

# ACT TO END HUNGER: 40 WAYS IN 5 YEAR TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

## 40 Recommended Actions

### Family Economic Stability

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#### **Goal: Develop living wage opportunities for Oregonians.**

##### *Recommended Actions:*

1. Protect Oregon's minimum wage and its current index for inflation.
2. Increase tuition assistance for low-income students seeking higher education and implement the Parents as Scholars Program to allow parents on Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) to pursue the education necessary to secure higher paying jobs.
3. Increase the number of jobs in Oregon that pay a living wage and encourage companies to employ residents of low-income communities.

#### **Goal: Strengthen family stability with programs that offset living expenses.**

##### *Recommended Actions:*

4. Create a tax credit for low-income families who are renting.
5. Secure adequate revenue to develop a sufficient number of affordable homes for Oregon's families through local and regional trust funds and the Oregon Housing Trust Fund.
6. Provide or increase healthcare benefits offered by businesses for employees.
7. Identify and secure additional revenue for the Oregon Health Plan to cover all low income families (at or below 200% of the federal poverty level) without employer provided health benefits and conduct outreach to those families. Reduce the cost of premiums and co-pays.
8. Increase the income limit to 185% of the federal poverty level for the Employment Related Day Care Program, reduce family copayments, and lessen the steep reduction in benefits as employees move up the income ladder.
9. Provide or increase childcare subsidies offered by businesses for employees.

#### **Goal: Revamp the tax and lending systems to protect low wage workers.**

##### *Recommended Actions:*

10. Reconfigure the Personal Exemption Credit, making it higher for low-income families and phasing it out for well-off families to ensure that poor families pay a lower overall tax rate than higher-income families.
11. Establish a cap on interest rates charged for "payday loans."
12. Make the Oregon Earned Income Tax Credit refundable and increase the value to eliminate state income taxes for people living below the federal poverty level.

**Goal: Create an adequate safety net for those unable to work.**

*Recommended Actions:*

13. Expand the unemployment insurance system to allow more temporary and part-time workers to receive benefits and eliminate state taxes on unemployment insurance benefits.
14. Strengthen the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program by increasing eligibility levels and benefit amounts to serve more families and increase their stability.
15. Reinstate the General Assistance program to provide adequate support for disabled, extremely low-income individuals.

## **Community Food Security**

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**Goal: Develop and support a sustainable regional food system through community-based solutions, with statewide coordination.**

*Recommended Actions:*

16. Establish a statewide Food Policy Council to assess statewide needs, propose solutions, and provide coordination among local food policy councils.
17. Support the development of local food policy councils to conduct assessment and planning to meet needs and support efforts.
18. Support the development of a database to provide information and to help coordinate community food security efforts across the state.

**Goal: Support local farmers and improve the nutrition of Oregonians.**

*Recommended Actions:*

19. Support Farmers' Markets and small farmers in their efforts to accept food stamps through the addition of Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) technology to their markets.
20. Support the continued development and growth of the Oregon Farmers Market Association and Community Supported Agriculture.
21. Increase funding for the WIC Farmers' Market Voucher Program and the Senior Farmers' Market Voucher Programs.
22. Issue a state policy formally authorizing and encouraging schools and other public institutions to give preference to regionally produced, high quality food.
23. Identify and secure funding to cover initial outlays for equipment required to transition to regionally produced food purchasing, such as salad bars, walk-in coolers and culinary equipment.
24. Advocate federally for expansion of the federal Small Farms/School Meals Initiative and bring the USDA Fruit and Vegetable Pilot Program to Oregon to help reduce children's reliance on unhealthy food.

## Federal Food Programs

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### **Goal: Increase participation in underutilized federal food programs**

#### *Recommended Actions:*

25. Fund outreach, education, and technical assistance in Oregon communities where there is low participation in federal food programs, especially the Food Stamp Program, the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), and the After School Snack and Meal Program.
26. Establish sites for congregate and home-delivered meals for elders and people with disabilities in communities lacking them.
27. Apply to USDA for increased access to the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) that provides food commodities to seniors, children, and pregnant women.

### **Goal: Reduce barriers to participation in federal food programs.**

#### *Recommended Actions:*

28. Increase the capacity of the Department of Human Services offices to handle new food stamp caseloads in a timely manner while still maintaining a variety of access options for clients.
29. Fund start-up costs and provide supplemental meal reimbursement to boost participation in the Summer Food Service Program and the After School Snack and Meal Program.
30. Provide adequate state funds for the WIC Program to enable the program to serve all eligible women, infants and children.

### **Goal: Improve and invest in programs at the federal level.**

#### *Recommended Actions:*

31. Provide for categorical eligibility across programs including child nutrition programs (Summer Food Service Program, After School Snack and Meal Program, National School Lunch and Breakfast Program, Child and Adult Care Food Program), WIC, Food Stamps, Medicaid, Energy Assistance, etc.
32. Create a streamlined seamless program to serve children year-round in the child nutrition programs.
33. Increase participation in the Summer Food Service Program by lowering area eligibility rates from school areas where 50% or more of the children are eligible for free and reduced price meals to 40%, and expand the Lugar pilot nationwide to simplify program operations.
34. Raise the \$10 minimum Food Stamp benefit to \$25 and index for inflation.
35. Reinstate food stamp eligibility fully for legal immigrants.

## Emergency Food Services

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### **Goal: Increase the capacity of Oregon Food Bank's Statewide Network.**

#### *Recommended Actions:*

#### *Until the number of hungry Oregonians begins a significant decline:*

36. Maintain a contribution from the state General Fund each biennium to the Oregon Food Bank statewide network.
37. Increase private efforts to build community capacity of regional food banks and local agencies to generate more food and funds for their local communities.
38. Increase the nutritional quality of donated foods.

#### *Over the long term:*

39. Encourage food distribution sites to offer other services such as literacy and life-skills training.
40. Expand the 211 information system statewide to provide local residents with one number to call for all of their social service needs, including emergency food assistance.

For more information or for a copy of the full five year strategic plan, contact:

Oregon Hunger Relief Task Force  
123 NE 3rd, Suite 475  
Portland, OR 97232  
Phone: (503) 963-2680  
E-mail: [info@oregonhunger.org](mailto:info@oregonhunger.org)  
Web: [www.oregonhunger.org](http://www.oregonhunger.org)