





It is working.

Our community is working.
Hunger is decreasing.

Our community is vast. Our community includes YOU. It includes every person who is currently or has experienced hunger. It includes our donors and our volunteers. It includes our partners: the amazing regional food banks and service sites throughout Oregon and Southwest Washington. It includes every anti-hunger advocate. It includes every person and organization that invests time and energy to defeat hunger.

And thanks to the efforts and energy and dedication of our ginormous community, hunger is decreasing.

According to the recently-released USDA Household Food Security Study, food insecurity in Oregon dropped by 31 percent from 2015 to 2018. The overall rate of hunger in Oregon is now 11% – about the same rate it was in 2007. Oregon is finally back to the level of hunger we experienced before the Great Recession.

In this report, we will celebrate the progress we have made together. We will celebrate the extraordinary strength of people experiencing hunger. We will lift up our vision for the next ten years. We will rejoice over signs of progress.

A key takeaway from the year: hunger is decreasing – but it is still too high.

- One in nine households in Oregon still experience food insecurity, in line with the national average. This means that more than 480,000 Oregonians struggle to afford food – the equivalent of the combined population of Eugene, Gresham, Bend and Medford.
- Food insecurity among African American and Native American households is more than double the rate of white households in Oregon, and Latinx families face higher rates of hunger.

So we need our community to grow even larger, even stronger. Together we can eliminate the root causes of hunger, for good. Are you with me?

Susannah Morgan, CEO



Mecca's story

At Oregon Food Bank, we know that hunger is not just an individual experience; it's also a community-wide symptom of unequal access and barriers to employment, education, housing and healthcare.

In 2016, a federal mandate kicked in that limited SNAP benefits for able-bodied adults without dependents – unless they worked or volunteered at least 20 hours a month.

Mecca started volunteering at Oregon Food Bank to keep his SNAP benefits.

“But once I was there, I realized where all the [food] assistance I was getting from the churches and the pantries was coming from,” remembers Mecca. “From all the help I got from the food bank, that’s what makes me want to go in every week and volunteer there.”

Mecca experienced congestive heart failure when he lived on the streets. His whole body filled with fluid, doubling in size. He went blind and he couldn’t walk or breathe. Without a safe and secure home or decent healthcare, he found himself in and out of hospitals.



Finally, after receiving proper medical support and transitional housing in the community, Mecca found the stability to change everything about his nutrition and exercise.

“Once my health got better, I wanted to get out and start doing stuff,” Mecca says. “But I couldn’t really jump into a job situation because they want hours.”

For Mecca, volunteering weekly at Oregon Food Bank is central to his new wellness plan. He also handles food distribution for the pantry he runs in his affordable housing complex.

“My volunteer work is what I’m proud of right now,” Mecca says with a grin. “The feeling of helping people like I was helped. It gets into you and you want to keep doing it.”

At Oregon Food Bank, we believe in community-led change – and our work to create hunger-free communities is led by people who have first-hand experience of hunger, like Mecca.



“My volunteer work is what I’m proud of”



Our 10-year Vision

We believe food is a basic human right.

We envision resilient communities throughout Oregon and Southwest Washington that never go hungry.

Hunger is not just one empty stomach or an individual experience. Hunger is a community-wide symptom of exclusion, of not having enough – not having enough nutritious food, enough income, enough power, enough represented voice. Hunger is a symptom of barriers to employment, education, housing and healthcare.

We all experience the effects of hunger in our communities. But together we can build communities that never go hungry. We can build communities where every voice matters. We can build communities that share responsibility for each other and the common good. Because when we share prosperity, we all benefit.

To achieve this bold vision, Oregon Food Bank will build community connections to help people access nutritious food today – and we will build community power to eliminate the root causes of hunger, for good.

Together, we are building:

- **A new leadership.** People who have experienced hunger are the experts on hunger. And it's these

experts who will serve as project planners, advocates, volunteers, community organizers, food bank and agency staff.

- **A new story.** We will spread a new, true story of hunger. Hunger and poverty are not primarily the result of personal choices; they are deeply rooted in systems that deny opportunity and provide insufficient safety nets for common crises, such as illness.
- **A new bounty.** Nutritious, locally grown food is abundant in the Pacific Northwest. We will rally the food industry – growers, manufacturers, retailers and more – as partners in ensuring that this bounty flows through the food assistance system.
- **A new local focus.** We will honor local expertise. The best ideas for community prosperity are developed by and with local, representative leadership – and flourish when rooted in regional, statewide and national networks.
- **A new health partnership.** We will intertwine food assistance and healthcare systems – recognizing that nutrition is key to life-long health, and health is critical to inclusion.
- **A new wave.** We will build a movement. More than a million people in Oregon and Southwest Washington experience hunger or volunteer at a food assistance program. Together, we are powerful beyond measure. We will channel that power into action on public policies that create communities that never go hungry. And we will raise resources at a scale that changes the rules of the game.

Our Impact in 2018

54.5 MILLION MEALS

worth of food were shared with our clients



31% OF TOTAL FOOD

delivered was fresh or frozen produce, a new high



2,286 ACTIONS

organized to protect SNAP benefits



3,300 PEOPLE

participated in client-led educational programming



38,000 VOLUNTEERS

donated 172,000 hours of service





Signs of Systemic Progress

According to the recently-released USDA Household Food Security Study, food insecurity in Oregon dropped by 31 percent from 2015 to 2018. The overall rate of hunger in Oregon is now 11% – about the same rate it was in 2007. Oregon is finally back to the level of hunger we experienced before the Great Recession.

Let that sink in: Oregon, in the past year, has finally RETURNED to the rate of hunger we experienced in 2008. It took a decade for this to happen because our neighbors facing hunger did not have access to living wages or affordable housing. The economic recovery did not reach everyone equally.

We know that systemic problems require systemic solutions. And we are proud to celebrate significant progress in tackling challenges that drive hunger.

Minimum Wage Reform Bears Fruit. In 2015 and 2016, Oregon Food Bank advocated actively for a moderate, staged increase to the minimum wage – indexed to inflation with allowances for the differences in urban and rural communities. The Oregon Legislature essentially did just that, passing a landmark minimum wage law that created a three-tiered rate that requires employers

to provide increases annually from 2016 to 2022. At Oregon Food Bank, we now hear from folks who no longer need food assistance because their wages have increased. Several other states also enacted minimum wage increases in the past few years, including Nebraska, Colorado and New York. The recent USDA Food Security Study shows a correlation between states that saw big decreases in hunger and those that passed minimum wage increases.

Legislation Positions Students For Success.

This Spring, Oregon took another great step forward with the Student Success Act. The State Legislature passed a massive package that significantly increases investments in education. In the 2020-21 school year, three in five students in Oregon will attend a school serving meals to all kids at no charge. The remaining schools will raise income eligibility for families and students to match eligibility for children's health insurance – 300% of the federal poverty line. Once these changes are implemented, Oregon will be doing more than any other state to tackle childhood hunger.

These systemic changes decrease hunger. And they give us hope that we can build resilient communities that never go hungry.

School Pantries: Community with a Side Helping of Food

A school pantry is a food pantry that operates regularly in a school – in the gym, community resource room or wherever they can find the space. Despite the prosaic name, these pantries are an amazing focus of community life for schools ... that also distribute nutritious food.

Oregon Food Bank has opened and is supporting 40 school-based food pantries – a 200% increase over the past five years. We have leaned into school pantries because they address both sides of our mission: eliminating hunger and its root causes.

One of the profound root causes of hunger is institutionalized racism. School pantries have become one of most effective ways to collaborate with communities of color – and 75% of the people who receive food through school pantries identify as an ethnicity other than white, with more than 40 different languages spoken. Community members are leading change in the pantry and at school.

Another profound contributing factor of hunger is social isolation. Hunger flourishes when people don't have family, friends or neighbors

to whom they can turn. At Oregon Food Bank we wondered: “Can we use food distribution as a mechanism to build social networks?” School pantries have shown the answer is a resounding “YES!” An astonishing 28% of people who receive food through a school pantry also serve as committed volunteers there.

Yet another contributing factor of hunger is stigma. Food assistance is not evenly available to all, and repeated messages about who is “deserving” can become an insurmountable barrier to seeking help. School pantries are designed to make it easy and comfortable to access food assistance. A school pantry is held in a very public place, is advertised through the usual school networks, and welcomes everyone in the school community.

And, of course, school pantries distribute nutritious food – with a heavy emphasis on fresh, regionally grown produce – which eliminates hunger today.

School pantries demonstrate that we can build resilient communities that never go hungry.



Hunger flourishes when people don't have family, friends or neighbors to whom they can turn.



Feeding the Northwest

Apples. Potatoes. Pears. Onions. Carrots. Melons.

We grow a lot of delicious food in the Northwest – defined here as the states of Oregon, Washington and Idaho. Produce has to meet exacting standards for size, appearance and condition in order to be sold. Which means that there is a lot of extra produce that is too big or slightly the wrong color. Depending on the year, there can also simply be a bumper crop – more than consumers will purchase. For these reasons, Northwest growers end up with a lot of excess nutritious food.

And by a lot, we mean tens of millions of pounds of Northwest-grown produce that could help fill the plates of people facing hunger across the country.

Feeding the Northwest is a collaboration between Oregon Food Bank, Food Lifeline in Seattle, Second Harvest Food Bank in Spokane, the Idaho Foodbank and Feeding Washington. Its goal is to gather up this excess produce, make sure the abundance is well distributed throughout the Northwest, and share the bounty with food banks across the country.

It is wildly successful. In the last year, Feeding the Northwest oversaw the collection and distribution of nearly 49 million pounds of free produce. To visualize this, imagine a line of 18-wheel trucks that stretches for 25 miles.

Oregon growers have contributed between 9 and 14 million pounds of pears annually – above and beyond the 50 to 70 truckloads of pears that Oregon Food Bank distributes throughout our statewide network. And we receive apples regularly from Washington State through the collaboration, to ensure that every person seeking food assistance in Oregon has consistent access to this kid-friendly fruit.

This regional partnership is a shining example of our commitment to build community connections to help people access nutritious, affordable food today. At Oregon Food Bank, we believe that food and health are basic human rights for all. And we know that hunger is not just an individual experience; it is also a community-wide symptom of barriers to employment, education, housing and healthcare. So by building on the strength of programs like Feeding the Northwest, we'll also build community power to eliminate the root causes of hunger for good.

Corporate volunteers are part of our community

Corporate volunteer groups gave more than 27,000 hours of their time this year to help repack food, work in our gardens or take action to end hunger. Many of our corporate partners also support Oregon Food Bank through financial donations alongside volunteer shifts, in workplace giving programs, and by hosting food and fundraising drives. These efforts brought nearly 2.1 million meals to communities across Oregon and Southwest Washington — and we couldn't be more grateful.

"Food is our business, our passion and our best opportunity to make a positive difference in the communities where we operate and live. Too many of our neighbors, many with children, struggle to get food on the table each day. Sysco has the scale and capacity to make a meaningful difference — and the strategic priority for our charitable activities is to direct 75 percent of community donations and volunteerism

activities toward hunger relief. We are so fortunate to partner with Oregon Food Bank and embrace their great mission to eliminate hunger and its root causes."

— Liz Aspray,
President, Sysco
Portland and
member of the
Oregon Food Bank
Board of Directors



Join our Legacy Circle

Ensure that you make a lasting impact on those struggling with hunger by building your family's legacy through a



planned gift to Oregon Food Bank. You can designate a percentage or specific dollar amount and revise at any time.

Contact Jill Beidler, Associate Director of Development at [503.439.1950](tel:503.439.1950) or jbeidler@oregonfoodbank.org for bequest information or other options for including Oregon Food Bank in your estate plan.



7900 NE 33rd Drive, Portland, OR 97211 | 503.282.0555 | oregonfoodbank.org

