



MEDIA ADVISORY

MEDIA CONTACT:

EMAIL:

TELEPHONE:

TWITTER:

FACEBOOK:

WEB:

Jordan Rubin

jordanr@northwestharvest.org

206.923.7426

@nwharvest

[Facebook.com/NWHarvest](https://www.facebook.com/NWHarvest)

northwestharvest.org

NORTHWEST HARVEST AND SAFEWAY TEAM UP TO STOCK WASHINGTON FOOD BANKS DUE TO RECENT SHUTDOWN

SEATTLE SEAHAWK DOUG BALDWIN KICKS OFF STATEWIDE FOOD DRIVE

(Seattle, WA – January 25, 2019) Today, Northwest Harvest and Safeway and Albertsons stores are unveiling a statewide food drive to collect groceries for local food banks in response to the increasing demand created by the recent government shutdown.

Even as a temporary opening of the government has been announced, an alarming number of Washington residents are at risk of not being able to meet their most basic of needs. Furloughed federal employees, contractors, and other business owners and employees are missing paychecks, forced to skip meals, miss mortgage payments, or default on medical bills or student loans.

All Safeway and Albertsons stores in Washington now have Northwest Harvest donation bins for customers to donate non-perishable items for those most impacted by the government shutdown. Food collected will be distributed from the grocery stores directly to that community's local food bank or food pantry.

"Right now, more than a million people in our state are being negatively impacted. And as uncertainty remains, even more are added to that list," said Sara Osborne, Safeway's Public & Government Affairs Director. "Because of this, local food banks – the final safety net when public assistance programs run out of funding – are seeing dramatic increases in demand."

In addition to all those who have missed their regular paychecks, 1 in 8 Washingtonians that currently count on SNAP to buy nutritious food face dire uncertainty – as it is unclear whether they will receive assistance in March should the shutdown resume. "That's why this partnership between Northwest Harvest and Safeway is so vital," says Thomas Reynolds, Northwest Harvest's CEO. "Together, we have the ability to make a huge difference in our community by coming together and helping our neighbors keep food on their tables during this very difficult time."

Northwest Harvest provides nutritious food freely to 375 food banks, meal programs, and high-need schools throughout the state. "As an agency that specializes in making nutritious food available in times of sudden or unexpected need across the state, we have seen an unprecedented increase in the number of families visiting their community food banks for the very first time," added Reynolds. "Many of these first-time visitors are families of federal employees."

To keep our neighborhood food bank shelves stocked, community members are being asked to drop off a bag of groceries at their nearest Safeway or Albertsons store – or go directly to northwestharvest.org to contribute to help those at imminent risk due to missing their paychecks or supplemental benefits.

Safeway and Northwest Harvest are hosting a kickoff event this Saturday. The public and media are invited to attend.

Food Drive Kickoff Event Details

DATE: Saturday, January 26

TIME: 12:00 – 4:00 PM

LOCATION: West Seattle Safeway, 2622 California Ave SW, Seattle, WA 98116

SPEAKERS: Seattle Seahawk Wide Receiver and Community Advocate, Doug Baldwin (1:00 PM)
Other guests TBA

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About Northwest Harvest

Northwest Harvest is Washington's leading hunger relief agency – supporting a statewide network of 375 food banks, meal programs, and high-need schools. Focused on improving equity in our food system, Northwest Harvest believes everyone in Washington should have consistent access to nutritious food that nourishes the body, mind, and spirit. In addition to making sure those who suffer from hunger have increased access to healthy food, Northwest Harvest aims to shift public opinion, as well as impact institutional policies and societal practices that perpetuate hunger, poverty, and disparities in our state.