

## Accessibility

A MESSAGE FROM CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, THOMAS REYNOLDS

One of the core tenants of Northwest Harvest's vision for a Washington free from hunger is that everyone is able to access nutritious foods. Accessibility is something I have been learning about. When I look across the activities and actions taken by Northwest Harvest, I ask myself, how does it feel? And, how much time does it take?

I want people who shop at Northwest Harvest's SODO Community Market to feel welcome, at ease... enthused by the experience. I also want the experience to be a good use of time. I want this to be true for people with and without disabilities. I see that members of my community, my neighborhood, and my workforce experience disabilities.

I see resilience, courage, adaptability and tenacity in the lives of people who are disabled.

I want everyone who partners, engages and exchanges with Northwest Harvest to find an organization expanding accessibility in the food system, thus contributing to a more equitable future.

Best regards,

Thomas




## ACCESSIBLE AND CONSISTENT GIVING



Perennial plants have deep, expansive root systems that allow them to survive season after season. At Northwest Harvest, our "Perennials" are donors who have chosen to set up a recurring monthly gift. These gifts of various size allow access to everyone in our community to support our network of 300+ partner organizations and high need schools. Perennials provide an added layer of stability and sustainability to our programs, supporting the critical work of ending hunger. By becoming a Northwest Harvest Perennial, your recurring gift of any size provides support we can count on, again and again. Join the Northwest Harvest Perennials to help cultivate and sustain the hearty efforts in Washington. For more information, please contact Jeff Peterson, Annual Fund Manager: [jeffp@northwestharvest.org](mailto:jeffp@northwestharvest.org).

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## White House Conference

The White House is expected to hold a conference on hunger, health, and nutrition in September to unveil a national strategy to end hunger and increase healthy eating and physical activity by 2030.

At Northwest Harvest, we believe that the national strategy should be bold. Our leaders should be proposing policy changes and solutions that get at the root cause of hunger, resulting in partnerships and programs necessary to address racial disparities, and provide more economic security and opportunity for all.

In addition to participating in an online meeting with White House staff, Northwest Harvest submitted written recommendations, created in partnership with people who are experiencing hunger. We conducted a survey to learn about barriers to services and desired policy changes. We then met with a sample of our survey participants to collaboratively develop the key messages they wanted the White House to hear about how to end hunger.

90% of our survey respondents (representing urban and rural communities throughout Washington) are chiefly concerned with food prices and higher costs of living.

Based on their feedback, we recommended that the national strategy must be multi-tiered:

We need strategies that will provide immediate relief from hunger and another set of policies that will work more structurally to provide relief from poverty in the long-term. Immediate relief strategies will require the commitment of both the public and private sectors and should include things like raising the benefits adequacy of food, housing, and other essential needs programs; structural changes will require developing resources that are flexible and trust that people are making the right decisions to best meet their family's needs.

The Policy and Advocacy team at Northwest Harvest will continue to center and honor the stories of people experiencing hunger. As we work alongside the communities most impacted by the root causes of hunger, we will leverage our resources to advocate for policies that actually provide systems-wide solutions, at all levels. We will advocate in local politics, and we will advocate at every opportunity nationally.

If you are interested in following and supporting our policy work, consider signing up for Advocacy Alerts at [northwestharvest.org/get-involved/advocacy](https://northwestharvest.org/get-involved/advocacy), and we will share timely concrete action steps you can take to address hunger in Washington State.

# Food Access in Rural Washington



Communities living in rural areas often face unique challenges in getting adequate, affordable, accessible, and appropriate food to feed themselves and their families. In northeast Washington, near the Canadian border, in a small remote town resides Jenn. Living 54 miles to the nearest grocery store, through a mountain pass that can be unexpectedly closed during the winter months, limits Jenn's ability to find and buy fresh produce, access sale items, or buy most food in bulk. More than 10% of people in Washington state experience hunger regularly. Nearly 13% of Washingtonians rely on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Communities that are geographically isolated are significantly impacted by availability and accessibility of food.

Jenn supports four children and two adults primarily on SNAP benefits, which total less than \$160 a month. She depends on limited SNAP benefits and without reliable and affordable access to nutrient-dense foods, Jenn must get creative about feeding her family. Even though there is a short growing season, Jenn tries to supplement her family meals with homegrown produce and makes sure to stretch every resource as much as possible: she cans, pickles, dehydrates, and freezes the foods she grows in her garden.

But this is not enough, especially since Jenn has been directed by her doctor to eat a primarily plant-based diet for health reasons. For people who have health disorders or concerns, food can play a large role in improving their health, but it can also cause a condition to worsen. Jenn works hard to make sure she's feeding her family adequately, but to do that, she has to purchase commercially canned foods, shelf-stable items, and frozen meat – most of which she has been discouraged from eating: "There are times when I cook a meal for my family that I cannot eat. I'll skip a meal, rather than risk my health declining."

Accessible food, both physically and economically, means ensuring that people do not go hungry at the expense of other basic needs, including one's health.

Hunger is not just about being able to afford enough food to avoid malnutrition, but to be able to realistically, reasonably, and consistently access a wide variety of foods so that everyone can meet their personal needs for nutritious and culturally responsive food. Northwest Harvest believes that all people have a right to feed themselves and their families with dignity. We are working hard to increase access to emergency food while also advocating for policies that address the root causes of hunger so that families like Jenn's will be able not just to survive but thrive.

## The Impact of Inflation

At the SODO Community Market, one can always tell that summer has arrived with the beautiful and varied array of fresh produce available for our guests. While the summer provides us with an opportunity to expand the variety of our offerings at the Market and our partners across the state, this summer rising inflation has posed a great challenge for our food banks and the communities they serve.

As is true for many Americans, Washingtonians are feeling the pinch of rising rent costs, gas prices, utility rates, and, unfortunately, rising food prices. Food is one of the essential items that has been hit the hardest by the highest inflation in four decades. Food prices are currently approximately 12% higher than they were at this time last year.

In recent weeks, food banks and other organizations have seen an increase in customers across the country. One of our partners shared this story:

*"When we are in the last month of the reporting year, we don't expect over 80 new households to sign up, but that was the case this month. We are hearing consistent messages about the high cost of food and gas. We are getting more calls for delivery because customers can't afford gas to get to the food bank. Unfortunately, we aren't able to support that need. We are facing challenges with these cost for the 150+ senior and ADA customers that we currently deliver to each week."*

- Edmonds Food Bank, Snohomish County

Although our costs are increasing, we remain committed to meeting the needs of our neighbors across the state—providing healthy food with dignity. You can help us by supporting our work: [northwestharvest.org/donate](https://northwestharvest.org/donate).



## EVENTS

WASHINGTON  
WESTERN | CENTRAL | EASTERNMore events and up-to-the-minute details at: [northwestharvest.org](https://northwestharvest.org)

**KZOK ROCK THE HARVEST, October 25** | The 25th Annual Rock the Harvest campaign returns this October. What better date to celebrate, but on 10/25 the call numbers for KZOK 102.5! Mark your calendars to tune in to make a donation, win some prizes, and be a part of this annual tradition.

**KING 5 HOME TEAM HARVEST, December 3** | Join us on December 3rd on KING 5 TV for the 22nd annual Home Team Harvest and help us meet our goal of raising 22 million meals!

## Music Lovers Share Their Voices

Good Music? Yup. Good Food? Yes. Good Company? Heck Yeah. Northwest Harvest had a great time celebrating with KEXP at their 50th anniversary event on Saturday, August 6th. Northwest Harvest spent the afternoon chatting with music lovers and asking them to write postcards to WA senators to show their support of the Healthy Meals, Healthy Kids Act. As a nonprofit arts organization, KEXP has been connected to the local Washington community, serving listeners since 1972. We're excited and proud to share this milestone with them!

### Spokane and the Food Bucket Challenge

This summer with the support of KHQ in Spokane, Northwest Harvest launched a fun summer campaign – the Food Bucket Challenge - to increase visibility and raise money for the work of Northwest Harvest. Northwest Harvest's small and mighty Spokane team encouraged members of the Spokane community to post videos of themselves "taking a shot" for food security. And the Spokane community showed up! Sheri McMahan from Eastern Washington University shot as a part of Hoopfest, Mayor Nadine Woodward scored from a great distance (surprising even herself), and the fire chief made several shots with a little help from the fire truck. But, our favorite reel came from Hazel, a seven year old, who made her shot from her "horse" with lasso in hand! Check out #FoodBucketChallenge to see all the folks who participated and showed up to support families across Washington.



### ALASKA AIRLINES EMPLOYEES SOAR HIGH

Northwest Harvest is deeply grateful for our longstanding relationship with Alaska Airlines and its employees. Partnered with Northwest Harvest since 2000, Alaska Airline employees have contributed more than \$144,000 through their employee giving campaigns, donated over 4,600 hours of volunteerism, and organized large food drives where they "Pack the Plane" to support Northwest Harvest - yielding almost 14,000 lbs of food. Thank you, Alaska Airline employees, for your dedication and generosity. With community partners lifting our wings, we trust we will go places in ending hunger in Washington state.

**northwest  
HARVEST**

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*Interested in learning more about working for Northwest Harvest? Check out our job openings at [northwestharvest.org/careers](https://northwestharvest.org/careers).*

## Retired Donors set high bar with their Qualified Charitable Donation Gifts

We want to share some amazing news regarding the growth of Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) gifts. Northwest Harvest donors who've reached 70 ½ and give via IRA have made a deep impact at Northwest Harvest, in the considerable growth of Qualified Charitable Distribution gifts.

We've gone from 17 Qualified Charitable Distribution gifts in 2019 to 323 in 2021! This program helps donors reduce taxes and may also help reduce Medicare costs gauged to taxable income.

In 2018, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act passed. Suddenly older individuals who normally itemize expenses such as charitable deductions, property tax, mortgage interest, realized that the \$22,000 standard deduction for a married couple was more beneficial than itemizing deductions and thus they weren't going to benefit, tax-wise, from their charitable gifts.



While taxes are not the primary reason individuals give to charity, it was still a shock. This provided the perfect opportunity for the Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) for donors over 70 ½. QCD allows an individual to request their IRA institution to transfer money out of their IRA directly to their chosen charities without paying taxes on that money. Furthermore, if done correctly, those gifts may reduce the taxable portion of your Required Minimum Distribution obligation that kicks in at age 72.

There are important steps that individuals need to follow to ensure that they take full advantage of the Qualified Charitable Distribution. Please always discuss decisions with your financial and legal advisors for professional advice.

Below is important information you may need when requesting a Qualified Charitable Distribution:

**MAILING ADDRESS:** Northwest Harvest, PO Box 12272, Seattle, WA 98102

**TAX IDENTIFICATION NUMBER:** 91-0826037

**CONTACT NAME IF REQUESTED:** Anne S Knapp, Senior Planned Giving Officer, 206.390.6094, [annek@northwestharvest.org](mailto:annek@northwestharvest.org)

*Please let Anne know when you send in your QCD request to your IRA Administrator. It helps us ensure we properly record your gift when we receive it.*

**"In June, we had a 19% increase in clients. Food prices and other elevated expenses are having a significant impact on our community members."**

— WOMEN'S & CHILDREN'S FREE REST, SPOKANE COUNTY

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