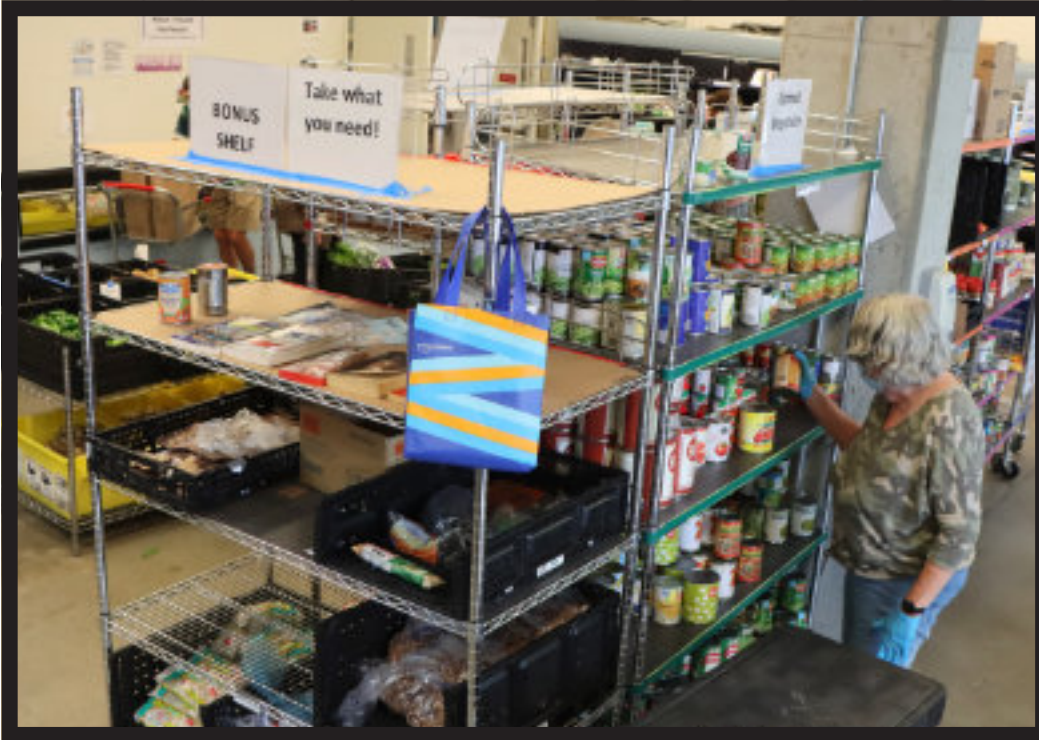


SUMMER 2024

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE UNIVERSITY DISTRICT FOOD BANK

2024-2025 budget shortfalls loom



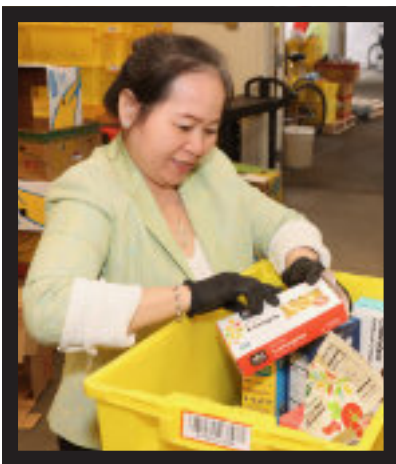
First, we want to thank this community for all that you do to support our efforts and feed Northeast Seattle and beyond. And we want to be transparent about budgets as we head towards our 2024-2025 fiscal year.

Our total operating budget is \$3.3M for the coming fiscal year and currently we're projecting a \$200,000 shortfall. We're hoping to close this \$200,000 gap over the next month and start our year well-positioned to continue fighting food insecurity.

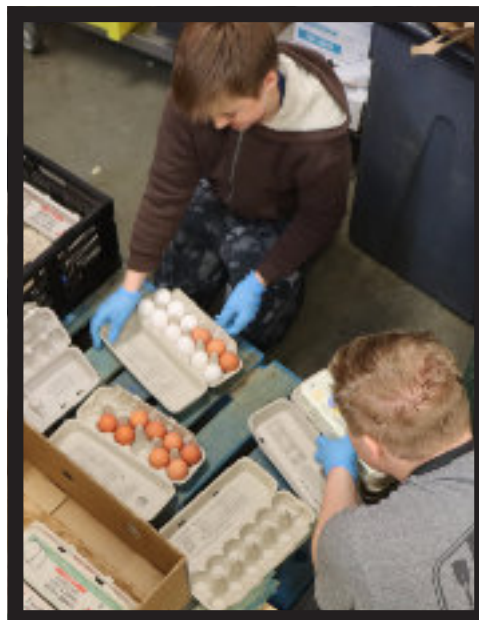
March and April 2024 were the busiest months on record in our 41-year history, with more than 10,000 visits each month. With less help from our local food partners and increased food costs, we intentionally doubled our food budget this year to feed our community.

To paint a picture: in 2023 we were 60%

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Our volunteers work hard to keep our shelves stocked, but they can't do it without your generous support.



University District Food Bank assists low-income individuals residing within Zip Codes 98102, 98103, 98105, 98112, 98115, and 98125.

Food for Thought is published quarterly by University District Food Bank for our volunteers, donors, and public at large.

University District Food Bank is a program of the University District Service League, a registered 501 (c) (3).

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Letter From The Director

Dear Friends,

Later this month, we'll begin the annual customer survey process at our University District pantry. While we've surveyed our home delivery and satellite pantry customers already, surveys at our big pantry are more challenging. We're open four days and 27 hours per week, so the effort to reach shoppers is harder but that much more important. We're 60% busier each week compared to our last survey period, so trying to understand the needs of these new customers is critical as we plan for our future.

As I reflect on the many community conversations I have throughout the course of the year – at neighborhood meetings, with church groups, tabling at food drives, speaking with elected officials, guest lecturing at UW – sharing information about our customer community and their expectations for our services is an important part of those conversations. Two facts pulled from our last survey that continue to spark disbelief and dialog in my conversations are that more than 80% of our customers earn \$30,000 or less per year to support their household and that almost 90% of our customers rely on the food bank for at least half of their weekly food. These are sobering facts. And these are important reminders about why we need more than just our network of 31 Seattle food banks to end hunger for our neighbors. We need economic policies to create substantive change, much like they did during the pandemic.

Congress has begun their deliberations on the next Farm Bill. In even these initial conversations, SNAP has been in hyperfocus and no doubt will continue to spark heated debate. SNAP is a lifeline for so many in our community and critical in making our work possible. Our Community Connectors regularly do SNAP enrollment and even the small benefits that enrollees might receive are positively impactful to their family well-being. If anything, we need these benefits expanded so that their funding better reflects the real cost of food today. But at a minimum, we cannot sustain SNAP cuts. And I ask that you help us amplify that message.

Even in difficult political environments, we know that important policy wins are possible. Washington State will be rolling out Summer EBT ("Sun Bucks") this summer because of strong constituent outreach during the recent legislative session. To be successful at the national level, we need even more voices. I'm asking for your voice.

Tell your elected officials, tell your friends and family, tell your neighbors riding with you on light rail that we need a Farm Bill that protects, preserves, and promotes SNAP. Our friends at FRAC (Food Research & Action Center) can give you a detailed analysis of the Farm Bill fight and the nuance needed to ensure that we promote policies that improve food security for our neighbors.

We know our daily food bank work is important and necessary, but your support will be made more impactful with an expanded investment in SNAP. I hope you'll join me in sharing this message of SNAP support.

In peace,

Joe



Meet volunteer Gayle Childers

Meet Gayle Childers, one of our amazing Food Bank volunteers! She was also one of our GiveBIG fundraising ambassadors this year and generously stepped up to help spread the word to her network.

When did you start volunteering at the Food Bank?

I began volunteering in the spring of 2021. I had passed the University District Food Bank many times and always thought of looking into volunteering. When I retired at the end of the 2020, the time had come.

What are your typical volunteer responsibilities?

I typically volunteer twice a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays. I enjoy stocking the store with whatever food we have. I'm usually given a primary area of focus, and I still check in on other areas [don't tell] because I like to keep

busy. I scan the shelves, see what needs cleaning up and what is missing that I can fill in. I enjoy uncovering things that got hidden away in the garage and refrigerator. Stocking the floor and putting things away is like playing Tetris – I love it. If I'm not stocking, I'm sorting through donations to prepare them for going out. That's typical, but where there is a need, that's where I'll go.

What is your favorite part about volunteering?

Hmmm...I keep active, meet people, have interesting conversations, learn more about the world, come across interesting food, know that I am helping others in a meaningful way. That's a lot of favorites. And there's the music in the

background – I often find myself singing out loud. Where else can you do that?

Why should others volunteer at the Food Bank?

For the reasons above and that in giving of yourself to help our neighbors, we create positive rippling impacts. Giving of your time, talent and treasure – in whatever way you can, makes a difference. And it's fun. Oh yeah, there's fun to be had too.

What else do you want people to know about our Food Bank community?

The Food Bank has great staff and volunteers – those who care deeply about the services they provide. Our community needs us to help fight food insecurity and help make ends meet. We need our community to remind us that we care about more than just ourselves. In giving, we receive.

I am reminded of coming in one day and it wasn't one of my better days. I found something to do that allowed me to contribute quietly. Music was on in the background and "Tainted Love" came on. Singing to myself, I heard Owen singing when we both heard each other. The duet began. My spirits lifted in an unexpected way and created a connection.

I have found such meaningful moments with people here. Know it matters to others, know people here care deeply, know that you can help our community. I hope to see you soon.

Gayle Childers encourages others to volunteer at the Food Bank because "in giving of yourself to help our neighbors, we create positive rippling impacts."





New Rooftop Roots Farm is Complete!

Big news! This spring we were able to get our Rooftop Roots Farm refresh underway and completed! Our Farm Manager, Shanelle Donaldson was then able to get plants and starters in the soil in time for the summer season. Now we can once again offer our own fresh vegetables and herbs to Food Bank shoppers.

Thanks to Toll Brothers and our awesome volunteers who worked hard building the new planters and filling them with soil to make this new farm come to life.

“Rooftop Roots is such a great program, but many folks who come to the Food Bank as customers and volunteers have never heard about it!” said Shanelle Donaldson, Rooftop Roots farm manager. “The Farm is a great opportunity for building community. We will host classes like gardening 101, food preservation, easy recipes, etc., reinstate our plant start project, and survey our customers to make sure we continue to grow the food they want.”

Top, bottom left and center: Volunteers and employees from Toll Brothers worked in the rain on April 25 to assemble the new planting beds for Rooftop Roots.

At far right: Plants are starting to sprout in the new garden beds.



Apple A Day Café is a Hit

Our new Apple A Day Café has been serving the community with free hot meals, beverages, and grab-and-go options – and it's been a home run with our shoppers!

Cafe manager Arra Ebersten shares more about how the first month has been and a peek into what she and her team have been whipping up in the kitchen.

What has the response been from shoppers?

People have been thrilled with the new service and the bistro style al fresco dining area. Meal programs that serve everyone are limited in this area, so for a lot of folks this is their best bet for getting a hot meal. Those with dietary restrictions really appreciate the numerous menu options. We have received compliments on pretty much every dish that has been served. From Mediterranean baked fish with roasted veggies and mashed potatoes, right down to a bagel sandwich.

What does a typical menu look like?

1. We always serve a salad. One of my favorites is the Apple Crunch, which has tart apples, celery and toasted sunflower seeds on a bed of cabbage or kale with an apple cider vinaigrette.

2. A big pot of soup. Some of the cafe volunteers love making soup out of produce the food bank has to offer that day.

3. Roasted veggies. We use any veggies that we have an excess of, last week it was Brussels sprouts. To make my simple go-to marinade, just throw some garlic, spicy brown mustard, lemon juice, thyme, salt and pepper in a food processor. Puree and stream in some high heat oil. Massage a little bit over your vegetable of choice, and roast on a sheet pan in a hot oven.

4. A main entree. We have made chili, paninis, cottage pie, enchiladas, and so much more.

5. Secret menu! I always make a vegan and gluten free alternative meal.

6. Dessert. We often offer up pastries, but if time allows, we will make brownies



Cafe manager Arra Ebersten at work making breakfast.

or an apple crisp.

What are the Cafe hours?

We try to mirror the food bank's hours, but we are not always able to open at the same time. Sometimes we stay open a little late if we still have food to offer the community.

To support our new Café you can donate online or sign up to volunteer at udistrictfoodbank.org!



Easy as Pie Fundraiser at Tutta Bella July 14-18 will benefit Food Bank

Dine on pizza and pasta at your neighborhood Tutta Bella and they will donate 20% of sales to the University District Food Bank from July 14-18!

Use code EasyAsPieUDFB at check-out for dine-in or order delivery, take-out, or curbside from tuttabella.com.

Tutta Bella restaurants are located in Wallingford, South Lake Union, Columbia City, Bellevue and Issaquah.

Grocery store locations are in Kirkland and University Village.

Please note the code cannot be used on third party delivery sites (UberEats, DoorDash, etc). And for orders at Kirkland and University Village grocery store kiosks, orders must be placed at tuttabella.com, not the registers in QFC.

Cheers!



We Exceeded Our GiveBIG Goal!

Thank you for giving big or small in May, it all added up to us raising \$102,000 and exceeding our \$100,000 goal!

If you donated and your employer offers matching funds please take them up on that and double your

gift, it's not too late!

We will be putting these funds toward our food purchasing budget to ensure that we can feed anyone who comes through our doors or utilizes one of our many programs. Thank you to our amazing community!



Food Bank Assistant Director Bill Lowie, left, talks with volunteer Jess Levine, far right, and former volunteer Terry DiJoseph at the 2023 open house.

Food Bank Open House is July 31

Join us for an Open House on Wednesday, July 31 from 5-8pm at the Food Bank. It's a great opportunity to see our new Apple A Day Café, our refreshed Rooftop Roots Farm, as well as tour the Food Bank.

Drop in anytime from 5-8pm – we look forward to seeing you there!

Call for Auction Donations

Please mark your calendar to join us on Saturday, October 19 at St. Demetrios in Montlake for dinner, drinks, live and silent auctions, and more to raise vital funds for our food purchasing budget.

We've started curating some top items for the auction and are looking for sports tickets, vacation packages, airline tickets, wine tours, experiences and more.

Interested in donating one or more of these items? Please visit udistrictfoodbank.ejoinme.org/Auction2024. Contact Paul Yunker with any questions paul@udistrictfoodbank.org. We also want to recognize and extend a big thank you to the following sponsors of our 2024 benefit auction. We're so appreciative of their support!

- BECU
- Beneficial State Bank
- Corient
- Lovrovich Orthodontics
- Seattle Interiors
- Sellen Community Foundation
- University of Washington

Visit udistrictfoodbank.ejoinme.org/sponsorship to learn about our auction sponsorship levels for your workplace or business and sign up to support the event!

Budget shortfalls loom at the Food Bank

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

busier across our programs than in 2022. And 2024 is 18% busier than 2023 and our team is working hard to keep up.

If you are considering making a gift this year and have the ability to make a larger gift, it will go very far in helping our efforts.

What your donation can buy:

\$30 buys:

- 35 meals
- Feeds 15 families

\$50 buys:

- 57 meals
- Feeds 24 families

\$100 buys:

- 120 meals
- Feeds 51 families

Please make a donation, any size big or small helps us meet our goal! Donate at udistrictfoodbank.org/donate