



Costs & Benefits of SB 1383

FOOD BANK DATA & PERSPECTIVES

March 2025

California Association of Food Banks



Acknowledgments

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- Xochi Hernandez, Alameda County Community Food Bank
- Joan Sanborn, Second Harvest of Silicon Valley
- Kate Garrett, Feeding San Diego

Staff from the following food banks participated in preliminary conversations during the evaluation planning process and/or shared their perspectives in follow-up interviews.

- SLO Food Bank
- Feeding the Foothills
- Central California Food Bank
- Los Angeles Regional Food Bank
- Yolo Food Bank
- Food Share of Ventura County
- Food for People
- Second Harvest Food Bank Santa Cruz County
- Feeding America Riverside | San Bernardino Counties

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For more information, contact research@cafoodbanks.org



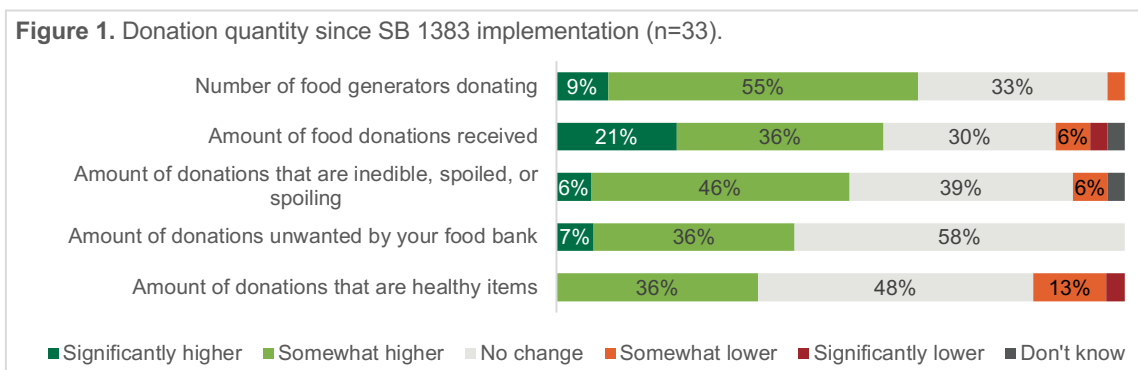
Executive Summary

Background

- In 2022, California began a phased implementation of Senate Bill (SB) 1383 (Lara, 2016), a multi-faceted organic waste reduction law that includes a requirement for food generators (e.g., grocery stores, wholesalers, etc.) to donate surplus food to organizations such as food banks.
- In 2024, California Association of Food Banks conducted an evaluation of the impacts of the first phase of this law on our member food banks using several data sources: a survey, food bank donation records, and conversations with select food banks.

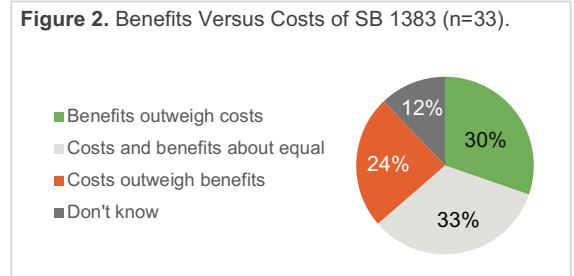
Findings

- **Most food banks are receiving more donations since SB 1383 went into effect, and some are getting more nutritious items, but spoilage is also on the rise.**



- Implementation of SB 1383 coincided with increased donations to most food banks. However, donations have decreased for some food banks, and others worry donations may decrease in the future.
- Many are receiving increased donations of nutritious items (e.g., meat, produce, etc.), which are products food banks consider especially essential.
- Increased donations, including of nutritious foods, have allowed some food banks to provide a greater variety of food to clients and onboard more partner agencies.
- However, half of food banks (52%) are also receiving more inedible donations.
- Many food banks attributed increased donations and improved donation quality to factors outside of SB 1383, such as their efforts to educate food generators.
- **Increased donations have come at a high cost to food banks, which have had to expand their roles without sufficient or sustainable resources.**
 - Food banks now spend more time educating food generators, training partner agencies, reporting to jurisdictions, and performing other administrative tasks such as fielding food generator questions, developing contracts, and ensuring timely reporting by partner agencies.
 - Most food banks (67%) had to hire additional full-time food recovery staff, adding annual costs of \$24,400 to \$288,000 per food bank. Yet, most (86%) still have inadequate staff or are not confident they can continue to fund their current level of staffing.

- Nearly all food banks (89%) purchased additional infrastructure, costing \$20,000 to \$1.4 million per food bank. Even with these investments, insufficient infrastructure remains an “extreme barrier” for many.
- One third of food banks provided funding to their partner agencies. The amount each of these food banks provided ranged from \$263,000 to \$1 million.
- **Half of food banks received funding related to food recovery, but not enough to cover ongoing costs; and food banks are divided on whether the benefits of SB 1383 outweigh the costs.**
 - The most common funders were local jurisdictions and CalRecycle. Only one food bank received funding from a food generator. Some of this funding was received by food banks well before SB 1383 implementation.
 - Most funding was one-time, and amounts varied from \$15,000 to \$2.4 million.
 - At least 62% of food banks increased their spending on food recovery by more than what they received in funding.
 - Only one food bank said donations help save money on purchasing food.
- **For rural food banks, lack of jurisdiction engagement in SB 1383 is a key pain point.**
 - These food banks are less likely to see their jurisdictions conduct education or enforcement activities or fund their food bank’s partner agencies.
- **Receiving funding is a predictor of positive outcomes for food banks.**
 - Food banks believing the benefits of SB 1383 outweigh the costs were more likely to report having received funding, less severe barriers around staffing and infrastructure, and increased and better-quality donations.
 - Food banks receiving more donations since SB 1383 implementation were more likely to report that they or their partner agencies received funding, high engagement from their jurisdiction(s), and food bank infrastructure purchases.



Key Recommendations

- **State agencies and policymakers, local jurisdictions and food generators** can identify sources of ongoing, sufficient funding for food banks and opportunities to lower the administrative burden on food banks.
- **State agencies** can develop training or capacity-building resources for generators and food recovery organizations (FROs) throughout the state.
- **Local jurisdictions** can inform food generators of food recovery regulations, educate them on appropriate donations, and invite food bank staff to join them when visiting food generators to conduct education or enforcement activities.
- **Food generators** can ensure their staff are aware of, and trained on, donation guidelines.

Background: SB 1383 and the Role of Food Banks

Senate Bill (SB) 1383 (Lara),¹ passed in 2016, is a law aimed at reducing organic waste in California across a variety of sources, including edible food. A key requirement is for food generators (e.g., grocery stores, wholesalers, restaurants, etc.) to donate surplus edible food to food recovery organizations (FROs), such as food banks, rather than dispose of it in a landfill. As a mechanism of ensuring their compliance, food generators must establish a written contract with at least one FRO stating the FRO will accept donations. The law was phased in, starting with “Tier 1” generators such as food retailers and wholesalers on January 1, 2022, and adding “Tier 2” generators such as large restaurants, institutions, and event venues on January 1, 2024.

Most food banks in California had already been receiving donations from food generators for years, if not decades, prior to SB 1383. Thus, in many cases, the law meant putting an existing donation relationship in writing. In other cases, generators reached out to food banks for the first time to develop a contract. Under SB 1383, food banks and other FROs are not required to contract with food generators or receive donations. However, if they enter a written contract with a food generator, they bear the responsibility of reporting on the donations they receive to their local jurisdictions.

California Association of Food Banks (CAFB) is a network of 41 food banks. CAFB member food banks use a variety of models to recover food,² with some receiving donations directly, while others coordinate the efforts of agencies they partner with (e.g., food pantries and meal programs) to pick up donations and distribute them. In each of these models, the food bank usually holds the contracts with food generators. In a few cases, food banks partner with a third-party coordinator that works directly with food generators to recover food and coordinate its delivery to food bank(s), their partner agencies, and/or other FROs. Many food banks use a combination of these three models. However, in a few counties, CAFB member food banks are not involved in food recovery, and other FROs or third-party coordinators manage food recovery instead.

To illustrate the scope of food recovery performed by our network, we found in our evaluation that the 27 food banks submitting data on their partnerships collectively coordinate the efforts of 941 partner agencies to conduct pick-ups from 3,088 unique food generator locations.

¹ Bill text available at: https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160SB1383

² May Lynn Tan. “SB 1383 & Food Banks: Models of Grocery Recovery California.” California Association of Food Banks, Oakland, CA. September, 2023. Available at: <https://www.cafoodbanks.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/SB-1383-report-23-09.27.pdf>

Research Questions & Methods

This study was designed to answer the following research questions:

- What donated goods are most essential to meeting community needs?
- How have donations changed since SB 1383 was implemented?
- What are the costs and benefits of implementing SB 1383 for food banks?
- What do food banks see as the successes and pain points of SB 1383?

We first held conversations with individual food banks to gather their perspectives and determine the optimal data collection approach. Based on these conversations, we developed a 32-question survey asking about food banks’ perceptions of SB 1383, donation preferences and barriers, and financial information. The survey included a combination of multiple choice and open-ended questions.³

A total of 33 food banks participated in the survey, 15 of which provided administrative data on overall pounds received, and 16 provided pounds by category (e.g., produce, meat, etc.). We also conducted follow-up interviews with two food banks and held a group discussion where we shared survey results and asked for additional context and feedback.

Characteristics of food banks participating in each component of the study are summarized below. Food banks that participated in initial conversations or in follow-up interviews are included in the “Food Bank Conversations” column.

Table 1. Characteristics of participating food banks, by study component.

Study Component	Survey (n=33)	Admin Data – Total Pounds (n=15)	Admin Data – Pounds by Category (n=16)	Food Bank Conversations (n=12)
Characteristic				
Food Bank Location				
Rural	36%	33%	31%	17%
Urban	64%	67%	69%	83%
Food Bank Size				
Small	36%	33%	31%	17%
Medium	36%	27%	25%	50%
Large	27%	40%	44%	33%
Food Recovery Program Size in 2023				
Large (Received 5 million pounds or more in 2023)	39%	60%	69%	75%
Small (Received less than 5 million pounds in 2023)	39%	40%	25%	17%
Unknown	21%	0%	6%	8%
Percent of Donations Picked Up by Partner Agencies (Vs. Food Bank)				
0-49%	60%	67%	50%	45%
50-100%	40%	33%	50%	55%

Some of the quotes in this report have been lightly edited for clarity.

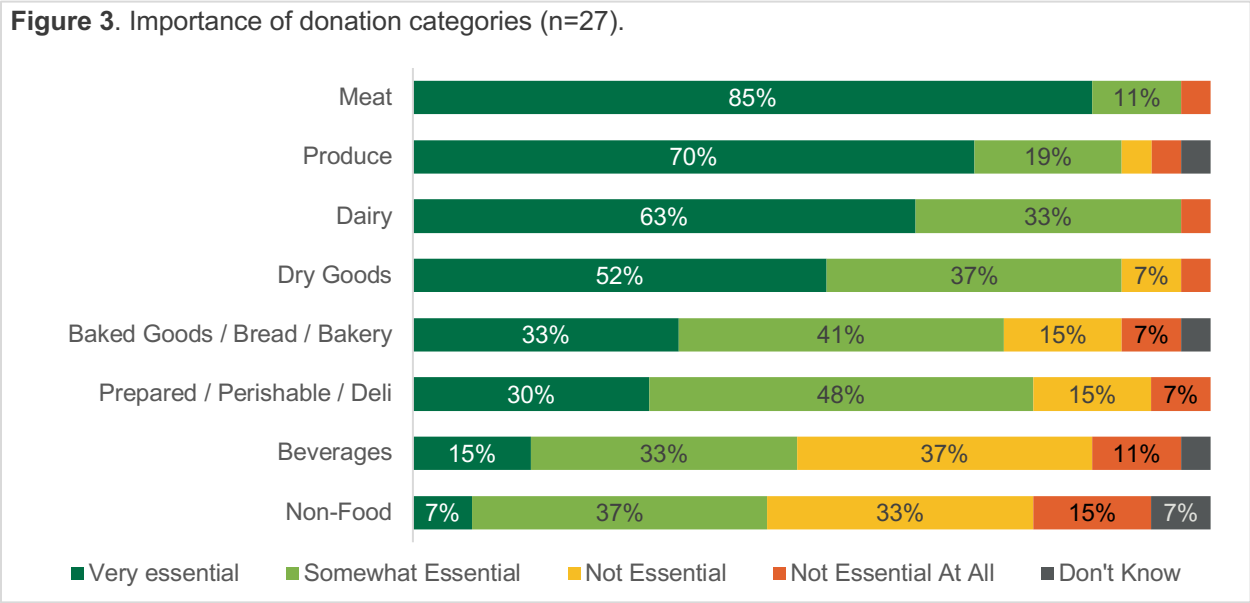
³ A copy of the questionnaire is available at: <https://www.cafoodbanks.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/SB-1383-Survey.pdf>



Findings

What donated goods are most essential to meeting community needs?

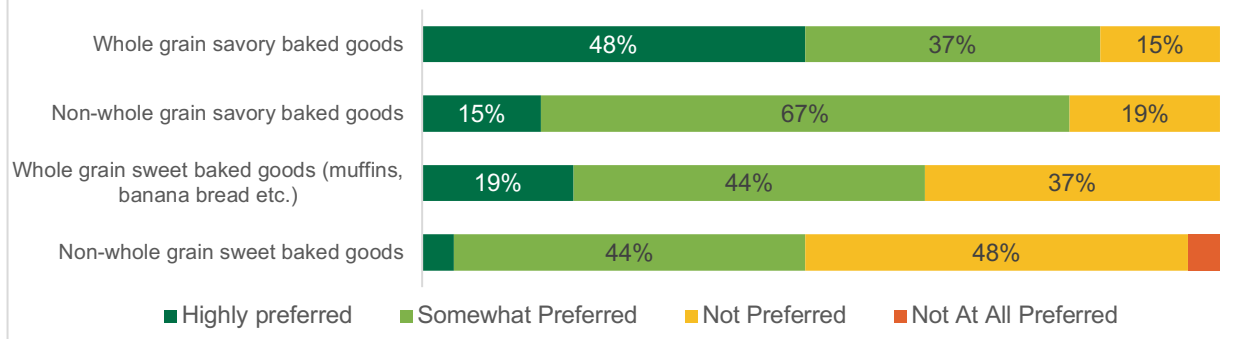
Food banks consider donations of nutritious foods, and other ingredients that can be used to make meals, as especially essential



Food banks generally view meat, produce, and dairy as the most essential categories of donations (**Figure 3**). This is because some food banks cannot offer these items otherwise due to their cost, and because many also prioritize offering nutritious foods that can be used to make a meal. Some food banks prize these foods so highly that they proactively monitor the amount they are receiving from individual food generators and provide targeted education to any generators that stop donating these items. However, one food bank acknowledged that while they would prefer to receive items such as meat and produce, food generators are not necessarily able to donate more of them because they are expensive, and the generators must protect their own bottom line as well.

Other categories of donations that most food banks see as essential include dry goods, baked goods or bread, and prepared foods (**Figure 3**). Nearly half of food banks also see donations of beverages and non-food as “somewhat” or “very” essential.

Figure 4. Baked goods preferences (n=27).

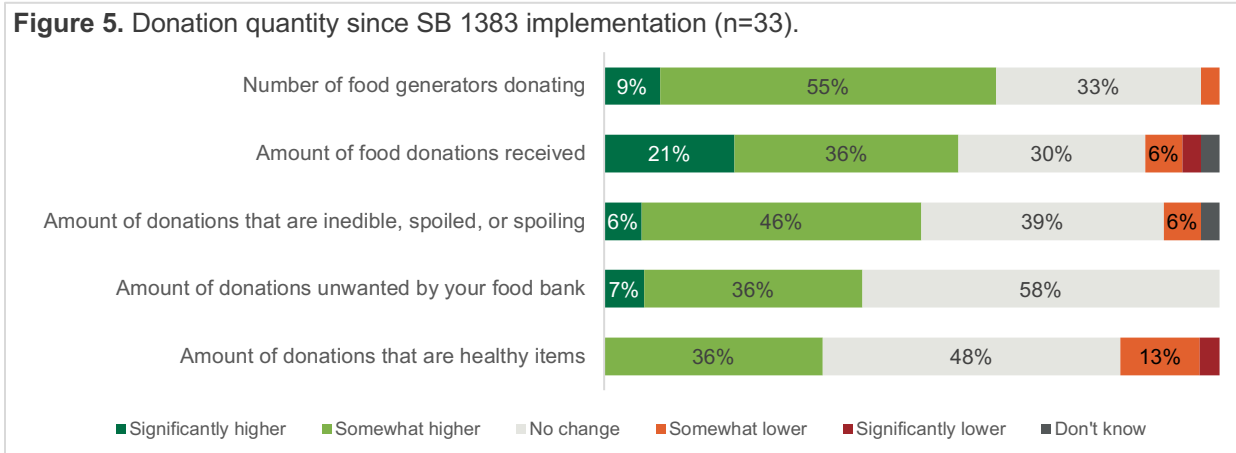


Food banks generally prefer baked goods that can be used as part of a meal. Within the broad category of bread and baked goods, most food banks prefer donations of savory and whole-grain items (**Figure 4**). One food bank explained that anything that could be used to make a sandwich was helpful, while another commented that hamburger and hot dog buns are popular at their food bank. Another food bank expressed a preference for baked goods that could be eaten for breakfast, such as granola bars.

How have donations changed since SB 1383 was implemented?

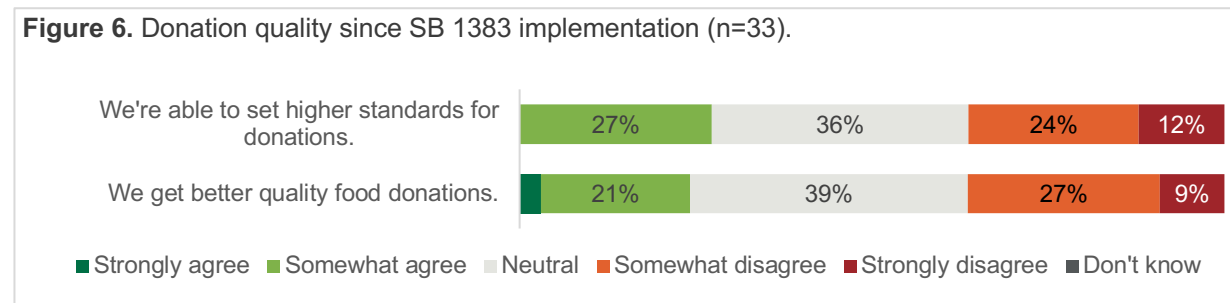
Changes in Donation Quantity and Quality: Survey Data

Most food banks are receiving more donations, and some are getting more nutritious items, but spoilage is also on the rise



Most food banks saw an increase in the number of food generators donating and amount of donations received (**Figure 5**). Over a third also reported an increase in “healthy items” donated, such as protein and produce, which is important since most food banks see these items as among the most essential donations to receive.

However, half of food banks (52%) also reported receiving more inedible or spoiled donations, and about a third are receiving more donations that are unwanted by their food bank, such as soda or candy.

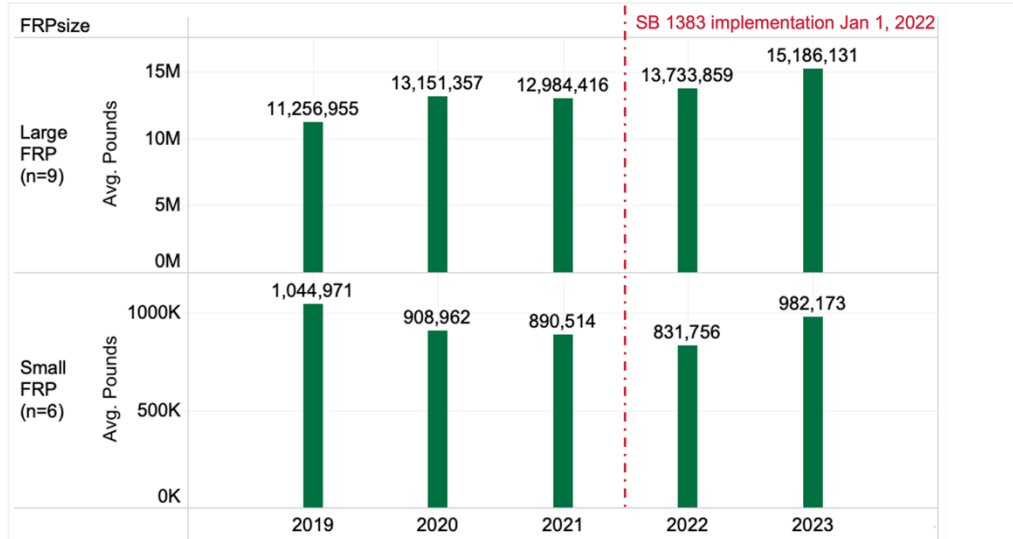


While about a quarter of food banks agreed they can set higher standards and that the quality of donations has improved, slightly more disagreed with these statements (**Figure 6**).

Changes in Donation Quantity: Administrative Data

SB 1383 implementation coincided with increased donations to many food banks

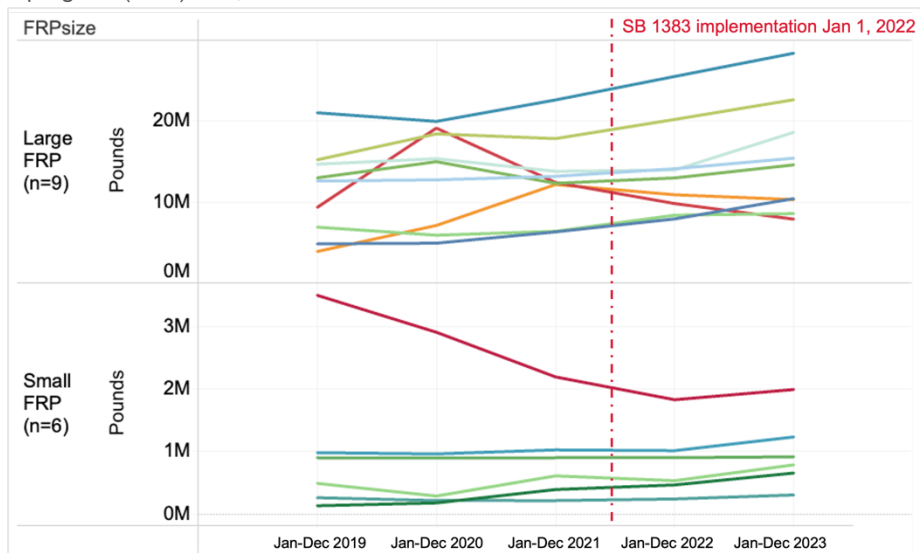
Figure 7. Average total pounds of donations received, by food recovery program (FRP) size, 2019-2023.



A subset of food banks submitted administrative records, including 15 that shared the pounds received from SB 1383-mandated food generators between 2019-2023. Implementation of SB 1383 in 2022 coincided with increased donations, particularly among food banks with larger food recovery programs (FRPs), which are defined as receiving at least five million pounds of donated goods in 2023 (**Figure 7**). However, food banks with smaller FRPs were more likely to see an initial dip in 2022 followed by an increase in 2023.

Figure 8, below, shows donation trends for individual, de-identified food banks, illustrating their varied experiences. While donations increased at most food banks, 3 out of 15 received fewer pounds in 2023 than in 2021.

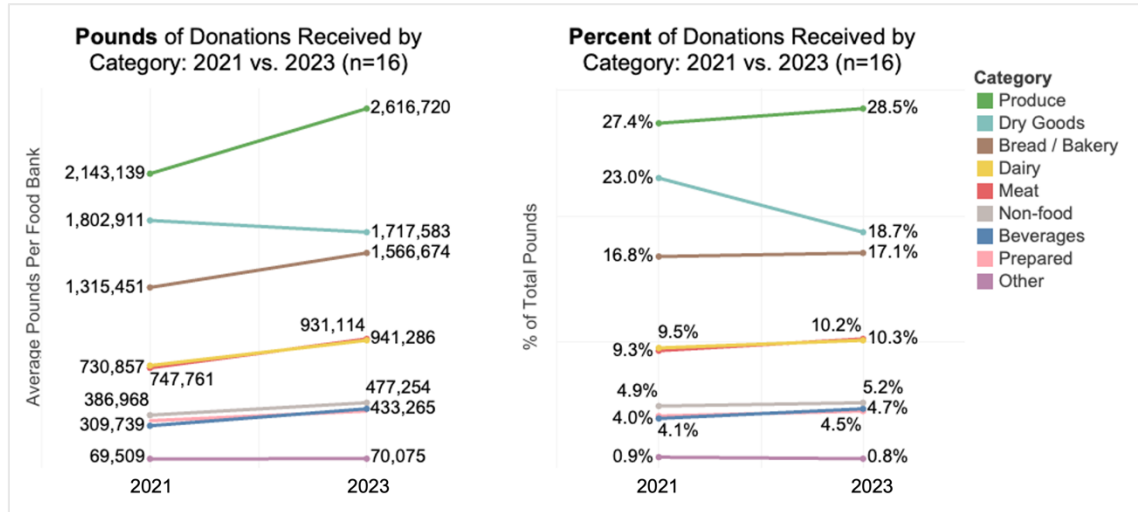
Figure 8. Total pounds of donations received, by food bank and recovery program (FRP) size, 2019-2023.



Changes in Donation Categories: Administrative Data

Many food banks received more pounds of essential, nutritious foods

Figure 9. Donation category trends.

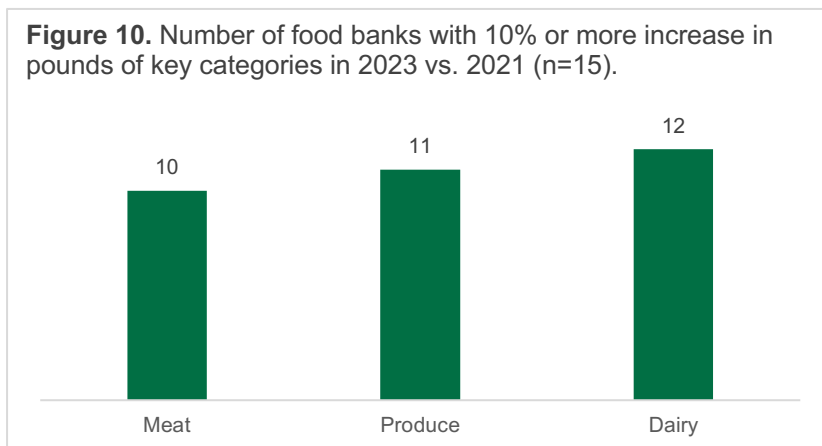


16 food banks shared records of pounds of donations by category in 2021 and 2023. On average, pounds of all categories increased, except for dry goods (**Figure 9**). The proportion of categories held steady, except that dry goods made up a smaller share while produce slightly increased its share.

Table 2. Importance of donation categories vs. proportion of donations received in 2023.

Category	% of Food Banks Rating as "Very Essential" (n=27)	% of Donations Received in 2023 (n=16)
Meat	85%	10%
Produce	70%	29%
Dairy	63%	10%
Dry Goods	52%	19%
Baked goods / Bread / Bakery	33%	17%
Prepared / Perishable / Deli	30%	5%
Beverages	15%	5%
Non-Food	7%	5%
Other	n/a	1%

Donations align somewhat with food bank needs. For instance, produce makes up the greatest proportion by poundage and is "very essential" to 70% of food banks (**Table 2**). However, meat is considered "very essential" by the most food banks but ranks as the fifth in pounds of donations received.



Finally, we compared the pounds of food received for the three most essential categories in 2021 and 2023 at individual food banks. Of the 15 with this data, most saw a 10% or greater increase in poundage of produce, dairy, and meat (**Figure 10**).

Donations of nutritious items: Reconciling survey data & food bank records

In the survey, 1 in 3 food banks reported that the amount of “healthy items” donated such as produce and protein was now higher (**Figure 1**), while most of those providing data on donation categories showed increases in poundage of meat, produce, and dairy (**Figure 10**).

We asked several food banks for their interpretation of these differences, and one explained they think of the amount of nutritious donations as unchanged because these items as a *proportion of the overall donations* they receive is the same. Another food bank shared they believe any increase in healthy items is due to their own efforts to educate food generators, and not SB 1383.

An additional consideration is that most of the food banks able to share donation category data had larger FRPs, and their experiences may not be representative of all food banks who participated in the survey.

Changes in Donations: Food Bank Perspectives

Many food banks attributed increased donations to factors outside SB 1383, and some worry donations will decrease over time

Many food banks attributed increases in donations to their own food generator outreach and education, independent of SB 1383. Others cited efforts to improve partner agency reporting of donations and other external factors such as warehouse moves. A few pointed out that donations to their food banks had already been steadily increasing prior to SB 1383. However, some food banks did tie increased donations directly to SB 1383.

Several food banks shared concerns that donations would go down in the future, as food generators become more aware of how much they are donating and then reduce their ordering or production. Some expressed that they were already seeing these reductions.

SB 1383 helped improve donation quality for some, but food bank efforts to educate food generators were crucial to this outcome

Some food banks tied increases in essential donation categories, such as meat and produce, to SB 1383. One explained the law was helpful in improving the donations they received because it caused food generators to view them as partners rather than recipients of charity.

Regardless of their views of SB 1383, food banks agreed that educating generators (often repeatedly) about what donations are acceptable, safe, and desirable was essential to maintaining or improving donation quality.

Some food banks received more waste, while others saw little change

While very few food banks have a mechanism for systematically tracking waste from donated food separately from other waste, several commented on their experiences.

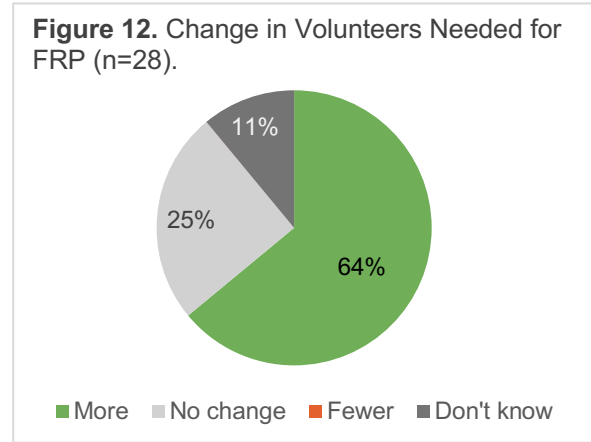
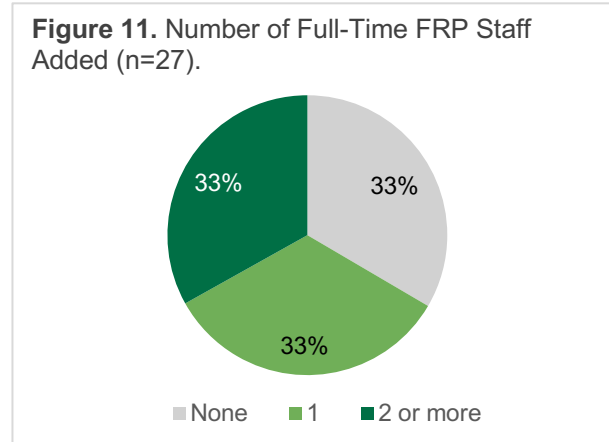
One food bank shared that the quality had gone down because SB 1383 made retailers more aware of their donation volume; retailers then began to sell higher quality surplus items cheaply rather than donate them. At the same time, the food bank's landfill bill went up due to the waste they were receiving from these retailers.

Another food bank reported receiving entire truckloads of food that were too close to their expiration date to safely distribute, and they had to work with the generator to get them shipped back. While they were not responsible for the waste bill for these items, it took significant staff time to resolve the issue.

As a counterpoint, several food banks expressed that the proportion of donations that needed to be disposed of had not been impacted by SB 1383.

What are the costs to food banks of implementing SB 1383?

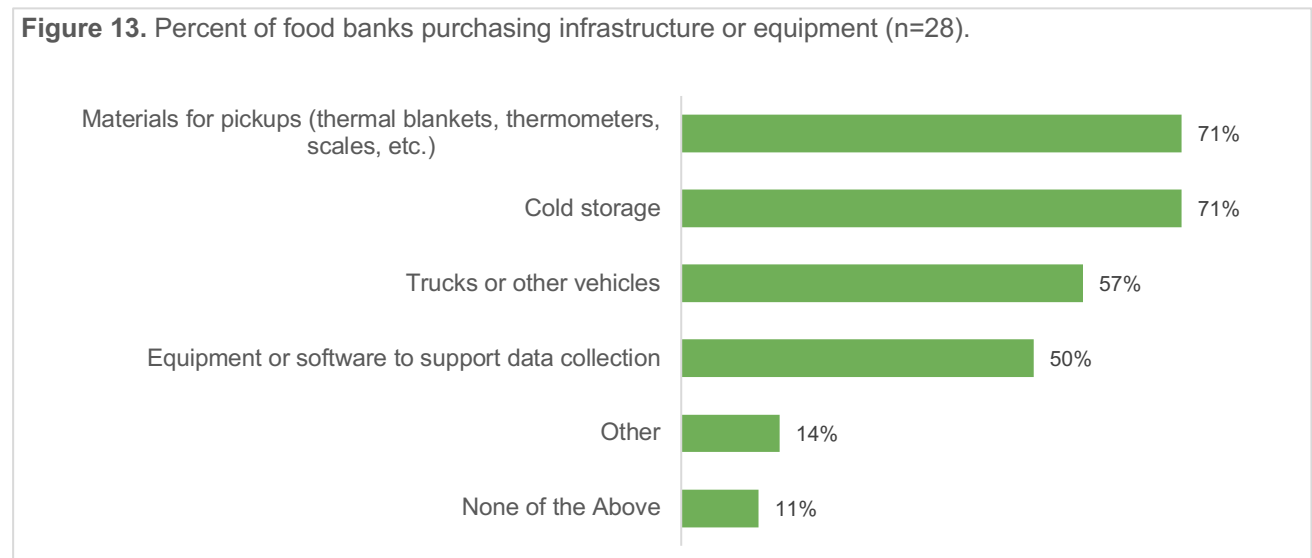
Most food banks had to hire additional, full-time food recovery staff



Two-thirds of food banks hired one or more staff members for their food recovery program (**Figure 11**). Among the 10 food banks that reported costs, additional annual costs for staffing ranged from \$24,486 to \$288,000.

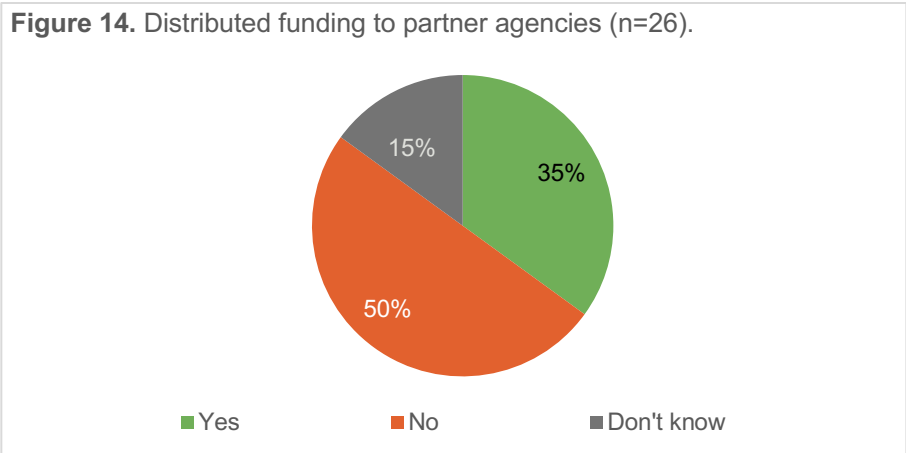
Two-thirds of food banks surveyed also need more volunteers now compared to before SB 1383 went into effect, further illustrating the need for additional labor (**Figure 12**).

Most food banks purchased equipment or infrastructure, often for temperature control



Over half also purchased vehicles, and a similar proportion bought equipment or software for data collection (**Figure 13**). Among the 12 food banks reporting their infrastructure spending, this ranged from \$20,000 to \$1.4 million.

One in three food banks granted funding to their partner agencies for food recovery

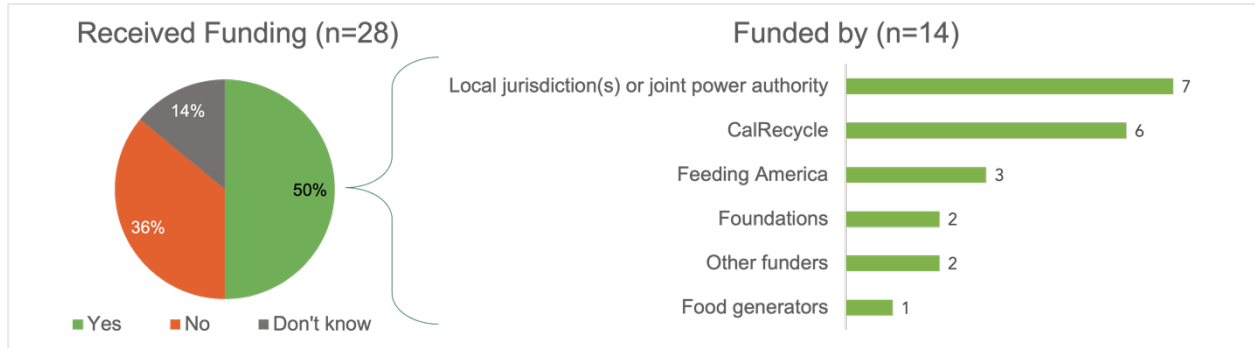


The five food banks reporting the amount provided between \$263,000 and \$1 million of funding to their partner agencies.

What funding or cost-savings are food banks receiving?

Half of food banks reported receiving funding related to food recovery

Figure 15. Funding received for food recovery.

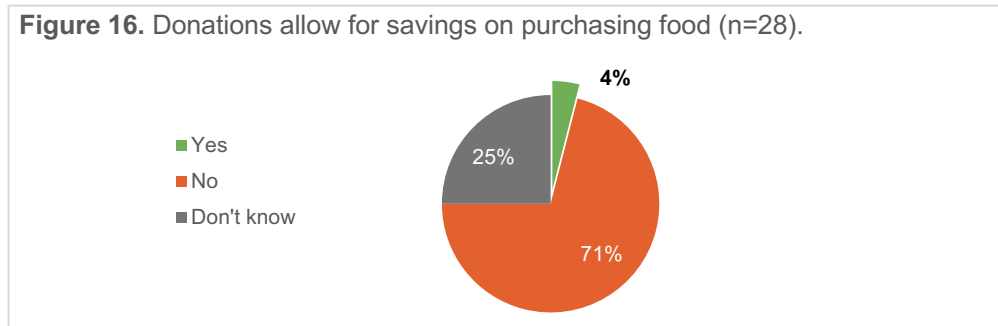


The most common funders included local jurisdictions and CalRecycle (**Figure 15**). Only one food bank received funds from a food generator. Among the 11 food banks reporting the amount of funding they received, this ranged from \$15,000 to \$2.4 million.

The funding questions did not include a timeframe, so some food banks reported on funding they received several years prior to SB 1383, including CalRecycle's Food Waste Prevention and Rescue Grant Program.

Most reported that food donations do not save them money on purchasing food

Figure 16. Donations allow for savings on purchasing food (n=28).



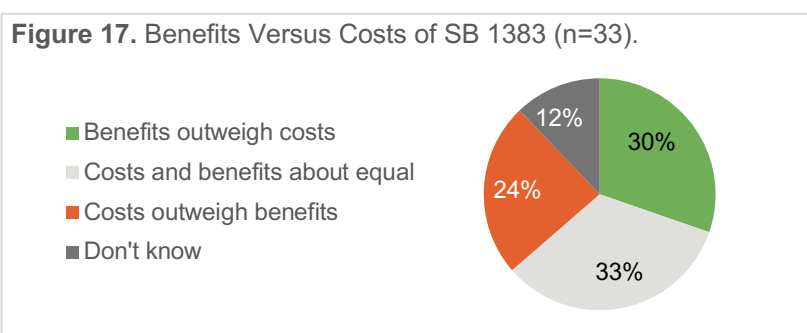
While most food banks received more donations after SB 1383 was implemented, just one food bank said that this was allowing them to save money on purchasing food (**Figure 16**). For some food banks, donations are seen as a supplement that add variety to the staple products they purchase. Because donated goods are highly variable, food banks that aim to guarantee a steady supply of core staples must use funds to purchase these. On the other hand, some food banks that rely on food recovery for a substantial portion of the food they distribute have very limited purchasing budgets, so there is not much that can be offset by donations. As one food bank explained, "Food purchasing is not tied to donation amount in 1:1 fashion. It is based on funding availability, often from private sources."

Most food banks increased their spending on food recovery by more than what they received in funding

Twenty-one food banks reported on the amount of funding received, if applicable, and the amount they spent on at least one cost category (i.e., additional annual staffing costs, infrastructure, and/or funds distributed to agencies). Of these, **at least 62% spent more than they received in funding**. The true proportion of food banks that spent more than they received is likely higher, because not all food banks reported on all categories of costs, and only one year of increased staffing costs was included in the calculation. In addition, several food banks mentioned other food recovery costs that have increased since SB 1383 was implemented, but that we were unable to quantify in our study. These include disposal of spoiling or otherwise unusable products, fuel, and vehicle insurance.

In interviews, several food banks that received funding noted that it was through a one-time grant that would not be renewed, while additional costs such as staffing were ongoing. Often, costs for these additional food recovery staff come directly out of their core operating budget.

Food banks were divided on whether the benefits of SB 1383 outweigh the costs, or vice versa



Nearly equal proportions of food banks stated the costs of SB 1383 outweigh the benefits, the benefits outweigh costs, and that the two are about equal (**Figure 17**). One food bank saying the costs outweigh the benefits stated:

“Our jurisdictions are very behind the state with SB 1383 implementation. Notice of the requirement to be in compliance only went out last year which is when we have seen the biggest change. The largest impact on us has been having to divert staff time to deal with implementation (creating & executing generator contracts, fielding calls from confused generators, extra reporting, and the added education and reporting detail required for our agency partners - many of whom are volunteer-run).”

Even those that feel the benefits outweigh the costs struggle with implementation. As one food bank explained:

“Food recovery is not new to our business model. The new law has been an opportunity to engage existing donors in expanding food categories and access to donations more days a week, as well as partnering with new donors finally prepared to make efforts to offer donatable product. ... With that said there is a huge gap in funding for [hunger relief] organizations to do the education and outreach to Tier 1 and 2 generators on the ways in which we can accept product, let alone the resources to pick up, store and distribute in a cadence that keeps donations fresh and healthy for our neighbors.”

What are the key successes?

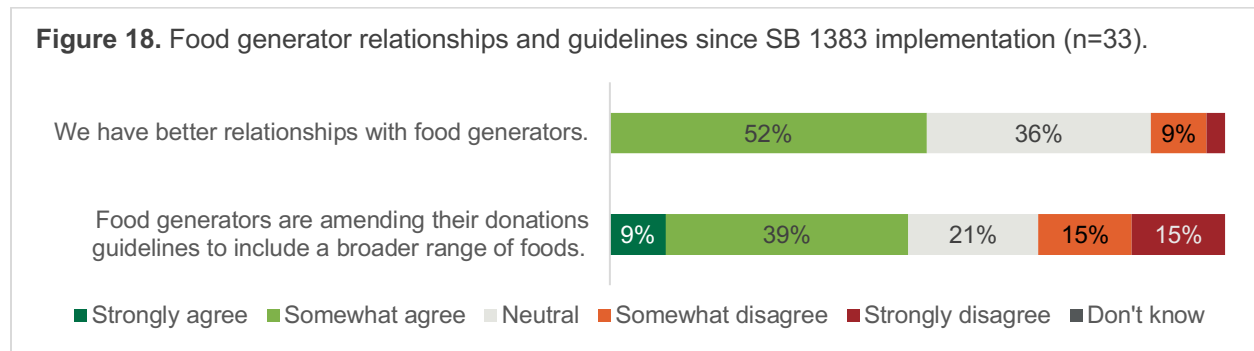
Many food banks are receiving more donations, allowing them to provide more food to their communities

As noted earlier, over half of food banks reported receiving more donations and an increase in food generators donating since SB 1383 was implemented. One food bank shared that increased donations also allowed them to onboard more partner agencies to pick up and distribute food.

Recovered food enhances the variety of food bank offerings, including nutritious foods

Being able to offer more varied and nutritious items that are available through donations as seen as an important success by some food banks. As one explained, “Because of the increased donations, we are able to offer meat and produce to our neighbors instead of only non-perishable items.” One food bank also noted that grocery donations make it possible to offer brand-name products, which can contribute to client dignity.

Many food banks have improved relationships with food generators and other stakeholders such as local jurisdictions



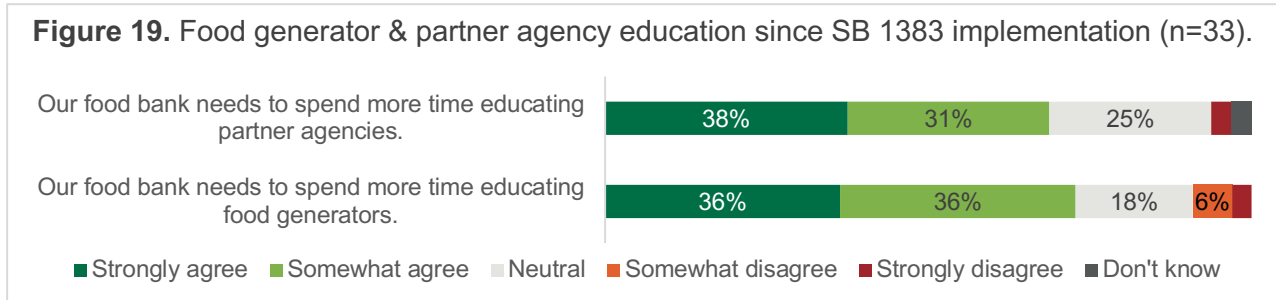
About half of food banks agreed they have better relationships with food generators and a similar proportion agreed generators are updating their donation guidelines to include a broader range of foods (**Figure 18**).

A few food banks also commented that other stakeholders, such as local jurisdictions, are now more aware of the food bank and their role in food recovery. One food bank noted increased awareness of the role of food recovery within their own organization.

Finally, a few food banks pointed to the social and environmental impacts of SB 1383 as a success, given the increase in donations to many food banks, and the awareness the legislation has raised about organic waste and food recovery.

What are pain points for food banks?

Food banks have had to expand their role significantly and now spend more time educating food generators and their partner agencies as well as on administrative tasks



Nearly three-quarters (73%) of food banks said they need to spend more time educating food generators now compared to before SB 1383 was implemented (**Figure 19**). This education includes what is desirable and appropriate to donate and food safety practices for donations. Many food banks described conducting this training repeatedly due to high turnover of food generator staff. One food bank stated:

“...New and under-educated donors can feel that donating food that is less salvageable than Food Banks and FROs require is a safer solution to ensure they are not penalized for not adhering to donation requirements. ... Quantity, quality, labelling, packaging, preparation considerations, logistics, transportation and volunteer/staffing needs are all requirements that necessitate robust donor education, staff training, and re-training due to staff turnover.”

In some cases, the need for education is due to a communication gap between food generators’ corporate headquarters and their individual store locations. Food banks shared they sometimes must print out and show staff emails received from corporate headquarters specifying that donations of certain categories, such as meat, are allowed.

Most food banks are also spending more time educating their partner agencies. To ensure compliance with SB 1383 reporting requirements, this includes training them how to accurately weigh, categorize and record donations in a digital platform. Food banks also provide education on how to provide feedback to food generators when they offer inappropriate donations, and how safely handle donations of perishable and prepared foods. One food bank explained, “We have taken a huge initiative to educate our Agency Partners on food safety, their rights, and encouraging proactive communication with donors.”

SB 1383 has also come with a substantial administrative burden. Much of this centers around reporting requirements, including following up with partner agencies to ensuring timely and accurate reporting to the food bank, and sharing data with jurisdictions and their consultants. Many food banks also spend substantial time performing administrative tasks related to food generators, including fielding questions from generators that are looking to establish a contract, developing agreements with them, onboarding them, and responding to their requests for data. One food bank explained:

“Many jurisdictions request data/donation activity reports, signed agreements (on behalf of generators), status updates and other relevant information. A lot of time has been spent communicating with new generators and signing agreements/onboarding, though most of these businesses have not actually started donating.”

Role expansion has not been coupled with sustainable funding

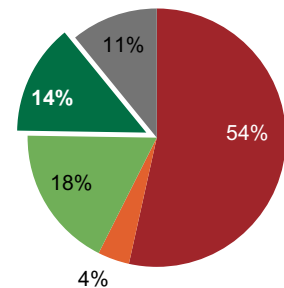
This disparity is illustrated by the fact that, while 85% of food banks have been asked by their jurisdictions to report on the donations they've received, only 27% received funding from a jurisdiction. As one food bank noted: "The administrative burden put on our staff without any corresponding resources has caused a lot of stress and additional work."

Furthermore, most of the funding food banks have received for food recovery has been through non-renewable grants, while many of their costs are on-going.

Because of insufficient funding, most food banks currently have inadequate food recovery staff or are not confident they can continue to cover their current level of staffing

Figure 20. Staffing Adequacy and Sustainability (n=28).

- We have inadequate staff and don't have enough funding to hire more
- We have inadequate staff, but have funding to hire more
- We have adequate staff, but funding for them is likely to run out within 2 years
- We have adequate staff, and likely have enough funding for them for 2+ years
- Don't know

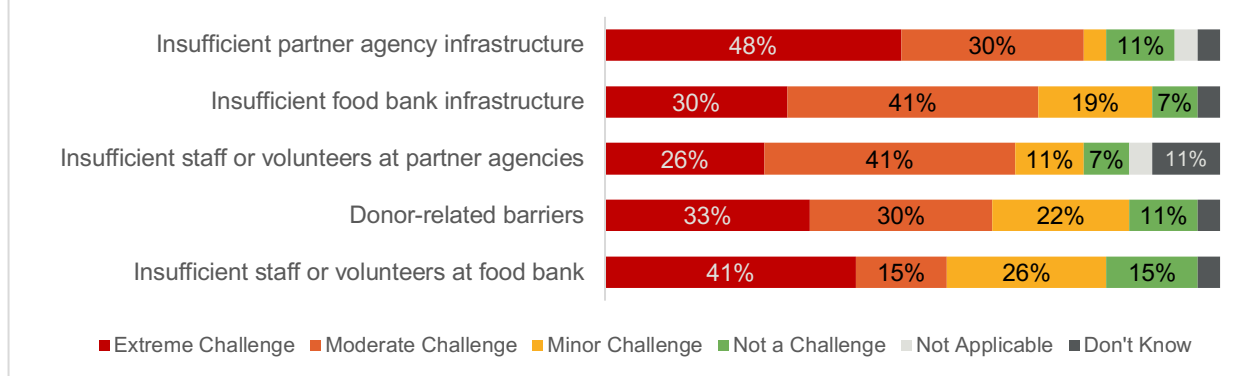


Despite adding staff in recent years, most food banks (57%) still have inadequate grocery recovery staff (**Figure 20**). Only 1 in 3 currently have enough staff, and half of these say the funding is likely to run out within two years. Consistent with this finding, over 40% of food banks say that not having enough staff or volunteers at their food bank is a "extreme" barrier to maintaining or expanding their food recovery work (**Figure 21**).

"The work of food recovery is valuable, but support must be given to Food Banks and FROs conducting this work in order to ensure that future work is possible." – Food Bank

Insufficient infrastructure, staffing, and donor-related challenges are significant barriers to maintaining and expanding food recovery work

Figure 21. Barriers to maintaining or expanding FRP (n=27).



A majority of food banks (59%) say infrastructure at their partner agencies and/or their food bank is an “extreme” barrier (**Figure 21**). Examples of infrastructure gaps include insufficient fleet, storage, kitchen space, and cold rooms; high fuel costs; and lack of health permits for repurposing prepared foods.

Donor-related barriers are also a challenge. Food generators may have unrealistic expectations, such as frequent pickups of small loads, which are time- and cost-prohibitive for many food banks. Improper donor packaging and limited staff time to participate in food recovery training or meet with food banks were also mentioned as significant challenges.

“...many jurisdiction staff and food donors expect that the charitable food network will service any donor that asks and there are unrealistic expectations for the timeframe for those partnerships to be established and the role that the charitable food network is expected to play (e.g., we have donors requesting weekly pickups for 1-2 boxes of produce, which would cost more in gas and time to pick up than the donation is worth).”

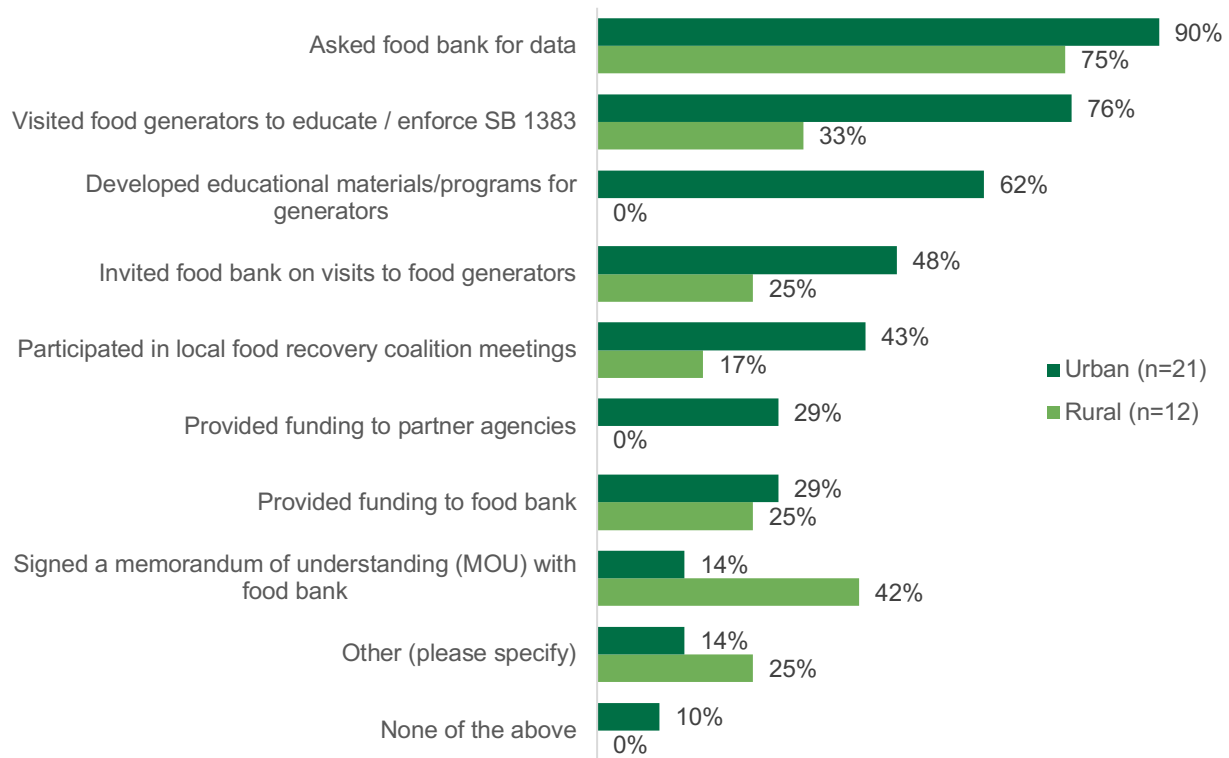
Similarly, several food banks mentioned food generators may be looking to donate prepared foods, which may not fit with their food recovery model. While there are exceptions, most food banks specialize in distributing groceries and lack the infrastructure to store and distribute prepared foods. Some food banks work with partner agencies that are able to accept these donations, but this comes with significant food safety training and infrastructure investments.

Food banks’ partner agencies are stretched thin and bear substantial costs

Many food banks see an insufficient number of staff or volunteers at their partner agencies as a significant challenge to maintaining or expanding their food recovery efforts (**Figure 21**). Several food banks that rely on these agencies for donation pickups reflected on concerns about the sustainability of these efforts. One said the agencies they worked with were at maximum capacity and could not take on pickups from additional food generators. Other food banks shared worries about the costs borne by these agencies, including gas, waste disposal, and purchasing infrastructure such as cold storage. In many ways, partner agencies serve as buffers to their food banks by shouldering some of the labor and costs necessary to pick up and process donations. Recognizing this, several food banks called for funding and other resources to be provided to these agencies.

Many rural food banks struggle with a lack of support from their local jurisdictions

Figure 22. Jurisdiction activities (n=33).



Food banks in rural areas were less likely to report that their jurisdictions were engaged in activities that we found to be associated with food banks receiving increased donations (**Figure 22**). Specifically, rural food banks reported their jurisdictions were less likely to:

- Develop educational materials or programs for food generators
- Conduct educational or enforcement visits related to SB 1383
- Invite food banks to join these visits
- Fund the food banks' partner agencies

Furthermore, several rural food bank staff commented on food generators' lack of awareness or concern about SB 1383, which they attributed to their jurisdictions lack of educational efforts and enforcement of the law.

“SB1383 is here in name only at the moment – compliance enforcement isn't happening yet.” – Rural Food Bank

What's associated with positive outcomes?

Food banks that felt the benefits of SB 1383 outweigh the costs were more likely to report receiving funding, having less severe barriers around staffing and infrastructure, and receiving increased and better quality donations (including more healthy items).

Food banks stating that benefits outweigh costs (as compared to those who said the opposite) were more likely to report:

- Receiving funding for food recovery^{*4}, especially from CalRecycle*
- Agreeing that generators are amending guidelines to maximize donations**
- Receiving a higher amount of food* and donations of “healthy items”*
- Receiving better quality donations*
- Partner agencies were doing most of the donation pickups (rather than the food bank)*

Food banks saying costs outweigh benefits were more likely to report:

- Experiencing food bank staffing**, partner agency staffing*, and food bank infrastructure* as “moderate” or “extreme” barriers to their food recovery programs
- Needing to spend more time educating agencies** and food generators*
- “Amount of food your food bank would otherwise need to purchase is” is now “higher” since SB 1383 went into effect**
- Receiving a higher amount of unwanted donations*
- Food bank was doing most of their own donation pickups*

Food banks receiving more donations since SB 1383 implementation were more likely to report that they or their partner agencies received funding, high jurisdiction engagement, food bank infrastructure purchases, and more food generators donating.

Compared to those who received a lower or unchanged amount of donations, food banks that experienced an increase in donations were more likely to report:

- Receiving funding*, especially from CalRecycle*
- Being in jurisdictions that:
 - Funded partner agencies**
 - Developed educational materials**
 - Visited generators to educate them about or enforce SB 1383**
 - Invited food banks to join these visits**
- Number of food generators donating was now higher**, and agreeing that food generators are amending guidelines to maximize donations** and they have better generator relationships**
- Purchasing cold storage* and materials for pickups (e.g., thermometers, scales, etc.)*
- Receiving better quality donations** and higher amounts of healthy items**
- Partner agencies were doing most of the donation pickups (rather than food bank)*

Based on our records, these food banks were more often in urban areas and partners of Feeding America.

⁴ **Indicates statistical significance at 95% confidence (p>.05). *Indicates statistical significance at 90% confidence (p>.10).

Recommendations

State Agencies and Policymakers (e.g., CalRecycle, Legislature, etc.):

- Pursue sources of ongoing funding for food banks that are sufficient to sustain their food recovery operations, especially staffing.
- Recognize that donations of nutritious foods (e.g., proteins, produce, etc.) and other meal ingredients help food banks address food security.
- Develop training or capacity building resources (e.g., on best practices and compliance) that could benefit food generators and FROs throughout the state.
- Incentivize local jurisdictions to follow the recommendations below.

Local Jurisdictions and Joint Power Authorities:

- Identify opportunities to lower the administrative burden on food banks, such as by streamlining the reporting process.
- Investigate new revenue sources, such as consumer waste collection or disposal fees, that can be used to provide ongoing funding to food banks and their partner agencies.
- Inform food generators of food recovery regulations and educate them on appropriate donations; prioritize outreach to generators that can offer nutritious items.
- Invite food bank staff to join educational and enforcement visits to food generators.
- Learn about food banks' and other FROs' overall capacity and ability to receive specific products (e.g., prepared foods) in order to refer generators to an appropriate FRO.

Food Generators – Corporate Headquarters

- Ensure individual locations are aware of food recovery regulations and guidelines, including food safety and quality standards, and what products can be donated.
- Encourage donations of nutritious items in company guidelines.
- Monitor program compliance by tracking the volume and variety of donations made by individual locations, and by adding food recovery performance to audits and checklists.
- Allocate staff time at the individual location-level to participate in food recovery.
- Provide funding and/or in-kind infrastructure donations to food banks and their partner agencies.

Food Generators – Individual Locations

- Allocate staff time to participate in donation-related training and food recovery.
- Proactively train new staff on donation regulations and guidelines.
- Work with food banks and their partner agencies to understand their donation capacity (e.g., if/what prepared food can be donated, how much they can accept, etc.).
- Instead of trying to donate spoiling and spoiled items to food banks, responsibly dispose of them (e.g., through animal feed, compost, etc.).

Food Banks:

- Communicate needs and preferences to food generators and be empowered to decline donations or new contracts if they do not advance organizational mission or goals (e.g., ability to offer nutritious foods).
- Provide pass-through funding and infrastructure to partner agencies.

Appendix: Select Survey Crosstabs

Below, we show select survey responses of food banks broken down by:

1. Those who say the benefits of SB 1383 outweigh the costs, versus those who say the costs outweigh the benefits
2. Those who said that, compared to before SB 1383 went into effect, the amount of donations they receive is now higher versus those who say this is unchanged or lower.

In each column, we show the percentage of the food banks in these four groups that selected a specific response in each row.

Table 3. Select Survey Crosstabs.

	Said...		Said amount of donations is..	
	"...benefits outweigh costs" (n=10)	"...costs outweigh benefits" (n=8)	"...higher" now (n=19)	"...unchanged" or "lower" now (n=13)
Since 1383 went in effect...				
...the number of food generators donating is...				
Higher	70%	88%	84%** ⁵	31%
Unchanged or lower	30%	13%	16%	69%**
...the amount of food received is...				
Higher	80%* ⁶	38%	100%	0%
Unchanged or lower	20%	63%*	0%	100%
...the amount of donations unwanted by your food bank is...				
Higher	22%	63%*	39%	46%
Unchanged or lower	78%*	38%	61%	54%
...the amount of food your food bank would otherwise need to purchase is...				
Higher	0%	38%**	17%	31%
Unchanged or lower	100%**	63%	83%	69%
...the amount of donations of healthy items is...				
Higher	56%*	13%	56%**	8%
Unchanged or lower	44%	88%	44%	92%**
...we have better relationships with food generators.				
Agree	60%	50%	68%**	23%
Disagree	20%	13%	5%	23%
Neutral	20%	38%	26%	54%
...we get better quality food donations.				
Agree	30%*	0%	42%**	0%
Disagree	20%	38%	21%	62%**
Neutral	0%	63%**	37%	38%
...food generators are amending their donations guidelines to include a broader range of foods.				
Agree	80%**	50%	74%**	15%
Disagree	10%	25%	16%	46%*
Neutral	10%	25%	11%	38%*
...our food bank needs to spend more time educating food generators.				
Agree	50%	88%*	74%**	69%
Disagree	20%	0%	11%	8%
Neutral	30%	13%	16%	23%
...our food bank needs to spend more time educating partner agencies.				
Agree	33%	86%**	71%	69%
Disagree	11%	0%	0%	8%
Neutral	56%*	14%	29%	23%

⁵ **Indicates statistical significance at 95% confidence (p>.05).

⁶ *Indicates statistical significance at 90% confidence (p>.10).

	Said...		Said amount of donations is..	
	"...benefits outweigh costs" (n=10)	"...costs outweigh benefits" (n=8)	"...higher" now (n=19)	"...unchanged" or "lower" now (n=13)
Food bank received grants or contracts to cover costs related to food recovery and/or SB 1383				
Yes	78%*	33%	65%*	30%
No	22%	33%	24%	50%
Don't know	0%	33%*	12%	20%
Food bank received funding from CalRecycle (asked of those answering "yes" above)				
Yes	5*	0	6*	0
No	2	2*	5	11*
Jurisdiction has...				
...provided funding to partner agencies				
Yes	20%	13%	32%**	0%
No	80%	88%	68%	100%**
...developed educational materials/programs for food generators				
Yes	50%	38%	58%**	15%
No	50%	63%	42%	85%**
...visited individual food generators to educate them about, or enforce, SB 1383				
Yes	60%	63%	74%**	38%
No	40%	38%	26%	62%**
...invited food bank staff to participate in visits to food generators				
Yes	40%	38%	53%**	15%
No	60%	63%	47%	85%**
Extent to which the following are barriers maintaining or expanding food recovery work:				
Insufficient number of staff or volunteers at food bank				
Minor challenge or not a challenge	44%	17%	44%	40%
Moderate or extreme challenge	56%	83%**	56%	60%
Insufficient number of staff or volunteers at partner agencies				
Minor challenge or not a challenge	50%*	0%	21%	22%
Moderate or extreme challenge	50%	100%*	79%	78%
Insufficient food bank infrastructure				
Minor challenge or not a challenge	44%*	0%	31%	20%
Moderate or extreme challenge	56%	100%*	69%	80%
Food bank has purchased...				
... cold storage				
Yes	78%	83%	82%*	50%
No	22%	17%	18%	50%*
...materials for pickups				
Yes	78%	83%	82%*	50%
No	22%	17%	18%	50%*
Percent of donations picked up by partner agencies (vs. food bank)				
0-49%	33%	83%*	47%	90%**
50-100%	67%*	17%	53%**	10%
Food bank location				
Rural	40%	50%	26%	46%
Rural Serving	20%	25%	16%	31%
Urban	40%	25%	58%*	23%
Feeding America (FA) affiliation				
"Partner" food bank (direct partner of FA)	44%	38%	67%**	23%
"Affiliate" (under the FA umbrella through an affiliation with a FA Partner food bank)	44%	50%	22%	62%**
Independent	11%	13%	11%	15%