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[About](#)
[Contacts](#)
[Locations](#)
[Directions](#)
[Beaver Nation PDX Newsletter](#)

Accept the challenge: Healthy, hearty food on every holiday table



The beloved Christmas story, *A Christmas Carol*, by Charles Dickens, illuminates the plight of malnourished Tiny Tim. For many Oregon children this winter, this is not a plotline, but a reality as families struggle to provide in light of the nationwide cut in SNAP (food stamp) benefits that took effect on Nov. 1. Oregon will lose approximately \$84,000,000 in benefits, according to the [Food Stamp Cuts, State-by-State interactive map](#).

These cuts will affect roughly 304,000 children in Oregon as the number of food insecure households increases. Food insecurity means a limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate or safe foods. Children living in food insecure households often face adverse psychological, social, physical and educational development.

Oregon State University strives to support families and individuals at all economic levels through a variety of free, healthy and informative resources. These programs include [Food Hero](#), which allows users to find recipes for healthy meals on a budget, and the [Childhood Food Insecurity](#) course, offered through [Professional and Noncredit Education](#), which is designed to help those employed in child health and development fields identify and understand food insecurity.

"Hunger is often hidden," says Nancy Weed from Oregon Hunger Relief Task Force, "[as] there is no bill collector for hunger." Identifying risk of food insecurity is an important step in preventing hunger and reducing the risk of life-long health problems. The free [Childhood Food Insecurity online course](#) provides information on identifying and assisting children and families who are in food insecure environments.

During the holidays, Oregonians have numerous opportunities to help their food insecure community members. In addition to the educational resources above, the Oregon Food Bank is running a number of campaigns this holiday season in the hopes of helping Oregon families put healthy, hearty food on their tables including their "[Send a gift of hope](#)" campaign and their "[Give a meal this holiday season](#)" campaign.

Help make every Oregonian's holiday table a happy and healthy one.

"Know that no space of regret can make amends for one life's opportunities misused!" – Charles Dickens, A Christmas Carol

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