



WaFoodCoalition.org

Food for Thought

Washington Food Coalition newsletter / Winter 2025

No one in Washington State should go hungry

Greetings!

As we enter the winter months, a time when many things go dormant or come to an end, it feels fitting to say a heartfelt goodbye. After 42 years in the food security field—starting as a senior meal coordinator, then serving as a food bank director, coordinating and staffing a coalition of food banks in Seattle, and ultimately becoming the Executive Director of the Washington Food Coalition (WFC)—I am retiring!

This marks a new chapter in my life, and I honestly don't know what I'll do with myself. Hopefully, I will discover new hobbies and interests, and perhaps even volunteer at my local food pantry.

I have truly loved my role as the Executive Director of the WFC. It has been an amazing opportunity to connect with so many of you and witness the incredible work being done in communities across Washington State.

Although I feel sad about not being able to engage with all of you anymore, I trust that the coalition will continue to support you. I will be available part-time for a couple more months, after which I will conduct some training with Andra Smith, our new Executive Director. Please refer to the article on page 4 for more details. Who knows, maybe I'll make an appearance at a future conference!

As Garrison Keillor says, stay well, do good work, and keep in touch. If you would like to reach me, you can contact me at (206) 669-1740 or via email at trishjim206@gmail.com.

Wishing you all a Happy Holiday!

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!

As we wrap up the year, I want to extend my immense gratitude for your partnership and resiliency throughout these tougher times. I don't want to lose sight of the fact that we have received record levels of funding and food support but have also seen record levels of community need – a staggering 14.8 million client visits in State Fiscal Year 2025 (SFY25) for EFAP alone. Your tireless work is truly inspiring and your commitment to serving others shines through. We are humbled by your kindness and are so grateful to have you as a partner in building stronger, food-secure communities. Your voice has made the difference in shedding light on the realities facing the people you serve, the struggles faced by the hunger-relief community, and the severe impacts of the federal shutdown, reductions in safety net programming, and a growing number of unknowns.

While there will be many storms to still navigate, I'm grateful that we live in a state that is so supportive of our collective efforts and provides us with the tools to keep the ship afloat. In the new year we will continue to look for opportunities to reduce regulations where we can, make program improvements through increased community engagement, increase and strengthen internal and external partnerships, and leverage existing resources to the best of our ability. In the meantime, here are a few more practical matters to keep in mind for the first few months of 2026:

- The WSDA Food Assistance Lead Agency Check-In Meetings will resume on Fridays with the first one being on January 9th 9:00 – 10:00.
- The WSDA Food Assistance General Check-In Meetings will also resume on Tuesdays with the first one being on January 27th 9:00 – 10:00.
- New! The Resiliency Grants Quarterly Required Meeting and Training for all organizations that received a Resiliency Grant this year – invites have been sent for the first quarterly meeting which will be held on January 12th at 10:00 am. See the Resiliency Grants webpage for all updated information and monthly Optional Open Office Hours.
- For those of you that participate in TEFAP and/or CSFP we think budgets will actually be final in January which is far earlier than previous years. This will also include final caseload (seniors) numbers for Federal Fiscal Year 2026 (FFY26). If there is another federal shutdown, we will keep you updated historically the food and funding will continue to come into the system during a shutdown.
- Anticipate that the Food Assistance Advisory Committee (FAAC) will have a meeting in the latter part of January.
- Keep your eye out for new information on our "What's New" webpage in January.
 - The "What's New" section currently has information about the EFAP SNAP Response funding that was designated by the Governor to support food banks in early November. You can also click on the "Find older announcements here" link to find previous announcements.
- As the legislative session starts up, we will be updating our "Hunger in WA" with more data and infographics.
- Hunger Action Day is on February 10th!
- The annual TEFAP Risk Assessment should be ready in February.

- Required trainings (for those of you that don't have audits) should be available starting sometime in the latter part of February – more to come on this in January. There will be a live option and an on-demand option. This is a project that WFC is working on with Nancy Bacon, and we think this will be a really great resource for you!
- As part of community engagement, regional stakeholder engagement will take place from January-June 2026 which will help to inform FA program improvements for implementation in the next state biennium (begins July 1, 2027). Engagement will be conducted amongst hunger-relief partners via reoccurring surveys and region-specific community development and coalition building. Stay tuned for more information.

Wishing you a safe and peaceful holiday season, and we look forward to continuing to partner with you in 2026.

Kim Eads & the WSDA Food Assistance Team

Mark your calendars now – Tuesday, February 10 is Hunger Action Day 2026!

Each year in Olympia, lawmakers have opportunities to learn from advocates about the most critical issues facing hungry people, and to support policy solutions that will be most effective for our communities. One of the best ways we make a difference in Olympia is Hunger Action Day, when advocates from all corners of Washington come together to learn from each other and to meet with their legislators about our priorities for solving hunger.

Hunger Action Day will be Tuesday, February 10 @ United Churches of Olympia (at 110 11th Ave SE, Olympia). This annual lobby day is sponsored by the Anti-Hunger & Nutrition Coalition as a day-long event that begins in the morning with greetings from our champions in the Legislature, training on our shared legislative priorities, and tips on how to be an effective advocate. Hunger Action Day culminates with appointments with your lawmakers throughout the afternoon.

Hunger Action Day is a great way to get to know your legislators and to show them you are committed to your program back home and to policy change in Olympia. Because of an expected budget shortfall of as much as \$5 billion, this year it's more important than ever that lawmakers know how important it is to protect basic needs investments – like food access, housing, and health care. Federal funding cuts to SNAP and Medicaid is putting enormous new pressures on low income people and the programs that serve them – as well as shifting historic new costs to our state budget. We will prioritize protecting: funding for food access programs in the budget; access to SNAP and related food benefits; creating a statewide coordinated response to hunger (HB 1987); expanding access to affordable housing and shelter; and, creating new sources of revenue to provide sustainable funding for critical basic needs into the future.

Advocates will need to encourage lawmakers to make much-needed changes to our budget in order to maintain funding for critical safety net programs and pathways out of poverty, so Washington has what we need to build healthy, hunger-free communities.

To register for Hunger Action Day 2026: <https://bit.ly/4j09BE2>

Meet Our Incoming Executive Director: A Conversation With Andra Smith



As the Washington Food Coalition welcomes our new Executive Director, Andra, we sat down with her to learn more about her path into hunger relief, her leadership philosophy, and what she's most excited to take on in the year ahead.

What drew you to the Washington Food Coalition, and what inspires you most about this work?

I first connected with WFC in 2016 as a new member of the hunger-relief community, and even then, I deeply admired the organization. WFC was a huge source of support as I learned my way through nonprofit work and food access. Joining the Board in 2020 gave me a behind-the-scenes view of governance, operations, and the organization's potential for impact. Stepping into this role feels like a natural extension of that experience. I care deeply about the work and believe WFC has an opportunity to influence hunger relief in meaningful, statewide ways.

How has your recent work or past roles prepared you for this position?

My background is eclectic, in the best way. I grew up in a self-employed family and spent my early years working in family businesses, from a Western wear store to a petroleum wholesale business. Along the way, I worked in media buying and planning, chambers of commerce, and owned several small businesses. I've collected many "tools" from these experiences that I bring into this role.

Most recently, my nine years at Sequim Food Bank reinforced the importance of equitable food access and treating everyone with dignity. I also learned the power of collaboration, how no one organization can solve hunger alone, and how essential it is to have others "along for the ride" to make the work prosperous and impactful.

As you step into this role, what opportunities or priorities are you most excited to focus on?

Every region in Washington is unique and what works on the Olympic Peninsula may not be the best approach in other parts of the state. I'm excited to learn from members across the state, understand their local realities, and identify how WFC can provide the most meaningful support and statewide advocacy. Another top priority for me is strengthening internal operations and workflows to ensure WFC has a strong foundation that can support our members well into the future.

Washington's hunger-relief network is incredibly diverse. How do you hope to engage and support food banks and pantries statewide?

Being "boots on the ground" is crucial, visiting communities, listening, and learning firsthand. I also plan to have an open-door policy, including virtual office hours and focus groups, to hear from members directly. I want WFC to be responsive, collaborative, and aligned with the needs of our communities. I'm also interested

in seeing how we can plug into existing efforts so we complement what's already happening rather than create more work for partners.

What can members expect from your leadership style?

Collaboration is core to who I am. I believe in shared vision, clear communication, and ensuring everyone - staff, volunteers, donors, and partners - feels they have a place and a voice. My style is supportive and non-intrusive, built on the belief that "things work until they don't," so staying aware of the pulse of the organization is essential. I want WFC to continue fostering an environment where everyone is respected, communication is strong, and teams work together in harmony.

What's something you've learned so far about WFC or the hunger-relief community that has surprised or impressed you?

The level of genuine support in this community is remarkable. People show up to help each other, share resources, and lift one another up. WFC members truly collaborate, and that spirit of generosity is inspiring.

When you're not working, how do you like to spend your time or recharge?

I love to cook, especially with old cookbooks, which I read like novels. There's so much history, culture, and story in them. Food connects us; we celebrate with food, we mourn with food, we make memories with food. You can often find me wandering through Goodwill and estate sales looking for cookbooks to add to my collection or spending quiet time at home recharging.

Final Thoughts

I am incredibly grateful for the trust the board has placed in me. Picking up the torch and moving WFC forward is an honor. I'm eager to listen, learn, and collaborate with this community to strengthen hunger-relief efforts across Washington.



Washington Food Coalition Board Members

<p>District 1 Stephani Smith <i>NEW Hunger Coalition</i></p>	<p>District 6 VJ Meadows <i>Tri-Cities Food Bank</i></p>	<p>District 11 Jody Stoltz <i>Tenino Food Bank</i></p>	<p>At-Large Members Sara Osborne <i>Safeway</i></p>
<p>District 2 Rachel Bishop <i>Upper Valley MEND</i></p>	<p>District 7 Erik Mora <i>Blue Mountain Action Council</i></p>	<p>District 12 Emily Straw <i>Clark County Food Bank</i></p>	<p>David Bobanick <i>Harvest Against Hunger</i></p>
<p>District 3 Jose Garza <i>Othello Food Bank</i></p>	<p>District 8 Casey Davis <i>Edmonds Food Bank</i></p>	<p>District 13 Brent Hunter <i>Coastal Harvest</i></p>	<p>Julieta Altamirano Crosby <i>Refugee & Immigrant Services Northwest</i></p>
<p>District 4 Seth Dow <i>Partners Inland Northwest</i></p>	<p>District 9 Jason Austin <i>Meals Partnership Coalition</i></p>	<p>District 14 Andra Smith <i>Sequim Food Bank</i></p>	<p>Claire Lane <i>Anti-Hunger & Nutrition Coalition</i></p>
<p>District 5 Ken Trainor <i>Sunrise Outreach Center</i></p>	<p>District 10 Angel Swanson <i>Feeding Feasible Feasts LLC</i></p>		