



## **San Diego Food Bank – Press Release**

Contact: Chris Carter  
619-857-2314  
ccarter@sandiegofoodbank.org  
[www.sandiegofoodbank.org](http://www.sandiegofoodbank.org)

**For immediate release:**

### **San Diego Food Bank to seek city support for “San Diego Community Cares Project” at City Hall Food Stamp hearing**

San Diego, Calif – Jan. 13, 2009 – San Diego Food Bank Chairman Eugene “Mitch” Mitchell will appear before the City Council’s Public Safety & Neighborhood Services Committee at a hearing on Wednesday on Food Stamp participation in San Diego.

Mitchell will seek city support for an initiative called the San Diego Community Cares Project that will help the Food Bank’s over 200,000 recipients apply for Food Stamps and a range of underutilized programs at its food distributions across the county.

The committee will hear about the Food Stamp program from the Director of the San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency and expert witnesses from local hunger relief organizations.

Over 70% of eligible residents do not receive Food Stamps in San Diego County. Currently 120,669 people in the county receive Food Stamps. Of this number, 76,731 are children. According to 2006 U.S. Census data, over 480,000 people in San Diego County either live in poverty or in “low-income” households and face food insecurity. 181,000 are children under 12.

“The deepening economic recession is forcing tens of thousands of people to turn to the San Diego Food Bank for help every week,” said Mitchell. “While we provide emergency relief to families in need, the real solution will be expanding Food Stamp coverage in our

county to ensure that families, children and fixed-income seniors don't have to face hunger.”

At the committee hearing, Mitchell will seek city support for the new project led by the San Diego Food Bank in partnership with 15 organizations.

The project's key objective will be to sign up eligible individuals for the Food Stamp program while they wait in the Food Bank's food distribution lines. The initiative will also use the Food Bank's food distributions as a venue for government, corporate and charitable organizations to promote widely underutilized programs for a range of services including housing, employment, utilities and medical care.

Commenting on the new initiative Mitchell said, “The San Diego Food Bank distributes food to over 200,000 people in the community so we are ideally placed on the front-line to sign up people for Food Stamps and let them know about all of the other programs they qualify for but most likely won't know about. We have lap tops, a team of expert volunteers and 10 distribution sites ready to go. In this economy we need to provide food assistance and information about available services to assist families affected by the deepening recession.”

**Editors Notes:**

**Committee meeting details (the meeting is open to the media and public):**

*Examination of Food Stamp Participation in San Diego*  
Committee on Public Safety and Neighborhood Services  
Wednesday, 2.00 p.m., Council Committee Room, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor,  
City Administration Building, 202 C Street, San Diego, 92101

**Witnesses appearing before the committee hearing:**

Eugene “Mitch” Mitchell, Chairman, San Diego Food Bank  
Richard Barrera, Board Member, San Diego Unified School District  
Nick Macchione, Director, San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency  
Jennifer Tracy, Food Stamp Outreach Coordinator, San Diego Hunger Coalition

**Committee members:** Marti Emerald (Chair), Tony Young (Vice Chair), Todd Gloria, and Sherri Lightner.

**For witnesses' proposals and Power Point Presentations visit:**

[http://docs.sandiego.gov/ccagenda\\_psn/p090114.pdf](http://docs.sandiego.gov/ccagenda_psn/p090114.pdf)

**Members of the San Diego Community Cares Project:**

211 San Diego

American Red Cross

AT&T

Armed Services Y.M.C.A.

Council of Community Clinics

Family Health Centers

Elder Help of San Diego

Kaiser Permanente San Diego

Manpower San Diego

Meals on Wheels

San Diego Union Tribune

San Diego Y.W.C.A.

SDG&E

South Bay Community Services

United Way of San Diego

Urban League of San Diego County

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