

# FOOD For THOUGHT



WINTER NEWSLETTER 2025

## Building Food Security for All: Opening Our Capital Campaign to the Community



**FIND Food Bank is excited to announce the public phase of our capital campaign**, inviting the community to join us in our mission to ensure food security for our neighbors. **We would love for our desert community to be part of our efforts!**

FIND's capital campaign goal is **\$2 Million**. The expansion will add **40,000 sq. ft. of warehousing space** to complete FIND Food Bank's Food Security Campus that will equitably serve our Southeastern California Desert communities across 10,000 sq. miles.

We're meeting the community's growing need for nutritious food access today, but we've outgrown our current facility, exceeding our storage capacity by 80%. This new building will provide almost three times the space to increase our dry storage and freezer capacity, keeping produce, meat, and dairy products fresher for longer, and allow us the ability to deploy food immediately to aid disaster relief.

FIND has outgrown its current facility and is operating at two times the capacity. It was originally built to process roughly 10 million pounds of food per year; however, during the height of the pandemic, FIND was processing

close to 30 million pounds of food. The new building will now allow us to process 40 million pounds of food annually in support of the growing need of our desert region.

Set to open in Spring 2025, the new building will also house training and education programs for youth and adults, generating jobs that will streamline facility operations and logistics.

**FIND is committed to ending hunger today, tomorrow, and for a lifetime.** And with the community's support, we've made great strides in our food programs, senior and homebound services, youth scholarships, workforce development, community health worker services, and more. However, there is still much work to be done to break the cycle of poverty. This is why we are initiating our public campaign, inviting the community to engage in creating transformative change in our desert region.

This is a critical time in FIND's history, and the community's support is vital to realizing our vision. We believe that, with your help, we can effectively tackle the root causes of hunger.

**We appreciate your continued support and hope you can join us in this important initiative. To support our Capital Campaign, visit [findfoodbank.org/expand](https://findfoodbank.org/expand).**





## Message from the President and CEO

As we welcome a new year, we also welcome a renewed sense of commitment to our mission of ending hunger today, tomorrow, and for a lifetime. This past year has shown me the power of community, and I eagerly anticipate what lies ahead. We are committed to strengthening our initiatives, building more resilient food systems, and creating sustainable solutions that address the root causes of hunger.

With the expansion of FIND's Food Security Campus, we can build a legacy of abundance and opportunity in California's Southeastern Desert Region. We can forge a future where no one has to worry about where their next meal is coming from.

We invite you to join us in this mission, whether through volunteering, advocacy, or ongoing contributions. Your continued support empowers us to innovate and expand our reach, ensuring that every individual in our community can live with dignity and hope.

Here's to another year of progress, renewed commitment, and shared victories in the fight against hunger.

Debbie Espinosa  
President and CEO,  
FIND Food Bank



## FIND Raises Funds to Support Disaster Relief for Our LA Neighbors



As the Desert's Regional Food Bank, designated by the State of California for Emergency Response and Disaster Relief, we understand the impact disaster can have on a community and the resources required to assist those affected.

So, this winter, FIND and KESQ collaborated on a critical fundraising and food drive initiative supporting victims of the devastating Los Angeles wildfires. The one-day event, titled "Coachella Valley Cares," united the desert community in a spirit of compassion for our LA neighbors. We are deeply grateful to our sponsors and community residents for their support to CV Cares.

Presented in a "telethon" format and in partnership with the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, local city and tribal leaders, along with fire captains, KESQ, volunteers, and FIND staff, answered countless phone calls and collected donations during the twelve-hour event. KESQ reporters provided live updates and interviews throughout the day.

With generous contributions from Agua Caliente and the Auen Foundation, we raised \$125,255 and 36,700 pounds of food and essentials. FIND delivered these donations to the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank, our sister food bank and Feeding America partner, ensuring support for the wildfire victims.

As we hear the stories of our LA neighbors and comprehend the work that must be done to support their communities, FIND's expansion is more crucial than ever. The additional storage space will ensure FIND has the resources to deploy food immediately to aid in disaster relief.

In times of emergency, FIND will become a regional hub; our local and county partnerships increasing access to essential supplies and equipment. By growing our Food Security Campus, we can be ready for the unforeseen and better assist our desert neighbors and fellow Californians with food and resources.

Tune in to KESQ, News Channel 3, on Friday, April 4<sup>th</sup> to watch FIND's 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Telethon



## College Corner

### Filled with Holiday School Spirit: COD & CSUSB Collaborate with FIND

As part of FIND's workforce development program, College Corps students from College of the Desert and California State University San Bernardino (Palm Desert Campus) sorted and packaged almost 6,000 pounds of fresh produce and hundreds of senior boxes to be distributed to those facing holiday hunger.

*"We're serving with gratitude this Thanksgiving week, in collaboration with our friends at College of the Desert," said Ernesto Hernandez, CSUSB College Corps Program Coordinator. "For the holiday season, we students are focused on addressing food insecurity in Coachella Valley."*

In a storybook partnership, these student hunger advocates came together to make a real difference for those facing hunger in their communities.



### FIND's Success Program Expands to Copper Mountain College with New Food Pantry

An integral part of our Ending Hunger initiatives, FIND assisted Copper Mountain College in opening their first on-campus student food pantry. This fall, FIND supplied the materials and nutritious food items necessary to set up and stock the pantry, in addition to training student volunteers on food pantry operations.

Along with dependable food access, students also have access to case management enrollment through FIND's community health worker services, as well as workforce development opportunities.

The pantry is staffed by student volunteers enrolled in the FIND Success program, a workforce development program for low-income college students, providing food safety certification, public benefits assistance, career training, and resume-building opportunities.

Ending hunger for a lifetime begins with supporting local students, ensuring everyone has access to career-building opportunities, reliable food, and the resources to support their families for generations to come.

### FIND Welcomes the College of the Desert's Third Cohort



In partnership with FIND Food Bank, 59 students were sworn into the College of the Desert's third College Corps cohort. This year's cohort is ready to complete 26,550 volunteer hours, working to help support FIND in feeding 125,000 people monthly.

Fellows in College Corps will build their leadership skills and become community leaders in local food insecurity, all while achieving their college goals.

During their year-long service, the fellows will learn and develop new strategies to address hunger in the Coachella Valley, as well as take part in service activities to create a generation of civic-minded leaders and build more equitable communities.

# Caring For Our Neighbors: FIND Food Bank Addresses Senior Hunger During the Holidays



Without access to reliable food, the holidays, which are meant to be a time of joy and fellowship, can become a time of uncertainty and despair. For FIND, it's crucial that the 29,000 seniors we

serve a month have access to the same comfort and food stability we experience during the holidays.

**FIND Food Bank, in partnership with the USDA, works to improve the health of people at least 60 years of age** by supplementing their diets with nutritious foods through the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP). This program provides seniors with a 32-pound box of well-

balanced and nutritious non-perishable foods and a supplemental recipe for seniors' nutritional needs.

The CSFP, or senior food box program, is one of FIND's fastest-growing programs, expanding from approximately 2,200 boxes a month to 4,500 boxes a month. CSFP senior boxes are distributed at our free community mobile markets and designated partner food pantries, as well as delivered to our neighbors via our home delivery program.

**Volunteer drivers deliver food to families and individuals who may be isolated, mobility-impaired, or unable to collect food** at our various distribution sites. Approximately 220 homebound clients rely on FIND volunteers to deliver healthy groceries once a month.

**Together, FIND staff and volunteers are ensuring that no one experiences isolation or hunger during the holidays and year-round.**

## Our Neighbor Vincent

"With the cost of groceries being so high, FIND helps me tremendously," said FIND Food Bank client Vincent. "FIND provides me with the things that I need every day ... it really helps the budget."

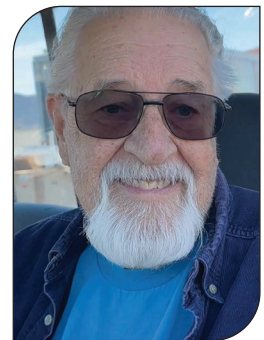
With the ever-increasing prices of life's necessities, like medication and gasoline, Vincent is relieved to have extra support.

Vincent said he also has FIND to thank for keeping his diet healthy and nutritious; therefore, decreasing his visits to the doctor.

"The selection of foods is very good — it generally covers everything that I need for a well-rounded meal program," he said. "These fruits and veggies are keeping me healthy."

He says he also has FIND to thank for jogging his memory.

"Once and a while I get cabbage, and I haven't eaten cabbage since I was a kid!" he beams. "I'm now back to my younger days!"



With cabbage in the fridge and the connections he's made at FIND's distributions, Vincent can't help but have a big smile on his face.

"I really thank FIND Food Bank for what they're doing," he said. "The staff and volunteers are just fantastic. They're always very happy and smiling and greet everyone. It's a nice part of my monthly chores to visit their Community Mobile Market distribution."

**Support FIND Food Bank, and you too can help feed the 125,000 adults, children, and seniors across California's southeastern desert region every month.**

Follow us on:   

**FINDFoodBank.org**

83775 Citrus Avenue • Indio, CA 92201 • (760) 775-3663

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