

OREGON HUNGER TASK FORCE

Creating Policies for a Hunger-Free Oregon

To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Human Services
From: Chris Baker, Oregon Hunger Task Force
RE: Testimony in support of HB5026
Date: March 2, 2023

CoChairs Campos and Valderrama, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Chris Baker, and I am the Administrator of the [Oregon Hunger Task Force](#). **This letter is written in support of HB 5026 especially the full funding of the Oregon Department of Human Services Self Sufficiency Programs (SSP) at \$262,487,953.** Among the many vital programs funded by this budget is the Oregon Hunger Task Force, a cross-sector group that was created by the legislature in 1989 to help research hunger and set a clear roadmap for government action and investments to end hunger in Oregon.

The Task Force has supported significant policy achievements and system-wide coordination since its founding. From establishing a state EITC in the 90's, connecting Oregonians to SNAP during the recession, re-investing in TANF in 2015, crafting the nation's leading school meal policy in 2019, and the work on increasing access to basic needs for people attending college in 2021 - Oregon has consistently lead the way. The Oregon Hunger Task Force has proven to be a wise investment over time for the state.

To continue the work of the Oregon Hunger Task Force (OHTF) at current service levels as directed by statute ([ORS 458.532](#)) ODHS must designate \$300K per biennium. The OHTF budget designates these funds to continue to maintain and expand the following work:

EXPAND OHTF MEMBERSHIP TO INCLUDE PEOPLE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE

As directed by the Oregon Legislature in [2021](#), the OHTF is undertaking an initiative to recruit, train, and support task force members with direct lived experience of hunger in Oregon. The OHTF works to mitigate barriers to participation by providing stipends and other support to participants.

CONVENING COMMUNITIES ACROSS OREGON TO SOLVE HUNGER

The OHTF convenes community listening sessions across the state for people impacted by hunger to share their experiences and advise the task force on community needs. It is crucial to the success of this participatory-style research and engagement that community participants receive travel reimbursement, ADA accommodations, translation services, and all other accessibility measures and barrier mitigation activities.

DEVELOP RESPONSIVE STATE AND COMMUNITY-BASED HUNGER INTERVENTIONS DURING TIMES OF CHANGE

The OHTF has built the infrastructure to respond to sudden changes in the landscape that impact nutritional support programs such as SNAP and school meals programs. In the wake of the pandemic, Oregonians continue to experience hunger at increased rates, but pandemic benefit programs are ending. The task force stewards collaborative spaces where stakeholders come together to advance solutions and require significant staff time to maintain these collaborative spaces.

PUBLIC AWARENESS AND ACCOUNTABILITY AROUND HUNGER IN OREGON

The OHTF maintains a website allowing increased accessibility and transparency to the public regarding hunger impacts and policy in Oregon. The website will continue to host OHTF-generated county fact sheets and other important tools for legislators and CBOs to be informed and responsive to their community's needs.

I urge you to please fully fund the Self Sufficiency portion of HB 5026. These funds are critical to the anti-hunger work and the work of the Oregon Hunger Task Force.

With gratitude,



Chris Baker
Administrator, Oregon Hunger Task Force
Legislative Strategist, Partners for a Hunger- Oregon