



Date: March 25, 2025

To: Senate Committee on Human Services

From: Oregon Health Equity Alliance (OHEA)

RE: Support SB 611

Chair Gelser Blouin, Vice-Chair Linthicum, members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Oregon Health Equity Alliance (OHEA) we are writing to support Senate Bill 611. The bill ensures that Oregonians regardless of their immigration status have access to food which in turn will support their overall health. Across Oregon, 1 in 8 people experience hunger and 1 in 6 kids do not have enough to eat.

OHEA is a people of color-led collaborative, organized to center and uplift the wisdom of our communities of color through racial justice informed health equity policies and practices. OHEA serves Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington counties as one of nine Regional Health Equity Coalitions, RHEC, across Oregon. It is important as a health equity organization to support Food for All Oregonians as we know food access is a social determinant of health that can directly affect the lives of our community members.

Five states, including Washington, and California have state-funded programs that improve SNAP eligibility for immigrants and refugees. Senate Bill 611 will give food assistance to those ages of 0-25 and 55+ who are currently excluded due to immigration status. Build on a successful, community-driven navigator model to ensure trust and community safety and make applying for assistance welcoming and culturally responsive.

The state has the opportunity to support these communities that are already facing attacks from the federal government by passing SB 611 we can continue to ensure that Oregonians have access to nutritious food especially when we know that immigrant and refugee communities, People of Color and many other families experience food insecurity at 2-3 times the rate of White Oregonians.

We urge the committee to vote yes on SB 611.

Sincerely,

Oregon Health Equity Alliance