

CAPACITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE GRANTS FOR FOOD BANKS AND MEAL PROGRAMS

More donated food. Safe distribution. Less waste.

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

Skagit County Community Action

Donated food needing to be held in refrigerated or frozen storage overwhelms the already tight capacity at our food bank and with our partner pantries and meal programs. We had a 12.5% increase in food (over 300,000 pounds) due to nearly doubled amounts of trade mitigation and other federal commodities.

This influx helps us respond to the steady demand for food but strains resources as aging and insufficient infrastructure throughout the emergency food network can no longer keep up. For example, we have a slowly failing walk-in freezer that will cost well over \$120,000 to replace. Not doing so risks wasting or turning away perishable proteins that are so important to nourishing the people we serve.

Food banks and meal programs need increased cold storage and other capacity to safely store and distribute fresh produce and perishable food.

- **1 in 6 Washingtonians** rely on their local food bank to help meet basic nutrition needs.
- **A focus on sourcing fresh Washington-grown produce**, combined with dramatically increased donations of fresh and frozen commodities from the federal government have created stressors on an emergency food system that lacks sufficient refrigeration and freezer space.
- Between fiscal years 2018 and 2019, the amount of fresh and frozen food coming into the emergency food system increased by 401.3%.
- We anticipate even greater need of infrastructure for processing and distributing donations of food, as Washington works towards its goal to cut food waste in half by 2030.

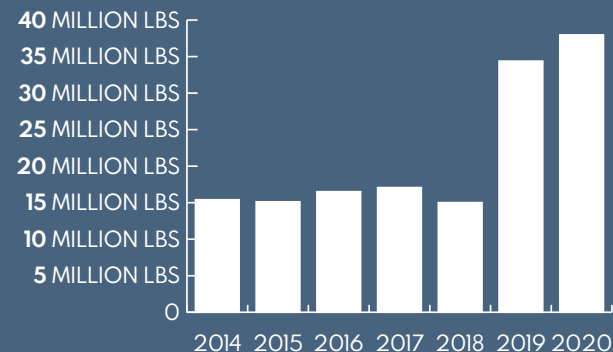
FOOD DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM BOTTLENECKS



Local food pantries and meal programs **lack adequate refrigerators and freezers**, and larger organizations need **refrigerated trucks** to transport perishable food to local food pantries and meal programs. Additionally, food banks need **increased commercial/warehouse-sized refrigeration and freezer space** to hold food for later distribution to local programs without adequate storage space.

FY 2014 – FY 2020*
TOTAL POUNDS OF
FEDERAL COMMODITIES
BROUGHT INTO
WASHINGTON

**projected*



Total amounts include pounds from The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), Bonus TEFAP, and Trade Mitigation Product (TMP). TMP was introduced in FY 2019.

PROVIDE \$500,000 FOR CAPACITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE GRANTS

Funding to create a new, one-time grant program, administered by WSDA's Food Assistance Program will provide much-needed relief to increase the emergency food system's infrastructure and capacity needs.



- One-third of the funding will go towards creating a rebate program so that food banks and pantries will be able to immediately purchase refrigerators, freezers, and other equipment.
- One-third will be available for programs that propose larger scale projects or equipment needs, costing up to \$75,000.
- One-third will be available to fund a large scale, multi-organizational collaboration that will create system-wide or regional infrastructure and efficiency improvement.
- Grant awards will be decided with community input, including people who use food banks and meal programs to help ensure funding goes to projects that will effectively meet needs.

For more information, contact: **Christina Wong**, Northwest Harvest, 206.306.5877, christinaw@northwestharvest.org
or **Aaron Czyzewski**, Food Lifeline, 813.503.3535, aaronc@foodlifeline.org.

