



# What food issues are important to San Diego County food workers?



In the summer of 2020, as part of [San Diego County Food Vision 2030](#), San Diego County residents answered a few survey questions to express their unique needs and aspirations related to food in their communities. We're excited to share what we heard from food workers in our region.

## OVERVIEW

What do you value in your relationship with your employer?

### SELECT RESPONSES

- "They are very open to my feedback, often making changes based on what's reported (especially right now with COVID)."
- "Honesty above all."
- "That they care about the safety of their employees."

What do you want San Diegans to know about your experiences growing, producing, harvesting, and delivering food to markets?

### SELECT RESPONSES

- "I take my job very seriously. I don't cut corners. Every person who eats with us, their lives matter to me."
- "Working as a cook has higher risk of injury then most other jobs working with sharp, hot, cold, heavy objects as well as slippery surfaces."
- "Es un trabajo digno para cocinar y vender desde casa, es rentable y limpio." (It is a decent job to cook and sell from home, it is profitable and clean)

## CHALLENGES

What are your top workplace challenges?

### TOP CHALLENGES

Low wages  
Access to health insurance, medical expenses, paid sick leave

What resources or tools would be helpful to you?

### TOP RESOURCES

Continuing education programs  
Nonprofit advocacy organization that uplifts basic income, healthcare, paid sick leave, childcare, and immigration policies for food workers  
Livable wage campaign & Workforce training campaign

How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted your work and how do you anticipate it will affect your experience in the coming months?

### SELECT RESPONSES

- "It's hard. We can't stay home. We have to work. And essential doesn't mean anymore appreciated. It's making me rethink my whole career in general and the company I work for."
- "I am working longer hours supporting all parts of the grocery store, dealing with more high-stress situations. But it has never felt more rewarding to work in the food industry!"
- "I'm unemployed and just want my job back!"
- "I was laid off after COVID-19. Now I'm on unemployment and I have to start looking for work. Small businesses will suffer the most."

## ASPIRATIONS FOR FOOD WORKERS

What is your 5- to 10-year vision for food workers in San Diego County?

### FAIR WAGES

- "My vision is for food workers to be able to afford to live in the regions they serve, shop at the businesses they help keep in business, and be treated as essential, important parts of the local economy."
- "Better pay, correct resources to do the job, work-life balance, more training, feeling appreciated. They make commercials for nurses' month but nothing for the ones who are helping feed America."
- "Being a school food service employee, I would like to be seen as an important part of the school. Just like teachers. If it wasn't for us, students would be hungry."
- "Minimum wage increase."
- "Paid better and respected more as humans helping to put food on tables."
- "Living wages for all."
- "Livable wages and set schedules for all workers, particularly those working for larger companies that can afford it. Universal basic income would help so all companies big and small don't have such a great burden to pay more when they can't. Tips allowed."
- "q tengan beneficios, mejores salarios, acceso a salud oportunidades de superacion." (have benefits, better salaries, access to health, opportunities for improvement)
- "Better wages, living wage ordinance, an office of labor standards, no more at-will employment. More sick paid time. Better workers' compensation system."
- "I'm hoping to see better living wages and health care for fast food workers throughout the years. We go through a lot everyday and especially during this pandemic, it was an eye opener seeing how much more we deserve but have yet to receive."

### FAIR TREATMENT OF WORKERS, PROGRAMS FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- "Progreso en todos los aspectos no solo de alimentos." (Progress in all aspects, not just food)
- "Espero aún y no quiero perder mi esperanza en cambio radicales laborales." (I still hope and do not want to lose my hope in radical labor changes)
- "Better understanding of who is a food worker and better respect and recognition of the hard work and its importance."
- "Que haya lugares que nos capaciten para tener nuestro propio emprendimiento laboral." (That there are places that train us to have our own enterprise)

What would you like to see happen as a result of San Diego County Food Vision 2030?

### SELECT RESPONSES

- "I'd like to see a food system that uplifts and supports the communities of food workers that support the food system, especially when they intersect with underserved populations. a food system that is circular, with zero waste!"
- "Respect that many food service entry jobs are not and should not be intended to support a family, but rather something to build on for either advancement in the food or other industry."
- "Create policy that helps restaurants be more profitable, so food workers can be compensated better."
- "Minimum basic wage campaign, along with advocacy for workers who feel like they can't call out sick, live with harassment at work, and endure inhumane conditions."
- "In ten years' time, there should be better education about food. Mandatory food and nutritional classes for everyone."
- "Fair wages and benefits, more females leading the food industry, more people of color leading the food industry."