

# LOCAL FOOD BANKS NEED ADDITIONAL HELP TO FEED OUR NEIGHBORS

The **Emergency Food Assistance Program** (EFAP), operated by the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA), is our state's long-standing program for distributing funding equitably, transparently, and flexibly to food banks, food pantries, and tribes. EFAP funds go directly to 16 tribal lead agencies and 27 non-tribal lead agencies which represent every county and support over 350 local food pantries and tribes. Decision-making is made at the local level and tailored to specific communities' needs for food purchasing, storage, and distribution.

EFAP enables food banks to use state funds to maximize local resources, and address gaps in charity and food industry partnerships to meet client demand. EFAP funds are administered transparently by a state agency, responsive to local conditions, and *urgently needed*.

**BUDGET REQUEST: \$15 million for WSDA's Emergency Food Assistance Program in one time funding.**

Our food banks and food pantries are seeing more clients than ever before: **at 10.9 million visits, Washingtonians visited a food bank more often last year than any year in the past 10 years.**

According to WSDA's latest available data comparing FY 2022 to FY 2023, new client visits to food banks increased **36%**; clients that visited a food bank more than once in the year increased **30%**. In the first year of the biennium, all client visits increased by **one-third** (31%) compared to 2022.

The same high food and fuel prices that are driving up demand for food bank services are also affecting food banks' ability to meet this growing need. Food banks are struggling to afford to keep food on their shelves, and the rise in gas prices has made it more expensive for food banks to distribute food through their network of warehouses to community organizations, especially in rural areas. Supporting food banks with EFAP funding is the smartest, most responsive solution to today's struggles:

**EMERGENCY  
FOOD  
ASSISTANCE  
PROGRAM helps  
food banks  
because it is:**

**LOCAL:** EFAP funds are distributed and used at the local level, providing the flexibility food banks need to take advantage of local opportunities *and* gaps in the local food economy in order to feed your constituents.

**COST EFFECTIVE:** Large coalitions of smaller food banks and pantries have economies of scale together to purchase the foods their communities need at cheaper prices. Food banks are incredibly resourceful - an additional \$15 million leverages the **equivalent of up to 45 million meals across the state.**

**EFFICIENT:** EFAP covers communities across the entire state, ensuring that no area is left out of available state funds. WSDA uses an allocation formula (based on population, poverty rates, etc.), rather than a grant process, so it's more equitable and more efficient to administer.



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COALITION**