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## **Second Harvest Launches Its Largest Holiday Fundraising Campaign Ever As More Local Families Facing Inflation Need Support**

Food bank is managing the ongoing pressure of serving more people while its operating costs rise and financial donations decline

### **Highlights:**

- Second Harvest of Silicon Valley is launching its largest holiday campaign ever with a goal of raising \$35 million this holiday season so it can continue to ensure that everyone has access to nutritious food.
- The food bank is already providing food to an average of 450,000 people every month – an 80% increase over pre-pandemic levels – and that number is expected to rise during the holidays and into the new year as inflation continues to take its toll on local families.
- 1 in 5 Silicon Valley households has zero or negative assets, meaning there is no room in their budgets for inflationary pricing.
- With need on the rise again, the food bank’s operational costs have increased with inflation, while individual financial donations and food donated from government sources have declined.
- Individuals, corporations and organizations can help by donating money or volunteering. For more information, visit [shfb.org](http://shfb.org) or call 1-866-234-3663. Every dollar donated makes an impact – \$50 helps provide enough food for 100 meals.

**SAN JOSE, Calif., November 15, 2022** – With demand for its services spiking to near-peak-pandemic levels, Second Harvest of Silicon Valley is launching its largest holiday fundraising campaign ever with a goal of raising \$35 million by the end of the calendar year. Record high inflation and surging gas prices are taking a toll on local families and more are turning to the food bank for support. As the center of the charitable food system in Silicon Valley, Second Harvest is feeling the strain of its long term response. Its own operational costs have increased with inflation, coupled with a decline in individual financial donations and diminished levels of food and other support from government sources.

Second Harvest is already providing food to an average of 450,000 people every month – an 80% increase over pre-pandemic levels – and those numbers are expected to rise during the holidays and possibly beyond as inflation shows no signs of waning and there are fears of an impending recession.

“So many families are counting on us this holiday season,” said Leslie Bacho, CEO of Second Harvest of Silicon Valley. “A lot of our neighbors were hit hard during the pandemic and now they are grappling with the high cost of food, gas and other necessities due to record high inflation. We

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are committed to ensuring that everyone has access to healthy food – during the holidays and all year long – but we need support from the community to continue operating at this capacity for the foreseeable future.”

The food bank is heading into the holiday season – typically its busiest time of year – on the heels of Joint Venture Silicon Valley’s Silicon Valley Index that shows nearly 20 percent of Silicon Valley households have zero or negative assets, meaning there is no room in their budgets for inflationary pricing. Often healthy food is the first to go when there isn’t enough money to cover essentials.

Second Harvest works with its network of nearly 400 partners—including schools, community centers, libraries and churches—in neighborhoods across Santa Clara and San Mateo counties to provide nutritious free groceries and fresh produce to anyone who needs it.

The support Second Harvest provides helps ease some of the stress families are feeling as they continue to recover from the financial devastation of the pandemic. “I end up paying double or triple what I used to pay before, and at the end, I don’t even bring anything back from the grocery store,” Diana said. “Years back, we were able to save money, but right now, honestly, we can’t save anything. Right now, we are day by day.”

Diana is not alone. In a recent client survey, 93% of respondents said they have had to buy less food due to high gas prices and inflation. The number of clients who reported being worried about paying their rent or mortgage next month saw a 25% jump over last year’s survey.

“Economic factors and our own client feedback tell us that we must continue to operate at high capacity because there is no financial recovery in sight for many local families, and in fact things may get worse,” said Bacho. “During the pandemic, need was mainly driven by job loss, but now a major driver is inflation.”

### **Operational Strains Impact Second Harvest**

Even though most of the food Second Harvest receives is donated by large farms and food retailers, the food bank is under immense pressure as it also faces the high price of food, gas and other commodities needed to maintain its operations and meet the increased need. In addition, Second Harvest is receiving less food from government sources than it was at the height of the pandemic and individual financial donations to the food bank are down.

“We are dealing with the same issues our clients are – the high cost of everything is making it even more difficult to ensure that everyone has enough nutritious food to eat,” Bacho said. “Because we have been providing almost double the amount of food since the pandemic started, last year our expenses were twice what they were prepandemic. Now with inflation, our budget is even more challenged.”





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Second Harvest is already maximizing all available food resources by focusing efforts on obtaining rescued and donated food – including fresh produce – and taking advantage of large-volume, bulk purchases for highly sought-after staples like milk, eggs and protein.

“The bottom line is we can’t do it alone,” Bacho said. “We need the community’s support to ensure that we can continue to operate at this capacity so everyone has access to healthy groceries. You can’t be productive at school or at work if you don’t have nutritious food. It’s that simple. This holiday season, we need community members to make room in their budgets or schedules to support our mission through financial contributions or by volunteering at one of our warehouses or grocery distribution sites in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties – and if you need help, we’re here for you.”

### **Give monetary donations instead of food**

The best way to support Second Harvest of Silicon Valley is to make a monetary donation, start a virtual food drive to collect funds, or volunteer at a Second Harvest warehouse or distribution site. Second Harvest ended its traditional food collection drives last year after determining they are not the most effective way to provide food to the community. Learn more.

### **Donate funds**

Individuals, corporations and organizations can have a huge impact by making a financial gift. In fact, a \$50 donation helps provide enough food for 100 meals. To support the campaign, visit [shfb.org/donate](http://shfb.org/donate) to donate online or call 1-866-234-3663.

### **Host a virtual drive**

Virtual food drives can be just as fun as traditional food drives without the need to physically collect food. Organizers can set a goal, easily create their own personalized fundraising page with visuals, and ask their friends, family and co-workers to contribute. To learn more or to start a virtual drive, visit [shfb.org/ffd](http://shfb.org/ffd).

### **Volunteer**

Volunteers are vital to ensuring that nutritious food continues to flow into the community. Last year volunteers contributed more than 216,000 hours of service, the equivalent of 104 full-time employees. There are several ways to volunteer with Second Harvest, including:

- Helping sort and box fresh produce at our Cypress Center in north San Jose.
- Volunteering at one of our community food distributions, which can be found in nearly every neighborhood in Silicon Valley.
- Becoming a volunteer driver making deliveries to homebound seniors and adults in Santa Clara or San Mateo counties.





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Volunteers must be 12 or older. All open volunteer opportunities can be found at <https://www.shfb.org/give-help/volunteer/>.

### **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://www.shfb.org/GetFood). Staff speak English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Cantonese, Mandarin and Tagalog. Three-way interpretation is available for other languages.

### **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 and the economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Second Harvest is now serving an average of 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://www.shfb.org).

If you are covering issues related to hunger in Silicon Valley, we can provide expert spokespeople who can talk about the local landscape.

Please contact Diane Baker Hayward at [dbakerhayward@shfb.org](mailto:dbakerhayward@shfb.org) or 408-266-8866, ext. 368.

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