



News Local News

Second Harvest kicks off annual food drive

BY TODD GUILD • November 11, 2024 262



© Todd Guild

A cadre of nonprofit leaders and county officials gathered at Cabrillo College Thursday to kick off Second Harvest Food Bank's (SHFB) annual Food and Fund Drive, when that organization takes in the lion's share of its donation for the year and helps feed the people who need it.

With a lofty goal of 4.75 million meals – an increase of last year's total of 4.5 million – SHFB is asking the entire community to help.

SHFB CEO Erica Padilla-Chavez said that the numbers of people turning to the food bank to supplement their pantries has reached those during the Covid-19 pandemic, when many were out of work and people waited in long lines.

But now, the situation is slightly different, she says.

"Inflation is a big factor, and cost of food is a big factor," she said. "It's not that people have lost their jobs, it's that they're not making more that can offset the cost of everything going up."

And the diversity of the people turning to the food bank has changed too, Padilla-Chavez said.

"There's people in government jobs, teachers and college employees," she said. "Right now, a large part of our community that is fully employed and is supplementing their pantry through our food bank."

The same is true, she added, for food banks across the U.S., which have all reached a "pandemic-level" of need.

"What's so important to remember in this campaign is that every dollar we raise during this time, every can that gets raised during this time, every volunteer hour that is provided during this time gets us closer to ensuring that every person in our community is able to access nourishment, so that's not a stressor," she said.

Santa Cruz County Superintendent of Public Schools Faris Sabbah said the problem also affects students.

A total of 44%, he said, are "food insecure.

"Skipping meals, not sure where their next nutritious meal is going to come from," he said. "When you're hungry it affects your ability to learn, we know that. So all the support we can provide through the help of the food bank, we want to do that."

...

For information or to donate, visit thefoodbank.org or place food in one of the bins placed throughout the county.

[Link to original story.](#)