

## Communities Support State Food Assistance

*71 community organizations join together to call for full restoration of State Food Assistance for our children, elders, and families.*

*February 7, 2014*

Dear Esteemed Washington State Legislators and Governor Inslee,

We are coming together once again from all around Washington State, from diverse communities, to call on you to restore State Food Assistance to equal benefit levels with Basic Food.

We appreciate the partial restoration of State Food Assistance that you passed in 2013, which increased benefits from 50 percent of Basic Food to 75 percent. The increase is helping families eat and meet their basic needs. However, the job is not done. Now we are asking you to finish the job and fully restore equal food benefits for families that count on State Food Assistance.

State Food Assistance (SFA) is Washington's smart answer to hunger. For more than 15 years, Washington has strategically leveraged national resources to make sure that food stamps reach families during difficult times.

But now our food security network isn't working like it should. The recession plunged more Washingtonians into food insecurity, and pushed more children into poverty. At the same time, Washington legislators slashed SFA benefits for thousands of children growing up in immigrant families, nearly all of whom are children of color. At a time when an estimated one in four Washington children lives in a food insecure household, the cut to SFA deepens racial and economic inequality.

The cut hurts vulnerable children and elders the most. Children make up half of the Washingtonians in households that receive State Food Assistance. Many are seniors. Singling out immigrant children and elders to suffer in hard times is simply not fair.

Our quality of life in Washington depends on our ability to make sure kids have what they need to grow up healthy and strong. No matter where you're from, or what you look like, in America all of our children should have opportunities to learn and succeed so they can grow up and be the strong leaders, workers and parents our future depends on.

But hunger is a roadblock to opportunity. The ties between hunger, poor health and learning are well understood. If we continue to send children to school without the fuel they need for academic success, we continue to let the opportunity gap swallow up our future.

In our communities we see the impact of the cut. Cash-strapped families still have to skimp on the grocery items that build our kids' bodies and minds and keep elders healthy. Visits to food banks can't fill the holes left in family budgets by the cut, and food banks in many of our communities are overwhelmed by the rising need.

The economic recovery has not reached all families equally. Low-income families are not yet seeing significant improvements in income or wealth, and hunger continues at near-record levels. This legislative session we urge you to take a step toward restoring the integrity of our food security system, and restore State Food Assistance to equal benefits with Basic Food. It is a move in the right direction for Washington State.

—Signatories listed on reverse.

Anti-Hunger and Nutrition Coalition (statewide)	International Community Health Services (King County)	Statewide Poverty Action Network
API CHAYA (King County)	Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle	Tacoma Community House
Asia Pacific Cultural Center (Puget Sound Region)	Latino Education and Training Institute (Whatcom, Skagit, Snohomish Counties)	Tenino Food Bank
Asian Counseling and Referral Service (King County)	Legal Voice (statewide)	UFCW Local 21 (statewide)
Asian Pacific Islander Coalition of Pierce County	Lifelong AIDS Alliance (King County)	Unite HERE Local 8 (statewide)
Auburn Food Bank	Lourdes Salazar, President and Diana Lindner, MD, FAAP, of Eastside Latino Leadership Forum (East King County)	United Way King County
Ballard Food Bank	Maple Valley Food Bank	United Way of Snohomish County
Bothell Community Kitchen	Michael Woo and Tammy Nguyen of Got Green (King County)	University District Food Bank (Seattle)
Catholic Community Services of Western Washington	Minority Executive Directors Coalition of King County	Vashon Maury Community Food Bank
Casa Latina (King County)	Multi-Service Center - Federal Way	Washington Assoc. of Community Action Programs
Centerstone (King County)	National Association of Social Workers - WA Chapter	Washington Community Action Network
Children's Alliance (statewide)	Northwest Harvest (statewide)	Washington Food Coalition
Des Moines Area Food Bank	Nutrition First (statewide)	Washington State Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
Entre Hermanos (King County)	Odyssey World International (Spokane)	Washington State Catholic Conference
Ethiopian Community Mutual Association (King County)	OneAmerica (statewide)	Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence
El Centro de la Raza (King County)	Parents Organizing for Welfare & Economic Rights	Washington State Farmers Market Association
El Comité Pro-Reforma Migratoria y Justicia Social (King County, Pierce County)	Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane	Washington State Food and Nutrition Council
Emergency Feeding Program of Seattle & King County	Seattle Food Committee	West Seattle Food Bank
Faith Action Network (statewide)	Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness (SKCCH)	White Center Community Development Association
First Congregational United Church of Christ, Vancouver, Washington	SEIU Healthcare 775NW	White Center Food Bank
FISH Food Banks of Pierce County	Senior Services (King County)	Within Reach (statewide)
Food Bank at St. Mary's (Seattle)	Solid Ground (King County)	
Food Lifeline (statewide)	South King County Food Coalition	
Hopelink (North and East King County)	Spokane Valley Partners	
Hunger Intervention Program (Seattle)	St. Leo Food Connection (Tacoma)	