

## LATEST HEADLINES

### South County Triage Group receives \$400k in state funding



Erica Padilla-Chavez, CEO of Second Harvest Food Bank, speaks at a function in Sept. 2022. Second Harvest will be the fiscal lead in hiring a project manager for the South County Triage Group as part of \$40,000 received from the California Accountable Communities for Health Initiative. (PK Hattis — Santa Cruz Sentinel file)

By [NICK SESTANOVICH](mailto:nsestanovich@santacruzsentinel.com) | [nsestanovich@santacruzsentinel.com](mailto:nsestanovich@santacruzsentinel.com) |

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WATSONVILLE – The South County Triage Group, a collective of 27 community partners in South Santa Cruz County aimed at addressing the root causes of health and economic inequities for the area's marginalized communities, was one of [37 communities](#) to receive state funding through the California Accountable Communities for Health Initiative.

The organization received \$400,000, which will go toward hiring a project manager tasked with taking the lead on improving community wellness and economic mobility for all, according to a press release. Second Harvest Food Bank Santa Cruz County will serve as the fiscal lead and the city of Watsonville as the supporting backbone. Its four goals are advocating for proportional funding and resources, achieving equity in public health, recognizing and elevating disinvested voices and advancing economic security.

"Addressing root causes of food insecurity is paramount to The Food Bank's mission," Erica Padilla-Chavez, Second Harvest CEO and Triage Group co-founder, said in a statement. "Food and nutrition insecurity is influenced by multiple factors including accessibility, affordability barriers and the local environment. It is clear that only by working together will we achieve a healthy and thriving community that is food secure and healthy. This is SCTG's goal, and this is our goal."

The Triage Group was launched in March 2020, right as California began issuing shelter-at-home orders in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It has continued to meet to address the needs of the Pajaro Valley community. Its members include representatives from Second Harvest Food Bank, city of Watsonville, Community Action Board, Community Bridges, Community Health Trust of Pajaro Valley, Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency, El Pajaro Community Development Corp., Monarch Services, Pajaro Valley Health Trust, Pajaro Valley Health Care District and Watsonville Community Hospital, Pajaro Valley Prevention and Student Assistance, Pajaro Valley Unified School District, Salud Para la Gente, Santa Cruz Community Ventures and Santa Cruz County Office of Education as well as residents of the Pajaro Valley community.

"We are thrilled to be part of this collaborative," Matko Vranjes, interim CEO of Watsonville Community Hospital and the Pajaro Valley Health Care District, said in a statement. "All of us are working together to advance the health and wellness of the community we serve."

For information on the Triage Group, visit [PVPSA.org/south-county](https://PVPSA.org/south-county).

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[Link to original story.](#)