

Access in Action

A MESSAGE FROM CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, THOMAS REYNOLDS

Equitable access to nutritious foods for everyone in Washington – that has been Northwest Harvest's singular goal since 2018. This is our vision of a future Washington we would all like to live in. A Washington where celebratory foods that mark occasions, and specific diets that support recovery or stave off illness, and little splurges like fresh berries or crisp, tart apples or baby Bok choy are affordable and available, in season, for all of our neighbors. A Washington where food brings joy - instead of a lack of food bringing worry, shame, anxiety or even the pangs of hunger.

Northwest Harvest recognizes that for this endpoint to be true for everyone, we must recognize that understanding the starting point for people is vital. This is not a utopian dream nor a theoretical exercise. Every single day, we practice this concept in our policy work, our food distribution, our outreach and our partnerships.

Take the Fruitvale Community Market and the SODO Community Market – serving Yakima and Seattle respectively. Both are designed with disabled persons in mind. The entrances are wide and step-less; the restrooms are wheelchair accessible. Does that mean able bodied people are also not able to take home free groceries from the Northwest Harvest's Markets?

Of course not, but to be driven by equitable access means the design needs to be attuned to making shopping a pleasure for everyone.



For policy work, we consider the disproportionate rate of childhood and college hunger, especially for Black, Indigenous and People of Color, and prioritize increasing access to food through universal school meals and college-based programs that expand food options for low-income students.

For economic development initiatives, we seek to partner with small businesses, for example, halal butchers, East African farmers and Central American bakers, knowing that access to start-up capital often requires collateral that may not exist for entrepreneurs from newly arriving immigrant communities.

This work brings me deep joy – knowing that everyone can benefit from access to food when we center the experiences of people whose starting point is a bit further behind others. Join us in thinking of every way under the sun to create equitable access to nutritious food for all in Washington.

Happy Holidays!

Thomas

UNITED THROUGH STORIES: TAKE ACTION TO END HUNGER

Storytelling is a powerful force in our lives. Stories teach us about the resiliency of communities facing hunger, stories help drive our goals and they can unite us in unimaginable ways. The stories we hear from our partners, shoppers, supporters, staff, those who are experiencing hunger, and those who have overcome food insecurity leave an impact on each of us.

What are the stories that have left an impact on your life? What moves you to take action? We see firsthand how the stories from our partners and taking action converge, illuminating the need for a steady supply of nutritious food and change in public policy. One story that exemplifies this need takes place in Snohomish.



A shopper, Shelly, came to her local food bank to share some news, "I got a raise at work last month!" The volunteers and staff congratulated her, but tears welled up in Shelly's eyes as she revealed that her increased income had just barely pushed her above the threshold for SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) eligibility. Despite her higher earnings, Shelly still found herself struggling to afford groceries and had completely lost her SNAP benefits.

Over 330,000 people in Washington use SNAP to offset the rising costs of living, many of them working at least one or more full time jobs. **This is a story that persists in our state and around the country and is why we need your help in taking action to alleviate these hardships. Your financial gift helps us supply a network of accessible food to communities all over Washington.**

Together we can write a new story to bring about change that leaves a lasting impact for people like Shelly striving to provide for their family to lead happy and healthy lives. **By giving this season you ensure nutritious food is available to people all over Washington. Help us write an end to this story, let's end hunger, together.**

Ways to Give

The remarkable difference made by Northwest Harvest is made achievable thanks to individuals like yourself. Your financial contributions play a crucial role in furthering our mission. Please mail back the enclosed donation envelope, visit northwestharvest.org/donate, or scan the QR to donate to Northwest Harvest today.



Volunteerism at Yakima's Fruitvale Market

A group of compassionate volunteers from Building Changes drove from Seattle to repackage food and produce at our Yakima Distribution Center, all in the spirit of helping Yakima communities. With the dramatic decline of volunteerism, their dedication is heartwarming and inspiring! Food banks across Washington are in dire need of volunteers and signing up is as simple as visiting [BackToAction.team](https://www.backtoaction.org) to be matched with a food bank in your area. We are grateful for our partners at Safeway, Vault89, the Seattle Seahawks, and WA Food Coalition in this effort. Together, through collective action, we can continue to make a positive impact in the lives of those experiencing hunger and food insecurity.



EVENTS

WASHINGTON
WESTERN | CENTRAL | EASTERN

SAVE THE DATE: 23RD ANNUAL HOME TEAM HARVEST – BUILDING COMMUNITY, ONE MEAL AT A TIME! – December 2, 10am | Home Team Harvest is Northwest Harvest's largest annual funds and food drive raising more than 100 million meals in 22 years. Last year, our community rallied to raise more meals than ever before. Help us break records again this year as we come together to raise 23 million meals!

An estimated 1 in 12 Washington households are facing food insecurity. Northwest Harvest, and our partners at KING 5 recognize that it takes more than food to end hunger. They are dedicated to ending hunger by addressing the root causes of poverty and getting food where it is most needed- to every county in Washington, working with a statewide network of 400 food banks, meal programs, and schools.

Hunger is not just the absence of food, it is the absence of justice. Join us as we partner with KING 5, Safeway, the Seattle Seahawks, Providence-Swedish, Kitsap Credit Union and WARM 106.9 to end hunger and address the root causes of poverty.

More events and up-to-the-minute details at: northwestharvest.org



Investing in Local Economies: Black, Indigenous, and People of Color Market Voucher Program

"We knew this would be the perfect opportunity to help community members access fresh, local produce, while also fostering the local economic pathways for Black, Indigenous, and other people of color vendors."

— A COMMUNITY-BASED PARTNER PARTICIPANT

2020 marked the inaugural pilot year of the **Black, Indigenous, and People of Color Market Voucher Program (BIPOC Market Voucher Program)**. The program was initially launched during the 2020 COVID-19 response and aims to respond to the historical and current disadvantaging of Black-, Indigenous-, and People of Color-owned businesses operating in the food system of Washington state. By providing vouchers to local food-focused businesses, community members who experience disproportionately high rates of food insecurity can procure the food that is best for themselves and their households.

Here's how the program works:

- Northwest Harvest partners with BIPOC –led or –serving community-based organizations that have authentic and deep connections within their communities.
- These community-based organizations then partner with local BIPOC-owned food-focused businesses and distribute vouchers or gift cards to community members to purchase goods at local BIPOC-owned food-focused businesses.
- Food-focused businesses include grocers, market vendors, farmers, farm stands, restaurants, and more. Participating food-focused businesses then benefit from increased profitability and strengthened relationships with local community members. Often shoppers will redeem their vouchers at the businesses and then spend additional cash on other items.

The benefits of this program are two-fold: community members have increased access to desired foods that address nutritional, cultural, and dietary needs, specialty items or ingredients that may be hard to find elsewhere, or foods that are prepared according to certain specifications. This promotes dignity and choice for families. It also benefits the food focused businesses by ensuring that the people who want to shop with them are more able to access their products.

This program aims to stimulate local economies across Washington state, celebrate community strengths, and promote the resilience of both community members and small local businesses. Money invested in local businesses tends to stay and circulate within those communities, and simultaneously increases the financial stability and health of businesses owned by historically marginalized people.

Northwest Harvest has established a bold goal to cut the rates of food insecurity in half by the year 2028 and one of the four key strategies to accomplish this goal is to support Black, Indigenous, People of Color market actors to secure more resources within Washington state's food supply chain. This program uses a partnership model to grow power within communities of color and promote greater access to the food items that promote community health.

If you are interested in learning more about the BIPOC Market Voucher Program, please reach out to Becca Phillips, Program Research and Development Manager, at BeccaP@northwestharvest.org.

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Interested in learning more about working for Northwest Harvest? Check out our job openings at northwestharvest.org/careers.

CREATING YOUR OWN CHECKLIST

As we close in on year-end, I'd like to share a few words about the importance of record keeping. As a Planned Giving Officer, I am usually involved in estate gifts and in many cases I come into the picture after the donor has passed. During these difficult times for the family the process of estate gifts runs smoothly when family members for whom the deceased made sure all records were in order.

There are some cases where important statements will be shredded upon a family member passing to ensure privacy. Before disposing of potentially critical documents, I strongly recommend meeting with a financial or legal professional to account for financial statements as well as beneficiary designations for retirement accounts and your Will.

I often suggest writing an Ethical Will that shares stories about family history and personal history are beneficial to estate planning.

Including information about life experiences such as serving in the military, living through the Great Depression or World War II, and more current historical events have impacted you. Sharing the highs and the lows are both important. We often learn more from the adversities that family members overcame than just learning the high points in life. Listing what organizations have been meaningful in your life and to which you have given private support - these are all helpful components in an Ethical Will. Learning that giving to others was an important part of your life is an affirming quality that we want to pass on to younger generations.

For ideas, check out The Essential Questions: Interview Your Family to Uncover Stories and Bridge Generations, by Elizabeth Keating PhD. Thank you for your support of Northwest Harvest. If you would like to learn more about estate planning, please feel free to contact:

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Northwest Chorale: How Handel's Messiah Inspires Giving Back to the Community

Taking collective action to end hunger comes in many forms. For Northwest Chorale, the resounding community of beautiful music brings people together in support of providing nutritious food all around Seattle. Led by Founder and Conductor Lynn L. Hall, Northwest Chorale is a group of civic-minded vocal performers whose organization has supported Northwest Harvest's mission for 47 years.

Inspired by Handel's generosity, Mr. Hall formed Northwest Chorale in 1976 bringing together like-minded musicians to sing and support communities experiencing hunger. Handel himself consistently donated all the earnings from his concerts and gave them to The Children's Founding Hospital of London - conducting Messiah a total of 54 times in his life. Continuing this tradition of philanthropy, Northwest Chorale performs major choral works every winter season, Handel's Messiah being a feature every other year - all donations going to support food security around the greater Seattle area.

As an agency dedicated to fostering community, it is inspiring to behold the passion for music and longstanding dedication to giving. This season you can see Northwest Chorale's winter concert perform Benjamin Britten: A Ceremony of Carols and Poulenc's Four Motes for Christmas in December. For more information about their performances visit their website at nwchorale.org. Thank you to Lynn Hall and all those at Northwest Chorale for your ongoing generosity to the community!

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