



# WE ARE THE FOOD BANK

## Partner Agency Newsletter

November 2024



### From the CPO

Hello Partner Agencies,



With the holidays approaching, I wanted to remind everyone to keep an eye out for updates from our agency team regarding any upcoming closure dates over the next three months. Our mid-year inventory is scheduled for late January, and we'll send a notification as soon as those dates are confirmed. This inventory helps us account for all products in our system and serves as a best practice to streamline our end-of-year inventory process and fiscal-year closure.

We want to invite agencies who wish to participate in a roundtable discussion and help inform our strategic plan. Please reach out to me via email at [josue@thefoodbank.org](mailto:josue@thefoodbank.org). We want to hear from you all about how we should shape our next strategic meeting. We are seeking input from various stakeholders such as our donors, participants, you, and partner agencies.

We are thankful for the partnership with each one of you.

Josué Barajas, Chief Programs Officer

### Agency Network Update

#### Holiday Chickens

This holiday season, cost-sharing whole chickens will be available for order on Agency Express 3 at 80% cost sharing starting in November. Note that there won't be a reservation system, so please remember to add them directly to your online orders. For any special deliveries, coordinate with our Agency Network Team.

#### Holiday Distributions Changes

As the holidays approach, please inform our Agency Network Team of any changes to partner agency distribution dates, times, or special holiday distributions so we can update the community. Also, note our holiday closures listed in this newsletter. We'll send reminders, including any order limitations.

#### Partner Agency Strategic Planning Survey

The Food Bank eagerly anticipates incorporating insights from our partner agency network into our upcoming strategic plan. Leadership contacts have been emailed a survey, and we encourage all partners to complete it by November 2.

#### Office Hours

November's hours are Thursday, November 14, 3:00 – 4:00 p.m.  
[Use this link to join the Zoom Meeting](#) | Meeting ID: 899 8170 1023

### Agency Participation Numbers

September 2024			
County Zone	Estimated Unduplicated Households	Estimated Unduplicated Individuals	% Change from August '24
North County	12,070	23,582	-3.00%
South County	5,888	14,518	-26.54%
San Lorenzo Valley	3,563	7,811	0.68%
Out of County	735	1,725	16.40%
<b>Total</b>	<b>22,256</b>	<b>47,636</b>	<b>-10.65%</b>

\*43 of 52 (83%) partner agencies reporting as of 10/25/24 - Thank you!

## Community Spotlight: People First

People First, a homeless services provider in Santa Cruz County, is committed to ensuring housing for all by uniting the community, forming partnerships, fostering advocacy, and delivering essential services. We maintain and distribute four Free Guides—covering Santa Cruz, Watsonville, San Lorenzo Valley, and Veterans—that list free resources across the county. In January, we launched an Outreach-Based Case Management Program to support homeless and recently housed individuals by meeting them wherever they are. This past winter marked our second season operating Extreme Weather Shelters, which provided hundreds of homeless individuals with a safe, welcoming space day and night. We are also in our third year of the RV Safe Parking Program, which offers 24/7 parking, showers, case management, and housing navigation support.



On August 1, People First took over the Armory/Overlook Emergency Shelter, which serves up to 135 individuals 24/7, offering round-the-clock staffing, three meals a day, transportation to downtown Santa Cruz, case management, and healthcare and housing navigation. Breakfast is provided by Costco and Second Harvest, while lunch and dinner are prepared by our talented kitchen team at the Santa Cruz Vets Hall. This team, using ingredients from Second Harvest and other community partners, provides nutritious meals and job training opportunities, helping participants gain work skills and experience. With 33 dedicated staff and up to 15 on any given day, we ensure all shelter needs are met, with volunteers assisting in key tasks.

At People First, we believe stability, safety, and meeting basic needs are essential for individuals to set goals and make positive changes in their lives. Our work is rooted in compassion, aiming to create a space where everyone—especially the most marginalized—can thrive. We believe everyone deserves dignity, support, and access to resources that respect their individuality, enabling our community to flourish.

—Kat Salehi, People First

## Network Action Spotlight: USDA Cohort Onboarding

The Food Bank is excited to onboard more partner agencies to our USDA distribution program, allowing direct ordering through our online platform, Agency Express 3. If your agency is interested in joining the upcoming cohort, please contact our Agency Network Team at [agencies@thefoodbank.org](mailto:agencies@thefoodbank.org) or call 831.256.7201. Note that USDA product distribution requires specific government documentation and compliance.

### Save the Dates

Please add the events below to your calendars. We kindly request that agencies update us regarding changes to, or cancellations of, their distributions.

#### Thursday, November 14

Agency Network Team Office Hours | 3:00 – 4:00 p.m.

[Use this link to join the meeting](#) | ID: 899 8170 1023

#### Mid-Year Inventory Closures

Last Day for Delivery or Pickup – Wednesday, January 29

Regular Operations Begin – Monday, February 3

#### Food Bank Holiday Closures

Thanksgiving Day – Thursday, November 28

Day After Thanksgiving – Friday, November 29

Christmas Eve – Tuesday, December 24

Christmas Day - Wednesday, December 25

New Year's Day – Wednesday, January 1

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Agency Team Contact Information: 831.256.7201 | [agencies@thefoodbank.org](mailto:agencies@thefoodbank.org)

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