



SAN JUAN COUNTY COMMISSION

Willie Grayeyes Chairman
Bruce Adams Vice-Chair
Kenneth Maryboy Commissioner
Mack McDonald Administrator

Social Services Appropriations Subcommittee

February 1, 2022

Attn: Senator Anderegg
Representative Ward
350 State Street,
Salt Lake City, Utah, 84111

Dear Social Services Committee Members,

We are writing to express our support for the appropriation request for additional funding for food pantries and food banks, and want to bring to your attention the critical role community food pantries play in our community and throughout the state.

Food pantries are on the front lines of the fight against food insecurity, making them a vital resource for communities and providing food directly to thousands of Utahns each week. This last year brought a lot of unexpected challenges for food pantries and food banks. The chaos of pandemic lockdowns, volunteer shortages, and general anxiety about COVID-19 required agencies to adapt services delivery models. Despite these challenges, pantries adapted and continued to deliver essential services to their clients.

There are 217 food pantries across the state, of which only 26 received funding from the State Office of Community Services, those 26 pantries (and their 46 location) provided food to 225,590 Utahns in FY2021.

In FY2022, there was \$1,126,900 available in state funding for pantries and food banks, agencies submitted \$1,640,949 in requests for funding. While all pantries who submitted a request were funded, there was still a \$514,049 gap in funding needed. This has led to reductions in staff, delays in capital improvements, and plans to expand services.

As we look to the future, many pantries are hoping to hire additional staff and provide additional services for our clients, and this funding is critical to meeting the needs of food-insecure Utahns.

For additional information you can look at these two reports regarding food insecurity in the state and the needs of pantries.

Food Security Task Force Report: <https://uah.org/reports-and-publications/pantry-survey>
Emergency Food Assistance Fund Report to Housing and Community Development: <https://uah.org/reports-and-publications/efa-fund-report>

Respectfully,

Willie Grayeyes
San Juan County Commission Chair