

Partner Agency Newsletter

November 2026 We are the Food Bank.

Dear Partner Agencies,

As I sit here in Raleigh, North Carolina, with Ulises Peralta, our UCSC Basic Needs Operations Coordinator, we are reflecting on what we'll bring home from this year's Growing Stronger Communities conference. We had the opportunity to learn alongside food bankers, partner agencies, and farmers, and to talk about how we can strengthen our local food systems.





One message came up repeatedly throughout the conference. Relationships and intentional partnerships make collective action possible. We are all part of the same food system, and when we share what we learn and support one another's work, we can do more for the communities we serve.

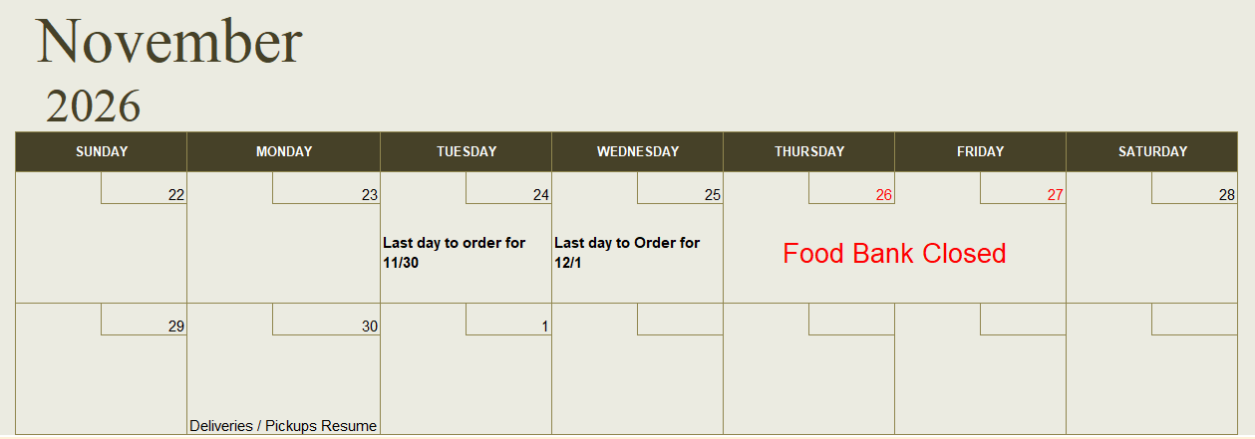
Let's lift the work we are all doing to support our community and ensure that our neighbors have the nourishment that they need. Together, we can build a stronger local food system that reflects what our neighbors need and value.

In Community,
Adriana Mata
Chief Community Impact Officer

Agency Network Updates

Ordering Updates

As the end of November approaches, we want to remind all our partners that the food bank will be closed on Thursday, November 26th, as well as Friday, November 27th. If there are any changes that need to be made in terms of distribution days, times, or generally any operational changes, we encourage you all to reach out to our team as soon as possible.
Please review the calendar below for the shifted ordering windows.



Harvest Pass Updates

The team continues to work hard on implementing Harvest at distributions around the county and has officially begun implementation with a select few pilot agencies. The response from the public has been overwhelming, and we are excited to see how far this system takes us in the future!

The advisory council continues to meet on a regular basis. We continue to discuss important privacy notices, program elements, implementation practices, and more to best support the entire network.

Network Action Spotlight

Stronger Together Capacity Building Grant

Stronger Together Capacity Building Grant is a six-month pilot program designed to help strengthen your agency's organizational capacity and that of our partner agencies while supporting your ongoing participation in Second Harvest Food Bank activities.

Through this funding opportunity, eligible partners can request financial support for projects, equipment, and other operational needs that strengthen your program, support food distribution efforts, and increase your ability to serve the community.

Interested in applying? We encourage you to explore this opportunity and consider how additional support can help strengthen your agency's operations and expand your ability to serve the community.

Application Deadline: November 25 at 5:00 PM

We look forward to working together to build a stronger network and expand our collective impact in the communities we serve!

Application: Stronger Together Capacity Building Grant

Diaper Bank Updates

We are excited to share that we held our first diaper distribution in Scotts Valley on Monday, October 10, at the Community Center. The distribution was a success, allowing us to support **33 households** and provide assistance to families with a **total of 130 children.**

Additionally, we hosted a Diaper Pop-Up distribution at the Watsonville Hospital on Monday, October 26. Through this distribution, we were able to assist families with diapers and wipes supplies for a **total of 524 children!**

If your agency is interested in applying to become a diaper partner, please fill out the application below, and a team member will get back to you shortly:

Diaper Distribution Program Application - Fill out form

Staff Spotlight

Brianna Melgoza-Ortiz – Food Rescue Manager

We are excited to introduce the newest staff member joining our Second Harvest Food Bank team, Brianna Melgoza–Ortiz. Brianna is our new Food Rescue Manager. In her new role, she will be taking a lead on all of our food recovery efforts!

Please help us welcome her to the Food Bank, where she will surely interact with some of our partner agencies that participate in grocery rescue.



Where did you grow up and where do you live now?
- Response: I was born and raised in Watsonville, CA.

How long have you been at the food bank, and how did you start there?
- Response:I recently joined the food bank this November. I have a background in non-profit work and community outreach. I'm excited to be a part of the team and look forward to learning, growing, and contributing to the work we do.

What does the food bank mean to you?

- Response: Coming from immigrant farmworker parents, the food bank's mission holds a very special place in my heart. Growing up, I saw firsthand how farmworker families can experience food insecurity, despite being such an essential part of providing food across the country. To me, the food bank is about so much more than providing food. It's about creating a sense of community and making sure everyone feels supported and cared for.

What is your current role and what department are you in?
- Response: I'm currently the Food Rescue Manager in the Operations department.

Fun Facts!

What is your favorite fruit and/or vegetable?
- Response: My favorite fruit is strawberries.

What are some of your favorite foods?
- Response: Nothing beats my mom's cooking. Some of my all-time favorites are her mole, frijoles with tortillas de harina, and birria.

What is your favorite animal?
- Response: Cats are my favorite animal, although I actually have a dog. My mom has a phobia of cats, so I haven't been able to have one of my own yet. Luckily, my dog acts just like a cat.

What is on your bucket list, and what have you already accomplished on it?
- Response: Skydiving, seeing the Northern Lights, and visiting every state in Mexico are all on my bucket list! Some items I've checked off already are taking a hot air balloon ride and visiting some states in Mexico, including Guadalajara, Michoacán, Baja California, and Mexico City.

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.

Harvest Pass Enrollment
Please help us pre-register community members for Harvest Pass by spreading the word about this enrollment event.

- Date: Friday, November 20th
- Time: 3:00 p.m. — 5:00 p.m.
- Location: 423 Bridge St, Watsonville, CA 95076

Community Resources

Upcoming Disaster Preparedness Trainings & Resources

SF Card - Events happening this week and next!

800 Ohlone Parkway, Watsonville, California 95076

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www.thefoodbank.org

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