

Note: The action numbers following each Accomplishment and Next Step refers to Actions in the full Act to End Hunger report.

Family Economic Stability

For most, hunger is an income issue. Oregonians are at risk of hunger if they do not have enough income to meet basic needs like food, shelter, heat, medical care, childcare, and transportation. These costs have risen significantly over the last decade. Full-time work is not always enough to ensure that these basic needs are met.

Goal: Develop living wage opportunities.

Accomplishments:

- The minimum wage and its current index for inflation were preserved in the 2005 legislative session (Action #1).
- The Oregon Opportunity Grant Program which provides scholarships for low-income Oregonians received an additional \$33 million and was expanded to include part-time students (Action #2).
- The Degree Completion Initiative was implemented to assist parents on the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families program to complete their degree when they have up to two years left in school (Action #2).

Next Step:

- **Expand the Degree Completion Initiative to allow full two- and four-year degree programs for parents in the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families program (Action #2).**
- **Increase the number of jobs in Oregon that pay a living wage and encourage companies to employ residents of low-income communities (Action #3).**

Goal: Strengthen family stability with programs that offset living expenses.

Accomplishments:

- A Renter's Tax Credit bill was introduced but not passed in the 2005 Legislative Session (Action #4).
- The Oregon Affordable Housing Tax Credit was increased from \$6.2 to \$11 million (Action #5).

Next Step:

- **Secure adequate revenue to develop a sufficient number of affordable homes for Oregon's families through local and regional trust funds and the Oregon Housing Trust Fund (Action #5).**
- **Secure additional revenue for the Oregon Health Plan to cover low-income families who don't have employee-provided health benefits and do outreach to those families. Reduce the cost of premiums and co-pays (Action #7).**

Goal: Revamp the tax and lending systems to protect low wage workers.

Accomplishments:

- A bill to cap payday loan interest rates passed the State Senate in 2005 but stalled in the House. Portland and Gresham passed payday loan ordinances in early 2006, giving consumers more

protections (Action #11).

- The 2005 State Legislature made the Oregon Earned Income Tax Credit refundable starting in 2006, raising the amount of the Oregon Earned Income Tax Credit from 5% of the federal credit to 6 % in 2008 (and expiring in 2010) - putting more money back into the pockets of working families to help to pay for basic needs (Action #12).

Next Step:

- **Establish a statewide cap on interest rates charged by “pay-day loan” dealers (Action #11).**
- **Work to expand the Oregon Earned Income Tax Credit to 12% of the federal Earned Income Tax Credit, effectively eliminating state taxes on below-poverty wage earners (Action #12).**

Goal: Create an adequate safety net for those unable to work.

Accomplishments:

- A broad based committee has formed to reshape the General Assistance Program after considerable lobbying to restore the existing program did not succeed in the 2005 Legislative Session (Action #15).

Next Step:

- **Reinstitute and fund the General Assistance Program. Provide immediate State funding for housing and/or other emergency needs to people with disabilities and seniors applying for SSI/SSDI, as the State will be reimbursed retroactively once the SSI/SSDI grant is approved (Action #15).**
- **Strengthen the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program by increasing eligibility levels and benefit amounts to serve more families and increase their stability (Action #14).**