



**Foodbank of Santa Barbara County**

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***Foodbank of Santa Barbara County Responds to ‘Food Shortage’  
With Emergency Injection of \$100,000 for Food Purchases***

**Santa Barbara County, CA- December 6, 2008** -The current economic downturn is having the largest impact on Santa Barbara County’s poorest citizen’s ability to stay healthy and productive by getting good nutrition.

To assist the community, the Foodbank’s Executive Director Erik Talkin and the Foodbank’s Board of Directors, has made the decision to invest an additional \$100,000 in emergency and supplemental food sources and opportunities during these critical and devastating times. The Foodbank is asking the community to assist in this effort by continuing to deepen their financial support of the organization.

“The funds will be used to make a major contribution to our \$100,000 *Emergency Food Purchase Plan*, where we are having to find an extra \$100,000 beyond funds already budgeted to buy food for those in need and feed families not only through the holiday period, but also in the lean period of January and February,” said Talkin. “We are faced with a food shortage and the Foodbank is taking emergency steps to avert a food crisis.”

With businesses closing, people being laid off from their jobs and bills mounting, good nutrition is often the first thing to cut. The Foodbank is seeing those who were once donors to the organization now becoming clients instead and a rapid increase in the demand for food. The 220 social service organizations and churches (member agencies) that receive food through the Foodbank then distribute the food to their clients are seeing a major increase of 25 to 35 percent of people in need for basic food items.

“People must realize the Foodbank is the only organization in Santa Barbara County with the capabilities to safely transport, store and distribute millions of pounds of food and fresh produce,” said Talkin. “With a fleet of trucks and over 30,000 square feet of warehouse space the organization is dedicated and ready to act in this desperate situation.”

Talkin continued saying, “Sometimes you just have to step forward and decide that a serious course of action is required, and it must be undertaken despite the cost. The feeding of our community over the coming months is such a critical need it cannot be ignored.”

The community’s ongoing support will accomplish a number of immediate priorities: first, help offset the costs of our Produce Initiative; providing millions of pounds of fresh California produce to children, seniors, individuals and families; second, provide our member agencies (our partners at the frontline of hunger) conducting emergency food distributions with additional resources for accessing more food from the Foodbank. Finally, the funds allow the Foodbank to purchase more high quality foods and meats – products no longer available through past sources of donations.

Talkin concluded saying, “We know this assistance will make the difference for the community over the winter months. We sincerely thank you and hope you will support our efforts to address these extraordinary economic times by providing more nutritious foods and fresh produce to those in need.”

The Foodbank provides a vital link between the multi-faceted food industry and people in need of food. With warehouses in Santa Barbara and Santa Maria the Foodbank serves over 220 social service organizations and churches. More than 43% of those served are youths under the age of 18. In 2007, the Foodbank distributed more than 7.3 million pounds of food of which nearly 2 million pounds of fresh produce to more than 125,000 people in need. For more on the Foodbank of Santa Barbara County, please visit [www.foodbanksbc.org](http://www.foodbanksbc.org)

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