



Contact:

Diane Baker Hayward
408-266-8866 x368
DBakerHayward@shfb.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SECOND HARVEST FACING \$1.1 MILLION FUNDING SHORTFALL

Decreases in giving compounded by increasing demands on Food Bank strains efforts to provide food to more people than ever before

Highlights:

- Decreases in giving this year, coupled with an uncertain funding environment, puts Food Bank's services at risk
- Response effort to Northern California Camp Fire further impacts Bay Area food banks as they provide food and support to fire victims while continuing to serve local food needs
- Funding down despite more people relying on Second Harvest Food Bank than ever before – an average of 260,000 people every month
- Monetary donations are needed. Individuals, corporations and organizations can donate at SHFB.org or call 866-234-3663

SAN JOSE, Calif., December 12, 2018—Despite the fact that more Silicon Valley residents are receiving assistance from Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties than ever before – an average of 260,000 every month – the Food Bank is \$1.1 million behind in donations this year, compared to last year. The months of October through December are not only when the Food Bank sees a spike in people needing food assistance, it's also the organization's most critical fundraising period, when it raises 40 percent of its operating revenue for the entire year. This funding is critical for Second Harvest to continue to expand its programs that help feed more people all year round, including school programs and additional food distributions.

Second Harvest launched its most important fundraising campaign of the year with revenue trailing expectations, hoping to make up for the deficit during the holiday period when the majority of people give. Uncertainties in the fundraising environment, including a trend of some major donors giving less to local causes and changes to tax law for charitable deductions, likely played a role. Distractions from the

elections and regional disasters, including the devastating Camp Fire in Butte County, also likely impacted local giving.

Second Harvest is one of five Bay Area food banks providing food assistance to victims of the Butte County fires. In times of emergency, food banks play a key role as “second responders,” providing food and water in the immediate aftermath of disaster, as well as longer-term food assistance as neighbors rebuild their lives. Bay Area food banks have an emergency response plan in place to coordinate efforts and concentrate support in times of crises, but must also continue to serve the needs of Bay Area residents struggling with hunger every day.

Second Harvest CEO Leslie Bacho said the growing demands for assistance, locally and regionally, remind us that hunger is a very real problem that people experience every day. “Whether someone is struggling to put healthy food on the table due to the high cost of living in Silicon Valley, or because they lost their home and belongings in the tragic Camp Fire, Second Harvest and Bay Area Food Banks will be there to help people get back on their feet during their greatest time of need,” said Bacho. “Everyone needs healthy food to fully engage in their lives.”

Second Harvest estimates that about 700,000 people – or 1 in 4 – are at risk of hunger in Silicon Valley. The booming economy has driven up the cost of housing, while wages have remained relatively flat for those outside the tech sector, making it difficult for many to pay rent and put food on the table.

Second Harvest’s partners are counting on the Food Bank to reach its fundraising goal. The Food Bank partners with 309 nonprofit agencies to provide food at more than 985 sites throughout Santa Clara and San Mateo counties – including schools, pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, and senior centers – so that everyone has access to the food they need to thrive right in their own neighborhood. It is one of only a few food banks in the nation that does not charge its partners for the food it provides, so it depends on donations. Last year, Second Harvest provided more than 65 million pounds of food to the community, the equivalent of nearly 55 million meals.

Individuals, corporations and organizations can help by donating to Second Harvest Food Bank. Every \$10 donated helps provide 20 meals and a monetary donation will help Second Harvest feed hungry people all year long. To make a donation, visit [SHFB.org](https://www.shfb.org) or call 866-234-3663. Anyone who needs food should call Second Harvest’s multilingual Food Connection hotline at 800-984-3663.

About Second Harvest Food Bank

Based in Silicon Valley, Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties is one of the largest food banks in the nation. Currently providing food to an average of 260,000 people every month, Second Harvest is a trusted community-based organization that was founded in 1974. Despite the immense wealth in Silicon Valley, and partly due to the high cost of living, hunger and malnutrition are pervasive. The Food Bank distributes nutritious food, including more fresh produce than almost any other food bank in the country, through a network of 309 nonprofit partners at 985 sites. Second Harvest is pursuing innovative efforts to increase access to food resources as it seeks to feed more hungry people each month. To reach more people, it advocates for anti-hunger policies and connects those in need to federal nutrition programs and other food resources. To learn more about how Second Harvest is building a hunger-free community, visit SHFB.org.

###