

Whose Government? Our Government.



Hunger is a problem we can solve — together.

Government belongs to us: we pay taxes and elect leaders to be our voice in the decisions that affect our families and communities.

The priorities of our elected leaders can make a major difference in our daily lives — they have the power to pass policies, create and fund programs, and ensure our communities' voices are heard when coming up with solutions.

Oregonians who face hunger know what it's like to make tough decisions between food and other essential needs. Our housing, childcare, healthcare and transportation costs are all increasing, though our wages are not. Too many of us are forced to make impossible decisions about what to cut.

It doesn't have to be this way. Hunger is a problem we can solve — together. And there are so many ways to get involved to make sure our voices are heard, regardless of citizenship status.



Who can vote in Oregon:

You must be a US citizen and at least 18 years of age at the time of the election to be eligible to vote.

Unlike some states, in Oregon, you can:

- Vote by mail. Postage is now free — no stamps required!
- Sign up to be a voter at 16 years old. (You won't receive a ballot until you are 18 years old.)
- Vote if you have been convicted of a felony in the past, or if you are on parole or probation. Remember to re-register to vote after you're released from prison.

How to vote in Oregon:

Register to vote. If you are eligible, you will be automatically registered if you apply for, renew, or replace your Oregon driver's license, ID card, or permit at the DMV. You also can register online or in-person at your county elections office.

Not sure if you're registered? Visit sos.oregon.gov.

To vote by mail:

1. **Receive a ballot** in the mail two to three weeks before an election.
2. **Fill in your ballot** and put it in the return envelope. Don't forget to sign the return envelope to make it count.
3. **Return your ballot** by mail or drop it off at an official ballot site before October 28. All ballots must be received by 8 p.m. on Election Day in order to be counted.

How can we end hunger?

We can end hunger when elected leaders listen to what our communities need to thrive. So it's important that we make our voices heard — whether through grassroots advocacy or at the ballot box.

No matter your voting status, you can make a difference!

- Encourage and educate people who can vote.
- Forward this guide to everyone you know.
- Share the issues that matter most in your community.
- Write letters to your local newspaper and post on social media.
- Sign up to take action on policies that help end hunger!

Who's Who?

Learn who makes the decisions that affect us in federal, state and local government.



Federal Elected Positions



US President

Heads the executive branch of the federal government for four years, and cannot serve more than two terms (eight years).

- Makes rules about who is eligible for federal food assistance programs like SNAP and WIC.
- Recommends funding for programs such as childcare, housing, healthcare and hunger relief.
- Nominates federal judges for lifetime appointments who rule on issues like equal rights and discrimination.



US Congress

Has two houses— the US House of Representatives and the US Senate. Makes federal laws with no limit on the number of terms a member can serve. Oregonians elect five Representatives and two Senators to be our voice in Congress.

- Decides whether to increase or cut funding for programs like SNAP, school meals, Head Start, Oregon Health Plan, Social Security and domestic violence services.
- Creates laws about child nutrition, immigration, healthcare, education, criminal justice, student loan interest rates and tax rates for low-income families.

Statewide Elected Positions



Governor

Heads the state executive branch. Elected every four years and cannot serve more than two terms in a row.

- Recommends funding levels for programs such as public schools, roads, housing and child welfare programs.
- Can stop certain laws and make sure existing laws are being carried out properly.



Attorney General

Heads the state's chief legal and law enforcement office. Elected every four years.

- Represents the state's position in all legal matters in court, including housing discrimination and racial profiling.
- Communicates opinions and interpretation of Oregon law or proposed laws, including voting rights, immigration and healthcare.
- Helps make sure that protection orders in domestic violence cases are enforced across the state.
- Approves ballot measure titles and descriptions to make sure they're clear to voters.



Secretary of State

Oregon's chief elections officer. First in the line to replace the Governor. Elected every four years.

- Protects Oregonians' right to vote.
- Makes sure that money for important state programs like welfare, foster care and housing are being spent fairly.

Oregon State Legislature

Like Congress, the Oregon Legislature is divided into two houses: the Oregon State Senate and the Oregon State House of Representatives. Legislators are in charge of making state laws.

You have one Senator, who is up for election every four years – and one Representative, who runs for re-election every two years.

- Chooses how to prioritize funds devoted to public schools, roads, housing, foster care and more.
- Makes decisions about the quality of – and who is eligible for – social service programs like Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), healthcare and childcare.
- Decides healthcare access for communities facing challenges due to income or immigration status.
- Determines whether to build more low- and moderate-income housing.



Local Elected Positions

Mayor, City Council and County Commissioner

City and County governments in Oregon have different structures. In some places, the mayor is the most influential and in others the city council has more power. Each county is run differently. Learn more about your local government on their websites.

- Decides how much financial support to give to community services that support low- and moderate-income families.
- Can support or stop the building of affordable and temporary housing, including emergency shelters for mothers and children.
- Able to introduce a new tax or fee for a council vote.

School Board

School boards set the vision and direction of the school district. They also hold schools accountable for meeting the needs of students.

- Can create policies that support the success of all students – like access to school meal programs and health class curriculum.



Oregon Food Bank

Works to eliminate hunger and its root causes – through emergency food assistance, public awareness and policy change.



Follow us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter @OregonFoodBank – and get involved at oregonfoodbank.org/takeaction.