



Community Action Program East Central Oregon

SERVING UMATILLA • MORROW • GILLIAM • WHEELER • SHERMAN • WASCO • HOOD RIVER COUNTIES

*Assisting
people to
become
independent,
healthy
and safe.*

MAIN OFFICE

721 SE Third St., Ste. D
Pendleton, OR 97801
541-276-1926
800-752-1139 TOLL FREE
541-276-7541 FAX

FOOD WAREHOUSE

1605 NW 50th Dr.
Pendleton, OR 97801
541-276-5073
541-966-6024 FAX

HERMISTON

1565 N. 1st St., Sp. 1
Hermiston, OR 97838
541-289-7755
800-214-4776 TOLL FREE
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THE DALLES

3641 Klindt Dr.
The Dalles, OR
97058 541-506-3512

March 30, 2020

The Honorable Betsy Johnson
The Honorable Elizabeth Steiner Hayward
The Honorable Dan Rayfield
Co-Chairs of the Joint Ways & Means Committee
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chairs:

Community Action Program of East Central Oregon (CAPECO) Food Share is a regional food bank that serves Gilliam, Morrow, Umatilla, and Wheeler Counties. As a community organization on the front lines of fighting hunger in Oregon during the COVID-19 pandemic one of the reasons that we were able to respond so well was because of Oregon Hunger Response Funds and additional food purchasing provided by the Oregon Legislature. Hunger is an entrenched problem in Oregon and the pandemic is bringing this to light. To continue the ongoing fight against hunger the Oregon Food Bank Network is asking the Legislature to make \$4.56 million the new base budget for the Oregon Hunger Response Fund in the Oregon Department of Human Services budget for the 2021-2023 biennium by rolling up the 2019-2021 one-time funds. For the past several years the Oregon Food Bank Network has received \$4.56 million from the Oregon Hunger Response Fund. If we were to only receive the \$2.9 million allocated in the current base budget it would be detrimental to the agencies and programs that provide food to those in need.

CAPECO Food Share serves as one of 21 Regional Food Banks in the state-wide Oregon Food Bank Network. We partner with Oregon Food Bank, who delivers USDA commodities and donated food to our warehouse in Pendleton. CAPECO then distributes the product to local food pantries and individuals across our four-county region. Due to the pandemic, we have received an increased volume of food to respond to the growing need in the communities that we serve. The influx of food has put pressure on the food bank networks infrastructure, resulting in immediate investments in additional refrigeration, freezers and transportation capacity. To keep our staff and those accessing food assistance safe it was imperative that we alter our operations so an often venerable population could safely receive much needed food.

CAPECO, a non-profit, and our partners have always relied on volunteers to help provide the services that the community needs. Often these volunteers are older adults who generously donate their free time. However, fears related to COVID-19 and the potential vulnerability of volunteers has resulted in a decrease in donated time. This has meant we have had to reallocate staff to fill positions that were traditionally filled by volunteers. CAPECO has been fortunate enough to receive the Oregon Hunger Response Funds that have allowed us to increase our staff capacity to fill this void.



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The pandemic has created many uncertainties for our neighbors throughout Oregon and statistics show the number of people facing food insecurity will continue to grow. In many cases SNAP benefits do not last the entire month which requires them to visit a food pantry. CAPECO's regional network of 16 food pantries provided food to over 61,000 hungry Oregonians in 2020. No Oregonian should be uncertain about where their next meal will come from or how they will feed their family.

During these uncertain times, the Oregon Food Bank Network continues to rely on this critical state funding to provide regional food banks with more resources, support and food across Oregon.

Oregon Hunger Response Funds are vital in serving families throughout our rural region in eastern Oregon.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Tori Colvard

Tori Colvard
Program Manager
CAPECO Food Share

cc

The Honorable Peter Courtney, Senate President
The Honorable Tina Kotek, Speaker of the House
Senator Bill Hansell
Representative Bobby Levy