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## **STEVEN LOYA JOINS YOLO FOOD BANK AS DIRECTOR OF PHILANTHROPIC ENGAGEMENT DURING A PIVOTAL TIME FOR THE ORGANIZATION**

Initiatives leading to healthy long-term outcomes for Yolo County residents that pivot to more of a resilient, intentional approach are guiding Yolo Food Bank's current efforts. To support this work of helping to create a robust, equitable and sustainable local food system, the organization has announced Steven Loya as their new director of philanthropic engagement. Loya's first day with Yolo Food Bank was February 14th.

As the state of California adopts an endemic virus policy, organizations providing essential needs to the masses – such as Yolo Food Bank – are also beginning to reimagine how to better serve the community. Ushering in a new chapter for the organization that prioritizes food equity, Yolo Food Bank recently announced [updated mission and vision statements](#) and a theory of change documenting the pathways to achieving the envisioned outcomes. Endeavoring to take a deeper, more systemic look at the underlying complex challenges badgering community members who are facing food insecurity, Yolo Food Bank is:

- Intentionally increasing the nutritional content of the food that is distributed
- Enhancing availability of culturally appropriate options that honor what's familiar and nourishing for diverse populations
- Providing foods easily combined to create healthy and appealing meals

“Yolo Food Bank is evolving in the way it serves the community by becoming more closely attuned to our neighbors’ needs,” explained Yolo Food Bank Executive Director Michael Bisch. “Hiring Loya is in alignment with this refined focus, as Yolo Food Bank prioritizes acquiring staff members with deep local expertise who are inspired by the new mission.”

“Growing up in Woodland and having so many personal ties throughout the region gives me a unique motivation to work hard to serve the needs of the Yolo County community,” said Loya. “Aiding those who are struggling to meet their basic needs is an issue I have been committed to and have been passionate about throughout my life. I

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am honored to have the opportunity to help further the important mission of Yolo Food Bank.”

Loya brings more than a decade of philanthropic development experience to his role at Yolo Food Bank. While at his alma mater California State University, Chico for nearly ten years, he focused on frontline fundraising, annual giving, philanthropic relationship building, and donor engagement. Loya achieved numerous accomplishments during his time there, including supporting and funding the Chico State Basic Needs Project, which addresses food and housing insecurity at the university. Loya also brings relevant experience from his most recent role as assistant director of development for the College of Letters and Science at the University of California, Davis where he focused on increasing engagement and philanthropic activity, securing major gifts, and overseeing volunteer boards. Committed to the local community, Loya currently serves as the volunteer president of the Woodland High School Music Boosters, strategically fundraising and advocating for access to educational opportunities and the arts.

In response to heightened demand for food assistance in Yolo County due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Yolo Food Bank is now distributing nearly one million pounds of food at over 130 food distributions per month. This includes Yolo Food Bank’s direct distribution programs (Eat Well Yolo, Eat Home Yolo, and Kids Farmers Market), as well as via more than 80 nonprofit partner organizations countywide.

The increased scale of Yolo Food Bank’s response has necessitated a larger philanthropic engagement department and the use of new fundraising strategies. The organization has also prioritized learning from and centering the communities it serves through qualitative data collection efforts, allowing for a deeper understanding of the issues underpinning food and nutrition insecurity in Yolo County, according to Bisch. With insightful feedback to refine its programs and partnerships, Yolo Food Bank is honing a measured and informed response to regional food insecurity.

“Steven brings unique philanthropic engagement skills to Yolo Food Bank and I am confident that he will mobilize increased support for countywide food and nutrition security through his inspired leadership and his deep connections with the Yolo County community,” shared Yolo Food Bank Executive Director Michael Bisch. “Cultivating sustained philanthropic engagement and community service is critical to providing desperately needed services to hard-pressed individuals, especially as our organization deploys more resources to tackling food equity initiatives this year.”

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Loya's role will be focused on planning, directing, and implementing all aspects of fundraising required to achieve the mission of Yolo Food Bank. The director of philanthropic engagement role is essential as the organization receives minimal government support and is more than 90% funded by private donors.

"I look forward to building on Yolo Food Bank's fundraising success to further expand the organization's impact on the county," said Loya. "Our benefactors are vital to our success, and I'm excited to continue to deepen and expand those relationships."

Uniquely positioned to increase food equity in Yolo County, Yolo Food Bank is committed to building a community that thrives, not just survives. To donate, volunteer, or learn more about advancing food security, visit [yolofoodbank.org](http://yolofoodbank.org).

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