



ALAMEDA COUNTY
COMMUNITY
FOOD BANK

Until everyone's fed

MEMBER OF
FEEDING*
AMERICA

Community Harvest

FALL 2022



Celebrating Change

Fall is here, and we're harvesting from the seeds of change we've planted over time. We're embracing the seasonal shift to regroup with our community partners, acknowledge the transformations we've endured, and proceed into the busy holiday season — together.

As the demand for Food Bank services continues to grow, this year's inflation has made it even more challenging to meet the need. Higher food costs, global supply chain challenges, and higher transportation costs are affecting us all. By absorbing the higher costs and continuing to provide our services free of charge, we're helping alleviate the pain many of us feel at the store and the gas pump.

Your partnership means money saved for gas, rent, diapers, utilities — and less worry during a challenging time.

Meanwhile we're doubling down on addressing the inequities that cause hunger. We've been working to deepen our anti-oppression work and — driven by a united community voice — we're dismantling the systems of racism, sexism, heteropatriarchy, ageism and ableism that are at hunger's roots.

We are grateful to have community members like you on this journey with us. The upcoming holiday season marks a period when the needs of our community are amplified. **Now is the time to pause and reflect on what we've built, celebrate change, and join together to take care of each other.**

Thank you for your continued support.

From the desk of Regi Young



One year ago this month, I stepped foot into Alameda County Community Food Bank for the first time. As I reflect back on my first 12 months here, I am thrilled to be part of an organization and community that shares my passion for ending hunger. I’m inspired by how Food Bank staff, partners, and supporters have continued to effectively respond to the elevated need, despite the immense — and prolonged — impact of the pandemic.

However, I am very concerned by the prospect of this elevated need continuing at its current rate during another busy holiday season. A time of year that should be spent celebrating and connecting is shaping up to be challenging for many of us, especially with rising fuel costs, inflation, and whispers of a recession ahead. For instance, we are expecting to spend almost \$400,000 more for whole chickens this holiday season compared to last year. I know that our team will work tirelessly to ensure we all have access to nutritious food this holiday season, but we also need to be thinking about how to prevent food insecurity before it starts.

Even after a decade of working at food banks, I am often reminded that food alone will not resolve the issue of food insecurity. We know that the need for food is only a symptom of the challenges that a person experiencing hunger is dealing with. We also know that reducing food insecurity requires eliminating the conditions that

“The need for food is only a symptom of the challenges that a person experiencing hunger is dealing with ... reducing food insecurity requires eliminating the conditions that lead to it...”

lead to it, including disparities and inequities imbedded in the systems that we inhabit daily like schools, hospitals, and workplaces.

September is Hunger Action Month, a time when our community mobilizes to shed light on food insecurity and takes action to prevent it. This month offers us all an opportunity to re-commit to using our voices and our power, to ensure our elected officials enact policies that address hunger at its roots.

I hope you’ll take September to consider the multiple ways you can help eradicate hunger in Alameda County. Volunteering your time at our warehouse or in the community and supporting our work financially are critical. And so is taking a stance against hunger through your vote and voice.

In Solidarity,
Regi Young

Vote Out Hunger

A LEGACY OF ADVOCACY

When food banks were first established, they were designed to meet emergency need for food — but that role has evolved to include advocacy along with food distribution. Today food banks like ours have a much bigger goal of eradicating hunger entirely. We can only end hunger by dismantling the systems at hunger’s roots — racism, sexism, classism, heteropatriarchy, ageism, ableism — which concentrate power and resources inequitably. Food insecurity can only be truly eradicated through a more equitable distribution of power and resources.

Dismantling systems can only happen when we hold the government accountable and through effective advocacy, driven by a united community voice.

CHANGE IS POSSIBLE

Toppling centuries-old systems sounds daunting, but we have good news: advocacy works!

Just look at the last two years. **Universal school meals** in the state budget eradicated hunger from California public schools ensuring access to healthy food to children across the state. The **federal child tax credit** reduced childhood poverty by 25% nationwide. And this year ACCFB advocates joined partners across the state to successfully expand the **California Food Assistance Program**

for undocumented older adults who are excluded from the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

These critical legislative victories reduced hunger and poverty, and happened *because* of advocacy. Whether you contact your representative, vote on election day, or just have a conversation about the issues with your friends and family — every one of us can make a difference.

LET’S GET TO WORK

Every election shapes the government that makes vital decisions affecting our community — and the November 8 mid-term election is no exception. Midterm elections historically have a 33% lower turnout so we can’t let up. We will continue to shine a light on the fact that 1 in 4 Alameda County residents is experiencing hunger *and* we have the policy solutions to fix this.

That’s where *you* come in.

Our voices are stronger together, so join us and recruit your community into the conversation about ending hunger! Whether you are a life-long voter, voting for the first time, or unable to vote — there are many ways to make your voice heard. Voting begins *before* election day so our team has been busy gathering resources about the issues and opportunities to get involved. **Learn more and make a plan at accfb.org/vote.**

Important dates to remember:

October
10

Ballots are mailed out

October
24

Last day to register to vote by mail
(You can still register to vote in-person at your county elections office or polling place until election day)

November
8

Election day!

Make a plan to vote at accfb.org/vote

Mark
your
calendar!

ARE YOU
READY TO TAKE
ACTION?

Sign up for
Advocacy Action
Alerts at
accfb.org/advocacy
and get notified
when it's time to
contact your elected
official.

CENTERING EQUITY FROM FARM TO FOOD BANK

When the pandemic hit, the increase in food insecurity in our community was unlike anything we've seen in nearly 40 years. Our response had to be as big as the crisis: our network of partners grew from 250 to nearly 400 organizations; our staff nearly doubled to 140 hardworking individuals; and our average output of food exploded to the tune of 50 million pounds annually — a 60% increase.

For more than a decade, we've been on a journey to embed diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) into all that we do. With the nationwide racial reckoning that started in 2020, we reflected and knew we had

to do more to operationalize equity in our day-to-day work, including in how we get the food we provide. As one of the largest nonprofit purveyors of food in Alameda County, we budget millions of dollars to purchase food every year. Behind that \$15 million we spend is a focus on nutrition and quality — including farm fresh fruits and vegetables.

About 50% of what comes through our warehouse is fresh produce — more 20 million pounds annually. None of that, however, had previously come from farms owned by people of color.

That is, until 2021 when we committed \$600,000 to spend on produce from Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) owned farms in California. We're on pace to double that this year, to \$1.2 million!

In just two years we've gone from having 0% of our purchased produce come from BIPOC farmers grow to 81%. And diversifying where we get food has played a large role in our ability to provide culturally relevant foods — critical in a community with such rich diversity and culture as Alameda County. Today, our warehouse is stocked with items we would have never

imagined two years ago: okra, dates, avocados, and more — all from BIPOC farmers.

Our mission to passionately pursue a hunger-free community requires systemic change rooted in justice, equity, and community power. We're invigorated by the positive impacts of this work, as these efforts are also helping other food banks examine and diversify their own food procurement strategies. Follow along as we continue deepening our work and join us in dismantling the systems at hunger's root.

THE RIPPLE EFFECTS OF SOURCING EQUITABLY

Oakland-based Saba Grocers Initiative works in partnership with 120 Arab American and Muslim-owned corner stores interested in making healthy food — including fresh fruits and vegetables — more affordable and accessible in neighborhoods with fewer options.

Over the last year we have been partnering with Saba to help in our own efforts to purchase more food from California's BIPOC farmers, with whom Saba already works. If you took a tour through our warehouse today, you'd see pallets stacked with cases of bitter melons, tangerines,



A farm day for the Saba Team!

L to R: Francis Calpotur (Board Member), Lina Ghanem (ED & Co- Founder), Sonia Penia (In-Advance Board Member/ Finance Director), Jerry Andrade (Farmer), Dhaifallah Dhaifallah (Program Manager & Co-Founder)

Mandarins sourced for Lunar New Year celebrations



and Chinese eggplants — all exciting, culturally-relevant additions to the food we provide the community, thanks to this partnership.

And talk about a “win-win”: With the Food Bank making large produce orders, Saba in turn gets better rates from farmers — savings that they can pass along to the network of corner stores. And that means store owners can offer the healthiest food options available at prices comparable or even cheaper than big grocery chains!

POWERFUL PARTNERSHIPS

Diversifying the food we provide — as well as where we get that food — depends on strong relationships.

Raley's has been a longtime, vital partner in ACCFB's mission to uproot hunger. This past summer, Raley's Food for Families campaign raised \$20,000 to bolster our efforts in securing nourishing fresh produce from BIPOC-owned farms. With the help of Kitchen Table Advisors, a non-profit that directly supports small farms, we used the funds from Raley's to purchase an entire truck load of fresh, locally grown strawberries to distribute to neighbors all over Alameda County.

These beautiful strawberries were picked especially for our community from Acevedo Farm Organic, Bucio Organic Farm, Chelito Organic Farms, Doyse Farm, El Zenzontle Organic Farm, Magaña Organic Farms, and Narci Organics.



Heather Frambach from Kitchen Table Advisors with local, organic strawberries purchased with Raley's support

SEE THE JOURNEY FROM FARM TO FOOD BANK!

Visit accfb.org/farmtofoodbank for an interactive map that traces fresh grown produce's journey from farms across the state, to our East Oakland Warehouse, and out across Alameda County.

A Win-Win in the Fight Against Hunger

BY SHALINI SHARP



Shalini Sharp, ACCFB Board of Directors

Growing up in downtown Detroit, I saw massive income inequality and how people lived side-by-side but in vastly different worlds. I’ve now lived in the Bay Area for many years, and things have gotten even tougher for people who are struggling. Sometimes, the problem feels insurmountable. You can sit back and feel anxious and sad about what’s going on, or you can try to do something about it. I think that’s why so many people are part of the Food Bank family: to take action with an organization that has real impact.

I first got involved with the Food Bank because I looked around at who was working behind the scenes to address poverty and who was doing it effectively. The Food Bank not only addresses food insecurity, but it takes a broader view, getting at the root causes by addressing poverty at the policy level.

You can’t really argue with feeding hungry people. I feel fortunate, and I want to help. I put my finance background to work on the board of directors. My family has started volunteering at our local food pantry and the Food Bank warehouse. And we donate in both cash and stock.

With stock, if you invest \$100, and you sell it at \$150, you would normally pay capital gains taxes on the \$50 increase. However, if you give that \$150 in stock to the Food Bank, you do not pay the capital gains tax; you deduct that \$150 donation on your income tax filing — and most importantly — the Food Bank benefits from the full value of the stock. It’s a win-win situation.

Whether you donate stocks, write a check, or volunteer with ACCFB, I can’t imagine a better way to make a dent in poverty than getting involved with the Food Bank. Visit our updated accfb.org/stock to donate appreciated stocks and other securities.

Community Partner Spotlight: Pioneers for HOPE

At Cal State University East Bay’s campus, situated in the beautiful Hayward Hills, you will find the robust Pioneers for HOPE program assisting students facing food insecurity, housing insecurity, and more. Their services include a food pantry, assistance with CalFresh applications, a clothing closet, emergency housing resources, technology assistance, and more.

The team at HOPE is made up of 5-10 students that pick up non-perishable goods, fresh produce, and refrigerated items weekly at the ACCFB Community Market. The most popular items offered at the HOPE pantry include eggs, milk, chicken, and fresh produce — all food our community helps us purchase.

By eliminating barriers and addressing basic needs first, students can focus on school and their well-being. Harry Sio, a senior at CSUEB studying design, has been working for HOPE since 2020. He says the HOPE program helps many international students — many like himself who moved to the Bay Area alone. With high costs like tuition and rent, Harry says “it’s been meaningful to be able to tell fellow students about the pantry and CalFresh. It helps being able to get groceries and use SNAP at farmers markets. Many of us can save money for life after college.”

As we enter fall and back-to-school season, we’re thankful to partner with Pioneers for HOPE in ensuring that every person — including students — in Alameda County has enough healthy food to thrive and achieve their goals.



Students from Pioneers for HOPE, a program providing students with food, among other needs

Success Is a Journey, Not a Destination.

BY ELIZABETH GOMEZ



Elizabeth Gomez, Chief Impact Officer

Twenty-five years ago, I headed back to the work force after having a baby. I saw a job for a receptionist at Alameda County Community Food Bank and mailed in my resume on special resume paper.

When I interviewed, I thought, “WOW!” — I had no idea these resources existed. I grew up in an immigrant family with a single mom. We were food insecure and I wish we knew about food banks back then. Because there was a language barrier, my mom couldn’t connect to resources. When I think about the people we serve, I see myself.

Flash forward 25 years: I’m now in the newly created role of Chief Impact Officer. It’s not a job, it’s a passion. It’s my mission to ensure that everyone in Alameda County struggling with food insecurity has access to the resources that I didn’t have growing up.

During my tenure, I’ve gone from receptionist to Helpline coordinator, to convincing our former executive director we needed to help clients apply for CalFresh. Since then, our client services department has grown to 16 passionate employees who connect the community to our food pantries and CalFresh. Today, we are the largest outreach program in the state and have become a model for food banks nationwide. In the last year alone, our outreach has led to over \$27 million that our neighbors spend at local stores and farmers markets. Our work creates a ripple effect that benefits the entire community.

We have done this by overcoming tremendous political obstacles — including politicians who have tried to criminalize hunger, which disproportionately impacts people of color. It

used to be that to apply for CalFresh, you needed to be fingerprinted. You couldn’t own a car worth more than \$4,650 or have a savings account.

But we innovated to connect with people in need. We successfully advocated to overturn many unjust laws. And we did so, in a way — as we still do — that centers our community in every decision.

As ACCFB’s first ever Chief Impact Officer I’m looking forward to further centering Community into our work — and building a collaborate effort between our client services, operations, and programs teams to ensure everyone in our community has the resources they need.

“It’s not a job, it’s a passion. It’s my mission to ensure that everyone struggling with food insecurity has access to the resources that I didn’t have growing up.”

Spending more than two decades working with our clients, I know people are reluctant to reach out — or don’t participate at all — because of fear, lack of awareness, or because enrolling in CalFresh can feel so daunting. My commitment is to break those barriers and create access with care and intention.

By 2030, I want to live in a world where food banks are no longer needed and we will be out of a job. That’s our north star and we’re honored you’ve joined us.

THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO GET AND GIVE SUPPORT!



GET FOOD

Whether you need help signing up for CalFresh or want to find a food distribution in your neighborhood — **your friends at the Food Bank are here to help.**

If you or somebody you know needs food, please call us at 1-510-635-3663 or visit foodnow.net.



VOLUNTEER WITH US

The holidays are almost here and that means **it's time to start booking your holiday group volunteer shift!** It's a fun, safe, and impactful way to give back to the community you're part of. Learn more and sign up at accfb.org/volunteer.



BECOME AN ADVOCATE

Use your voice to help end poverty, inequality and hunger. We work year-round with every level of government to support policies that ensure we all have access to healthy food.

Learn more about how you can get involved at accfb.org/advocacy.

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!



VISIT accfb.org/social



I want to provide food — and hope — for families in Alameda County.

Enclosed is my tax-deductible gift of: ☐ \$35 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$250 ☐ Other: \$ _____

☐ I commit to a monthly gift of \$ _____ (my first gift is enclosed).

I authorize Alameda County Community Food Bank to charge the amount indicated above to my account each month. I am signing and dating to confirm my monthly commitment to ACCFB.

Signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____

You can sign up at accfb.org/monthly

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Please make check payable to:

Alameda County Community Food Bank (or "ACCFB")

P.O. Box 30757

Oakland, CA 94604-6857

Please charge my gift to my:

☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ AmEx ☐ Discover

Card # _____ Exp. Date _____

Name on Card _____ Sec. # _____

Signature _____

Donate online at donate.accfb.org

NLFAL22

Your donation is tax-deductible as permitted by law. The Food Bank will send you a receipt.

