



**BUSINESS OF THE CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF MERCER ISLAND**

**AB 6526  
September 3, 2024  
Consent Agenda**

**AGENDA BILL INFORMATION**

<b>TITLE:</b>	AB 6526: Hunger Action Month Proclamation No. 343	<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action Needed: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution
<b>RECOMMENDED ACTION:</b>	Approve Proclamation No. 343 proclaiming September 2024 as Hunger Action Month on Mercer Island.	

<b>DEPARTMENT:</b>	Youth and Family Services
<b>STAFF:</b>	Ali Spietz, Chief of Administration Derek Franklin, YFS Administrator
<b>COUNCIL LIAISON:</b>	n/a
<b>EXHIBITS:</b>	1. Proclamation No. 343
<b>CITY COUNCIL PRIORITY:</b>	n/a

<b>AMOUNT OF EXPENDITURE</b>	\$ n/a
<b>AMOUNT BUDGETED</b>	\$ n/a
<b>APPROPRIATION REQUIRED</b>	\$ n/a

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The purpose of the agenda bill is to proclaim September 2024 as Hunger Action Month on Mercer Island to raise awareness about the importance of food security and to inspire residents to take action.

**BACKGROUND**

September has historically been recognized as a month to focus on food security. In the past, there has been local, grassroots efforts to identify a specific day for giving to food security efforts (No Islander Goes Hungry/NIGH). There has also been recognition of the regional Mayor’s Day of Concern for the Hungry. Currently, and herein, efforts are centered on recognizing the full month of September being National Hunger Action Month to raise awareness and highlight local efforts and support options.

**ISSUE/DISCUSSION**

Every community in the country faces food insecurity. On Mercer Island, food insecurity continues to be a concern post-pandemic especially for low-income households, those on fixed incomes, cost-burdened household, and immigrants/ refugees. Youth & Family Services food security efforts also scaled-up during the pandemic to meet that emerging need.

In 2020, in response to the pandemic, the City’s Department of Youth and Family Services (YFS) closed the in-person YFS Food Pantry and began a food card distribution program to align with emergent needs and to account for public health risk factors (minimizing in person contact during the pandemic). By 2023, utilization of YFS Food Security efforts had increased by approximately 40% from 2022. The number of households served in 2023 averaged over 100 households per week compared to 75 in 2022 and 35 in 2020. In 2023, food card distribution totaled approximately \$200,000, an increase of approximately 52% over 2022.

In 2024, as the impacts of the pandemic subsided, YFS Food Security efforts adapted, and the food card distribution program was discontinued. Instead, YFS contracted with HopeLink to bring their Mobile (food) Market to the Island to restart distribution of fresh and shelf stable food items to Islanders facing food insecurity. This change also reduced the unsustainable cost of the food card program and the waste inherent to food card distribution (lost cards, cards with unused balances, etc.).

Currently, YFS is tracking up to 100 visits every two weeks to the HopeLink Mobile Market, has established an agreement with Mercer Island Farmer’s Market to offer “Market Bucks” to supplement summertime food demand (without school lunches/meals, some families face extra demand), and refers individuals or families who need food delivery or more food for larger families to HopeLink’s brick and mortar location in Bellevue, Washington.

As part of Hunger Action Month, YFS calls on Island residents to increase their awareness of the impact of food insecurity on Mercer Island and nationally and to consider contributing their time, skills, or resources towards ending food insecurity. Information is available at Feeding America ([www.feedingamerica.org/take-action](http://www.feedingamerica.org/take-action)) and donations towards YFS Food Security efforts can be sent to YFS at 2040 84<sup>th</sup> Ave SE, Mercer Island, WA 98040 or given on-line to the MIYFS Foundation, a standalone non-profit that exists to support YFS programs at <https://miyfs.org/initiatives/foodsecurity/>.

Food security support is available to any Island resident experiencing food insecurity by contacting Cheryl Manriquez, YFS Family Support Specialist at [cheryl.manriquez@mercerialand.gov](mailto:cheryl.manriquez@mercerialand.gov) or by calling the YFS confidential intake line at (206) 275-7657.

## **RECOMMENDED ACTION**

Approve Proclamation No. 343 proclaiming September 2024 as Hunger Action Month on Mercer Island.