



Partnership in Action:

A YEAR OF COLLECTIVE IMPACT

Second Harvest Food Bank
Santa Cruz County

Annual Report FY 2024-2025



LETTER FROM OUR CEO



Dear Friends,

This past year was marked by meaningful progress and collective impact. Together, we strengthened food access across our region, deepened relationships with partner agencies, volunteers, growers, donors, and advocates, and continued to respond to the evolving needs of our community with care and determination. These accomplishments are a testament to what is possible when a community comes together around a shared commitment to nourishment, dignity, and resilience.

In early spring of 2025, we were met with unexpected federal policy changes that resulted in the cancellation of critical food resources. The suddenness of these shifts created real challenges, ones that could have significantly disrupted our ability to serve our neighbors. Yet, in the face of uncertainty, something remarkable happened.

You showed up.

Our community stepped forward with generosity, creativity, and resolve. Donors increased their support, partners collaborated in new ways, volunteers leaned in, and advocates raised their voices. Because of you, we were able to bridge the gap, stabilize our operations, and continue providing

food to those who rely on us. This moment reaffirmed what we have always known: our food bank is not a standalone organization. It is a shared effort, built and sustained by true partners.

As we look ahead, we know challenges will continue to arise. The landscape of food security is constantly changing, and the work ahead will require adaptability, courage, and continued collaboration. But one thing is certain: whatever comes our way, we will face it together.

Thank you for believing in this mission, for standing with us during moments of both progress and uncertainty, and for being an essential part of this work. Your partnership makes our impact possible, and your commitment gives us confidence in the future we are building—together.

With deep gratitude,
Erica Padilla-Chavez
 CEO



INSIGHTS FROM THOSE WE SERVE



During the 2024–2025 planning cycle, hearing directly from Second Harvest participants was essential in shaping our priorities. Their insights helped us better understand the realities families face and guided how we refined our services to meet evolving community needs.

What we heard was clear: food insecurity is closely tied to the rising cost of living. High rent and mortgage payments consumed most household budgets. Low or unstable wages made it harder to plan from one month to the next. Expenses like childcare, transportation, and medical bills compounded financial strain, leaving little room for unexpected setbacks.



“With a limited income, ongoing health conditions, and many responsibilities, eating healthier felt overwhelming, but the Healthy Food Box program gave me simple recipes and ideas that helped me make positive changes.” — **Rocio Moreno**



“Second Harvest helps me take care of myself, and it allows me to help others. Being able to bring food to elderly neighbors and make sure they’re not alone fills my heart with gratitude.” — **Wanda Spencer**

Based on a survey of Second Harvest participants in FY 24-25

(78 Spanish-language responses; 133 English-language responses):

70%

agree that **high rent or mortgage costs** are the biggest reason they struggle to afford food.

46%

report **low wages or limited work hours** as a major barrier to putting food on the table.

1 in 5

struggle to afford food due to **transportation, childcare, and medical costs.**

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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 California Certified Organic Farmers

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 Salud Para La Gente

We have distributed
10.7M
 POUNDS OF FOOD,
 Equivalent to
8.9M
 MEALS,

Serving an
 average of
70,000
 residents
 each month

**YEAR
 IN
 REVIEW**



**The Need was
 Higher Than Ever...**



**Access to Food Is Essential,
 but Access to Healthy
 Food Is Transformative.**

Our Healthy Food Box Program provides nutritious foods to support specific chronic conditions, along with nutritional counseling sessions that help participants make lasting health changes.



**Volunteers Showed
 Up When and Where It
 Mattered the Most.**



**TOGETHER
 WE BRIDGED
 THE GAP**



Delays and sudden cancellations of food shipments from the federal government through the U.S. Department of Agriculture created immediate and visible gaps in our food supply. In March 2025, federal pauses and cuts placed more than 177,000 pounds of expected food deliveries at risk, representing \$348,728 in stalled TEFAP-funded food orders. At the same time, the cancellation of the Local Food Purchase Assistance (LFPA) program, a proposed 90% reduction in CalFood funding, and a federal proposal to cut \$230 billion from SNAP (CalFresh) threatened food access for 41,000 Santa Cruz County residents, including thousands of children.

In response to that, Second Harvest Food Bank Santa Cruz County launched **Operation Bridge the Gap, an urgent campaign to mobilize community support in response to an escalating food insecurity crisis driven by federal funding disruptions.** On March 24, the Food Bank convened a press conference to publicly address these challenges and call for the community to help close the widening gap between need and available resources.

**Our community of volunteers,
 donors, and local partners rose
 to the moment, coming together
 to help their neighbors.**

At our annual Holiday Food and Fund Drive Awards Dinner, the evening transformed into an impromptu fundraiser when longtime supporter **Mari Rossi** stood up and issued a \$10,000 challenge gift, inspiring others to give. **The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints** delivered a full truckload of food to support families in need. **KSBW** partnered with regional food banks, including Second Harvest, Monterey County, and San Benito County, to host a televised telethon that amplified awareness and generosity across the Central Coast. Local artist **Monika Modest** launched **The World Has Heart**, creating ceramic hearts for donors who give \$25 or more.

Operation Bridge the Gap reminded us that in times of change and uncertainty, our incredible community shows up. Through generosity, partnership, and collective action, our neighbors came together to ensure no one faced hunger alone.

**HONORING SALLY
 KATHLEEN SCHOLZ**



Sally Kathleen Scholz (1958–2021) lived a life defined by curiosity, creativity, and deep compassion for others. She embraced community in all its forms, through dance, travel, and art, and cared deeply about people, animals, and the world around her. Sally believed in showing up for causes that reflected her values, and her generosity reached far beyond her lifetime. By including Second Harvest Santa Cruz County in her legacy, Sally chose to continue caring for her community in a lasting way. Her generosity now helps ensure families have access to healthy food and dignity when they need it most.

We at Second Harvest are deeply grateful for Sally's gift and the trust it represents. Her story reminds us that compassion can live on, and that each of us has the power to make a difference that lasts.

If you would like to know more about Planned Giving, or would like to let us know that you have already chosen to include Second Harvest in your estate plans, please reach out to Michele Bassi at Michele@thefoodbank.org.



HONORING OUR HUNGER FIGHTERS OF THE YEAR!



America Sanchez – Amesti Elementary Community Distribution Site

America Sanchez has shown extraordinary dedication to her community through her volunteer work at Second Harvest's Community Distributions at local schools in Watsonville. Despite developing anxiety around driving after a car accident, she never let that stop her from finding rides from supportive family members or walking to distribution sites so she could continue serving others. At each distribution, she plays a key role in organizing the food display and helping participants bag their items, a two-hour effort from setup to cleanup. From her own experience of receiving support from the Food Bank, she felt the need to give back and was deeply moved by the gratitude of the participants she met. We are proud to honor America as a Hunger Fighter; her passion for lifting her community is truly inspiring!



Loisrae Guin – Watsonville Veteran's Food Pantry Program

Loisrae Guin, 98, is the co-founder of the Watsonville Veterans' Food Pantry Program (WVPP). A Korean War veteran and U.S. Navy Corps Officer, she recognizes the needs of more than 2,000 veterans in Watsonville and the surrounding areas. Alongside U.S. Marine James Dailey, she founded WVPP in November 2024 to provide veterans with reliable access to healthy food and connections to critical housing and medical services. Loisrae helped secure the Watsonville Veterans Memorial Building as a food pantry, now serving more than 80 veterans and their families each month. To date, WVPP has distributed over 49,920 pounds of food. We are honored to recognize Loisrae as a Hunger Fighter and to celebrate her lifelong dedication to serving veterans in our community.

FOOD DONOR OF THE YEAR!



Dean Sakae of Wysiwyg Farms

Dean Sakae of Wysiwyg Farms is a third-generation farmer whose family has farmed in the Pajaro area for more than 100 years. Last year, as more families struggled to access fresh, nutritious food, Dean made a simple but powerful decision: to dedicate a portion of his land to support the community. Using extra acreage, Dean planted zucchini, yellow squash, and cucumbers specifically for donation. In just a few months during the 2025 harvest season, his fields yielded 31,806 pounds of fresh produce for Second Harvest, helping nourish thousands of neighbors. This year, Dean is expanding his commitment by dedicating more than twice the acreage and extending the growing period to reach even more families.

His generosity also helped spark our gleaning volunteer program, turning unused crops into fresh food and engaging volunteers to harvest produce that might otherwise go unpicked. We are proud to honor Dean Sakae and Wysiwyg Farms for transforming their resources into nourishment and hope for our community.

FINANCIALS AT A GLANCE

Annual Revenue

Food Donations	17,436,986
Cash Contributions	5,362,303
Grants	2,741,778
Government Contracts	3,759,097
Other Revenue	1,331,476

Total Revenue \$ 30,631,640

Annual Operating Expenses

Food Distributed	18,028,544
Food Purchased	1,857,384
Food Storage & Distribution Programs	4,327,930
Administrative and General Fundraising	2,361,745
	1,769,213

Total Expense \$ 28,344,816

Assets

Cash & Investments	14,327,332
Accounts Receivable	1,075,348
Food Inventory	1,612,852
Prepaid Expenses	14,592
Land, Building & Equipment	6,456,508

Total Assets \$ 23,486,632

Liabilities

Accounts Payable & Accrued Expenses	683,703
Long-term Payable (building and land)	528,260

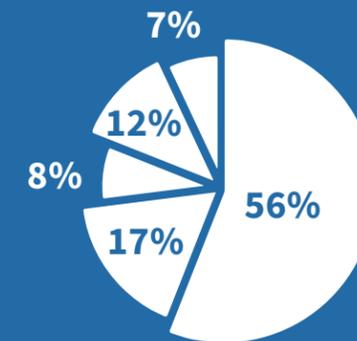
Total Liabilities \$ 1,211,963

Equity

Without Donor Restrictions	4,969,672
Board Designated Funds	4,874,167
Land, Building & Equipment	6,671,692
Inventory	1,544,773
With Donor Restrictions	4,214,365

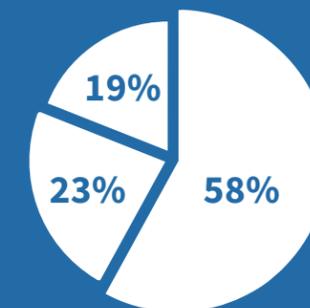
Total Net Equity \$ 22,274,669

Total Liabilities and Net Equity \$ 23,486,632



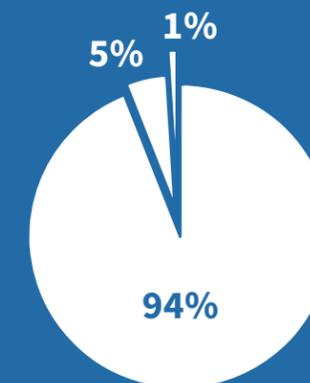
Where Our Funding Came From

Food Donations:	56%
Cash Contributions:	17%
Grants:	8%
Government Contracts:	12%
Fees and Other:	7%



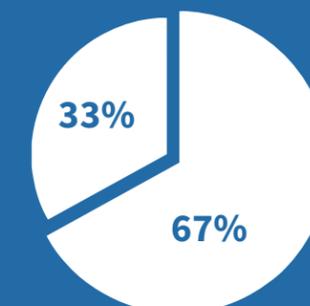
Where Our Food Came From

Donated:	58%
USDA:	23%
Purchased:	19%



How We Used Our Resources

Food Donations/ Programs:	94%
Administration:	5%
Fundraising:	1%



Where Our Food Went

Partner Agencies:	67%
SHFB Distribution Sites:	33%



PLACE
POSTAGE
STAMP
HERE

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

Your partnership makes our impact possible. Your commitment gives us confidence in the future we are building.



Stay connected!
thefoodbank.org

- @secondharvestsantacruz
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For general information, please call (831) 722-7110

To find food, call (831) 662-0991 or email foodhotline@thefoodbank.org

For volunteer information, visit our website or call (831) 232-8141

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

