




**CLARK COUNTY
FOOD BANK**

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THE LUNCHBOX
QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

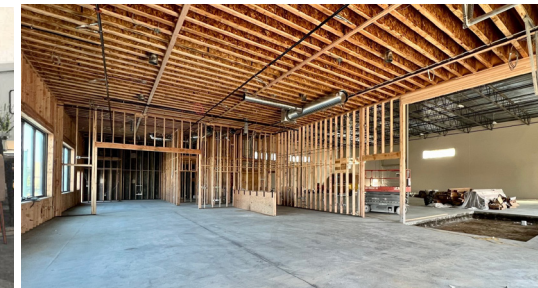
SPRING
2024

ALMOST HERE! THE VISION CENTER

After years of planning and anticipation, we are thrilled to report that construction is nearly complete at our additional facility—the Vision Center! Every day brings new improvements. Some are large and visible, such as framed walls in the new pantry space or exterior painting on the building. Other days, the improvements are less visible (but very important!), such as the installation of fire sprinklers or the myriad of wiring required for a multi-use facility.

While all of this is taking place, Clark County Food Bank team members are working on defining the work that will take place within the building. Some teams are working to create a welcoming, inclusive, and idealized model of food distribution for our clients, while other teams are defining technological resources to enhance collaborative meetings for the Vision Center. Still others are working to enhance our volunteer programming and operations with the availability of more space. Our team recognizes that we are not only adding a building, we are adding to our community.

With construction scheduled to be completed by late spring, we anticipate moving Community Kitchen Walnut Grove into the Vision Center by early summer. Clients and staff members alike look forward to the day when we are able to open the doors and welcome the community into the Vision Center!



UPCOMING EVENT!



Friday, May 17 & Saturday, May 18

Tacos & Taps is a fun, high-energy fundraising event where guests enjoy gourmet taco creations and craft beer from local restaurants and breweries. With live music, raffle prizes, games, photo booth, excitement, and more, this event is not only a ton of fun, but it's also a meaningful way to raise funds to help people in our community.

Tickets opened at the end of March with limited availability for both individual and 6-pack tickets. For more information about the event, tickets, and FAQs, visit: clarkcountyfoodbank.org/tacos-and-taps

A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

It's an exciting time at the food bank as we prepare to open the new Vision Center and expand efforts within our root cause programming. This new facility will help us focus our efforts in the root causes space, as well as provide opportunity for additional warehouse space and increased food distribution. By working together to find lasting solutions and support, we can build a stronger and more resilient community for everyone.

As we continue to develop our programs that alleviate the root causes of hunger, we are not decreasing our food distribution work. We are actually refining and expanding to meet the ever-changing needs of our community. Our commitment to alleviating both hunger and its root causes remains strong, which necessitates adaptability and flexibility to ensure our neighbors get the resources they need to thrive.

I want to express my appreciation for the progress and resilience we've seen in our community. During this time of growth, the food bank has continued to expand its impact, thanks to our dedicated volunteers, local partnerships, and YOU, our community members. Together, we've witnessed countless families receiving vital support during difficult times.

Thank you for being part of this journey and for your commitment to supporting our neighbors in need.

With gratitude,

- Alan Hamilton
President, Clark County Food Bank

GROWING THE HUNGER TEAM

As Clark County Food Bank grows and adapts to meet our community's need, we are consistently impressed and deeply grateful for the ongoing support of The Hunger Team. Who is The Hunger Team? If you've shared food with a neighbor in need, advocated for those facing food insecurity, donated food or funds, or volunteered your time at the food bank, YOU are part of The Hunger Team!

Being a member of The Hunger Team means caring about those affected by hunger in our community and taking action—no matter the scale—to positively impact their lives. This could be a significant financial donation to help fund the Vision Center or it could be the \$4 given by a child because they wanted to help others. It is made up of individuals who volunteer weekly to ensure food reaches our neighbors, and also those who advocate for people in need by spreading kindness and generosity within our community.

Your actions—whether you are giving financially, serving, or telling others about the work of Clark County Food Bank—make change possible. Together, we can continue to support those facing food insecurity and grow our efforts to address the root causes of hunger in our community!



EXPANDING OUR INITIATIVE: ROOT CAUSES OF HUNGER

Clark County Food Bank has been on a mission to alleviate hunger and its root causes in Southwest Washington for many years. Anyone in our community experiencing hunger can access emergency food at our Community Kitchens in Walnut Grove and Fruit Valley, as well as at a wide network of partner agency sites. But addressing the root causes of hunger goes beyond distributing food. It requires digging into the causes behind food insecurity and providing support and connection to those who need it. Through these efforts, we hope to move closer to our vision to inspire and grow a network of community health and support healthy lifestyles,

professional growth, and opportunities to serve the community. To support these efforts, we are expanding our initiative to develop and enhance partnerships with community organizations who address one or more of the root causes of hunger, like nutrition education, financial empowerment training, workforce development, resource navigation, and other resources and skill development programs. Keep an eye out in the coming months for more information about these programs. Want to learn more? Please reach out to us at info@clarkcountyfoodbank.org

A MORE MEANINGFUL WAY TO DISTRIBUTE FOOD

As the Vision Center nears completion, the team at Clark County Food Bank has been working to create an improved, more meaningful way to distribute food to clients. We're calling this a "Best Practices Food Pantry," which will go beyond providing food by offering clients a highly dignified, shopping-style experience with additional services to address the root causes of hunger. At first glance, it looks like a specialty grocery store with fresh fruits and vegetables, meats, dairy, and culturally specific foods. But what you may not see on the surface is how the design of the pantry is built to promote healing and improved physical, mental, and emotional well-being for our community members experiencing hunger through a "trauma-informed" lens. One of the food pantries Clark County Food Bank operates, Community Kitchen Walnut Grove, will relocate to this new space.



"It's about mitigating barriers to access and helping people navigate the resources needed to help transform people's lives towards independence," said Alison Lauderdale, Director of Community Programs at Clark County Food Bank.

Along with food, clients will benefit from the new root cause programs launching at the Vision Center that include expanded nutrition education, financial wellness education, resource navigation, and workforce development.

SCHOOL PANTRIES: A SUCCESSFUL SEASON

Every year during the months of October–May, in partnership with Share and the Vancouver and Evergreen School Districts, Clark County Food Bank volunteers can be found setting up food pantries at 16 different sites around the county. These sites rotate days throughout the month offering a friendly, shopping-style experience, as well as 2 locations set up as convenient drive thrus.

Families enjoy walking through and choosing between varieties of fresh produce, bread, milk, eggs, and pantry items like rice and oats. Thousands of pounds are distributed each month during the school year. Food choices differ from week to week, but the smiles are always there. This opportunity helps to bridge the hunger gap amidst the continued rising cost of food. Each site can see anywhere from 30-90 families per distribution, increasing each year as the need continues to grow. Volunteers have been able to brighten the day even more with the addition of a box filled with shelf stable items geared towards children for each family. These boxes can contain granola bars, cereals, applesauce, and items that kids can eat without preparation. For a full list of school pantry sites, visit: clarkcountyfoodbank.org/schoolpantrysites



FROM THE PANTRY: CREATING A HEALTHY MEAL

Every week, food is distributed from Clark County Food Bank's warehouse to food pantries around the county. These pantries ensure clients have access to nutrient-rich food to feed themselves and their families throughout the week. Even when they have the food, clients face the additional challenge of turning these ingredients into an easily preparable meal. Since the items available at pantries shift from week to week, we are continually impressed by the creative and innovative ways clients rise to the challenge of taking the ingredients they collect from pantries and turning them into versatile meals.

With this in mind, the Nutrition Education Team has put together a delicious and healthy on-the-go recipe framework for the whole family that can be made using ingredients readily available at local food pantries. This recipe can be adapted based on what is available at clients' local pantry each week. A grain bowl is a versatile dish which includes whole grains, vegetables, protein, and sauce, and can be personalized to an individual's diet and tastes. Simply fill a bowl with ingredients from each of the columns below, and you'll have a quick and easy meal ready to go! For a list of local pantry sites, visit clarkfoodfinder.org



Pick your base (2-3 cups)	Choose your veggies	Add legumes (1/2 cup – 1 cup)	Protein of choice	Add sauce
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> White rice Brown rice Quinoa Potatoes Whole grain pasta 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steamed broccoli Corn kernels Green peas Sliced carrots Spring mix Cabbage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chickpeas Black beans Lentils Edamame 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chicken Pulled pork Ground turkey or beef Sliced steak 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pesto Peanut sauce Miso sauce Salad dressings Dips Lemon juice

WELCOMING A NEW PARTNER AGENCY: CLARK COUNTY VETERANS ASSISTANCE CENTER



We're so excited to be welcoming The Clark County Veterans Assistance Center (CCVAC) into our network of partner agencies. CCVAC aims to provide a welcoming and safe environment for the purpose of assisting Clark County Veterans and their families in obtaining benefits, services, and resources to meet their basic needs. The CCVAC strives to support the reintegration of military veterans into the community. In addition to sack breakfast and lunch, any veteran or veteran family can receive a monthly food box. They also provide clothing and hygiene items. Their day room offers veterans a safe space to come inside and have coffee and a pastry, read a book, or visit with fellow veterans.

A widespread network of partner agencies means more community members have access to the food and services they need to thrive. For more information about partner agencies and the role of the food bank's network in getting food out to the community, visit clarkcountyfoodbank.org/ournetwork

AMERICORPS: JOIN US FOR THE NEXT SEASON

For 10+ years, we have had wonderful teams of AmeriCorps members serving at Clark County Food Bank in partnership with Washington Service Corps' Healthy Futures Project. During their 10.5 months in the program, AmeriCorps members do everything from develop curriculum and teach Nutrition Education, to cultivate and glean fresh produce, distribute food at food pantries, school sites, mobile distributions, and more. Throughout the years, the AmeriCorps team has continued to expand to meet the need. On average, the Nutrition Education team teaches about 300 class sessions

per year. The Food Distribution AmeriCorps team oversees two shopping-style food pantries that each distribute, on average, over 50,000 lbs. of food per month. The Farm Team brought in over 200,000 lbs of fresh local produce in 2023! **It's time to recruit for our next season!** We are recruiting 11 members this year: 5 Nutrition Educators, 2 Farming and Gleaning Coordinators, 2 Food Distribution Coordinators, and 2 Financial Empowerment Coordinators. If you're interested in signing up, email: info@clarkcountyfoodbank.org