



Food for Thought

Washington Food Coalition newsletter / Winter 2024

No one in Washington State should go hungry

WaFoodCoalition.org

Executive Director's Greeting

What a year it's been! It feels like every year has been quite the adventure lately, doesn't it? This year, we saw some record-breaking numbers! In FY 2024, hunger relief organizations served 2.2 million Washingtonians, with an impressive 13.4 million visits. Food pantries, meal programs, and food banks have been working tirelessly to make this happen across the state. A huge thank you to everyone who has dedicated their efforts to making sure their community is well-fed.

Looking forward to 2025, let's hope for even more food on your shelves. Check out Claire Lane's article on page 4 for insights into the upcoming legislative session, and don't miss WSDA's article for updates on LFPA and TEFAP CCC. The great news is that these programs have been renewed or received additional funding. The Governor's budget included the Enhanced Funding for Food Assistance - \$93.3 million (one-time). but these funds are not guaranteed. It's going to be crucial to advocate for these funds.

As we step into 2025, exciting changes are on the horizon for the coalition. In January, we'll welcome a new Membership and Education Manager, and by the end of the month, our new platform will be up and running. We're continuing with our grant writing sessions and offering a special training on creating and administering surveys on January 15th. On the same day, we'll have our first FAAC meeting of 2025. Erik Mora from the Blue Mountain Action Council in Walla Walla is our new chair, and we've brought on a facilitator to help with the meetings. We'd love for you to join us on the 15th at 9 a.m.

Here's to a bountiful and healthy New Year!



All the best,

Trish Twomey

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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



Season’s Greetings from WSDA Food Assistance!

We deeply appreciate the services each of you provide to your community during the holiday season. We know many hunger relief organizations offer special foods at this time of year whether it’s to give everyone visiting your meal program an extra special dinner, or to provide staple items to people who might be hosting large family gatherings. Even for the organizations that didn’t provide additional holiday distributions, we know that this is often the busiest time of year for hunger relief organizations as people juggle other expenses, and many of you have already been experiencing high levels of demand. The recently published EFAP data for state fiscal year 2024 (S <https://about.usps.com/what/corporate-social-responsibility/activities/nalc-food-drive.htm> FY24) has really demonstrated the increasing demand food pantries are facing. Thank you for continuing to be a reliable source of support for people needing some extra help.

Below is a summary of a few projects Food Assistance is working on as we head into the new year!

Future Resources:

- **Legislative Request:** We are pleased to share that Enhanced Funding for Food Assistance was included in Governor Inslee’s Budget - \$93.3 million (one-time). This does not mean that funding has been allocated for the 2025-27 Biennium, but it’s a positive first step as we head into the Legislative Session. Over the next few monaths, you will hear about opportunities to comment on this funding opportunity from partners such as the Anti-Hunger and Nutrition Coalition and Washington Food Coalition.
- **LFPA:** USDA has announced that there will be additional funds awarded to continue the Local Food Purchase Assistance (LFPA) Cooperative Agreement Program. We are gathering details about this latest round of funding and in the coming months we will share information about what this means for Washington State.
- **TEFAP CCC:** USDA has announced the renewal of TEFAP CCC (Commodity Credit Corporation) which has accounted for roughly half the TEFAP Foods received in FFY24. The continuation of this program means that the volume of TEFAP food is expected to remain stable throughout 2025.

Policy Updates

- **Final Rules: Improving Access and Parity in TEFAP & CSFP:** On October 31, 2024, USDA published final rules providing updated TEFAP and CSFP policies, some of which impact things like client data collection (TEFAP in particular) and client eligibility (CSFP in particular). Some changes will be implemented this winter, and others later in 2025. We have been working with the Food Assistance Advisory Committee as much as possible to gather feedback on the implementation of these changes. Key updates include:
 - **Removes the USDA term commodities and changes to USDA Foods.**
 - **TEFAP Income Eligibility at 400% (WFC FAAC Survey Results – 93% support & 7% did not support).**
 - **Removes requirement to collect TEFAP client addresses (clients only need to self-attest that they live in the State of Washington).**
 - **CSFP Income Eligibility at 150% instead of 130%.**
 - **CSFP participants and/or proxies no longer need to show ID when picking up food.**
- **Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Updates:** Policy updates to 2 CFR Part 200 (Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards) were published and effective October 1, 2024. We are working to integrate and as applicable, phase these changes into Forms, Guidance documents, and Program Agreements. Changes will continue to be adopted throughout 2025.

Policy Updates (continued)

- **Procedures Manuals:** We are diligently working on updates to the TEFAP and CSFP Procedures Manuals and related forms, to align with the new federal rules for these programs. We anticipate these Procedures Manuals will be finalized in late January, pending USDA approval to our TEFAP and CSFP State Plans. Next, we will turn our focus to the EFAP and EFAP-Tribal Procedures Manuals for the next biennium. Our goal is to have these completed in February or March. We are looking forward to making sure that this supplemental resource can be used as a current reference and guide to your work under those programs in addition to your program Agreements and Amendments.

To stay up-to-date on the items above, please join us at the next **Food Assistance Advisory Committee Meeting** (January 15, 9:00 – 10:30), or our [Monthly Check-in Meetings](#).

We look forward to continuing to partner with you in 2025,
WSDA Food Assistance Staff

Looking Ahead into 2025

New Platform

The coalition will be moving to a new platform – GrowthZone. Our current site will end on January 31st. Hopefully, our new website will be up and running by then! More news to come.



WFC 2025 Annual Conference – Three Rivers Convention Center

We are excited to announce that our 2025 Conference will be September 17-19th in the Tri-Cities, Kennewick, to be exact. We will be at the Three Rivers Convention Center. More information is coming soon. If you are interested in helping us plan this year’s conference, please contact Trish.



Upcoming WFC Trainings:

January 15th at Noon **Survey Fundamentals for Food Pantries**

You know your customer needs are important, so you want to survey them and learn more about their food and health concerns, but where do you start? How can you conduct a survey that people will take? How do you work the questions to get the information you need? In this one-hour workshop, we will cover the fundamentals of using surveys to gather feedback and make program improvements, which can be the first step in developing or updating your program’s nutrition policy and donation guidelines. We will explore what you may want to ask, and how to get the data you need! RSVP to register and receive the calendar link to join:
<https://calendly.com/cc-meredith/survey-fundamentals-for-food-pantries>



Watch your weekly newsletter for another grant writing class scheduled for Feb. 5th



2025 National Letter Carriers Food Drive

Save the date for the 2025 **#StampOutHunger** food drive on Saturday, May 10!

Mileage Rate Increase 2025

IRS increases the standard mileage rate for **business** use in 2025; key rate increases 3 cents to **70 cents per mile**



Preparing for Anti-Hunger Advocacy in 2025

As a new Congress begins with a returning president, and as a new state legislature begins with a new governor and a large budget deficit, we will need strong advocates for hungry people in the coming months!

In DC: A few days before Christmas, Congress passed a budget extension that will fund the government until March 14 and reauthorized the Farm Bill until September 30, 2025. There are deep concerns about possible rule changes and legislation in 2025 to further restrict eligibility and access to SNAP and Medicaid, and budget cuts and tariffs that would negatively impact food banks and producers. Washington’s delegation has two new members: state senator Emily Randall replaces retiring Rep. Kilmer (WA-06), and Spokane Co. Treasurer (and former state senator) Michael Baumgartner replaces retiring Rep. McMorris Rodgers (WA-05). Make sure your member of Congress knows how critical it is to protect the hunger safety net!

In Olympia: For the first time in a dozen years, there will be a new Governor, and Gov-elect Ferguson has already named several new agency leads - and one returning: at the Dept of Agriculture, Derek Sandison will remain Director of WSDA. There are also many new state representatives and senators. It will be a difficult session for lawmakers because they have to write a 2 year budget while our state faces a \$10-12 billion deficit. The end of federal pandemic relief funds, unexpectedly high caseloads, slowing state revenue, and new policies set to begin in the next 2 years have contributed to the budget gap. As required, Gov. Inslee released a budget proposal in mid-December. His proposal includes delaying or freezing some spending, cutting some investments (especially in K-12 education and early learning), and raising new revenue through a capital ownership asset tax (a “wealth” tax) and temporary changes to the Business & Occupation tax. Only with these tax proposals does Inslee’s budget avoid the kinds of massive program cuts we experienced in the Great Recession – and allow the kinds of investments in the hunger safety net that are so desperately needed.

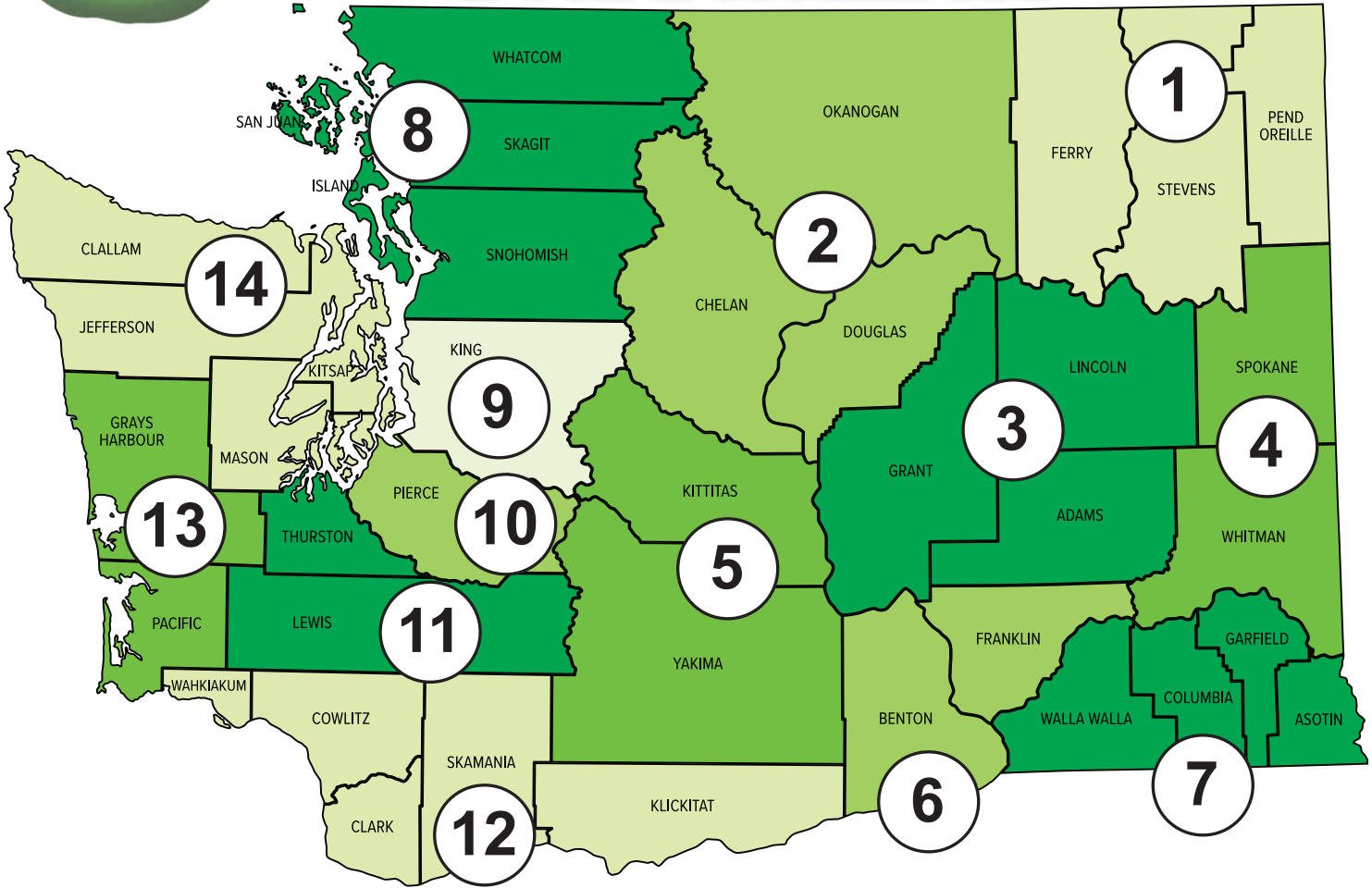
This budget proposal fully funds WSDA’s request for \$93.3M for Food Assistance, DOH’s request for additional \$6M to maintain current service levels for the Fruit & Vegetable Incentive Programs for SNAP and low income patients, DSHS’ request to continue Summer EBT/SUN Bucks, and OSPI to cover current access to free school meals. It also nearly fully funds DSHS’s request of \$35.4M to maintain current caseload for senior nutrition programs (Inslee’s proposal included \$27.9M).

It will be our job to advocate in the coming months so our state has adequate funds to invest in the essential programs to feed hungry people – as well as the programs and policies that help them also keep a roof overhead, access to health care, and opportunities for economic success.

Save the date for
Hunger Action Day 2025
Monday, Feb. 24!



Washington Food Coalition Board Members



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