

PREVIEW AGENDA



- 8:00 am Registration & breakfast
- 9:30 am Welcome remarks
- 9:45 am Freshy Awards Ceremony
- 10:20 am **Keynote speaker**
A New Way of Life
- 11:10 am **Plenary panel discussion**
*Nourish California, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities,
Alameda County Community Food Bank, A New Way of Life*
- 12:00 pm Lunch
- 1:10 pm **Breakout Session, Round 1**
- From Policy Change to Food Security: We Imagine, We Act to Build Community-Centered CalFresh Systems
 - Building Food Access Infrastructure Through Farm to School Programs
 - We Imagine, We Thrive: Advancing Food Justice Through Mental Health and Sustainable Food Systems
 - Beyond the Plenary: After Hours
- 2:20 pm **Breakout Session, Round 2**
- Beyond Benefits: Tackling Food Prices to Strengthen CalFresh and Community Power
 - Co-Creating the Future of Digital Outreach for Food Benefits in California
 - CalFresh for College Students: Celebrating the Journey of Radical Change and Co-creating the Next Chapter
- 3:20 pm Small group debrief + closing
- 3:45 pm Refreshments and networking



2026 CALFRESH FORUM BREAKOUT SESSIONS



From Policy Change to Food Security: We Imagine, We Act to Build Community-Centered CalFresh Systems

Speakers:

- *Bill York, President & CEO, 211 San Diego/Community Information Exchange/San Diego Health Connect*
- *Dr. Elizabeth Hernandez, Interim Deputy Chief Administrative Officer for the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency*
- *Raychel Sager, Director of Client Services, 211 San Diego*

As policy changes reshape CalFresh, how do we move beyond simply responding to barriers and begin imagining—and building—systems that help people remain connected to food assistance? This interactive session highlights the partnership between 211 San Diego and the County of San Diego, using the Enrollment Center and Work Ready Hub as examples of how government- community collaboration, operational infrastructure, trusted relationships, navigation, and retention strategies can turn the vision of a more equitable and resilient CalFresh system into practical action.

Building Food Access Infrastructure Through Farm to School Programs

Facilitator: Neha Sanghera, Policy Director, Berkeley Food Institute

Speakers:

- *Alicia Baddorf, Sustainable Supply Chain Coordinator, UC Agriculture and Natural Resources*
- *Catherine O'Brien, Farm to School Network Regional Lead for the Bay Area, CA Department of Food and Agriculture*

This panel will examine how food hubs function as critical links in regional food supply chains, drawing on California's Farm to School program to explore how serving school districts has strengthened distribution networks, connected communities to fresh local food, and made school meals more culturally responsive through community engagement strategies like crowdsourcing family recipes. The session will conclude with policy recommendations from evaluators of California's Farm to School Incubator Grant Program, offering actionable pathways for scaling these models statewide.

2026 CALFRESH FORUM BREAKOUT SESSIONS



We Imagine, We Thrive: Advancing Food Justice Through Mental Health and Sustainable Food Systems

Speakers:

- *Zubaida Qamar, Associate Professor of Nutrition and Dietetics, San Francisco State University*
- *Supriya Misra, Associate Professor in the Department of Public Health, San Francisco State University*

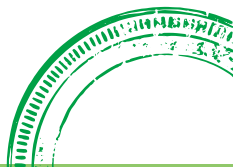
Food insecurity is deeply connected to mental health, well-being, and the sustainability of our food systems, yet food access efforts often focus primarily on meeting immediate needs. In this interactive brainstorming workshop, participants will explore how we can reimagine food justice by connecting CalFresh and food access work with broader goals of mental health, community well-being, sustainable food systems, and long-term resilience. Drawing on research and promising practices from higher education, public health, and local food systems initiatives, attendees will collaboratively identify innovative, actionable strategies that address the root causes of food insecurity while promoting psychological well-being, equity, and environmental sustainability. Together, we will imagine what it means to move beyond preventing hunger toward creating communities where people can flourish and food systems can thrive, and develop ideas for turning that vision into action.

Co-Creating the Future of Digital Outreach for Food Benefits in California

Speakers:

- *Leilani Martínez, Associate Program Director, Code for America*
- *Miguel Rosales, Senior Program Manager, Code for America*

This interactive brainstorming session will bring participants together to explore how digital outreach for food benefits can evolve to better reach diverse communities across California. Together, we'll share lessons, brainstorm new approaches including the opportunities and considerations that come with AI, and identify ways to make digital outreach more equitable, accessible, and human-centered.



2026 CALFRESH FORUM BREAKOUT SESSIONS



Beyond Benefits: Tackling Food Prices to Strengthen CalFresh and Community Power

Facilitator: Beth Smoker, Policy Director, California Food & Farming Network

Speakers:

- *Ana-Alicia Carr, Los Angeles Food Policy Council; Ezer Pamintuan, Alameda County Community Food Bank*
- *Loyal Terry, Economic Security California Action*

In California — a state that grows more food than any other in the nation — 1 in 5 residents remain food insecure while corporate grocery chains post record profits. Grocery prices have risen nearly 30% since 2020, while CalFresh benefits have stagnated, been reduced, or cut entirely — a double squeeze that has gutted the purchasing power of our most vital food assistance program. Reining in corporate control over food costs is a direct CalFresh intervention — through a short presentation and open discussion, we'll explore community-controlled models like co-ops, Tribal markets, food hubs, and public grocery, and begin identifying which we want to build in California.

CalFresh for College Students: Celebrating the Journey of Radical Change and Co-creating the Next Chapter

Facilitators:

- *Ruben E. Canedo, Co-Director, Education & Training, UC Essential Needs Consortium*
- *Cindy Phan, CivicCapstone Student Fellow at Public Benefits Lab, Irvine Valley Community College*

Speakers:

- *Aaron Kunst, Director, Strategy and Policy, Public Benefits Lab*
- *Antonio Watson, Student Staff, Mt. San Antonio College*

Join us for a radical and joyful journey of failure, progress, celebration, and everything in between in the CalFresh for College Students movement. This community participatory panel and workshop will help people expand their partnerships and connections, learn from subject matter experts across the CalFresh College Student Eco-system, and contribute to imagining what's next in this new CalFresh enrollment era.