



Fighting Hunger

Bringing Health and Hope
to the Imperial Valley

Contact Us

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 IVFOODBANK

 IMPERIAL VALLEY FOOD BANK

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Imperial Valley Food Bank Staff

2025

Letter From the Imperial Valley Food Bank's Executive Director & Board President

Dear Friends of the Food Bank,

As 2025 presented new challenges, we were reminded daily that food insecurity is not just an issue - it is a lived reality for many in our community.

We recognize and gratefully acknowledge that our donors and volunteers give altruistically and entrust us to be responsible stewards of their gifts, especially during this critical year in our history.

Despite the increasing cuts to federal funding to address the hunger gap, the Imperial County community truly stepped up to help us meet the need for thousands of children, families, and seniors. Additionally, the government shutdown was an unprecedented time for us. We saw more people needing food assistance in those six weeks than we did at the height of the pandemic. We were able to meet that need because of so many generous people in Imperial Valley who continue to support us in our mission.

Even amid the uncertainty, there were highlights this past year as well. A successful launch of a new three-year strategic plan increasing efficiency in our operations and growth in our volunteer program, accolades from Assemblyman Jeff Gonzalez for the Nonprofit of the Year in the 36th Assembly District and the Imperial Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce designating us Business of the Year inspires our team to continue to grow in excellence while serving our community.

As we head into another uncertain year in 2026, the challenge of hunger remains. We are confident that our staff, volunteers, and supporters will continue to step up to ensure that Imperial County children, families, and seniors are supported through our programs.

Sara Griffen
Executive Director

Elvira Gonzalez
President, Board of Directors

Board of Directors



Elvira Gonzalez
President



Jean Oswald
Vice President



Bob Barros
Treasurer



Sharon Stegmuller
Secretary



James Abatti



Kris Becker



Liz M. Gonzalez



Josephine Conway



Tom Muller



Renato Montano



Martin Gonzalez



Juan Cruz



Shelly Wilkinson
Immediate Past President

Leadership

The leadership of the Imperial Valley Food Bank is a committed group of community leaders that have the best interests of the Food Bank, and the thousands of people we serve, at heart.

Elvira Gonzalez took the lead as President in 2025. She will serve a two-year term.

During a three-month period leading up to January 2025, the Board engaged in a Strategic Planning process to guide the organization over the next three years.

The 3 Strategic Priorities that emerged are:

Healthy Food Access and Distribution
Community Engagement and Leadership
Organizational Sustainability

We also worked with staff to identify our company values; values we live by every day in our actions but have never been articulated. Combining these values with our other guiding statements, they read as follows:

Our Mission

Fighting Hunger –
Bringing Health and Hope to the Imperial Valley

Our Vision

All Imperial County residents have access to adequate amounts of nutritious food

Our Values

Compassion and Respect, Accountability,
Professionalism and Teamwork



In Memory of Ed McGrew

Ed served on our Board of Directors for the last decade of his life. He served as both President and VP of our Board and was instrumental in the campaign for the current facility. Ed was a true leader with an understanding of fiscal responsibility for current issues with an eye to future opportunities. We miss his sage advice and uncompromising professionalism.

Operational Improvements

Although the IV Food Bank staff and operations moved into the new Rabobank Center in late 2019, we did not have time to adapt to our new surroundings before COVID hit in early 2020 as we were thrust into emergency operations. The return to 'normal' operations in 2023 was in fact returning to how we did things in the old building on Applestill Road. We had not grown into the functions and efficiency the new building afforded us, because we had simply done everything as we had before. In 2024, we began working with an operational consultant who walked us through how we function and helped us move to more streamlined processes. Gaps in learning, size of staff, and insufficient technology were revealed during this process.

The result of that process was finally fulfilled in 2025 and changes made include:

- Hired a Director of Operations and Programs to lead warehouse operations
- Transitioned to a more robust inventory software system
 - The system allows for each person responsible for entering data to have their own access - reducing the need for finding people physically to ask a question
 - The system allows for scanning products, reducing time and labor
 - The system keeps track of where food is located, also reducing time finding small amounts of food not easily seen
- Started holding weekly food flow meetings to increase communication among staff
- Increased volunteer opportunities in the warehouse, to help with workload
- Recruited more volunteers to meet us at the cities and towns where we distribute food, so less staff members have to leave the warehouse to help pass out food.
- Promoted a staff member to Procurement Manager, who is now in charge of all the food sourcing for the organization.



John Reed, Director of Operations



Client Improvements

As the national news affected us so profoundly, with the reduction of food and funds to sustain our work, we needed to find a way to communicate this to our clientele. Historically, our clientele is hard to communicate with because most do not have smart phones or regular computer access. Previously the most effective way to send messages was through flyers at distributions. We decided to go "old school" by printing a monthly newspaper.

Nourishing News was launched in September 2025 to share factual information and community resources. This monthly newspaper for our clients, printed in both English and Spanish, explains any updates from our programs, and includes a schedule of the following month's distributions, the basic list of items to expect, recipes, community information, games, local events and healthy lifestyle guidance. With printing costs offset through ad sales, we reach 10,000 households each month. Even with only six months of printing, Nourishing News is already a success. Our clients have told us how much they look forward to receiving it.

Thank You to our *Donors*



Foundation Support

Price Philanthropies Foundation
Sandberg Goldberg Bernthal Family Charitable
Foundation
Warne Family Charitable Foundation
Enterprise Taylor Charitable Foundation
Sisters of St. Joseph's Healthcare Foundation
Wells Fargo Foundation
Rest Haven Children's Foundation
Bank of America Charitable Foundation
Robert & Toni Bader Charitable Foundation
Howard P. Meyer Foundation
Pattern Energy
Mechanics Bank
Imperial Valley Wellness Foundation
So Cal Gas/Sempra Energy

Individual Donors and Local Support

Inland Respite
FNL Foundation
Marie and John Anderson
Julie and Curt Corda
Eric and the Late Francis Rice
Donald & Viola Templeton Trust
Ben Marsh
Anonymous
Anne Ellis
Madjac Farms
Lyla Corfman
Gilda and John Glaser
Imperial Premix
Marybell and William Plourd
Linda and Ron Rubin
Ojeda Industries
Burgers and Beer/Honold Family
The Elmore Companies
Berkshire Hathaway Energy Foundation
Bill and Kathleen Brandenburg
First Foundation Bank
Project Food Box/Sunterra
Judith Low
Shelly and Danny Wilkinson
Josephine Conway
Sayed Monis
Norma and Robert Barros
Sharon Stegmuller
Elise and the Late Phil Heald
Carla and Mickey Kuhns
Poli and Mercedes Flores
Ormat
Lazlo Bock
Alex Romero

Food Bank News

Through 2025, the Imperial Valley Food Bank made local news, not only for our recognition as Non-profit of the Year for Assembly District 26 and Business of the Year from the Imperial Valley Regional Chamber, but also because of federal and state cuts which threatened to impact our operations.

The 2025 annual budget anticipated around 44% of revenue from government programs, which help support the wholesale purchase of food that directly feeds more than 25,000 Imperial County residents each month. This includes procurement of food from USDA which supports farmers and provides food to food banks.

Signed on July 4, 2025, H.R.1—also known as the One Big Beautiful Bill Act—implemented program cuts that resulted in a loss of 15% of funding from USDA and a loss of 21% of food.

H.R.1 also imposed severe cuts to SNAP, known as CalFresh in California. In addition to cutting benefits, it also expands work requirements and restricts eligibility for millions of people who rely on the additional nutrition support.

Cutting funding to these programs not only impacts the individuals and families who qualify to receive these benefits but also can have an economic ripple effect in rural regions like Imperial County. For example, for every dollar spent on SNAP, \$1.65 is generated in local economic activity.

Despite the difficult news from the Federal level, the Imperial Valley Food Bank continued its operations.

"The headlines were devastating in 2025," Executive Director Sara Griffen said. "We arrived at several distributions and clients were surprised we were still in business."

Following the signing of H.R.1, state legislature and other lobbyists advocated in California to secure and fast-track an additional \$80 million to local food banks to strengthen food distribution and offset the delays in federal assistance.

While news of state funding provided some relief to the lost funding from H.R.1, the proceeding government shutdown in November brought hundreds of government employees to the Food Bank for support. Furloughed employees were sent home and essential staff continued to work without immediate pay. Overall, during the months of October and November, the Imperial Valley Food Bank saw a 21% increase in families visiting our distributions for assistance.



"During the Federal government shutdown, the only place to turn for food was the independent nonprofit food bank that had just suffered massive cuts to food and funds by that same Federal hand," said Griffen. "It was an irony that left many hungrier and our food bank less stable."

Even after the government shutdown ended on November 12, the Food Bank continued to see increasing numbers compared to 2024, with a nearly 20% increase in individual seeking assistance at our facility and distribution sites. Compared to December 2024 where we served 24,816 people, we served 28,869 people in December 2025.

FINANCIALS

January 1, 2025 - December 31, 2025

Financial Overview

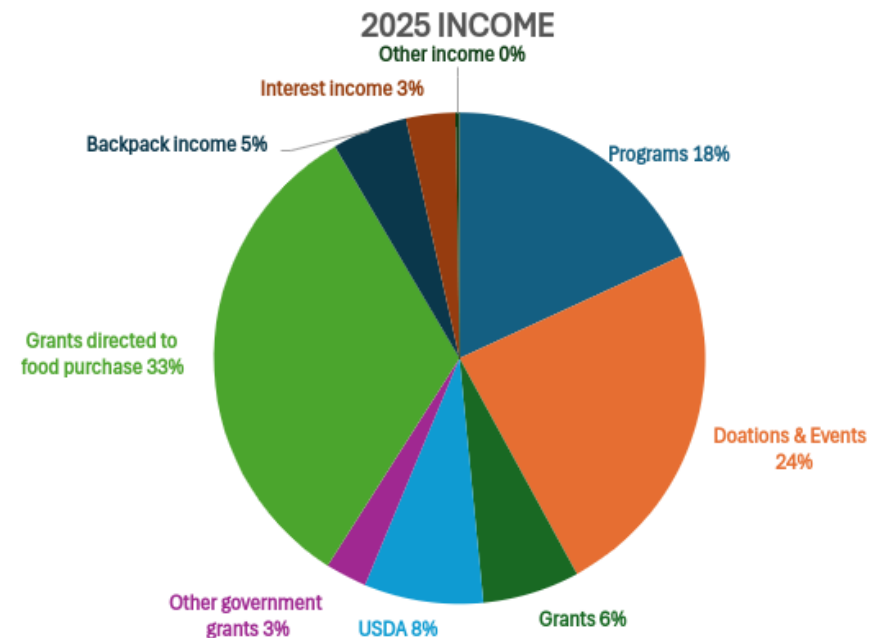
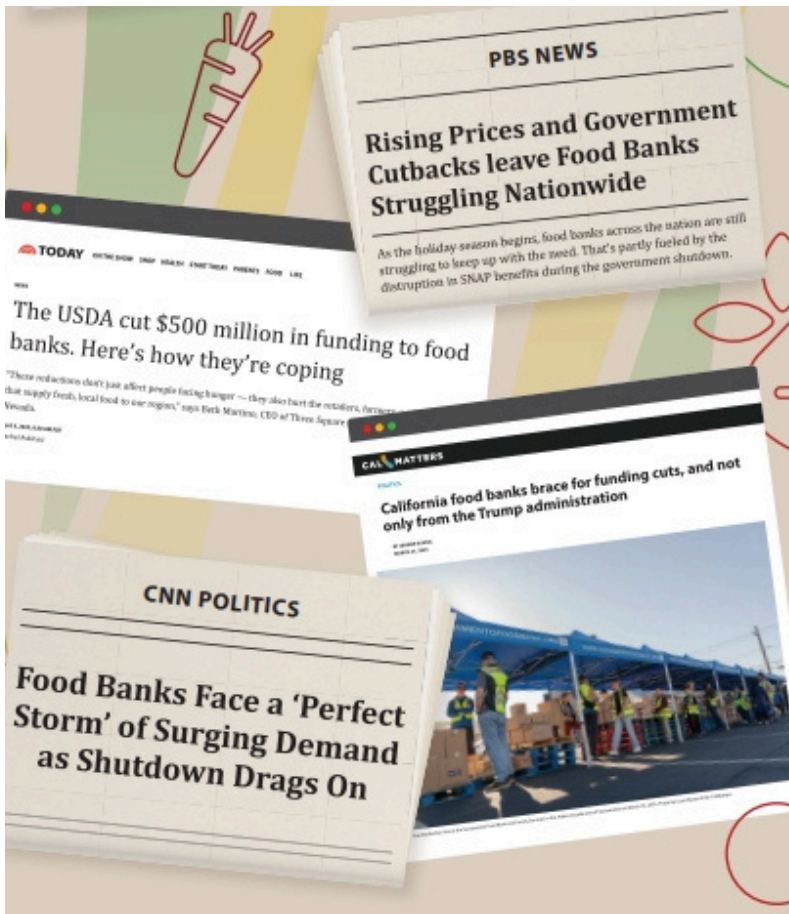
The financial numbers on these pages reflect the amount of money we raised and spent in 2025. We refer to these amounts as our "Annual Fund".

These are not our audited numbers. Due to the robust amount of USDA food we deliver in Imperial County, we are subject to an annual "single audit" which is submitted to the Federal government. In a single audit, all assets are counted toward a single number, which is the sum total of all our assets, not just the money we raised in 2025. The single audit numbers include the money raised, the value of all food in the warehouse, the land on which our building resides, our building, our vehicles and all the equipment we own. This number can make it appear as if we have much more cash than we actually do. The single audit will be completed later in the year, usually in September, and will be available on our website and on any website that hosts nonprofit 990s.

The numbers represented here in the infographic are the ones we use on a daily, monthly, and yearly basis. We believe they better reflect the actual operation of the Imperial Valley Food Bank, since the audited numbers considers our assets.

For Imperial County, which has the highest food insecurity rate in the state of California for both adults and children, Federal and state cuts deeply impact the work done at the local level to mitigate hunger in our community. Despite the disheartening implementation of these cuts and increase in need in 2025, our local community has responded overwhelmingly by volunteering, donating, and advocating for our mission: Fighting Hunger—Bringing Health and Hope to the Imperial Valley.

"The response from donors was unbelievable," said Griffen. "A bright light in a dark time— we are grateful for the tremendous support by the good people in our community."



Income and Expenses

In 2025, we generated \$4,112,315 in income, which includes \$1,337,620 in reimbursement for food purchase through the State of California CalFood Program. The USDA TEFAP reimbursement line item included in 2025 reflects cost reimbursement for distributing USDA food. In 2024, we received a reimbursement of \$722,768, but we received just \$322,162 in 2025 after program cuts were enacted in January of 2025.

Last year, we had \$3,505,946 in expenses, which includes \$1,500,445 in food purchases, operations and other programs.

Looking Ahead to 2026

We could not be more thankful to our giving community, both local and throughout the United States, that stepped up to support us, particularly during the government shutdown in November 2025. Your gifts allowed us to stay afloat despite the decrease in government funds and will allow us to start 2026 on strong footing during an uncertain time.

The surplus from 2025 will be applied toward the deficit budget in 2026, in consideration of the loss of annual monies to reimburse Federal and state food purchases.



Being named Nonprofit of the Year by the CA Assembly is always a profound honor, but during a time of uncertainty for so many families in our community, it held even deeper meaning. This recognition reaffirmed the importance of our work and strengthened our commitment to continue the fight against hunger in the Imperial Valley.



Sara Griffen receiving the Nonprofit of the Year Award on behalf of Imperial Valley Food Bank.

Photographed: Sara Griffen with Assemblyman Jeff Gonzalez



Victor Nava, President of the Imperial Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce, presents the Business of the Year Award during the 12 Days of Christmas IV celebration to Sara Griffen and staff on behalf of the Imperial Valley Food Bank.

"I am glad for the good, innovative and empowering work that IVFB is doing to provide nourishment and care to Imperial Valley. I am pleased that my modest contributions to your efforts are meaningful for all of you."
Sustaining Donor, Monthly Giving

"We were privileged to meet development staff who shared more about their work and food bank mission. We were moved - food is a necessity that not everybody has access to. So when we were introduced to the Weekend Backpack Program, which provides children with food outside of school, we were inspired to contribute."
Local Business Owners and Gifters, Annual Donor

"With volunteering, we felt we are able to show solidarity and support for our community- it is a wonderful experience!"
Volunteer, Corporate Giving

2025

A year at a glance *in numbers*

"Students are enthusiastic about receiving their backpacks, and parents are relieved to know that even while they are working and their children are being watched by family, their children have food."
Community Partner,
Weekend Backpack Program

"The food bank is facing a real crisis with some of the government reductions in programs in 2025, so we were delighted to be just a drop in the bucket of what they need to be successful and serve our community."
Local Business Leader,
Annual Donor

"Interacting with our community at mobile distributions is rewarding work. They always express gratitude for the services we provide, and recognize our effort in showing up even in extreme heat or sudden storms."
Food Bank Staff,
Community Distribution

8,106,151 pounds of food distributed to our community
3,505,946 dollars in expenses
1,194,159 pounds of local produce recovered and distributed
52,852 unduplicated number of county residents who received food.
27,433 monthly average of neighbors served.
8,318 volunteer hours committed by local individuals, organizations, and businesses.
3,031 individual volunteers
1,500 local students receiving weekly backpacks of food.
61 schools identifying and distributing backpacks to area children
34 distribution sites serving Imperial County residents.
35 years of continuous operation.
18 employees
6 years operating at the Aten Rd. facility

Value of Impact *to the Imperial Valley Community*

\$13,942,580

Food Bank Events

In May, staff and volunteers helped establish a new annual fundraiser with the inaugural Kurt Honold Memorial Golf Tournament at Ram's Hill Golf Club in Borrego Springs. The two-person scramble tournament welcomed dozens of teams competing for the top place while also having fun playing for other prizes with the different contests on the green. Our thanks to the Honold Family for including the Food Bank as they honor their father in this meaningful way.



Our annual Harvest Bowl fundraiser was our most successful iteration of the event yet. Not only did we welcome around 400 guests to enjoy courses inspired by our Farm to Table theme, but we also broke previous records of money raised at Harvest Bowl through incredible sponsors, silent auction sales, tequila tasting, fun cash contests, and new supporters pledging to contribute to our Weekend Backpack Program for area schoolchildren.



From vision to celebration: The 2025 Harvest Bowl Committee



Ed McGrew's personalized license plate, creatively repurposed as garland décor, highlighted this year's Harvest Bowl celebration.

Celebrating legacy and community: The Honold Family at the Kurt Honold Golf Tournament, supporting the Imperial Valley Food Bank at Ram's Hill, Borrego Springs

For our fourth annual Palate, Palette, and Pallet, we honored our friend Frances Rice with the establishment of the Impact Through the Arts Award in the spirit of her legacy with organizing and supporting the original Festival of Palate and Palette event at its original location at the St. Peter's and Paul Episcopal Church. Along with a team of members from the church, Frances helped with the transition of the fundraiser to the food bank in the spirit of both bringing awareness to our mission and celebrating the artistic talent in Imperial County.



Painting of Frances Rice by Sheryl Nash

Through these new fundraisers and our annual events, our supporters help us to raise nearly \$250,000 to help close the gap caused by the federal and state cuts and our continued increasing clientele who come to the food bank for assistance.

SAVE *the* DATES



**THURSDAY
APRIL 30, 2026**



**SATURDAY
OCTOBER 10, 2026**



**THURSDAY
OCTOBER 29, 2026**