

HUNGER IN SAN DIEGO

December 2022 Data Release & Analysis

Background

Hunger Free San Diego is a multi-year, collaborative and cross-sector initiative to apply a data-informed and community-driven approach to ending hunger in our region. The research in this issue brief was conducted by San Diego Hunger Coalition with input and guidance from the Hunger Free San Diego Advisory Board, a table comprised of leaders representing all aspects of hunger relief in San Diego County. Launched in 2016, Hunger Free San Diego is led by San Diego Hunger Coalition and is a member of the national Hunger Free Communities Network. This data release is the latest analysis from San Diego Hunger Coalition and Hunger Free San Diego Advisory Board using shared data and metrics.

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December Nutrition Insecurity Rates

Nutrition insecurity levels increased in the fourth quarter of 2022. In December, San Diego Hunger Coalition estimates 23% of the population (758,000 people) in San Diego County were nutrition insecure, meaning they live in a household without sufficient income to purchase three healthy meals per day. This represents an increase from September's estimates, resulting in an additional 30,000 people estimated to be nutrition insecure in December. The table below shows the effect of the increase on children, older adults, and the population with disabilities.

December 2022 Nutrition Insecurity Rates in San Diego County by Population with Comparison to September 2022			
San Diego County	Children	Older Adults (60+)	Population with Disabilities
23% <i>+1%</i>	29% <i>+1%</i>	22%	35% <i>+2%</i>
Nearly 1 in 4 ~ 758,000 people <i>+30,000 people</i>	More than 1 in 4 ~ 199,000 children <i>+9,000 children</i>	Nearly 1 in 4 ~ 151,000 older adults <i>+44,000 older adults*</i>	More than 1 in 3 ~ 116,000 people <i>+5,000 people</i>

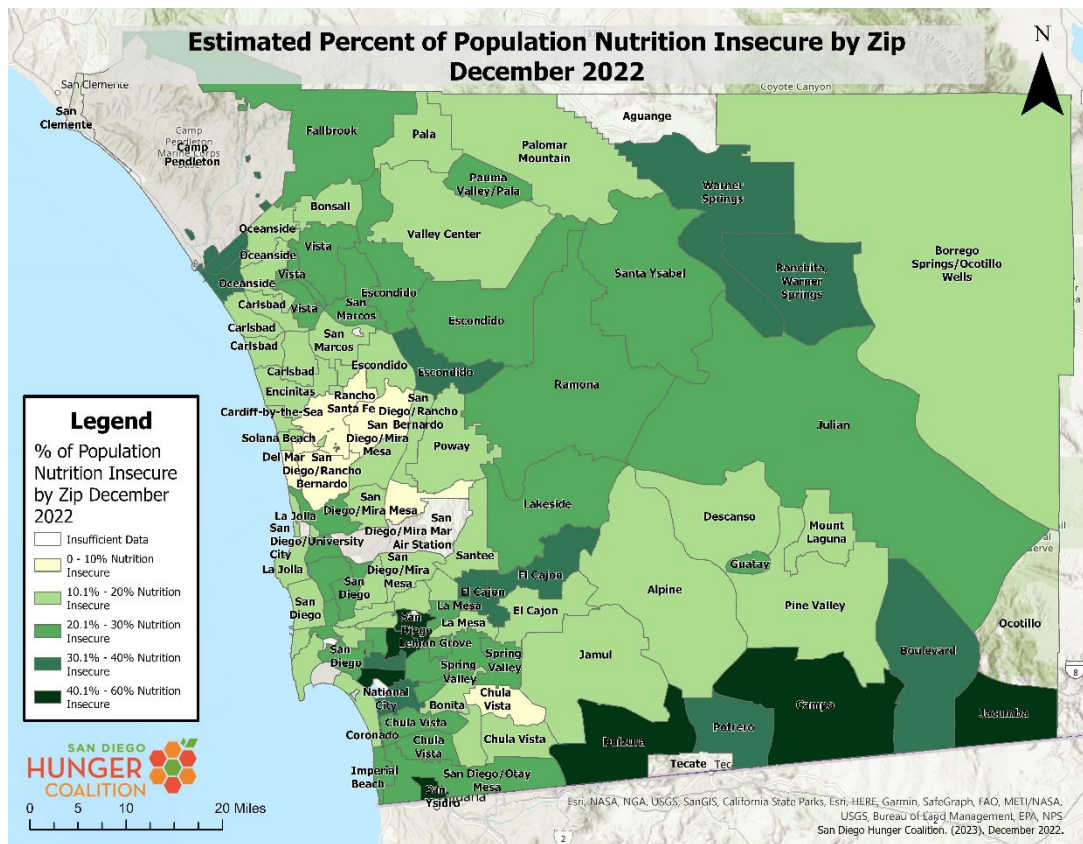
*Result of changing the definition of older adult from age 65 down to 60



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The map below shows the nutrition insecurity rate broken down by zip code across the county, giving the percentage of people that are nutrition insecure out of the total population for each zip. Darker areas on the map represent areas with high rates of insecurity. For maps illustrating the estimated number of people in each zip code experiencing nutrition insecurity, please visit www.sdhunger.org/research.



December 2022 Food Assistance

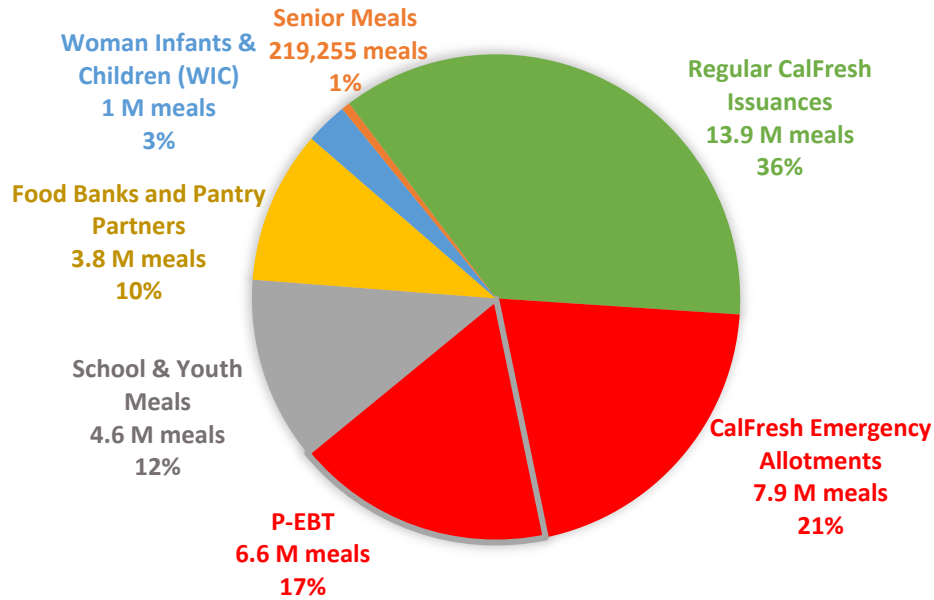
San Diego County’s hunger relief sector provided more than 38M meals across all programs in December, meeting 96% of estimated need for food assistance. This total represents a significant increase of more than 4M meals compared to September 2022 data, however, 14.5M (38%) of all assistance in December 2022 came from two federal programs that are no longer operating as of April 2023, namely the CalFresh/SNAP emergency allotments and the third round of Pandemic EBT. CalFresh emergency allotments provided 7.9M meals in December for CalFresh recipients, and P-EBT 3.0 benefits provided another 6.6M meals for children and families. The increase in total food assistance in December 2022 will therefore be offset in 2023 by a significant loss in the amount of food assistance provided each month as the federal government ended the CalFresh/SNAP emergency allotment program with the last pandemic aid benefits issued in March 2023. The chart below shows the totals for all types of food assistance in December with the two pandemic aid programs in red, showing how many meals are no longer being provided as of June 2023.



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Food Assistance Meals in San Diego County December 2022



38.2M total meals in Dec. (33.8M in Sept.)

ANALYSIS: December Meal Gap & Impact of Pandemic Aid Ending on Food Pantries

With the last of the CalFresh emergency allotments issued in March 2023, San Diego County’s food banks, pantries, and other organizations distributing bags or boxes of food saw increased demand immediately as people who lost hundreds of dollars per month in their CalFresh benefits looked to charitable food distributions to replace those lost meals. With 96% of need for food assistance met in December 2022, the meal gap in San Diego County was 1.7M meals. Without the emergency allotments and P-EBT benefits, the meal gap in December would have been more than 16M meals, giving a future glimpse of the region’s meal gap as of June 2023.

Fortunately, San Diego Hunger Coalition analysis indicates that an additional 248,000 people are likely eligible for CalFresh in San Diego County but not yet enrolled. Further increasing CalFresh enrollment and ensuring all households are receiving the full amount for which they are eligible represent two of the biggest opportunities the sector has to (1) reduce the 2023 meal gap and (2) mitigate the impacts from the loss of the temporary federal pandemic aid programs on nonprofit food providers that are struggling to keep up with increased demand as charitable donations continue to drop.

For more information on where likely eligible populations are and for CalFresh participation numbers, please visit www.sdhunger.org/maps-tables. For more information on the expiration of the CalFresh emergency allotments and what people can do, please visit www.sdhunger.org/end-of-emergency-allotments.