



Oregon Coast Community Action

Feed • House • Warm • Educate

April 15, 2021

The Honorable Betsy Johnson
The Honorable Elizabeth Steiner Hayward
The Honorable Dan Rayfield
Co-Chairs of the Joint Ways & Means Committee
900 Court St. SE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Co-Chairs:

REQUEST: ROLL-UP OF ONE TIME FUNDS IN THE HUNGER PROGRAMS FOR 2021-23

South Coast Food Share, the Regional Foodbank that services all cities within Coos and Curry Counties, wishes to ask to roll-up one-time fund levels of 2019-21 into the 2021-23 budget for these specific programs: Oregon Hunger Response Fund, DHS Farm Direct Nutrition: WIC Families, and Farm Direct Nutrition: Low Income Seniors.

As with all things, servicing the food needs within a community is an ever-changing process. The needs of any given community fluctuate with economic change. We have seen that in the last year, more than ever. The working poor, disabled, and retired are affected by increased costs of living which impacts their ability to pay for food. These same individuals and families earn too much to qualify for the SNAP benefits. Our pantries fill a critical need to the working individuals just as much as those who are unable to work by ensuring that they will not only have food to eat, but they were given healthy food to nourish their bodies to reduce the burden that poor eating habits place on an already strained healthcare system.

"My social security is not enough to cover the cost of living and I get almost no food stamps. without you (the food bank) I would not have anything to eat."- a homeless veteran

In our service area of approximately 87,412 people, 14.77% live with financial means below 100% of the federal poverty level according to the census bureau. The median household income for our area is \$18,692 per year. The average cost of housing is \$814.00 per month, and the two counties we serve have the 5th and 6th highest homeless counts in the state of Oregon according to the Oregon Health Authority. 16.5% of our service area's population is disabled and under the age of 65 and 30.75% are of the age demographic of 65+ years of age. Food banks will



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be needed more than ever to support these groups of individuals as their needs change in these uncertain times.

"If it were not for food banks, I would not eat by the end of the month"- anonymous food bank client.

In the past, we have utilized the Oregon Hunger Response Funds to support our partners with expansions to food distribution capacity; To support the collection of donations throughout our region; To support outreach and education around food safety and creative recipes and to develop a means to coordinate services with other entities that provide also provide services for those experiencing economic instability.

Moving forward, we here at South Coast Food Share are committed to the goal of closing the hunger gap in our community for good. We know that good healthy food promotes wellness, and wellness reduces the strain on the medical professionals, because wholesome food is the easiest preventative medicine that exist.

"Was a homeless vet and you kept me alive. The community warmth is amazing. Brought together with food. Thank you." -E-4

We implore you to make \$4.56 million the new base budget for the Oregon Hunger Response Fund in the Oregon Department of Human Services budget for the 2021-2023 biennium by rolling up the 2019-2021 one-time funds.

Thank you for your consideration and ongoing support of anti-hunger programs.

Sincerely,

Laura Hunter

Program and Project Development Director
Oregon Coast Community Action