



BERKELEY FOOD NETWORK

Presentation to the Health, Life Enrichment,
Equity & Community Policy Committee
January 28, 2026



BERKELEY FOOD NETWORK

MISSION Our mission is to build an accessible, food-secure future.

VISION We envision a community where everyone has reliable access to the nourishing food and resources they need.

Berkeley Food Network was founded in 2016 with input from community-based organizations to create a hub for food and resource sharing. BFN moved into our warehouse in 2019.

Since then, Berkeley Food Network has become the largest direct food assistance organization in the region. By living into the “network” part of our name and involving stakeholders in visioning, planning, and implementing food assistance programs, we have led the way in providing dignified food assistance.

BFN operates **three** distinct direct-service programs - 9th Street Pantry, Neighborhood Pantries, and Home Grocery Delivery - and provides food and resources to dozens of organizations serving communities beyond our reach as a **regional food bank**.



BFN PROGRAMS

COMMUNITY ACCESS

9th Street Pantry

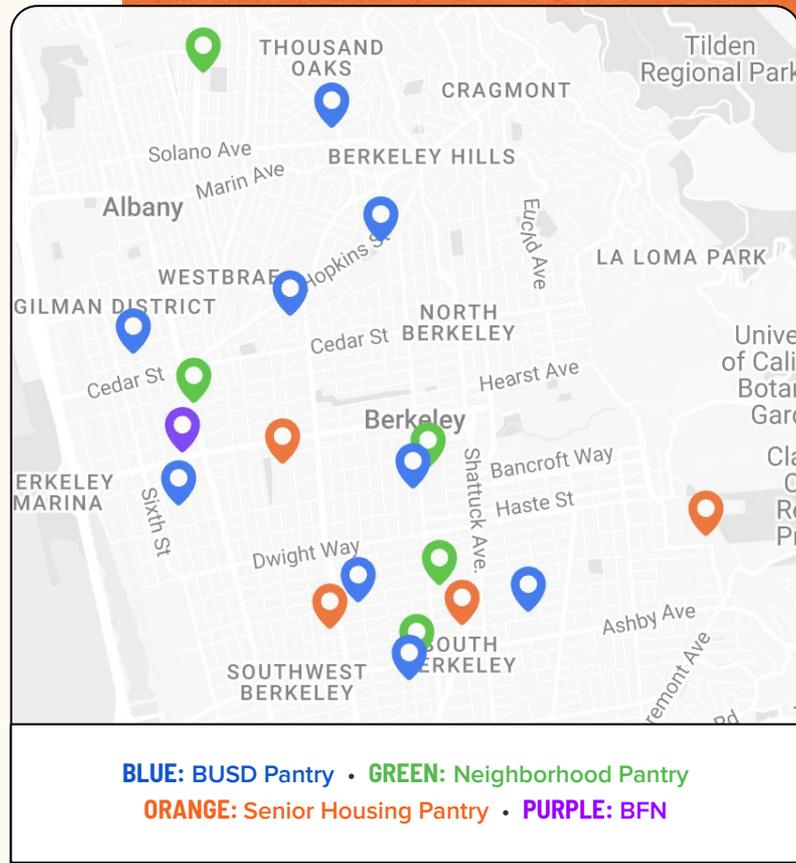
The 9th Street Pantry is open 2 days per week and provides food to over 1,400 households weekly, each receiving over 30 pounds of groceries per visit. It connects community to resources beyond food, including CalFresh, MediCal, and other social safety net programs

Neighborhood Pantries

This network of pop-up food pantries operates at schools, community centers, senior housing facilities, expanding our reach to serve an additional 600 households per month.

Home Delivered Groceries

The home delivery program provides custom grocery boxes to individuals who has no where else to turn for support. What started as 20 households in 2022 has grown to over 130 households receiving twice monthly grocery deliveries.

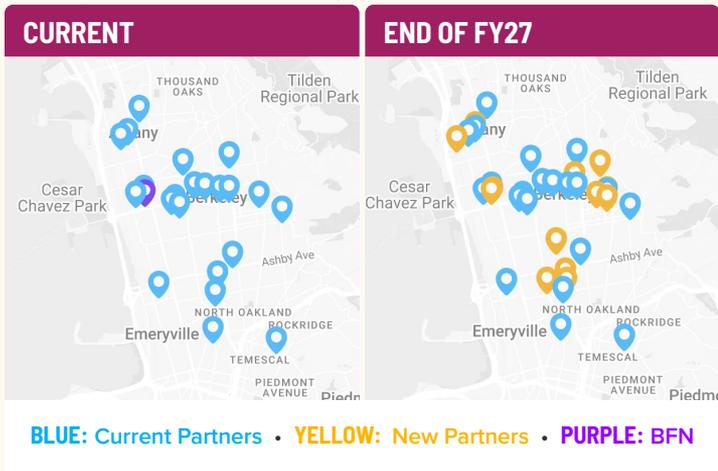




BFN PROGRAMS

FOOD BANKING

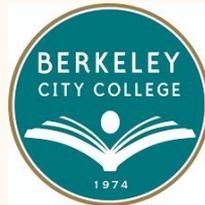
BFN is a “redistribution organization” (RDO) with ACCFB and Feeding America, giving us the ability to redistribute food received to distribution partners such as CBOs and schools. Partners are able to pick-up orders at the warehouse and receive deliveries. We leverage our warehouse to source and distribute food to 30 community-based organizations in the area, with plans to expand to nearly 45 by end of FY26 with all new partners in Berkeley.





BFN PROGRAMS

FOOD BANKING





FUTURE CHALLENGES TO FOOD SECURITY IN BERKELEY

TODAY

We are serving more community members across all programs than ever before.

- **9th Street Pantry** - Annually over 2,700 Berkeley households visits representing over 5,600 individuals
- **Home Delivery** - 120 Berkeley households enrolled representing seniors, individuals with health/mobility challenges, families in BUSD
- **Neighborhood Pantries** - Operate 4 Berkeley senior housing site pantries, South Berkeley Senior Center, elementary and middle schools, and student-run pantries at BHS and BTA
- **CalFresh Outreach & Enrollment** - BFN aids community members with application enrollment support

FUTURE

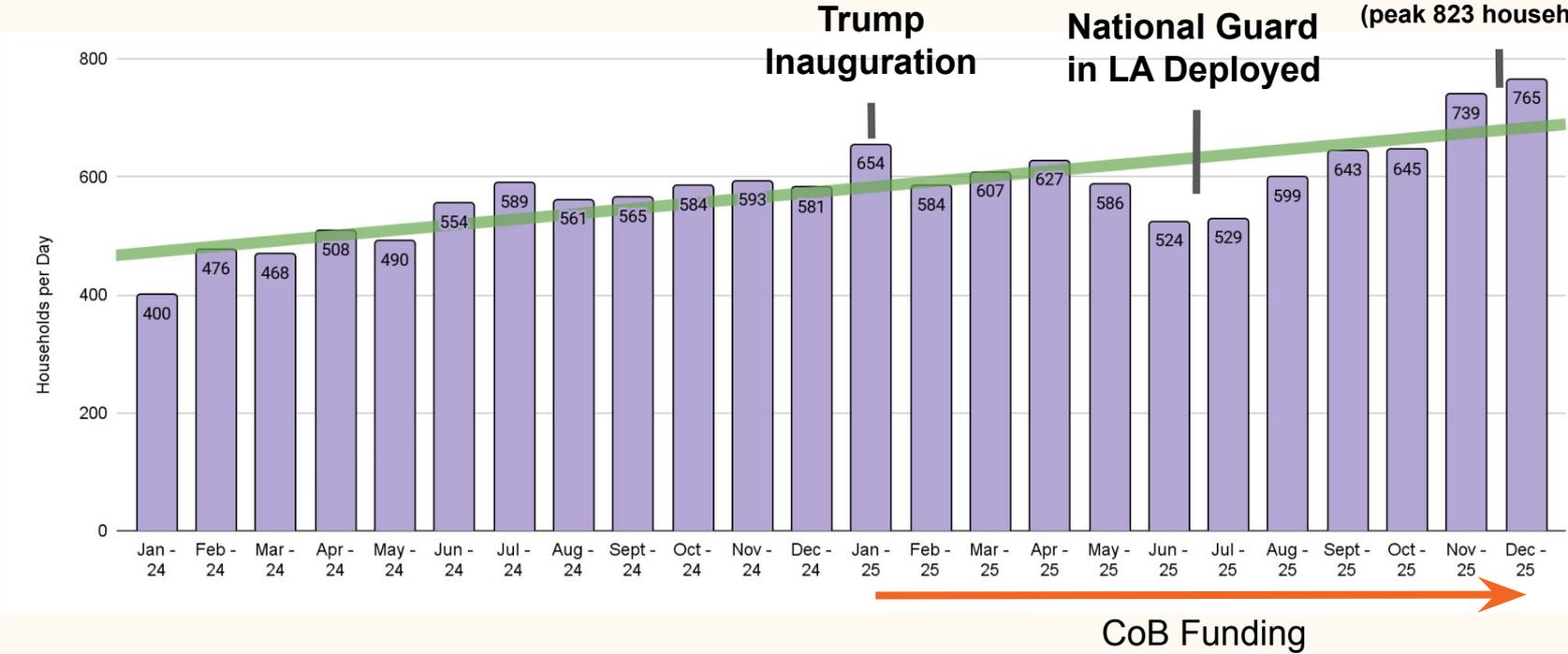
The factors influencing food security do not appear to be getting better, but instead exasperating a deep problem.

- **Berkeley Food Pantry Closure** - Fewer places to access food will result in increasing visits to BFN and home delivery
- **Economic Challenges** - Increasing grocery prices and cost of living; Healthcare premiums increasing
- **Basic Services** - Decrease in funding for CalFresh & new work requirements (**HR-1**); Social security, medicaid
- **Immigration** - Vulnerable communities targeted that are in need of food assistance



MORE HOUSEHOLDS VISITING THE 9TH STREET PANTRY THAN EVER

Gov't Shutdown
SNAP Delays
(peak 823 households)





BFN RECEIVED A TWO-YEAR CONTRACT WITH TO ADDRESS HUNGER

Contract Process & Terms

- Community Agency RFP (4-year funding cycle) does not include food security
- BFN contacted **Councilmember Kesarwani** to discuss; presented at HLEEC in **May 2024**
- **May 2024** - HLEEC made recommendation to City Council to prepare RFP to address food security
- **June 25 2024** - City Council formally adopted, allocated \$200,000 for FY 24-25 and \$200,000 FY 25-26 from general fund to create RFP to address food security
- **September 2024** - RFP opened; BFN submitted and chosen as contract to address food security
- **December 2024** - Contract work begins

Focus Areas

- **Capacity Building** - BFN is the City's food hub; must build capacity to source, store, and distribute
- **Hunger Relief** - Leading food assistance organization; providing grocery access through variety of programs
- **Expanding Services** - Volunteer recruitment, expanding hours of pantries and mobile pantries



INVESTMENT IN COMMUNITY FOOD ACCESS

Multiplying Impact in Community

Because of BFN's size, infrastructure, and mission, we are able to source millions of pounds of food worth millions of dollars. In FY25, we sourced 2.4 million pounds worth \$4.5 million wholesale. At retail prices of approximately 2x wholesale, that is \$9 million worth of food distributed to the community at no cost.

With Berkeley alone accounting for 50% of households served across all programs, that is **\$4.5 million saved and invested** in the local economy on rent, car repairs, summer camp, restaurants, savings accounts, healthcare, groceries, and more.

PRIMARY OUTCOMES

IMPROVING COMMUNITY ACCESS

- Expanded 9th Street Pantry Hours to 14 hours per week
- Expanded Home Delivery program onboarding
- Expanded South Berkeley Senior Center Pantry hours

VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT

- Over 500 volunteers engaged Dec 2024 - Jan 2026
- 14,000+ hours of community service
- Youth Works, BUSD students, CA Climate Action Corps

FOOD SOURCING & RECOVERY

- Over 2.5 million pounds distributed to community
- Over 350,000 pounds of food recovered



NEXT STEPS IN ADDRESSING FOOD SECURITY IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

Berkeley Food Network is Addressing Hunger

- Our **community connections** with residents and organizations amplify any contribution
- \$200,000 from the City of Berkeley yielded **millions** in savings for the community - not including deferred healthcare costs and improved educational outcomes due to nutritious food access
- Berkeley Food Network the best-positioned organization to support neighbors with food during **disaster, government shutdown**, or an **increased need for vulnerable residents**.

Asks of Support

- **Recommend City Manager Extend the Contract**
 - Ends June 30, 2026, but can be renewed or extended by the City Manager
- **Increase Funding to \$300,000 for Two Years**
 - Strengthening and stabilizing the local food system is paramount during an unreliable federal administration
- **Recommend On-Going Funding for Food Security**
 - The City needs to ensure Berkeley residents are nourished. Food security, like housing, can become a basic right in Berkeley.

