

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

DATE: April 4, 2022

TO: Honorable Mitch O'Farrell
Honorable Paul Koretz
Honorable Gilbert A. Cedillo
Honorable Kevin De León
Honorable Paul Krekorian

Energy, Climate Change, Environmental Justice, and River Committee

Honorable Paul Krekorian
Honorable Bob Blumenfield
Honorable Kevin De León
Honorable Monica Rodriguez
Honorable Curren D. Price, Jr.

Budget and Finance Committee

FROM: Barbara Romero, Director, and General Manager



SUBJECT: **LA SANITATION AND ENVIRONMENT REPORT BACK ON THE FOOD RESCUE IN FOOD INSECURE COMMUNITIES PROGRAM, INCLUDING WHICH ORGANIZATIONS THE BUREAU INTENDS TO PARTNER WITH TO IMPLEMENT THE PROGRAM AND WHAT NEIGHBORHOODS WILL BE TARGETED (CF# 21-0600 S45 CFMS)**

RECOMMENDATION FOR COUNCIL ACTION

1. Approve LA Sanitation and Environment's (LASAN) enclosed plan to partner with nonprofit organizations to address food insecurity, with a particular focus on CD 9 and adjacent underserved communities.
2. Transfer one million dollars (\$1,000,000) currently in the Unappropriated Balance (UB) fund to the Citywide Recycling Trust Fund No. 46D, Revenue Source 3684 Other Federal Grants. Funding for the implementation of the Food Rescue in Food Insecure Communities Grant (Food Rescue Grants) Program in the amount of \$1,000,000 is available in the Citywide Recycling Trust Fund No. 46D, Dept 50, Appropriation Unit 50VX82 Sanitation Expense and Equipment.
3. Authorize LASAN to prepare instructions to the Controller for any necessary technical adjustments, subject to approval of the City Administrative Officer and as authorized by the Controller to implement such instructions.

4. Authorize the Bureau of Sanitation (LASAN) to contract with LA Food Policy Council (LAFPC; fiscally sponsored by Community Partners) for grant administration, implementation, and monitoring of the program.
5. Authorize the LASAN to contract with a fiscal intermediary to contract with and manage the distribution of the funds to the Program grantees.
6. Direct LASAN to report back on the outcome of the program.

BACKGROUND

In May 2021, the City Council allocated one million dollars from the 2021 Budget to address food insecurity in the City of Los Angeles. The funds were placed in the UB. LASAN has received instructions to report to the Energy, Climate Change, Environmental Justice, and River Committee and the Budget and Finance Committee regarding the Food Rescue Grants Program, including which organizations LASAN intends to partner with to implement the program and what neighborhoods will be targeted.

Los Angeles County is home to an estimated 2 million people experiencing food insecurity, a figure that has likely increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of the communities in Los Angeles facing economic hardships and food insecurity are also burdened by environmental pollution, including waste processing facilities and landfill operations. Access to nutritional and healthy food is exacerbated by these issues and promotes a myriad of social and economic disparities. Organic waste – including food waste – makes up about 25% of what Los Angeles currently sends to landfills. It's estimated that about 40% of all food is wasted in the U.S (FDA, 2021). Recent estimates suggest that a third of California's total supermarket/grocery store food waste, and 73% of total merchant wholesaler food waste, is recoverable (CalRecycle, 2021).

Municipalities can help to manage and coordinate food recovery and distribution in numerous ways. Some ways to address food insecurity (and climate change) is to glean food that would otherwise be wasted, from restaurants, retail grocery stores, and producers, and support non-profit food rescue organizations with resources that will build their capacity to increase access to food in vulnerable communities (Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior, 2019).

LA City Council has taken proactive and progressive steps to address food insecurity and Mayor Eric Garcetti released L.A.'s Green New Deal (GND) in April 2019 targeting organic waste reduction by setting the ambitious goal of eliminating organic waste going to landfills by 2028. Since January 2018, LASAN working with the recycLA Solid Waste Service Providers and non-profit organizations have rescued roughly 18,000+ tons of surplus edible food or approximately 29 million meals.

The State of Food Recovery & Distribution

The rescue and distribution of food have largely been tasked to Food Rescue Organizations (FROs) and Food Rescue Services (FRSs), which are often under-resourced non-profit organizations and mutual aid providers. The operations of FROs, Feeding Sites and Pantries are quickly evolving as the needs of underserved Angelenos rapidly increase alongside major limitations on capacity-building, particularly as barriers to upscaling are not easily surmounted by individual organizations acting alone. Feeding Sites and Pantries are serving many more individuals than in the past due to the Covid-19 pandemic and struggling to keep up with the demand. Commercial enterprises, FROs, and government agencies that haven't been involved in feeding people before are now distributing food to meet the need.

Existing FROs currently operate at or above their individual institutional capacity with limited resources and few opportunities for collaborative problem-solving. Collective, system-wide capacity for food recovery in the region is far below the current supply, and anticipated increases in supply will in fact add greater strain to an already strained ecosystem. Additional resources to collect, transport, and store surplus food are needed, but siloing these resources within individual organizations does not address the system-wide capacity limitations. Upscaling the food recovery network as a whole requires heightened collaboration between FROs, as well as between FROs and surplus food providers, and new infrastructure to distribute that food. One of the greatest hindrances to scaling both food recovery and food distribution that has emerged is the logistical capacity to adequately connect supply with demand. Where communication across the system regarding resources, food surplus, and capacity are disjointed and lacking. It is anticipated that the situation will continue to evolve and that the need will remain elevated for some time to come.

In order to fully achieve the food rescue potential in the City, we must understand the potential quantity of available surplus rescuable food from edible food generators in the City, and develop sustainable food rescue programs and infrastructure.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Strategic Partnership

To support the Food Rescue Grants Program, LASAN will partner with the Los Angeles Food Policy Council and a fiscal agent to distribute the funds. LAFPC currently serves as the backbone organization for a network of over 400 organizations and agencies working for healthy, sustainable, and fair food. Growing from the collective impact model, they translate collaboration into policy outcomes and help incubate, launch and lead food system initiatives. LAFPC cultivates a diverse network of change-makers from across our food system through cross-sector working groups, network events, and other civic engagement activities. One such working group, the Food Waste Prevention and

Rescue Working Group, convenes an industry-specific FRO Task Force¹. LAFPC also serves as an advisor on cross-sector collaborations on food security, supply chains, and resiliency for government entities, academic institutions, philanthropy, and community-serving organizations.

This project will provide administrative management services that include, but are not limited to, coordinating grant oversight, distribution of funds, execution, and optimization of program logistics in order to support the convening of FROs to identify systemic barriers and needs to improve communications, capacity, resource allocations, and other infrastructural needs of the food rescue and distribution system.

Approach and Design

As a collective, they will design and direct tiered funding opportunities that include but are not limited to micro-grants to fund FRO's material needs (e.g., refrigerators and freezers, pallet jacks, scales, etc.), and larger grants to support dynamic projects that involve the collaboration of multiple groups, like developing communication networks that will assist the FROs to communicate their needs across the network so that more food is shared.

Geographic Focus

The Food Rescue Grants are meant to increase the food rescue capacity of the FROs located within the areas of the City with the most unmet need. To strategically target the geographical areas that are most prevalent LASAN considered need indicators such as the following:

- The USDA Food Access Research Atlas - Low Income & Low Access 2019
- The Los Angeles City Planning Department's Food Access Map 2022
- The United Way's Real Cost Measure in California 2021 Report

To address the food insecurity, LASAN recommends the pilot program be focused in Council District 9 and neighboring areas (please see Figure 1. on page 8). The grants will also include support for FROs in areas with high food waste generated such as the DT Wholesale Produce Market. Increased system-wide capacity for FROs will have tangible benefits not only for the areas within which the FROs operate, but due to the interconnectivity of the charitable food network as a whole, systemic capacity improvements will be felt across the region.

Greater availability and variety of recovered food overall will also benefit organizations that do not actively engage in food recovery as these organizations rely heavily on food donations from FROs. For example, hunger relief organizations within CD9 that rely on donations of recovered food, including programs like A Place Called Home, Central

¹ Active members include Hollywood Food Coalition, LA Regional Food Bank, RAND, Food Cycle, Food Finders, Jewish Family Service of LA/ SOVA Food Pantry, Polo's Pantry, Seeds of Hope, MEND Poverty, North Valley Caring Services Food Forward, Farm Link, St. Francis Center, World Harvest, Dream Center, Westside Food Bank

Neighborhood Health Foundation, and many others, will see improvements in available food for distribution due to the direct improvements of food recovery in other areas of the City.

Projected Grant Award Estimates

Early projections indicate an ideal breakdown of the following:

- 10 to 20 rapid release micro-grants at \$15,000 - \$25,000 each and;
- 3 to 6 multi-stakeholder project grants at \$50,000 - \$100,000 each.

Table 1. Grant Implementation & Administration

Project Oversight	Description	Project Costs
Fiscal Administration	Contracting, distributing, and oversight of grant funds	\$150,000.00*
Los Angeles Food Policy Council	Project staffing to implement, monitor, and evaluate grant activities	\$282,352.94**

*estimate at 15% of the total grant

**inclusive of personnel and indirect costs

Table 2. Estimate Range of Rapid Release Micro-grants

Range	Amount/Grant	# of Grants (up to)	Total
Low end	\$15,000.00	17	\$255,000.00
High end	\$25,000.00	10	\$250,000.00

Table 3. Estimate Range of Multi-stakeholder Project Grants

Range	Amount/Project	# of Projects (up to)	Total
Low end	\$50,000.00	6	\$300,000.00
High end	\$100,000.00	3	\$300,000.00

Projected Program Timeline

Below are the anticipated major phases of the work:

Table 4. Projected Program Timeline

Primary Phases	Lead	Time Range	Activities
Contract with the fiscal intermediary and program administrator	LASAN	April 2022 - Aug. 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Acquire the grant funding from the UB to LASAN ● Contract with a fiscal intermediary and LAFPC
Provide rapid release grants to FROs	LAFPC Fiscal Agent	Sep. 2022 - Dec. 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop and release the Notice of Funding Opportunities for the rapid release micro-grants ● Award the 10-20 micro-grants ● Convene cross-sector partners to identify organizational and systemic barriers to capacity-building
Develop an infrastructure plan for food recovery	LAFPC	Sep. 2022 - Dec. 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Co-design and resource multi-phase project(s) ● Develop a deeper understanding of communication practices, existing metrics, and information sharing
Implement and resource activities	LAFPC Fiscal Agent	Jan. 2023 – Dec. 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop and release the Notice of Funding Opportunities for the multi-stakeholder project grants ● Selection of grantees and distribution of funding
Reporting	LAFPC Fiscal Agent	Dec. 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reporting to LASAN

OUTCOMES & IMPLICATIONS

The need for food rescue programs is urgent and by virtue of its existing food rescue programs and its ongoing mission to protect public health, LASAN is uniquely positioned to provide assistance to the local food redistribution network. The food rescue grants will address a significant gap in the existing food rescue infrastructure.

Funding opportunities for projects will offer FROs increased capacity through needed equipment as well as develop collaborative opportunities to design and implement larger infrastructure projects such as building Food Rescue Hubs, and a program to train FRO volunteers that will support many more FROs, food pantries, and feeding sites in the City's most underserved communities. Projects like the Hubs and Training programs will not only create the local assistance that is needed but will help to create a network of Hubs that can expand the ability to assist all the underserved areas of the City while expanding the City's surplus edible food rescue capacity to meet the mandates of SB 1383 and the Mayor's Green New Deal.

The success of the Food Rescue grants will be reliant on ensuring FROs are informed about the grant opportunities. LAFPC in coordination with LASAN will create a plan that includes all the necessary information and tools to ensure that the grants meet their purpose of building capacity and serving the most vulnerable populations in LA and surrounding areas.

LASAN will report back to Council with the outcomes of the Food Rescue Grants.

Figure 1. Food Access Map in the City Los Angeles

