

PRESS RELEASE

Second Harvest Food Bank Santa Cruz County Invites Community to Take Action During Hunger Action Month

*September initiative brings together volunteers, advocates, donors, and neighbors to help
address hunger across Santa Cruz County*

Watsonville, CA (September 1, 2026) – This September, Second Harvest Food Bank Santa Cruz County is joining food banks across the country in recognizing and taking part in Hunger Action Month, a month dedicated to raising awareness about hunger and turning awareness into action.

As more neighbors face rising food costs and difficult choices about putting food on the table, Second Harvest is reminding Santa Cruz County residents that addressing hunger is a community effort, and everyone has a role to play.

This year's Hunger Action Month theme, "Assembly Required", from the Feeding America network, reflects a simple but powerful message: change takes all of us coming together. Farmers, food donors, volunteers, advocates, community organizations, businesses, and neighbors each bring an important piece to building a stronger food system and ensuring everyone has access to nutritious food.

"Hunger is something we can see, respond to, and change when we work together," said Erica Padilla-Chavez, CEO of Second Harvest Food Bank Santa Cruz County. "Hunger Action Month reminds us that every contribution matters. Whether you volunteer your time, advocate for food access, make a donation, share information with a neighbor, or simply learn more about hunger in our community, there is a place for everyone in this work."

Through September, Second Harvest is inviting the community to find their piece of the solution through a Hunger Action Month community calendar, featuring opportunities to take action each week. The calendar will highlight four key ways to get involved: advocacy, volunteering, giving, and community support. Residents can advocate for food access and programs like SNAP, volunteer to pack and sort food, become a monthly donor, share information with neighbors, and find other ways to support the fight against hunger.

Additionally, Second Harvest will conclude the month with Hunger Action Day on September 29, a national day of action encouraging people to learn more about hunger and take a meaningful

step toward addressing it. Second Harvest representatives will be available to share updates on the month's activities, highlight community participation, and discuss the continued work needed to address hunger across Santa Cruz County.

Second Harvest encourages residents to follow along throughout September, explore the Hunger Action Month calendar, and choose an action that is meaningful and right for them.

To learn more and find ways to take action, visit <https://www.thefoodbank.org/ham-26/#>

MEDIA CONTACT: Despina Rieke, despina@thefoodbank.org | (831) 232-8332

About Second Harvest Food Bank Santa Cruz County: Founded in 1972, Second Harvest Food Bank is the only food bank serving all of Santa Cruz County and was the first food bank in California and the second in the nation. Its mission is to inspire and support Santa Cruz County to provide nourishment for all community members. Through a network of more than 100 local pantry partners and distribution sites, Second Harvest serves an average of 70,000 people each month. We recognize our donors, celebrate our volunteers, and are grateful for our partners and staff. Nourishing Today, Building Tomorrow. We are the Food Bank. [TheFoodBank.org](https://www.TheFoodBank.org).

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