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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Second Harvest of Silicon Valley Launches Holiday Campaign to Raise \$30M to Meet the Demand of Serving an Average of 500,000 People Every Month

The need for food assistance spikes to peak levels as decreased donations take a toll on Second Harvest's budget

Highlights:

- Due to the high cost of living in Silicon Valley and elimination of pandemic-era government support, Second Harvest of Silicon Valley is now serving an average of 500,000 people every month—the need is back to where it was at the peak of the pandemic.
- The rate of people coming to Second Harvest for food has outpaced financial donations, straining the organization's budget.
- A staggering 1 in 6 people in Silicon Valley are turning to Second Harvest for help.
- A recent client survey revealed that 70% of respondents are worried about being able to pay all of their bills next month.
- Second Harvest is seeking immediate help to meet the need. Donate via shfb.org. \$50 helps provide enough food for 100 meals.

SAN JOSE, Calif., November 17, 2023 — To meet the high need for food assistance in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties, Second Harvest of Silicon Valley today announced its holiday campaign to raise \$30M. The number of people Second Harvest serves doubled during the pandemic – from 250,000 to 500,000 a month – and although the pandemic has waned, the need for food assistance has spiked back to record levels.

With high prices and dramatically reduced government support, neighbors are feeling the pinch of living in this expensive area. A staggering 1 in 6 people in Silicon Valley are turning to Second Harvest for support as working parents, college students and seniors on fixed incomes struggle to make ends meet. In a recent client survey, the Food Bank found that:

- More than 70% of respondents are worried about being able to pay all of their bills next month.
- Almost 60% of respondents reported that they were more worried about their finances today than they were a year ago.
- Nearly 60% of respondents reported they have less than \$100 in savings right now.

As the food insecurity crises stretches on, Second Harvest is calling on individual and corporate donors to help meet the high level of need and achieve its campaign goal by December 31st, 2023. Every dollar donated helps the food bank provide two nutritious meals.





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“We know when people are under financial strain, they have to prioritize expenses like rent, utility bills and car payments, so the first thing they often have to cut is their food budget,” said Second Harvest CEO Leslie Bacho. “For many people, planning a holiday meal isn’t as simple as making a grocery list and heading to the store. But with your help, we can make an immediate difference, ensuring our neighbors have access to nutritious food during the holidays and year-round.”

Donations to Second Harvest help power Silicon Valley’s entire charitable food system from Daly City to Gilroy — immediately going to work to solve food insecurity right here at home. Second Harvest supplies food free of charge to almost every nonprofit in this region that provides groceries and meals, through their network of nearly 400 nonprofit and agency partners — such as local food pantries, meal programs, schools and churches. This massive effort results in providing food to our neighbors at more than 900 sites. Last year Second Harvest distributed 125M pounds in total, enough food for more than 104M meals.

While the majority of the food needed is acquired through food rescue and large-scale donations, Second Harvest relies on its world-class bulk purchasing and sourcing power to obtain the rest. That’s how it can turn \$1 into two nutritious meals. However, the Food Bank has been dealing with increased food, fuel and labor costs while financial donations and government support have both decreased—taking a toll on Second Harvest’s operating budget and making it harder to cover necessary costs.

“The bottom line is we can’t do this alone,” said Bacho. “You can make an immediate, tangible impact right here in your own community by donating or volunteering. There’s no reason for empty tables, especially in Silicon Valley.”

How to help

Donate funds—gifts to Second Harvest support the entire charitable food system in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties. Individuals, corporations and organizations can have a significant impact. In fact, a \$50 donation helps provide enough food for 100 meals. Visit shfb.org/give-help/donate-funds or call 1-866-234-3663.

Start a fundraiser. Set a goal, easily create a personalized fundraising page with visuals, and ask friends, family and co-workers to contribute. To learn more, visit shfb.org/ffd.

Volunteer. Volunteers are vital to ensuring that nutritious food continues to flow into the community. Last year 40,000 unique volunteers contributed more than 283,000 hours of service, the equivalent of 136 full-time employees.

Help sort and box fresh produce at Second Harvest’s warehouse, volunteer at one of the many community distribution sites, or make deliveries to homebound seniors and adults. Volunteer opportunities can be found at shfb.org/give-help/volunteer. (Volunteers must be 12 or older).

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





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How to get help

Second Harvest can connect people to a variety of food resources, including grocery distributions in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties, as well as provide 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. Staff speak English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Cantonese, Mandarin and Tagalog. Three-way interpretation is available for other languages. Second Harvest also offers an easy-to-use food locator tool on its website at shfb.org/get-food where users can search by address, city or zip code to find food nearby.

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 food through a network of nearly 400 partners at more than 900 sites across Santa Clara and San Mateo counties. Due to the prohibitively expensive cost of living in Silicon Valley and the dramatic reduction in pandemic-era government support, Second Harvest is serving an average of about 500,000 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

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

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