EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ENDING HUNGER BEFORE IT BEGINS

OREGON’S CALL TO ACTION 2010-2015
oregonhunger.org

We envision an Oregon where everyone is healthy and thriving with access to affordable, nutritious and culturally appropriate food.
Beneath Oregon’s beauty lies a problem: Hunger. In recent years, more than a half million Oregonians have struggled to get enough food to eat. Hunger and food insecurity have serious consequences, both for those who experience them and communities that must respond. At its root, hunger is a symptom of a lack of sufficient income to pay basic expenses. It is also an indicator of systemic issues in our economy that put a heavier financial burden on many working Oregonians’ budgets. Hunger is preventable and solvable. The plan, Ending Hunger Before It Begins: Oregon’s Call to Action and its three goal areas are designed to guide Oregon’s collective efforts.

Economic stability means having sufficient and reliable income to pay for expenses. It is the most permanent solution to hunger and food insecurity.

How does economic stability help end hunger?
- When Oregonians have enough income to meet their basic needs and save for emergencies, the need for food assistance is dramatically reduced.
- When communities and our state have sufficient local and state revenue, they are able to invest in needed services like schools and infrastructure to support growth in economic activity.

How can we increase economic stability?
- **Focus on income** Oregonians need living-wage jobs and, at times, income supports to pay basic living expenses. Our state and local communities need sufficient revenue to fund public services and a strong rainy-day fund.
- **Focus on expenses** The cost of living in Oregon is higher than the national average. We can reduce this financial burden by focusing on public policies that help families afford housing, child care, and medical insurance, and still have enough money for food.

**Recommended actions to increase economic stability:**
- Help low-wage families keep more of their income by expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)
- Reduce the burden of housing expenses by increasing affordable housing
- Invest in Employment-Related Day Care (ERDC) so that more parents can afford to work
A food system represents the journey from seed to plate—from farmers to producers to distributors to retailers and consumers. A strong food system allows all Oregonians to access affordable, locally grown and produced foods.

How does a strong regional food system help end hunger?
- When Oregonians know how their local food system works, they can collaborate to make it stronger by addressing gaps.
- When communities link all parts of the food system together, a food web is created. These connections help identify local solutions, including ways to get food onto everyone’s plates.

How can we strengthen our regional food system?
- **Focus on community organizing** Community-driven forums can identify strengths and gaps, opportunities for economic development, and frameworks needed for success.
- **Focus on removing barriers** Local and state-wide policy bodies can improve food systems by removing barriers through assessments and strategic planning.

Recommended actions to strengthen the regional food system:
- Attend or organize a Food, Education, Agriculture Solutions Together (F.E.A.S.T) workshop
- Increase availability of and access to Oregon grown fruits and vegetables
- Establish a statewide food policy council

Food assistance programs provide an immediate response that helps Oregonians get enough to eat.

How do food assistance programs help end hunger?
- When times are tough, programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps), school meals, WIC, farm direct nutrition programs and emergency food boxes are the primary source of food for many Oregonians.
- SNAP and other food assistance programs help reduce the impact of poverty, allowing Oregonians to both afford food and pay for basic expenses.

How can we strengthen Oregon’s food assistance programs?
- **Focus on access** Many Oregonians are not accessing help, even though they are in need. We can work together to ensure they know about and can access food assistance programs.
- **Focus on program adequacy** SNAP benefits do not last the entire month for most people, food banks struggle to gather enough food and child nutrition programs are not available in all areas of our state. We can improve the food assistance safety net so that all Oregonians have a sufficient, nutritious diet.

Recommended actions to strengthen the food assistance safety net:
- Conduct multi-program outreach and collaboration across all food assistance programs
- Advocate for increased benefits in SNAP
- Increase participation in child nutrition programs
- Support the emergency food distribution network

to learn more about these goals and to get involved visit oregonhunger.org
TOGETHER WE CAN END HUNGER BEFORE IT BEGINS.

LEARN
Find out more about hunger and how you can help end it—read Oregon’s plan: www.oregonhunger.org

CONNECT
Get involved in your community by working to implement Oregon’s plan.

ADVOCATE
Your voice is needed—speak up! Ending hunger requires policy changes that address the root causes. Add your voice to public policy efforts.

We are stronger as communities and as a state when all Oregonians are fed and healthy. We must work together to ensure that no one goes hungry today, while taking bold steps to address the root causes so we prevent it in the future.
Ending hunger in Oregon will take collective efforts from every corner and sector of our state. Together, the Oregon Hunger Task Force and Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon met with communities across the state to develop a plan, Ending Hunger Before it Begins: Oregon’s Call to Action. Collectively we made progress on 30 of the 40 action items in Oregon’s first plan. Let’s build on this success together.

Get involved!

LEARN
- Learn more about hunger
- Read the plan

CONNECT
- Spread the word
- Support local efforts

ADVOCATE
- Contact your elected official
- Share your story

BECOME A PARTNER

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