



California—Rural Housing Service

Local & Regional Food Systems

Second Harvest Food Bank Provides Fresher Produce and Time Efficient Service

Outline Of Need:

Second Harvest Food Bank is the second oldest food bank in the United States. Located in Watsonville California, where unemployment affects 1 in 4 residents, it is a critical food source for many. These low income residents of Santa Cruz County face the challenges of obesity and diabetes because they cannot afford to purchase healthy produce. Second Harvest Food Bank has struggled to meet the growing demand in the community because they lack an efficient operational system to store and distribute food to community members; and with half the community served being children, it became critical that they improve the efficiency in their services.

How Rural Development Helped:

USDA Rural Development provided a Community Facility direct loan in the amount of \$2 million to expand the existing warehouse, construct a new truck dock, and rehabilitate the parking lot. In addition, Rural Development established the loan terms at 30 years with a 4.125% interest rate to make the loan more affordable.

The Results:

Second Harvest Food Bank has benefitted from many upgrades and improvements. With the funding they have installed a racked interior to reduce product handling by five times what it



*Left: New truck docks reduced time to load and unload products
Right: The new racked interior reduces product handling by five times what it was when pallets were stacked and needed to be moved individually to reach pallets in the back.*

was when all other pallets would need to be moved first in order to reach a pallet of food stored in the back. This not only provides consumers with fresher products, but also accommodates more volunteers. In addition, they constructed new truck docks to enhance time efficiency in loading and unloading bought and donated products.

“The improvements will make us much more nimble and efficient,” said Chief Executive Officer Will-Elliott-McCrea, “To give you just one example, where it used to take 40 minutes to unload a truck by hand, it will now take just 10 with the forklift and loading docks.”

Not only have they improved the time efficiency in their distribution system, but they have also made it more eco friendly. With the provided funding they have installed a new parking lot that collects runoff and filters it back through a filter before it goes out to the Monterey Bay Marine Sanctuary. Additionally, their coolers are now solar powered, they now have 2 bins that generate over 15,000 pounds of compost each year, and with the use of cardboard recycling are down to just one garbage bin a week.

They are now able to provide more efficient services to more community members with the same number of employees. The expansion has provided them with the capacity to store 1.6 million pounds of food and assist 9,000 additional people monthly. They expect to distribute 2 million more pounds of food annually, and hope to distribute 10 million pounds of food each year by 2015.

Fast Facts

Program: Community Facilities

Investment: \$2,000,000 direct loan

Congressional District: CA-17

Impact:

- The expansion has provided them with the capacity to store 1.6 million pounds of food
- Assist 9,000 additional people monthly

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