



Food for Thought

Washington Food Coalition newsletter / Summer 2025

No one in Washington State should go hungry

WaFoodCoalition.org

Dear WFC Members,

We are excited to share some new resources and opportunities designed to support and strengthen your efforts in the emergency food system. First, we're thrilled to announce the release of the WFC Senior Nutrition Toolkit, a valuable guide for programs serving older adults. This resource offers essential information on the dietary needs specific to seniors, practical tips to enhance your services, and links to helpful tools. We're grateful to our partners for their contributions and to SNAP-Ed for supporting the translation and printing of this toolkit. You can download a digital copy here or request a printed copy by filling out this short form. If you'd like to learn more or talk through ways to apply the toolkit to your program, reach out to our nutrition consultant, Dana Cordy, at dana@wafoodcoalition.org.

We're also excited to announce the release of our new Best Practices manual, a collection of innovative approaches and good ideas from across the state. This resource highlights practices nominated by peers or surfaced during recent research, with a special effort to feature organizations of varying size, geography, and structure. While not an exhaustive list, this manual is a first step in building shared capacity and sparking conversation among emergency food providers. A PDF version will be available on our website, and printed copies will be distributed at the upcoming annual conference. The Senior Nutrition Toolkit and the Best Practices manual is based upon work that is supported by the Statewide Technical Assistance and Training Grant through the Washington State Department of Agriculture, Food Assistance.

Additionally, WFC members now have free access to a suite of online training courses through the Nonprofit Learning Center. These self-paced courses cover a range of topics to help you grow your skills and strengthen your organization, including: The Nonprofit Board Certificate (also available in Spanish), Let's Talk Money: Nonprofit Finance Basics, How to Raise Money for Your Organization, Disaster Planning for Nonprofits, and Fiscal Sponsorship for Food Organizations. You can access these courses here.

Lastly, don't forget to save the date for our 2025 Annual Conference, happening September 17–19 at the Three Rivers Convention Center in Kennewick, WA. This year's theme, Seeds to Solutions: Growing the Impact, reflects the collective power we have when we come together to share ideas, build partnerships, and create change. Hotel room blocks are now available, so be sure to make your reservations early. Registration details will be announced soon!

Thank you for the work you do to feed and care for our communities. We are your coalition, grounded in community, strengthened by peers, and united by shared values.

Warmly,

The WFC Team

Our Mission: The Washington Food Coalition actively educates and networks with organizations that strive to alleviate hunger throughout Washington

Our Vision: The Washington Food Coalition is the unified voice for a strong emergency food system



Greetings Greetings from WSDA,

As we enter the summer season, we want to take a moment to appreciate the hard work each of you are doing as direct service providers, redistribution partners, advocates, and supporters of the hunger relief network. The work you do to bring food to all Washingtonians is so important, and we are proud to partner with so many organizations across the state.

The state budget for the 2025-2027 Biennium – July 1, 2025 thru June 30, 2027 – has been finalized but the official budget numbers from Office of Financial Management (OFM) have not been released for our on-going funding and the “new” funding. We are thankful that our Agency’s request for the new \$93.5 million to support Food Assistance in the coming biennium was granted and recognize that the Legislature & Governor Ferguson made hard decisions this year faced with a large budget shortfall. WSDA Leadership has thus far approved the use of funds to support the following programs:

Pass-through approved to date:		
State Estimate Pass-through	SFY 2026	SFY 2027
EFAP State	\$25,600,000.00	\$25,600,000.00
EFAP – Tribal State	\$2,700,000.00	\$2,700,000.00
Farm 2 Food Pantry	\$800,000.00	\$1,000,000.00
LFPA Gap Funds	\$160,000.00	\$160,000.00
CSFP Bridge Funds	\$500,000.00	\$500,000.00
TEFAP Bridge Funds	\$10,000,000.00	\$10,000,000.00

Additional funding options such as continued support for the Food Rescue Grant Program (formerly WA Commodities Donation Grant Program) and Resiliency Grants are still up for consideration until OFM releases state agency specific budgets and WSDA Leadership gives final approval (anticipate mid-July). For information as it becomes available, please join us at our monthly General Focus Check-in Meetings or monitor the “What’s New” section of our Food Access webpage.

For those of you who applied for the 2025 Resiliency Grants, we received 260 eligible applications, requesting a total of about \$43.1M in support. The budget for this round is still unknown but projected at ~\$10-\$14M. We are in the judging period and hope to have award and non-award notifications communicated by late July with a retro-active start date of July 1, 2025.

Shifting focus to our federal programs in Food Assistance, we can share that the CSFP (Commodity Supplemental Food Program) and TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program) budgets have also been finalized for Federal Fiscal Year 2025 (FFY25; Oct. 1, 2024 – Sept. 30, 2025). There is no change in the amount of pass-through funds previously awarded to each Lead Agency in those programs.

We also know many of you are interested in the levels of TEFAP Food coming into the State in FFY25 and wanted to provide a brief status update here as we do in our General Check-in Meetings as well.

So far, this FFY,

- Volume: WA State is on track to receive 750 – 800 truckloads this year. While less than 2024, and on par with 2023, we are optimistic that there will be additional FFY25 TEFAP Bonus offerings before the end of the year.

- Value: We continue to track the average price per pound of food ordered for Washington’s TEFAP program and can report the price continues to drop from its high in FFY22 (\$1.42) and is currently at \$1.22 per pound. This has allowed FA to stretch our TEFAP Entitlement dollars just a little further and bring in more food with the funding allocated to the State.
- Total Money Spent: We have ordered \$30.5M in TEFAP foods (Entitlement, Bonus, and CCC) this FFY and hope to see that figure increase slightly over the coming months. While down from roughly \$45.9M ordered in FFY24, we anticipate two strong final quarters (July-Sept, Oct.-Dec.) with a wide variety of offerings to round out the state’s TEFAP distribution.

Looking ahead, we are excited to share the final use and priorities for pass-through of State funds. It is hard for us to predict what will be included in the Federal budget in the coming Federal Fiscal Year. We are tracking a proposal to eliminate CSFP, continue to closely monitor federal food and funding levels, and will provide more information as it becomes clear.

We continue to hear that local hunger relief organizations are serving more than ever and many of you rely on these state and federal resources to help you meet that need. We want to highlight the importance of ensuring that complete and accurate closeout and client data is provided. This is important for both EFAP and TEFAP Sub Agencies as we rely on this information to have a better understanding of program operations and challenges. This is important on a monthly basis but especially want to make sure everything is properly reported by the close of each program’s Fiscal Year (June for EFAP, and September for TEFAP).

In community,

Kim Eads & WSDA Food Assistance Team Members



Washington Food Coalition Board Members

District 1
Stephani Smith
NEW Hunger Coalition

District 2
Rachel Bishop
Upper Valley MEND

District 3
Jose Garza
Othello Food Bank

District 4
Seth Dow
Partners Inland Northwest

District 5
Ken Trainor
Sunrise Outreach Center

District 6
VJ Meadows
Tri-Cities Food Bank

District 7
Erik Mora
Blue Mountain Action Council

District 8
Casey Davis
Edmonds Food Bank

District 9
Jason Austin
Meals Partnership Coalition

District 10
Angel Swanson
Feeding Feasible Feasts LLC

District 11
Jody Stoltz
Tenino Food Bank

District 12
Emily Straw
Clark County Food Bank

District 13
Brent Hunter
Coastal Harvest

District 14
Andra Smith
Sequim Food Bank

At-Large Members
Sara Osborne
Safeway

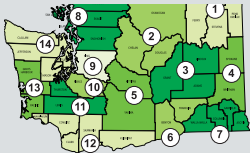
David Bobanick
Harvest Against Hunger

Julieta Altamirano Crosby
Refugee & Immigrant Services Northwest

Claire Lane
Anti-Hunger & Nutrition Coalition

Linda Matthews
WSU Pierce County

Dan Gustafson
Retired, World Food Program



Recognizing Innovation: Announcing the 2024-2025 Fresh Results Award Winners

At the Washington Food Coalition, we believe in the power of community-led solutions to end hunger and transform our food system. In partnership with the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA), we are proud to present the Fresh Results Award, an initiative that uplifts and celebrates the innovative work happening across our state’s emergency food network. This award recognizes organizations that are not only addressing food insecurity but doing so with creativity, collaboration, and lasting impact. We are excited to announce this year’s Fresh Results Award winners, two incredible projects that exemplify these values in action:

Clallam County Farm Gleaning Program

Serving Clallam and Jefferson Counties

The Clallam County Farm Gleaning Program is a collaborative initiative that connects surplus produce from local farms to families in need through a well-organized volunteer gleaning effort. In 2024 alone, volunteers gleaned over 20,000 pounds of produce from River Run Farm. These fresh foods were distributed through the Sequim and Port Angeles Food Banks, reaching an estimated 5,000 households each month.

The Sequim Food Bank plays a key role in recruiting and coordinating weekly volunteer gleans, while the Port Angeles Food Bank installed a produce washing station this year to better prepare the harvested food for distribution. They also expanded their reach by coordinating delivery to the Forks Food Bank, ensuring tribal food banks in West Clallam County benefit from the fresh produce.

This initiative not only reduces food waste, but it also strengthens the local food system and builds community resilience. Looking ahead, the team is exploring new ways to preserve excess produce, like cauliflower, cucumbers, and kale, so it can be safely stored and distributed throughout the year.

Project Partners:

- River Run Farm – Noah Bresler
- WSU Extension – Benji Astrachan
- Sequim Food Bank – Andra Smith
- Port Angeles Food Bank – Emily Dexter



Grow Your Own Row - Northeast Washington Hunger Coalition

Serving Ferry, Stevens, and Pend Oreille Counties

The Grow Your Own Row project, led by the Northeast Washington Hunger Coalition (NEWHC), is an inspiring gardening education program that empowers food pantry clients to grow their own food. What started as a creative solution to a delayed harvest season has blossomed into a region-wide effort involving WSU SNAP-Ed, Meadowlark Farm, Huckleberry Range Collective, local Master Gardeners, and many more community partners.

In 2024, NEWHC hosted 17 free gardening classes at food pantry and senior living locations, providing participants with plant starts, seeds, soil, grow bags, and hands-on training. Nearly 400 individuals participated, learning valuable skills in growing their own vegetables and developing a deeper connection to their food. The excitement didn’t end at the workshops; participants stayed engaged by sending photos, asking questions throughout the season, and sharing their garden successes.

The impact is clear; more than a third of participants said they would not have started a garden without the program. By breaking down financial and knowledge barriers, Grow Your Own Row is cultivating not just gardens, but community health and empowerment.

Project Lead: Stephani Smith, Executive Director – NEWHC

Key Contributors: WSU SNAP-Ed, Meadowlark Farm, Huckleberry Range Collective (Dana Combest), Master Gardeners of Ferry, Stevens & Pend Oreille Counties



At WFC, we are inspired by these award-winning projects and the passionate people behind them. The Fresh Results Award is just one of the many ways we aim to uplift the incredible work happening throughout Washington’s emergency food network. We extend our heartfelt congratulations and gratitude to both projects and look forward to seeing how their efforts continue to grow and nourish communities in the years ahead. Together, we are seeding solutions and growing impact one harvest, one garden, and one community at a time.

To learn more about other nominees for the Fresh Results Awards, visit our website.

Save the Date: WFC Annual Conference - Seeds to Solutions: Growing the Impact

September 17 - 19, 2025

Kennewick, WA

Three Rivers Convention Center

Each fall, we bring together leaders, volunteers, and advocates from across the state to share knowledge, spark collaboration, and reenergize our collective work. Rooted in the understanding that real change happens when practical tools meet meaningful conversation, the conference offers a mix of skill-building workshops, visionary speakers, and opportunities to connect with others doing the day-to-day work of hunger relief and food justice.

Spotlight on Friday's Keynote: **Chef Maria Hines**

We are thrilled to announce Chef Maria Hines as our Friday keynote speaker. A James Beard Award-winning chef, Maria is also the founder of Blue Sky Minds, a nonprofit focused on creating a just, sustainable, and community-rooted food system in Washington State, with a special focus on the Okanogan region. Maria brings a powerful perspective shaped by years at the intersection of food, sustainability, and health. Her work promoting organic and regenerative practices in kitchens and beyond has influenced national conversations on what it means to cook, eat, and grow with care for people and planet. Through Blue Sky Minds, she now works to support local food system collaborations, always guided by values of kindness, inclusion, and resilience.

Bringing the World Home: Food Security in a Global Context

This year's agenda also features a special session from WFC board member **Dr. Daniel Gustafson**, former Deputy Director-General of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization. With over four decades of international experience, Dr. Gustafson will share lessons learned from his work across Africa, Asia, and Latin America and how global approaches to food and nutrition security can inform local strategies here in Washington. His deep insight and commitment to building sustainable systems make this a session not to miss.

Learning That Sticks: Tools for Building Organizational Strength

Professional development is another key focus of this year's gathering. We're excited to welcome Nancy Bacon, a nationally recognized learning strategist and co-host of the Nonprofit Radio Show. With a background in nonprofit leadership and instructional design, Nancy understands what it takes to build effective, resilient organizations. Her sessions will cover volunteer management, succession planning, and strategies to support staff development, all rooted in practical tools and real-world experience.

Whether you're looking to troubleshoot a pantry issue, navigate leadership transitions, or gain inspiration from leaders in the field, the 2025 conference offers something for everyone. We can't wait to see you there.

