



770 Bailey Hill Road
Eugene, OR 97402
PH (541) 343-2822
FX (541) 343-5019
info@foodforlanecounty.org
foodforlanecounty.org

TO: Joint Committee on Ways and Means
FROM: Tom Mulhern, Executive Director
RE: State Budget
DATE: April 19, 2023

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Mulhern".

Co-Chair Steiner, Co-Chair Sanchez, and Members of the Committee

My name is Tom Mulhern and I am the Executive Director of FOOD For Lane County. We operate the second-largest regional food bank in Oregon. Working with more than 150 local partner organizations in all sections of Lane County, we serve more than 70,000 food insecure individuals each year.

The demand for food assistance has grown in recent months, and our food pantries are seeing more people seeking food boxes now than they did in the first year of the pandemic. This increase in demand has been fueled by the increased cost of food and other necessities, combined with the recent loss of pandemic-related benefits, particularly the loss of emergency allotments in the SNAP program.

FOOD For Lane County is part of the Oregon Food Bank Network, and we support the following three priorities for the Oregon 2023 budget:

\$9M for the Oregon Hunger Response Fund to maintain funding for emergency food distribution efforts statewide. This crucial funding helps us and other regional food banks respond to the increased demand for food assistance.

\$10M to fund critical food purchases through the Oregon Department of Human Services.

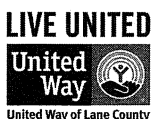
While most of the food we collect and distribute is donated food, the ability to make targeted food purchases has proven to be a very helpful way to get people the help they need.

\$22M to strengthen Oregon's food distribution network to make one-time infrastructure investments in regional food banks to support Oregonians facing hunger. We propose to use a portion of this funding here in Lane County to purchase land for growing food. We have two food-producing projects, the 2.5-acre GrassRoots Garden in Eugene and the 6-acre Youth Farm in Springfield. Both locations are owned by others and both are at risk of sale for development. We want to purchase our own land so that we can ensure continued food production to supplement and support our food bank operations.

Thank you for considering support for initiatives that will make a real and practical difference in the lives of food-insecure Oregonians.



FFLC is an equal opportunity provider and a member of



and the Oregon Food Bank Network