



April 25, 2025

The Honorable Kate Lieber  
 The Honorable Tawna Sanchez  
 Joint Committee on Ways and Means  
 Oregon State Legislature  
 State Capitol  
 900 Court Street NE  
 Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chairs, Lieber and Sanchez, members of the committee,

On behalf of the Community Action Partnership of Oregon (CAPO) we would like to stress the urgent need we are seeing regionally through local food distribution channels. Federal reductions to the Federal Commodity Credit Corporation are further straining a stressed regional food distribution system. As a result of these disinvestments, we are expecting to see **17 percent less in available food acquisition** through local food distribution partners as of March 31<sup>st</sup>.

In an affordability crisis, we are also in an ongoing hunger crisis. **One-third more Oregonians are experiencing hunger** now than before the pandemic. Last year, there were 2.5 million visits to the 1,200 food assistance sites throughout the Oregon Food Network — a **31% increase** from the previous year. The current level of food insecurity facing Oregonians and recent **reductions in federal funding for food assistance** creates an urgent need to invest in food security.

In a survey among Oregon's regional food programs (before the federal reductions), **a gap of \$16.7 million** was identified to **maintain existing levels of services**. For example, NeighborImpact in Central Oregon was feeding on average 29,000 people monthly before the pandemic. Last month, they fed more than 74,750 individuals – a 159% increase in four years. With the help of critical state investments in 2022, we have been able to meet this demand. As numbers continue to surge and prices increase, we need additional financial support to maintain this level of assistance regionally.

Organization	Operation Funding/Food Acquisition Gap
Access Food Share	\$1,324,000.00
Community Connections of NE Oregon	\$200,000.00
CAPECO Food Share	\$1,000,000.00
Linn Benton Food Share	\$1,200,000.00
Food Share of Lincoln County	\$400,000.00
NeighborImpact	\$2,000,000.00
Yamhill Community Action Partnership	\$1,000,000.00
Clatsop Community Action Regional Food Bank	\$500,000.00
Columbia Pacific Food Bank	\$300,000.00
Food for Lane County	\$2,000,000.00
Josephine County Food Bank	\$500,000.00
Klamath-Lake Counties Food Bank	\$600,000.00
Marion/Polk Region	\$2,000,000.00
South Coast Food Share, ORCA	\$1,600,000.00
Feeding Umpqua, a program of UCAN	\$2,078,000.00
<b>Total Need to Maintain Existing Services</b>	<b>\$16,702,000.00</b>

In looking at it from a **statewide perspective and including urban areas, the need only intensifies**. We respectfully ask that you fund the Oregon Hunger Response Fund, currently proposed at \$6.4 million within Senate Bill 5526. While this funding is important for our communities, it isn't enough to meet the demand we are seeing in rural communities. **We also urge you to make \$16.7 million in direct investments** to help sustain existing services at the regional food distribution programs listed above that are providing a lifeline for thousands of families and individuals facing food insecurity.

During challenging fiscal times, regional food banks have established critical partnerships with businesses, farmers, and ranchers to address hunger and food insecurity in the state. Farm-to-Food Programs directly connect local farmers and ranchers with food banks, allowing farmers and ranchers to donate or sell surplus crops or livestock at a reduced rate, which would otherwise go to waste. It also creates opportunities to support local farms through food acquisition and ensure healthy food options are available to communities that might otherwise only have access to non-perishable or processed food. Being able to sustain these partnerships not only feeds hungry Oregonians, but they also create economic benefits for farmers and ranchers.

As we continue to rely on financial support through the state, donations from business, and partnerships with farmers and ranchers, we would welcome conversations with legislative leaders to identify creative ideas and additional partnerships that support farmers and ranchers, while investing in local healthy food for families facing food insecurity.

Please join us in supporting and investing in critical programs that support operations for regional food banks and fund food acquisition in local communities – no one should go hungry.

Sincerely,

Paul Rainey  
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