

## Here In Redmond! | Hopelink, March 2025

### Redmond Mayor Angela Birney

The high cost of living impacts everyone. And with the rising price of groceries, the number of people needing assistance is growing as well.

Food is a basic human need, yet many struggle to adequately provide for their family's health and well-being.

Over 1,300 households in Redmond were estimated to have received food benefits in 2023. And Hopelink, one of our many local partners, reported a 15% increase in their program enrollment since last July.

Hopelink has a long history of making a difference in our community, especially in addressing food insecurities.

And who better to talk about Hopelink and its food markets than Amanda Lopez-Castañón, Director of Food Programs.

Tell us a little about your approach here and how it differs from a typical food bank experience.

### Amanda Lopez-Castañón, Director of Food Programs at Hopelink

Well, I'll say that Hopelink's approach to distributing food is to make it a dignified experience for our clients. Our clients shop in a grocery store model where they grab a cart, push it through the market, and select items that they choose for their family. They are not coming in to get a grocery bag that I get to choose from them, they choose for themselves.

Well, the enrollment is very high, because the cost of food has gone up. And if we don't have the ability to buy everything that we need to buy in the store, it can be really hard to secure all of the things that you need to secure for your families.

I think the misconception that a lot of people have, is that food insecurity looks a certain way. And it does not have a face. The stigma of food insecurity is real; and it keeps people from knowing what it looks like, what it feels like. I think the feeling of food insecurity is important, it should be something we all have to learn about.

I think everything works in conjunction with each other, and that makes Redmond a really good community to be a part of.

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Here are some other valuable resources and volunteering opportunities to consider in and around Redmond.

Open Kitchen offers free dine-in or take-out meals at Redmond United Methodist Church every Wednesday evening.

Nourishing Networks is a Redmond group of volunteers and like-minded groups working to address food security and other basic human needs.

And, KidVantage provides essential care and goods for children experiencing economic insecurity, systemic inequities, or family disruption.

Together, our actions can bring about positive change in our community.  
See you next time!