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HOUSE BILL 1784

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State of Washington

68th Legislature

2023 Regular Session

**By** Representatives Gregerson, Ormsby, Duerr, Alvarado, Berry, Ryu, Bergquist, Peterson, Berg, Chapman, Mena, Lekanoff, Senn, Thai, Leavitt, Santos, Callan, Macri, Fosse, Riccelli, Doglio, Kloba, Timmons, Ramel, Bateman, and Pollet

Read first time 02/07/23. Referred to Committee on Appropriations.

1 AN ACT Relating to addressing hunger relief; creating new  
2 sections; making appropriations; and declaring an emergency.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** Appropriations in this act are for the  
5 fiscal biennium ending June 30, 2023.

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** The legislature recognizes that food  
7 insecurity has many negative impacts on health and well-being.  
8 Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the legislature has prioritized  
9 meeting people's basic needs, including investing in getting fresh  
10 food from Washington farmers to families, expanding the community  
11 eligibility provision so thousands of low-income students can enjoy  
12 healthy nutritious meals, providing additional funding for seniors to  
13 spend at local farmers markets, and supporting the emergency food  
14 system.

15 The legislature finds that even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic,  
16 one in 10 Washington households were food insecure. Food insecurity  
17 rates rose when the pandemic began and have remained high, especially  
18 for those with very low incomes, Black and Hispanic households,  
19 families with children, young adults, and military veterans.

1 The legislature further finds that the cost of food and fuel has  
2 increased significantly in the past year. Supply challenges and food  
3 prices affect consumers and businesses alike, and this is  
4 simultaneously affecting low-income people and the emergency food  
5 system that is intended to respond to rising need.

6 The legislature further finds that many of the worst impacts of  
7 high food prices and economic instability have been avoided by  
8 increased federal support for the basic food program. Recent  
9 congressional action ends additional emergency allotments to basic  
10 food after February 2023, resulting in a loss of \$93 million per  
11 month in federal food assistance to Washington households living at  
12 or below the federal poverty line. Low-income households most likely  
13 to experience the largest loss of basic food benefits are seniors,  
14 people with disabilities, families with children, and single adult  
15 men.

16 The legislature intends to provide support to people who are most  
17 impacted by the loss of basic food, from young children to seniors.  
18 This includes providing funding to support food banks to provide  
19 emergency food supplies to families, increases in the fruit and  
20 vegetable incentive program that helps families stretch their basic  
21 food dollars further, and senior nutrition programs that provide  
22 meals to people who might otherwise go hungry.

23 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3. FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE—FOOD**  
24 **ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

25	General Fund—State Appropriation (FY 2023) . . . . .	\$20,000,000
26	TOTAL APPROPRIATION. . . . .	\$20,000,000

27 The appropriation in this section is subject to the following  
28 conditions and limitations: \$20,000,000 of the general fund—state  
29 appropriation for fiscal year 2023 is provided solely for the  
30 department to provide grants to hunger relief organizations to  
31 achieve food security within the state such as the purchase of food  
32 and supplies; investment in storage capacity; management of  
33 operations, facilities, employees, and volunteers; conducting social  
34 service outreach to food recipients; or conducting any other activity  
35 that is necessary to help achieve food security for the public.

36 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4. FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

37	General Fund—State Appropriation (FY 2023) . . . . .	\$2,000,000
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1 TOTAL APPROPRIATION. . . . . \$2,000,000

2 The appropriation in this section is subject to the following  
3 conditions and limitations: \$2,000,000 of the general fund—state  
4 appropriation for fiscal year 2023 is provided solely for the fruit  
5 and vegetable incentives program.

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5. FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH**  
7 **SERVICES—AGING AND ADULT SERVICES PROGRAM**

8 General Fund—State Appropriation (FY 2023) . . . . . \$6,000,000

9 TOTAL APPROPRIATION. . . . . \$6,000,000

10 The appropriation in this section is subject to the following  
11 conditions and limitations: The appropriation in this section is  
12 provided solely for senior nutrition services programs operated by  
13 area agencies on aging to provide meals for seniors, prioritizing  
14 services for those who have been most impacted by the loss of federal  
15 resources under the supplemental nutrition assistance program that  
16 were provided during the COVID-19 pandemic. The funding may also be  
17 used for outreach activities to target the populations most impacted.

18 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** If any part of this act is found to be in  
19 conflict with federal requirements that are a prescribed condition to  
20 the allocation of federal funds to the state, the conflicting part of  
21 this act is inoperative solely to the extent of the conflict and with  
22 respect to the agencies directly affected, and this finding does not  
23 affect the operation of the remainder of this act in its application  
24 to the agencies concerned. Rules adopted under this act must meet  
25 federal requirements that are a necessary condition to the receipt of  
26 federal funds by the state.

27 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** This act is necessary for the immediate  
28 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of  
29 the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes  
30 effect immediately.

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