



# FOOD For Lane County

770 Bailey Hill Road  
Eugene, OR 97402  
phone (541) 343-2822  
fax (541) 343-5019  
info@foodforlaneconomy.org  
[www.foodforlaneconomy.org](http://www.foodforlaneconomy.org)

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March 19, 2013

Dear Members of the Ways and Means Subcommittee,

I am pleased to offer this written statement as a follow-up to my in-person public testimony to the Committee today. I represent FOOD for Lane County and the Oregon Food Bank Network. We serve all residents of Oregon who are working hard to make ends meet, but still are struggling to put food on the table. The Oregon Hunger Response Fund has been a critical, vital link in helping us to meet the need. Let me tell you how we've used Oregon's investment at my food bank for capacity-building.

The Olivos family—a dad, mom, and four children ages 12 through 18 months --have lived near Cottage Grove for over 15 years. The father, Jorge, lost his good-paying construction job in 2008 due to lack of work. Unable to afford rent any longer, the family loaded up in their car and was living out of that car in the rest stop along Interstate 5 between Cottage Grove and Eugene. A truck driver told them about the food pantry in Cottage Grove, which is one of FOOD for Lane County's distribution sites. They were afraid to go, as they have never had to ask for help before. The Oregon Hunger Response Fund has helped us help families just like the Olivos family. With part of those funds, we've been able to hire a Multicultural Outreach Coordinator who supports all of FOOD for Lane County's distribution sites with ensuring that there are bilingual volunteers, staff, and signs and forms in both English and Spanish to help everyone who needs help. When the Olivos family went, they found that the food pantry in Cottage Grove was able to help them with their immediate food needs, and also connect them with other resources that put them back into stable housing and back in the job market. Due to the work of the Multicultural Outreach initiative, Spanish calls to the front desk have increased 64%, the pounds of culturally appropriate food distributed has increased from approximately 1,000 pounds to 20,747 pounds, and the percentage of food box clients who self-identify as Hispanic/Latino has increased from 6.2% to 9.7%.

The second key area in which Oregon Hunger Response Fund has been critical is to increase our capacity to capture donated food and bring it to the food bank. We've added a Food Resource Developer position to oversee the Fresh Alliance Program and food drives at FOOD for Lane County. She has added 15 new food drives, while continuing to retain a portfolio of nearly 600 established food drives. These drives brought in over \$120,000 in funds and 560,000 pounds in food. She added four new grocery stores this past fiscal year. The grocery store food recovery program in Lane County brought in 1.2 million pounds of perishable food that otherwise would have been thrown out.

Both of these positions are partially funded by Oregon Hunger Response Fund, grants, and locally donations. We've been able to reach more people, reach more diverse populations, and bring in more donated food because of you. The funds are critical--and they *are* what has allowed us to meet the increasing demands for our services during the recession. The Oregon Food Bank Network is asking for \$750,000 additional in this fund to continue to address the growing need for emergency food services in Lane County and across the state. We'll continue to use the funds judiciously to address key areas of need in each county and use it to leverage local community resources.

Sincerely,

*Karen Edmonds*

FOOD for Lane County is an equal opportunity provider and a member of



United Way  
of Lane County



Karen Edmonds  
Programs and Services Director

and the Oregon Food Bank Network