

We Are The Food Bank

Partner Agency Newsletter
July 2026



Dear Partners,

Hard to believe we're already halfway through the year! As we prepare for the new fiscal year, our team will be implementing several changes designed to optimize our work and create new opportunities to strengthen partner agency capacity. You will hear about some of these changes at the upcoming Partner Agency meeting on July 7th. These changes are important as they are intended to improve efficiency and foster stronger collaboration. Our partner agency team is committed to providing the highest level of support to you, our partner agencies, and neighbors.

Additionally, the new CalFresh work requirements are now in effect. Our CalFresh team is here to continue supporting our neighbors with enrollment and benefits assistance. We recognize that many members of our community are facing additional challenges and uncertainty during this time. Please know that we are here to help and remain committed to connecting individuals and families with the resources they need.

[CalFresh June 2026 Changes - Second Harvest Food Bank Santa Cruz](#)

Fun Food Fact: Did you know that July is berry month! So, what did one berry say to the other berry at the party? Let's dance and have a jammin' good time!

In Community,

Adriana Mata

Chief Community Impact Officer

Agency Network Updates

Food Insecurity Symposium

"On May 15th, more than 300 community members came together at Cabrillo College for our Food Insecurity Symposium, an inspiring reminder of what is possible when people gather with compassion, concern, and a shared commitment to one another. Throughout the day, we learned more about the growing challenges facing our food safety net system and the difficult realities many families are navigating every day. We were deeply honored to hear from Secretary Leon Panetta, who reminded us **that this moment calls for collective action: caring for our neighbors not only through food assistance, but also through advocacy with our local, state, and federal leaders.** We also want to extend a very special thank you to the local Rotary Clubs whose partnership and support helped make this important symposium possible. To everyone who joined us that day, thank you. And thank you for continuing to stand beside us in our mission to nourish our neighbors, advocate for those struggling to make ends meet, and strengthen our community through your volunteerism, generosity, and support.

P.S. If you were unable to attend the Food Insecurity Symposium, you can watch the recording here: https://youtu.be/JuE2kxwQ_6Q

- Erica Padilla-Chavez, CEO



New Capacity Building Project

Consistent with our [strategic plan](#) and our commitment to planning for the long term, we recently had a unique opportunity to **secure a parcel of land through a bargain sale**. This site will become the future home of our new warehouse and office space, designed to help us better meet the growing needs of our community. This new space represents a critical investment in strengthening that capacity.

This new facility will allow us to serve our community with greater care, coordination, and impact, ensuring that individuals and families not only receive food but are also connected to the tools and support they need to thrive.

We will keep the community updated throughout this journey. Stay connected and follow our progress by visiting our website at this link:

[OurFuture - Second Harvest Food Bank Santa Cruz](#)



June Food Bank Closures & Inventory Audit

We appreciate everyone in the network being flexible during our fiscal year Inventory Audit, as our Operations Team endeavors to maintain good stewardship over our stock.

Network Action Spotlight

Annual Demographics Survey

Our team will soon be messaging out the upcoming survey questions for our Annual Demographics Report. As a reminder, the survey was skipped last year because of immigration policy response fears in the community, but the food bank is required to gather this information by our national partner, Feeding America, as well as other grant providers and funders. Each agency will be notified of the number of surveys they are expected to gather based on their participation reporting.

Partner Agency Network Spotlight

Jacob's Heart Children's Cancer Support Services

The Full Hearts Grocery Program, part of Jacob's Heart Children's Cancer Support Services, has been serving families since 2013 from its base in Watsonville, reaching households across Santa Cruz, Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Clara counties. The program supports approximately 100 families each week, many of whom face financial hardship and transportation challenges while caring for a child undergoing cancer treatment or recovery.

At its core, Full Hearts operates a grocery delivery model, providing weekly, customized grocery bags directly to families' homes. Volunteers pack and sort groceries based on each family's preferences and dietary needs, then organize them into delivery routes for drivers to distribute across the region. In addition to home delivery, the program offers Heart Mart, a pantry-style distribution where families can select items in person, as well as Caroline's Closet, which provides clothing support. These services are part of a broader network of emotional, financial, and practical assistance that Jacob's Heart offers to families navigating pediatric cancer.

The program is powered by a dedicated team of 16–20 volunteers, some of whom have been involved for over a decade, a testament to the meaningful, community-driven nature of the work. Volunteers like Billy and Betty Hatchett exemplify this commitment, regularly helping pack groceries and delivering them multiple times each week. The atmosphere of the program

is warm, welcoming, and rooted in dignity, with a strong emphasis on ensuring families feel seen, respected, and cared for during an incredibly difficult time.

As demand has grown, particularly for consistent, nutritious staples like eggs, and as the program has expanded into additional counties, logistical complexity has increased. Despite these challenges, the team continues to meet the need through flexibility, strong volunteer engagement, and a deeply family-centered approach. One of the program's most impactful practices is offering customized grocery bags, which not only reduces waste but also empowers families with choice, reinforcing dignity in the support they receive.

Staff and volunteers alike are driven by a shared belief: no child, especially one facing cancer, should go hungry. Being able to ease even a small part of that burden for families is both a responsibility and a privilege, and it's what keeps this community coming back week after week to make a difference.



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.

In-Person Partner Agency Network Check-In Meeting

- Tuesday, July 7
- 11 a.m. — 2 p.m.
- Location: Ann Jean Cummings County Park, 461 Soquel San Jose Rd, Soquel

Food Bank Closures

- Fourth of July — Friday, July 3
- Offices will be closed. No delivery or pickup orders available.

Inventory Audit

- Wednesday, June 24 through Tuesday, June 30
- Office open. No delivery or pickup orders available.

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