



Contact:

Diane Baker Hayward

408-266-8866 x368

[DBakerHayward@shfb.org](mailto:DBakerHayward@shfb.org)

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## **New Survey Shows That Inflation And High Gas Prices Are Taking A Toll On Local Families**

Findings highlight that the risk for food insecurity in Silicon Valley may be more challenging than during the height of the pandemic

### **Highlights:**

- A recent survey of Second Harvest of Silicon Valley's clients shows increased costs and high gas prices are taking a significant toll on local families, with 93% reporting that they have bought less food due to the impact of inflation.
- The number of clients who reported being worried about paying their rent or mortgage next month saw a 25% increase over last year.
- More than 60% of clients surveyed reported having less than \$250 in savings right now.
- The increase in need is in some ways more challenging than during the pandemic—when the rise in need was mainly due to job loss—because inflationary pricing is now the major driver, and that shows no signs of waning.

**SAN JOSE, Calif., September 27, 2022**—Second Harvest of Silicon Valley released the results of a new client survey today that shows local families are being hit hard by inflation and the high cost of gas, with 93% of respondents reporting that they have bought less food due to these factors. In addition, more than 60% reported having less than \$250 in savings right now and 73% said they are worried about being able to pay next month's rent or mortgage – a 25% jump over the number of clients who named having that concern last year.

“These findings are very troubling as we head into the holiday season, when we typically experience an increase in the number of families seeking food assistance,” said Leslie Bacho, CEO of Second Harvest of Silicon Valley. “In some ways, this is more challenging than what we experienced during the height of the shutdown. While the job loss was tragic, it still felt temporary. Now, as families still struggle to get back on solid ground after the financial devastation of the pandemic, these inflationary prices show no sign of waning. Families are really struggling because of these economic pressures, and we are seeing the impact at our free grocery distributions.”

The number of people Second Harvest serves doubled during the pandemic – from 250,000 to 500,000 a month – and continues to stay extremely high at an average of about 450,000 every month. Even before the pandemic and record-high inflation hit, low-wage workers were already having a hard time making ends meet in one of the most expensive places in the country.





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“Either my car eats or I do,” said Irma, a Second Harvest client, when talking about how the increase in gas prices has affected her. “I do my job, I go to work, but sometimes that’s not enough.”

“We see it on the faces of our clients every day,” said Bacho. “They are forced to make tradeoffs and are choosing between food, gas and other necessities like rent and medicine. Low-income families are particularly vulnerable to the incredible increases in prices we are experiencing because food and fuel are such a large percentage of their budgets. Food is one of the first areas where people cut their budget when money is tight.”

In addition, pandemic support programs like the child tax credit, rent relief and increased CalFresh benefits are either gone or being phased out, placing further stress on low-income households. The expiration of the child tax credit alone has led to an estimated 41% increase in child poverty between December 2021 and January 2022 according to researchers at Columbia University’s Center on Poverty and Social Policy.

“This is real cash that low income families with children are missing,” said Bacho. “The math just doesn’t add up. When the other pandemic support programs are phased out, we expect our services to spike again.”

### How to get help

Second Harvest can connect people to a variety of food resources, including its own grocery distributions held in partnership with community organizations throughout Santa Clara and San Mateo counties. The food bank also provides enrollment support for federally funded food assistance programs like CalFresh. Anyone who needs food should call Second Harvest’s multilingual Food Connection hotline at 1-800-984-3663, Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m., or visit [shfb.org/GetFood](https://shfb.org/GetFood). Staff speak English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Cantonese, Mandarin and Tagalog. Three-way interpretation is available for other languages.

### How to give help

Individuals, corporations and organizations can make a huge impact with a financial gift. A \$50 donation helps provide enough food for 100 meals. Second Harvest also needs volunteers. To get involved, visit [shfb.org](https://shfb.org) to donate online or find volunteer opportunities, or call 1-866-234-3663.

### About Second Harvest of Silicon Valley

Founded in 1974, Second Harvest of Silicon Valley is one of the largest food banks in the nation and a trusted nonprofit leader in ending local hunger. The organization distributes nutritious groceries through a network of more than 300 partners at drive-thru and walk-up sites across Santa Clara and San Mateo counties. Due to the prohibitively expensive cost of living in Silicon Valley, the economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the rise in inflation, Second Harvest is now serving an average of more than 450,000 people every month. Second Harvest also connects people to federal nutrition programs and other food resources, and advocates for anti-hunger policies on the local, state and national levels. To learn more about how Second Harvest is responding to the incredible amount of need in Silicon Valley, visit [shfb.org](https://shfb.org).

**Need Food?** 1-800-984-3663 **Want to Donate?** 1-866-234-3663

