



Media Contact: Rachelle Mesheau
Marketing and Public Relations Manager
(707) 523-7900 x 113 | rmesheau@refb.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Urgent Volunteer Appeal to Help Tens of Thousands in Need of Food

SANTA ROSA, CA (May 5, 2021) – The Redwood Empire Food Bank urgently needs more volunteers in order to keep feeding families.

Restrictions are lifting. And, while many people are returning to work, many aren't. Unfortunately, it's the perfect storm for the Redwood Empire Food Bank who continues to see increases in the need for food. In fact, last month they distributed the equivalent of more than 1.5 million meals. At the same time, other individuals are moving toward a more "normal" day-to-day, which means they no longer have the time to put toward volunteering.

"What we realized within days of the initiation of the lockdown was that people have very little to live on and food insecurity is right around the corner," said David Goodman, CEO at the Redwood Empire Food Bank. "We've had dramatic growth of individuals seeking food assistance. And if you're wondering if that growth will taper, well, we just had our largest month ever."

Support from the community throughout the pandemic has been phenomenal, but many of those who had been giving up their time to volunteer have now returned to their jobs.

"Without volunteers, we risk not having enough food boxes for our distribution sites," added Rachelle Mesheau of the Redwood Empire Food Bank. "We have the food, we just don't have enough volunteers to pack and distribute the food."

The Redwood Empire Food Bank has over 300 distribution locations that run on weekly and monthly schedules throughout Sonoma, Lake, Mendocino, Humboldt, and Del Norte counties. In addition, there are 4 shifts daily (7am, 10am, 1pm and 5pm), Monday through Friday, at the warehouse location on Brickway Blvd. in Santa Rosa. Though volunteers are needed at all locations, the warehouse is where volunteers are currently needed most.



“The Redwood Empire Food Bank allows me to do something powerful by joining together with others. It’s humbling, and it’s also very inspiring,” noted Julie Ruth, volunteer at the Redwood Empire Food Bank.

Protocols are in place to ensure the safety of all volunteers. In addition to the recommended guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, they are also taking proactive and voluntary steps to help reduce contact and/or spread of the Coronavirus.

For more information on volunteer opportunities and to register, please visit refb.org/volunteer or call (707) 523-7900.

About the Redwood Empire Food Bank

The Redwood Empire Food Bank is the largest hunger-relief organization serving Northern California. Since 1987, the Redwood Empire Food Bank has provided food and nourishment to those facing hunger—serving more than 100,000 children, families and seniors in Sonoma, Lake, Mendocino, Humboldt, and Del Norte Counties. With over 300 direct service distributions, and 170 partnerships with other hunger-relief organizations, all residents facing food insecurity have access to more than 470 weekly and monthly distribution sites across the five counties.