



**SLO**  
**FOOD**  
**BANK**

County Partnership  
for Hunger Relief

# STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2028



# OUR MISSION

To work with a network of community partners to alleviate hunger in San Luis Obispo County and build a healthier community.

# OUR VISION

A community in which every person has adequate access to nutritious food, regardless of the reasons that they may not be able to obtain it for themselves. It is our privilege and commitment to serve without judgment.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Message from Our Leadership Team .....	Page 4
Process & Terminology .....	Page 5
Client Services .....	Page 6
<i>Enhancing and expanding client services.</i>	
Education & Advocacy .....	Page 8
<i>Engaging in Board-adopted advocacy and education that strengthens our mission of hunger relief and enhanced community health.</i>	
Resource Alignment .....	Page 10
<i>Aligning resources to maximize service efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability.</i>	
Fiscal Health .....	Page 13
<i>Ensuring robust fiscal health.</i>	
Employee Success .....	Page 16
<i>Investing in employee satisfaction, retention, and development.</i>	
Board Impact .....	Page 18
<i>Maximizing the impact of our Board of Directors.</i>	
Conclusion .....	Page 19

# MESSAGE FROM OUR LEADERSHIP

This Strategic Plan guides our future priorities, resource allocation, and decision making on our journey to execute our hunger relief mission efficiently and effectively for all who face food insecurity in San Luis Obispo County.

Our goals continue to be ambitious and we are confident that we can achieve them with the support of our community.

The next few pages demonstrate the culmination of the focused engagement of our staff and Board of Directors and our renewed understanding of our neighbors' lived experiences around food insecurity and related challenges.

Our work in the coming years is centered on broad research into effective anti-hunger solutions across the nation, the findings of our Health Equity Project, and a year-long effort of extensive outreach to those experiencing food insecurity and to our allied hunger-relief network.

## IMPORTANT NOTE

This is a living plan. As such, this plan will coexist and harmonize with our daily operations. Our espoused priorities, outcomes, and timelines may be adjusted in the face of changing realities.

*Let's feed SLO County  
Together.*

# OUR PLANNING PROCESS

The thoughtful development of this plan has been a significant focus for our team, and the steps to capture our vital priorities in this planning document have been quite deliberate. With our refreshed understanding of regional food insecurity from the Health Equity Project, the entire SLO Food Bank staff and Board engaged in an iterative process to establish our strategic vision.

Perhaps the best way to understand our strategic terms is to understand how these components emerged. During facilitated strategic planning sessions, three broad questions were examined.

1. *If the SLO Food Bank maximized our efforts over the next five years, what are we capable of accomplishing?*
2. *Given this vision of future success, what obstacles may be in our way?*
3. *Understanding the obstacles on our path, what specific action steps will lead us to our five-year vision of effective internal and external service?*

## PLANNING TERMINOLOGY

### **DIRECTIONS**

A strategic “Direction” is a major overarching theme of this plan. There are six Directions. Some planning documents may refer to Directions as Goals, but we chose to stick with the term Direction due to the longevity of our movement toward each of these Directions. Indeed, future revisions of this plan will likely have the greatest amount of change related to Strategies, while our Directions, and even many Objectives, may continue to be relevant in future planning cycles.

### **OBJECTIVES**

Strategies based on similar themes are grouped together as “Objectives” and include desired outcomes associated with these efforts. There are 13 Objectives in this plan.

### **STRATEGIES**

The answers to that last question, the specific action steps on our vision’s path, form the “Strategies”. There are 58 Strategies in this plan.

# 1

## CLIENT SERVICES

ENHANCING AND EXPANDING CLIENT SERVICES.

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES
<p><b>1.1</b> Enhance bi-directional communications and relationship building with clients to build greater trust and understanding.</p>	<p><b>1.1.1</b> Improve the organization’s ability to communicate with non-English speakers (verbally and written) at sites, warehouse walk-in, digitally, and main phone line.</p> <p><b>1.1.2</b> Evaluate systems for gathering and prioritizing client data and feedback to better assess participation, preferences, and trends.</p> <p><b>1.1.3</b> Improve and extend outreach by focusing resources/personnel to connect with clients where they are.</p> <p><b>1.1.4</b> Develop resources to assist clients with maximizing their healthy food purchasing power.</p>

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES
<p><b>1.2</b> Explore service enhancements based on needs to better understand and incorporate the needs and preferences of clients.</p>	<p><b>1.2.1</b> Evaluate all hunger relief efforts for opportunities to expand client choice, equity and effectiveness.</p> <p><b>1.2.2</b> Implement operations to provide food to all homebound clients.</p>
<p><b>1.3</b> Broaden and diversify partner network to maximize our efficient reach throughout our community.</p>	<p><b>1.3.1</b> Expand relationships with Food Bank teams in other counties to establish best practices and leverage efficiencies.</p> <p><b>1.3.2</b> Assess and develop meaningful partnerships with other social service agencies to more effectively and holistically support our clients.</p> <p><b>1.3.3</b> Assess opportunities for wrap around services coordination during our operations/services, including but not limited to Neighborhood Distributions.</p> <p><b>1.3.4</b> Evaluate options to support Agency Partner equipment and training needs.</p>


# 2

## EDUCATION & ADVOCACY

ENGAGING IN BOARD-ADOPTED ADVOCACY AND EDUCATION THAT STRENGTHENS OUR MISSION OF HUNGER RELIEF AND ENHANCED COMMUNITY HEALTH.

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES
<p><b>2.1</b> Implement Board-adopted advocacy platform to seek to be active in making a difference in policy discussions relevant to our core mission.</p>	<p><b>2.1.1</b> Collaborate with our Board to develop and approve an advocacy platform to effectively advance our mission.</p> <p><b>2.1.2</b> Develop communication and education plan for advocacy efforts.</p>
<p><b>2.2</b> Increase the reach of SLO Food Bank’s regional communications to share our story and relevance with a broader audience.</p>	<p><b>2.2.1</b> Develop holistic communications strategy for the organization.</p> <p><b>2.2.2</b> Expand Spanish communications for clients and other stakeholders.</p> <p><b>2.2.4</b> Assess support and staff needs for organizational communications strategy.</p> <p><b>2.2.5</b> Complete GleanSLO brand reconciliation.</p>



A person wearing a purple long-sleeved shirt is seen from the side, leaning over and working in a field. The field is filled with green and yellow plants, possibly a vegetable garden or farm. The background is slightly blurred, showing a clear sky and distant hills. The overall scene is bright and natural.

**"I HAVE A HARD TIME  
GETTING THE FOOD I NEED,  
BUT HAVE ALWAYS BEEN  
ABLE TO COUNT ON THE  
FOOD BANK AND CALFRESH  
WHEN I GO TO THE STORE."**

- Health Equity Project  
Survey Participant

# 3

## RESOURCES ALIGNMENT

ALIGNING RESOURCES FOR EFFICIENCY, EFFECTIVENESS, AND SUSTAINABILITY OF SERVICES.

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES
<p><b>3.1</b> Maximize efficiency and utilization of all sources of nutritious food to provide the most impactful services and outcomes possible.</p>	<p><b>3.1.1</b> Develop strategy to communicate the realities of ineffective food sourcing activities, including household scale food drives, with the goal of maximizing the value of community donations.</p> <p><b>3.1.2</b> Develop multiyear shelf-stable and fresh food sourcing strategy that maximizes reliable, no and low cost food.</p> <p><b>3.1.3</b> Develop Business Continuity and Disaster Response and Recovery plans with engagement from Santa Barbara County Food Bank per 2024 Affiliate Food Bank agreement.</p> <p><b>3.1.4</b> Assess partnership opportunities with County Office of Emergency Services to provide interim hunger relief supplies during local/regional disasters.</p> <p><b>3.1.5</b> Explore local farming options, including expanded gleans and intentional planting partnerships.</p>

## OBJECTIVES

### 3.2

Evaluate current processes for incremental improvements to ensure staff can accomplish their work efficiently and clients/partners experience superior customer service.

## STRATEGIES

### 3.2.1

Develop operations and staffing plan for on-site client services.

### 3.2.2

Reevaluate our process for tracking and allocating produce between programs.

### 3.2.3

Develop criteria and implement regular review process for assessing/scoring distribution sites and agency partners to maximize impact and eliminate inefficiencies.

### 3.2.4

Evaluate systems to further improve inventory tracking.

### 3.2.5

Prioritize on time, complete, and consistent operations in serving partners and clients.

### 3.2.6

Implement consistent volunteer acknowledgement and appreciation program.

# 3

## RESOURCE ALIGNMENT CONTINUED...

ALIGNING RESOURCES FOR EFFICIENCY, EFFECTIVENESS, AND SUSTAINABILITY OF SERVICES.

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES
<p><b>3.2 Continued...</b> Evaluate current processes for incremental improvements to ensure staff can accomplish their work efficiently and clients/partners experience superior customer service.</p>	<p><b>3.2.7</b> Evaluate organization and assignments in support of distributions and agency partner functions (regional vs. functional) informed by a set of service goals, including goals related to efficiency, return on investment, and information flow.</p> <p><b>3.2.8</b> Evaluate volunteer support resources, including staffing and communications platforms.</p> <p><b>3.2.9</b> Develop training program for volunteers on topics such as customer service, problem solving, and lead duties.</p> <p><b>3.2.10</b> Transition community impact dashboard to a database.</p> <p><b>3.2.11</b> Evaluate membership status with Feeding America.</p>

# 4

## FISCAL HEALTH

### ENSURING ROBUST FISCAL HEALTH.

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES
<p><b>4.1</b> Expand and enhance relationships and information sharing with existing and potential donors to establish and maintain meaningful, genuine relationships to fund our mission.</p>	<p><b>4.1.1</b> Develop a complete and timely event sponsorship plan.</p> <p><b>4.1.2</b> Develop major donor acquisition and retention plan, including expanded guidelines for pledges in support of major projects.</p> <p><b>4.1.3</b> Develop robust bequest communications, resources, and partnerships.</p> <p><b>4.1.4</b> Deepen Board engagement in donor identification and appreciation.</p> <p><b>4.1.5</b> Align Development team duties to maximize return on investment.</p>

# 4

## FISCAL HEALTH CONTINUED...

### ENSURING ROBUST FISCAL HEALTH.

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES
<p><b>4.1 Continued...</b> Expand and enhance relationships and information sharing with existing and potential donors to establish and maintain meaningful, genuine relationships to fund our mission.</p>	<p><b>4.1.6</b> Develop consistent, across the Board recognition plan for donors.</p> <p><b>4.1.7</b> Take sustaining donor program (HEART) to next level of regional and experiential impact and engagement.</p> <p><b>4.1.8</b> Explore options related to endowed funds.</p> <p><b>4.1.9</b> Assess efficacy of incorporating volunteer information, communications, and management in Development database.</p>

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES
<p><b>4.2</b> Evaluate accounting solutions to be more inclusive of other financial transactions and data to maximize efficiency and accuracy of all financial activities.</p>	<p><b>4.2.1</b> Assess accounting platform capabilities across finance, inventory, grant, and donor functions.</p> <p><b>4.2.2</b> Assess third party billing services to outsource accounts payable.</p> <p><b>4.2.3</b> Transition to budget cycle that lines up best with external partners and is sensitive to internal work cycles.</p>
<p><b>4.3</b> Implement robust forecasting to position the organization for long-term fiscal planning success.</p>	<p><b>4.3.1</b> Capture and program all anticipated expenses related to fleet, facility, and infrastructure.</p> <p><b>4.3.2</b> Develop five year fiscal forecast.</p> <p><b>4.3.3</b> Establish a process and cycle for periodically assessing all vendor and service contracts.</p>

# 5 EMPLOYEE SUCCESS

## INVESTING IN EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION, RETENTION, AND DEVELOPMENT.

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES
<p><b>5.1</b> Assess staffing needs, allocation, and support to ensure expectations are appropriately resourced for desired outcomes.</p>	<p><b>5.1.1</b> Assess needs for staffing and/or seasonal assistance across all functions.</p> <p><b>5.1.2</b> Maintain Employee and Family Friendly Workplace efforts and continue assessing opportunities for incremental practice improvements.</p> <p><b>5.1.3</b> Assess outstanding accounting needs and sustainability of our fiscal processes, including payroll, accounts payable, revenue processing, and grant tracking.</p> <p><b>5.1.4</b> Assess outstanding grant tracking, reporting, and project management support needs.</p>



## OBJECTIVES

### 5.2

Implement consistent, meaningful training programs and practices to position staff for success in their area of focus and as a member of a collaborative, well-informed team.

## STRATEGIES

### 5.2.1

Develop training program to ensure a minimum level of knowledge about the organization, compliance with state mandated trainings, and predictable opportunities for professional development.

### 5.2.2

Explore options for employee training and development.

### 5.2.3

Expand and enhance new employee onboarding, including all requirements, training, resources, and food bank knowledge.

### 5.2.4

Explore options to establish a tuition reimbursement program for staff.



## BOARD IMPACT

### MAXIMIZING THE IMPACT OF OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES
<p><b>6.1</b> Collaborate with Board to implement productive engagement practices to open doors for greater organizational success powered by the knowledge and network of our current and past Board members.</p>	<p><b>6.1.1</b> Develop Board member position description with roles and responsibilities.</p> <p><b>6.1.2</b> Structure program for Board member assistance with donor recognition outreach.</p> <p><b>6.1.3</b> Assess opportunities to maintain engagement of former Board members.</p>



# BRINGING OUR PLAN TO LIFE WHILE RESPONDING TO COMMUNITY NEEDS.

Our strategic plan captures our vision of mission excellence at a point in time. We will continue to monitor the needs of our community and devote resources to the highest priorities that are best positioned to produce meaningful outcomes. When this plan facilitates mission-focused success, the plan will continue to chart our course. If the actions of this plan interfere with or impede our mission-focused success, our organization will thoughtfully adjust our course to ensure our energy aligns with our community's needs.



**SLO**  
**FOOD BANK**

County Partnership for Hunger Relief

1180 Kendall Road  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

805-238-4664  
[slofoodbank.org](http://slofoodbank.org)

Let's Feed SLO County. *Together.*