



PHOTO COURTESY OF SACRAMENTO COMMUNITY FRIDGES

## Johanna Bulaong, Sacramento Community Fridges

This summer, when Johanna Bulaong and Maggie St. Vincent decided to reduce food instability in Sacramento, they failed to find businesses willing to partner with their new organization, Sacramento Community Fridges. But the pair spread the word, and homeowners stepped up. Sacramento now hosts three fridges on private property: 1617 25th St., 1322 F St. and 481 Arden Way. [The landlord and city have asked that the one on 25th be removed, at least temporarily.] The group is now 70 members strong, and looking for more fridge locations. Bulaong answered our questions about the program.

### How did you come up with the idea for a community fridge? Did it relate directly to increase in job loss and homelessness due to the pandemic?

It's been inspired by [Instagram account] @iohny where there's a huge New York network of community fridges, but also by our neighboring Oakland, S.F., L.A., Berkeley, Marin and Modesto community fridges. I think the idea of a community fridge has definitely been out of necessity in response to job loss and homelessness due to the pandemic. I think it's also related to the injustices everyone is experiencing right now, which makes us feel politically hopeless. Instead, focusing on taking action and affecting things in our own city through mutual aid networks and community fridges is a way for us to regain our power.

### How did you choose fridge locations?

We originally visited businesses and restaurants in Oak Park, but didn't have any success with finding a host. No one agreed to take a chance and be the first host until we were more active on [Instagram]

and gaining more followers. We've found all of our host fridge locations through Instagram and people messaging us that they're interested in being a host. We then have someone visit the location and see if it has good foot traffic and access to electricity, which are our two requirements for a fridge location. All of our host locations are residential homes, but we would love to have local Sacramento businesses host as well.

### What kinds of items go into the fridge, and how are they sourced?

We accept produce, fruit, pantry goods, freezer items, eggs, milk and any other food items that need to be refrigerated. The only items we don't accept is raw meat...We are looking into partnerships with farmers and grocery stores in order to collect extra produce/goods. Food waste is [another problem] we're trying to tackle...so the fridges are a way to distribute food that would have ended up thrown away.

### What's your goal for the fridge program?

Our goal for the fridge program is to get as many fridges up as we can...Our fridges serve not only to feed our unhoused neighbors, but are also for anyone facing job unemployment, or struggling under the pandemic and capitalism. We'd like to make mutual aid and collective care networks a regular thing. One of our main goals is to cultivate trust within our community, especially during these times that want to keep us more divided than ever.

### Anything else you'd like to share/contact for those who'd like to be involved?

We're in great need for more builders to add to our construction team. All of our fridges get a shelter constructed around it, and we'd love to be in touch with anyone who could offer some skills/knowledge. We'd also love to be in touch with anyone thinking they'd make a great host. None of this would be possible without our amazing volunteers who keep everything running smoothly, or our lovely hosts who believe in our dreams of collective care. It especially wouldn't be possible without everyone in the Sacramento community who have inspired us to take action.

Contact Sacramento Community Fridge at [instagram.com/sacfridge4all/](https://www.instagram.com/sacfridge4all/) or by emailing [sacfridgeforall@gmail.com](mailto:sacfridgeforall@gmail.com)

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