

TO: Joint Committee on Ways and Means  
FROM: Kim Olson, Oregon Food Bank  
RE: Budget Priorities to Address Hunger and its Root Causes  
DATE: April 8, 2023



Chairs Sanchez and Steiner, and members of the committee,

Oregon Food Bank's mission is "to eliminate hunger and its root causes... *because no one should be hungry.*" We pursue this goal in two key ways: we foster community connections to help people access nutritious food today, and we advocate to change policies that drive hunger and poverty.

At Oregon Food Bank we believe food is a human right. Ending hunger requires a clear vision and bold action, with all of us working together to provide nutritious, culturally-relevant food today and to address the root causes of food insecurity in our communities, like unaffordable housing and child care, and systemic racism, sexism, and transphobia. Today, the rising cost of food and housing is worsening food insecurity. Coupled with the loss of federal food and health care assistance, we expect as many as 1.5 million visits this year from people seeking food assistance – nearly double what we saw pre-pandemic.

We urge Oregon's legislature to take bold action so we can emerge stronger. We commend the legislature for already taking action this session to address homelessness and housing affordability. We would like to highlight several critical budget priorities that - together - will help Oregon on our pathway to ending hunger for good:

### **Food For All Oregonians (SB 610)**

We believe everyone in Oregon should have access to food, no matter where we were born. SB 610 will make food assistance available to all Oregonians who are currently excluded from Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) food benefits due to immigration status or Compact of Free Association (COFA) status. Oregonians who are immigrants make our communities stronger. Community members who are excluded from SNAP are kids, parents, grandparents, college students, entrepreneurs, taxpayers and workers in areas including food production, health care and education. The Food For All Oregonians bill, SB 610, passed out of the Senate Human Services Committee on April 3 with bipartisan support.

### **Budget Requests to Strengthen the Emergency Food System**

The Oregon Food Bank Network has three priorities for the 2023 budget to help meet the increased need, while strengthening our statewide network to ensure food remains available to all who need it, for years to come:

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



- **\$9M for the Oregon Hunger Response Fund** to maintain funding for emergency food distribution efforts statewide. These funds help our rural Food Banks keep their doors open, trucks on the road, and pantries fully stocked.
- **\$10M to fund critical food purchases** through the Oregon Department of Human Services. Funds and food will be distributed to community-based food assistance programs across rural and urban communities, addressing disruptions in food supplies.
- **\$22M to strengthen Oregon's food distribution network** to make one-time investments in regional food banks, ensuring greater capacity to accept, store and transport locally-sourced fruits and vegetables, dairy, protein and pantry staples.

### Double Up Food Bucks (HB 2728)

Double Up Food Bucks Oregon matches SNAP benefits so Oregonians can purchase additional fruits & vegetables. For every dollar spent on SNAP-eligible foods at participating farmers markets, CSA shares, and select independently owned grocery stores, SNAP participants receive an additional dollar to spend on fruits and vegetables, up to \$20 per visit. Double Up generates \$1.80 in further economic activity for every SNAP dollar spent, and this impact is even greater, up to \$3, for purchases on local farm direct produce. HB 2728 passed out of the House Early Childhood and Human Services Committee unanimously on March 8.

### Moving Toward Healthy School Meals for All (Budget Revision in HB 5014)

On March 22, 2023, USDA (which oversees school meals federally), announced a game-changing proposal to reduce child hunger in schools and ensure access to school meals for all, which reduces stigma and boosts student achievement. Hundreds more schools in Oregon will be eligible to serve breakfast and lunch at no charge. A funding revision in HB 5014 will be necessary to ensure the Hunger-Free Schools Account is sufficient to ensure this new option is financially viable as soon as it's available so we can do right by Oregon's kids.

### Oregon Kids' Credit (HB 3235)

Evidence shows this is a proven way to reduce hunger and poverty. In 2021, the federal monthly Child Tax Credit reduced Food Insecurity by 26%. Sadly, that policy expired at the end of 2021. The Oregon Kids' Credit advances racial justice and supports single parents who perform a disproportionate share of uncompensated care work. Children in rural Oregon stand to especially benefit. HB 3535 passed out of the House Early Childhood and Human Services Committee unanimously on March 29.

### Child Care for Oregon (HB 2991, HB 3005, HB 2727, 3027)

We are all better off when kids have a safe place to be while parents are at work. It is critical that we rebuild our child care sector. Together, these proposals will improve access to affordable and inclusive child care. Child care is the work that makes all other work possible.

