



Food for Thought

Washington Food Coalition newsletter / Summer 2024

No one in Washington State should go hungry

WaFoodCoalition.org

Executive Director's Greeting

Greetings!

Hope you're having a fantastic summer! I wanted to give you a quick update from the WFC. We're all hands-on deck, gearing up for our annual conference in Wenatchee, WA from September 18-20th. We have a wonderful team that's been working tirelessly to ensure this conference is one of our best yet. (Do check out the article about the conference!)

We are thrilled to welcome aboard all our new board members. We now have a full team of 14 district representatives and 6 At-Large members. We're really looking forward to you meeting them all in Wenatchee.

Great news! We've received additional funds for translation and interpretation services. If you'd like to take part, do sign up here: <https://wfc.memberclicks.net/translation---interpretation-services> If you have any items that need translating, feel free to send them directly to Trish at trish@wafoodcoalition.org.

Lastly, we will be updating our Best Practices Manual this year and want to hear from all of you about the innovative programs and services you are providing. More about this at the conference!



Hope to see you in Wenatchee,

Trish Twomey

Trish Twomey
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BRIDGING THE GAP
Washington Food Coalition Conference
Sept 18th -20th, 2024 • Wenatchee Conference Center

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



WSDA Food Assistance Update: Summer 2024

It is hard to believe that it is already August, and we are heading into the end of summer! I’m grateful for your diligence in closing out the state fiscal year and submitting “all” the reporting. The reporting is vital for assessing how the year went, and it is also used to guide future planning.

I was recently asked what has the WSDA Food Assistance (FA) team been doing to address the need for increased food during a time when we are seeing a record number of clients in need of food, and what are our plans to address future need.

To put it simply, we are doing everything possible to increase the amount of food we receive, stabilize the food supply by bringing in a steady stream of food, and expand the number of sources that we can get food from. Sometimes that looks like providing increased operational funding so that you can use your “other” funding to purchase more food.

Food: There are 3 primary programs that we operate that provide food:

- **TEFAP:** Beyond “regular” TEFAP food from USDA, we are seeing increased amounts of bonus (free) foods – James Scovel on our team is taking as much as possible of these foods, and the continuation of TEFAP CCC foods through at least through March 2025 will help with the amount of food Washington gets in 2025. So far for 2025, we have already ordered \$6,171,254.07 worth of TEFAP food. In 2024, TEFAP food is at \$46,452,233.87 (so far) which is an increase of \$7,781,363.01 from 2023! The average price per pound for USDA food has improved in 2024. We are at \$1.29 as of 8/05/2024. In 2023, we ended the year at \$1.40 per pound. That is a \$0.11 decline compared to the previous year. The bottom line is that the emergency food system is getting more TEFAP food and getting a better deal on that food!
- **CSFP:** Even though this is a smaller USDA program, it provides consistent monthly food packages to Seniors. CSFP provides Washington State on average \$185,550.10 worth of USDA foods each month to be issued to seniors statewide.
- **Reserve Warehouse:** The idea behind the Reserve Warehouse was initially developed to offset the food supply chain issues caused by COVID. Today, it is used to increase the amount of food being made available to you. Since July of last year, over \$6.9 Million worth of food came from the Reserve Warehouse to distribute throughout the emergency food system. We are also planning to purchase additional food in the winter for distribution during Jan – Mar 2025.

Funding to purchase Food: Beyond the EFAP and EFAP-Tribal funding we provide you, there is also the USDA Local Food Purchasing Assistance grant that provides funding to purchase local Washington foods and distribute those to hunger-relief organizations and tribes across the state.

- **LFPA:** This is the first time that we received funding from USDA to purchase local food, over \$7.8 Million ran through WSDA FA hunger relief organizations and tribes to support these efforts. It was a slow start in 2022, but just in the last year alone \$2.6 Million of local food was purchased. The remaining balance for this year is \$4.5 Million.

While we are ALL doing a lot to increase the amount of food coming into the system, we know that there is more to do. Hopefully, many of you have heard Katie Rains speak at our monthly General Check-In Meetings about WSDA’s proposed legislative requests (not final), including one for Food Assistance which will be incredibly important for addressing current gaps in the system and longer-term improvement strategies for the future. This funding is also critical as the COVID-19 funding comes to an end on June 30, 2025. Please keep in mind that WSDA’s proposal was not developed to address the anticipated reductions to SNAP and you all know the devastating impact that will have on the people we serve and your organizations.

In addition to food and funding, we are also putting our energy into increasing our conversations with you and sharing resources that are helpful to you. We are in the process of updating our webpage so please keep an eye out for those changes and let us know what you think! We had a great response to the updated Food Purchasing Resources and later in August we will be adding survey links to gather input from you on EFAP and EFAP-Tribal proposed changes for the upcoming biennium. You will also see that we are providing a lot more “open office hours” for all of our programming – these are informal and a great place to ask all those questions that you might not really want to ask.

WSDA Food Assistance Update: Summer 2024 cont.

We look forward to connecting with you at the Washington Food Coalition Conference in Wenatchee next month. WSDA FA will host a session on Thursday (tentatively 10:15 – 11:45) discussing FA programs and priorities – where “we” have been, where we are at, and where we are headed. You’ll also find our team members in some of the other sessions. For example, you can join James Scovel and Jeff Mathias, for a detailed update on USDA Foods heading your way this year and Food Procurement Resources on Thursday’s, “Where’s the Food?”.

As always, we are thankful for you and your partnership!
The WSDA Food Assistance Team

Voter Registration
Food Research and Action Center

A single sentence in the federal tax code defines the prohibition of partisan political activities by 501(c)(3) charitable organizations. It states 501(c)(3) organizations are “prohibited from directly or indirectly participating in – or intervening in – any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for elective public office.” Whether activities are considered partisan political activity on behalf of or in opposition to a candidate depends on the “facts and circumstances” in each situation. ***While partisan activities are prohibited, it’s clear there’s still a lot a 501(c)(3) can do on a nonpartisan basis to promote voter and civic engagement as part of its charitable and educational mission during the election season and beyond.***

Permissible Nonpartisan Activities and Common Examples

The IRS affirmatively states that 501(c)(3) organizations may **conduct voter engagement or connect with candidates on a nonpartisan basis**. 501(c)(3) organizations under this principle may:

- **Conduct or Promote Voter Registration.**
- Educate Voters on the Voting Process.
- Distribute Sample Ballots or Nonpartisan Voter Guides.
- Encourage People to Vote; and
- Conduct Nonpartisan Candidate Education.

The main principle for being nonpartisan is to conduct voter engagement and education in the context of your educational and civic mission and not in a way intended to support or oppose a specific candidate or political party. If you hold a candidate forum or offer to brief the candidates on issues of importance to your organization, make sure you treat the candidates equally. When you do voter registration or remind people to vote, do it in the context of the importance of voting—encouraging active citizenship and giving voice to the communities you serve.

For more information on activities that nonprofits can and cannot do - connect to FRAC’s Anti-Hunger Nonprofits and Elections packet. <https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/anti-hunger-nonprofits-and-elections.pdf>

More resources on voter registration:
Three Ways to Register to Vote: <https://youtu.be/NkuhRpP-TY4>
Register to vote online. <https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/voters/voter-registration/register-vote-washington-state>
Print a voter Registration form - [https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/voters/voter-registration/print-voter-registration-form in 23 languages](https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/voters/voter-registration/print-voter-registration-form-in-23-languages).
<https://voter.votewa.gov>

<https://www.northwestharvest.org/wp-content/uploads/Vol-Voter-Engagement-Guide.pdf>



BRIDGING THE GAP

Washington Food Coalition Conference

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WFC Conference

Hope you are considering joining us in Wenatchee, September 18-20th.

There is so much to share about our upcoming conference. First of all, if you have never been before it is a fun time. Very friendly people so don't be shy about attending alone.

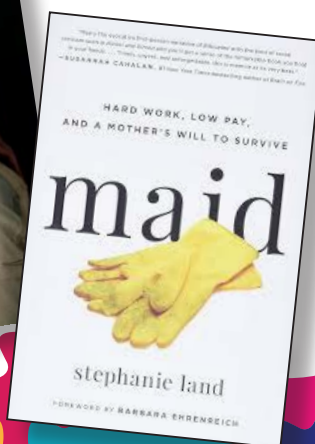
We will be at the Wenatchee Convention Center, 121 N Wenatchee Ave, Wenatchee, WA 98801. We have several hotel room blocks, please see our website, <https://www.wafoodcoalition.org/ourannualconference> for details.

To register for the conference, link here: <https://www.wafoodcoalition.org/ourannualconference> We use Whova, a conference platform App, that offers attendees the ability to see all our sponsors, our 25 sessions and exhibitors plus engage in a little friendly competition. It's a great place to converse and share ideas with other conference attendees. Be sure to download the app. Our presenting sponsor this year is Nourishing Networks-Safeway.

The price of the conference for members is \$150 (Earlybird will end September 3rd) but we do have scholarships available that can assist with travel, hotel rooms and registration.

Keynote

Our keynote will be Stephanie Land, Best Selling Author, Memoirist and Economic Justice Advocate. The Netflix show, Maid, is based on her life story and is set on Kitsap Peninsula. To view the series, link here: <https://www.netflix.com/title/81166770>.



Stephanie tells us she has a special place in heart for food banks in WA State.

For our Book Club this year we will be reading Stephanie Land's bestselling memoir **Maid: Hard Work, Low Pay, and a Mother's Will to Survive**. Her book is available on Amazon for about \$12 or at your favorite bookstore.



Tours

At each conference we offer tours of local sites on Wednesday afternoon. A conference favorite! Meet in the convention center at 1:30 p.m. to carpool to your destination. This year's tours will include:

- Chateau Faire Le Pont Winery - \$10 tasting fee, wine tasting (15-20 max people)
- Ohme Gardens - \$5 fee to visit and receive tour of the gardens.
- Tour of the new distribution center and Market at the Chelan Douglas Community Action Council (CDCAC) & Pybus Market.
- Tour the Aplets and Cotlets Candy Kitchen in Cashmere on your way to Leavenworth to tour the Upper Valley MEND Food pantry and Thrift store, plus time in Leavenworth to shop.

Health

We are also hosting a CPR and AED certification class on Wednesday, 18th at 12 noon. The class will run for an hour and a half. You'll finish just in time to join the tours. The class will cost \$25, sign up when you register.

We will be offering yoga classes plus head and shoulder massages to attendees at no cost, but tipping is encouraged. All thanks to our Wellness Sponsor, Humana!

Thanks to all our wonderful sponsors for making this conference possible!

Hope to see you in Wenatchee. If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Trish at trish@wafoodcoalition.org



Advocacy Updates: Elections, Voter Engagement, Budgets and Farm Bill

Claire Lane, Director

Our primary election on Aug 6 chooses the top 2 candidates who will be on the ballot in every race on Nov. 5. Final primary ballots are still being counted; results are at the Sec. of State's website [here](#). In November, we know we will have a new President, a new Governor, a new Attorney General, at least 2 new Congress members, approximately 25% of the state House will be new, and more than 30% of the state Senate will be new – other statewide elected offices may also have new faces, or the incumbent will return. Additionally, there are two significant ballot initiatives that, if passed, would roll back progress on making our tax system more fair and cut billions of dollars from our state budget. Ensuring our community members are registered to vote, understand what's at stake in elections, and actually vote are essential to democracy – and makes sure everyone's voice is heard in big decisions.

And there are big decisions coming up: in January, the Legislature will begin to write a new 2-year budget. Washington's budget outlook for the next 2 years is very tough yet demand is high for basic needs services, especially anti-hunger programs - while state government fundamentals like K-12 education, transportation, health care and other issues also need significant support. Organizations are beginning to plan their preliminary priorities for funding and bills in Olympia – get involved by reaching out to your advocacy partners!

At the same time, the federal budget ends on Sept 30 and Congress has no agreement on any of the necessary 13 appropriations bills, nor agreement on the Farm Bill that also expires on Sept 30. Advocates expect that the budget and the Farm Bill will have short term extensions ("continuing resolutions") to keep the government running and the Farm Bill provisions in place until after the election. In addition to agriculture and conservation, the Farm Bill supports a significant portion of the hunger safety net: SNAP and all the programs that support emergency food providers (TEFAP, CSFP, FDIRP) as well as smaller programs like Farm to School and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Programs. It's critical legislation for hungry people and our community partners who serve them. A broad national coalition, including anti-hunger organizations, is gathering signatures [for a letter urging Congress to pass a resilient, equitable and sustainable Farm Bill in 2024](#) – deadline to sign on your organization is Sept 5.



WFC Chair
Sara Osborne

Vice Chair
Jay Kang

Past Chair
Andra Smith

Treasurer
Cecilia Chavez

Secretary - Open

District 1
Stephani Smith
NEW Hunger Coalition

District 2
Rachel Bishop
Upper Valley MEND

District 3
Jose Garza
Othello Food Bank

District 4
Carrie Chase
CAC Pullman

District 5
Cecilia Chavez
Toppenish Community Chest

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
Kathleen Murphy
Ballard Food Bank

District 10
Angel Swanson
Feeding Feasible Feasts LLC

District 11
Jay Kang
Thurston County Food Bank

District 12
Alan Hamilton
Clark County Food Bank

District 13
Sandy Harley
Ocean Shores Food Bank

District 14
Andra Smith
Sequim Food Bank

At-Large Members
David Bobanick
Harvest Against Hunger

Dan Gustafson
Retired, World Food Program

Claire Lane
Anti-Hunger & Nutrition Coalition

Linda Matthews
WSU Pierce County

Sara Osborne
Safeway

David Uhl
Feeding Washington