

TO: SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES, MENTAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY
FROM: Ryan Schoonover, Double Up Food Bucks Program Manager
RE: SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 440 and 555
DATE: February 2, 2021



Chair Gelser and members of the committee,

Oregon Food Bank's mission is to eliminate hunger and its root causes. We pursue this goal in two key ways: we foster community connections to help people access nutritious food today; and we build community power to dismantle systems and policies that drive hunger and poverty. Our Network of 21 regional food banks and 1,400 partner agencies continue to work tirelessly to ensure that Oregonians are able to put food on the table in the wake of this pandemic.

Prior to the pandemic, 1 in 11 Oregonians were food insecure. **Today, nearly 1 in 5 people in our communities face hunger – a dramatic increase.** And the public health and economic impacts of the pandemic have fallen hardest on people who have faced systemic inequities for generations: communities of color, immigrants and refugees, single parents and caregivers, and our trans and gender non-conforming neighbors.

We have the opportunity to rebuild and emerge stronger so that we can end hunger for good in our communities. This is our moment to embrace our shared values, care for each other and take bold action in support of *all* Oregonians.

Double Up Food Bucks: An Essential Investment in Public Health and Our Local Economies

Oregon Food Bank is honored and excited to partner with the Farmers Market Fund, Pacific Northwest Community Supported Agriculture Coalition, Oregon Farmers Markets Association and the American Heart Association to increase access to fresh Oregon-grown produce to food insecure individuals and underserved communities. Senate bills 440 and 555 provide critical funding to support the continued expansion of the SNAP Double Up Food Bucks (DUFB) program to farmers markets and grocery stores across the state. DUFB will provide additional funds directly to SNAP users, thereby increasing affordability and access to Oregon-grown produce from farmers markets, CSAs and grocery stores in underserved communities.

State funds from the 2019 Session launched a pilot to implement DUFB at independent grocery stores across the state. In spite of the challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic, we successfully launched DUFB in eight store locations across seven counties. The pilot worked to develop point-of-sale-technology solutions with four regional tech providers enabling DUFB to seamlessly integrate in the check-out process at grocery stores, easing the SNAP shopper experience and building capacity for retailers to operate the program seven days a week. In the

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



close of this budget year the DUFB program will have supported Oregon families in purchasing \$250,000 of the fruits and vegetables they want and need.

In the next calendar year, Oregon Food Bank is focused on expanding this program to 25+ stores across 15+ counties with a targeted focus on locations that are culturally specific, stores owned by and serving communities of color and rural retailers serving within a food desert. At a time when food insecurity in Oregon has nearly doubled since the beginning of the pandemic, according to a recent report from OSU Policy Analysis Laboratory (OPAL), this is a critical time for continued investment in programs like Double Up Food Bucks.

An estimated one in four Oregonians experienced food insecurity in 2020 – the highest rate in a century. The pandemic has brought hunger and poverty to the doorsteps of thousands of Oregon families for the first time, and the situation is even worse in communities that have faced disproportionate challenges for generations. Double Up Food Bucks provides an opportunity to support these communities, as well as Oregon farmers and local economies – an incredible triple win.

We have heard from our retail partners across the state about the incredible impact DUFB is making in their communities to expand access to nutritious foods. Our Medford store partner shared, “Increasing access to fresh fruits and vegetables for low-income shoppers is a huge benefit for our community. Allowing our shoppers to stretch their grocery budgets – especially during the pandemic when folks are out of work and we have increasing rates of poverty and hunger – and to include more healthy foods in their diets is vitally important to the health of residents in the Rogue Valley.”

Grocery shoppers have also shared the personal impact of accessing fruits and vegetables during the pandemic.

“Due to your excellent program, I have purchased more high-quality organic produce than I normally would. The program brings the overall cost of food down to affordable levels. I love this! I also love anything that benefits our farmers, and helps preserve our critically valuable agricultural land! Thank you so much for DUFB. This is the type of program that restores faith in our governments.” Medford shopper

“I cannot express how grateful and happy I am that this program is being offered, I feel that I am able to have more healthy food in my life. I really hope this program continues and is integrated everywhere else! Thank you from the bottom of my heart to the top of my belly!” Astoria shopper

“It has made healthy organic foods more accessible to me and is a wonderful way to enable people with low incomes to have the right to healthy foods. Health should not be reserved for the wealthy but something cultivated and celebrated by all!” Astoria shopper



“Due to my cancer there isn’t much I can keep down, so I drink fresh smoothies everyday to try and stay healthy and keep food in me because my stomach can handle it, but fruit and veggies that are fresh are REALLY expensive, especially berries, so this helps me so much.” North Portland shopper

The continued expansion of the SNAP Double Up Food Bucks program through Senate Bill 440/555 is an incredible opportunity for Oregon to address three important goals: reducing hunger; supporting families, farmers and economies; and promoting public health. At a critical time when an estimated 25% of Oregonians are food insecure, Oregon Food Bank greatly appreciates your consideration and support of the Double Up Food Bucks program.

Thank you,



Ryan Schoonover
Double Up Food Bucks Program Manager
Oregon Food Bank

