



# Our Work Together is Vital



Second Harvest Food Bank Santa Cruz County  
Annual Report FY 2023–2024

# Letter from our CEO

Dear Friends and Supporters,

At Second Harvest Food Bank Santa Cruz County, we are proud to be the only food bank serving our region—and even prouder to do so in collaboration with an incredible network of community providers. Together, we've built a resilient, compassionate system of support for our Santa Cruz County neighbors, ensuring that no one has to face hunger alone.

The 2023–2024 year was one defined by innovation, adaptability, and a deep responsiveness to the evolving needs of our community. Whether navigating rising food insecurity, natural disasters, or economic uncertainty, our work was made possible by people like you—our donors, partners, and volunteers—who showed up with dedication and heart.

We're especially grateful for our volunteers, some of whom are featured in this report. Their stories reflect the spirit of service that drives our mission forward. From distributing food at neighborhood pantries to packing boxes in our warehouse, our volunteers are the heartbeat of Second Harvest—and we are endlessly thankful for their commitment.

As we look ahead, we invite you to continue standing with us in the fight against hunger:

- **Donate:** Financial contributions help replenish our supplies and expand our reach. Give today at [TheFoodBank.org](https://TheFoodBank.org).
- **Volunteer:** Join our incredible community of volunteers by signing up at [TheFoodBank.org/volunteer](https://TheFoodBank.org/volunteer).
- **Advocate:** Speak out against hunger. Contact your elected officials and urge them to protect and increase funding for food assistance programs.

With your continued support, we can ensure a nourished and thriving Santa Cruz County.

With heartfelt gratitude,  
Erica Padilla Chavez



Chief Executive Officer  
Second Harvest Food Bank Santa Cruz County



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# Our Donors are Making a Tremendous Impact

## Spotlight on Shelly and Marty Hernandez



"The mission of Second Harvest is very endearing to our hearts. We have seen the profound impact of their work and how essential their community resources are in Santa Cruz County.

As the only food bank in our county, supporting food pantries and their distribution network, Second Harvest has taken on a huge commitment to feed neighbors in need, and we are very blessed for being able to support their efforts.

For over 10 years, Marty and I have organized and presented benefit dinners to fundraise for Second Harvest. Our families have been in Santa Cruz County for many generations, and we firmly believe in creating a solid bridge of support to foster a well-nourished and healthy community where everyone can thrive.

Hunger is something that no family, no individual, should ever confront. We are proud to be a small part of Second Harvest's work to help with one of the most basic needs a person can have. *We are grateful for this opportunity!"*



# Year in Review

Your Continued Support is Making a Difference



Your generosity allowed us to provide **55,188,783** meals for the community in FY 2023–2024.



Thanks to you, we were able to serve **65,000** residents monthly.



We distributed **9,338,203** pounds of food.

Your support will help us meet the current demand, as we continue to fulfill the needs of the most vulnerable.

# Honoring Our Hunger Fighters of the Year!

## Vinita Fernandes – Partner Agency Grey Bears and St. Joseph’s Church

For 11 years, Vinita Fernandes has served her community through Grey Bears Thrift Store and St. Joseph’s Church. Every Monday, she prepares hot lunches for 175 seniors, providing nourishment and connection. Originally from India, she’s seen hunger’s impact firsthand, fueling her passion for food rescue and waste reduction. At Grey Bears, she sorts donations, organizes emergency meals, and supports seniors, the homeless, and disaster evacuees. During the 2023 storms, she helped feed displaced residents. Her warmth shines in moments like welcoming a Bangladeshi family with a homemade meal.

*Vinita fosters care, dignity, and inclusion, and we’re proud to honor her as a Hunger Fighter of the Year.*



## Diana Valadez – Second Harvest Distribution Site Live Oak Elementary

For the past seven years, Diana Valadez has been a dedicated volunteer, organizing food distributions for food-insecure families in her community. Inspired by a conversation with her child’s principal at Live Oak Elementary, she partnered with Second Harvest Food Bank Santa Cruz County to create a program that now serves 100–120 families twice a month, including approximately 70% families, 20% seniors, and some of our unhoused neighbors. She has led over 170 distributions, volunteered over 500 hours, and helped provide more than 400,000 pounds of food. Despite challenges, Diana’s upbringing drives her commitment, believing that no one should go to bed hungry.

*Thank you, Diana, for all you do for Second Harvest and our community.*

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# Food Donor of the Year!

## California Giant Berry Farms



Second Harvest Food Bank Santa Cruz County proudly recognizes California Giant Berry Farms as our 2024 Food Donor of the Year. Since 2016, California Giant Berry has been a steadfast supporter, donating over 120,000 pounds of fresh berries last year alone. Their contributions of strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, and blackberries have provided nutritious options to our recipients. Their proximity to the Food Bank allows for an ideal partnership – ensuring fresh berries reach those in need promptly. Beyond their generous food donations, California Giant Berry has demonstrated exceptional community commitment by sponsoring key fundraising events like our Chef’s Dinner and Holiday Food & Fund Drive. They have also supported educational initiatives such as The Chef Invitational.

In times of crisis, California Giant Berry Farms’ support has been invaluable, including a significant donation in 2023 to our Flood Relief campaign for neighbors in Pajaro.

*We extend our heartfelt gratitude to California Giant Berry for their unwavering dedication to fighting hunger and strengthening Santa Cruz County.*

# Our New Programs are Thriving!

## The Land and Sea Program Supports Local Growers and Fisheries

We've taken steps to enrich our community's food supply by sourcing local fish protein from the Monterey Bay and increasing our procurement of organic produce from small, local farmers—helping to nourish our neighbors while strengthening the local economy and reducing food miles. As Second Harvest's strategic plan calls for addressing root causes of food insecurity, we're working to inject resources into our local economy to keep jobs and support employment stability.



## Nourish Helps Neighbors Facing Health Challenges and Families Needing Diapers

In partnership with Watsonville Community Hospital, we've established a new pantry to ensure patients in need receive immediate nourishment support and are connected to Second Harvest's resources.

Additionally, Nourish Fresh Market provides free diapers to ease the financial burden on families with young children.



## Strengthening Our Network: SHFB Invests \$754,629 in Partner Agency Grants

As Second Harvest Food Bank plans for the future, we remain committed to building resilience—within our infrastructure and across our network of community partners. A generous state grant has enabled key facility improvements, including new warehouse coolers, vehicles, and forklifts to boost efficiency and reach.

Beyond our own upgrades, we invested **\$754,629** in our partner agencies to strengthen local food distribution. This includes **\$327,629** from the state and **\$427,000** from SHFB. These funds supported kitchen renovations, refrigeration, and awning installations to enhance safety and expand capacity.

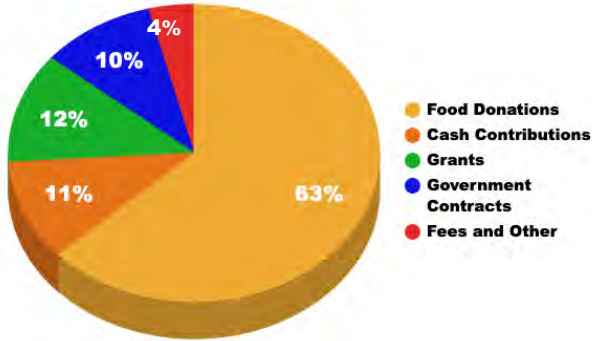
By combining public funding with internal investment, we're reinforcing the systems that power our shared mission—a hunger-free Santa Cruz County.



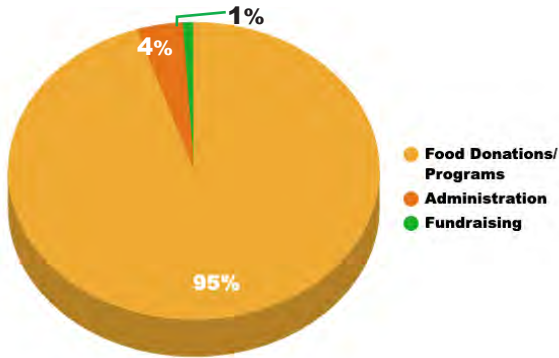
# Financials

**Second Harvest Food Bank serves 65,000 residents each month – 20,000 of whom are children.**

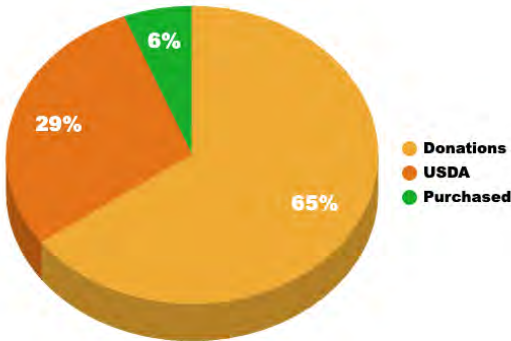
## Where Our Funding Came From



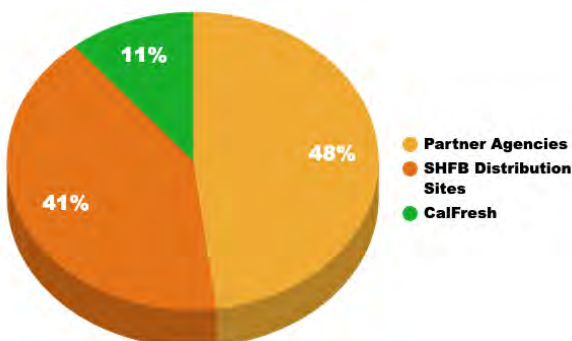
## How We Used Our Resources



## Where Our Food Came From



## Where Our Food Went



## Annual Revenue

Food Donations	18,013,360
Cash Contributions	3,172,930
Grants	3,570,323
Government Contracts	2,735,476
Other Revenue	1,299,490
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>28,791,579</b>

## Annual Operation Expenses

Food Distributed	17,443,151
Food Purchased	953,110
Food Storage & Distribution	4,656,251
Programs	1,926,964
Administrative and General Fundraising	1,398,123
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>26,377,599</b>

## Assets

Cash & Investments	12,420,452
Accounts Receivable	827,626
Food Inventory	1,544,774
Prepaid Expenses	88,854
Land, Building & Equipment	6,671,692
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>21,553,398</b>

## Liabilities

Accounts Payable & Accrued Expenses	941,042
Long-term Payable (building and land)	624,511
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>1,565,553</b>

## Equity

Without Donor Restrictions	4,739,147
Board Designated Funds	4,874,167
Land, Building & Equipment	6,671,692
Inventory	1,544,773
With Donor Restrictions	2,158,067
<b>Total Net Equity</b>	<b>19,987,845</b>

**Total Liabilities and Net Equity 21,553,398**



**At Second Harvest Food Bank, our mission is to inspire and support Santa Cruz County to provide nourishment for all community members.**



**Our Work Together is Vital.  
Your Support is Key.**

Scan the QR Code to help support the Food Bank today!



**Stay Connected!**

For general information, please call (831) 722-7110  
To find out how to access food, email [foodhotline@thefoodbank.org](mailto:foodhotline@thefoodbank.org) or call (831) 662-0991  
For volunteer information, visit our website or call (831) 232-8141