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Second Harvest Food Bank Santa Cruz County launches holiday campaign to raise funding for 4,750,000 meals



PROMOTED BY SECOND HARVEST FOOD BANK SANTA CRUZ COUNTY
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As the holiday season draws near, Second Harvest Food Bank is mobilizing its resources and community support to combat hunger for the more than 65,000 residents who rely on their services monthly. With donations urgently needed to sustain its operations, Second Harvest invites individuals, families, organizations, and businesses to help meet the increased demand by contributing to their

[annual holiday campaign](#). Every dollar donated provides three healthy meals for local families, seniors, veterans and the unhoused, directly translating donations into food for those in need.



Credit: Michael Cinque

Founded in 1972 and borne out of the Black Panther movement at UC Santa Cruz, Second Harvest was the first food bank established in California and the second in the nation. What began as an extension of the "Breakfast for Children" program has grown into an essential community lifeline, feeding tens of thousands of Santa Cruz County residents every month. This year, Second Harvest has distributed 10 million pounds of food to its network of over 100 nonprofit organizations, food pantries, soup kitchens, and shelters, bringing fresh produce, proteins, and shelf-stable items to those facing food insecurity across the county.

"An increasing number of families are relying on us, and the need becomes even greater during the holidays and winter months," says Second Harvest spokesperson. "Every donation goes directly toward filling tables for families and ensuring no one in our community goes without."



Credit Michael Cinque

In addition to food distribution, Second Harvest emphasizes nutrition education, equipping recipients with the knowledge and skills to prepare healthy, budget-friendly meals. This holistic approach fosters long-term well-being, addressing food insecurity from multiple angles. Second Harvest also manages Santa Cruz County's Grocery Recovery Program, which redirects surplus food to those in need, minimizing waste while maximizing resources. This program includes bilingual outreach and county-wide infrastructure support to reduce food waste and increase access to nutritious food.

Volunteers are central to Second Harvest's mission. Over 3,200 volunteers keep operations running smoothly, sorting and packing food, staffing food drives, and supporting distribution sites. Their dedication enables Second Harvest to reach more people and amplify the impact of every dollar donated.

Second Harvest's partnerships with local schools, nonprofits, and community groups strengthen its distribution network and ensure nutritious food is accessible throughout the county. This reach is especially critical as The Food Bank has seen an increase in demand due to the lingering effects of the pandemic, inflation, and last year's flooding events.

For more than fifty years, Second Harvest has been a steady source of support and hope for the community. This holiday season, as families come together in celebration, Second Harvest is counting on local generosity to help fill the plates of those facing food insecurity. With the support of volunteers, community partners, and donors, Second Harvest Food Bank is building a stronger, more resilient Santa Cruz County, where everyone has access to the nourishment they need.

This holiday season, a donation to Second Harvest is more than just a gift of food—it's an investment in the health and well-being of the entire Santa Cruz County community. Donate at thefoodbank.org



Credit: Michael Cinque

[Link to original story.](#)