



## SFHSA MOBILE BENEFITS CENTER

# A Program Guide for San Francisco Partners

### The Mobile Benefits Center

A **fully-equipped vehicle and program**, designed to bring [San Francisco Human Services Agency](#) (SFHSA) services and staff support directly to residents across San Francisco.

### Program Goals

1. Delivering a **full range of services to people who can't go to the office**; replicating most in-office services in other parts of San Francisco.
2. Connecting eligible residents with SFHSA services, and **reducing disparities in enrollment** across San Francisco.
3. **Serving all residents that show up for support**, equitably, and delivering on the services that were advertised.
4. **Building trust and connection** with community members and partners, changing the way people think about SFHSA.

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This guide provides an overview of the Mobile Benefits Center (MBC) - its purpose, goals, and what the experience looks like for customers and partner community-based organizations.

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## Section 1. About the Mobile Benefits Center (MBC)

### 1.1 What is the Mobile Benefits Center?

The Mobile Benefits Center is a **fully-equipped vehicle and program**, designed to bring SFHSA services and staff support directly to residents across San Francisco.



#### Core Services

- Applications and renewals for benefits programs such as CalFresh, Medi-Cal, CalWORKs, and other services
- Staff assistance with applications, renewals, referrals, or to troubleshoot active benefits
- On-the-spot EBT Card printing and application approvals for those who meet eligibility criteria

#### Core Principles

The Mobile Benefits Center is:

- **Welcoming & Safe** - creating a friendly and approachable environment where people feel valued and comfortable. We make sure people feel safe from physical harm, psychological stress, and any fears related to privacy, confidentiality, or unintended consequences of trying to access services.
- **Responsive to Community Needs** - adapting to different locations, community groups, and support requests. We help people navigate services and get the assistance they need, providing information and defining next steps in a way that is clear and easy to understand.
- **Equitable & Respectful** - making sure that all services are accessible to everyone, especially those from marginalized or underrepresented populations. We treat people with dignity and care, honoring their privacy and individual circumstances.
- **Trustworthy & Reliable** - building trust throughout the city by maintaining a high standard of service and demonstrating credibility through City-branding. We nurture relationships with local partners - showing up consistently and well-equipped to deliver supportive services.

## 1.2 What does an Event Look Like?

### Event Planning



In the lead up to the event, we will work closely with a community partner to plan out key elements of the event. This includes developing an outreach/in-reach plan and mapping how to best use the space to serve clients while also being mindful of other services happening on site. (Example Site Map, on the left)

### Flow of Services - The Client Experience

*NOTE: The event experience may vary depending on the type of event, type of services offered, and physical layout of the event space.*

1

Greeters will **welcome** potential participants to the space and highlight the services available during this event. They will help to answer questions and refer people to the check-in desk if they're interested.

2

At the **check-in desk**, an SFHSA Team Member will check whether they have an appointment or are interested in drop-in services. They will be added to the reception log and will receive a ticket number to note they're in line.

3

Next, they will be directed to a comfortable **waiting area** that includes easy access to a restroom, it may also include activities or access to wifi depending on what's available at that location.

4

When they are next on the Reception Log, an Eligibility Worker will come out and announce their ticket number to protect their anonymity, and invite them back to a private **service desk**.

5

Once finished with available services or possible referrals, the client will be guided back to the main event space. They will have the opportunity to complete an **exit survey** and receive any **additional support available on site**.

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## Section 2. Purpose and Goals of the Program

### 2.1 Why Does it Matter and Who Does it Reach?

SFHSA has conducted many engagements with residents and stakeholders over the years. Community feedback has been loud and clear. To address food insecurity and inequity in benefits access, we need to remove geographic and bureaucratic barriers.

The purpose of the Mobile Benefits Center program is to ease these barriers by meeting people where they are, in multiple ways:

1. Establishing a **consistent presence in underserved neighborhoods** that don't have easy access to an SFHSA Office or Outstation.
2. Connecting directly with **underserved populations**, at locations that feel familiar, convenient, and safe to them.
3. Being responsive to **community-requested support**.

### **Partnering to Reach Underserved Neighborhoods & Populations**

In San Francisco, 4 of 5 areas designated as food deserts are in the Southeast quadrant of the city, where over half of Black and Latino families live and where SFSFHSA does not currently have offices. Most SFHSA offices are located in the South of Market neighborhood (or SOMA for short), making access challenging for those farther away or with mobility issues. Many older adults and immigrants also prefer in-person interactions.

To address this, the **Mobile Benefits Center will rotate locations and days of the week, including weekends, to establish a consistent presence in priority areas**. By partnering with local organizations, the Mobile Benefits Center helps reduce barriers such as language access, digital literacy, and transportation. This ensures that services reach those who may not otherwise engage through traditional office settings.

### **Responding to Community-Requested Support**

In addition to intentionally reaching out to underserved neighborhoods and populations, the Mobile Benefits Center will be **available for requests by community-based organizations** that are interested in bringing specific SFHSA services to their clients.

Check out the [SHFSA Mobile Benefits Center Website](#).

## 2.2 Program Goals

The purpose of the Mobile Benefits Center (MBC) is to **reduce barriers to accessing services**. It will do this by:

#	Sub-Goals
<b>GOAL 1</b> Delivering a full range of services to people who can't go to the office; replicating most in-office services in other parts of San Francisco.	
1.1	The MBC is an <b>active and reliable</b> way for participants to connect with SFHSA staff and programs
1.2	The MBC provides a <b>range of in-office services</b> for communities across SF, maintaining similar protections as physical offices
1.3	The MBC provides <b>referrals and troubleshooting support</b> to participants, aiming for prompt and effective resolution
1.4	The MBC is a <b>positive and impactful work environment</b> for SFHSA staff
<b>GOAL 2</b> Connecting eligible residents with SFHSA services and reducing disparities in enrollment across San Francisco.	
2.1	The MBC increases benefits enrollments from <b>underserved populations</b>
2.2	The MBC increases benefits enrollments from <b>underserved neighborhoods</b>
<b>GOAL 3</b> Serving all residents that show up for support, equitably, and delivering on the services that were advertised.	
3.1	The MBC provides a <b>smooth flow of services / operations from entry to exit</b>
3.2	The MBC <b>provides in-language support</b> to anyone seeking services
3.3	The MBC is <b>accessible to all clients</b> and creates barrier-free environments for people accompanied by children or caregivers; people with disabilities; and anyone that has experienced barriers in other government spaces
<b>GOAL 4</b> Building trust and connection with community members and partners, changing the way people think about SFHSA.	
4.1	The MBC <b>builds public awareness</b> of SFHSA and its benefits programs
4.2	The MBC delivers a high quality, welcoming experience <b>for clients</b>
4.3	The MBC delivers a high quality experience <b>for partner community-based organizations (CBOs)</b>

## 2.3 Providing People-Centered Services

This program is a valuable opportunity to make benefits more accessible and to continue **improving people's experience with government services**. Below are some of the ways that the Mobile Benefits Center aims to deliver people-centered services at each event:

### **GOAL 1. Delivering a full range of services to people who can't go to the office; replicating most in-office services in other parts of San Francisco.**

- Offer services that address the specific needs of communities being served while also offering general SFHSA support.
- Prioritize privacy and confidentiality in every type of location.

### **GOAL 2. Connecting eligible residents with SFHSA services and reducing disparities in enrollment across San Francisco.**

- Rotate to visit different neighborhoods, creating more consistent access to services.
- Hold events at different times to accommodate different schedules, considering both time of day and day of the week.
- Provide drop-in services, offering a wide window for people to participate in the event without being constrained to a specific appointment time.

### **GOAL 3. Serving all residents that show up for support, equitably, and delivering on the services that were advertised.**

- Make sure that all participants receive the same quality service, regardless of background and ability (i.e. languages, mobility).
- Prioritize access to bathrooms and a comfortable waiting area.
- Ensure the layout and pathways between stations are accessible for everyone, considering how people navigate the space whether they have a disability and/or speak languages other than English.
- Staff the event with SFHSA team members that can provide services in-language, coordinating with the CBO partner to identify priority languages.
- Minimize wait times for clients.

### **GOAL 4. Building trust and connection with community members and partners, changing the way people think about SFHSA.**

- Address as many of the participant's requested services as possible while on-site. Focus on taking the time to answer questions and explain the process before ending the interaction.
- Ensure clients leave with a clear understanding of any actions that they have to take.
- Make referrals to relevant services that aren't offered by SFHSA.
- Consistently use City branding to communicate that this is an official event.
- Establish recurring events to demonstrate consistency and reliability, while also being able to help clients that might need multiple visits to fully resolve their questions or issues.

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## Section 3. Become a Mobile Benefits Center Partner!

Check out the [SHFSA Mobile Benefits Center Website](#) to request an event or explore ongoing partnership.

**Local partnerships are a core component of the program** to help us bring vital benefits services to both underserved neighborhoods and populations. Community-based organizations (CBOs) help us meet people where they are - in spaces that are comfortable, safe, and familiar for potential applicants and clients.

In addition to intentionally reaching out to underserved neighborhoods and populations, the Mobile Benefits Center will be **available for requests by community-based organizations** that are interested in bringing specific SFHSA services to their clients.

### 3.1 How to Request an Event with the Mobile Benefits Center

Visit the SFHSA Mobile Benefits Center webpage and submit a request through this [form](#).

The form will ask you for the details below:

- Specific SFHSA services that you would like at your event
- Confirmation that the site can accommodate the vehicle:
  - There is a place to park that is not on a through street
  - There is a place to park that fits the full dimensions of the vehicle:
    - Length: 26 feet
    - Width: 13 feet and 4.5 inches
    - Height: 12 feet and 7.5 inches
- Details about the location, including photos and amenities on site/nearby.
- Details on any support that your team can provide, before and during the event

Ideal partners are able to host scheduled mobile visits, promote the event within their networks, and provide dedicated staff to support planning and outreach/in-reach activities as needed.

*Note: There will be some questions in the form that are not required and may not apply to your location. All the questions are there to help us get a better picture of the location/opportunity and assess if it's a suitable fit.*

## 3.2 What Does Collaboration Look Like?

*“[Youth] came up to me jumping for joy because they got approved for Medi-Cal and CalFresh. Someone came up to me and said they were going to get their benefits stopped, but when talking to staff, it turned out it was an error. So just seeing the relief in their faces was great.” - Partner Community-Based Organization*

### Exploring a Partnership

In the initial stages of developing a partnership, it's important to be clear about the goals of the program and the ways that we typically set-up in a space. While the MBC vehicle helps to bring valuable services to new locations, such as secure EBT Card printing, **the customer experience will often start and end at the partner site.**

When exploring a new partnership, we host introductory meetings with CBOs to build trust and explore whether an MBC event would be a good fit for their community and their location. This will usually include an **initial call and a site visit** to discuss:

- What services/support would be most beneficial to their clients?
- Are their clients eligible for benefits programs? Are people likely to already be enrolled or looking for application assistance?
- When would be good days/times to host the event?
- How many clients could the event serve? (NOTE: this will depend on the size of the space, length of the event, and services requested)
- How can we best use the space and what parts of their current services and amenities would be available to people attending the event?

### Planning an Event

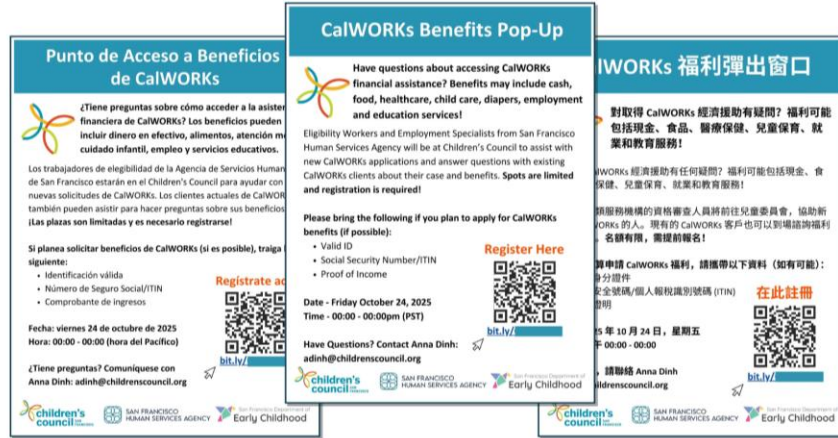
#### *(~1-2 months to coordinate logistics)*

In the lead up to the event we will work together closely to plan out key elements of the event. This will include **setting a date and time** and **mapping how to best use the space** to serve clients while also being mindful of other services happening on site.

### Outreach & Promotion

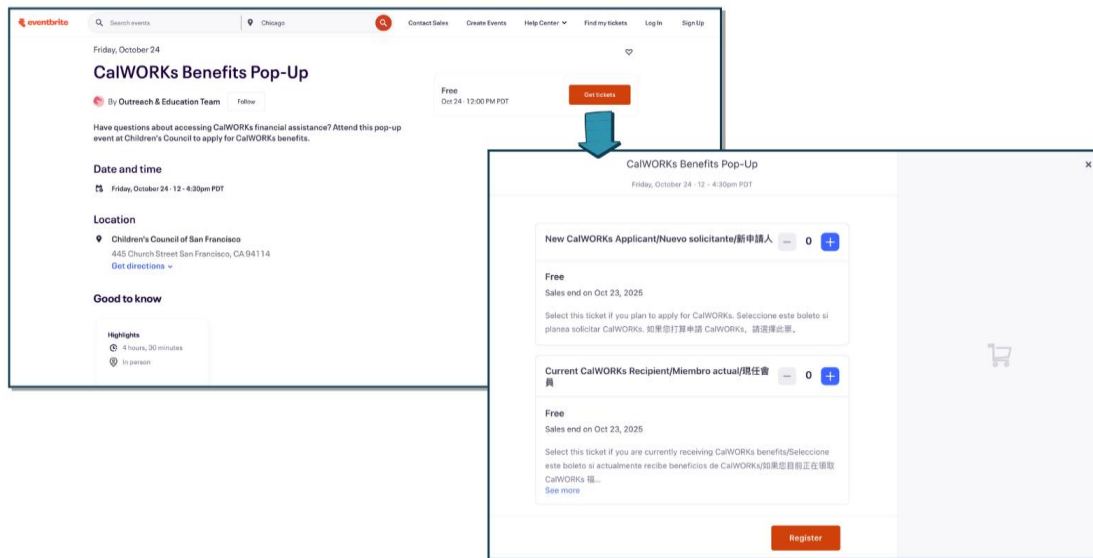
#### *(~1 month of focused outreach)*

Our team will work with you (e.g. the partner) to plan an **outreach strategy** for the event. This strategy will both explore how to reach existing clientele that may be eligible for benefits programs and how to outreach to new clients through the use of flyers, newsletters, and other channels.



Sample fliers prepared by the Children's Council; in Spanish, English, and Chinese.

Once all the logistics have been confirmed for the event, and the materials developed, your team will be ready to promote the event to your community. It may also help to create an RSVP link to be able to monitor interest in the event and set a limit.



Sample Eventbrite page, prepared by the Children's Council.

Leading up to the event, your team will continue their outreach support by sending reminder texts, calls, and/or emails with details of the event.

## During the Event

On the day of the event our team will be mindful to stay in close contact with you as our hosts. We want to be mindful of how we operate in your space and alongside your regular services and clients. After helping with the event planning and outreach process, your main

role for the event is to help with the set-up and provide a point of contact to answer any questions or issues that might come up over the course of the day. This may include:

- Providing tables, chairs, extension cords, and internet access, as available.
- Helping to arrange the furniture and space to align with the planned stations. This can happen while SFHSA staff are on site to support, or ahead of time if already agreed upon.
- Directing clients to the event who arrive and express interest.
- Helping to answer questions from clients or SFHSA staff, related to use of the space or addressing issues that may arise.
- Supporting the clean-up at the end of the day, directing MBC program staff on how the space may need to be reverted back to its normal use.

**SFHSA staff will manage all customer support during the day (e.g. application assistance and intake processes).** It is not expected that your team is stationed at the event throughout the day, but it helps if they are able to check in every once in a while to make sure things are running smoothly.

### **After the Event**

The MBC Program is committed to Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) and to nurturing relationships with our partners across San Francisco. A core component of this is giving space for you to provide feedback on the event and the partnership.

All our partners are welcome to share reflections by joining the **SFHSA team debrief** at the end of the event or submitting an **anonymous feedback form**. This feedback may include:

- What worked well during the event and what could be improved.
- Any client stories / testimonials that were shared during or after the event.
- The partnership with the program staff and the communication / collaboration leading up to the event.
- Requests for additional services or future events, including any opportunities to further formalize a partnership with the MBC Program.

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## **Acknowledgement**

We thank all of our partners for their continued dedication to the residents of San Francisco. Your collaboration and trust make it possible to reach and serve those who might otherwise face barriers to accessing support.

[Check out more about the Mobile Benefits Center program and Request an event here!](#)