

FOOD MATTERS!

FALL 2021



HUNGER ACTION MONTH



September is Hunger Action Month!

We know that hunger isn't primarily the result of personal choices. It's caused by barriers to employment, education, housing, healthcare and more — and the unfair systems that keep them in place. Hunger Action Month is a time each year when people across the country join together to volunteer, donate and make our voices heard in the fight to overcome these barriers and end hunger for good.

This year, we're emphasizing key aspects of the Oregon Food Bank community's systemic approach to addressing hunger: efforts to increase food security

in the short- and long-term; expansion of values-based networks that increase economic, racial and gender justice; community-led advocacy to influence decision-making at all levels of government; and transformational work to build an organization that reflects the society we're working toward.

We hope you'll learn more in this issue — and take action at oregonfoodbank.org/hungeractionmonth to ensure our communities can emerge stronger and end hunger for good. 🌱

Making a Difference, Together, During Hunger Action Month

We're in the thick of Hunger Action Month – and the need for your time, activism and financial support has never been greater.

As I write, nearly 300,000 Oregonians have been diagnosed with COVID-19. Thousands have lost loved ones. And the economic disruption has led to hunger, with nearly 1 in 5 of us facing food insecurity in the pandemic's wake.



Over the past year, the Oregon Food Bank Network worked with nearly 1.7 million community members experiencing hunger – almost double our numbers from 2019. We've seen first-hand the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on communities of color, immigrants and migrant communities. And

the current surge in Delta Variant cases is a reminder that we're nowhere near past this public health crisis, let alone the long-term economic effects.

You and I know that hunger was a crisis before the pandemic – and COVID-19 has only worsened the existing disparities and inequities in our communities. Yet my heart is continually full with the incredible outpouring of support, creativity and action the Oregon Food Bank community has offered to meet this crisis head-on.

Throughout Hunger Action Month, we're highlighting several of these community-led efforts and the steps we can all take to emerge stronger. So I hope you'll make a difference today by volunteering, donating, advocating for change – whatever is meaningful to you. Because, together, we can end hunger and its root causes.

Sincerely,



Susannah Morgan
CEO, Oregon Food Bank

P.S. With Hunger Action Month comes a brand new Oregon Food Bank website! Visit oregonfoodbank.org/hungeractionmonth for more information and ways to get involved throughout September and beyond. 🌱



Evolution and Investments to Address Hunger — and its Roots

From the ongoing pandemic, to worsening wildfire seasons, to national momentum in advancing racial justice, this has been a year of challenges and opportunities — and Oregon Food Bank continues to adapt and innovate in pursuit of our vision of resilient communities that never go hungry. Many of our programs and partnerships have evolved to better meet today's extraordinary needs, while also building values-based networks to address hunger's root causes.

Recognizing the pandemic's disproportionate impact, we're providing targeted funding and support to partners working in communities that have long faced hunger and poverty — communities of color, immigrants and refugees, single mothers and caregivers, and trans and gender non-conforming communities. Whether through direct assistance to organizations led by and serving these communities, or dedicated support for the Oregon Worker Relief Fund, our shared efforts have assisted thousands

of families who too often fall through outdated and inadequate social safety nets.

Just one example: our Ambassador program has expanded from a sole focus on garden-based programming to more holistic initiatives that address food insecurity. In the past year alone, this effort has grown to encompass leadership development, organizing and civic engagement in the Congolese, East African, Karen, Palauan and Slavic communities. And many Ambassadors are now forming their own nonprofit organizations with formalized initiatives, from urban farming education to community-led farmers markets.

These efforts are supported by a transformation of Oregon Food Bank's approach to philanthropy. We know our drive toward resilient, hunger-free communities is bigger than any one organization or initiative — and that the most effective solutions come from impacted communities. We hope you'll join us in strengthening regional food systems by supporting local organizations and leaders at the forefront of the anti-hunger movement.

Meet some of these amazing friends and allies at oregonfoodbank.org/allies 🌱

Darwin Robins, Love and the Power of Lived Experience

We know that people who have experienced hunger and its root causes are the true experts — leaders who are best positioned to identify and advance solutions. As an organization, we value lived experience in every aspect of our work, from recruitment and promotion of food bank staff, to the leadership of volunteers and community members.

Throughout September and beyond, we're highlighting colleagues who are transforming our organization to reflect the society we're working toward. Among them is Darwin Robins, an anchor presence in our central warehouse and inspiration for us all in love and generosity.

"What drives me to be a part of OFB is the fact that we need love in our community. Everywhere you look, you see a lot more negative than you see positive," Darwin said. "Whatever little bit of love that I can show — being of assistance to somebody in need — that's what I want to do."

Darwin points to the critical work we do each day to connect communities with resources, right alongside long-term efforts to address hunger's root causes.

"It's very important to have an organization that believes in those values. If we address homelessness...address what the root problem is, and come up with solutions. That's why I work here — because we're addressing these as best we can."

View stories from Darwin and fellow transformational leaders at oregonfoodbank.org/Darwin 🌱



Community Action to Advance Anti-hunger Policies

Oregon Food Bank is proud to support one of the largest food assistance networks in the country, made up of 21 regional food banks and more than 1,400 pantries, markets and meal sites. Even with this scale, we know we can't end hunger for good through emergency food assistance alone. We need true, systemic change to address hunger at its roots.

That's why we advocate for anti-hunger policies and investments at all levels of government. And this month, we're formally launching our Policy Leadership Council as a key step in shortening the distance between people who experience food insecurity and the decisions that affect us. Made up entirely of community members with lived experience, the Council will ensure our policy priorities are determined

and advanced by people who have faced hunger and its root causes.

This is an exciting time for our advocacy efforts at Oregon Food Bank — and we hope you'll get involved! You can meet our Council members, register to vote, sign up for Action Alerts and more at oregonfoodbank.org/takeaction 🌱



Increasing Food Security now and Into the Future

In the midst of supply chain disruptions and natural disasters, the Oregon Food Bank Network has continued to connect hard-hit communities with food and other critical resources. Over the past year, we distributed more than 50 million meals worth of food throughout the region — with an emphasis on fresh produce, dairy, protein and other pantry staples.

Through the expansion of Double Up Food Bucks (DUFb) and distribution of Grocery Gift Cards, we've placed hundreds-of-thousands of dollars directly into the hands of food insecure families. These initiatives improve access to fresh fruits and vegetables for Oregonians participating in SNAP food assistance programs, while supporting regional economies through investments in rural retailers serving known food deserts, locations that offer culturally-specific foods and stores owned by and/or serving communities of color.

As food systems across the state continue to struggle, we're also investing heavily in food purchases from local farmers, producers and manufacturers. Our Fresh Alliance program continues to pair food assistance sites with grocery stores in their communities to ensure perishable items and ready-to-eat meals reach families quickly. And to



ensure people facing hunger know where to find these vital resources, we launched a new FoodFinder app to connect people to food assistance in 14 languages commonly spoken in the Pacific Northwest.

None of this would have been possible without strong government and food industry partnerships, fueled by the incredible generosity of the Oregon Food Bank community. Your ongoing support has kept essential resources and critical information flowing to communities throughout the region. You've been with us every step of the way, and we can't thank you enough for all you've done — and will do — to ensure we can all emerge stronger!

Support this work as a Monthly Sustainer at oregonfoodbank.org/sustainer 🌱

Save the Date: Virtual Oregon Harvest Dinner

Our vision is to build resilient communities that never go hungry. Join us in celebration of our community and our mission at our Oregon Harvest Dinner, happening virtually on Wednesday, October 13, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

You'll hear stories of lived experiences from community members and voices of those working to eliminate root causes of hunger — from legislative action and fighting systemic inequities, to nutrition education and community support.

We dream of a world where no one goes hungry and we believe the way to make this happen is through community action. Learn more and join us at avlaunch.me/ofb 🌱



Thank You for Your Support!



Support from **First Tech Federal Credit Union** as our Hunger Action Month sponsor brought awareness and action to Hunger Action Month. Thank you!



Thank you to **New Seasons** for your work to end hunger and its root causes by investing in equity initiatives and co-creating a stronger community!



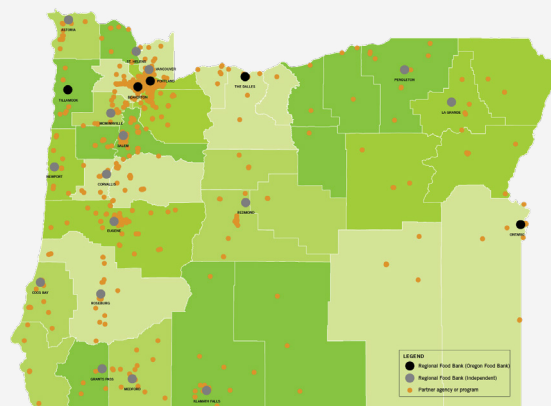
Oregon Harvest Dinner Presenting Sponsor **Fred Meyer** makes a critical difference in our communities with Zero Hunger | Zero Waste, aiming to end hunger and be waste free by 2025.



Thank you **Boeing**, for your support to end hunger in our communities as Oregon Harvest Dinner's Hunger Hero Award sponsor for 2021!

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Food is Available to All Who Need It!



Our Network of 1,400+ pantries and meal sites remains 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

