

TO: Joint Interim Committee on the First Special Session of 2020  
FROM: Matt Newell-Ching, Public Policy Manager, Oregon Food Bank  
RE: Recommendations for the First Special Session  
DATE: June 23, 2020



**Since the beginning of the pandemic, the number of Oregonians facing hunger has doubled.** Oregon State University estimates that 900,000 people — **one in five Oregonians** — are food insecure. Our task is to lead our state through this public health and economic crisis so that we may emerge stronger on the other side.

This is also a moment in which we must act upon a shared conviction to address injustices as old as America itself. We stand with community members in every corner of Oregon who are crying out for racial justice.

### **Oregon Food Bank Supports the Recommendations from the People of Color Caucus**

**We can't end hunger without ending systemic racism.** Oregonians who are Black, Latinx, and Indigenous experience hunger at a rate more than double the rate of Oregonians who are white. There is a direct link between inequities in the criminal justice system and these outcomes. We support the package in front of the legislature which includes banning the use of chokeholds, as well as increasing accountability for officers engaging in misconduct through better investigations, ensuring officers can be removed if necessary, preventing repeat-offenders by creating a statewide database, and requiring officers to report misconduct of other officers. While much more needs to be done re-imagine public safety and end the era of mass incarceration, we believe these are important first steps.

### **Housing Stability is Paramount During the Pandemic**

**We support LC 45**, which includes moratoriums on evictions and foreclosures to ensure Oregonians have a safe place to call home during the pandemic. The bill also increases necessary options for shelters for Oregonians experiencing homelessness, as well as boosting energy assistance (LIHEAP), increasing options to utilize Individual Development Accounts (IDAs), and identifying disparities about the impact of COVID on our communities.

### **End the Practice of Debt-Based Driver License Suspensions**

Debt-based driver license suspensions trap Oregonians in a cycle of poverty. There is a direct line from these suspensions to the racial disparity seen in police citation data for driving while suspended, specifically for Black Oregonians. Ending this practice is a first step towards stopping the harm caused by an unjust fines and fees system made worse by the pandemic.

### **Increase Safe Production Options in the Food Supply Chain**

**We support LC 74** to establish a state inspection program to increase the ability of meat processing plants to safely operate in Oregon when USDA inspectors aren't available.

Oregon Food Bank  
Headquarters /  
Metro Services  
7900 NE 33rd Drive  
Portland, OR 97211  
503-282-0555

Oregon Food Bank  
Washington County  
Services  
1870 NW 173rd Ave  
Beaverton, OR 97006  
503-439-6510

Oregon Food Bank  
Tillamook County  
Services  
PO Box 1344  
Tillamook, OR 97141  
503-842-3154

Oregon Food Bank  
Southeast Oregon  
Services  
773 S Oregon Street  
Ontario, OR 97914  
541-889-9206

Columbia Gorge  
Food Bank  
3610 Crates Way  
The Dalles, OR 97058  
541-370-2333

