

18 Reasons: Transforming Lives Through Food



The Need

In our modern food environment, access to nutritious food is not enough - food skills education is necessary for making informed choices about what we buy, cook, and eat.

We offer four free multi-week cooking and nutrition education programs for youth, families, adults, and birthing parents in underfunded neighborhoods: Cooking Matters, Planned & Prepped, Food As Medicine (FAM) and Nourishing Pregnancy. Each year, we teach thousands of families to buy, cook, and eat good food on a limited budget.

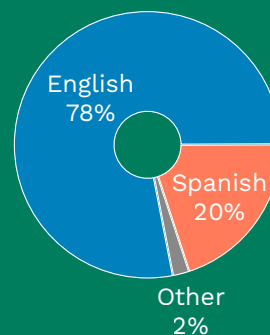
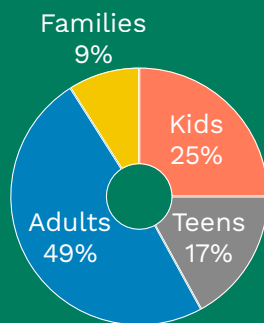
Who We Serve

86%

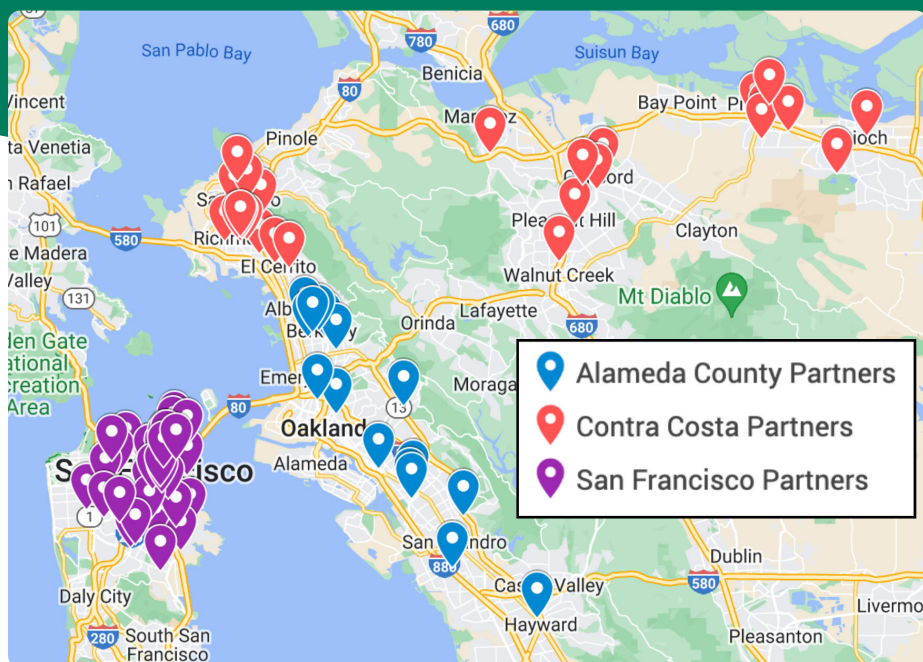
identify as people of color

69%

rely on federal food assistance and pantry programs



(Mandarin and Arabic)



Where We Work

We deliver cooking and nutrition programs at community centers, medical facilities, and schools to meet our students where they live, work, and learn. **All programs are free of charge, and rely on grants and donations.**

Community Programs Impact

Anthony

Cooking Matters for Adults Participant

Anthony came to 18 Reasons through long-time partner AccessSFUSD, a community-based program for young adults with disabilities. He grew up with a love for cooking because his family ran a restaurant; participating in Cooking Matters was a chance to grow his confidence and creativity in the kitchen. Throughout the series he learned how to use a knife, new ways to use ingredients, and about food groups. Anthony's favorite part? Using take-home groceries to add his own flair to class recipes, then sharing the meal with his family: "It is fun to try things at home, learn new things, and try new food - making it yummy and delicious!"



Ana

Participant to Peer Health Educator

Stay-at-home mom Ana came to 18 Reasons through West County First 5, a family resource center in San Pablo. She attended Cooking Matters for Families with her two-year old daughter, then eagerly continued into the advanced Planned & Prepped series. Ana's family previously prepared imbalanced meals cooked in a lot of fat - now she fills her freezer with the homemade marinara sauce and blendable frozen fruit that her daughter loves, and she enjoys surprising her mom group with delicious Cooking Matters recipes.

Now in training to become a Peer Health Educator who instructs Cooking Matters series in the community, Ana says, "I fell in love with what 18 Reasons does - I was made for this. I wake up really excited every Tuesday morning to learn how to teach about things that are healthy and good for families. I'm so glad for this space and for the chance to model for my daughter how to help in our community."

Jensine

Sleep Consultant with Nourishing Pregnancy

As a sleep consultant, Jensine helps families create a sleep strategy that advocates for the well-being of both mother and baby. She teaches Nourishing Pregnancy sessions via Zoom from her home in Boston and counsels birthers in their first weeks postpartum. Says Jensine, "Babies often get all the attention and the momma is forgotten in the background - any program that empowers mom is something that I want to be a part of. You need to create a village, and Nourishing Pregnancy gets the experts together to tackle the most important parts of motherhood: nutrition and information."

