



County of Monterey

Item No.27

Board Report

Board of Supervisors
Chambers
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

Legistar File Number: PAR 26-018

August 11, 2026

Introduced: 7/31/2026

Current Status: Agenda Ready

Version: 1

Matter Type: Preliminary Analysis
Report

Consider a preliminary analysis report in response to Board Referral No. 2026.15 (Lopez) for Greenfield Branch Library Pilot Program: Youth Snack and Behavioral Data Tracking

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors:

- a. Receive a preliminary analysis report in response to **Board Referral No. 2026.15** and;
- b. Provide direction on a preferred referral processing option:
 - i. Proceed with completion of referral as outlined in preliminary report;
 - ii. Proceed with completion of referral based on modifications by Board;
 - iii. Return to Board with a more comprehensive analysis of referral and anticipated effort for completion; or
 - iv. Rescind referral.
- c. Provide further direction, as appropriate.

SUMMARY: This is a preliminary response to referral 2026.15 (Lopez) regarding a pilot snack program at the Greenfield Library. After reviewing referral 2026.15, I spoke with the District 3 office, and the referral was modified to include taking the existing “informal” after school snack program in place at the Greenfield Branch Library, and work to formalizing it and expanding it to other Monterey County Free Library sites in District 3 or other areas. Monterey County Free Libraries (MCFL) has a planned pilot of an expanded snack program in motion for the fall across four additional branch libraries, in an effort to quantify costs and options for expansion.

PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS:

Background:

Monterey County Free Libraries (MCFL) currently offers different types of opportunities that include directly giving food to library patrons.

Lunch at the Library - A summer program that is substantially funded by a grant from the California State Library, with food prepared and provided by partner schools, using the School Lunch Program funds from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). During the summer, most MCFL locations serve as a place for a school lunch to be eaten when school is out, from one to five days per week for five to seven weeks. Grant funds pay for food handling certificates and food serving tools such as gloves and tongs, along with materials for enrichment activities such as crafts and games.

Food Bank for Monterey County - Some MCFL locations serve as a host for food distribution by Food Bank for Monterey County, either on an ongoing basis or during Lunch at the Library. The food is provided by the Food Bank and the library partners for space, publicity, and logistics. Some

libraries also have a Food Bank donation barrel in the lobby or entry areas, and serve as a collection point for non-perishable food donated by the community.

Programs - Some MCFL locations offer snacks during library programs. The food is funded by a program sponsor, such as a Friends of the Library group or local donor. This can range from popcorn served at a movie to individually wrapped granola bars, coffee, or similar at a craft program.

Emergencies - When a branch library is serving as a Temporary Evacuation Point or Cooling Center, staff can work with the Department of Emergency Management for appropriate food provision that help serve that function.

All branch libraries report requests from the public for food, general positive feedback and enjoyment when food is offered, and need for current information on food distribution in communities. Library staff also report food supporting positive behavior in the library, allowing and enhancing communication and social bonding, and even a small snack enabling someone to stay in the library to complete a need.

Project Description:

For a general after school snack program, the Greenfield Library has the most extensive offering. Food is directly provided and donated by the community, with all being individually wrapped and non-perishable. The staff has done an internal report and has anecdotal and observational information showing that a small snack can derail a problem, resolve a conflict, forestall immediate hunger, or otherwise assist the staff in building relationships with the people who use the library.

After school or other snack programs in other MCFL locations range from formal “Snactivities” at the Soledad Library, when funded by an outside donor, a snack is paired with an activity. This brings it closer to the formal programs option, as there is an event. The Buena Vista Library has an after-school snack program with snacks provided out of pocket by the staff. The Seaside Library has used left over program snack supplies to offer a snack when the staff sees the need. All of these locations report similar conclusions as Greenfield, showing how a small offering of portable and non-perishable food is a benefit for the library patrons, and for the staff in managing situations, assisting people, and building community relationships. Other branches have asked to have a snack option available.

Potential Partnerships:

MCFL will contact the Food Bank for Monterey County to determine if a systemwide snack program is something that could be supported through a partnership. This may assist in overcoming the purchasing hurdle for food, if the partner purchased the food. As the MCFL service area is large, and a goal of MCFL is equity of service across all the communities we serve, we would work to see if a partner could provide this level of support.

Incident and Behavior Tracking:

MCFL has an incident reporting system in place that allows branches to report incidents including categories, descriptors, and follow-up needed.

Estimated Project Cost:

A pilot project, funded by the Foundation for Monterey County Free Libraries, is planned for this fall in four branch libraries. The Library Director has one-time approval from the Auditor Controller, specifically for this pilot project, to procure the food using County processes. This will enable assessment of the costs in food and staff time to procure, store, and supply the food. The Foundation for Monterey County Free Libraries is funding the food, estimating \$6,000 to cover four branch libraries for up to four months, which will provide the detail on costs of the food across locations and time. All food will be individually wrapped, and non-perishable, in compliance with the Health

Department regulations.

Staffing Level Estimate:

The staffing costs for the pilot project are anticipated to be covered by the Library Director at about 15 hours, and branch library staff at about 40 hours. This will come from the Library's operational budget as the pilot is underway. The pilot will allow a thorough assessment of ongoing staffing costs to expand the program. Development of a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or similar agreement for a partner to provide the food or the service at the libraries is estimated at about 10 hours of Library Administrative and Attorney time, then 4 hours per year for communication and problem solving during the duration of the partnership.

Departmental Challenges:

To formalize a library snack program, the following elements need to be resolved:

Cost of the food - Currently, snacks are informal as there is no stable or sustainable budget or consistent opportunity to pay for the food itself. Some branches have very generous donors, others do not. Greenfield Library's program as is costs about \$165 per week, over \$8,000 per year, as they do both granola bars and individual bottled water as requested.

County procurement of food - The current County procurement policies do not allow the library staff to officially procure food that is not for a specific program or event. When purchasing food, staff must include a flyer for a program and a sign-in sheet for the program, in order for that purchase to be approved. The snack programs have been for staff dispersal as needed, not only offered during an event that the staff is advertising. In addition, asking someone who is hungry or in the moment when the staff is trying to forestall another issue to "sign here" is generally seen as counter-productive to the need the staff is trying to meet.

Staff time - Absorbing time to manage a snack program into the current staff workload is generally a challenge when workload is an issue across the branch libraries. Time for a formal program would include shopping for the food (which includes mileage as a cost), managing receipts and reporting on credit card statements, and then keeping the snacks in supply at multiple locations while tracking expiration dates. Different libraries have different amounts of food suitable storage available on site, staff available, facility limitations, and other elements of service.

Proposed Response Date:

Completion of the planned pilot and evaluation of the results are anticipated to be complete in February, 2027.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS:

- X Well-Being and Quality of Life
- ___ Sustainable Infrastructure for the Present and Future
- ___ Safe and Resilient Communities
- ___ Diverse and Thriving Economy
- ___ Dynamic Organization and Employer of Choice

If does not fall under any of the above Board of Supervisors Strategic Plan Goals (Other):

___ Administrative

Link to the Strategic Plan:

<https://www.countyofmonterey.gov/home/showdocument?id=139569>

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Attachments:

Board Referral No. #2026.15