

## **Title: Food Insecurity - Youth in Action Town Hall**

**Written by Arthur Wang, Sally Alskaf, Sanjana Ganguly-Fitzgerald, Kavindi Seneviratne, and Daniela Hernandez, Youth Leaders, *Live Well San Diego* Youth Leadership Team 2024-2025**

One in four San Diegans faces food insecurity according to a report published in March 2024 by the [San Diego Hunger Coalition](#). The report indicates that 840,000 people cannot provide three nutritious meals per day for themselves or their families. To understand and address food insecurity, the *Live Well San Diego* Youth Sector organized a virtual Youth-led Food Insecurity Town Hall on October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2024, to discuss the issue, raise awareness, share resources, offer a Q&A for attendees, and propose actionable solutions.

At the beginning of the town hall, the audience participated in a Kahoot! Quiz to assess their knowledge about food insecurity. Topics such as the continent with the highest hunger rates, causes of food insecurity, food waste percentages, the Universal School Meal Program, groups most affected by hunger, and the percentage of students in San Diego County who rely on free or reduced lunch were tested.

Next, Youth Leaders shared how they became involved in food insecurity. Some personally experienced hunger, while others observed growing food waste problems connected to the free school meal program. Their presentations covered statistics, the main causes of food insecurity in San Diego County, and issues of community neglect and food injustice. They emphasized how food insecurity affects overall health, academic performance, and quality of life.

**Sam Duke** from [Feeding San Diego](#) discussed the state of hunger in San Diego County, the coexisting high level of hunger, and significant food waste. He explained how Feeding San Diego connects people facing hunger with nutritious meals by maximizing food rescue to attain their goal of creating a hunger-free and healthy community.

**Lakisha McZeal** from [San Diego Food System Alliance](#) discussed how equitable food distribution and justice are achievable. She introduced Food Vision 2030 with its [three goals](#), and [ten objectives](#) to build an equitable and nourished San Diego County.

The panel addressed several topics, such as the Universal School Meal Program, the impact of food deserts, and food waste. Panelists explored how communities could learn from other cultures and suggested that youth play a crucial role in advocating for food justice in schools, neighborhoods, and local government.

The action items urged youth to volunteer at food banks, organize food drives, create community gardens, and use social media to raise awareness and educate their peers about nutrition and food waste. Moreover, the panel inspired youth to advocate for policy changes to improve food accessibility.

At the end of the town hall, attendees scanned a barcode for a feedback survey to share their experiences and offer suggestions to improve future town halls. The audience was overall

satisfied with the presentations and discussions. They would highly recommend the town hall to other youth and proposed potential topics for future events.

For more information about the *Live Well San Diego* Youth Sector, please visit [LiveWellSD.org/youth](https://LiveWellSD.org/youth). For any questions, contact [LiveWellYouth@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:LiveWellYouth@sdcounty.ca.gov).