



OREGON FOOD BANK

Impact Report 2024

It's amazing what a little **superpower** can do

AS I WRITE THIS, our fellow humans in the southeastern United States are still grappling with the effects of Hurricanes Helene and Milton – hunger, thirst, displacement, loss of loved ones.

Oregon Food Bank has just sent a truckload of apples from the Columbia Gorge on its way to North Carolina. Feeding the Northwest, the produce cooperative of which we are a founding member, is also sourcing and shipping food. About two dozen staff members from Oregon Food Bank as well as regional food banks in Coos Bay, Eugene, Ontario and Salem have volunteered to deploy to the affected area and assist our fellow food banks.

I am reminded of a T-shirt we made for our team that said “I am a food banker. What’s your superpower?”

You, too, are superheroes. Every person and organization that donates money, that advocates for anti-hunger policies, that volunteers time or that donates food is helping us step up in this moment of disaster.

And we never forget – and you never forget either – that any person who is experiencing hunger is in the midst of a slow-moving disaster, wherever they are. We must take action collaboratively and unite to end hunger every day. And we do. This report shows many of the ways we have moved mountains together in the past year.

I am also thrilled beyond measure that a superhero will take the helm as Oregon Food Bank’s next president: Andrea Williams, who has served as our vice president for the past three years. Andrea is experienced, committed and brilliant – and just what Oregon needs.

I know this supercommunity will support Andrea and the whole Oregon Food Bank team as we work together to end the disaster that is hunger for good.



Susannah Morgan
President, Oregon Food Bank



Claudia Al-Amin oversees a food distribution at Somali Oregon Service Center



First Foods first: meet Food Systems Ambassador Duane Lane

AS A DESCENDANT OF THE YAKAMA Nation and the fifth great-grandson of Chief Owhi — one of the signers of the **Treaty of 1855** — Duane Lane understands the connection between colonization and hunger in Indigenous communities. Duane named his native plant business 1855 Plants to honor his family and to recognize 1855 as the year when settlers took away land that had been occupied for thousands of years by the **14 tribes** that now make up the Yakama Nation. The treaty not only disrupted countless Native communities but also their sources of food. Logging and farming quickly destroyed many native plants and traditional hunting grounds.

Over the last seven years, the Food Systems Ambassador program has provided 30 people from diverse cultures and communities with more than \$250,000 to pursue projects that would likely not have been possible without the program. Our ambassadors are bringing a new kind of leadership to their communities, forging new paths (or reviving old ones) to true food justice.

Based in East Multnomah County, 1855 Plants is dedicated to raising plants using traditional, sustainable methods and helping homeowners, local government agencies and nonprofits integrate native plants into their landscaping and planning.

Duane is also one of the newest members of Oregon Food Bank's **Food Systems Ambassador program**, which supports local leaders as they improve food security in their communities, address root causes of hunger and deliver culturally relevant foods to Native communities.

Duane is part of a growing movement to bring back First Foods and the culture they represent. "First Foods" refers to the more than 300 foods, from Chinook salmon to camas bulbs, that were staples of Indigenous diets and medicine in the Pacific Northwest for thousands of years before colonization.

"Indigenous communities are original caretakers of the area," Duane explained, "but with constant expansion of our urban environments, it's becoming harder and

Duane plants camas bulbs on his farm





harder for the Native community to access native plants and First Foods, especially in an urban environment.”

1855 Plants concentrates on growing and saving native plants from Lane County to Willamette Valley to central Washington State. They currently work with 50 to 75 different species.

Duane pointed out how traditional growing practices are essential to counteract the damage caused by corporate farming techniques and **climate change**.

“It’s very important that community members, myself included, utilize low water consumption and nonpetroleum products,” said Duane. “I don’t use herbicides or pesticides and I use biochar to assist the plants and capture more of the nitrogen and nutrients. And I have beneficial microbes in my container soil that hopefully the homeowner takes and utilizes on their property. Utilizing traditional growing practices and using native plants is very important as the climate adjusts here in the Northwest.”

Duane appreciates the importance of building community with other Indigenous farmers and growers. “The Native community is very willing to share their knowledge. We share information, we share resources, and we share traditional knowledge as well. Other farmers or growers teach me new techniques and share their knowledge and

expertise, whether that’s formal education or traditional education.”

In just a few years, Duane’s work has made tremendous progress toward increasing food security across Oregon. What’s next? His future ambitions include expanding to farmers markets, opening his space for the general public, helping to improve urban home environments, securing farmland and opening up a storefront nursery.

“It’s been very rewarding to me to start my journey, open my own business and expand community outreach.” 🌱



“Indigenous communities are original caretakers of the area, but with constant expansion of our urban environments, it’s becoming harder and harder for the Native community to access native plants and First Foods, especially in an urban environment.”

– DUANE LANE
OFB Food Systems Ambassador



Making our voices heard: celebrating victories and building momentum for future wins

OREGON'S ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE SESSION concluded on March 7, 2024, and, thanks to our collective advocacy and the unwavering support of people like you, we successfully persuaded lawmakers to take bold steps forward. Here are some key victories:

- ✔ **Summer lunch money:** In 2024 Oregon's legislature secured participation in the federal **summer grocery benefit program**, helping 294,000 children and families with an extra \$40 per month for food in summer. This vital support bridges the gap for students who rely on free school meals and lose that critical resource over the summer. Oregon now joins 37 states, five territories and three tribal nations in implementing this program, which has been shown to **reduce child hunger by one third**.
- ✔ **Affordable and stable housing:** This session marked a critical moment in addressing Oregon's housing crisis. The legislature committed approximately \$375 million to housing-related initiatives, an important step toward creating more affordable and stable housing options for Oregonians.
- ✔ **Affordable child care:** The legislature allocated approximately \$169 million to bolster the Employment Related Day Care program, acknowledging its crucial role in helping families to afford child care. Additionally, lawmakers approved funding to enhance access to meals for children at eligible day-care providers through the Child and Adult Care Food Program.
- ✔ **Access to hot meals:** The legislature created a pathway for Oregon to participate in the Restaurant Meals Program, an exciting addition to the federal **Supplemental Nutrition**

Participants at the Food for All Oregonians strategy summit in April 2024





This September, our community came together in an incredible show of solidarity for Hunger Action Month:

700+

More than 700 new community members pledged support for Food for All Oregonians.

2,200+

More than 2,200 individuals completed more than 6,600 volunteer hours.

Assistance Program (SNAP). This option makes it possible for people who are finding it difficult to prepare meals, including seniors and those experiencing houselessness, to use SNAP benefits to buy prepared food at select retailers. Oregon Food Bank eagerly anticipates playing a role in implementing this program.

Looking ahead: Food for All Oregonians

Although the comprehensive Food for All Oregonians bill did not pass in the 2024 legislative session, we're not stopping. The coalition behind this transformative initiative is preparing to introduce a new version in the next legislative cycle. The proposed bill would extend critical food assistance to more Oregonians regardless of immigration status. Ensuring access to nourishing, culturally appropriate food is key to the health, freedom and prosperity of all Oregonians — and we won't stop until this vision becomes a reality. ↵

Cool change: warehouse mods let more fresh food flow

NEARLY 25 YEARS after building our first statewide warehouse, Oregon Food Bank has reimagined the space to address the changing needs of our communities and the climate realities of 2024. Thanks to a significant grant from the Oregon State Legislature, we've modernized the cold storage in our 108,000-square-foot warehouse on NE 33rd Avenue to distribute a growing volume of fresh foods — including dairy, proteins and produce — throughout the state.

“Produce is abundant here in the Northwest,” said Danny Faccinetti, Oregon Food Bank director of operations. “We have a lot of food industry donors who want to give us produce. And people in the community want fresh food. Before we modernized the warehouse, the amount of produce being donated far exceeded the space we had dedicated to it in the warehouse.”

All of this freshness posed a serious dilemma. Fresh produce was competing for space with other highly needed products like milk and eggs. Could we really turn away large donations of produce and let communities lose out simply

because we couldn't store it? “We needed more cooler space to accommodate the donation opportunities out there,” said Danny.

Before the modernization was completed in 2024, the warehouse had more freezer than cooler space, and the cooler space was not designed to handle the precise storage



“People in the community want fresh food. Before we modernized the warehouse, the amount of produce being donated far exceeded the space we had dedicated to it in the warehouse.”

— **DANNY FACCINETTI**
Director of Operations, OFB



Community Support

This fiscal year thousands of donors contributed to the cause:

34,539

34,539 donors gave to OFB this fiscal year

6,779

6,779 donors gave monthly

130,531

130,531 financial donations were made to OFB

\$25

The most common gift amount was \$25 (at 15,240 gifts)

requirements of foods like dairy and seasonal produce. Using state capital project funding from the 2021–2023 biennium, OFB carried out a clever remodel: by swapping the existing cooler and freezers, we more than doubled the cooler space. We then split the cooler into two sections, allowing for variable temperature control and the ability to maintain quality in a variety of perishables. At the same time, we optimized the pallet configuration in our freezer so we didn't lose much space there.

It was also time to adapt our operations to the reality of climate change. "Our facility was built in the early 2000s. And the refrigeration equipment was designed at a time when summers in Portland – and the whole world – were cooler. So the equipment was aging and being worked past what it was originally engineered to do, leading to failures and huge repairs," said Danny.

Crises like the COVID-19 pandemic and unprecedented wealth inequality are also changing the state of hunger in our region. Across the OFB Network, for example, we've seen a 14% increase in visits to food assistance sites in the last year alone.

When we opened our doors in 1982, we could not have predicted the needs of our community more than 40 years later. Today, the Oregon Food Bank Network brings together 21 regional food banks and more than 1,400 food assistance sites. We are ready to adapt, holding our communities at the center of all we do.

"At the end of the day, this is positioning us to be strategic about the types of food we bring in," Danny said. "Modernizing our infrastructure allows us to capitalize on the types of donations that are abundant here in the Northwest." ↩

Cool facts

We now have **8,000 square feet** of cooler space and **4,500 square feet** of freezer space, dramatically improving our ability to flow fresh food to Oregon and Southwest Washington.

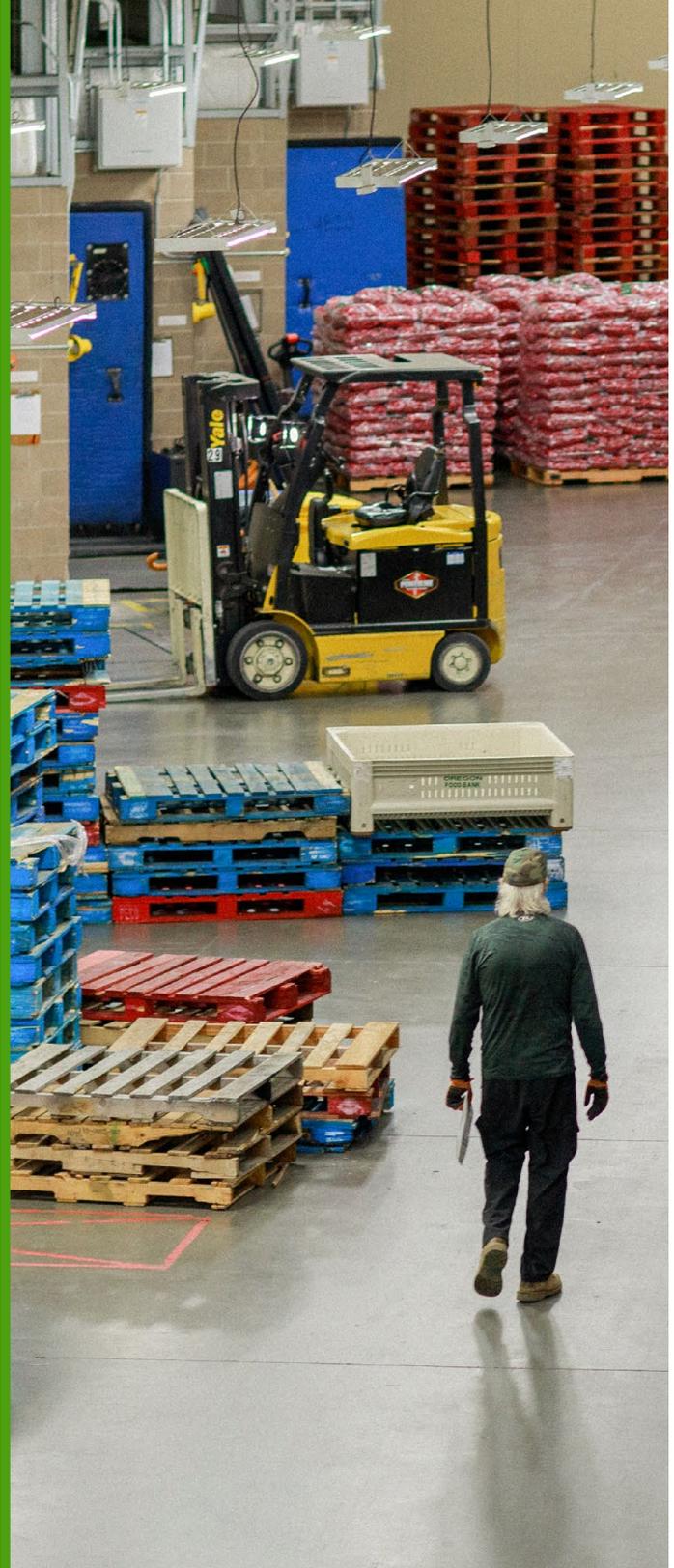


Fresh produce made up **30 percent** of the total food OFB distributed statewide.

Last year we distributed **73 million meals** across the network — and more than half of that food was fresh or frozen produce, dairy and protein.



Our statewide warehouse sources, picks up, receives, stores, repacks and delivers **between 4.5 and 5 million pounds of food** every month.



Be the change: Q&A with OFB's Policy Leadership Council

REPRESENTING URBAN, rural and suburban communities throughout the state, the **Policy Leadership Council** (PLC) draws on its members' lived experience to shape the vision for Oregon Food Bank's policy and advocacy work. Its 16 members, all of whom have been affected by food insecurity and the systemic injustices that cause it, are powerful leaders in addressing hunger at its roots.

We sat down with two PLC members, David Soria Garcia, of Tillamook, and Andrea Cisneros, of Ontario, to hear about their vision for a hunger-free Oregon.

OFB: How did you get involved in food justice?

DAVID: I attended a community event here in Tillamook County where I resonated deeply with Oregon Food Bank's mission. Learning about the struggles faced by individuals in my community — such as discrimination, lack of affordable housing and workers' rights violations — sparked my interest in supporting their work. My involvement

followed, driven by my commitment to equity, inclusion and diversity.

I thought that the Oregon Food Bank would be just food distribution, like food pantries. But once I got involved with their work, I noticed that it goes beyond that — advocating for ending hunger and other social issues.

"I think people feel scared. They feel like they don't have rights. Those are my people, and they need somebody in their corner."

— ANDREA CISNEROS
OFB Policy Leadership Council

ANDREA: I got involved with the PLC because of my previous work with farmworkers and my background in a migrant family and community. Now I'm working on an app with the Oregon Human Development Corporation that creates a yearly training for farmworkers on heat exhaustion and pesticides.



David Soria Garcia speaking at the Policy Leadership Council orientation in September 2024



ANDREA CISNEROS

Although Andrea studied mathematics and is getting her bachelor's in computer science, she has a passion for helping underserved communities. She has worked at the Oregon Human Development Corporation as a resource specialist, helping families with rental assistance programs, vouchers for food and other necessities. She also was a mentor for the Oregon Migrant Leadership Institute, where she worked with students to help them see college as a reality in their future. She is passionate about improving the quality of life for all people in all areas, including education, access to nutrition and housing.

OFB: What drives your passion to end hunger?

ANDREA: I was born in Mexico. When I came to the United States, I felt like my life got ripped from me. I remember leaving, waving goodbye to my family from the back of the truck. I remember thinking, *I don't know if I'm ever going to see them again*. I'm thankful that I'm here, but it was hard to come from a different country – to learn a different language and a completely different world.

DAVID: I have experienced food insecurity myself. I was balancing pursuing higher education with lack of resources, like housing inequities and transportation, and it was hard. I have a mission for myself and for my family to provide the best I can, and that's what's motivated me to pursue higher education.

OFB: Tell me about your community.

ANDREA: Ontario is a small town on the border of Oregon and Idaho. It's about 50% Hispanic, but we don't see Hispanic people involved in politics. I think people feel scared. They feel like they don't have rights. That could have been me. That was my family – living in fear, not able to stand up for themselves, not being able to have a voice. Those are my people, and they need somebody in their corner.

DAVID: My community includes farmworkers, DACA* recipients, single parents and individuals without

* Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals – a policy allowing people who arrived in the United States as children to avoid deportation and secure a work permit, Social Security number and driver's license, enabling them to live and work in the U.S. openly. (**Boundless**)

immigration status. A lot of people from Tillamook County, I notice they're scared of making their voices heard. They're trying to make change, but they fear the government will do something to them if they speak up.

OFB: Tell me about something important the PLC is working on this year.

DAVID: I am particularly proud of the PLC's focus on integrating food insecurity with broader social issues, such as affordable housing and workers' rights. These areas are crucial because they address the systemic barriers that contribute to food insecurity and create an approach to improving community well-being.

ANDREA: I'm excited about the immigration justice pillar of our work. I've been the most happy to be involved in Food for All Oregonians. That bill is going to be passed. No matter what, we're going to fight until it passes.

OFB: What do you wish people understood about hunger?

DAVID: Many people might not understand that hunger in Oregon affects a broad spectrum of individuals, not just those in extreme poverty. Food insecurity can impact people in different demographics, including those who are employed but still struggle due to low wages, high living costs and systemic inequities.

ANDREA: People expect immigrants to be superhuman. They expect them to work themselves to death to be deserving of some dignity. But they're human. I think people don't realize that hard work is not the sole ingredient for "success" — much of it is luck, the resources you were born into. 🍀



DAVID SORIA GARCIA

David Soria Garcia is a dedicated advocate for social justice in Tillamook. As a proud Mexican-American, David combines his bachelor's degree in psychology with his ongoing master's degree in international security studies to drive change through his work with the Policy Leadership Council. He is committed to tackling issues like affordable housing and workers' rights. David believes that everyone deserves access to basic necessities and the right to live in a safe, equitable community, regardless of their background or place of birth.

Inside Oregon Food Bank: a conversation with Itsa Ortiz

FOR ITSA ORTIZ an early memory lies at the core of her passion to end hunger. “My dad was sick with cancer, and so he wasn’t working,” Itsa said. “We were able to get food stamps, which, at the time, came as a little booklet.”

Itsa remembers being in line at the grocery store as her mother pulled out the little blue vouchers to pay.

“I remember I saw the cashier’s demeanor change. And I remember looking back at the line of people behind us, and they also were annoyed. I could sense that my mom was suddenly very flustered and upset. I could see her hands shaking as she was trying to gently tear the vouchers without tearing them apart.

“I became very upset because I felt like we were being judged. There’s still so much stigma – people don’t understand that SNAP benefits are a necessity. If the government actually did something about reducing the wage gap and increasing minimum wage, then we wouldn’t need them. But here we are.”

Today, Itsa recognizes that her family was not alone in this experience, that the systemic inequities that cause hunger are not a personal failing. She recalls how overt and covert racism have led to housing and food insecurity throughout her life.

As the associate director of equity, people and culture at Oregon Food Bank, Itsa is a trusted person, helping staff navigate the workplace with compassion and connection.

“In HR, there aren’t a lot of people like me,” she said. “You grow up quickly when you have parents who don’t speak a lot of English, who need you to help them navigate a foreign land and a foreign language.”

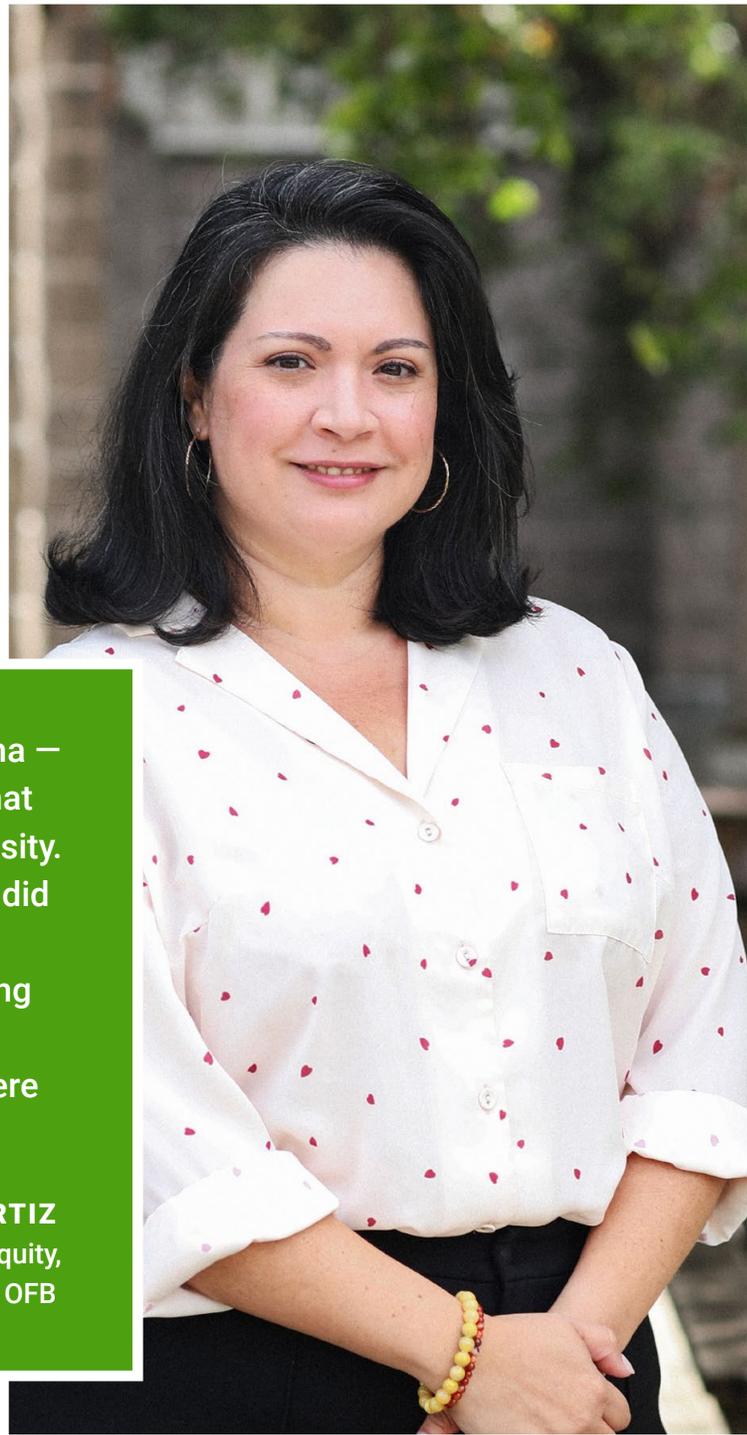
For Itsa, ending hunger means so much more than just getting food on the table:

“For my family and a lot of other immigrant families, there is fear of deportation, being found, being separated from your family. As I became older and started utilizing food pantries, I realized, this is my right. I shouldn’t

be afraid to utilize a benefit or any kind of program that is meant to help me. There's so much stigma around poverty, but it's something that's created by our own country. And it's something that can be solved." 🍃

"There's still so much stigma — people don't understand that SNAP benefits are a necessity. If the government actually did something about reducing the wage gap and increasing minimum wage, then we wouldn't need them. But here we are."

— ITSA ORTIZ
Associate Director of Equity,
People and Culture, OFB



Compassionate connector: Liliana Beltran Torres & Nuevo Futuro

LILIANA BELTRAN TORRES is motivated by her desire to help others, a seed planted early on by her mother: “My mother is a single mom, and she raised 10 kids all by herself. I saw day in and day out, she would get up early, she would work, and she never, ever left us without eating, not even one day. We went through a lot of hardship, and my mom worked so hard just to feed all of us. And I don’t want any other family to have to go through that.”

“The most important thing people can do is put themselves in the shoes of people experiencing hunger and have more empathy.”

— LILIANA BELTRAN TORRES
Food Promoter, AntFarm Youth Services



As a food distribution coordinator and community health worker in Clackamas County, Liliana supports rural Latine and Hispanic

families through the Nuevo Futuro program at AntFarm Youth Services, in partnership with Oregon Food Bank. Her role is to connect families to the resources available to them, including help with food, rent and utilities.

“The people I work with live in rural communities, and many of them work on farms and in restaurants. And I see this imbalance,” Liliana explained. “I see families with single parents and families that have an elderly family member living with them. They get up very early in the morning, they go to work, and still – working as hard as they do, getting up as early as they do – they are not able to meet their basic needs.”

In 2024, as part of a pilot project with Oregon Food Bank, Nuevo Futuro launched a twice-monthly food distribution program based at their office in Estacada. They focus on providing culturally relevant food, such as fresh onions, potatoes, pears, watermelon and masa, to the Latine community. Liliana considers the program



Volunteers at AntFarm Youth Services in Estacada working to repack fresh foods for Nuevo Futuro's distribution event

a success. "It's very important to provide culturally relevant food, because we all have the right to eat something that has been with us and our families for generations. We should be able to eat food that's from our roots, that's ingrained in our history and our culture."

Today, Liliana brings her mother's lessons to her work in Clackamas County, where she

sees how caring for our communities and meeting basic needs can change lives. "One thing that will stick with me forever is that my mom was so compassionate. She shared food with everyone — out of one potato, she could make 10 meals. Even when she was stressed, even when she had to just get through the day, she was compassionate." 🌱

How to get involved

WORKING 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. *There are so many ways to contribute and connect. Join us!*

Food industry partners

Much of the food we distribute comes from local, regional and national growers, packers, manufacturers, retailers and others. By joining forces with us, these companies know that their donations will directly help individuals and families throughout Oregon and Southwest Washington. Our food resource developers work with these vital partners every day and regularly connect with other food system partners to build new relationships as the need for food assistance continues to grow.

Community partners

We are honored to partner with passionate and committed individuals and organizations throughout the region that are working to advance our shared mission of eliminating hunger and its root causes — by running food pantries and free food markets, supporting

local BIPOC farmers, doing grassroots organizing around anti-hunger policies and so much more.

Corporate and organizational partners

Engaged socially responsible allies are key to ending hunger and its root causes. We work with hundreds of incredible values-aligned corporations and organizations that share our vision through fundraising drives, employee giving, group volunteer shifts and other local partnerships.

Volunteers

Our food distribution efforts are supported by thousands of amazing volunteers at our central warehouses and out in the community. Along with these indoor and outdoor options, we offer a host of seasonal opportunities to make a difference from the comfort of home. Please check our website for the latest volunteer shifts and events near you.

Advocates and organizers

Oregon Food Bank advocates and organizers work year-round to advance anti-hunger policies at the local, state and federal level. Together we can ensure that decision makers prioritize the investments needed

Join our team!

OregonFoodBank.org/Jobs

to keep food flowing today, alongside systemic changes to prevent hunger in our communities.

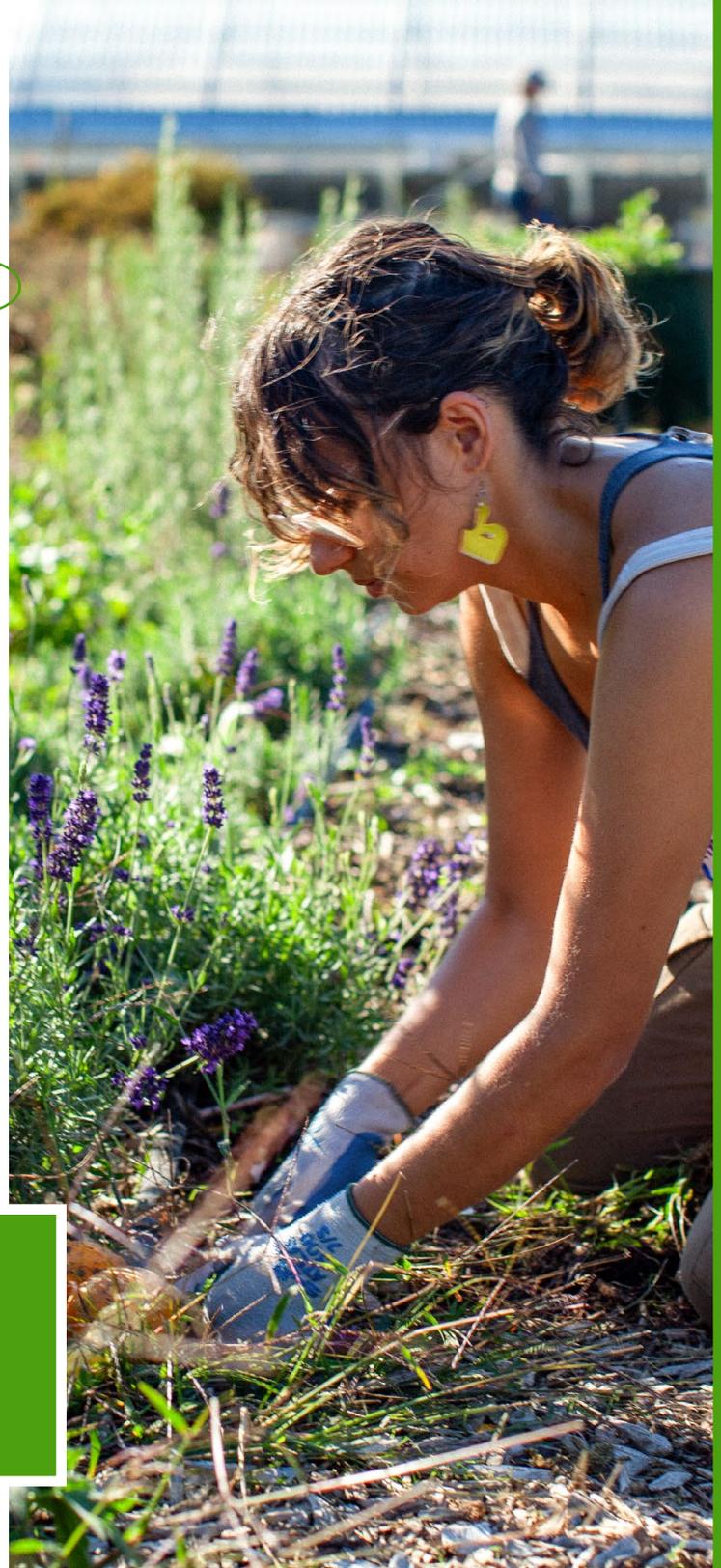
Monthly Sustainers

Monthly Sustainers are critical partners in our work, helping ensure that we can meet the need for food today while addressing hunger's root causes. It's an easy, convenient way to support these efforts throughout the year — just set up your recurring gift and we will take care of the rest!

Legacy Circle members

Legacy Circle members support the movement to end hunger at its roots through an estate, trust or bequest — opening doors to multigenerational relationships and engagement that helps realize a vision of hunger-free communities.

Learn more and get involved at OregonFoodBank.org/Get-Involved or reach out to our team at Contact@OregonFoodBank.org or 503-282-0555.



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

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