

## Summer Hunger

A MESSAGE FROM CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, THOMAS REYNOLDS

I grew up in the Pacific Northwest and adored summertime – especially for the long days and short nights, blockbuster movies, school vacations, road trips, baseball games, rolling harvests of locally grown fruits and veggies, swimming in lakes, and hiking alpine paths in the Cascades. It has been my favorite season over all the others throughout my life.

Unlike half a million children in Washington state, I did not associate summer with hunger, that is until I joined Northwest Harvest. That's how many of our school-aged neighbors experience food insecurity in June, July, and August – when school is out.

Schools provide breakfasts and lunches Monday through Friday for kids who grow up in low-income households from Spokane to Yakima to Seattle to Port Angeles and all places in between. The absence of school-based meals becomes a gap in the summertime. Collectively, we are working to close that gap. Schools and clubs and nonprofit organizations offer summer meal programs. This summer, Washington state will introduce SUN Bucks which is a wonderful new program supplying additional funds to school-aged children in qualifying low-income households. Summer camps also work to fill in gaps.

Despite all of this, there is still at least a \$50 million dollar gap, affecting nearly every neighborhood in Washington, for moms and dads and caregivers working to feed the kids in their lives that matter so much to them.

We can all do our part to close that gap. We can write to or call our elected officials and thank them for the SUN Bucks program. We can volunteer our time at summer camps and food banks around the state that are providing food to households with children. We can contribute financially to close the remaining \$50 million gap that makes summer an anxious time for caregivers who are working hard to get food on the table to fuel a summer of joy for the kids in their lives.



Thomas

### VOLUNTEERS ARE VITAL

Volunteers are the engine of our organization. Our volunteers donate approximately 34,000 and have a huge impact on all facets of our operations.

Whether it's repacking product at one of our regional distribution centers, distributing food at our SODO Community Market in Seattle, helping out a special events, or hosting food drives, our volunteers are vital to our work to grow food justice.

There are volunteer opportunities available across our three distribution centers, our free community markets, and plenty of options to support our advocacy efforts with your time! If you are interested in learning more about our volunteer programs, visit our website or fill out a volunteer application! We can't wait to see you!



### Join Us: Bridging the Summer Meal Gap

Summer's arrival, while a time of excitement for many students, can be a period of stress for families across Washington grappling with financial hardship. Stretching funds to provide three meals a day for their kids during the summer months is a daunting challenge.

Nationally, nearly 13 million children face food insecurity. Due to systemic racism, children from Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) households go hungry at a disproportionate rate. Many kids rely on school meals to get enough healthy food, but once summer begins, not only are there fewer options, existing meal programs often only reach a fraction of families that need them.

Northwest Harvest and our Food Access Network partner organizations statewide are committed to bridging this gap by offering easy access to nutritious and fresh foods for all Washington families. This is particularly urgent during the summer months, to ensure that our youngest neighbors continue to receive the nourishment they need.

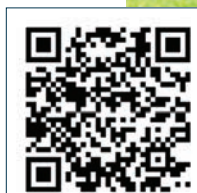
Our partners are already seeing a surge in the number of families seeking assistance at their food banks:

*"The number of families we provide food to each week continues to increase. Last week, we had another record number of families coming to us for food - 1,289 households. This is really stretching our ability to provide food to all these families."*

- Pasco Community Services, Franklin County

Your generosity can make a profound difference in ensuring that no child in Washington goes hungry this summer, or any summer. With your support, Northwest Harvest can procure fresh, nutritious food for distribution to families in Franklin County and beyond.

**Together, we can provide nourishing meals and ease the burden on these families. Will you join us by donating today?**



Please mail back the enclosed donation envelope, visit [northwestharvest.org/donate](http://northwestharvest.org/donate), or scan the QR to donate today.

# Unseen Realities: Childhood Hunger in Washington State



At Northwest Harvest, we believe that hunger is a solvable problem, not a condition that we must accept. Food insecurity is a growing reality for a number of people and families across the United States. While Washington state tends to report lower rates of food insecurity than many states, there are still over 200,000 children experiencing poverty in Washington. An estimated 38% of those children are likely not eligible for federal nutrition assistance like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

It is unjust for any person to experience hunger, but the numbers of children, babies, and their families that do not have enough to eat is truly unacceptable. The poverty rate in the U.S. has risen dramatically since pandemic benefits ran out — and the child poverty rate has more than doubled, according to U.S. Census Bureau's annual data on poverty, income and health insurance released last fall.

The poverty rate for children more than doubled from a historic low of 5.2 percent in 2021 to 12.4 percent in 2022, erasing all the record gains made against child poverty over the previous two years. Progress made in 2021 in narrowing the glaring differences between the poverty rates of Black and Latine children compared to white children was largely reversed. The significant decrease in childhood hunger rates in 2021 can be attributed to the success of the federal Child Tax Credit and COVID-19 pandemic supports, including emergency allocations to public benefits programs, moratoriums on evictions, and massively expanded free school meal programs in schools across the country.

The pandemic-era SNAP emergency allotments were discontinued in the spring of 2023, which was termed the “benefits cliff” or “hunger cliff.” Many families, who could feed their children three square meals for the first time on increased benefits, have returned to the stark reality of woefully inadequate SNAP benefits.

Despite careful budgeting, meal planning, and stretching every available resource, single parents, like one of our community members Dante, routinely struggle to consistently put food on the table and pay all their bills.

*“It is difficult to find food my girls like that is also healthy, and not too expensive,”* says Dante.



*“Cost is always the thing that gets me, and beats me over the head – you think you’ve purchased enough, but it goes by quickly, and then the last week of the month comes and fear kicks in.”*

It is crucial for the developmental and nutritional needs of growing kids to have access to a nutrient-rich diet. There are numerous programs and policies that specifically aim to reduce childhood hunger.

## ADDRESSING CHILDHOOD HUNGER DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR

**Three Squares Program:** Three Squares is a program coordinated by Northwest Harvest that is dedicated to preventing child hunger and supporting school readiness in our most vulnerable communities. Launched in 2004, it was the first food backpack program to operate in Washington. Three Squares currently partners with 44 schools.

Last year we provided 168,830 nutritious, child-friendly meals to low-income students between 5 and 13 years old. Our partner schools are located in the highest-need neighborhoods in school districts throughout King, Pierce, Grays Harbor, Grant, Yakima, Ferry, Benton, Stevens and Spokane Counties. These are schools where at least 85% of children are eligible for free/reduced school meals, with many families experiencing food insecurity, poverty, or homelessness. Student backpacks contain child-friendly breakfast, lunch and dinner items that ensure every child has three square meals each day.



**Free School Meals for All:** Northwest Harvest knows children need healthy school breakfasts and lunches to focus on learning and get the most out of their education.

Paperwork, the cost of meals, and stigma are all barriers for student access and participation in school meals; and for schools, collecting applications and having to categorize meals for proper reimbursement rates are heavy administrative burdens. The solution is to provide healthy school meals at no cost for families because it is an essential service to a well-rounded learning environment. During the 2024 Washington State legislative session, we joined other food justice organizations in advocating for legislation that would have provided free school meals to all students in Washington. Though the bills did not pass this session, the legislature allocated an additional \$45 million to the budget to ensure schools have sufficient funding to cover previous legislation that expanded free school meals using the Community Eligibility Provision.

## ADDRESSING CHILDHOOD HUNGER DURING THE SUMMER

**Summer EBT:** Hunger does not take a holiday during summer break. Families who rely on schools to provide essential meals for their children struggle to find replacement resources during the summer months. Summer EBT, a successor to the effective and popular Pandemic EBT, provides summertime food assistance for K-12 students.

This program is expected to help approximately 506,000 low-income Washington families afford more groceries when schools are closed. The Washington State legislature invested \$12.23 million dollars this year to launch a robust 2024 Summer EBT program. Northwest Harvest was among the many organizations and coalitions who organized to get this funding included in the budget. For information on eligibility for 2024 Summer EBT, visit the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services website.



**Free Summer Meal Sites:** Through USDA's summer meal programs, approved sites in communities across the country can serve meals to kids up to age 18 at no cost. Free Summer Meals programs are offered at the places where your family lives, learns and plays—including schools, parks, community centers and faith-based organizations. Free Summer Meals programs are open to all families and don't ask for any paperwork. Many sites also offer fun activities that help kids stay active and engaged when school is out. Summer 2024 sites will operate approximately July 1 through August 23, 2024. Each young person can receive up to two meals or one meal and one snack per day to be eaten onsite. For more information on free summer meal programs near you, visit this website. (or should we use this link: <https://www.seattle.gov/human-services/services-and-programs/youth-and-young-adults/summer-food-service-program>)

Ending childhood hunger in Washington state is everyone's responsibility. Join Northwest Harvest, and our partners across the state, in growing food justice through collective action, and solving hunger's root cause: poverty.

## THE POWER OF CHOICE: REGISTER TO VOTE

Voting is a fundamental principle of democracy. Participating in elections can help ensure we are choosing representatives that reflect our values. Voting is one of our basic opportunities to use our voice to promote policies and resources to help end hunger and poverty. Much political advocacy begins at the ballot box!

It's easy and secure to register to vote online, by mail with a paper form, or at a county elections office. Check your registration at [VoteWA.gov](http://VoteWA.gov). We have an upcoming primary election in Washington on August 6, 2024. Online and mail registrations must be received 8 days before Election Day (July 29). Register to vote in person during business hours and any time before 8:00 p.m. on Election Day.

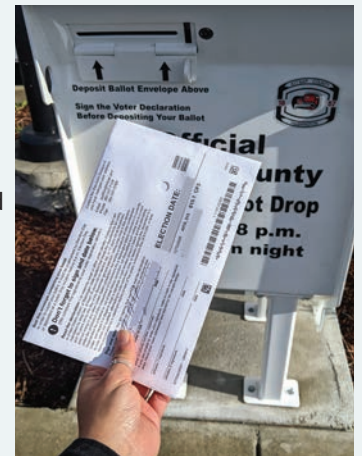
There will also be a general election on November 5, 2024. Online and mail registrations must be received 8 days before Election Day (October 28).

Register to vote in person during business hours and any time before 8:00 p.m. on Election Day.

Please note that people who do not have a traditional residential address (unhoused or transitional housing) can still register to vote! Your residential address is the physical location where you spend most of your time. On a voter registration form, you can use the address of a shelter or park, or the location of a vehicle, intersection, or other identifiable location that you consider your current residence if you do not have a traditional residential address. This location is required and will be used to determine which precinct you will vote in.

Along with your residential address, you must also provide a valid mailing address. You need a mailing address in order to receive your ballot and election information on time. You could use a post office box, address of a friend or relative, shelter, day center, or CSO where you can get mail, or general delivery at a local post office. You can also receive your ballot at your local food bank!

If you have more questions about registering to vote in Washington, visit the Secretary of State's website.



**northwest  
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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).*

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## THE OTTO HILL FAMILY AND CHARITABLE TRUSTS

This story demonstrates the three secrets to success in family philanthropy: frugality, consistency, and generosity. The Hill family, through careful planning and the use of trusts, was able to fulfill their family's financial goals and strengthen their local communities.

The Hill Family emigrated from Germany in 1884. A family of four upon arrival, they quickly grew to a family of 12! Since going to college wasn't as common then as it is today, Otto, the youngest of the Hill children, was the only one to graduate from college. After receiving his Ph.D. in Agricultural Chemistry, Otto began working at Washington State University in Pullman, WA where he met his future wife, Opal, who he married in 1936. The Hill family eventually settled in Seattle, where they welcomed their two boys: Ken and Richard. Ken would grow up to become a teacher, and Richard enlisted in the army in 1965. Like many veterans, Richard returned home from the Vietnam war with psychological scars from which he never fully recovered and required financial support throughout his life.

Otto never earned more than the equivalent of \$70,000 in today's dollars. But the valuable lessons he learned on living within his means from his immigrant parents and a more affordable cost of living in Seattle at that time allowed his family to own their home and live comfortably.

Otto also took an interest in the stock market, allowing him to invest slowly over the years and watch his nest egg grow.

To ensure the family would always be cared for, Otto and Opal established three trusts: a family trust, a living trust, and a special needs trust. The first two would provide for Opal when Otto passed, and the third was set up so Richard's needs would always be met. If governmental assistance such as VA support was also involved, a special needs trust can be administered to ensure that the governmental assistance continues.

Upon Richard's passing in 2019, the proceeds of his trust — grown to \$750,000 over the years—went to charities benefitting Otto and Opal's alma maters as well as several social service and justice groups, including Northwest Harvest.

Charitable trusts are flexible so that when they are set up, they can meet very specific needs as well as cover multiple beneficiaries. Setting up charitable trusts to ensure your family needs are met, then ultimately leveraging the nest egg to support charitable work after the trust fulfills its obligation helps families like Otto's see significant tax saving, while meeting personal and philanthropic goals.

If, as you begin to think about estate planning, you want to learn more about different types of charitable trusts, please contact Justin Vierela, Senior Manager of Community Philanthropy at [justinv@northwestharvest.org](mailto:justinv@northwestharvest.org).

## Join the Northwest Harvest Perennials

Sustained giving leads to sustainable change. At Northwest Harvest, we are honored to have a strong and reliable ecosystem of donors who regularly give to support our work. These special donors now have a special name: the Northwest Harvest Perennials.

Perennial plants have deep, expansive root systems that allow them to weather storms and prevent erosion. NWH Perennials provide an added layer of stability and sustainability to our programs, supporting the critical work of ending hunger. Their gifts been particularly important as the world has become more uncertain and unpredictable—consistency has been our best tool to meet crisis-level need with a steady hand.

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—because it takes more than food to end hunger.



Scan to learn more about the Perennials