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**OPEIU and The San Francisco Marin Food Bank
Have Ratified Their First Labor Contract**

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CONTACT:

Emily Citraro
emily.citraro@sfmfoodbankunion.org
650-439-0418
www.sfmfoodbankunion.org

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA - On September 16, 2020, 78% of workers at the San Francisco-Marin Food Bank voted to ratify a three-year labor contract, and will work on implementation in the coming weeks. They are represented by The Office and Professional Employees International Union, Local 29 (OPEIU). This is the first union contract in the history of the 33-year-old San Francisco-Marin Food Bank and the first of its kind in the nation. An essential business in the time of COVID19 and Wildfire season, the Food Bank provides food to over 30,000 households in San Francisco and Marin Counties every week.

The workers negotiated a contract while continuing the essential work of the Food Bank during the COVID-19 pandemic and wildfire season. They worked long hours responding to increased demand of food insecure people, risked their health to feed people without service interruptions, and dealt with issues of racial inequities inside the workplace and in the community.

Workers at the San Francisco-Marin Food Bank look forward to a productive and positive ongoing relationship with leadership and management. However, they remain cautiously optimistic because there were repeated attempts at anti-union tactics over the course of the last year. The leadership team initially hired a notorious anti-union law firm, terminated employees without union representation, spread misinformation, and created a hostile workplace by threatening staff and amplifying anti-union voices.

The workers hope that leadership and management may come to realize that the goal of the union is to restore decency in the workplace, enable staff to freely speak up about ways to improve services without fear of reprisal, protect staff from being unjustly fired before they've cultivated meaningful relationships in the community, increase cultural competency, end bias by providing a legally binding grievance procedure to deal with racism in the workplace, ensure equal opportunity for professional advancement, establish racial and gender pay equity, and cultivate a culture of accountability and professionalism in the organization.

Food bankers are embarking on a new era of justice and integrity in the workplace and in The SF Bay Area. A stronger voice in the workplace means that workers can amplify the voices of the most vulnerable people in San Francisco and Marin Counties. The workers at The San Francisco Marin Food Bank, uphold the mission of the Food Bank, and believe that empowered workers lead to an empowered workplace, lead to an empowered community and beyond.

The newly organized Food Bankers hope their story can become a blueprint for how essential workers can meet the cultural moment in this nation's history. The union hopes its success can inspire workplaces in the ways to protect the health of workers during a pandemic, ensure safety protocols during natural disasters, advance racial equity, and uphold workers rights and wages during an economically turbulent time in the nation's history.

Highlights of the San Francisco Marin Food Bank Union contract include:

- Health and Safety Committee so that employees remain protected during the COVID19 Pandemic and Wildfire season and throughout the year
- Improved employer covered Health Insurance premiums to more closely match other Bay Area Food Banks
- Protected employment status to enable employees to discuss difficult topics like issues of institutional racism
- An added floating holiday to enable employees to celebrate Juneteenth, Cesar Chavez Day, or a religious holiday of their choice
- Salary floors and pay transparency to ensure racial and gender pay equity
- 3% guaranteed wage increase for all workers in the next 3 years, where in the past employees received performance based raises of as little as \$0.05 or 1% increases.
- Improved phone reimbursements for employees who had to use their own cell and data plans to conduct work
- Increase pay for employees that translate and interpret for the community in Chinese, Spanish, Russian, Tagalog, or other languages

About the Workers at the San Francisco Marin Food Bank

The employees at the San Francisco Marin Food Bank elected 6 staff to represent them during contract negotiations which began on January 14, 2020 in-person and concluded on September 2, 2020 via Zoom meetings to ensure social distancing protocols. The union was initially recognized with an election on October 31, 2019, with a 75% vote in the affirmative. The union is wall-to-wall and represents over 100 employees. The precipitating cause for unionization occurred when an employee was ignored for bringing up issues of institutional racism at the Food Bank, among other things. The proximate cause for unionization occurred when leadership at the Food Bank began indiscriminately firing and reorganizing many staff, thus threatening long-standing community relationships and the overall mission of the Food Bank. The Union believes strongly that by protecting the rights of workers, the staff can focus fully on ending hunger and thus effectuate social change in San Francisco and Marin Counties.

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