



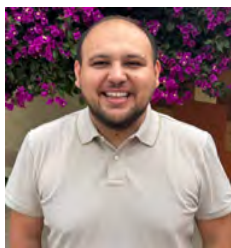
WE ARE THE FOOD BANK Partner Agency Newsletter

December 2024



From the CPO

Happy Holidays,
Partner Agencies!



The Food Bank receives donations from various sources, often with short shelf lives. If you notice high volumes or cases of fresh produce on Agency Express, or receive emails from our staff, please take as much as you can use. Our Agency Network staff may also add bonus items to your orders, so please help us distribute these to our community.

We are committed to accepting all donations and reducing food spoilage. In the first quarter of the 2024-25 fiscal year (July-September), we unfortunately had to discard nearly 100,000 lbs. of fresh produce. Our food distribution model relies on 70% distribution through our agencies and 40% through community distribution sites. Your continued support is crucial in helping us get food to those in need.

Wishing you all a fantastic holiday season and looking forward to seeing you in the new year!

Josue Barajas
Chief Programs Officer

Agency Network Update

We Upgraded our Mapping Function!

We will soon have a new mapping platform designed to provide participant-centered services and significantly enhance the end user experience. This upgraded tool will replace the old map and is available on our website. Features include advanced filtering options, customization capabilities, and the ability for partner agencies to host their own dedicated web page! We go live in January 2025, with customization at our January 27 Partner Agency Meeting. We'll work closely with you to ensure your information displayed on the platform is accurate and up-to-date. Stay tuned for more details as we prepare to launch this transformative new resource.

Holiday Distributions

Please inform our Agency Network Team of any changes to partner agency distribution dates, times, or special holiday distributions so we can update the community. Also, note our holiday closures listed in this newsletter. We'll send reminders, including order limitations.

Produce Availability & Allocation

This time of year, produce variety and availability will fluctuate as in previous years. We ask our partner agencies to assist The Food Bank in reducing waste by sourcing and distributing produce, especially when there is a high available volume. Our Agency Network Team will manually add surplus produce to agency orders based on their distribution participation.

Office Hours

Our next office hour is Wednesday, December 18, 10—11 a.m.
[Use this link to join the meeting](#) | Meeting ID: 817 7659 2971

Agency Participation Numbers

October 2024				
County Zone	Est. Unduplicated HH	Est. Unduplicated Ind.	% Change from Sept. '24	
North County	12,431	23,478	2.56%	
South County	13,484	33,784	33.87%	
San Lorenzo Valley	3,748	8,704	6.02%	
Out of County	724	1,791	-12.97%	
Total	30,387	67,757	16.03%	

*41 of 52 (79%) partner agencies reporting as of 12/6/24. Thank you!

Agency Spotlight

By Sandra Sanchez

Gardenia Amor y Bienestar Para La Mujer is a nonprofit in Watsonville serving women 18 and older. We promote self-care through physical activities, nutritional education, nature connection, and preventive care. We offer exercise classes like boot camp, boxing, and Zumba three times a week, often at the beach or park. We also organize hikes, farm visits, and nutritional classes.

We collaborate with Second Harvest to provide food for our participants, to take home nutritious items after each class. We also partner with JSM Organic Farm and Esperanza Community Farms for farm visits, where participants can pick fresh produce.

Our services are free, thanks to our volunteers and local business support. We have ten volunteers who help with food pickup, class instruction, and setup. Gardenia creates a supportive community for women to improve their health and wellbeing. [Here are some participant stories:](#)

"Gardenia has helped me a lot mentally and physically. I lost my husband, and I felt lonely and depressed. When I found out about this organization, I tried it, and it really helped me out in many ways. One important way was depression. Gardenia is a program that has helped other women to take care of themselves and do something for each other. I have met so many people - we became friends, we exercise, dance, and laugh."

"Gardenia has made a huge impact in our community. For me, it has taken down the barriers to exercise since the classes are offered for free. I love the female empowerment element of the program because all the women there are super supportive of each other. It has also given me a sense of community with all the lovely ladies who attend the classes."

"I truly felt that Gardenia improves my overall health. I am in better condition physically, mentally, and emotionally. I am so grateful to the people who run and support Gardenia."

We are grateful for our collaborators and volunteers who make our services possible.

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.

Wednesday, December 18

Agency Network Team Office Hour
10 – 11 a.m.

[Join the Meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 817 7659 2971

Food Bank Holiday Closures

Tuesday, December 24 –
Christmas Eve

Wednesday, December 25 –
Christmas Day

Wednesday, January 1 –
New Year's Day

Monday, January 27

Quarterly Partner Agency Meeting
Time and Location TBA

Mid-Year Inventory Closure

Thursday, January 30 –
Friday, January 31
No Delivery or Pickup

Monday, February 3 –
Regular Operations Begin

Hunger Fighter of the Year Nominations

We need YOU to... Nominate the next Hunger Fighter of the Year! Do you know someone who goes above and beyond in their efforts to help feed members of our community? This is your opportunity to recognize that special person with your nomination. Your nominee may be an educator, advocate for the hungry, activist seeking food policy change, or volunteer who is using their time, energy and/or resources to fight hunger in our community. Thank you for helping us honor these individuals.

[Use this link](#), or scan the QR Code to nominate someone special. Deadline for nominations is **Friday, January 10, 2025**.



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