



*Testimony on Oregon Housing and Community Services Budget HB 5012
Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development
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Oregon Food Bank requests \$50 million for the Emergency Housing Account and State Homeless Assistance Program.

While many indicators point to Oregon recovering from the Great Recession, the food insecurity rate for Oregon remains at a record-level high. Oregon has a hunger crisis. Despite 50 consecutive months of job growth, according to the USDA, Oregon saw the highest rate spike in hunger in the nation over the last three years. Oregon's food insecurity rate also remains above the national average; it's 16.1 percent as compared to the national average of 13.7 percent.¹

Research from Oregon State University conducted this fall points to the high housing burden for Oregon renters as one of the reasons why hunger rates fail to fall in Oregon. High and ever-increasing rents throughout Oregon places significant strain on Oregonians' budgets, including money for food. Oregon State University research shows that food insecurity rate for Oregon renters is 8.2 percentage points higher than the food insecurity rates for United States renters. And that this increased rate of food insecurity among Oregon renters is new: it was 6 percentage points higher than what was measured in 2010-2012.²

Addressing Oregon's hunger crisis requires addressing Oregon's housing crisis.

The Emergency Housing Account and State Homeless Assistance Program are two important programs at the state level that address Oregon's housing crisis. The funding works to prevent and end homelessness, giving community members the ability to find and remain in stable homes. The funding is flexible, able to meet individual community members' needs for shelter, rent assistance, application fees and the multitude of other housing needs our friends and neighbors have.

The Legislature has the ability to make an immediate impact on the lives of Oregonians struggling to pay their rent, find a safe place to call home, and remain in housing. Oregon Food Bank urges the Legislature to invest \$50 million in the Emergency Housing Account and State Homeless Assistance Program.

¹ Household Food Security in the United States in 2015. United States Department of Agriculture. September 2016.

² Food Insecurity in Oregon: Considering the Role of Housing. Oregon State University School of Public Policy and the Rural Studies Program. October 2016.

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