



TO: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
FROM: Nancy Mitchell, Executive Director- Food Share of Lincoln County
RE: State Budget
Date: April 14, 2023

Co-Chair Steiner, Co-Chair Sanchez, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Nancy Mitchell, and I am the Executive Director of Food Share of Lincoln County. This year marks my 26th year of advocating for food-insecure families & individuals in Lincoln County.

The rising cost of food and housing has created significant hardships and worsened food insecurity in our communities. Food assistance programs are critical in supporting already stretched household budgets. Even a one-time trip to a food pantry can prevent a senior from going without heat, medication, or transportation. Our network of partner agencies serves over 1600 households a month, many of whom are children, seniors & working families.

As a member of the Oregon Food Bank Statewide Network, I'm asking you to support these three priorities for the 2023 budget.

- **1) \$9M for the Oregon Hunger Response Fund to maintain funding for emergency food distribution efforts statewide.**

OHRF funding has enabled our regional food bank to:

- *Increase the number of food distribution sites and reach underserved populations.*
- *Provide nutrition education to low-income families, teaching basics such as cooking on a budget, reading nutrition labels, and making healthy choices.*
- *Keep our refrigerators running and trucks on the road to store and distribute food to over 20 food pantries, meal sites, and youth & senior programs.*

2) \$10M to fund critical food purchases through the Oregon Department of Human Services

Such funds allow us to purchase additional nutritious and culturally-relevant food for our program sites to offset the decline in donated food. At the same time, these purchases support our economy by working with grocery partners, small business owners, and local farmers.

3) \$22M to strengthen Oregon's food distribution network for one-time infrastructure investments.

We have outgrown our 30-year-old warehouse, and our dry and cold storage space is extremely limited. These funds would allow us to start the process of acquiring buildable property or a more suitable facility to meet the rising need in our community.

These investments are critical to food security in local communities across Oregon, and we urge your support of these requests.

Thank you,

Nancy Mitchell

Food Share of Lincoln County