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Foodbank of Santa Barbara County Launches Text Program to Provide Food Information and Access to More of Local Population

Community members can provide their ZIP code and receive information about SAFE Food locations nearest them, even without smartphones or WiFi.

(Santa Barbara, CA) — In order to provide access to healthy food to more of the community, the Foodbank of Santa Barbara County launched a bilingual text program offering fast, customized access to information in English and Spanish about SAFE Food locations countywide. A text program offers instant information to those who do not have smartphones or WiFi.

Community members can text “FOOD” in English or “COMIDA” in Spanish to (877) FOOD801 ((877) 366-3801). After providing their ZIP code, information about the three SAFE Food Net distribution locations nearest to them will be texted back. This service is free, though messaging costs may apply.

“The Foodbank is always working to ensure that everyone in the community has access to healthy food,” explained Foodbank CEO Erik Talkin. “During the Covid-19 crisis, it’s more important than ever to consider every possible impediment to that access. Not having WiFi or the budget to buy and pay for service for a smartphone shouldn’t keep anyone from finding out where they can receive healthy food. This text program helps expand our reach into the community.”

At the Foodbank’s 54 SAFE Food Net sites throughout Santa Barbara County, community members may receive healthy groceries and fresh fruits and vegetables at no cost. No documentation or registration is required. Twenty locations offer no-contact drive-thru service. The amount of supplemental food provided depends on the stated number of members in the household.
Seniors in need of supplemental food delivered to their homes should call 2-1-1. Any seniors aged 60 or over, and those 55 and over who self-certify they have a disability, will receive healthy staples (canned protein, nut butters, whole grain cereals, beans, rice, milk-alternatives, low-sodium soups and stews, etc) and fresh produce delivered to their door.

The Foodbank continues to seek volunteers to pack food bags and to drive on home deliveries. Interested community members may sign up for a volunteer account at foodbanksbc.org and opt in to receive emails. Email notifications of volunteer opportunities will follow with details about current opportunities.

About the Foodbank of Santa Barbara County
The Foodbank of Santa Barbara County is transforming hunger into health by eliminating food insecurity through good nutrition and food literacy. The Foodbank provides nourishment and education through a network of more than 300 nonprofit community partners and more than 1,500 volunteers. In Santa Barbara County, one in four people receive food support from the Foodbank, which equates to more than 190,000 unduplicated people, 40% of whom are children. Last year, the Foodbank distributed 10 million pounds of food – nearly half of which was fresh produce. The Foodbank is assuming a major leadership role in countywide disaster preparedness with initiatives including a host of Covid-19 response programs, disaster food boxes, disaster feeding plan, establishing a new south county warehouse and updating our trucks for safer food storage and transport. For more information, visit www.foodbanksbc.org.

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