

FOOD MATTERS!

FALL 2022



Denis Nyongesa: Building Community Power, Health and Resiliency

As a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Outreach Ambassador and a longtime leader in food system improvement efforts, Denis Nyongesa works primarily with Swahili-speaking community members in Washington County on a host of fronts – including food distributions, vaccine clinics, voter registration and civic engagement drives. Growing up in Kenya to a large family of food growers, sharing and caring about other people has always come naturally.

“I believe that no one should go to bed hungry. Through all these activities, we help families access

the resources, like being a bridge. And we are glad it helps some people, because it could be the reason some people suffer.

There are so many things that I benefit from the community, so I say, ‘what is my way of giving back to the community?’ It’s to do something that will help the community members access resources which otherwise they would have not been aware of, or they would not have access to.”

Read Denis’s full story and join the movement to end hunger at OregonFoodBank.org/Denis 🐦

Join Me in Voting to End Hunger

September means my birthday, but since I'm in my 50s, birthdays just aren't that exciting anymore. Luckily, September also brings something much more important: Hunger Action Month!

Hunger Action Month is a time when people across the country come together to advocate, donate and volunteer in the fight to end hunger. That means you, our incredible community! Your ongoing support fuels our shared mission to eliminate hunger and its root causes. Thank you for all of your hard work — past, present and future.



The last two-plus years have been grueling. Nearly one in five Oregonians have faced food insecurity — not knowing where our next meal might come from. Through it all, I've been so encouraged to know I'm not alone in the work, to see our community stepping up and taking action. Community leaders like Denis — featured on our front cover — and so many others

who are building community power at the intersection of civic engagement and locally-grown, culturally-specific food.

I am fundamentally a hopeful person. I fundamentally believe people are good, and that we want to do the right thing for each other. Now in (cough) middle age, I have consistently found that if I do my part in the work needed to help create communities that never know hunger, then the people around me will join in. First action alone, then action together ... that's how change happens and hope is continually rekindled.

Join me. Take action. Throughout September and beyond, we'll share a host of resources, inspirational stories and opportunities to get involved with a focus on addressing food insecurity at its roots.

You can donate. You can volunteer. And perhaps most important of all, you can get civically engaged. The root cause of hunger is poverty, and poverty itself has root causes in inequities, such as racism, sexism and classism. Because these root causes are systemic, the solutions must be systemic too — from policy change to government investment. Here in Oregon, many of these decisions are made at the ballot box. Which means voters directly decide how we'll address key issues in our communities.

If me and you (and you and you and you) vote to end hunger this year and every year, then we really can end hunger for good. I hope you'll get involved at OregonFoodBank.org/HungerActionMonth 🐾

With love and hope,

Susannah Morgan
CEO, Oregon Food Bank

HUNGER ON THE BALLOT

Hunger Action Month 2022

Hunger Action Month is a time when we all come together to bring focus, attention and action to the fight to end hunger for good. Throughout September and beyond, we'll focus on the root causes of hunger that can be addressed at the ballot box.

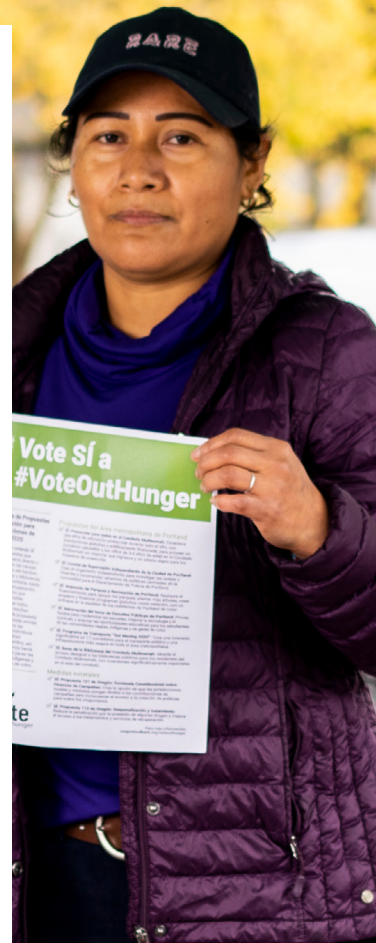
Why? Because so many of the drivers of hunger are addressed — or not addressed — through public policy. And our ability to ensure food reaches hard-hit communities throughout the state depends on robust government investment. So the issues we advance through the legislature and ballot initiatives have a huge impact on our fight to end hunger. And there's no one better to name solutions than those of us who have experienced food insecurity first-hand.

That's where our Policy Leadership Council comes in. Made up entirely of community leaders from rural, urban and suburban communities across the state, the Council draws on lived and professional expertise to determine the best pathways to address food insecurity at its roots. With the Council's leadership, we're shortening the distance between people who experience food insecurity and the decisions that affect us.

While some issues are still being considered, we already know for certain that hunger is on the ballot this fall. Two significant measures endorsed by the Council are summarized in this newsletter. And these aren't the only ballot decisions that will affect hunger and poverty in our communities. Legislators pass laws that impact our families' ability to put food on the table. Governors set budget priorities that determine whether or not our food assistance network has the resources we need. And depending on where you live, you may see initiatives on racial justice, community safety, voting rights and representation, and more — all tied to food insecurity.

So whether or not you're able to vote in Oregon, please sign the pledge to address hunger on the ballot this fall at

OregonFoodBank.org/HungerActionMonth 🐦



Guaranteed Access to Affordable Healthcare

One of the leading anti-hunger ballot initiatives would guarantee access to affordable healthcare in Oregon. The cost of healthcare and food insecurity rates are incredibly intertwined, with studies showing that health challenges tied to hunger cost upwards of \$583 million in Oregon alone.

On the individual level, this means more than \$1,400 in additional health-related costs each year for people already facing hunger and poverty. What's more, nearly 5% of Oregonians report being totally uninsured — and we know that Black, Indigenous, Latine, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities face even greater challenges obtaining health coverage. Consider the burden those additional

costs place on families that are already on the edge, already struggling to make ends meet.

We need to ensure that everyone in our communities has access to nutritious food and affordable care, so that each of us can thrive. That's why our Policy Leadership Council identified this ballot initiative as one of the key anti-hunger ballot initiatives our organization will support this fall. 🌱



Learn More
Oregon Measure 111

OregonFoodBank.org/HungerActionMonth

Removing Slavery from Our Laws

It may seem unbelievable, but the Oregon constitution permits slavery as a form of punishment.

From our founding, the state constitution barred Black families from owning a home, voting or accessing the legal system. Attempting to engage in any of these aspects of regular life was considered a criminal act. And while slavery and involuntary servitude were banned as a standard practice in Oregon, both were allowed as potential punishments for crime — and remain on the books to this day.

When we think about the types of systemic and structural barriers that exist for people facing hunger and poverty, a key example is discrimination and

racism that is explicitly written into the documents our state laws are built from.

To move forward toward a future where everyone in Oregon has access to food and other essential resources, we need to correct the wrongs of the past — especially those that remain today. Our Policy Leadership Council strongly endorses the removal of slavery and involuntary servitude from the state constitution. 🌱



Learn More
Oregon Measure 112

OregonFoodBank.org/HungerActionMonth



Ensuring Food Remains Available to All as Retail Prices Rise

It's no secret that our communities continue to face significant economic disruption in the wake of COVID-19, now coupled with shocks to global food and fuel supplies due to the war in Ukraine. Nearly one in four Oregonians experienced income and job loss over the past two-plus years — and the impact has fallen hardest on the communities that have faced disproportionate hunger and poverty for generations: people of color, immigrants and refugees, single moms and caregivers, and our trans and gender non-conforming neighbors.

Many people are still recovering from the impacts of the pandemic and there's no doubt that the rising cost of food and fuel is worsening food insecurity here in Oregon and across the country. The cost of groceries alone is up at least 10% overall — and that increase is closer to 15% when we look at the cost of meat, fish and dairy. And despite

our scale, food banks also face significant increases in food and fuel costs.

While these challenges are real and significant, it is important that everyone in our community knows that food remains available to all who need it. Our network of 21 Regional Food Banks and 1,400+ food assistance sites is doing everything possible to meet these challenges head-on.

This is an incredibly difficult time for families throughout the region — and the need for continued support is real. The latest wave of COVID-19 and inflation pressures remind us that we can't afford to slow down in our response to this crisis. Whether you're in a position to volunteer or donate, or if you or someone you know is in need of assistance, we have a host of helpful resources and opportunities for action at OregonFoodBank.org 🐦

Make a Big Impact with a Future Gift

When you include Oregon Food Bank in your estate plan, your generosity fosters community connections to help people access nutritious, affordable food today; and builds community power that will eliminate the root causes of hunger once and for all.



Our planned giving team would be happy to speak with you in confidence, with no obligation. To learn more about making a gift to Oregon Food Bank through a charitable gift annuity or a bequest in your estate plan, visit PlannedGiving.OregonFoodBank.org or contact Matthew Maas at 971.223.3410 or LegacyGiving@OregonFoodBank.org 🌱

Thank You for Your Support!

First Tech[®]
federal credit union

"For more than a decade, **First Tech** has been a strong supporter of Oregon Food Bank through grant support and employee volunteerism. We're excited to continue this critical work during Hunger Action Month and we remain committed to helping OFB build resilient communities that never go hungry."

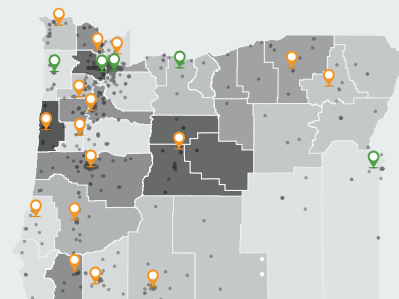
– Sheelagh Bandettini,
Sr. Director, Communications and
Community Engagement



Support from the **Bank of America Foundation** helps ensure food assistance operations continue safely and effectively to help meet the needs of food insecure communities in Oregon and Southwest Washington. Thank you, Bank of America!

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Food is Available to All Who Need It!



Our Network of 1,400+ pantries, free food markets and meal sites are open throughout Oregon and Southwest Washington – with many locations now offering contactless pick-up or delivery options.

If you or someone you know needs support, know that resources are available. From SNAP benefits to housing assistance, program expansions and new initiatives are underway to support families who are struggling in the wake of COVID-19.

Find food assistance sites near you at OregonFoodFinder.org – now available in 14 languages common to the Pacific Northwest!



OregonFoodBank.org
503.282.0555



@oregonfoodbank