



Advocacy Alert

OREGON FOOD BANK
OREGON HUNGER RELIEF TASK FORCE

May 2004
Volume 10 Issue 6



take five

(actions that take five minutes or less)

Action:

Check out Oregon Food Bank's great new on-line advocacy tool.

Follow these 3 easy steps:

1. Log on to www.Oregonfoodbank.org and follow the links to 'Advocate' and 'Legislative Contact'
2. Click on one of the 'Take Action' buttons to speak out on a current issue.
3. Surf through the rest of the site and discover all of the new features.

Bonus step:

Share this new activist tool with a friend!

Legislative Yellow Pages

State Legislative Information

1-800-332-2313 (outside Salem)
(503) 986-1000 (in Salem)
www.leg.state.or.us/citizenguide

Federal Legislative Contacts

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

An Act to End Hunger 40 actions aimed at eliminating hunger in Oregon

A highlight of this year's 2nd Annual Hunger Summit, convened by Governor Kulongoski, was the release of the Hunger Relief Task Force five-year strategic plan, *Act to End Hunger*. This comprehensive plan is the culmination of a year of development and coordination among many stakeholders across the region. A special thanks goes out to all of the staff at the Oregon Hunger Relief Task Force whose dedication and vision guided the entire process.

Hunger affects and diminishes the lives of everyone in the community. It is more than a social concern or a condition of poverty. It reflects situations broader than problems with alcohol or drug use or

mental health issues. Hunger has an impact on learning, on job performance, and on health care costs. It impacts virtually every aspect of our communities well-being.

The ranks of hungry and food insecure families now include middle-class Oregonians, struggling to meet housing, healthcare, and childcare costs. Many employed families are faced with the prospect of visiting an emergency food pantry or joining a gleaning group in order to stretch their hard-earned dollars.

Thousands of Oregon's residents lack food security. Many are hungry for extended periods of time. In response, Oregon has a large network of services to respond to hunger. These

essential programs represent an astounding investment of time and dollars. However, instead of ending hunger, these programs only are able to alleviate hunger on a day-to-day basis.

Ending hunger requires substantial changes in our social and economic infrastructure. Simply put, Oregonians must have enough income to pay for food and other essential needs. Oregonians must be able to secure living-wage income in order to end hunger.

Act to End Hunger was inspired by the community interest in hunger evident at Governor Ted Kulongoski's Hunger Summit in 2003. We hope to build upon the relationships and energy generated by both that event and the April 2004 Summit. The

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New on-line advocacy tool makes letter writing easier

The Oregon Food Bank web site now connects visitors directly to public policy decision makers and issues impacting the lives of Oregonians affected by hunger and poverty.

Through this new web-based advocacy tool, visitors can surf their way through current legislation at the state and federal levels, track how their elected officials are voting on anti-hunger bills, or submit letters and opinion pieces to media organizations throughout Oregon. Perhaps the most engaging piece of this new system is how easy it is to communicate with

your elected leaders.

Visitors have several new options for communicating with their legislators.

Action Alerts

These prominently displayed alerts will direct visitors to 'Take Action' on current issues. Clicking the 'Take Action' button will lead visitors to basic background information on the issue, followed by an automatic letter-writing form. By following the few simple steps, anyone will be able to weigh in important anti-poverty issues before congress and the state legislature. Visitors also

have the option of individually customizing their letter. The system is able to identify each individual's elected officials based on the contact information provided.

My Elected Officials

No more guessing what district you're in or how to reach your elected representatives. Visitors simply type in their ZIP code and the system provides a complete listing and contact information for their local, state, and federal officials.

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New on-line advocacy tool

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Issues and Legislation

Through this section, visitors are able to track news, information and current issues. Summaries and the current status of key legislation are also provided to help you stay on top of the issues important to anti-hunger activists.

For new citizen activists, or old timers interested in brushing up on the basics, there are tips and instructions to help you gain the skills to become effective activists.

Check out this great new tool. Visit www.OregonFoodBank.org and follow the links to 'Advocate' and 'Legislative Contacts'.

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

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Oregon Faith Hunger Conference: Common Concern, Common Action

May 17th, 7-9 p.m. – “What will it take to end hunger in America?” This free evening forum will feature a discussion of how federal government policy impacts hunger.

May 18th, 9:00 – 4:15 p.m. This day long conference is sponsored by Oregon Faith Roundtable Against Hunger. Registration for the day long conference is \$10. All are invited to attend regardless of ability to pay. For more information contact Bob Hornstein, Jewish Federation of Portland, 503-245-6496 or visit www.ofrah.org.

An act to end hunger (continued from page 1)

document is designed to give Oregonians a guide to help eliminate hunger in Oregon. We hope to inspire Oregon's leaders in business, community and government by identifying concrete, achievable actions.

Act to End Hunger outlines a menu of 40 actions, providing a host of answers to the question “What can we do to eliminate hunger?” The plan is organized into four distinct categories: Family Economic Stability,

Community Food Security, Federal Food Programs, and Emergency Food Services. Each category contains goals and a list of recommended actions for meeting each goal.

In an effort to help guide immediate efforts, 11 actions are identified as priorities for the coming year. Those recommendations are listed in the box below.

Taking action

Each one of us has a stake in

seeing this plan through. As community members, social service providers, businesses, religious leaders and policy makers, we all have a role to play in achieving these goals. The first step is to read the report and identify how you can become more involved. For copies of *Act to End Hunger* or questions about how you or your organization can get more involved, contact Oregon Hunger Relief Task Force, 503-963-2680, www.oregonhunger.org.

First Year Recommendations 2004-05

**Action numbers refer to their placement in the full 5-year plan*

Family Economic Stability

2. Increase tuition assistance for low-income students seeking higher education...(see report)
4. Create a tax credit for low-income families who are renting.
12. Make the Oregon Earned Income Tax Credit refundable and increase the value to eliminate state taxes for people living below the federal poverty level.
15. Reinstate the General Assistance program to provide adequate support for disabled, extremely low-income individuals.

Community Food Security

16. Establish a statewide Food Policy Council to assess statewide needs, propose solutions, and provide coordination among local food policy councils.
19. Support Farmers' Markets and small farmers in their efforts to accept food stamps through the addition of Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) technology to their markets.

Federal Food Programs

25. Fund outreach, education, and technical assistance in Oregon communities where there is low participation in federal food programs.
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.
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.

Emergency Food Services

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.