



# **Strategic Plan**

**2018 - 2022**

**Alameda County Community Food Bank**

# INTRODUCTION

## Our Bold New Goal: Improving Lives of the People We Serve

In the next four years, Alameda County Community Food Bank (ACCFB) will build on our past to create an exciting evolution. Our 2013-2018 strategic plan dramatically increased meals available to people in Alameda County. Our new strategic plan will help us to go beyond meals to improve the lives of the people we serve. This strategic plan is rooted in our core values, and commits us to take action that advances equity and opportunity for all.

Our bold new goal still anchors ACCFB firmly in the business of food security. We are a food bank: Food delivery and food related public policy will remain the primary way we improve people's lives. We also remain committed to working with, and expanding, our network partners to provide more meals to people in our community.

This strategic plan embraces the reality that in order to meet the dynamic needs of our community, we cannot assume that more meals will improve food security and wellness for the people we serve. We will develop the capacity to measure and target our work more precisely, demonstrate our impact with greater rigor, innovate faster, expand the public policy fight, and recruit more support from the community.

This new direction requires a long-term journey. In our political climate, the obstacles before us to sustain meals available to our community are significant; and taking on the challenge of measurably improving people's lives represents a leap. We will not get all the way there in the span of four years. Yet, for the sake of our community, we must take on this challenge.

### Main Strategic Objectives

1. **Strengthen** the nutrition safety net.
2. **Measure the "hunger gap"** and shift priorities to close it.
3. Define and demonstrate how **our work changes lives** (e.g., improving people's health).
4. **Invest in innovation** to better serve the community.
5. **Advance the policy fight** to end hunger.
6. Cultivate a **broader, more diverse base of supporters**.

The rest of this plan articulates our strategic objectives with corresponding *rationale*, and major *landmarks*.

# ONE: STRENGTHEN THE NUTRITION SAFETY NET

## Rationale

We play a critical role in the nutrition safety net, in terms of food distribution and policy work. Today, our safety net is under attack. It is our fundamental role to preserve – and strengthen – food distribution efforts and public policies currently in place.

At the core of this objective is the fact that most of the resources that comprise the nutrition safety net reside in the public sector. We must continue to hold government accountable. We must also invest resources to defend against emerging threats to policy achievements already won.

## Landmarks

By 2022, ACCFB will increase meals attained from 90 million to 120 million by achieving the following outcomes:

- Distribute 40 million quality meals by investing in high-capacity network partners and expanding direct distribution to reach additional people;
- Provide 5 million meals by connecting families to CalFresh through application assistance and case management;
- Secure 75 million meals via policy change by strengthening our safety net while promoting an economic opportunity agenda.

# TWO: MEASURE “THE HUNGER GAP,” PRIORITIZE EFFORTS

## Rationale

The most immediate and critical step in our plan is to *know the people*. ACCFB has mastered knowledge of distributing food at scale. We must build upon that trajectory to understand food program participants – those who are currently receiving food as well as those who could be receiving assistance.

We need two types of business intelligence to measure the hunger gap: a measurement of our current food program participants and a measurement of total food insecurity in Alameda County. Both will need to reveal more than a count, so that we are able to describe the hunger gap by people groups; for example, people in certain income, neighborhood or demographic sets.

As we build our hunger gap knowledge, our next question will be: “how do we close the gap?” New data will help us prioritize our work.

## Landmarks

By 2022, ACCFB will have comprehensive knowledge of the hunger gap in Alameda County because we will have achieved the following outcomes:

Measure current food program participants in terms of quantity and characteristics by partnering with our network to implement the Client Voice technology system;

Measure total food insecurity in Alameda County by quantity and characteristics of those in need in partnership with local academic/research institutions;

Compare the measurements to identify hunger gaps by people groups;

Prioritize our efforts to close the gaps in a way that strategically allocates ACCFB resources.

## THREE: DEFINE AND DEMONSTRATE HOW OUR WORK IMPROVES LIVES

### Rationale

To demonstrate how our work improves lives, we will need to precisely define which outcomes to pursue, and how we will show our success. A natural starting point will be to build on our “food as medicine” work to demonstrate food security and wellness-related outcomes. We may also decide to evaluate our impact on other types of life-changing outcomes related to education, workforce readiness, etc.

In pursuing this objective, we will establish research partnerships and leverage the work of others to build the evidence-base that demonstrates how our work improves lives. We will develop more depth to our expertise, and we assume that we will not be executing the bulk of the work on our own.

To support this work, we will increase our collaborations with a wider array of outcome-oriented funders and partners. To achieve our desired outcomes and close the hunger gap, we will develop food access strategies that are embedded in non-hunger settings (i.e. other than the food line) to reduce stigma as a barrier to food access, and build broader coalitions to strengthen the nutrition safety net.

### Landmarks

By 2022, ACCFB will advance an evidence-based theory of change that articulates how our work improves the lives of the people we serve:

Develop, test and refine a Theory of Change describing how Food Bank programs and policy work improve the lives of the people we serve;

Design and execute evaluation plans and research projects that test the Theory of Change; revise as necessary;

Validate our findings and promote to key target audiences to develop new, high-impact partners and supporters.

## **FOUR: INVEST IN INNOVATION**

### **Rationale**

Closing the hunger gap and improving lives will require us to change the way we work. We will dedicate resources to experimentation and support agile program development to reach new people. We will continue growing our culture of innovation, and nimbleness.

The data we acquire and lessons we learn along the way – by testing and piloting ideas – will determine the exact shape of future innovations.

### **Landmarks**

By 2022, ACCFB will achieve the capacity and culture for innovation because we will have realized the following outcomes:

Develop a process for innovation, orient staff to this process and invest in their development;

Create the conditions for innovation – trust, communication, dedicated resources toward experimentation – and expand our organizational culture to prize innovation;

Establish a governance structure to ensure that management choices and team configuration facilitate faster speed to market for new ideas.

## **FIVE: ADVANCE THE POLICY FIGHT AGAINST HUNGER**

### **Rationale**

As we move toward improving lives, we cannot lose focus on the systems that impact those we serve. We will expand policy targets to address key determinants of life outcomes, including the lack of economic opportunity, as we maintain hunger as our core issue. We will address poverty as the root cause of hunger. We have long since advanced the fight against hunger beyond the boundaries of safety-net policies, and have already achieved policy wins along these lines.

Many factors contribute to poverty, and we recognize racial disparities are chief among them. Public policy created inequitable institutions and structures; and it can be leveraged to correct this legacy. We will improve the lives of those we serve by promoting policies that advance racial equity and opportunity for all. Our work on racial equity is not to the exclusion of other types of equity work (e.g. gender); but rather what we learn will guide us as we move into these other spaces. Engaging key leaders in this work, we will deploy existing tools to deepen our advancement of equity.

## Landmarks

By 2022, ACCFB will have improved the lives of those we serve by addressing poverty as the root cause of hunger and advancing equal opportunity:

Integrate the policy fight against hunger within the policy fight against poverty; broaden our policy agenda to support economic and social opportunity for the people we serve;

Support public policy to eliminate racial disparities and ensure equitable conditions for well-being in our community;

Build coalition and grassroots power to advance the agency of the people we serve to end hunger.

## SIX: CULTIVATE A BROADER, MORE DIVERSE BASE OF SUPPORTERS

### Rationale

Adopting a goal to improve lives is innovative, ambitious and impactful. We will use this new direction to inform, and expand the network of people who support our work as funders, thought leaders, in-kind supporters and volunteers. We will develop new messaging, and relationships, to increase recognition of the leveraging power of food to improve lives.

### Landmarks

By 2022, ACCFB will increase non-government contributed revenue by 25% by achieving the following outcomes:

Diversify and grow the funding base; increase the number of high-value, long-term investors to support our innovation work;

Expand partnerships – within our network, with food industry and with key influencers – to gain financial support, product expertise, and credibility with new and expanded audiences;

Build on –and deepen – board engagement in securing supporters; expand highly-skilled volunteer and pro bono support to benefit our work.