

We Are The Food Bank

Partner Agency Newsletter
April 2026



Dear Partners,

I recently attended the Feeding America conference and had the opportunity to engage in a powerful conversation about the importance of neighborhood-centered engagement. The work we are all doing to bring communities together is truly an investment in the well-being of our neighbors.

We are “weavers” building relationships, strengthening connections, and creating trusted spaces where individuals and families feel welcomed. Through this work, we help reduce stigma and increase access to essential services. I invite each of you to reflect on your role and the meaningful contributions you make in facilitating neighborhood engagement.

I would also like to remind you of our upcoming **Food Insecurity Symposium** taking place on **May 15th**. Please be sure to register in advance, as space is limited. We hope to see you there!

Fun Food Fact: Did you know that April 21st is National Chickpea Day? The Black Eyed Peas can sing us a song, but chickpeas can only hummus one.

Thank you for all that you do to strengthen our community.

In Community,

Adriana Mata

Chief Community Impact Officer

Agency Network Updates

Strategic Plan

Food bank leadership is happy to introduce our new Strategic Plan. This roadmap reflects the evolving realities of food security and social services, and prepares us to meet the growing pressures facing our community, including hunger. For 53 years, our food bank has been a steady source of support. This new plan reaffirms our commitment to that role and outlines our path forward, centered on five key focus areas that will guide our work in the years ahead.



Please feel free to check out the plan on our website: [Strategic Plan 2026-2031](#)

Holiday Food and Fund Drive Update

At our recent Holiday Food and Fund Drive Awards event, we celebrated the community's triumphant efforts in helping us raise meals, and we honored the Hunger Fighters and Food Donor of the Year. The energy in the room

was one of love and community. Our Food Donor of the Year is Dean Sakae, of WYGIWYS Farms. He has been instrumental in not just providing us with food straight from the fields but also has helped us launch our gleaning program.

Our goal for the HFFD was set at 5.5 million meals this year, which is the largest goal ever set. We are beyond excited to share with you all that our community raised the equivalent of 8,653,707 meals!

Congratulations to our community!



Network Action Spotlight

Participation Reporting — Compliance Suspensions

Our team will soon be focusing on connecting with partners around missing or incorrect monthly participation reporting. As a reminder, reporting should include all touch points/moments of service during the course of the reporting month. Any agency that has **not reported for three consecutive months** will be evaluated for suspension, which will not allow them to

continue to source products from the food bank until reporting information has been submitted. Each of our partner agencies has a homepage that is generated by our Participation Database and details whether a month has any associated reporting and what information was submitted to us. Feel free to reach out to our team if you would like a link to your agency's homepage, which is also included in the follow-up email after submitting monthly participation reporting.

If your agency is part of our USDA program, then the additional unduplicated reporting should include those participants who self-reported that it was their first time attending a USDA distribution that month on the EFA-7 client intake form. The unduplicated number should be less than the overall reporting numbers, unless your agency only distributes once per month, in which case the numbers would be the same. Our team will be working on a retraining session for partners who have been submitting questionable participation information.

Partner Agency Network Spotlight

Hunger Fighters of the Year

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 her lifelong dedication to serving veterans in our community with a Hunger Fighter award.

America Sanchez —Amesti Elementary School 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!

Save the Dates

Please add the following events to your calendar!

We ask that agencies notify us of any changes or cancellations to their distributions.

Virtual Partner Agency Network Check-In Meeting

- Tuesday, April 21

- 9 — 10 a.m.

- [Join the Meeting](#)

- Meeting ID: 869 9805 9817

Second Harvest Food Bank Symposium

- Friday, May 15

- Time: 8:30 a.m. — 1:00 p.m.

- Cabrillo College — Samper Hall

- Ticket Link: [Symposium RSVP](#)

- Offices will be closed. No delivery or pickup orders available.

Food Bank Closure — Memorial Day

- Monday, May 25

- Offices will be closed. No delivery or pickup orders available.

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