SAN FRANCISCO FOOD SECURITY TASK FORCE (FSTF)
STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION WORK GROUP – PRIORITY #4
WORKING DRAFT

Improving San Francisco's food-related information and referrals (I&R) emerged as a priority in the FSTF's 2018-2019 strategic planning process. It was acknowledged that these efforts would have to be *multi-stakeholder driven,* as opposed to something that the FSTF would be able to take the lead on. The Task Force identified the following next steps for this priority in the 2019-2021 Strategic Plan:

---

4. **Information and Referrals** Next Steps

Multi-Stakeholder driven next steps:

Year 1 & 2:
1. **Referral Advocates:** FSTF to champion the need for food to be included in all existing referral efforts and process(es) (i.e., DPH Resource & Referral), while advocating for bi-directional feedback, client evaluation, and multi-generational approach.

2. **Best Practices Analysis:** FSTF/others to research best practices from other/current information referral efforts including: Our Children Our Families Council SF (OCOF) service inventory group, 211 in San Diego, DPH's efforts to update resources and referral around food, etc.

Longer-Term:
1. **Seat at the Table:** FSTF (or emergent structure) will participate in a multi-stakeholder Information & Referrals approach to:
   • **Key Actors:** Determine key actors/stakeholders to structure the initiative
   • **Implementation Plan:** Engage actors/agencies to develop a user-journey for current I&R system, develop a vision for seamless I&R, prototype & iterate, secure funding.

Source: FSTF Strategic Plan 2019-2021

The FSTF Strategic Plan Implementation Work Group, established in December 2019, has begun to take these next steps. We have started to compile a list of relevant I&R tools/systems:[1]

No.	Name	Type[2]	Website
1	211 Bay Area	System	https://www.211bayarea.org/
2	DAS Benefits and Resources Hub	System	https://www.sfhsa.org/services/access-empowerment/das-benefits-and-resources-hub
3	Food Locator-SFMFB	Tool	https://foodlocator.sfmfoodbank.org/
4	Link-SF	System	https://link-sf.com/
5	Free Print Shop	System	http://www.freeprintshop.org/
6	Shelter Tech	System	https://www.sheltertech.org
7	SF Families	System	https://www.sffamilies.org
8	SF Service Guide	System	https://www.sfserviceguide.org/
9	Foodwyze	Tool	https://devpost.com/software/foodwyze-waufy8
10	One Degree	System	https://www.1degree.org/plus

---

[1] Kaiser Permanente is working with a group called Unite-Us to roll out a referral system in 2020. However, this system will not be able to partner with government agencies.
[2] Type definitions: System = Provides information and referrals related to many needs/offerings; and Tool = I&R tool is only food related. Can find food in multiple locations.

Two of the most critical issues for I&R identified in the Strategic Plan were the need for:
1. Bi-directional feedback; and
2. Client evaluation.

Next Steps in Work Group Evaluation Phase
Possible next steps identified in the January FSTF SP Implementation Work Group were:
- Engage (i.e., survey or convene) stakeholders that provide food-related I&R to learn about their experience, what's working, challenges, and needs
  - o 211 Bay Area
  - o DAS Benefits and Resources Hub
- Continue to learn about existing technology and landscape (Foodwyze, Link-SF)
- Learn best practices from other cities/organizations (211 San Diego, Kaiser—Thrive Local). What national and/or international models are available that we can leverage?
- Engage food insecure clients/individuals to promote bi-directional feedback and inform client evaluation efforts

Preliminary Thoughts on the Problems
Challenges, in addition to bi-directional feedback and client evaluation, identified by the FSTF SP Implementation Work Group were:
- People don't know what resources exist and how to access them
- Resources are not always user-friendly for families/individuals and organizations
- There is still stigma related to food insecurity
- No referral system includes all of the food resources. The referral systems are not yet seamless.
  - o Resources are not all centralized
  - o Databases are not always updated
- Referral agencies/orgs have limited options
- Meeting clients/individuals where they are at is very difficult given their wide diversity (e.g., some are tech literate, others are not)
- I&R system(s) cannot always answer questions like: Where is the cheap food around me? Where can I use my EBT card?
- No shared definition of success for referrals and way to track success across I&R system(s)

Preliminary Thoughts on the Solutions
Once the challenges with the existing I&R system(s) are identified, possible solutions and recommendations can be discussed. The FSTF SP Implementation Work Group has begun a list of possible solutions:
- Create a backbone technology solution for I&R that includes a feedback loop (consider contacting Code for America if move forward with this idea)
- Introduce food navigators
- Create feedback loop from I&R and dashboard to track success
- Use a coordinated entry model (FSTF is not going to create new model, the plan is to work with the existing systems)

Any I&R solution must include the ability to track referrals made to understand whether people get food as a result and to identify when there wasn't a successful referral, why, and what would be needed to ensure there are adequate food resources for all referrals.