Ten years ago, Tami was a part-time student struggling to make ends meet after being laid off work.

“I worried every day about paying for groceries and whether I could afford to eat,” Tami said. She had $40 in her bank account, yet did not qualify for food stamps. “I knew that I needed help, but it felt scary and shameful to ask for it. There are societal pressures that make us feel like we’re not worthy of receiving help and that’s not accurate. Nobody should go hungry.”

Like many Oregonians, Tami was laid off from her job in March. In the weeks since, nearly 1 in 5 workers across the state have lost their jobs as businesses closed in the pandemic’s wake.

Despite the loss of income, Tami felt lucky to have a savings account to rely on. “This is the first time that our entire country – that our entire world – has been impacted by something so significant, and I am in a position where a majority of my friends are out of work,” explains Tami. “I wanted to do something to give back.”

Tami believes that her contributions, along with the contributions of other donors, will uplift our communities and help us emerge stronger from this ongoing crisis. “I won’t always have the means. In a few months I may not be able to make a donation. So I did it when I could, and in a few months when I’m not able to make it, I know I won’t regret giving. What I gave will help someone more than I needed it.”

Donor Knows The Difficulties of Job Loss
COVID-19 has tested us. In 2019, we estimate that 860,000 people in Oregon and Southwest Washington sought food assistance through the Oregon Food Bank Network. That means that about one in five of our neighbors went to a food pantry or meal site at least once last year. And hunger especially impacted communities of color, trans communities, immigrant and migrant communities, and single moms.

Hunger was a crisis before the pandemic – and the pandemic and associated economic disruption has made it worse. A lot worse. Schools are closed. One in five workers in Oregon are unemployed. Right now, we are experiencing a hundred-year flood of hunger – certainly the worst I’ve seen in 24 years of food banking.

And it won’t get better in the near future. State economists predict it will take Oregon’s economy three to five years to fully recover. So our response efforts won’t end when the public health emergency passes; our communities will need historically high levels of food assistance for the foreseeable future.

Anti-Black racism was also a crisis before the pandemic – and the murder of George Floyd is a heartbreaking, infuriating and painful reminder. It is not an accident that communities of color experience more hunger; it is because our society has denied these neighbors both rights and opportunities. Our communities cannot thrive if we as a society tolerate conditions that mean our neighbors of color are vastly more likely to die at the hands of police, sicken with COVID-19 or lose their jobs in the wake of a crisis.

Yes, we are succeeding right now in ensuring every person in Oregon and Southwest Washington who asks for food assistance can receive it. At these unheard-of levels of hunger, this is an astonishing success. It’s a testament to the strong, collaborative network of regional food banks and food assistance sites – and the generous community that supports us all.

And yet we are failing to address the root causes of hunger – including racism.

You have supported us throughout this pandemic, and I challenge you now to walk with us toward the racial justice that is so critical to our mission to end hunger. We have and will continue to promote and strengthen culturally-responsive food assistance. We will continue to support and invest in organizations led by Black, Indigenous and other People of Color. We will continue to pursue public policies that drive down hunger – particularly among communities of color and others who are disproportionately impacted by food insecurity.

Racial justice work is anti-hunger work. Because food is a human right – all humans, all the time.

P.S. I’ve been providing regular video updates to our community throughout the crisis. Watch at oregonfoodbank.org/ceoupdate, or sign up to receive them via email at oregonfoodbank.org/email.
Did you know that the recent stimulus payments, expansion of unemployment insurance and SNAP (sometimes known as food stamps) excluded more than 74,000 of our neighbors?

The sole reason they’re ineligible is because they’re immigrants. And it doesn’t seem to matter that many are essential workers – people who are critical to our food supply and healthcare system here in the Pacific Northwest and across the country.

Many of these essential workers and their families already faced housing and food insecurity – challenges that are made even worse by this public health crisis. It’s a travesty that so many of our neighbors have fallen through the cracks.

If we don’t act, tens of thousands of our neighbors may be left behind.

Fortunately, there’s an incredibly important effort underway to support these critical members of our communities: The Oregon Worker Relief Fund (OWRF). The fund is designed to fill gaps in our social safety net and provide direct funding to individuals that do not currently qualify for public benefits.

Pledge to support essential immigrant workers at oregonfoodbank.org/owrf. Because together, we can create a future where Oregonians all across the state – rural and urban communities alike – have food, healthcare, housing and economic security.

Share Your Story

Your story matters – and no one knows it better than you. Whether you’re volunteering or advocating or receiving assistance, we want to know how the pandemic has affected you and your family. Please leave a voicemail at (971) 313-8301 or visit oregonfoodbank.org/shareyourstory to make your voice heard.
Interim Report on Our Efforts to #EmergeStronger from COVID-19

As a pillar disaster response institution in our region, Oregon Food Bank (OFB) is leveraging its fullest strength to ensure that our food assistance system remains vital. We are unwaveringly dedicated to the health and safety of our community, including maintaining access to food for those most impacted: We will not allow hunger to become a symptom of COVID-19.

Since March 14, OFB donors have risen to the #EmergeStronger Community Challenge with private donations – exceeding a million-dollar challenge from Nike's John and Eileen Donahoe.

Thousands of supporters are rallying to strengthen OFB’s key, strategic priorities – ensuring that our communities not only survive COVID-19 but that we #EmergeStronger on the other side. These donations are propelling the food assistance system’s capability to keep pace with growing need while we anticipate the arrival of federal aid this summer.

Fueled by our community’s generosity and moral leadership, Oregon Food Bank is deploying more than $4.6 million in public and private resources, including donations made by donors like you. We've invested in a host of strategic priorities to ensure our communities have the resources they need today and a strong foundation for a brighter, more resilient future.

FLOW OF FOOD: $2,365,000
- Implementing innovative, safe food distribution models
- Purchasing food from local farmers impacted by COVID-19
- Supporting partners financially to keep neighbors fed in every corner of our region

FLOW OF INFORMATION: $420,000
- Ensuring our neighbors know where to access food and to rapidly disseminate COVID-19 updates through our Food Finder app
- Advertising across traditional and digital platforms in 11 languages common to the Pacific Northwest

FLOW OF SUPPORT: $1,115,000
- Distributing grants to all 21 regional food banks (RFBs) throughout our Network for immediate use to increase staffing, rent forklifts and buy packaging supplies
- Providing boxes, gloves, tents, and hand sanitizer to support new, safe food distribution methods

FLOW OF CHANGE: $730,000
- Influencing systemic solutions at the state and federal levels
- Protecting and strengthening our partnerships with movement-building organizations that work with equity constituencies (including Black and Latinx, immigrant and refugee, indigenous, and LGBTQ+ communities).

View full report at: oregonfoodbank.org/interimreport
From public speeches to media interviews, many leaders have expressed a desire to return to “normal” – an understandable statement following months of suffering, job losses and disruptions to daily life. But at Oregon Food Bank, we know this pre-pandemic “normal” also included profound, systemic inequities for tens of thousands of our friends and neighbors.

- Food insecurity among Black, Latinx and Native American households was more than double the rate of white households in Oregon.
- Nearly 28% of households headed by a single parent experienced food insecurity at some point in 2018.
- Children of foreign-born parents faced three times the rate of food insecurity as those whose parents were born in the United States.
- One in four LGBTQ adults reported not having enough money to feed themselves or their families at some point in the past year.

The pandemic has deepened these longstanding disparities, while making hunger a new reality for many more families throughout Oregon and Southwest Washington. And though food assistance alone can’t address these inequities, a lack of food most certainly contributes to the disenfranchisement of communities.

That’s why Oregon Food Bank hopes to do much more than return to normalcy in the wake of COVID-19. We dare to dream that our communities will emerge even stronger from this pandemic – and we’re working each day alongside community members, government leaders and industry partners to make it a reality.

Learn more about our shared vision for stronger, more resilient communities at oregonfoodbank.org/emergestronger.

Great Food Drive Nets 2.7 Million Meals!

This year’s KGW Great Food Drive was an incredible success, with partners stepping up to extend the drive through mid-April as the need for food assistance rose throughout the region. Thank you to KGW, Bob’s Red Mill, Rivermark, Safeway, Toyota and every community member who helped to connect local families with more than 2.7 million meals. Together, we know we can end hunger for good!
Thank You for Your Support!

Thanks to the incredible support of our community and industry partners, we have been able to meet this crisis head-on – and work to ensure we all #EmergeStronger from COVID-19.

PGE and the PGE Foundation, who’ve long-supported nutrition education programs, generously directed $200,000 to support COVID-19 relief efforts.

Thanks to Bank of America for quick and decisive leadership in funding pandemic response work in Oregon and Southwest Washington.

The team at Regence BlueCross Blue Shield of Oregon has generously supported our efforts to emerge stronger, in addition to volunteer and financial support throughout the year.

Critical support from Fred Meyer is helping to maintain the flow of food in our communities.

And, thank you to the Wheeler Foundation for the generous grant to support hunger relief efforts, including the Healthy Food Program.

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Food Is Available To All Who Need It!

Our Network of 1,400+ pantries and meal sites remains open throughout Oregon and Southwest Washington – with many locations now offering contactless pick-up or delivery options.

If you or someone you know needs support, know that resources are available. From SNAP benefits to housing assistance, program expansions and new initiatives are underway to support families who are struggling in the wake of COVID-19.

Find food assistance sites near you at OregonFoodFinder.org – now available in 11 languages common to the Pacific Northwest!

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