



## 2007 Oregon Legislature makes solid progress

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Contact:  
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or call: 503-282-0555 Ext. 246

Thank you,  
Lori Valdez

And thanks to all who changed last month!

The Oregon Hunger Relief Task Force, Oregon Food Bank and many of our allies put forth a ambitious agenda this session, and joined in with other groups as additional bills gained momentum. There were several important victories achieved for low-income Oregonians and significant groundwork established for legislation to come in 2008 and 2009.

#### ✓ Passed

The Legislature strengthened family supports in the TANF program. The first reform of the Oregon Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program since 1991 was largely successful. About \$25.8

million in new dollars will be dedicated to several new and enhanced program areas, including stronger up-front assessments of needs and barriers, a new family SSI program, child support pass-through dollars, and monetary support to families as they transition into the work force.

#### ✓ Passed

Strengthened rules for consumer loans. Consumer loan reform was very successful this legislative session. A number of bills were passed, and as of July 1 it is illegal to charge more than 36 percent interest for any consumer loan under \$50,000, including payday loans and car title loans.

#### ✓ Partial success

Funding was increased for affordable housing. The Oregon Housing and Community Services Department budget retained existing programs and added \$26 million in new resources to fund housing for working families, seniors, veterans and people with disabilities. Sadly, HB 3551, the document recording fee bill, was held up at the last minute.

#### ✓ Partial success

Health care to cover every child in Oregon. The Healthy Kids Plan did not pass the 2007 Legislature; however the public will get a chance to vote on it this

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## Food stamps, farmers' markets, fresh foods

Encouraging food stamps at local farmers' markets can help promote nutritious eating and encourage food stamp shoppers to buy locally produced food, helping to support local farmers and processors. This summer there are 35 market locations across the state where Oregon Trail food stamp cards are welcome.

Ripe berries, fresh fruits, vegetables, cheeses, meats, seafood and locally made bread can be purchased with food stamps. As usual, hot foods may not be purchased with Oregon Trail food stamp dollars.

### Here's how it works at most farmers' markets.

Visit the market information booth. Purchase \$1 tokens with the Oregon Trail food stamp card. Purchase food and, don't forget, starts and seeds that can be used for home gardens can also be purchased with food stamps.

### Tips for stretching food stamp dollars.

- Buy seconds when you don't need perfect-looking food, tomato sauce for instance.
- Buy in bulk for the discount and then freeze or can the items so they are available all year.

- Buy when products are at the height of their season.
- Purchase seeds or starts and grow your own food.

### Additional Resources:

- ✓1-800-SAFENET – to learn more about applying for food stamps.
- ✓[www.oregonfarmersmarkets.org/directory.html](http://www.oregonfarmersmarkets.org/directory.html) – for a complete list of markets accepting Oregon Trail cards.
- ✓[www.oregonhunger.org/food-stamp-materials.html](http://www.oregonhunger.org/food-stamp-materials.html) – Oregon Hunger Relief Task Force has food stamp outreach materials and flyers for specific markets.

### Legislative Yellow Pages

State Legislative Information  
1-800-332-2313 (outside Salem)  
(503) 986-1000 (in Salem)  
[www.leg.state.or.us/citizenguide](http://www.leg.state.or.us/citizenguide)

### Members of Congress

Senator Smith  
(503) 326-3386  
Senator Wyden  
(503) 326-7525  
Rep. Wu (District 1)  
(503) 326-2901  
Rep. Walden (District 2)  
(541) 776-4646  
Rep. Blumenauer (District 3)  
(503) 231-2300  
Rep. DeFazio (District 4)  
(541) 465-6732  
Rep. Hooley (District 5)  
(503) 588-9100

### Farm bill update

On July 27, by a vote of 231 to 191, the U.S. House approved the Farm, Nutrition and Bioenergy Act of 2007 (H.R. 2419, or the "farm bill"). The nutrition title of the bill invests an additional \$4 billion over five years to improve Food Stamp Program benefits and access and raises funding for The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) from \$140 million to \$250 million annually with adjustments for increases in food prices.

Now the bill moves on to the Senate and action by the Senate Agriculture Committee, chaired by Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA). A House/Senate conference committee would negotiate any differences between H.R. 2419 and a Senate-passed bill. Congress must reauthorize the farm bill before the current bill expires on September 30, 2007.

## Several victories in 2007 Legislature

(continued from page 1)

fall. Lawmakers succeeded in referring it as a constitutional amendment on the November ballot.

✓ **Partial success**  
Refundable Earned Income Tax Credit (EIC) was extended. A bill was passed that makes the EIC permanently refundable and extends the entire credit to 2014. Advocates were close but not able to pass an increase in the credit to eliminate all taxes on poverty wages.

✓ **More work needed**  
on a state General Assistance SSI/SSDI bridge program for individuals. HB 3139 would have created a bridge program to provide monthly support for disabled Oregonians as they pursued Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Income (SSDI). The bill did not survive the Ways and Means Committee.

✓ **Passed**  
WIC farmers' market coupon program was expanded. A \$98,000 increase in funding for WIC

coupons was included in the final budget and will help expand the program to more women and children.

✓ **Partial success**  
Senior farmers' market coupon program expanded. The senior farmers' market coupons were increased by \$49,000 out of \$230,000 requested.

✓ **More work needed**  
to incorporate the statewide Food Policy Council into statute. HB 2288 would have created a forum for collaboration among farmers, consumers, and institutions to improve the food system in Oregon. It received bipartisan support but was blocked in Ways and Means. Advocates are working with the Governor's Office to find an alternative means of starting the council.

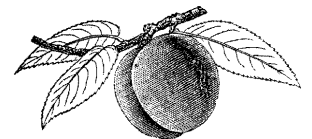
✓ **Passed**  
SB 461 will help protect low-income Oregonians from energy shut-offs and expand the Oregon Energy Assistance Program.

✓ **Passed**  
HB 2073 added homelessness to the charge of the Interagency Coordinating Council on Hunger, adding members and renaming it the Interagency Council on Hunger and Homelessness.

✓ **Passed**  
HB 2650 will set new nutrition standards for food items sold in schools. School districts will phase out high-sugar, high-fat junk food and soda in favor of healthier snacks for children.

✓ **Passed**  
HB 5019 will provide \$39 million in new revenue for Head Start, to help an additional 3,000 children succeed in school and life.

✓ **Passed**  
Funding for the Oregon Opportunity Grant Program was doubled to \$106 million to provide increase educational opportunities for low-income college students.



The Advocacy Alert is published jointly by Oregon Food Bank (OFB) and the Oregon Hunger Relief Task Force (OHRTF).

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## Summer food program a hit



The summer food service program is a huge hit this summer. Many sites offer free activities in addition to free lunches, helping to make the program fun for all kids. Children at 40 sites around metro Portland enjoy Start Smart Nutrition Education Curriculum and many of their parents take advantage of free parent meals offered at about 20 pilot sites. There are still a few days left to participate in some free summer food and fun in the sun – check out [www.summerfoodoregon.org](http://www.summerfoodoregon.org) to find a summer food site near you.

