



## HUNGER IN SAN DIEGO

### September 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.

Please cite this report as: *San Diego Hunger Coalition. September 2022 Data Release & Analysis. San Diego, CA; April 2023. For additional information, including methodology, maps, and data tables, please visit [www.sdhunger.org/research](http://www.sdhunger.org/research).*

#### September Nutrition Insecurity Rates

**Nutrition insecurity levels continued to decrease in the third quarter of 2022.** In September, San Diego Hunger Coalition estimates 22% of the population (726,000 people) in San Diego County were nutrition insecure, meaning they live in a household without sufficient income to purchase three healthy meals per day.

Nutrition Insecurity Rate by Population			
San Diego County	Children	Older Adults	People with Disabilities
<b>22%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>33%</b>
<b>More than 1 in 5</b>	<b>More than 1 in 4</b>	<b>More than 1 in 5</b>	<b>1 in 3</b>
~ 726,000 people	~ 190,000 children	~ 107,000 seniors	~ 111,000 people

Despite the continual decrease in the prevalence or rate of nutrition insecurity, **individuals and families throughout the county continued to struggle with affording enough healthy food** due to continued inflation. In September 2022, the Consumer Price Index reported an 8.2% increase in prices<sup>1</sup>, including a 13% increase in food at home and a 26% increase in gasoline<sup>2</sup>. The need for food assistance among nutrition insecure households was higher than normal in September 2022 as these economic trends further reduced their purchasing power.

<sup>1</sup> Data obtained from the Bureau of Labor Statistics at [https://www.bls.gov/regions/west/news-release/consumerpriceindex\\_sandiego.htm#:~:text=Prices%20in%20the%20San%20Diego,\(See%20table%20A.\)](https://www.bls.gov/regions/west/news-release/consumerpriceindex_sandiego.htm#:~:text=Prices%20in%20the%20San%20Diego,(See%20table%20A.)).

<sup>2</sup> Data obtained from the Bureau of Labor Statistics at <https://www.bls.gov/data/home.htm>.



While the overall trend is a continued slight decrease in the number of households experiencing nutrition security each month, this **gain will be offset by a significant loss in the amount of food assistance meals provided each month, as the federal government has ended its pandemic aid increase to SNAP (CalFresh) benefits that increased each recipients' benefits by hundreds of dollars each month.** Starting in April 2022, the total population relying on CalFresh in San Diego County (and our safety net as a whole) will lose between 7-8 million meals per month.

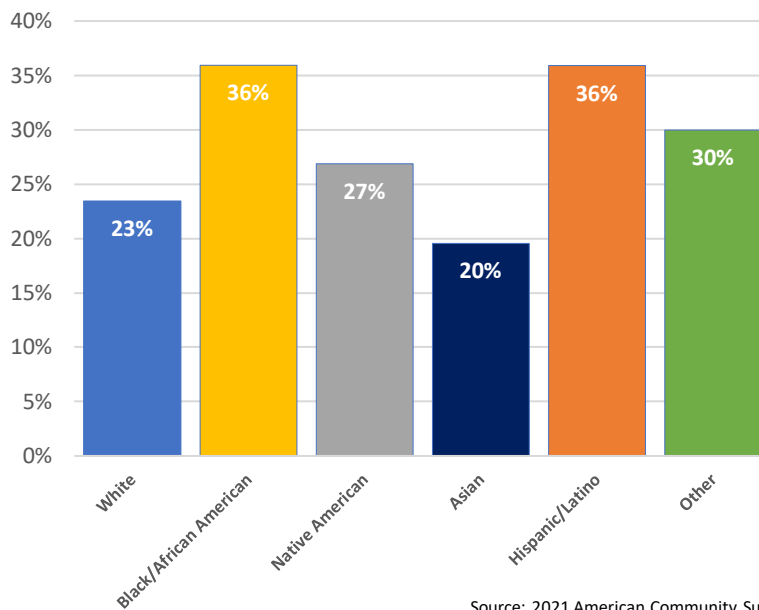
## Disparities in Nutrition Security Rates Persist

**People of color, particularly Hispanic/Latino, Black, and Native American, continue to experience nutrition insecurity at higher rates than the rest of San Diego County.**

To examine nutrition insecurity from a standpoint of racial equity, it is important to look at the *prevalence of nutrition insecurity within each race/ethnic group*, among other factors. The chart below shows the degree to which nutrition insecurity disproportionately impacts Black, Hispanic/Latino, Indigenous, and other people of color in San Diego County based on 2021 U.S. Census data.

From 2020 to 2021, the nutrition insecurity rate for Hispanic/Latino people saw the largest decrease, from almost 39% to 36%, and the largest increase in nutrition insecurity was among the white population, from 18% to 23%. Other than these, there were very few changes to the trends of racial disparity within the nutrition insecure population.

Nutrition Insecurity Rate in San Diego by Race/Ethnicity

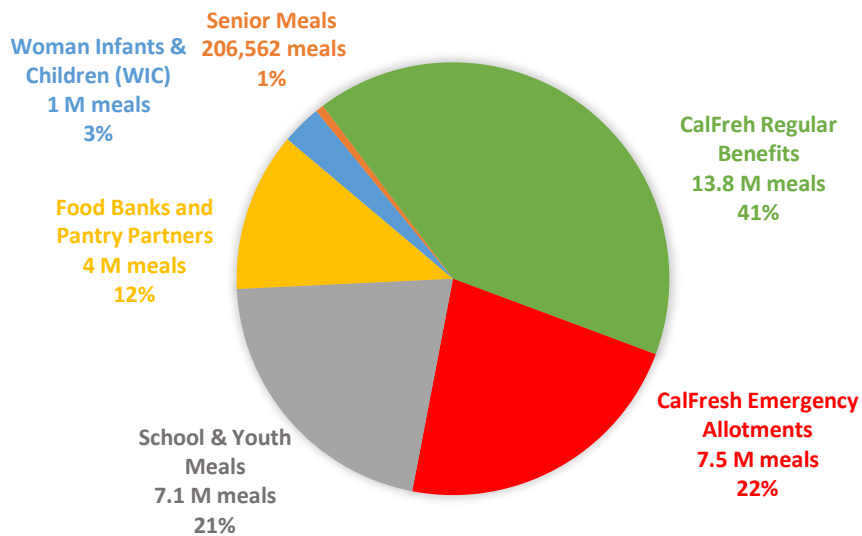


## The End of CalFresh/SNAP Emergency Allotments

Food assistance in San Diego County comes in different forms (e.g., funds on an EBT card, free school meals, bags of free food, etc.) and is provided through many different government and charitably supported programs. **In the month of September 2022, all food assistance provided totaled more than 33 million meals for San Diegans, meeting approximately 94% of the need and leaving a meal gap of 2 million meals.** The Hunger Free San Diego definition of “meal gap” is the estimated number of additional meals needed for our region to be nutrition secure in that month.

**As described above, our region has lost a major source of food assistance** – 7.5M meals in September 2022 – with the end of the federal pandemic aid program that increased all SNAP/CalFresh benefits to the maximum amount per household. The pie chart below shows the impact of the CalFresh emergency allotments, which was the source of 22% of the food assistance provided in September.

**Food Assistance Meals by Source (Sept. 2022)**

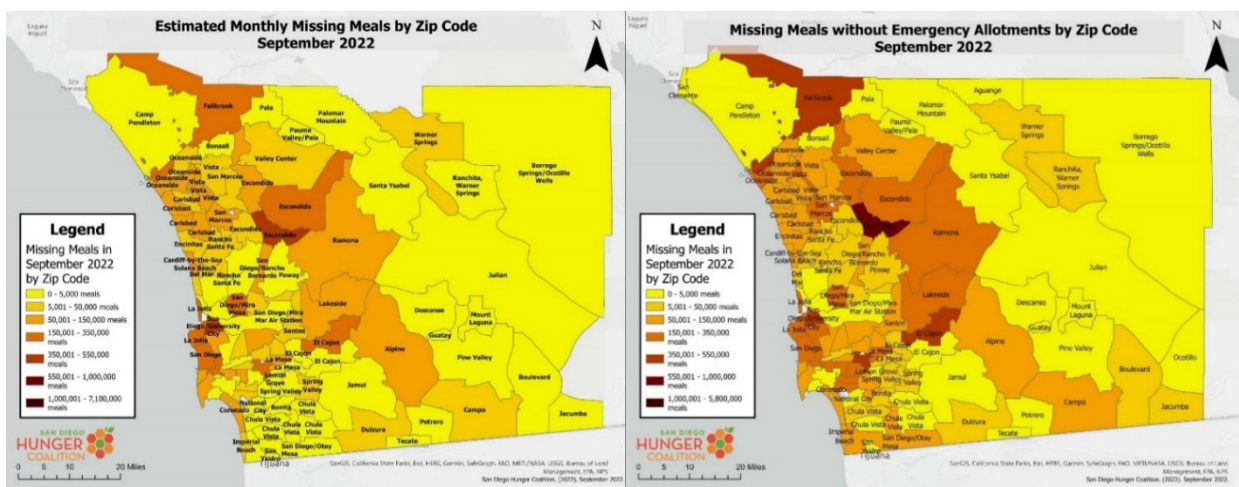


**Without the SNAP/CalFresh emergency allotments, San Diego County and its residents are facing a massive benefits cliff of between 7 – 8 million lost meals per month and a new meal gap around 10M meals/month starting in April 2023.** In terms of individual benefits issuances, households may lose \$250 - \$900 per month depending on household size, income, and other factors. Individuals and families who have been relying on those additional benefits are turning to our region’s food banks, pantries and other organizations that provide free food for help. San Diego’s hunger relief providers are already reporting a dramatic increase in demand.

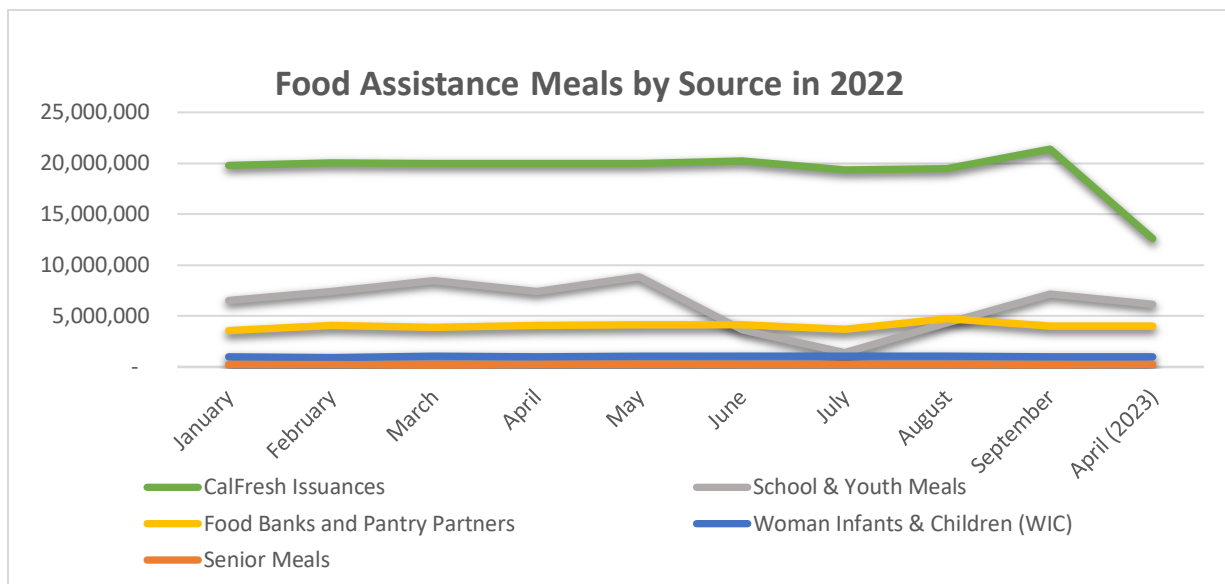
**For more information on the expiration of the CalFresh emergency allotments and what people can do, please visit [www.sdhunger.org/end-of-emergency-allotments](http://www.sdhunger.org/end-of-emergency-allotments).**

The two maps below show the potential effects of the loss of emergency allotments in each zip code. The first map shows the actual meal gap by zip code, which totaled 2 million meals in September 2022, with highest unmet need in Escondido, El Cajon, University City, Oceanside, and Fallbrook. The second map shows what the missing meals count would have been in September 2022 without the CalFresh emergency allotments and nearly 10 million missing meals. This gives us more insight into which communities will be hit the hardest as of April 2023. The Appendix shows these maps enlarged to see further detail.

Areas that will lose the most monthly meals include Chula Vista with 1M meals lost; 752,000 in El Cajon; 368,000 in the City Heights neighborhood; 272,000 in Logan Heights; 260,000 in Encanto; and 245,000 in the College Grove Area.



This graph further illustrates the dip in total CalFresh meals from lost pandemic aid as of April of 2023.



These maps and their corresponding data tables, along with the Hunger Free San Diego methodology, can be found in the research section of our website ([www.sdhunger.org/research](http://www.sdhunger.org/research)).