



ADVOCACY ALERT



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Oregon Food Bank
Oregon Hunger Task Force

Stimulus plan moves forward

On January 15, the House Appropriations Committee and House Ways and Means Committee released details of their portions of the economic stimulus plan, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The two-year, \$825 billion package includes nearly \$550 billion in domestic spending with the balance going to tax cuts. The package has significant funding for a number of human service programs that impact hungry Oregonians.

tion Assistance Program (SNAP) – SNAP, formerly the Food Stamp Program,



would receive a benefit increase of about 13 percent through fiscal year 2010.

SNAP administrative funds – The bill includes \$300 million in new SNAP administrative funding (\$150 million in each of fiscal years 2009 and 2010).

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) – WIC would receive \$100 million to improve state management information systems. Additional funding to help WIC meet the demands of increased caseloads due to the current recession are expected to be included in its (cont. on second page)

The Supplemental Nutri-

Human services stimulate our economy

Human service workers and providers say that their sector of the economy is “shovel ready,” to turn federal stimulus dollars into jobs and commerce within Oregon communities.

Human service investments have immediate return and allow Oregon to leverage federal dollars. More than 80 percent of the Oregon Dept. of Human Services (DHS) budget goes to communities through direct payments to clients or through service providers. These state and federal dollars pay for health-care services, child-care and independent-living assistance, and go directly and immediately into private-sector jobs supporting seniors,

children and other vulnerable Oregonians. Human-service dollars also have a multiplier effect within local communities – at the grocery store, office supplier or pharmacist. For example, for every \$5 in food stamps, \$9 in economic activity is generated.

Investments in human services are investments in our communities, and the loss of human-service dollars will make our recession deeper and longer.

Now is not the time to go backwards. Human services are needed most when our economy is in trouble and Oregonians face losing all that is most basic: jobs, homes and

health care. A record number of people are applying for emergency cash assistance and food stamps. This should put us all on alert to protect these programs so Oregon families can maintain stability and rebound when the economy begins to improve.

Unfortunately, human-service investments are often cut just when they are needed most, weakening families, local communities and our state.

The governor’s proposed budget contains a number of cuts that would affect families with children, seniors, and people with disabilities. Legislators will create their own budget during the 2009 legislative

take five

(actions that take five minutes or less)

Message:

As the U.S. Congress works on new economic stimulus legislation to strengthen our weakening economy, the needs of hungry Americans must come first. Food banks across the country are struggling to keep up with increased demand during the current recession.

Action:

Please go to www.oregonfoodbank.org/action to take action on this important legislation. Here you will be able to find your representative and talking points on what is needed in the stimulus package to fight hunger. If you are unable to go to our Web site please call the Capitol switchboard and ask for your representative at (202) 225-3121.

Email Request

If you are currently receiving the *Advocacy Alert* by mail and have Internet access, please consider sending us your email address. Receiving the *Advocacy Alert* electronically will help us save on postage, printing and paper. Please contact Lori Valdez at (503) 282-0555 Ext. 246 or lvadez@oregonfoodbank.org. Thank you.

session. They can accept the governor’s proposals or they can choose to protect services that stimulate our economy and provide vital support to struggling Oregonians.

Call your legislators today to advocate for the protection of human services.

Stimulus plan (cont. from front page)

annual appropriation, which must be completed by March 6, 2009.

After-school Meals – \$726 million would make all states eligible to participate in the After School Feeding Program for At-Risk Children and encourage participation by new institutions by increasing snack reimbursement rates. Because Oregon is one of eight states currently authorized to provide suppers in after-school care programs through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), under this provision it would be allowed to expand services to include an evening or week-end meal to an identified population of children in need.

Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) – Currently, working families with two or more children qualify for an EITC equal to 40 percent of the family's first \$12,570 of earned income. The bill would increase the EITC to 45 percent of the family's first \$12,570 of earned income for families with three or more children.

Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) – The bill includes an additional \$2.5 billion in TANF contingency funds

States would receive fiscal relief in the form of an \$87 billion increase in the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP)—the rate at which the federal government matches state funds spent on Medicaid.

Oregon Food Bank (OFB) and the Oregon Hunger Task Force have urged Oregon

members of Congress to support inclusion in the stimulus package of additional funds for The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)—the program that provides nutritious, shelf-stable, USDA commodities to food banks across the country. Specifically, we have asked for \$100 million annually over two years for TEFAP commodity purchases, \$50 million annually for TEFAP state and local commodity distribution, and \$15 million annually for Food Bank Infrastructure Grants to help food banks deliver food to hungry people in rural communities.

While less than hoped for, nutrition advocates are extremely pleased that both the House and Senate versions of the legislation include \$150 million for additional TEFAP funding.

TEFAP is an important source of food for the OFB Network, particularly as demand has increased so dramatically during the current recession. The latest OFB reports, covering July – September 2008, showed a five percent statewide increase in demand for food assistance, with some areas reporting demand up more than 40 percent. In October, the Portland metro area saw demand increase more than 40 percent over the previous year. More than 30 percent of emergency food recipients reported accessing the OFB Network for the first time.

At press time, the House has passed its stimulus legislation with a vote of 244-188, Oregon Representa-

tives Wu, Blumenauer, DeFazio and Schrader voted for the bill, Rep. Walden voted against the legislation. The Senate version is being considered by relevant committees and Senate leaders hope to have the full Senate debate the legislation the first week of February. Congressional leaders aim to finish action on the recovery plan in February. They have warned lawmakers that the President's Day recess period could be cancelled if final action has not occurred by then.

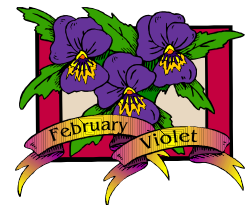
Oregon Legislators Raise Hunger Awareness

In an effort to raise awareness of hunger in Oregon and build bi-partisan cooperation, ten newly elected state legislators volunteered at Oregon Food Bank and local agencies across the state the day before the legislative session began. New House members from both political parties participated by repacking food donated by the community through holiday food drives. In total, the legislators repacked 6,339 pounds of food, equaling 4,876 meals.

Seven state Senators also volunteered at Marion-Polk Food Share in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. We are thankful for the volunteer efforts of these elected officials, especially in such tough economic times.

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

OFB Advocacy Staff:
(503) 282-0555 [Portland area]
1-800-777-7427 [outside Portland]
Jon Stubenvoll X206
Jeff Kleen X204
Tammy VanderWoede X230
Stephanie Tama-Sweet X243
David Osborn X267
<http://www.oregonfoodbank.org>
advocacy@oregonfoodbank.org
OHTF Staff:
Patti Whitney-Wise
patti@oregonhunger.org
Nancy Weed
nancy@oregonhunger.org
Jessica Chanay
jessica@oregonhunger.org
Annie Kirschner
annie@oregonhunger.org
Rick Freed
rick@oregonhunger.org
<http://www.oregonhunger.org>



Legislative Yellow Pages

State Legislative Information

1-800-332-2313 (outside Salem) 503-986-1000 (in Salem)

<http://www.leg.state.or.us/citizenguide/>

Federal Legislative Contacts

Senator Merkley
(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. Schrader (District 5)
(503)588-9100