



Nutrition Education Program and Policy

Second Harvest of Silicon Valley's nutrition policy and nutrition education program are designed to help our clients make **nutritious choices** for themselves and their families, while aligning with the latest nutritional science. We are committed to supporting the health and well-being of our clients.

Because our clients are in an area with one of the highest costs of living in the nation, many are having to make difficult choices between paying for food, housing, medication, transportation and other necessities. With **limited budgets** come **limited nutritional options** as well.

Chronic hunger and poor health outcomes intersect. Research has shown that poor nutrition significantly contributes to diet-related conditions such as hypertension, Type 2 diabetes and weight concerns. Food insecurity has also been linked to high levels of stress, which may lead to inflammation and damaged metabolism. Nutritious food can help to prevent or manage the health conditions that are highly prevalent in the community.

Our priorities to help our clients live healthy, balanced lives:

We provide nutritious foods

We teach basic cooking techniques

We share culturally relevant recipes for inspiration

We honor **client choice** and **cultural preferences** regarding food selection. Second Harvest's [online Nutrition Center](#) offers a diverse collection of multilingual recipes, training, and cooking videos, accessible 24/7.

We implemented a **tiered nutritional quality ranking framework** in 2019 to offer clients the most nutritious foods possible, as well as to support partner organizations in choosing foods that best meet the needs of their clients. This **color-coded ranking system** (green: choose often; yellow: choose occasionally; red: choose rarely) focuses on nutritional quality as well as the latest evidence-based research in the field of nutrition. It is also strongly anchored by **client choice** and meeting clients where they are at in their individual health and lifestyle journeys.

Visit shfb.org/nutrition-center for more information

Examples of color-coded foods:



Green

- All fresh fruits and vegetables
- Canned beans and vegetables with no added salt
- Dried beans and lentils
- Lean meats
- Whole grains
- Unflavored and unsweetened milk, dairy alternatives and yogurt

Yellow

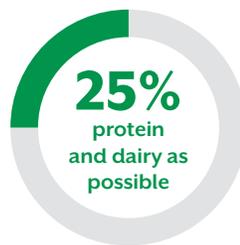
- Refined grains
- Whole or ground meats higher in fat
- Flavored milk, dairy alternatives and yogurt

Red

- Canned beans and vegetables with >230mg sodium per serving
- High-sodium processed meats, such as bacon, ham and sausage
- Pre-mixed meals, such as macaroni and cheese
- Baked goods, desserts and snacks (e.g., cakes, cookies, muffins, croissants, ice cream)

Our Nutrition Education Program Goals:

1. Ensure that we continue to maintain a mix of groceries as close to **50+% fresh produce** and **25% protein and dairy as possible**, distribute beverages free of sugar and sugar alternatives, and ensure that a minimum of **90% of all food and beverages distributed meet the criteria for green and yellow categories**.



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2. Increase utilization of foods from Second Harvest through **simple and delicious recipes** and cooking demonstrations (available on the [Nutrition Center](#)).
3. Encourage a **positive relationship** between food and clients in a **trauma-sensitive** way by recognizing how stress and adversity impact health and behavior and avoiding stigmatizing those who need help.