



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Mendo Food Network and Fort Bragg Food Bank Face Federal Budget Cuts**

**Fort Bragg, CA, April 17, 2025:** On April 15, Mendo Food Network faced a difficult decision to lay off two of our valuable employees. We made this decision with heavy hearts, through no fault of our employees. We appreciate all of their work, and the Mendo Food Network will surely miss their dedication and expertise.

In the face of federal budget cuts, the Mendo Food Network struggles to maintain our administrative and program costs. We take this opportunity to explain to our community the impact of these cuts for the MFN and our partner food banks, kitchens, pantries, and more.

Running a food bank can often be feast or famine, especially so in small, rural communities like ours. We do our best to support our employees and provide as many programs to our community as possible.

However, funding can be complicated, especially with about 40% of our funding coming from private and government grants. Such grants are very specific about what the funds may be allocated toward. For example, from 2021 to 2026, we have benefited from a million-dollar food bank capacity grant, which allowed us to purchase our new truck, refrigerator, warehouse, and storage capacity for partner food banks, pantries, soup kitchens, and more. The purpose of this grant was to fund equipment used to increase the capacity of the food safety network in California. It could NOT have been allocated to food sourcing or administrative costs.

With current cuts to federal support, we are seeing a significant and increasing impact on our ability to source food, pay employees, and maintain programs. Last year, we received \$72,497 in administrative funding from the Commodity Credit Corporation. This year, we have already lost \$21,303 from Phase 1 of 3 of the same program, and expect this to continue for the subsequent two phases. Last year, we received food valued at \$103,477 per quarter, which we do not expect to receive this year.

In addition to facing employee layoffs, we have already had to adjust program availability, cutting Curbside pick-up at the Fort Bragg Food Bank on Thursdays. Our executive director has already volunteered to take a pay cut, as has at least one other employee. Our board and management are discussing grant options and increasing fundraising efforts. We know our responsibility is to do our best for the Mendo Food Network. We are also responsible for maintaining transparency and honesty with our clients and community.

We are pleading with our community to help however you can. If you have the financial means, please support us by donating. If you have the time, please support us by volunteering. If you have the resources, please support us by supplementing our food losses with what you can. If you have access to any form of media or news sources, please support us by spreading the word. Our county's food resources network needs your help now.

Sincerely,

Amanda Friscia

Executive Director

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Mendocino Food and Nutrition Program Inc. is a 501(c)(3) organization. Our Federal Tax ID Number is 94-2577092.