



WE ARE THE FOOD BANK

Partner Agency Newsletter

September 2024



From the CPO

Dear Partner Agencies,



As we welcome in September, I have two updates for you all.

Food Banks Strategic Plan - The Food Bank will embark on updating and creating a new strategic plan and we need your help. We will be sending out a survey in the next month or so asking for some initial feedback. After that, we will be setting up focus groups that you all can attend and help share our new strategic plan. As you might remember the focus for the programs department this year is people-centered, compliance, and innovative solutions. All three of these will be put into practice as we will not only be seeking your feedback we will also be looking to our other stakeholders like our participants, donors, staff, and others.

Client Intake software update - We have narrowed it down to two software companies that we have planned to have a more 1:1 conversation with to see if they will meet what we are looking for. This has been a long journey, but we know that to do our best we need to make sure we are filtering through. We will ask four partner agencies to volunteer and be the beta testers. This will most likely happen in mid-October or early November so if you are interested, please get in touch with me directly at josue@thefoodbank.org to help us test the system.

Josué Barajas, Chief Programs Officer

Agency Network Update

Quarterly Partner Agency Meetings

We are looking forward to the first Partner Agency Meeting of the new fiscal year on Monday, September 16, 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. at Salvation Army Santa Cruz, 721 Laurel Street. (lunch provided). This is a great opportunity to share food bank updates and best practices, as well as touch base with our dedicated neighbors and peers. As a reminder, we encourage each of our partner agencies to send a representative to attend at least two of the four quarterly meetings.

Holiday Chickens

Cost sharing for whole chickens will be available to the network again this holiday season! Like other ShopSmart items, the cost is shared 80%. Agencies will be able to order these chickens through their regular Agency Express 3 online menu starting in November. Reach out to our Agency Network Team with any questions.

Berry Pushing

Berry season is in full swing, and The Food Bank has received significant donations of strawberries, raspberries, blackberries and blueberries. These donations often arrive with a very short shelf life, so our Agency Network Team will continue to automatically allocate them to agency orders based on quantities requested in previous surveys. If you'd like to update your numbers, or if there is a maximum amount that you can receive, let our Agency Network Team know.

Office Hours

September's hours are Wednesday, September 18, 10 – 11 a.m
[Use this link to join the Zoom meeting](#) | Meeting ID: 823 4025 2822

Agency Participation Numbers

July 2024			
County Zone	Est. Unduplicated Households	Est. Unduplicated Individuals	% Change from June '24
North County	11,157	20,708	-4.29%
South County	5,225	20,444	9.67%
San Lorenzo Valley	3,231	6,903	1.69%
Out of County	701	1,548	-2.95%
Total	20,314	49,603	-1.93%

*42 of 50 (84%) partner agencies reporting as of 8/26/24 - Thank you!

Community Spotlight: Skyland Church

We'd like to welcome Skyland Church to our Partner Agency Network. This new agency is located near Soquel/San Jose Rd. and Summit Rd. We are excited to have them as they fill a significant gap in services for rural residents in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Skyland's food distribution is a big operation requiring nearly 50 volunteers, averaging six volunteers each day of the week. In their own words...

Why does Skyland provide food to the community?

"There are many people in the rural areas of the Santa Cruz mountains who live off the grid and need additional help for their basic needs.

It is the mission of Skyland Church to feed people because food is a basic right; many of our residents have such high rents that they cannot afford to buy groceries.

We are supporting food-insecure mountain residents who are the working poor, the disabled, those with medical issues, the unemployed and larger families who need a helping hand by the end of the month when their paychecks are gone."

What motivates you to do this work?

"It gives us joy to make such a big impact on people's lives. We are always being thanked and hearing the impact on people's lives. Our work matters and truly makes a difference.

The individual stories that we hear every day motivate us to keep doing this important work." Shannon Edwards and Carol David are the program coordinators and provided us with the above quotes.



Network Action Spotlight: Partner Agency Compliance Highlight

This month, we're spotlighting two key requirements according to the Partner Agency Agreement and Feeding America requirements. Please contact our Agency Network Team with any questions or concerns regarding these requirements.

Liability Insurance

Each partner agency must provide a currently active certificate of liability insurance. If an agency establishes The Food Bank as a **Certificate Holder** on their insurance policy, then The Food Bank will automatically receive a copy of the certificate when it is renewed. Please note that this is different than having The Food Bank be 'Additionally Insured' under your policy, which is NOT required.

Food Safety Certification

Food safety requirements for all partner agencies have increased and were detailed in the last version of the Partner Agency Agreement. All agencies distributing dry goods to the community must have ServSafe Food Handler Certification, and all agencies that prepare hot food or meals for the community must have ServSafe Manager Certification, or equivalent. The Agency Network Team will contact agencies that have not yet submitted this documentation, or a timeline in acquiring this certification.

Save the Dates

Please add the events below to your calendars.

We kindly request that agencies update us regarding changes to, or cancellations of, their distributions.

Monday, September 16

Partner Agency Meeting

11 a.m. – 2 p.m. (lunch provided)

Salvation Army Santa Cruz, 721 Laurel Street, Santa Cruz

Wednesday, September 18

Agency Network Team Office Hours

10 – 11 a.m.

[Use this link to join the meeting;](#) Meeting ID: 843 8834 9741

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