

The Impact of Food Banks in the Community

“Food brings people together on many levels,” says chef Giada De Laurentiis. “It’s nourishment of the soul and body; it’s truly love.” We see this love not only in the meals we share with loved ones, but in the food we provide to our community. Here’s how food banks spread the love in their local areas, and why the **importance of food banks** goes far beyond the table.

What Are Food Banks?

[Food banks](#) are nonprofit organizations that store food and work with local partners to distribute that food to those who need it. Food banks range in size and can store millions of pounds of food, serving thousands of people. That food is often donated from neighbors, grocery stores, restaurants, and retailers. Here at the SLO Food Bank, we also rescue fresh produce from local farms, **farmers markets**, **local backyards**, and home gardens.

What Does a Food Bank Do?

Food banks store all that food for a very clear goal—to alleviate hunger in their local communities. Working with volunteers and partners, they see that nutritious food gets into the hands of the hungry. Here’s what we do at SLO Food Bank to build a healthier community!

- [Food distribution](#): providing and delivering food to neighbors in need.
- [Food rescue](#): gleaning produce from farms and gardens. This is a double win, preventing food waste and relieving hunger in one fell swoop!
- [Community outreach and partnerships](#): community events like farmers markets and nutrition education.

How Food Banks Help Their Communities

They provide hunger relief.

Hunger relief is an obvious benefit of food banks, but a critically important one! Millions of Americans suffer from [hunger and food insecurity](#) each year, and food banks are a crucial part of the solution. Here at SLO Food Bank, we distribute millions of meals to our neighbors in need each year!

They assist with food distribution.

Another important benefit of food banks is their **food distribution** networks. Our distributions are held at a variety of sites including community centers, schools, and other public spaces, and are run by SLO Food Bank staff, committed volunteers, and community partners. We hold over 75 distributions per month at more than 50 locations. This allows us to reach people who face struggles with [food access](#) because of food deserts, mobility, or other reasons.

They offer community resources.

Food banks' provisions don't stop at food. These organizations are essential community hubs, providing a wealth of benefits to locals. Nutritious food supports health in the community. Vulnerable populations like seniors and people experiencing homelessness are given support. Food banks also often promote nutritional education and host events that raise awareness about nutrition, food budgeting, and [food assistance resources!](#)

They bring people together.

Finally, food banks help solidify communities by bringing people together. Community events like farmers markets encourage camaraderie and social support, while [volunteer organizations](#) like food banks can be amazing places to develop beautiful friendships! The sharing of meals has always been an incredible tool for bringing people together, and food banks all across the nation are proud to be part of that tradition today.

We at the [SLO Food Bank](#) believe that everyone has the right to nutritious food. That's why we work hard to ensure access to fresh food for everyone in our community. We structure [our programs](#) in a few different ways to make fresh produce more accessible and affordable for those who need it. We also promote food assistance programs like [CalFresh](#), while hosting [food distributions](#) in the most rural areas of our county, where a grocery store may be more than 50 miles away.

With [our network of community partners](#) in San Luis Obispo, we strive to alleviate hunger and to build a healthier community. If you're in the area, check out our [Food Locator](#) to find food sources near you, or support our cause through [volunteer opportunities](#) or [donations](#), if you are able to give. With reliable access to wholesome food, we are all healthier, happier, and more productive members of our communities. [Donate](#) today to help us bring health and happiness to San Luis Obispo County!