



ROOTED + RISING

2025
Year in
review



OREGON
FOOD BANK

BLOOM

Nourishing our shared future

I OFTEN IMAGINE THE WORLD my two young kids will grow up in. Will their communities be thriving? Will their neighbors have access to nourishing food and the support they need to flourish? At Oregon Food Bank, we believe the answer can — and must be — yes. Thanks to you, we're making that vision a reality.

I'm Andrea Williams, Oregon Food Bank's new president. I firmly believe that as we continue building the movement to end hunger, we create stronger, more resilient communities for future generations.

In the current climate, campaigns like Rooted + Rising are more necessary than ever. Last year, we saw 2.5 million visits to food assistance sites across Oregon and Southwest Washington — a 31% increase from the year before. Meanwhile, the federal administration is cutting food assistance and funding — and it continues to advance proposals that harm our communities. These challenges make our work all the more important. We remain determined. The stakes are high.

I've seen firsthand the long lines at food pantries. They will continue to grow unless we address the root causes of hunger — like

skyrocketing housing costs and unaffordable health care. This campaign is about providing food today and creating systems where no one goes hungry, now or in the future.

Through Rooted + Rising, we amplify community power, strengthen local solutions, reimagine food systems and modernize infrastructure. None of this work would be possible without folks like you committed to change. You've helped raise more than \$75 million, accelerating our progress toward these shared goals.

Thank you for joining us — the future is bright because of your support.

With determination,



Andrea Williams (she/her)
President, Oregon Food Bank





The power of us

TOO OFTEN THESE PAST FEW months, conversations in my family turn to concern and fear — fear for our livelihoods and our lives.

Like too many families, we're threatened by the risk of illegal deportation and the erasure of those whose gender identity is targeted by violent federal policies. Like too many families, we're threatened by the risk of destitution and hunger as federal funding for public benefits and food assistance sits on Congress' chopping block.

Perhaps like you, we believe that even one family facing these threats is too many.

Now consider the scale of this shared experience throughout Oregon — there are hundreds of thousands of us. In that, I take courage and hope.

Hope lives in the power of people — of us — to rise as a community and manifest change.

In the pages that follow, you'll find stories that demonstrate what real change looks like.

Change is fresh produce, grown and harvested by high school volunteers from the fields of a recently purchased youth farm in Lane County. We hear it in the true stories of hunger,

empowered with messaging research, that influence hearts and minds with empathy and understanding. We live that change as a more just society shaped by legislation like Food for All Oregonians — bringing us closer to ending hunger.

These very real outcomes from Rooted + Rising prove our capacity to make change.

Of course, where we're going isn't a destination. We're not done. Still, as we continue to rise toward a more ideal future, we know our efforts matter. Our community has power. Our actions do yield change for good.

Whatever we may face, whatever comes next, I find hope in this community and our demonstrable power to rise together and realize something better.

Thank you for rising with us — for being "us" — and rising for us *all*.

C. Nathan Harris (they/them)
Director of Community Philanthropy
Oregon Food Bank



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Rooted in results, rising for all

Indigenous-owned community farms. Refugee-led food pantries. Statewide advocacy campaigns. An energy-efficient warehouse. These are only a few of the many initiatives Rooted + Rising has made possible. Since 2020, Rooted + Rising has mobilized more than \$75 million to support programs that get us closer to realizing our vision of a hunger-free future. And we're not done yet.

Reimagining food systems

We are investing in local farmers and small food processors, like Michelle Week and Maxi Hernandez, to cultivate justice in our food systems and new wealth in our state.

155+ producers who are 95% BIPOC have received ~\$4.9M since 2021 to launch and expand agricultural businesses focused on fresh, culturally familiar foods in 19 counties in Oregon.

~\$4.9M

155+ PRODUCERS

19 COUNTIES

Modernizing infrastructure

Our investments in facilities, transportation and technology improvements have reduced our environmental impact and strengthened community access to local bounties.

With private and state support, we've expanded cold storage in OFB's statewide warehouse and increased distribution of fresh foods. Today we source, pick up, receive, store, repack and deliver between 4.5 and 5 million pounds of food monthly — 30 percent of which is fresh produce.

>4.5M LBS FOOD MONTHLY

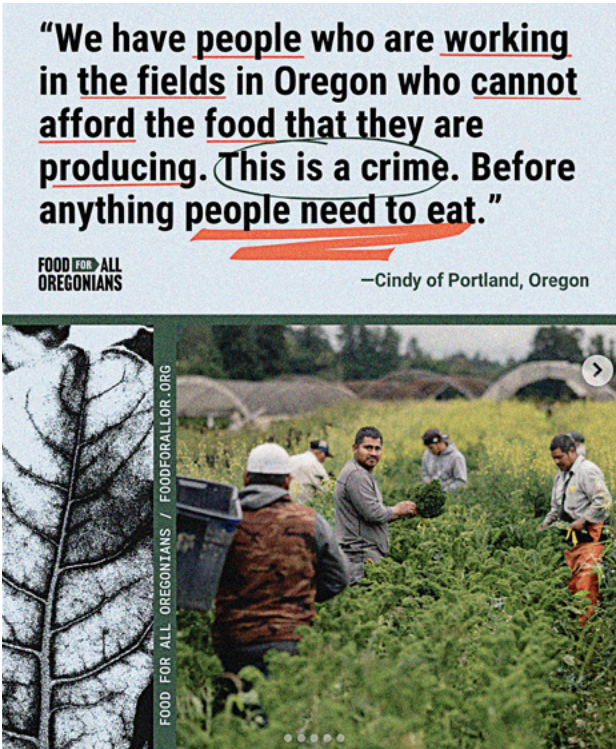
30% FRESH PRODUCE

Amplifying community power

We are cultivating a stronger food justice movement, led by people most affected by hunger. Through message research, community organizing, training and civic engagement, we’re investing in community-led advocacy campaigns like Food for All Oregonians.

36,000+ people have taken civic action to support policies for ending hunger and increasing community well-being since 2021.

36,000+ TOOK ACTION



Strengthening local solutions

We support community-driven solutions through the Oregon Food Bank Network – 21 regional food banks and more than 1,200 food assistance sites that serve more than 1 million people in Oregon and Southwest Washington. We are investing in projects designed by the regional leaders who know their communities best.

\$12M+ has been invested directly in our regional partners, supporting local leadership and solutions tailored to meet unique community needs.

\$12M+ TO REGIONAL PARTNERS

21 REGIONAL FOOD BANKS

1,200 FOOD ASSISTANCE SITES

>1M PEOPLE SERVED

YOUR SUPPORT MATTERS

Thanks to overwhelming community investment, we’ve made substantial progress – but there’s more work to do. With \$5 million left to raise, we need your support to ensure that these essential programs continue to grow and thrive well into the future.





Dreaming in acres

How Black Oregon Land Trust is reclaiming land and rewriting the definition of food justice

“You can’t talk about food justice without talking about land,” said Qiddist Ashé. “Land is the seed. It’s the foundation of culture, of sovereignty, of healing — of possibility.”

Qiddist leads Black Oregon Land Trust (BOLT), an organization that returns land to Black and Indigenous leadership. Much of this land was taken away in the past through unfair treatment, racism and forced displacement. BOLT works to build long-term access, equity and sustainability through collective ownership.

Founded in 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic, BOLT has become a model for land justice in Oregon. They support youth education, land acquisition, healing programs

Photos by Jamie Thrower



and farmers. With help from Oregon Food Bank and Rooted + Rising, they're building the framework to sustain a movement rooted in food justice. This movement generates nourishing food, cultural connection and the freedom to realize a self-determined future with dignity. BOLT helps Black and Indigenous families gain secure access to land, creating opportunities to build generational wealth while strengthening connections to land, community and culture.

Aria Charles, BOLT's development and operations coordinator, is passionate about growing food and community. Alongside Qiddist, she's correcting long-standing misconceptions and moving policymakers

to treat land access and food insecurity as one issue.

"We're challenging those legacies just through the fact that we are a group of Black people that are owning multiple acres of land and farming on it in Oregon," said Aria.

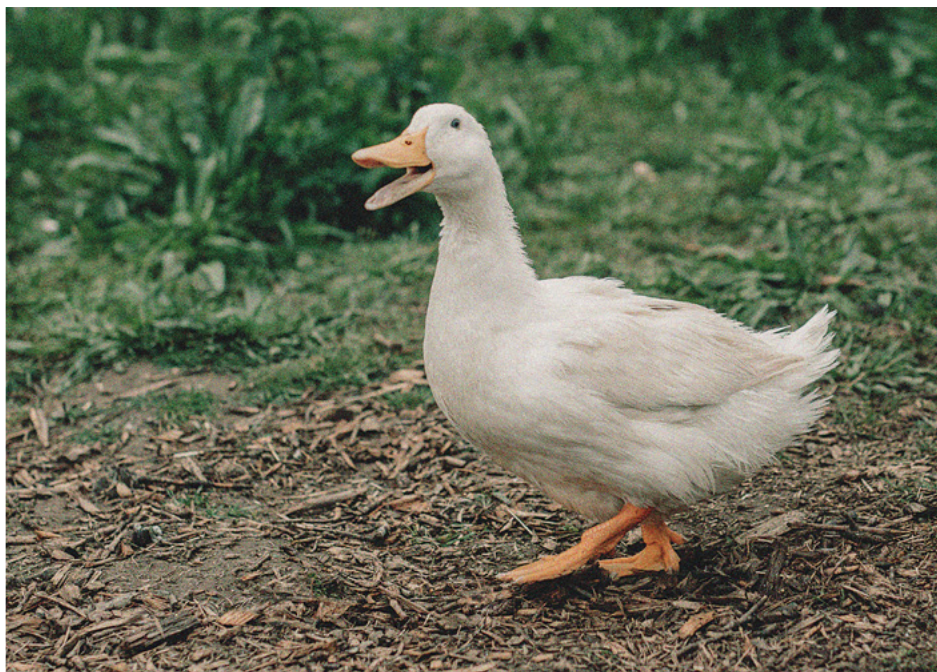
BOLT believes food justice means protecting the people, land and resources that make healthy food possible. "I actually can't think about food justice without all the foundations a community needs to thrive," said Qiddist. "Land is the foundation — not only of food sovereignty but of culture, home and community."

Aria put it even more plainly: "You need land to grow food. They're completely interconnected."

Growing community

BOLT emerged from conversations among farmers and organizers responding to the disruptions of the COVID-19 crisis. As systems failed and inequalities deepened, they imagined a different future — one rooted in land and resilience. “Black farmers were trying to do everything — grow food, shift policy, build community,” recalled Qiddist. “So we asked: what if an organization could carry some of that weight?”

In just three years, BOLT has become that organization.

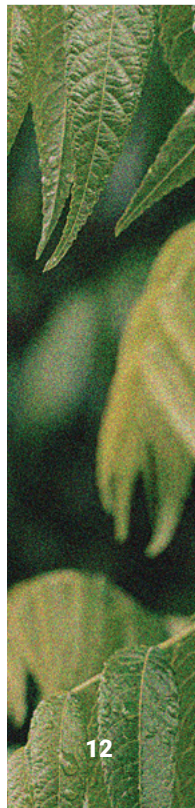


ROOTED IN JUSTICE

Last year, BOLT helped secure funding to purchase nine acres of land for Roberta Eaglehorse-Ortiz, an Indigenous wellness practitioner and farmer whose dream was to create space for fishing, herbal medicine and Indigenous cultural practices.

When Roberta's original funding fell through, she turned to BOLT. With support from the broader community, BOLT helped raise \$40,000 in small donations, demonstrating the power of grassroots momentum and collaborative resource generation. They secured the land through community donors and a private low-interest loan of \$150,000. Today, Roberta and her community steward the land. In the next one to two years, BOLT plans to transfer full ownership to her — BOLT's first land transfer and a milestone in their vision for equity through ownership.

Roberta and Qiddist first connected while farming at Oregon Food Bank's Unity Farm in 2017. Later, Roberta and her son volunteered to help build the yurt at BOLT's Mother(s)land headquarters. "Roberta's been in the community a long time, and it felt right that this land would return to someone who will honor it," said Aria.



Its vision for the next three to five years is both ambitious and grounded. Qiddist defines success as securing more land for conservation and for Black and Indigenous farmers and building the infrastructure to sustain the work. "We're still running on passion and volunteerism," she said. "But we need stability."

BOLT is also investing in leadership, cultivating a new generation of land-literate, community-rooted youth who grow food, steward ecosystems and organize for justice.

A new kind of land trust

While most U.S. land trusts focus on conservation that separates people from land, BOLT embraces a different truth: conservation and human stewardship can coexist. Rooted in an Indigenous worldview, their model treats land not as property but as a living relative to be cared for in a relationship.


BOLT offers multiple land access pathways: Some land stays in trust for communal stewardship; some supports homeownership with leased land; and some enables full ownership for long-term stability and generational wealth. “People are surprised by how nuanced it is,” said Qiddist. “But for us, it’s a return to an Indigenous worldview. Humans and conservation are not at odds.”

Still, doing this work requires more than vision. It requires stability, and that’s where Oregon Food Bank’s partnership and Rooted + Rising have been essential.

Cultivating relationships

At the heart of BOLT and Oregon Food Bank’s partnership is a shared commitment: Food justice and land justice must rise together.





Rooted + Rising has opened national funding streams, increased BOLT's visibility as a young, BIPOC-led organization and helped build the infrastructure — from staffing to operations — to sustain their vision. This support keeps BOLT rising toward a future where access to food and land is shaped by justice, not race or income.

From restoration to livestock management, each piece of BOLT's work is part of a larger story: one

of repair, reclamation and reimagining. "Earth stewardship isn't just planting trees," said Aria. "It's about relationships — with land, with people, across generations and geographies."

Those relationships are sacred. "The land is a living being. It's not just something we use. It's someone we know. Someone we're in kinship with," said Aria. 🌿



Change the story and **change** **what's possible**


At Oregon Food Bank, changing the narrative is core to our work. We're reframing how our community talks about hunger and poverty — and who gets to do the talking. The stakes are high: The stories we tell shape what we see and what we ignore. They influence both public attitudes and public policy.

"Our job is to counter harmful narratives with the truth," said Suleiman Amanzad, Oregon Food Bank director of strategic communications. "With every story we tell, we are helping more people understand that hunger is actually caused by long-term patterns and systems that no amount of individual effort can fix."

FALSE NARRATIVE

Often called the "bootstrap narrative" or "the American dream," this story tells us that anyone can succeed in the United States if they work hard. You just have to pull yourself up by your bootstraps! Or dare to dream! Struggling to afford food? You must be lazy. There are no facts to support this old narrative, but it still drives harmful public policies such as restrictive eligibility rules for programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.





Our Strategic Communications team produces videos, blogs and social media posts that elevate the stories of people who've experienced hunger. When someone shares their story, it's a profound act of generosity — a gift as meaningful as any donation. Their stories are critical to exposing the deeper forces that drive hunger (like low wages and housing discrimination), countering the myth that individual choices are to blame.

"Our goal is to amplify the voices of real people as we work to end hunger and its root causes," said Iván Hernandez, Oregon Food Bank associate director of strategic communications.

TRUE STORY

Liliana Beltran Torres sees the true story of hunger every day as a food distribution coordinator and community health worker for the Nuevo Futuro program at AntFarm Youth Services in Clackamas County.

"I see families with single parents and families that have an elderly family member living with them," said Liliana. "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."

Changing the narrative isn't just about telling better stories, however. It's also about understanding your audience. With support from Rooted + Rising, we launched a research initiative in 2024 to better understand how our communities talk about hunger — and which narratives they rely on to explain why it persists in their neighborhoods.

New insights emerge

With phone polls, surveys and focus groups, we included perspectives from urban, suburban and rural Oregon, with intentional oversampling of BIPOC, Spanish-speaking and ideologically conservative participants from beyond the Portland metro area.

"I used to think it was enough to just share more stories. But I've learned it's really about how we tell them — and who is sharing," said Morgan Dewey, Oregon Food Bank media and engagement manager. "Narrative change is movement work — it challenges the status quo and helps folks see hunger for what it truly is: a systemic issue we can take on together. That shift in perspective is powerful."

What we learned confirmed some of what we already knew and challenged us to do better.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

>4 in 5

agree that food is
a human right

78%

agree that cost of living,
housing, and poverty are key
causes of hunger

~70%

Are supportive of our
work to advocate for laws
that help end hunger and
its root causes

>25%

of research
participants have
personally used food
bank services

Participants responded
best to clear, simple
messages that used
everyday language

7 in 10

Oregonians are concerned
about people going hungry
in their community

This work is already shaping the way Oregon Food Bank talks about hunger. We've revised our high-level messages, tested new ways of talking about systems change and focused on being more direct and accessible in everything we publish.

"My priority isn't to knock down old stories but to lift up a new narrative," said Suleiman. "By using the everyday language people already understand, we make our message more accessible and extend our reach. As more people adopt this fresh way of talking about hunger, they'll be driven to act — and over time, that collective action will reshape policy and systems."

Over the next four years, we'll continue testing and refining our message framework to better connect with the people we need to reach most. We will also continue to collaborate with community members whose authentic stories so eloquently contradict false narratives like the old bootstraps myth.

Narrative change doesn't happen overnight, but it's essential to building public support for just policies. When we change the stories we tell, we open the door for empathy, action and real change. 🌱

TRUE STORY

Indigenous farmer Michelle Week understands displacement, survival and bringing First Foods back to her community.

"We're the original land tenders here," said Michelle. "We had lived here for thousands of years and found a way to live here in harmony with our ecosystem and our fellow beings. It's been difficult to realize that all this land was stolen Native land, and I also have to pay over a half a million dollars to access some land that would make this farm viable and successful forever."





Rooted + Rising strengthens immigrant justice in Oregon

How we're joining forces with organizations across the state to build power and protection for immigrant communities

This spring, Oregon Food Bank's organizing power was on full display. In March, more than 250 people took to the Capitol to demand passage of Food for All Oregonians, a bill that would ensure that all children ages 6 and younger qualify for food assistance regardless of their immigration status. In May, dozens of parents returned to the Capitol with their kids and snacks in tow and staged a lively "snack-in" (a family-led version of a sit-in) that lawmakers couldn't ignore.

As the federal government escalates its attacks on immigrants, Oregon's immigrant justice movement is growing in power and coordination. Across the state, people are organizing for a future where everyone can thrive — no matter where they were born or what papers they carry.

This level of enthusiasm and support reflects years of statewide organizing, deep coalition-building and

data-driven communications strategy. With support from Rooted + Rising, Oregon Food Bank mobilized its full advocacy, statewide organizing, communications and public affairs expertise to press lawmakers on the bill. While Food for All Oregonians didn't pass this session, the fight is far from over. We will keep demanding essential food assistance for all Oregonians.

But Rooted + Rising's investment in immigrant justice goes beyond one campaign. When the possibility of a

2,262 emails urged lawmakers to support Food for All Oregonians

1,590 people called their lawmakers asking them to support the bill

477 people shared testimony in support of Food for All Oregonians

740+ people joined 30+ events in cities cross the state including Tillamook, Ontario, Hood River, Eugene, Klamath Falls, Salem, and many more



second Trump presidency loomed and federal officials escalated attacks on immigrant communities, organizers across Oregon mobilized. Oregon Food Bank joined forces with organizations across the state to build lasting power and protection for immigrant communities. Together, they launched Oregon for All – a coalition uniting immigrant justice advocates to coordinate services, drive policy change and strengthen the movement statewide.

Building on existing partnerships with staff at organizations such as PCUN and Innovation Law Lab, Oregon Food Bank staff helped lay the groundwork for Oregon for All's coalition structure and fundraising strategies. To kickstart the new coalition, Rooted + Rising contributed \$60,000 and helped facilitate an initial \$100,000 investment from Meyer Memorial Trust, as a member of the Oregon Immigrant and Refugee Funders Collaborative.

"Immigrant communities are left out of services like unemployment insurance," said Isa Peña, director of strategy at Innovation Law Lab and one of Oregon for All's tri-chairs. "They're left out of SNAP benefits. They were left out of stimulus payments during the pandemic. And they're not only left out, they are actively being excluded, persecuted and racially profiled under this administration."

Oregon for All builds on momentum from past wins, like Oregon Worker Relief, which delivered more than \$100 million to immigrant households excluded from federal COVID stimulus funds. It also focuses on rapid response efforts to resist ICE raids and deportations, while pushing for access to basic services like food, health care and legal



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— Isa Peña (she/ella)

Director of strategy, Innovation
Law Lab Co-Chair, Oregon for All



representation. “When the pandemic hit, it changed how almost everybody saw our immigrant community,” said Isa. “It shed light on the huge inequities in our world, and people saw clearly how we were left out completely of any of the systems of support. That pushed us to think creatively as people and as organizations about how we show up for immigrants and how we build systems of support.”

Rooted + Rising Vanguard and business leader, Orlando Williams, Motus Recruiting & Staffing CEO supports Rooted + Rising and immigrant justice because he believes equity is foundational to Oregon’s future.



"Immigrants are working, and not only are they working, but they're bringing their rich cultural heritage and their talents to the workforce," he said. "When I think about the future, I want to see Oregon as a place where everyone has enough food, and because they have food they can stay healthy, and because they're healthy they can work, and because they can work they can afford housing and feel safe. Everyone should be able to have that security."

Progress may be incremental, but Oregon's immigrant justice movement has already driven real change. In just the last few years, Oregon has passed laws that allow undocumented immigrants to get driver's licenses, participate in the Healthier Oregon program and access universal legal representation in deportation proceedings.

For Isa, the work is personal and a reflection of what's possible with private philanthropy.

"I come from a mixed-status family where some members of my immediate family are documented and some are undocumented," she said. "I grew up with a lot of fear about my family being deported or being picked up by ICE. I saw firsthand how our immigrant communities have been left out of social safety net programs and conversations about our rights. And so I wanted to help my community build things and programs that support us on our own terms and advocate for the rights of those that are most impacted." 🌱





Local wisdom, lasting solutions:

Investing in FOOD For Lane County's Youth Farm

Every community in Oregon experiences hunger differently — and the best solutions come from those closest to the challenge. That's why Oregon Food Bank works through a statewide network of 21 regional food banks and more than 1,200 food assistance sites, investing in approaches rooted in local knowledge and leadership.

A local treasure

The Youth Farm at FOOD For Lane County is a prime example of the power of local activism. For more than 25 years, the farm operated on rented land, providing fresh produce to the community while training young people, new farmers and volunteers to grow food. Through its community supported agriculture program, the farm served 180 households

with seasonal fruits and vegetables. People using federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits saw their costs cut in half through a matching program, and fresh produce also reached families through health-care partnerships like Trillium's Start Smart for Your Baby program.

Turning point

That work was jeopardized in 2022, when the farm learned it would lose its lease. The land was being repurposed for affordable housing — a vital investment, but one that left the farm's future uncertain.

Purchasing new farmland was beyond the nonprofit's means. But community leaders and advocates stepped in, and Rooted + Rising helped move a solution forward. Regional food banks, including FOOD For Lane County, identified land access as a top priority and made the case that state dollars should support community-led projects like this one.

Oregon legislature steps up

In 2023, Oregon Food Bank and its partners took that message to Salem. The legislature responded by allocating \$14.3 million to fund locally identified hunger solutions across the state. Thanks to this public investment — alongside private

donations — FOOD For Lane County secured 25 acres of farmland in July 2024, giving the Youth Farm a permanent home.

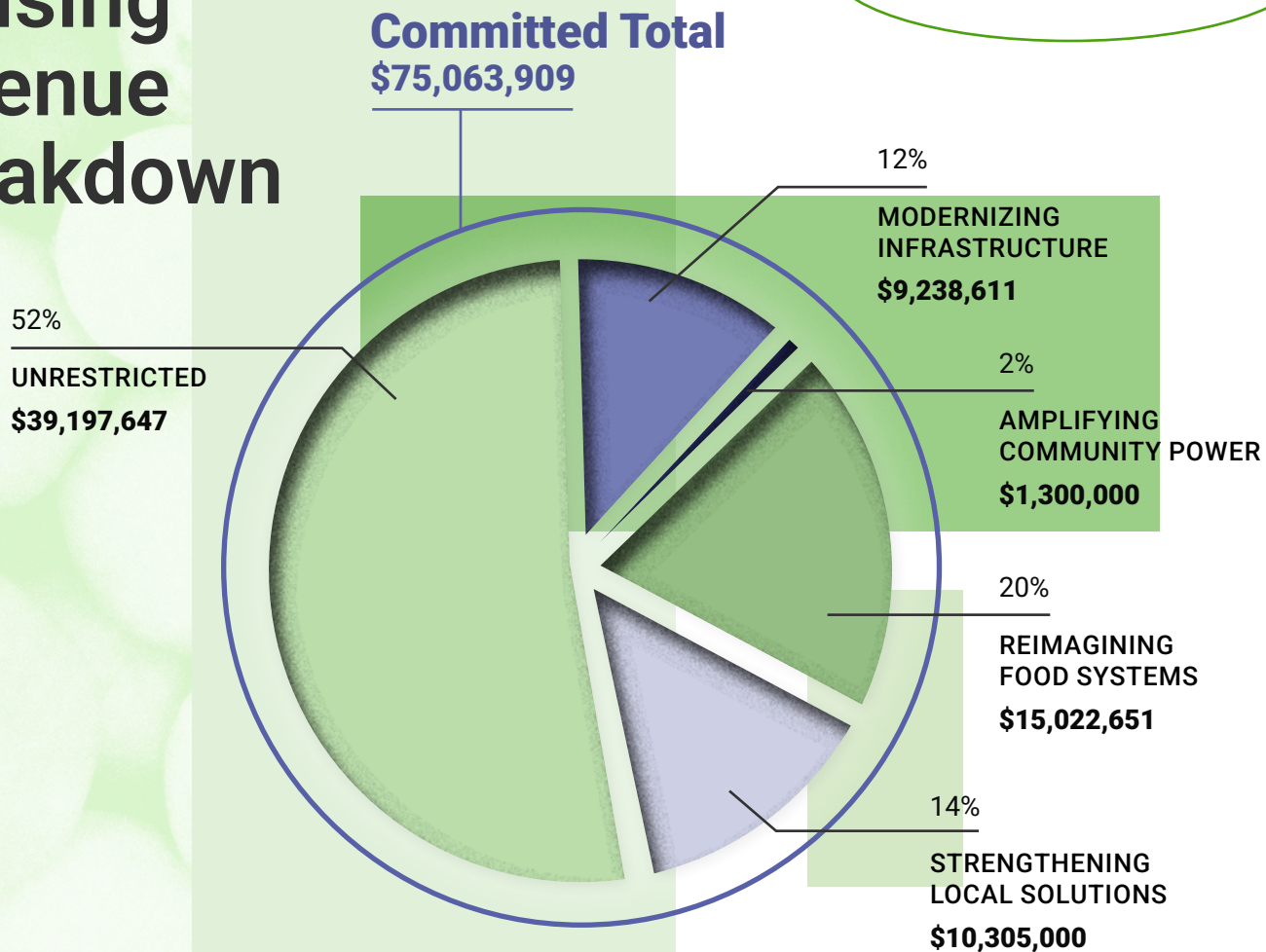
"Our regional food banks were absolutely critical in achieving this victory," said Oregon Food Bank President Andrea Williams. "They gave public testimony and showed up for Ways and Means road shows across the state. They submitted written testimony. They called and met with their legislators. All of those interactions were critical to achieving this huge investment in our communities."

FOOD For Lane County Program Manager Jen Anonia foresees a promising future for the Youth Farm. "We're going to be surrounded by farms and agricultural producers. There's an opportunity to learn from them. Many of them have been growing there for generations. And so here's an incredible opportunity to be neighbors with local farms, to collaborate and invest in each other." 🌱



Rooted + Rising revenue breakdown

CAMPAIGN DONATIONS BY
PRIORITY AREA, AS OF MAY 2025



Thank you

As each of these stories shows, ending hunger will take all of us. By joining **Rooted + Rising**, you become part of something transformational, creating a stronger, healthier, more equitable and prosperous future. Thank you for rising with us to meet this moment.

We look forward to hearing from you!

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