



# THE POWER OF A NETWORK

Erica Padilla-Chavez, CEO

October 23, 2025 – City of Capitola



# OUR MISSION



Second Harvest Food Bank Santa Cruz County is committed to building a **thriving** community where everyone has access to nutritious food and essential service to support their health and well-being.





# ADDRESSING FOOD INSECURITY IN OUR COUNTY

## Objectives:

- Provide basic understanding of our county's food security network
- Overview of the national cuts to food security programs
- Detail Second Harvest impacts and pivots given current shifting landscape
- Motivate increased conversation of food insecurity



# HOW DID FOOD BANKING GET STARTED?



- 1960's John van Hengel
- 1972 Second Harvest Food Bank Santa Cruz, first in CA, second in the country!
- USCS students instrumental in launching Second Harvest



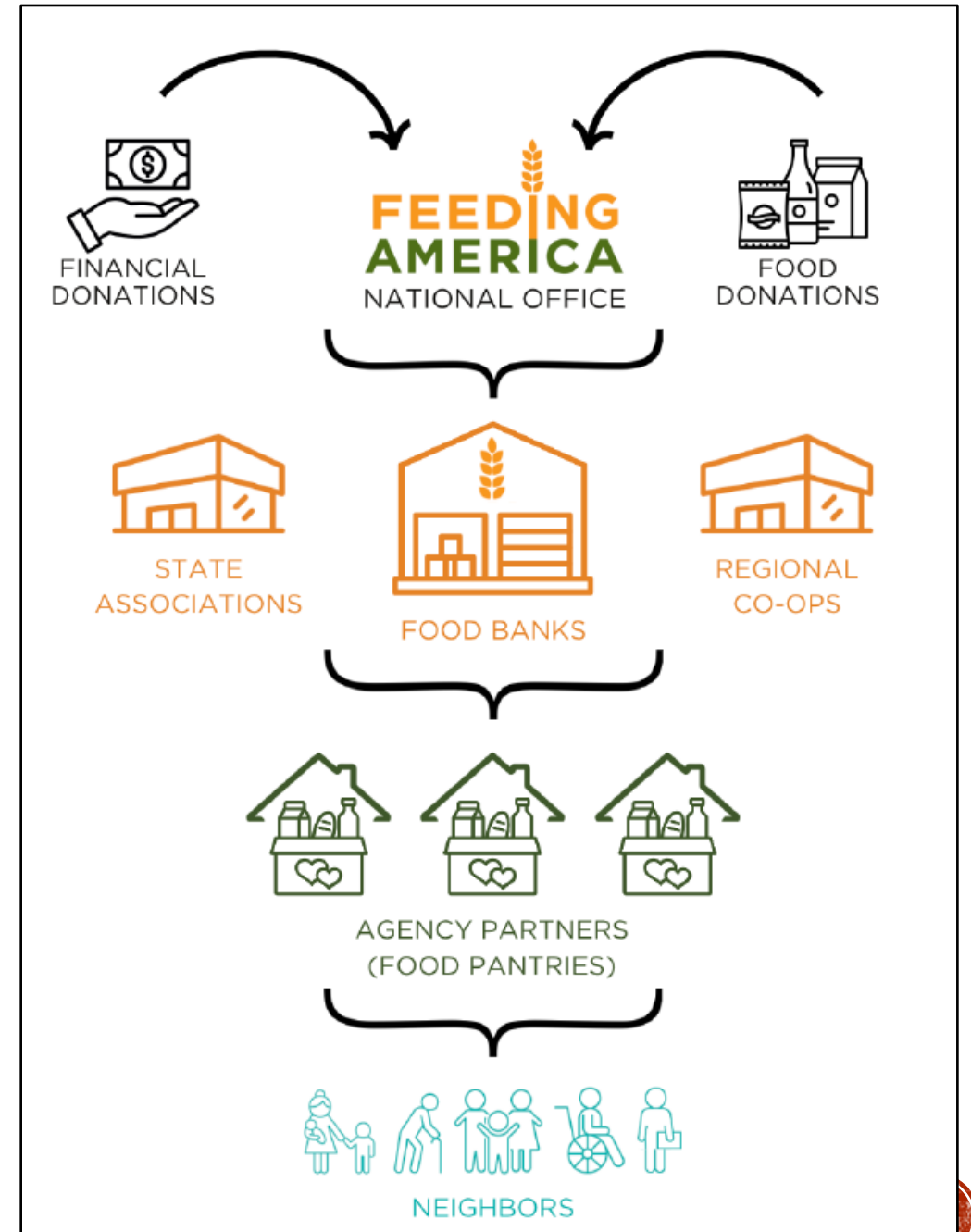


# WHAT IS THE NETWORK?

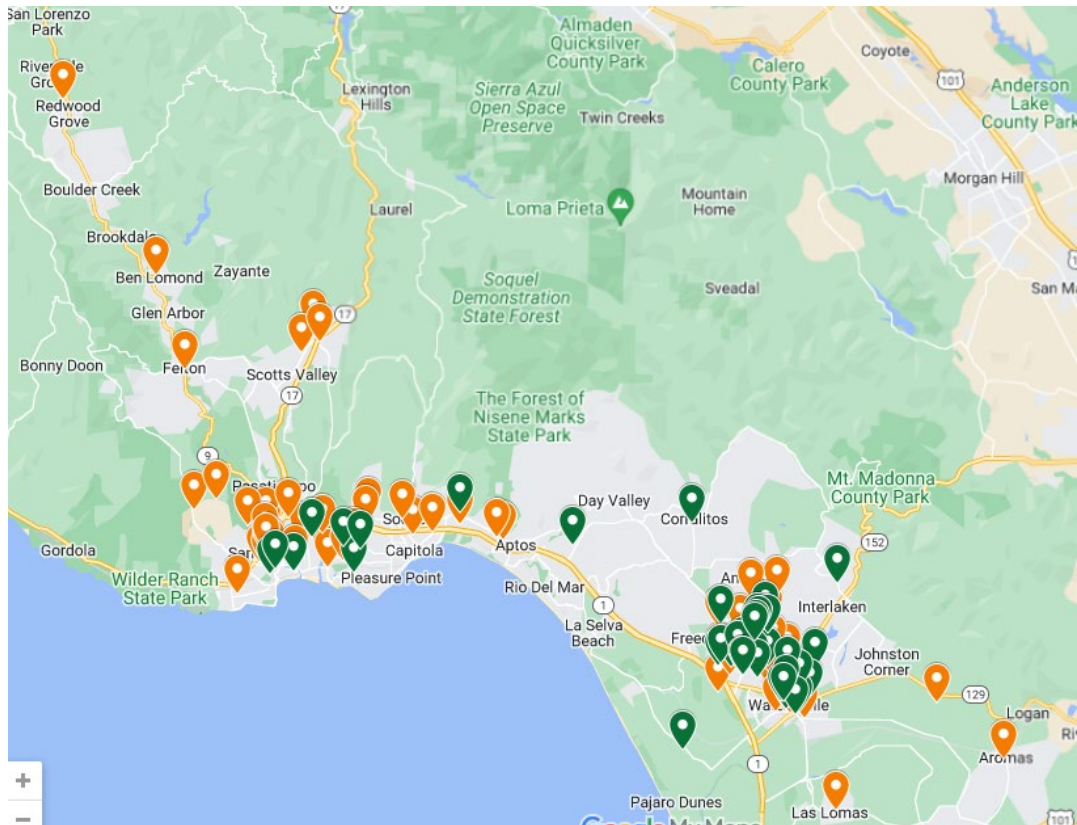
- A National, State and Local system that works in concert to provide nourishment to neighbors
- Feeding America Members: 220+
- California Association of Food Banks Members: 41 food banks
- Santa Cruz County: 66 Partner Agencies



CALIFORNIA  
ASSOCIATION OF  
FOOD BANKS



# OUR COUNTY NETWORK: HOW WE NOURISH OUR NEIGHBORS

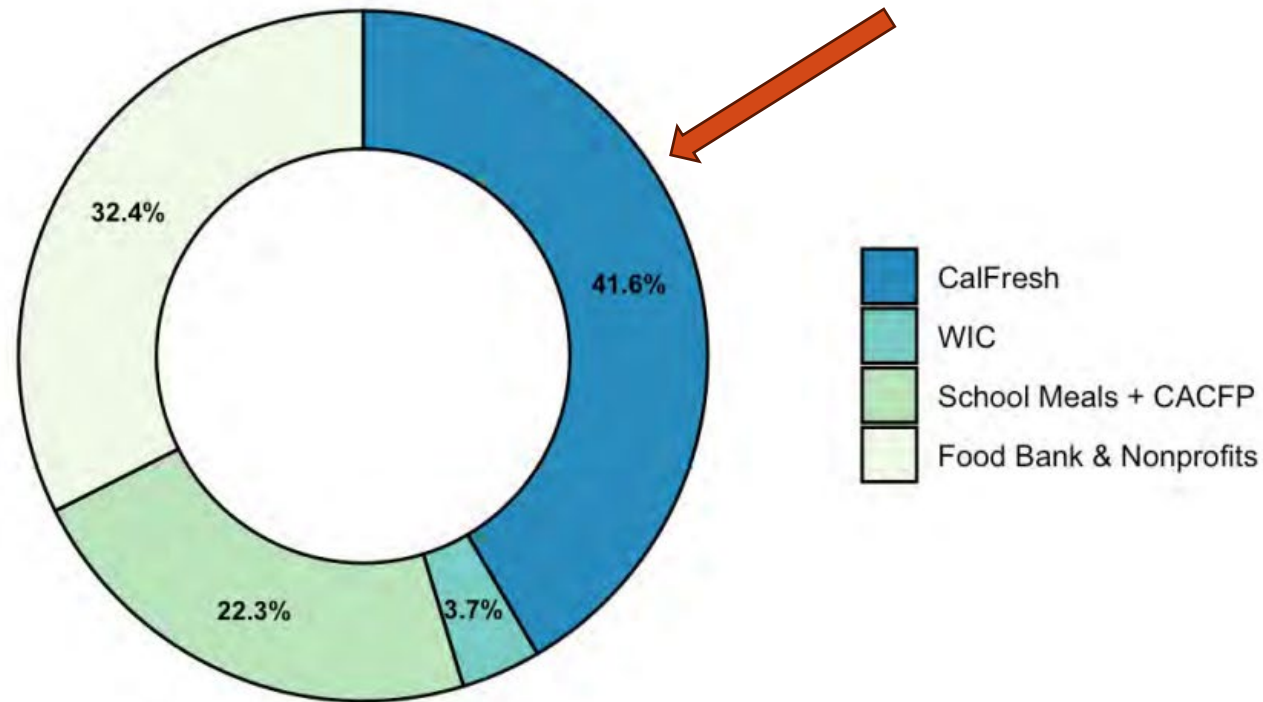


- 100+ Distribution Sites throughout the county
- 6 partner agencies - City of Capitola
- Unduplicated City of Capitola Individuals served by month: 1,760\*

*\*Represents approximately 20% of the city's total population*



# 2020 FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS IN SANTA CRUZ COUNTY





# IMPACTS TO OUR FOOD SECURITY SYSTEM

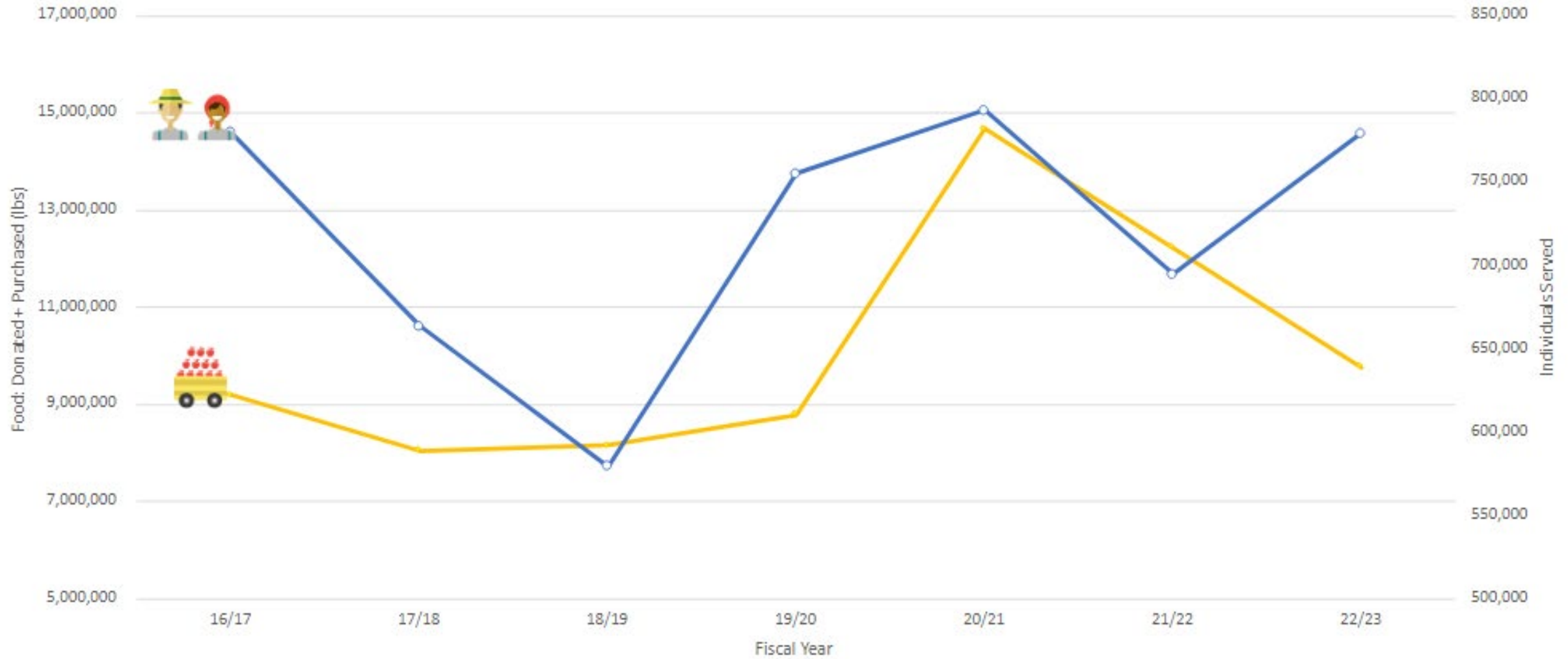


- **Cancellation of USDA resources**
  - Local Food Purchasing Assistance (LFPA) (\$600,000)
  - USDA TEFAP through Community Credit Corporation (\$400,000)
- **SNAP/CalFresh Changes**
  - Shifting of Cost to State
  - New Eligibility Requirements
  - Some legal residents ineligible for participation
- **Ripple Effect**
  - Some will lose eligibility
  - Local economic impact
  - Student meals impact (free and reduced lunch)
  - Food Bank demand will grow





## Food Donated vs. Individuals Served



# HOW ARE WE PREPARING?



- Convening leaders in the food insecurity space across our county
- Addressing current fears and pivoting to ensure access
- Optimizing our internal operations
- Leveraging new partnerships
- Educating the community
- Maximizing engagement







People working together in a  
strong community with a shared  
goal and a common purpose can  
make the impossible possible.

Tom Vilsack

