



## 2018 State Legislative Priorities

### Food and Nutrition

#### Help More Students Access School Breakfast

All students need a good breakfast so they can settle down and focus on the task of learning. Yet Washington languishes when it comes to participation in our school breakfast program: we rank 45<sup>th</sup> in the nation. By supporting legislation that requires high need schools to offer breakfast during the school day, just like lunch, students will be at school to receive or buy breakfast. When more kids eat school breakfast, school districts see a rise in reimbursements and revenue, but more importantly, breakfast helps students achieve higher test scores, decrease disciplinary problems, and be healthier. Support for school breakfast legislation will also help schools that serve breakfast in the classroom succeed at carrying out this service model that they determine is best for their students while meeting state requirements for instruction time.

#### Restore the Promise of the Regional Markets Program

The foundation of a healthier Washington is increased access to fresh and nutritious food for all of us. With technical assistance, relationship building, and other resources provided by the Regional Markets team at the Washington State Dept. of Agriculture, Washington growers can expand and increase their opportunities to sell directly to schools, restaurants, hospitals, senior centers, and other institutions. The result is healthy farms and healthy food options for all Washingtonians. [Restore an additional \\$250,000 in the 2018 supplemental budget.](#)

#### Make the Most Out of School Meals

School meals can be made with fresher ingredients when cooked from scratch. In 2015, our state's capital budget allocated \$5 million to help schools equip and remodel their kitchens to prepare meals on site. Schools want and need this support: the state received \$18 million in requests for grants created from that capital request. Let's build on the promise of those capital improvements and as a result, help our kids get the healthy school meals they need to grow in body and mind. [Pass a capital budget that includes \\$1 million for scratch cooking equipment grants for our schools.](#)

#### Protect and Preserve our Food Safety Net

In Washington, nearly 1 in 8 people don't know where their next meal will come from. Hungry Washingtonians cannot afford any cuts to the programs and services that provide nutritious food for low-income individuals and families. Northwest Harvest will be monitoring and defending our state's essential nutrition assistance programs including the State Food Assistance Program, funding for our state's emergency food network, and other programs that help families and seniors afford nutritious food.

***We want a healthy, hunger free Washington.** These priorities help get us there, but you can't get something for nothing. Washington faces huge costs for basic education, mental health treatment, and homelessness. To pay those bills and see the change we want to see for a healthier, hunger free Washington, we must work together to clean up our tax code: we want to close special interests loopholes to create the funds needed to protect our food safety net and make these improvements so that everyone in Washington is thriving and productive.*

*Northwest Harvest is a statewide hunger relief organization, providing nutritious food to 375 food banks, meal programs, and high need schools. In 2017 we provided 32 million pounds of food to emergency food providers across the state. We believe that eliminating hunger means fighting its root cause—poverty. To this end, we advocate for public policies that **1) promote access to nutritious food, 2) help low-income people meet their basic need, and 3) support budgets that restore a basic safety net with fair and sustainable sources of revenue.***