

# FOOD MATTERS!

SPRING 2024



## Inside Oregon Food Bank: **A Conversation with Celia Ferrer**

*"I'm an immigrant and a single mother. My primary motivation is to be able to give my kids and everyone's kids the best chance at life. I live and breathe that hope." — Celia Ferrer*

As a woman of color, Celia Ferrer knows what it feels like to face challenges in isolation, to be vulnerable to discrimination and to experience food insecurity. Yet Celia is also abundant with hope — and her experiences and identities have shaped her belief in the possibility of a better future.

In her role as the Associate Director of Community Philanthropy, Celia finds inspiration in Oregon Food Bank's commitment to end hunger for good — going beyond traditional food banking models to prevent food insecurity from happening in the first place. And that begins with an honest conversation about what causes hunger and poverty in the first place.

Read Celia's full story and join the movement to end hunger at [OregonFoodBank.org/Celia](https://OregonFoodBank.org/Celia) 🐦

# Black History Month and Food Justice

Across the country, Black communities have been organizing to reclaim access to land they have been excluded from due to historical violence and systemic racism. Redlining, racist financing systems and use of eminent domain are just a few examples of the ways in which land — and therefore economic prosperity, food sovereignty and generational sustainability — has been kept or stolen from Black communities.

In partnership with Indigenous communities and the Indigenous-led Land Back movement, Black communities are organizing to advance land justice. These movements are inextricably linked in their efforts to empower intergenerational economic prosperity and decolonize wealth and land ownership. Land Back efforts fight hunger by building systems that create regenerative, community wealth, combating the root causes of hunger like poverty and racism. In addition, these efforts advocate for greater food security in Black communities through increased access to farming and sovereignty over food production.

In Oregon, Mudbone Grown and the broader Feed'em Freedom Foundation create opportunities for land access and increased food sovereignty for Black Oregonians. Mudbone Grown “is a black-owned farm enterprise that promotes inter-generational community-based farming that creates measurable and sustainable environmental, social, cultural and economic impacts in communities.” ([MudboneGrown.com](https://mudbonegrown.com))

Learn more at [OregonFoodBank.org/BlackLiberation](https://OregonFoodBank.org/BlackLiberation) 🌱



## Take action on Measure 110

Oregon's legislative session is happening now! Through organizing and advocacy, we amplify community needs, address the root causes of hunger and support policies that put equity first.

Our Policy Leadership Council supports strengthening Measure 110. When we have systems that are just, equitable and protect our basic human rights, our communities are safe. To address hunger and promote well-being, we must nurture stability, health and connection. Take action with Partnership for Safety & Justice: [SafetyAndJustice.org/TakeActionM110](https://SafetyAndJustice.org/TakeActionM110) 🌱



## How much have I put on the line?

I seek wisdom in poetry (among other places) — and the first poem I read in 2024 was “The Birthday of the World” by Marge Piercy.

*How much have I put  
on the line for freedom?  
For mine and others?  
As these freedoms are pared,  
sliced and diced, where  
have I spoken out? Who  
have I tried to move?*

Oregon and the United States are still amidst a once-in-a-century hunger crisis. It was sparked by the pandemic and high inflation didn't help, but the fuel for this fire is wealth inequality. For forty years, we have accepted policies that concentrate wealth in the hands of very few, shrunk the middle class and increased the number of us who are just barely getting by.

Research by the Federal Reserve has found that 40 percent of people in the United States cannot come up with \$400 in cash — to fix a car or a hot water heater or make a medical co-payment. This means that 40 percent of us are just getting by.

Around 30 percent of people in Oregon and Southwest Washington asked for food

assistance last year. That is astonishingly high. But if 40 percent of us are just getting by, probably even more of us could benefit from food assistance right now.

And all of us should be working to change the policies that feed wealth inequality. These include policies about healthcare, housing, wages, police accountability, immigration and more. We especially should focus on policies that impact those of us who face disproportionately high rates of hunger — immigrants and refugees, trans and gender expansive people, single mothers and caregivers, BIPOC folks.

It is my honor and responsibility to lead Oregon Food Bank. I do my very best to lead it with humility, and to always hold the question Marge Piercy posed, “How much I have put on the line?” Because our neighbors urgently need me to do more.

Please join me.

**Susannah Morgan**  
President, Oregon Food Bank





## Powering Food Justice through Statewide Organizing

Ending hunger requires the insight and leadership of those who have experienced hunger firsthand. Through advocacy and organizing for food justice across Oregon and Southwest Washington, we collaboratively address the root causes of hunger, led by the valuable perspectives of those who have been directly impacted by these issues.

While food distribution remains a crucial part of our work, our intentional focus on organizing and advocacy recognizes the need to address the root causes of hunger. Distributing enough food today will not end hunger tomorrow. We must tackle the reasons people experience food insecurity, not just give out food, to create lasting change.

Organizing is a part of advocacy and political change that involves bringing people together,

planning and taking action to influence positive transformations in policies and systems. Statewide collaboration between farmers, organizations, families, schools, neighbors and Oregon Food Bank's Policy Leadership Council informs our organizing and advocacy goals. Fostering partnerships and mobilizing support across our region ensures that our approach to ending hunger is effective for communities across the state. Learn more at [OregonFoodBank.org/StatewideOrganizing](https://OregonFoodBank.org/StatewideOrganizing) 🐦

"Power comes from people, people organized to take action together."

—**MOIRA BOWMAN**, Director of  
Advocacy, Oregon Food Bank



# Fostering Equity: Centering Single Mothers and Caregivers to End Hunger

Single mothers face the highest food insecurity rates in the United States and the majority are paid below the poverty line. In Oregon, 1 in 2 Black, Indigenous and Latine single mothers lives below the poverty line.

Across the United States, more than 24 million children live in single-parent households, which are five times as likely to experience poverty as married and dual-income households. Yet programs that help single mothers afford food, housing and utilities are consistently targeted with funding cuts and eligibility restrictions.

At Oregon Food Bank, we center women whose experiences, labor and love are too often undervalued and invisibilized. No one should have to choose between child care and food. We center single mothers and caregivers because they face these impossible choices every day, and we believe in a future where single mothers have their needs met with an abundance of community support. Learn more at

[OregonFoodBank.org/SingleCaregivers](https://OregonFoodBank.org/SingleCaregivers) 🐾



Photo Credit: No Kid Hungry, Channing Johnson

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## Hunger and Humanity: Connecting Food Justice and Child Care

One of the biggest drivers of poverty — and hunger — in Oregon is the child care crisis. In Oregon, families face child care deserts and exorbitant costs in almost every single county. Single parents, women, lower-income families, families of color and families in rural regions are the hardest hit by the lack of access and affordability. Learn more at [OregonFoodBank.org/ChildCare](https://OregonFoodBank.org/ChildCare) 🐾



Photo Credit: No Kid Hungry, Channing Johnson



# Join us for the **2024 KGW Great Food Drive!**



For over 20 years, the annual KGW Great Food Drive has partnered with Oregon Food Bank to fight hunger and its root causes. Last year, we saw 1.9 million visits to food assistance sites through the Oregon Food Bank Network — a 14% increase from the previous year. Throughout March, the Great Food Drive brings our community

together to raise critical funds that keep food flowing and support the systemic change we need to end hunger for good. Get involved today:

[OregonFoodBank.org/KGWgives](https://OregonFoodBank.org/KGWgives) 🌱

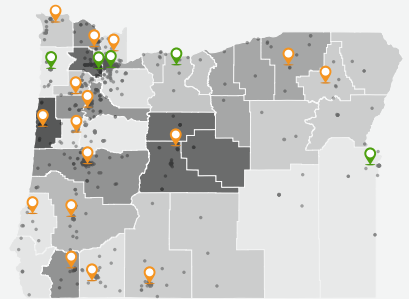
## Thank You for Your Support!



From the Charter Mechanical team: "Charter Mechanical and our employees believe in giving back to our local communities and supporting charities that take care of people in those communities. We are proud to support Oregon Food Bank and appreciate the vital services you provide to our community. Our employees have consistently supported Oregon Food Bank through their generosity, and we are very proud and humbled by the impact they have made with their donations. Charter Mechanical hopes our donation will continue to make a difference in the lives of Oregonians who rely on Oregon Food Bank."

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## Food is **Available** to All Who Need It!



Our Network includes 1,400+ free food markets, pantries and meal sites throughout Oregon and Southwest Washington — and many locations offer contactless pick-up or delivery options.

If you or someone you know needs support, know that resources are available to help area families with the rising cost of food and housing.

Find food assistance sites near you at

[OregonFoodFinder.org](https://OregonFoodFinder.org)

— now available in 14 languages common to the Pacific Northwest!



[OregonFoodBank.org](https://OregonFoodBank.org)  
(503)282-0555



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