



OREGON FOOD BANK

Impact Report 2022

The Good Comes

“Local food purchasing kept some of our local grocery stores afloat during the pandemic.”

A friend and colleague, Tyler Johnson, said these words to me recently. He leads the regional food bank at Community Action Program of East Central Oregon (CAPECO) in Pendleton, providing essential resources and services in Morrow, Gilliam, Wheeler and Umatilla counties.

Tyler’s comment made me think of the Spanish proverb: *“No hay mal que por bien no venga,”* or *“There is nothing bad from which good doesn’t come”*.

We have been through a dreadful few years together. More than a million lives have been lost to COVID-19. Hunger remains at a historic high due to pandemic impacts and high inflation; I anticipate that a breathtaking 1.5 million neighbors will ask for food assistance in our region this year. And communities that have experienced disproportionate rates of hunger for decades have been particularly impacted.

And yet, as my friend observed: out of the bad, the good comes. With unprecedented, sustained support from the State of Oregon and this incredible community, our Oregon Food Bank Network has purchased food in huge quantities and in new ways. CAPECO purchased food at small grocery stores to help meet the demand for food assistance in

the region — supporting local businesses and economies along the way.

The past few years have also shown how much we all depend on neighbors who grow and harvest our food. Alongside many allies, we passed new legislation to protect farmworkers in hot conditions and ensure fair pay for long hours. This major victory wouldn’t have been possible without strong, local leadership — and we’ve invested in the Ambassador program, our Policy Leadership Council, in community grower support, and through regional food banks like CAPECO and Columbia Gorge.

Together, we have weathered the worst rates of hunger in a century. We’ve shown that we can advance public policy to solve hunger at its roots. And most importantly, we are — all of us — more embedded in our communities.

The good comes. We are emerging stronger.

With love and respect,



Susannah Morgan
CEO, Oregon Food Bank





Communities That Never Go Hungry: Our Vision in Action

Meeting Unprecedented Challenges

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. **Nearly 1 in 5 Oregonians experienced income and job loss in recent years.**

And the impact fell hardest on the communities that have faced disproportionate hunger and poverty for generations — Black, Indigenous and Communities of Color, immigrants and refugees, single moms and caregivers, and our trans and gender non-conforming neighbors. As a result, the **Oregon Food Bank Network** saw an unprecedented need for emergency food assistance throughout Oregon and Southwest Washington — nearly 1.7 million people in 2020 and over 1.2 million in 2021.

Many of us are still recovering from the impacts of the pandemic, and any additional pressure on income or the cost of living makes it even more difficult for families to make ends meet. 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 — even higher when we look at the cost of meat, fish and dairy. This is happening at a time when

lower-income households already spend more than a third of our budgets on food.

Whether through our emergency food assistance network or critical programs like SNAP and WIC, the number of people seeking support is again on the rise. A local pantry shared that demand for food assistance was up 34% over last year, on top of the huge increase they saw in 2021. Free food markets in the Portland area reported seeing more than a thousand new families in a single month, many who aren't able to make ends meet even with two full-time incomes. In the Gorge, agencies are working with many families they haven't seen since the peak of the pandemic. And the amount of food local agencies are ordering from our central warehouse is up overall — a key indicator of rising demand.

This is an incredibly challenging time for people throughout the region — and the need for continued support is real. It took an incredible, unprecedented government and community response to prevent hunger from becoming another symptom of COVID-19. And the latest wave of COVID and inflation pressures remind us that we can't afford to slow down in our response to this crisis.

Coming Together for Change

Across the Oregon Food Bank Network, we see the economic impact of the pandemic and rising food and fuel costs each and every day. But we have also seen our communities rise together to address hunger at its roots. We have seen an outpouring of community generosity through time, money and energy that has been nothing short of phenomenal. We have cared for each other in large and small ways — uncovering new power to drive collective change along the way.

The layered challenges we've faced reinforce what many of us have long known: that hunger is not just an individual experience or lone empty stomach. Hunger is a communitywide symptom of exclusion, of not having enough — not having enough nutritious food, enough income, enough power, enough representation in decisions that affect us. Hunger is a symptom of barriers to employment, education, housing and healthcare. We all experience the effects of hunger in our communities. And together, we can build communities that share responsibility for each other and the common good. We can build communities where every voice matters. We can build resilient communities that never go hungry.



Realizing Our Bold Vision

Through dedication, persistence and daily action, we've shown that ending hunger in Oregon and Southwest Washington is possible. It's a vision that requires us to meet both the incredible needs spurred by the pandemic and address the policies and systems that drive hunger and poverty. As an organization that touches rural, urban and suburban communities in every corner of our state — and building on the power of food as a shared human experience that connects us all — we have a unique role in mobilizing action to support the long-term health and resilience of our communities.

So, over the next four years, we've committed to:

ENSURE food access throughout the region. We will continue to evolve our food assistance network to meet the dietary, cultural and health needs of all who live in Oregon and Southwest Washington.

EXPAND community leadership at all levels of decision-making. We will increase the presence and power of equity constituencies in every aspect of our work — from partnerships and policies, to staffing and governance.

ADVANCE and expand the Food Justice movement. We will strengthen our partnerships and investments to support the leadership of Black, Indigenous and all People of Color who founded and sustain the Food Justice movement.

CULTIVATE equitable food systems. We will expand access to land and agricultural resources in ways that support the leadership of equity constituencies and honor food workers.

SPREAD the true story of hunger. We will uplift stories and narratives that fundamentally shift common understanding of food insecurity, its root causes and the actions needed to end hunger for good.

STRENGTHEN organizational systems. We will continue to transform our information, fiscal and administrative systems to center equity, love and justice, ensure long-term sustainability, and advance our 10-year vision.

To read more about our vision and commitments to equity and racial justice, visit

OregonFoodBank.org/Vision

By the Numbers

149,572

financial donations, including 7,701 new supporters and 7,189 monthly sustainers

3,500+

actions to advance anti-hunger policy and systems change

12,273

volunteer shifts and actions to help end hunger and its root causes

58%

of all food distributed as fresh or frozen produce, dairy and protein

521,000+

community members found resources via FoodFinder across 14 languages

44.4 million

meals shared across our Network

\$608,000

in Double Up Food Bucks to support families' fresh produce purchases

\$330,000

invested in local food production with BIPOC farmers, Native and Tribal fishers



Addressing Hunger Through Policy Change

Our Policy Leadership Council (PLC) is paving the way toward a future without hunger. In its first full year of leadership at Oregon Food Bank, the Council — made up entirely of community leaders with lived experience of hunger and its root causes — has shortened the distance between

those of us who experience hunger and the decisions that affect us.

This year, the Council put forward a bold agenda of key policy changes and investments to help our communities recover from the pandemic and begin to emerge stronger. Our agenda recognizes

that the root causes of hunger — including poverty, racism, sexism and classism — are systemic. Because of this, the solutions must be systemic too.

Across the state, more than 1,000 members of the Oregon Food Bank community joined partners and allies to advocate for change. Together, we championed policy solutions to the root causes of hunger during a short, five-week legislative session — making our voices heard through calls, texts, emails and public testimony.

As a result, our communities won a host of important policies and legislative investments to #EmergeStronger! This translated to huge strides forward on community-led priorities to enhance racial justice, immigrant rights, economic and food security,



stable homes for all, access to childcare and much more – including:

- **\$87 million invested in our emergency food assistance network** and direct support through the Oregon Worker Relief Fund to families facing hunger and poverty
- **Overtime Protections for Farmworkers** ended Jim Crow-era exclusions from overtime protections and pay for 86,000+ essential agricultural workers
- **Affordable Housing and Houselessness Prevention** invests \$400 million in safe, stable homes for all to address challenges faced by those without stable housing, build and preserve affordable housing, and support homeownership
- **Transforming Justice:** Advanced racial justice by reducing disparities in traffic stops, improving success for people on probation and parole, and investing in communities

Combined, our advocacy at the local, state and federal levels has helped us address hunger at its roots!



“When the individuals who are experiencing the impacts of decisions every day are not at the table, it means we make many policy mistakes that have major implications for people’s lives. And for decades, farmworkers have been excluded from labor rights most workers take for granted.

Farmworkers deserve equal treatment, and the same quality of life as any other workers. They do some of the most important, hard, and dangerous work in one of the largest sectors of our state economy, and they are essential in feeding families across Oregon. We anticipate this legislation will mean a better quality of life for farmworkers – and I am excited to continue the work with our critical partners from the Farmworker Overtime coalition to make Oregon a better place for everyone.”

– **REYNA LOPEZ OSUNA**
Executive Director, PCUN

We Can Take Action Now to Guarantee Food for All Oregonians

Hunger was a crisis in our communities before the pandemic, and the health and economic impacts of COVID-19 have fallen hardest on newly-arrived Oregonians. Immigrants, refugees and Compact of Free Association (COFA) community members, in particular, have long faced higher rates of hunger and poverty in Oregon. Just one example: Latine and Pacific Islander families experienced hunger at twice the rate of White Oregonians pre-pandemic – and this gap has only widened as our communities continue to struggle in COVID’s wake.

Despite significant investments, state food assistance policies continue to leave more than 62,000 Oregonians behind, with programs that exclude huge portions of our communities. Shame, stigma and language barriers are built into existing rules, within a system that traces back to a long history of racism and White supremacy in Oregon. These systemic challenges are layered on top of specific exclusions from vital programs like SNAP (sometimes called “food stamps”) based on immigration status.

Hunger affects everyone in our communities in some way – and when we all have access to food, we’re all better off. Kids do better in school, our families’

health and well-being improves, and our economy thrives through support of local businesses. This is true in every corner of Oregon – in rural, urban and suburban communities alike – and we’re building the community power needed to make food for all Oregonians possible.

That’s why the Food for All Oregonians coalition has introduced legislation to create a state-funded program that ensures everyone in Oregon has access to the food we need. This game-changing policy will:

- Make food assistance available to all Oregonians who are currently excluded due to immigration status
- Provide families with money for groceries that matches federal SNAP food assistance benefits
- Ensure everyone is aware of this vital support through community navigation and outreach, improved language access and more

Together, we’re creating a system that benefits everyone in our communities. Join us and get involved in the campaign to guarantee Food for All Oregonians at Contact@FoodForAllOR.org



“Everyone has the right to food. Food that is accessible, culturally appropriate, and nutritious... [Food for All Oregonians] will be a community-led and community-focused program that will create state funding to fill status-related gaps in SNAP. Food for All Oregonians (FFAO) will address food insecurity for many Oregonians, especially for those who currently face a limbo in their immigration status or are in mixed status households and therefore are not eligible for state or federally funded food assistance programs. Food is a human right. No one in our state should have to go hungry.”

— **PETRONA DOMINGUEZ FRANCISCO**

Adelante Mujeres
Leadership and Advocacy Program Coordinator,
FFAO Steering Committee Member

Ambassadors at the Intersection of Food and Civic Engagement

As a **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Outreach Ambassador**, Denis Nyongesa has made transformative changes within the Swahili-speaking community in Washington County. He works primarily to increase food security and improve individuals' experience with SNAP.

Denis recognizes that hunger is not an individual experience. It is inextricably linked to barriers to employment, education, housing and health care. That's why he begins not with the goal to address a single issue or need, but to build community – to create a space where Swahili-speaking individuals and families feel safe and empowered. A space where parents support each other with childcare, friends give each other rides to the ballot box and

families grab their shovels to help each other build garden plots in their backyards.

To Denis, this sense of community is the foundation that must be laid before it is possible to imagine and work toward a world without hunger. His activism has mobilized the Swahili-speaking community to grow culturally-specific food, register people in the community to vote through grassroots organizing, and increase access to COVID-19 vaccinations.

"No one is an island," Denis shares. "We all need each other. Sometimes we don't realize that, but in the long run, when something hits, when something comes up, I realize that I can't do it on my own. I need help. And that's why we need our community."

A man wearing a blue baseball cap, sunglasses, a black t-shirt with a Columbia logo, and dark pants is leaning over a chain-link fence. He is wearing work gloves and appears to be working in a garden. The garden contains various plants, including tall corn stalks and leafy greens. The background shows a clear sky and some trees.

“I believe that no one should go to bed hungry. I’ve grown up sharing and caring about other people. And if I can help someone in that aspect, I don’t see why I should not.”

— DENIS NYONGESA
SNAP Ambassador

To learn more, visit
OregonFoodBank.org/Denis

Mano Amiga: Mobilizing Communities to End Hunger

Just before the pandemic began, a group of Latine community leaders met to learn about gardening and medicinal herbs at the Oregon Food Bank Learning Gardens. From there, the Latinx Leaders group became deeply involved in civic engagement and community activism efforts – ensuring community members were registered to vote and counted in the 2020 Census.

As the group prepared for door-to-door and in-person civic engagement work, COVID emerged. So they evolved to host phone banks and virtual gatherings, along with information sessions about the legislative session and opportunities to provide testimony. Along the way, an increasing number of community members expressed concern about the pandemic's impact on food access. With support from Oregon

Food Bank, the leaders launched a series of food distributions in the community.

Now known as Mano Amiga, the group has expanded to two regions, hosting bi-monthly food distributions that support hundreds of local families. Their work has helped deepen relationships with other members of the Spanish-speaking community.

Mano Amiga is a beautiful example of many groups across Oregon and Southwest Washington working to increase access to culturally-specific food and mobilize communities to address the root causes of hunger. Their incredible work further proves that communities facing food insecurity are in the strongest position to lift and develop solutions to hunger.



New Investments to Help End Hunger in the Gorge

Sparked by a foundational investment from Anne Naito-Campbell and generous community support, Columbia Gorge Food Bank (CGFB) broke ground this year at their new warehouse and community food center. A much-needed resource for the community, this new home not only positions CGFB to expand food assistance today, but also works to create long-term food security for the entire region.

Opening in late 2022, Columbia Gorge Food Bank's new 11,000-square-foot permanent home will boast a learning kitchen for classes, space for volunteers to receive and repack donations from local farmers, and hybrid meeting space for community partners to host workshops, trainings and more. Longtime partners at Windy River Gleaners Food Pantry and The Dalles Community Backpack Program will co-locate in the Community Food Center, helping the organizations serve the community with new infrastructure and space to grow.

The expansion of access to free, nutritious food and broader anti-hunger efforts comes at a critical time for local families. The Columbia Gorge Food Bank currently serves over 5,000 families per month across more than 35 community partners – so additional space for food storage and distribution is urgently needed. When complete, the new space will dedicate five times more warehouse and community space to the local fight to end hunger and its root causes.

"Until now, this has been one of the most underserved regions in Oregon – and at the outset of the pandemic, there were parts of this region that received no service whatsoever," said Sharon Thornberry, Columbia Gorge Food Bank manager. *"With this new building and resource for the community, we are doing something that not only sets us up to expand food assistance now, but also builds long-term food security for the whole region."*



‘Doubling Up’ Access to Fresh Produce for Area Families

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (often called “SNAP” or “food stamps”) is one of the most direct, efficient ways to increase food security. The Double Up Food Bucks program extends these benefits to increase shoppers’ purchasing power with a dollar-to-dollar match on fresh fruits and vegetables, herbs and plant starts. Double Up is available at participating grocery stores, farmers markets and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) operations across the state.

Double Up Food Bucks also provides an important financial boost to local farmers and grocers. This year, Oregon families purchased more than \$600,000 worth of fruits and vegetables through the program – with more than a quarter of those funds spent at culturally-specific and BIPOC-owned stores. And with support from Oregon Food Bank, Farmers Market Fund and Pacific Northwest CSAs, Double Up is now available in 18 counties! This includes an incredible expansion to 15 new grocery stores in the past year – including Organics to You, Yadanar Halal Market, Fubonn Supermarket, Fossil Mercantile, Chester’s Market (John Day) and Market Place Fresh Foods (La Grande).





How You Can Get Involved

Our vision for resilient communities that never know hunger is only possible through the strength of our community partnerships. There are many ways for you to get involved in the fight to end hunger for good!

Become a Partner

CORPORATE AND ORGANIZATIONAL PARTNERS: Engaged, socially-responsible corporate and organizational partners are key to ending hunger and hunger's root causes. We seek values-aligned collaborators that share our vision – whether through fundraising drives, group volunteer shifts or other local partnerships.

FOOD INDUSTRY PARTNERS: A significant portion of the food we distribute comes through the generosity of incredible partners in the food industry – from local growers, packers, retailers, manufacturers and more. We seek food industry partners that are looking for innovative ways to make their product or expertise stretch further to help the communities we live and work in. Our food resource developers ensure that the fruits of your labor support area families in need of food assistance.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS: Throughout the region, we work with a wide variety of community partners

to advance our mission of eliminating hunger and its root causes. From running food pantries and free food markets, to supporting local BIPOC and Indigenous farmers, to grassroots organizing around anti-hunger policies, we are honored to work with so many passionate and committed individuals and organizations.

Volunteer to support the nearly 1 in 5 community members who have faced hunger in the pandemic's wake. Through your time and effort, there are many ways to support the movement to end hunger and its root causes.

We continue to offer socially-distanced volunteer shifts at our warehouses and out in the community, along with opportunities to make a difference from the comfort of home. Please check our website for the latest shifts and events!

Join us to build a powerful movement. Oregon Food Bank's Advocacy team works year-round to advance anti-hunger policies at the local, state and federal level. Through the concerted efforts of people like you, we can ensure that decision-makers get the message: our communities need investments to keep food flowing today, and we need systemic change to end hunger for good.

Become a Monthly Sustainer as an easy, convenient way to support our work throughout the year. Set up your recurring gift and we will take care of the rest.

Join our Legacy Circle and ensure that your family has a lasting impact through a planned gift to Oregon Food Bank. You can designate a percentage or specific dollar amount and revise at any time.

We greatly appreciate all you do to help end hunger and its root causes! Our team is here to support our shared vision, so please don't hesitate to reach out at Contact@OregonFoodBank.org, 503.282.0555 or @oregonfoodbank on social media.



"Donating helps you see the impact you can have on the world, no matter how big or small it is."

— CATHY
Monthly Sustainer

Together, we can end hunger and its root causes for good.

Learn more and get involved at
OregonFoodBank.org/Get-Involved



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