent by post or fax, or hard copy delivered to our office, will not be accepted.



Later changes to the RFP process

If, after publishing the RFP, we need to change anything about the RFP, or RFP process, or want to provide interested parties with additional information we will let all interested parties know by contacting your Point of Contact.

Please notify us of your intention to submit an RFP, via email by May 31. With subject line “Intent to Submit RFP”, please also include the following contact information for all collaborating research partners. Please specify a main Point of Contact.

- Name
- Title
- Affiliation
- Email address

Please send email to Kate Cheyne (kcheyne@accfb.org) and Allison Pratt (apratt@accfb.org).

Opportunity summary

Since 1985, Alameda County Community Food Bank has provided food assistance and resources to children, adults and seniors in our county. Our Food Bank is located in the heart of the Bay Area in California, serving ethnically diverse individuals and households with significant health disparities. We serve 1 in 5 Alameda County residents,¹ and have a higher total food insecure population than any other of the nine Bay Area counties.²

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Alameda County Community Food Bank is endeavouring towards a major evolution in the next five years. Our most recent strategic plan is ending with the notable result of having dramatically increased meals for Alameda County. When we embarked on our current strategic plan in 2014, we set a bold goal to provide 90 million meals per year – or 1 meal/day for every food insecure person across Alameda County – by expanding our network distribution, maximizing Cal Fresh enrolment, and advocating for policy and systems change.

Our new strategic plan directs us to translate those outputs into impact on people's lives.³ The plan embraces the reality that to meet the variable need in our community, we will no longer assume that increasing outputs translates to the outcomes that are most important to us. We must measure and target our work more precisely, demonstrate our impact with rigor, innovate quickly, and expand the public policy fight more broadly.

The most immediate and critical step to shifting to a people-centred theory of change is to know the people – both the people we serve, and those we need to serve. **Two sources of information are needed towards this end: first, an illustration of our current reach⁴; secondly, and the opportunity herein – an illustration of the underlying need across our service area (the “where” and the “who”).**

In this opportunity, we are seeking a research partner and a methodology that can illuminate risk of food insecurity within the context of cost of living, that enables prioritization decisions (demographics; markers of vulnerability) and incorporates geographic sensitivity.

Guiding Questions

We hope the following will offer a useful orientation for the strategic questions we are trying to answer with this opportunity:

- Do we have the right distribution of resources?
- Who are the people we're *not* serving? How and where can we reach them?
- How do we balance two general types of need – 1) chronic and 2) intermittent?
- How should we prioritize our resources for our food distribution footprint?
- What do displacement and shifting demographics mean for food insecurity in Alameda County, and how can we use the foregoing trends of the last 18 years to provide insight into the next 1, 3, or 5 years?

¹ Feeding America (2014). Hunger in America 2014.

² Feeding America (2017). Map the Meal Gap 2017.

³ Alameda County Community Food Bank Strategic Plan outline attached.

⁴ See APPENDIX A for description of activities to-date in estimating network reach.

About us

For more than 30 years, Alameda County Community Food Bank has been an integral part of the Bay Area's social safety net.

Our work is founded upon this principle: Food is a basic human right. This core belief guides us every day in responding to our community's immediate nutritional needs. At the center of our efforts is a committed network of 240 partner agencies offering hunger relief and other critical services. These agencies provide tangibles, like shelter and job skills, as well as intangibles, like compassion and dignity.

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We are on track to distribute the equivalent of about 32 million meals this year, with fresh fruits and vegetables making up about *three-fifths* of the food we provide.

We have been and will continue to be trailblazers at the intersection of health and hunger. In 2006, we were the first food bank in the nation to discontinue donations of sugary beverages and have one of the most progressive nutrition policies in the nation. We also have a Research Department, which has collaborated in three separate rigorous studies.^{5,6,7} We see our participation in research to be integral to our ability to learn how we can break the cycle of food insecurity and chronic illness, be a partner for our clients in prevention and management, and create synergy between healthcare systems and community service organizations for better alignment of care. Our work in this area continues to expand because we know that a nourished community is healthier, better able to learn, safer and more economically stable.

While we are providing more food than ever, we know the reality remains that we cannot end hunger without addressing poverty, and the root causes of food insecurity and poverty. Our Cal Fresh outreach team works throughout Alameda County every day to maximize participation in nutrition programs, as our advocacy team works at the local, state and federal levels to empower grassroots mobilizing and advocate for policies to reduce poverty and help low-income communities escape food insecurity.

From improving established methods to enacting new approaches to ending hunger, collectively our work is leading a national movement to redefine what a food bank is, and what it can be. Our growth and our ability to stay ahead of community need is fuelled by passion and energy. Our work is only possible because of the partners who have made the decision to invest in us, and in the vision of a better nourished, stronger community.

⁵ Feeding America Launches New Efforts to Help Low-Income Americans Fight Diabetes. Accessed at: <http://www.feedingamerica.org/about-us/press-room/Laura-John-Arnold-Foundation-Funding.html>.

⁶ Partnering for Public Health: Diabetes Prevention Pilot Project Launches in Time for Diabetes Awareness Month. Accessed at <https://hungerandhealth.feedingamerica.org/2017/11/partnering-public-health-diabetes-prevention-pilot-project-launches-time-diabetes-awareness-month/>.

⁷ Prescribing Food as Medicine Shows Promising Results for Health of Alameda County Families and Children. Accessed at <https://www.childrenshospitaloakland.org/main/news/prescribing-food-as-medicine-shows-promising-resul-405.aspx>.

Issue Background

Food insecurity can be operationally understood as the ‘uncertainty and insufficiency of food availability and access that are limited by resource constraints, and the worry or anxiety of hunger that may result from it’.⁸ Conversely, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) describes the concept of *food security* as ‘consistent, dependable access to enough food for active, healthy living’.⁹

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The United States Department of Agriculture in the early 1990s carried out research that resulted in the development of an 18-item questionnaire that would allow for measurement of household food insecurity in a population. This 18-item battery is embedded into the Current Population Survey’s Food Security Supplement, and has been collected annually since 2001. It is a critically important means of monitoring national trends in presence and depth of food insecurity at a population level.

Since 2011, Feeding America has collaborated in the production of their *Map the Meal Gap* (MMG) analysis. Prior to MMG, Feeding America and many food banks across the nation used poverty rates alone as an indicator of local food need as it is available at and below the county level. National data has indicated that more than half (57%) of people struggling with food insecurity earn incomes above the federal poverty level, and 6 in 10 people living in poor households are food secure.¹⁰ Map the Meal Gap generates four types of local-level data: overall food insecurity estimates, child food-insecurity estimates, average meal costs and food budget shortfalls. ACCFB has used this data in recent years to help us examine where we might be under-represented or under-resourced. To review the technical brief¹¹ or executive summary¹² for Map the Meal Gap, please see the links below.

As a food bank, we need operational information about a) where unmet risk of food insecurity is developing locally and b) in what demographic populations risk of food insecurity is developing that should be prioritized. We are concerned that statistical models based on national and state data may not accurately reflect the extraordinary cost of living and levels of housing burden in expensive regions like the Bay Area when imputing to the local level. We believe there is an opportunity to improve the way we are assessing where we are under-resourced and how we can prioritize our finite resources. This approach could incorporate a shift from *perception* of food insecurity toward an assessment of *risk* of food insecurity – for example, what is a reasonable food budget for a family living at deep poverty? At the poverty level? Near poverty? And how do housing, childcare, medical costs and tax policies influence that budget?

⁸ Wunderlich, G.S. and Norwood, J.L. (eds.) (2006). Food Insecurity and Hunger in the United States: An Assessment of the Measure, Washington, DC: National Research Council of the National Academies.

⁹ Coleman-Jensen, A., Nord, M., Andrews, M., and Carlson, S. (2011). Household food security in the United States in 2010. Washington, DC: ERR-125, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Econ. Res. Serv.

¹⁰ United States Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. (2016, September). Statistical supplement to household food security in the United States in 2015. Washington: D.C.: Coleman-Jensen, A., Rabbitt, M., Gregory, C., & Singh, A.

¹¹ Gundersen, C et al. Map the Meal Gap 2017: Technical Brief. Accessed at <http://www.feedingamerica.org/research/map-the-meal-gap/2015/2015-map-the-meal-gap-tech-brief.pdf>.

¹² Feeding America (2017). Map the Meal Gap 2017: Highlights of Findings for Overall and Child Food Insecurity. Accessed at <http://www.feedingamerica.org/research/map-the-meal-gap/2015/2015-mapthamealgap-exec-summary.pdf>.

The following table includes food insecurity rates and poverty rates for the 2017 Map the Meal Gap release.

	<i>Alameda County</i>
Food Insecurity	14.3% (226,090)
Poverty Rates ¹³	
Up to 200FPL	25% (405,391)
Up to 300FPL	38% (613,090)

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We also want to be intentional about grounding the Food Bank's part in reducing food insecurity within the context of the importance of public policy (e.g. nutrition programs), and are therefore interested in exploring methodologies that would support this. For example, what proportion of meals should we aim to meet as a food bank, versus the meals that could be maximized through the role of public policy? This question importantly frames our task as coordinated strategies towards policy, systems-level and operational change.

Macroeconomic trends

We need a new approach to engaging not just the very low-income struggling with food insecurity, but those who are out of reach of the safety net and may not be aware of, or receptive to traditional messages of outreach about our services.

We know our clients are the first to be impacted by economic downturns, and the last to be lifted out. Our clients struggle against stagnant wages and increasing costs in other areas, including housing and transportation. In one recent study, living in a higher-cost county was associated with poorer nutrition among low-income Americans. More specifically, results indicated that cost of food may be a less useful indicator of food purchasing power than rent itself, which often constitutes the largest expenditure away from the food budget among low-income households.¹⁴

Who or where are those at risk of food insecurity who may not using our services? How and where can we reach out to them?

Cost-of-Living and Housing Burden in Alameda County

The Public Policy Institute of California, an independent non-partisan research institute, estimates that 1 in 3 Alameda County residents live in or near poverty using the California Poverty Measure.¹⁵

¹³ American Community Survey, 2015 1-year estimates.

¹⁴ Basu, S., Wimer, C., and Seligman, H. Moderation of the Relation of County-Level cost of Living to Nutrition by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. *American Journal of Public Health Research*. 2016;106(11): 2064-2070.

¹⁵ Public Policy Institute of California. California Poverty by County, 2013-2015.

According to a report prepared by Policy Link,¹⁶ nearly half of all households in Oakland were **housing cost burdened** in 2016, spending more than 30% of their net monthly income on housing costs. Lower-income households are disproportionately affected, with 80% of low-income households experiencing housing burden. Between 2015 and 2018, the fair market rent for a 2-bedroom apartment rose by 50% for Alameda County.

If we use the example of a family of four (two adults, two children), living at 300% of the 2017 Federal Poverty Level (\$74,574/year)¹⁷ and seeking a 2-bedroom unit at 2017 fair market rent (\$2,173/month), this family would be paying nearly 50%¹⁸ of their net monthly income on rent, what is considered **extreme housing burden** at that level. This same family would need an annual income of \$86,920 to afford a 2-bedroom FMR, or what equates to \$41.79/hour.

For the years 2011-2015, renter households made up nearly half of all households in Alameda County.¹⁹ The estimated hourly mean renter wage in 2017 was \$21.99 – and this renter would need to work nearly two full time jobs to afford a 2-bedroom FMR. To afford a 1-bedroom FMR, this renter would be spending 66% of their net monthly income.

Displacement and Shifting Demographics

African Americans and families with children are disproportionately represented in lower-income households. Between 2000-2015, Alameda County experienced a loss of 35,000 Black/African American individuals from the county, as documented by Census migration data.²⁰ This represents a 25% reduction in the county's African American population. During the same time, the county gained almost 100,000 people identifying as Hispanic/Latino, and nearly 200,000 people identifying as Asian.

What do displacement and shifting demographics mean for food insecurity in Alameda County, and how can we use the foregoing trends of the last 18 years to provide insight into the next 1, 3, or 5 years? Or, how is the geography of food insecurity likely to shift in the coming years, considering broader population shifts over the last 18 years?²¹

¹⁶ Policy Link (2016). Oakland's Displacement Crisis: As Told by the Numbers.

¹⁷ U.S. Census Bureau. Poverty thresholds for 2017 by Size of Family and Number of Related Children Under 18 Years. For size of family unit (4), with two related children, 100FPL is \$24,858.

¹⁸ Annual gross income converted to estimated net monthly income, assuming 2017 pay check originating from California with standard federal and state withholding while filing as married couple.

¹⁹ National Low Housing Coalition (2017). Out of Reach.

²⁰ U.S. Census Bureau. Census Flows Mapper.

²¹ State of California, Department of Finance Demographic Research Bureau provides county population projections by age, sex and race/ethnicity. They do not forecast population by income level.

Our Requirements

The result of this partnership should produce for the food bank:

1. A methodology for peer-reviewed publication that can serve as a plausible model for other food banks.
2. A novel assessment of risk of food insecurity.
3. A methodology to assess the ‘fit’ between the underlying need and food assistance that is unmet through government nutrition programs or food bank network reach.
4. Geographic insight at the sub-county level that can be used for resource allocation and programmatic direction. It is important to us that we be able to visualize the underlying need by census block/tract, state legislative districts, zip code tabulation areas, census places (cities) and school districts.
5. Demographic insight about people-centered target groups that can inform prioritization, programmatic direction and communication strategy.

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Methodology and Accessibility Needs

Methodology and accessibility should meet the following parameters:

1. Inclusion of correlates of *risk of* food insecurity are informed by relevant literature and knowledge of local/regional economic pressures (e.g. cost of living, poverty, etc.).
2. Researcher is willing to perform analysis annually/in alternate years with updated data (enough to register macroeconomic trends).
3. Accessibility bears in mind policy changes that may impact availability of data.
4. Methodology should serve as plausible model for other food banks.

Food Bank will work with Research Partner and other community partners to acquire other necessary, non-publicly available data.

Product and Visualization Needs

Analytical and visualization outputs or products should meet the following needs:

1. Must provide information to guide food bank resource allocation decisions and drive organizational action (geographic sensitivity – the “where”)
2. Must highlight relevant demographic or markers of vulnerability (people-centred and/or environmental – the “who”)
3. Should include narrative detailing data, analytic approach, results, and conclusion.
4. Should include mapped data visualization at the sub-county level (preferably at the census tract or census block level).
5. Food Bank will need to be able to re-produce maps in QGIS/Tableau using analytical output.

Important Milestones

We anticipate that the Contract will commence TBD 2018. Initial term of the contract is 1-2 years, in which the Research Partner would work with the Food Bank to create the methodology, execute the analyses, and produce the narrative and illustrate results.

Key outcomes

The following are the key outcomes that are to be delivered.

Description	Date for delivery
Finalize research partner contract	August 2018
Detailed summary of proposed data and methods	August 2018
Data acquisition (influenced by accessibility)	Fall 2018
Data analysis	Winter 2018
Presentation of analytical results and outputs	Winter 2018 - Spring 2019
Manuscript submission for peer-review	Spring 2019

**We will work with the chosen partner to adjust the above dates, with outcomes delivered within the FY18-19 fiscal year.*

Proposal and Cost Components

Proposal components

In preparing proposal, Respondents should include the following:

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- a. Proposal outlines tentative/suggested methodology of Respondent, referencing where previous research can positively inform current opportunity, and articulating limitations and challenges anticipated (methodology, data access, interpretation, etc.).
- b. Proposal includes a summary of data sources, including a brief statement of purpose of the data within the methodology and year of data proposed to be used.
 - a. Secondary, publicly available (e.g. ACS)
 - b. Secondary, non-publicly available (e.g. Cal Fresh enrolment)
 - c. Primary (Food Bank)²²
- c. Proposal outlines analytic output format, products, reports and maps that will be produced for Food Bank.
- d. Proposal includes an estimated timeline with deliverables for key outcomes.
- e. Proposal includes CV or resume for each participating member of Respondent team, and briefly articulates individual role within team.

Cost components

Budget estimates to be provided by respondents. Applicants are welcome to provide 1-2 budget scenarios. In submitting the proposed Budget(s), the Respondent should incorporate the following:

- a. Respondents may use any format they prefer.
- b. The proposed Budget shows a breakdown of all direct and indirect costs, fees, expenses and charges associated with the full delivery of the Requirements over the 12-month contract period.
- c. The proposed Budget includes an addendum that shows the breakdown of all estimated direct and indirect costs, fees, expenses and charges associated with *repeating* the analysis and providing analysis report/visualization following initial execution (2020-2021).
- d. Where part of the proposed Budget is based on fee rates, all rates are to be specified, either hourly or daily or both as required.
- e. In preparing their proposed Budget Respondents are to consider all risks, contingencies and other circumstances relating to the delivery of the Requirements and include adequate provision in the Budget and pricing information to manage such risks and contingencies.
- f. Respondents are to document in their Budget all assumptions and qualifications made about the delivery of the Requirements.

²² Food Bank data is currently attributable by pounds at the site-level (below agency level). Through the Client Voice process mentioned in APPENDIX A, eventually food bank data will both be attributable to the site-level and to the individual client or household (opt-in).

Evaluation of Proposals

Proposals will be evaluated by a group within the Food Bank including, but not necessarily limited to the Executive Director, Chief Partnership and Strategy Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Chief Development Officer, ACCFB Board Member(s), ACCFB Research Advisory Board Member(s) and Research Manager. Evaluation panel may also include external partners.

Evaluation of proposals will incorporate consideration of the following:

- a. Did Respondent include all requested information from Proposal and Cost Components – including:
 - a. Methodology
 - b. Data sources
 - c. Products
 - d. Outputs
 - e. Timelines
 - f. Respondent team CV and roles/responsibilities
 - g. Budget scenario(s)
- b. Did Respondent demonstrate capacity and interest in proposed opportunity and longer-term collaboration.
- c. Did Respondent provide a thoughtful proposal – both being responsive to our needs, and articulating suggestions and challenges/limitations with what we have asked for. (See below)

Rating	Definition	Score
EXCELLENT significantly exceeds the criterion	Exceeds the criterion. Exceptional demonstration by the Respondent of the relevant ability, understanding, experience, skills, resource and quality measures required to meet the criterion. Quote identifies factors that will offer potential added value, with supporting evidence.	9-10
GOOD exceeds the criterion in some respects	Satisfies the criterion with minor additional benefits. Above average demonstration by the Respondent of the relevant ability, understanding, experience, skills, resource and quality measures required to meet the criterion. Quote identifies factors that will offer potential added value, with supporting evidence.	7-8
ACCEPTABLE meets the criterion at a minimal level	Satisfies the criterion. Demonstration by the Respondent of the relevant ability, understanding, experience, skills, resource, and quality measures required to meet the criterion, with supporting evidence.	5-6
MINOR RESERVATIONS marginally deficient	Satisfies the criterion with minor reservations. Some minor reservations of the Respondent's relevant ability, understanding, experience, skills, resource and quality measures required to meet the criterion, with little or no supporting evidence.	3-4
SERIOUS RESERVATIONS significant issues that need to be addressed	Satisfies the criterion with major reservations. Considerable reservations of the respondent's relevant ability, understanding, experience, skills, resource and quality measures required to meet the criterion, with little or no supporting evidence.	1-2
UNACCEPTABLE significant issues not capable of being resolved	Does not meet the criterion. Does not comply and/or insufficient information provided to demonstrate that the Respondent has the ability, understanding, experience, skills, resource and quality measures required to meet the criterion, with little or no supporting evidence.	0

APPENDIX A

Measurement of network reach – activities to date

In tandem with the opportunity represented within this RFP, we want to move ourselves and our network toward an environment in which data can be collected in a consistent and accurate fashion that allows moving from telling stories about outputs to better understanding clients' circumstances and needs, seeing the "whole person" and putting food insecurity within the larger context of structural challenges. The network-wide system ('Client Voice', also referred to the Service Insights Initiative within Feeding America's national network) will enable an unduplicated client count, and support outcomes reporting and enable us to specifically target collaborations and interventions that go well beyond addressing food insecurity. We are in negotiations with our chosen technology platform vendor, and anticipate implementing Client Voice with a pilot agency group starting in summer 2018. We aim to onboard 80% of our network by volume in the next three years.

APPENDIX B

Institutions and organizations included in RFP release

Columbia University
Duke University
mdrc
Mathematica Policy Research
Northwestern University
Research Triangle International
Social Policy Research Associates
Stanford University
Syracuse University
University of Arizona
University of California, Berkeley
University of California, Davis
University of California, Los Angeles
University of California, San Francisco
University of Connecticut
University of Illinois
University of Madison-Wisconsin
University of Minnesota
University of Nebraska
University of Southern California
Urban Institute
Westat