



# ADVOCACY ALERT



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**Oregon Food Bank  
Oregon Hunger Relief Task Force**

## Food stamp bonus dollars help tremendously

The \$1.7 million in food stamp bonus money received last year by the Department of Human Services was released in February by the Legislature for a variety of great projects to help people with their food needs. Much of the money was routed through the food stamp outreach and food stamp nutrition education programs, which allowed the money to be further matched by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

We will highlight a number of these projects in coming months. For this month, we are pleased to report that the Oregon Hunger Relief Task Force (OHRTF) has used bonus funds to hire a part-time senior food stamp out-

reach coordinator for Washington County, Judith Auslander. Over the past several months, OHRTF has conducted a number of focus groups with seniors and created a list of great ideas for Judith to pursue. Judith will cultivate relationships with community partners to help more seniors get more nutritious foods by accessing food stamps. She will document her work so it can be used in other areas of the state.

OHRTF is also working with a number of regional food banks to expand food stamp outreach to seniors and other populations. We are currently working with Marion Polk Food Share, Food for Lane County, and

Oregon Coast Community Action (Coos, Curry and western Douglas County). Other regional food banks have been encouraged to contact us to discuss how they can pursue new food stamp outreach activities.

Finally, OHRTF has hired a consultant to review food stamp participation in five counties, looking specifically for those factors that contribute to successful outreach or that have become particular barriers. Those counties include Jefferson, Gilliam, Wheeler, Linn and Benton.

Stay tuned for more food stamp bonus project reports in coming issues of Advocacy Alert.

reimbursements for meals and snacks served by non-profit organizations, public entities, some for-profit entities, and tribal agencies located in areas where 50 percent or more of the student body qualifies for free or reduced meals. *(cont. on second page)*

Not sure if your program qualifies?  
See info on second page.

Does your after-school program provide educational or enrichment activities in a safe, structured environment? If so, the After School Meals and Snack Program (ASMSP) can provide a nutritional boost to school-age children who might otherwise go without. The ASMSP provides



Even though summer is in full swing, children will soon be back in school. This year many families are struggling to put food on the table because of skyrocketing food and fuel costs. Fortunately, there is a child nutrition program that can help, but this little-known program is only serving a fraction of those who are eligible.

### take five

(actions that take five minutes or less)

#### Message:

The U.S. Congress is considering a second economic stimulus package for potential passage in September. One of the provisions being discussed for the package is a temporary increase in food stamp benefits. Because of the way annual food stamp benefit increases are calculated, benefit levels lag behind the rapid rise of food prices. And food stamps benefit those most in need during economic slow times and are more likely to be spent than rebate checks.

- Ask senators and representatives to support low-income households that are struggling the most during the current economic downturn by doing all they can to include an increase in food stamp benefits in a potential second economic stimulus package.

#### Action:

Call your members of Congress to urge them to do all they can to support an increase in food stamp benefits in a potential second economic stimulus package. Call the U.S. Capitol switchboard at (202) 225-3121.

Take Action with ease...[www.oregonfoodbank.org](http://www.oregonfoodbank.org)



ADVOCATE

## After school programs (cont. from front page)

ASMSP has been an invaluable resource for many after-school programs.

“If it weren’t for ASMSP, our program would not be able to offer our youth a nutritious and balanced meal. This is important, because not only does the program feed our youth, but it has helped cut down on the afternoon disciplinary and concentration issues directly related to hunger. This helps our youth succeed. Without ASMSP, about 70 youth each day

would go hungry,” said Beth Faulhaber, Portland Police Activity League (PAL) Vice President/Molalla PAL Director.

Do you have children who are hungry at your after-school program? Do you lack funding to provide a meal? An after school program with 50 children can receive \$24,500 for serving meals and \$6,300 for serving snacks each year. Children can receive a snack and/or a meal depending on the structure and length of

the program.

The ASMSP is an excellent resource for children and after school programs, particularly during difficult economic times.

For more information about ASMSP contact Rick Freed at [rick@oregonhunger.org](mailto:rick@oregonhunger.org) or 503-236-7773. To learn more about how to qualify a program and upcoming training dates, contact Darcy Miller at 503-947-5899.

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**OFB Advocacy Staff:**  
(503) 282-0555 [Portland area]  
1-800-777-7427 [outside Portland]

Jon Stubenvoll X206

Jeff Kleen X204

Tammy VanderWoude X230

Stephanie Tama-Sweet X243

<http://www.oregonfoodbank.org>

[advocacy@oregonfoodbank.org](mailto:advocacy@oregonfoodbank.org)

**OHRTF Staff:**

Patti Whitney-Wise

[patti@oregonhunger.org](mailto:patti@oregonhunger.org)

Nancy Weed

[nancy@oregonhunger.org](mailto:nancy@oregonhunger.org)

Jessica Chanay

[jessica@oregonhunger.org](mailto:jessica@oregonhunger.org)

Annie Kirschner

[annie@oregonhunger.org](mailto:annie@oregonhunger.org)

Rick Freed

[rick@oregonhunger.org](mailto:rick@oregonhunger.org)

<http://www.oregonhunger.org>

### Introducing Stephanie Tama-Sweet

#### OFB’s new public policy advocate

Oregon Food Bank is thrilled to have Stephanie join the advocacy team and work to address the root causes of hunger and poverty in our state. Before coming to OFB, Stephanie served as executive director of the Oregon Center for Christian Values, a faith-based network promoting public policy for the common good, and political organizer with Stand for Children, a grassroots organization advocating for Oregon’s children. In these positions she had the opportunity to partner with OFB on the predatory lending campaign and Healthy Kids Initiative. Stephanie will focus on state-level, human-services public policy.

## Reaching out to seniors

Many senior citizens live on fixed incomes so when prices go up, they struggle to make ends meet. Many go hungry trying to pay for rent, electricity and medical expenses. Food stamps can help.

Even though overall food stamp participation is high in Oregon, only 30 percent of eligible senior citizens are on the Food Stamp Program. Senior participation varies from county to county, from a high of 42 percent in Multnomah County and a low of 14 percent in Wheeler County.

The Oregon Hunger Relief

Task Force (OHRTF) is reaching out to seniors to find out why they aren’t getting food stamps and to learn what can be done to make it easier for them to get the nutrition their doctors recommend.

During the spring, task force staff began a conversation with seniors living in urban and rural Washington County, and heard some surprising feedback.

Although many spoke about the stigma associated with using food stamps, this was not the biggest barrier. Most were unaware they could be eligible and

didn’t know where to start. They were excited to know they could get some extra help. The average monthly food stamp benefit for seniors living in Oregon is \$93, which can make a big difference in their food budgets.

When asked how we could reach other seniors to share this information they recommended talking to seniors where they congregate, such as senior centers, churches and other places of worship, meal sites, medical clinics and pharmacies, or placing information in

local newsletters and bulletin boards.

The task force recently hired a part-time staff member to continue work in Washington County with the goal of documenting outreach strategies that work and to provide this information to other counties in Oregon. Please join us in welcoming Judith Auslander, food stamp outreach organizer.

If you have ideas or would like to help get the word out to seniors, please contact Judith at [judith@oregonhunger.org](mailto:judith@oregonhunger.org).

