



2024 Healthy Living Conference - City of Hope Hollywood Food Coalition's Community Exchange Program

Summary

Hollywood Food Coalition (HoFoCo) is an organization dedicated to addressing food insecurity, eliminating food waste and helping our guests connect to essential services by building trust and community.

Hollywood Food Coalition's Community Exchange program is a free, concierge food model that rescues food from hundreds of businesses and food recovery groups annually, organizes it efficiently, and also redistributes it within our network of over 160 small-sized nonprofits throughout LA County.

Launched in May 2020, the Exchange provides nonprofits with the food they need, when they need it, so they can focus on their missions. We emphasize quality, centralizing great food donations and efficiently dispersing them around the county, so donors can give to one place and nonprofits can better choose what they receive and when they get it. We have ongoing conversations with our nonprofit recipients to improve our offerings and ensure our service is responsive to changing needs in their community and culturally relevant when applicable.

Since 2020, we've rescued and redistributed more than 7 million pounds of food. In 2023, we rescued 2.58 million pounds of food, equivalent to 2.15 million meals.

Facts

- Forty percent of food produced never gets eaten. HoFoCo rescues 49,000 lbs of that food weekly.
 - 3 in 10 Angelenos are food insecure. HoFoCo's food distribution reaches over 26,000 individuals annually
 - Uneaten food uses 18% of cropland and 14% of freshwater nationwide and is responsible for 24% of landfill inputs and 4% of greenhouse gas emissions as it decomposes. HoFoCo reduces food waste and contributes to the fight against climate change.
 - Food insecurity disproportionately affects persons from racial and ethnic minority and socioeconomically disadvantaged populations. communities. In Los Angeles:
 - 38% of food-insecure individuals are Hispanic/ Latino
 - 38% of food-insecure individuals are Black/African American
- HoFoCo serves 160 non-profits whose recipients are distributed among historically disinvested communities who have limited or no access to food.



Program Approach

We take great care in learning about each organization's programs and the communities they serve and then set up a personalized plan.

Our non-profit recipients serve historically disinvested communities across LA County, with a primary focus on the Hollywood and adjacent communities.

By learning the wants and needs of the organizations we work with, we are able to provide pre-sorted, healthy and fresh food that they can distribute to their communities in the quantity they can use (to minimize waste at all steps of the process), and to ensure people have access to a larger variety of food that takes into consideration their cultural needs.

To help improve the overall program outcomes, we have improved storage solutions, implemented best practices for optimal warehouse operations, optimized transportation costs, and implemented cold storage maintenance on site and on our fleet.



You provide great value to our distro. Our distro attendees would not otherwise have access to very high-quality food, and the variety is important. The richness and variety of the food that we provide means that our attendees look forward to seeing what they're going to get every week. This acknowledges that we're not simply a charity providing the "basics" - we're saying 'You also deserve to eat the delicious food that is seemingly only available to people with money.'"

Accion Comunitaria,
Exchange Recipient Organization

Impact

In 2023, we exceeded our goal to sort and distribute 2.4 million pounds of surplus food, rescuing and distributing over 2.58 million pounds of edible food that would have otherwise ended in landfills.

We grew our network of nonprofit recipients from 140 to over 160, including outreach teams, food pantries, grocery box distributors, community meal programs, recovery homes, community fridges, permanent supportive housing, drop-in centers, shelters and transitional housing, schools, clinics and senior living facilities.

From a climate perspective, our operations helped prevent 7.8 million tons of CO2 emissions from entering the atmosphere and saved 570 million gallons of water.



Conclusions

By introducing better food transportation and storage, and by alleviating the responsibility of cold storage maintenance, we have enhanced the quality of food distributed to the organizations we support.

This has also provided us with a greater capacity to address and comprehend their requirements and preferences. This has fostered better communication between Hollywood Food Coalition and many of our non-profit recipients, ultimately allowing more individuals to access free and healthy food choices.

As a result of our improved food handling capacity, we have been able to increase the amount of food donated to some partner organizations year over year.

Despite the progress made in rescuing and distributing more food than ever before since inception of the program, funding remains a critical need to sustain and improve our operations and help make a dent in the ever elusive collective goal of achieving food equity for all Angelenos.