

# Food Assistance Landscape 2023

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## Summary

The food assistance landscape for the year ending June 30, 2023 reflected the recovery from the pandemic and the economic challenges associated with inflation. While total food assistance did not change significantly from 2022 to 2023, the share of food assistance from different sources did change. Total food assistance in San Mateo County was up a mere 0.2% while food assistance in Santa Clara County fell 0.3%.

The methodology used for 2022-23 did not change significantly from previous years. The data used in the report are the best available as of the fall of 2023. As government agency reports are updated, it is possible that components of the index will need to be revised.

This report is based on information from the largest sources of food assistance in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties. Because there are also an unknown number of smaller, private efforts to serve the food insecure members of our community, the analysis presented here is a conservative estimate of the true availability of food assistance in the two counties.

## Public Sources of Food Assistance

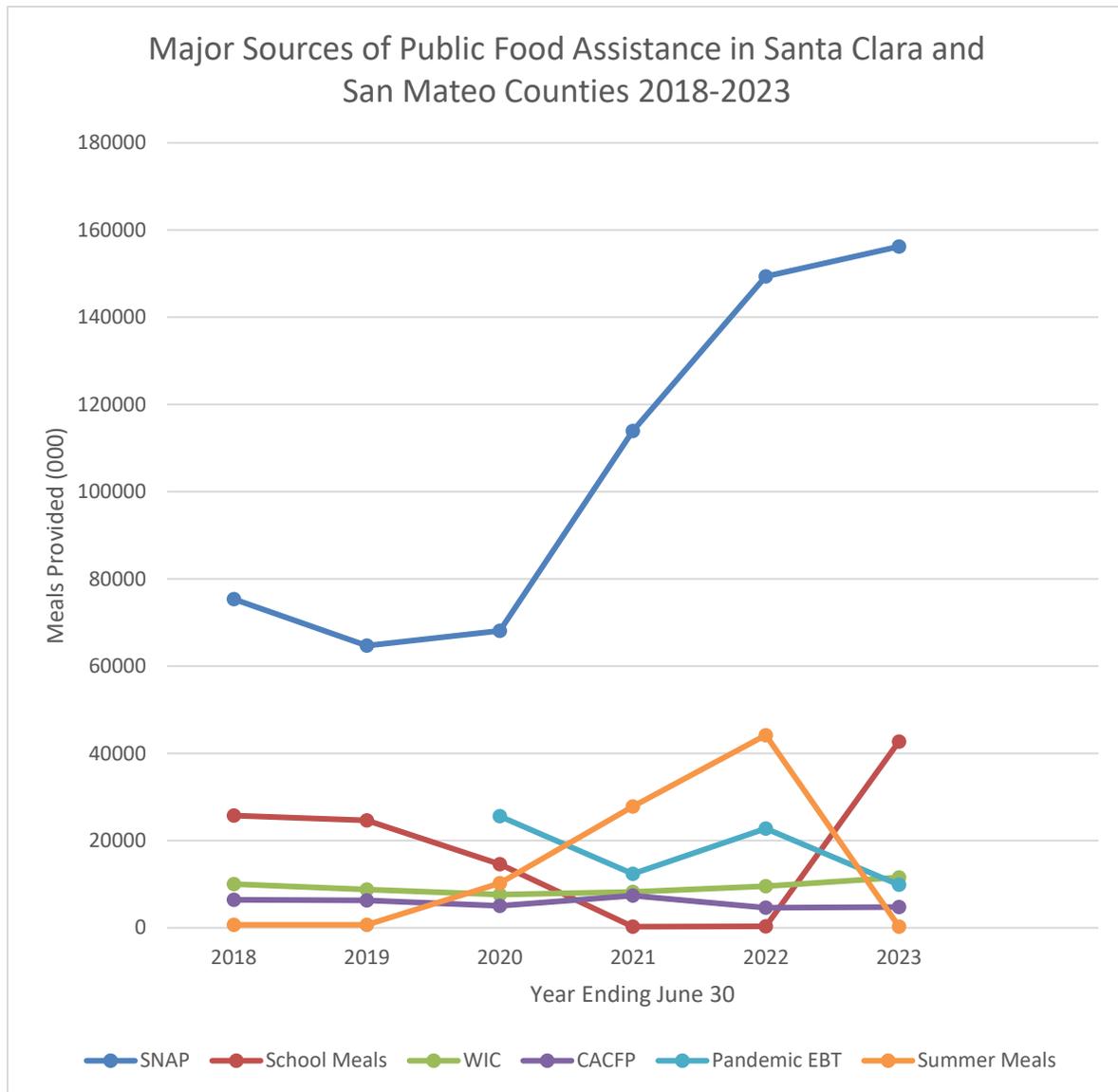
In 2022-23, public sources continued to provide the majority of food assistance available to the community. While most programs increased the amount of food assistance, one program had a notable decline: Pandemic EBT (P-EBT). Meals from the Pandemic EBT program fell from 23 million in 2021-22 to less than 10 million in 2022-23. The main reason for this decline is a modification in the eligibility for P-EBT benefits during 2022-23, the fourth round of P-EBT. In 2022-2023, P-EBT provided benefits to school-aged children and children under six for the school year<sup>1</sup>. The program ended in September 2023 along with the Public Health Emergency.

The pandemic also affected food assistance from school meals programs and summer meals programs. During the pandemic, the federal government provided free school meals to all students year-round. It did so by issuing waivers that allowed states to extend their existing free summer meal programs into the school year<sup>2</sup>. The large volume of “summer meals” depicted in the data for 2020-2022 below represents this reallocation while the pandemic-era waivers were in place.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/home/pandemic-ebt>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/cnpcovid19guidance.asp>



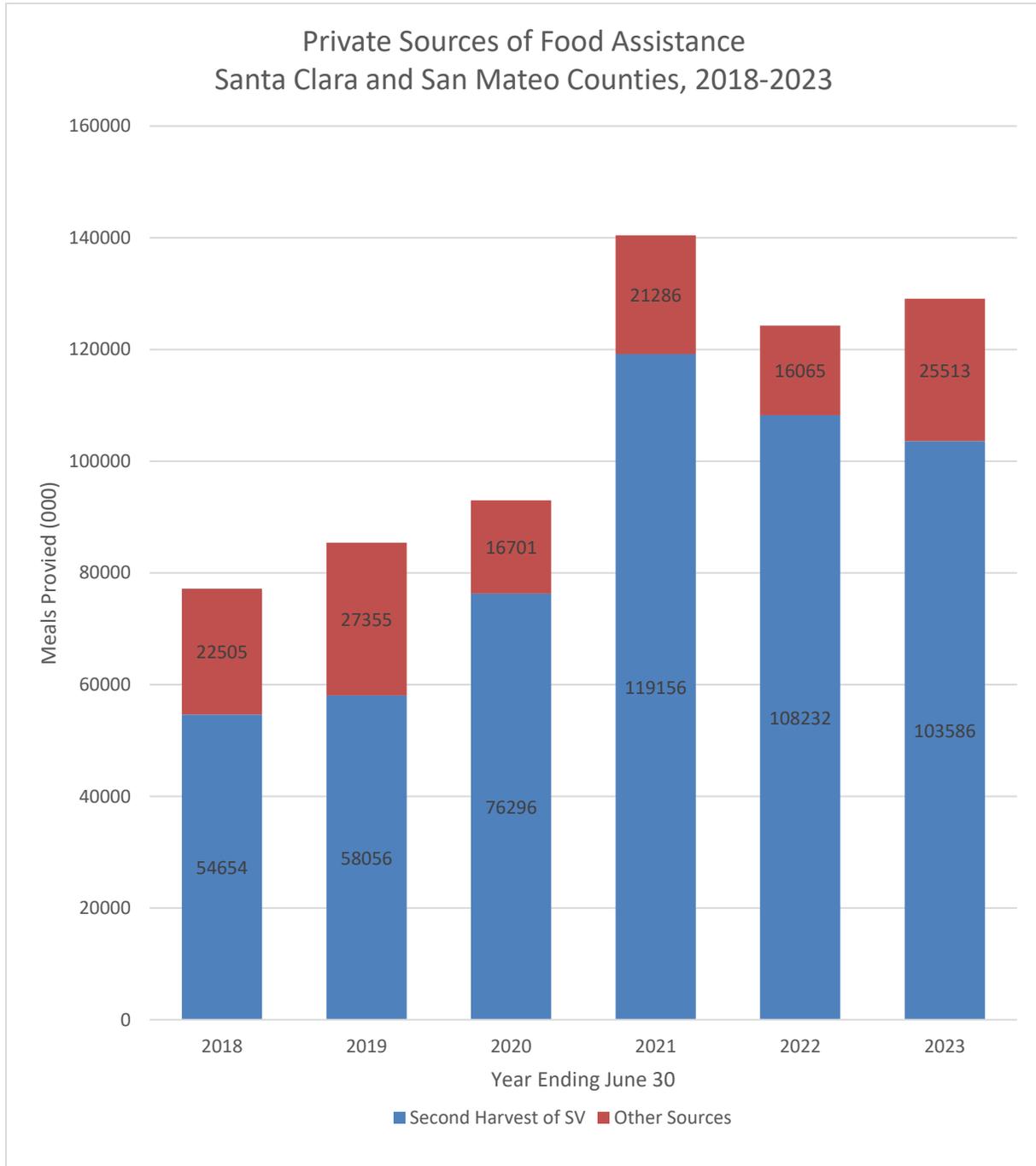
Part of the increase in school meals in 2022-2023 is related to California’s Universal Meals Program. In July 2021, the state of California passed the Universal Meals Program, becoming the first state in the nation to provide free breakfast and lunch to all students regardless of their ability to pay. Under this program, the state of California supplements federal reimbursements to make meals freely available to all public and charter school students in the state. The program was first implemented during the 2022-2023 school year<sup>3</sup>.

Other public sources of food assistance showed small increases. Senior nutrition, SNAP, WIC, and CACFP all increased resources for food assistance in both counties.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/sn/cauniversalmeals.asp>

### Private Sources of Food Assistance

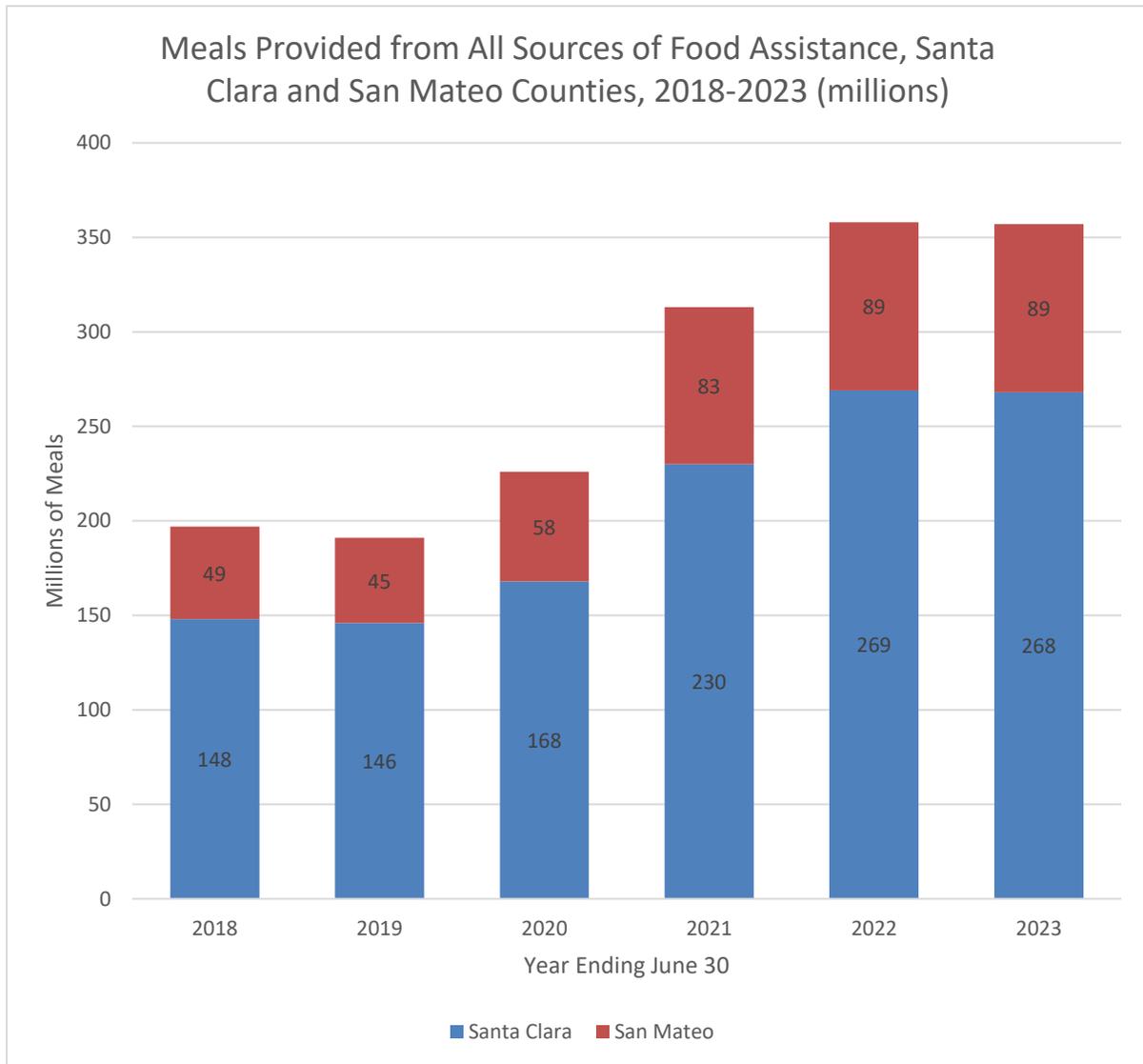
The impact of private sources of food assistance grew in 2022-23. In 2021-22, Second Harvest of Silicon Valley and other private sources provided just over 124 million meals, about 35% of all food assistance. The percentage and absolute number of meals from private sources increased to over 129 million meals or 36% of the total food assistance in the two counties in 2022-23.



### All Sources of Food Assistance

The food assistance landscape in 2022-23 reflected policy and programmatic changes associated with recovery from the pandemic. Unfortunately, recovery from the pandemic was accompanied by a significant increase in food inflation – and an increase in the average cost of a meal. According to the Economic Research Service of the USDA, 2023 food prices are estimated to have increased 5.8 percent over 2022 – building on a 9.9 percent increase in the previous year<sup>4</sup>.

Fortunately, increases in public programs like SNAP, WIC, and CACFP along with select private sources have maintained a high level of food assistance in the two counties.



<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-price-outlook/summary-findings/>

## **Acknowledgments**

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## Six Year Trend in Sources of Food Assistance in Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties, 2018-2023

### FOOD ASSISTANCE PROVIDED

#### Santa Clara County

<i><b>Program / Agency Program (000 meals)</b></i>	<i><b>2017-2018</b></i>	<i><b>2018-19</b></i>	<i><b>2019-20</b></i>	<i><b>2020-21</b></i>	<i><b>2021-22</b></i>	<i><b>2022-23</b></i>
Pandemic EBT (P-EBT)			18962	9205	17251	7636
Senior Nutrition	1448	1401	1647	2324	2081	1994
Summer Meals	567	530	8175	20810	32802	257
School Meals (Breakfast, Lunch)	19656	18833	10223	126	182	31432
SNAP (CALFRESH)	59039	50625	53799	89158	118251	124124
WIC (Women, Infants, and Children)	6980	6446	5369	5793	6825	8076
Second Harvest of Silicon Valley	40051	43397	54931	82236	76446	73489
Food from Other Sources (FOS)	14814	20780	10663	14505	11100	17048
CACFP	5378	5401	4399	5944	3815	3903
<b>Total FAP (Food Assistance Provided)</b>	<b>147934</b>	<b>147433</b>	<b>168168</b>	<b>230101</b>	<b>268753</b>	<b>267960</b>

### FOOD ASSISTANCE PROVIDED

#### San Mateo County

<i><b>Program / Agency Program (000 meals)</b></i>	<i><b>2017-2018</b></i>	<i><b>2018-19</b></i>	<i><b>2019-20</b></i>	<i><b>2020-21</b></i>	<i><b>2021-22</b></i>	<i><b>2022-23</b></i>
Pandemic EBT (P-EBT)			6609	3208	5506	2218
Senior Nutrition	270	300	300*	300*	220	334
Summer Meals	138	118	2019	6992	11382	36
School Meals (Breakfast, Lunch)	6097	5805	4400	132	162	11280
SNAP (CALFRESH)	16307	14069	14283	24744	31152	32095
WIC (Women, Infants, and Children)	3075	2316	2259	2402	2694	3481
Second Harvest of Silicon Valley	14603	14660	21366	36920	31786	30097
Food from Other Sources (FOS)	7692	6555	6038	6782	4965	8465
CACFP	1028	920	674	1430	788	875
<b>Total FAP (Food Assistance Provided)</b>	<b>49210</b>	<b>44742</b>	<b>57948</b>	<b>82909</b>	<b>88655</b>	<b>88883</b>

\*estimated

FOOD ASSISTANCE PROVIDED

Santa Clara and San Mateo County

<i><b>Program / Agency Program (000 meals)</b></i>	<i><b>2017-2018</b></i>	<i><b>2018-19</b></i>	<i><b>2019-20</b></i>	<i><b>2020-21</b></i>	<i><b>2021-22</b></i>	<i><b>2022-23</b></i>
Pandemic EBT (P-EBT)			25571	12414	22757	9855
Senior Nutrition	1719	1701	1947	2624	2301	2328
Summer Meals	705	648	10218	27802	44184	294
School Meals (Breakfast, Lunch)	25753	24637	14623	257	344	42712
SNAP (CALFRESH)	75346	64694	68082	113901	149403	156218
WIC (Women, Infants, and Children)	10055	8763	7627	8195	9518	11557
Second Harvest of Silicon Valley	54654	58057	76296	119156	108232	103586
Food from Other Sources (FOS)	22505	27355	16701	21286	16066	25513
CACFP	6407	6321	5073	7373	4603	4778
<b>Total FAP (Food Assistance Provided)</b>	<b>197143</b>	<b>192176</b>	<b>226138</b>	<b>313010</b>	<b>357408</b>	<b>356842</b>

FOOD ASSISTANCE PROVIDED

Public and Private Sources of Food Assistance

Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties

<i><b>Program / Agency Program</b></i>	<i><b>2017-2018</b></i>	<i><b>2018-19</b></i>	<i><b>2019-20</b></i>	<i><b>2020-21</b></i>	<i><b>2021-22</b></i>	<i><b>2022-23</b></i>
Public Agencies (000 meals)	119984	106764	133141	172567	233111	227743
Private Agencies (000 meals)	77160	85412	92998	140442	124297	129099
Public Agencies (% of food assistance)	60.86	55.56	58.88	55.13	65.22	63.82
Private Agencies (% of food assistance)	39.14	44.44	41.12	44.87	34.78	36.18