

Sonoma Valley Food Security Task Force

Media Contact information:

Logan Harvey
Mayor, City of Sonoma
Logan.harvey@sonomacity.org
707.347.6496

Sonoma Valley Leaders launching effort to ensure all residents are Food Secure during COVID-19 pandemic

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Sonoma, CA: Leaders in Sonoma Valley have joined together to launch a broad-based coalition to ensure all Sonoma Valley residents are food secure during the COVID-19 pandemic and shelter-in-place order.

The goal of the new Sonoma Valley Food Security Task Force is to bring together Valley leaders to work collaboratively to mitigate the challenges faced by our community over the coming weeks and months from the economic and social impacts of the coronavirus pandemic. The Task Force will leverage the current organizational capacity and expertise of non-profit organizations that serve Valley residents through increased resources and greater coordination. The Task Force has set a specific goal of shoring up food security.

The Sonoma Valley Food Security Task Force is being coordinated by City of Sonoma Mayor Logan Harvey, Kimberly Blattner, Alcaldessa 2020 and Board President of La Luz Center, Veronica Napoles with the Springs Community Alliance, and Jennifer Gray Thompson, Executive Director of the Rebuild North Bay Foundation, and includes leaders from multiple local organizations, including (but not limited to) Redwood Empire Food Bank, Vintage House, Meals on Wheels, Friends In Sonoma Helping (F.I.S.H.), La Luz Center, Rebuild North Bay Foundation, Sonoma Ecology Center, Sustainable Sonoma, Sonoma Valley Chamber of Commerce, and more. This effort will support the residents of Sonoma Valley, from Schellville to Kenwood.

The focus of the Task Force will be to significantly increase funding resources for local non-profit organizations that provide food programs and other basic needs services, and to shore up the volunteer networks that will be needed to ensure that food is promptly and properly distributed throughout the valley.

The Task Force is leading a campaign to raise funds to support local food security programs. By going now to www.sonomacity.org/food-security, community members can learn more about how to financially support the work of key service providers such as Redwood Empire Food Bank, F.I.S.H., La Luz Center, and SOS/The Haven.

The majority of Sonoma Valley's existing volunteer base is made up of dedicated residents aged 65 years and older, who have higher risk from COVID-19. With many regular volunteers unable to fulfill their normal roles, local organizations have struggled to find replacements. As the need for services surges as a result of the coronavirus crisis, the need for new volunteer support is immediate and acutely felt in Sonoma Valley.

Led by the Sonoma Ecology Center and Sustainable Sonoma, the Task Force will be launching a volunteer web page at www.sonomavalleyvolunteers.org to help match non-profits and volunteers for this specific emergency. This website will be a clearinghouse for all non-profits in the Valley and allow new volunteers to sign up with the service provider of their choice. The website will be live on Wednesday (3/25) and will be regularly updated with new volunteer opportunities.

“When we work together, we accomplish far more. Sonoma Valley organizations have experience in serving our community during disasters. While the length of this pandemic is unknown, the commitment to our community is certain. Together, we can flatten the curve, inspire a new generation of volunteers, and ensure that the needs of our non-profits are taken care of” said Mayor Harvey.

Updates and links to task force resources will be available on the City’s website at www.sonomacity.org/coronavirus-resources and via email notifications from the City of Sonoma. Subscribe to receive e-newsletters at www.sonomacity.org/subscribe.

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Sidebar: List of organizations that are part of the initial Task Force discussions:

Vintage House
Sonoma Valley School District
Sonoma Valley Education Foundation
La Luz
Friends in Sonoma Helping (FISH)
SOS/The Haven
Sonoma Valley Chamber of Commerce
Sonoma Ecology Center
Sustainable Sonoma
Rebuild North Bay
Impact 100
Volunteer Center of Sonoma County
Meals on Wheels

Additional Redwood Empire Food Bank partners:

Village Green II Senior Apartments
FAHA
Oak Ridge
First Congregational Church
St. Leo's Church

Public sector partners include the City of Sonoma, Supervisor Susan Gorin, State Senator Bill Dodd, and Congressman Mike Thompson.