

“It was either  
pay for gas to  
get to work, or  
buy food.”

-Kim S.  
Vacaville



## Serving our community in unprecedented times

We're all feeling the uncertainty of the world these days. Unfortunately, one thing we do know is the rise in food insecurity will not be easing up anytime soon.

Not only is the Food Bank **servicing over 50% more people** because of the skyrocketing unemployment rates, but we are now also assisting wildfire survivors. And right around the corner, we have the holidays—typically our biggest season of need.

To give you an idea of the scope of our crisis response: we're now distributing about a **million pounds of food per week**.

In fact, since the COVID-19 crisis began, we have spent three times as much money on food than we did in all of 2019.

In moving forward our goal is simple—expand our capacity to get more food out to as many people as possible.

To make this happen it will take a collaborative effort, which is why we will keep working with our 240 incredible partner agencies (see inside), our local school districts, and our government officials.

We know for some, **it will take years—not months—to recover**. Rest assured we are preparing now so we can be there for the long haul for all who need us.



"Even though the pandemic came as a surprise, the way you all have stepped up isn't surprising at all."

## A NOTE FROM OUR PRESIDENT & CEO

In the Spring 2020 edition of this publication, I introduced myself to many of you for the first time and discussed my initial 90 days with this incredible organization. I signed off by stating that I looked forward to “accomplishing great things together.”

Little did I know how much our lives would forever be changed just weeks later and how many great things we would end up accomplishing—together—in the first few months of this new COVID-19 era.

Even though the pandemic came as a surprise, the way you all have stepped up isn't surprising at all. This summer marked 45 years of the community's steadfast support of our mission. Whether it be for devastating wildfires, destructive earthquakes or lengthy recessions, we've been able to depend on you for that extra support when needed. We can't thank you enough.

Knowing there are so many compassionate people willing to help feed our neighbors in need, demonstrates that the human spirit is very much alive—which is a much-needed reminder right now.

Joel Sjostrom  
President and CEO  
Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano

## ACTION ALERT

# Hunger Action Month

Every September the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano takes part in Hunger Action Month—a nationwide initiative to raise awareness of hunger and promote ways for individuals to get involved to create lasting change.

There are many more reasons than ever to take action this year! Between the global financial impact of the COVID-19 crisis and the unprecedented number of wildfires that have displaced our neighbors...we are constantly being reminded that **hunger can happen to anyone**.

## Donate

To help us continue our essential service through these difficult times, please make a donation. Every \$1 you give helps provide 2 meals. [foodbankccs.org/hungeractionmonth](https://foodbankccs.org/hungeractionmonth)

## Volunteer

As the demand for food rises, so does our need for volunteers! Volunteers make up more than half of our workforce and are critical in carrying out our mission. We have day, night and weekend shifts available. [foodbankccs.org/volunteer](https://foodbankccs.org/volunteer)

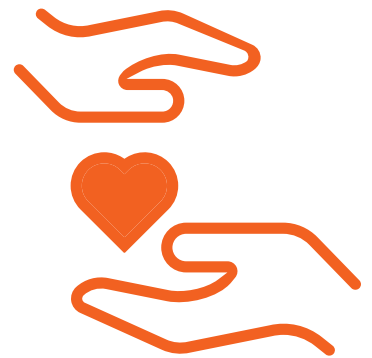
## Shape the Future

We can't end hunger with food distributions alone.

If you haven't registered to vote, do so now. If you are a registered voter, educate yourself on your candidates and where they stand on issues related to the root causes of hunger. [registertovote.ca.gov](https://registertovote.ca.gov)

## Get Social

Keep up-to-date and let your network of friends and family know you care about the issue of hunger by encouraging them to take action. Be sure to tag us [@foodbankccs](https://twitter.com/foodbankccs)!





**Above:** Anna is grateful for the food she receives from our partner agency, Shower of Blessings.

## PARTNER STORY

# Partner agencies shower blessings in a crisis

For 45 years our partner agencies have been fighting hunger alongside us with a common goal of nourishing our neighbors in need.

In early March, with COVID-19 spreading and businesses closing, we quickly realized the Food Bank would be called upon to meet a new and growing need. Our objective was safely scaling our operation in the face of many unpredictable and changing circumstances.

**As first responders in this crisis, we needed all hands on deck.** Leveraging our existing network of 240 nonprofit partners to distribute additional emergency food boxes and produce quickly became a top priority. Shower of Blessings in Antioch is one of those partners who stepped up during this very chaotic time. Their pantry has **doubled the number of people they are serving.** They now serve 100-200 families during the three days a week they are open.

Kindness and gratitude radiate from everyone at the agency and even a mask can't hide Pastor Sylva's smile as he shares how Shower of Blessings has been able help.

**“It is wonderful that we are here and the Food Bank is here to serve the community.”**

Sylva points out, “Sometimes we come across people who don't appear to need help, when really they are living in their car.”

When asked how they are meeting the increased need, Pastor Sylva credits dedicated volunteers—many who came from the line—and the partnership with the Food Bank.

Every week volunteers from the organization pick up food at an agency distribution which includes produce and emergency food boxes. Other volunteers safely conduct prearranged grocery recovery pickups from retailers like Costco, Target and Safeway, **saving the perfectly edible food from being discarded.**

The group thoughtfully assembles food boxes with a variety of produce and meat, so families can make complete meals from the offerings. As a volunteer named Beverly tells us, “There is always enough food for everyone.”

Paula, another volunteer, adds she recently was told, **“This is a blessing for me today because we didn't have any food and now I can feed my family.”**

As we navigate this new COVID-19 world, we will continue to foster these critical partnerships to serve the most at-risk communities including families experiencing hunger for the first time.

“There's nothing to be embarrassed about. We don't look down until we can pick you up. This can happen to anyone.” -Pastor Sylva



**Volunteers at Shower of Blessings in Antioch. Many are also recipients who want to give back.**



**Pastor Sylva works hard to ensure there is food for everyone who comes to Shower of Blessings.**



## Featured Partner: Calpine

### WHY WE GIVE

"Calpine is proud to support the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano, especially during these unprecedented times. The team at the Food Bank are working hard to serve the ever-growing community demand. We aim to provide the resources to support that effort so the Food Bank can better serve those in need when they need it most.

Being a good neighbor is important to Calpine. The great work of the Food Bank needs everyone's support, now more than ever. Through communication and regular updates, we have a true, meaningful partnership. We feel connected and better understand the challenges so many in our community face every day.

We are all in this together—we encourage you to reach out to the Food Bank to find out how you too can help!"

Danielle Matthews Seperas  
Director, Government & Community Affairs

**CALPINE IS  
MATCHING GIFTS\*  
FOR HUNGER  
ACTION MONTH!**

**\*ON THE FIRST \$20,000 DONATED**

[foodbankccs.org/hungeractionmonth](https://foodbankccs.org/hungeractionmonth)

For corporate partnership opportunities  
contact John Calender  
[jcalender@foodbankccs.org](mailto:jcalender@foodbankccs.org)  
or call 925-771-1313

## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

# New volunteers step up to serve

Hundreds answer the call to help their neighbors

Stephen Sankey waves cars forward before loading boxes of food and bags of produce into the open trunks. “Right now, a lot of people are in distress, and stressed, so **it’s really important for people like me, who have enough food to eat, to help those who don’t.**” says Stephen.

Volunteers like Stephen are some of the new faces **helping us feed 100,000 more people every month** in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

When the shelter in place order started—as demand for our essential service was skyrocketing—some of our volunteers understandably had to stay home. With **volunteers giving enough hours annually to equal 51 full-time employees**, we were genuinely concerned.

As usual, our community did not let us down! When some cancelled, an abundance of others immediately stepped in to help. New services like providing emergency boxes at drive-thru distributions meant more volunteer opportunities for people looking for ways to help their neighbors through these uncertain times.

We’re grateful for all the volunteers who are masking-up and lending a hand. And to our regular volunteers who aren’t able to come in right now—we look forward to seeing your smiling faces; know you are with us in spirit!



4010 Nelson Avenue  
Concord, CA 94520

*Return Service Requested*

**SWEET POTATO  
POWER  
BREAKFAST  
(Sweet Potato  
Avocado Toast)**

Photo and Recipe:  
Anna Gorman - Child  
Programs and Extra  
Helpings Administrator

**INGREDIENTS**

1 medium to large  
sweet potato  
Half of a large  
avocado  
2-3 eggs, beaten  
Salt and Pepper



**Optional toppings**

Sliced cherry  
tomatoes  
Sautéed vegetables  
Onions  
Kimchi  
Everything But The  
Bagel Seasoning  
Whatever else you  
enjoy putting on  
scrambled eggs

1. Using a large knife, slice the sweet potato lengthwise into 1/4 inch slices.
2. Heat a tablespoon of oil in a nonstick skillet over medium-high heat.
3. Place 2 of the sweet potato slices in the skillet, cover, and cook for 3-4 minutes.
4. Flip the sweet potato slices, cover, and cook for another 3-4 minutes, or until each slice is easily pierced with a fork.
5. Remove the sweet potato slices from the pan and move to a plate. Do not wipe out the pan.
6. Using the residual oil left in the pan, scramble the eggs over medium heat.
7. Assemble the toast by spreading avocado over the slices of sweet potato, and topping with scrambled eggs. Finish with salt, pepper, and any other desired toppings.

**AT-THE-TABLE**

What's inside

- Hunger Action Month
- Partner Agency Spotlight
- Volunteers Step Up