



Partners for a
Hunger-Free Oregon

Ending hunger before it begins.

To: House and Senate Committees on Health Care
From: Matt Newell-Ching, Public Affairs Director
Subject: HB 5026 - Fund the Farm Direct Nutrition Program
Date: March 8, 2017

Everyone is better off when Oregonians have access to fresh, nutritious, local produce.

Yet the reality is that hunger is increasing in Oregon, despite it decreasing nationwide. The rapidly growing cost of housing in all corners of Oregon means that seniors and families often sacrifice food quality as a strategy to afford rent and other essentials.

The Farm Direct Nutrition Program (FDNP) helps two groups of people gain better access to fresh Oregon produce: low-income seniors, and families with kids under the age of five that participate in the WIC program.

Fully-funding FDNP at \$3.3 million for WIC families and \$434,000 for low-income seniors would make a significant difference in the ability of families with young kids and seniors to be able to afford Oregon produce.

At bare minimum, we request \$300,000 in additional funding for FDNP families participating in WIC (\$200,000) and low-income seniors (\$100,000) above the governor's request of \$260,000. This would maintain current service levels.

How it works

Participating households receive a book of \$4 checks that can be redeemed at farmers markets and farm stands. The total benefit to participating seniors is \$20 per year, and the total benefit to families participating in WIC is \$24 per year.

Eligible participants will receive these funds as \$4 checks, specifically to purchase locally produced fresh fruit and vegetables directly from authorized farmers at farm stands and farmers markets from June 1 to October 31. In 2015, farmers earned \$1.16 million in Farm Direct sales to seniors and WIC families.

If the additional \$300,000 in funding is not restored

- 9,650 fewer WIC participants would be served per year.
- Over 2,400 fewer low-income seniors would be served per year.