

GOOD FOOD MASSACHUSETTS

Connecting people with healthy and affordable food

Did you know...

- In MA, 1 in 11 people (over 600,000) are food insecure, meaning they regularly struggle to have enough food for themselves and their families, and 1 out of 8 children suffer from food insecurity.
- Massachusetts ranks fifth highest in the country for weekly food budget shortfall and average meal cost.
- 33% of food insecure people in MA are not eligible for government assistance program, and many of those who are eligible are not participating. Over 700,000 MassHealth recipients likely qualify for SNAP benefits but are not currently receiving them.
- In Norfolk County, 1 in 14 people are food insecure, but 49% of those in need are not eligible for assistance programs (the highest discrepancy of need and eligibility in the state).



Hunger and health are deeply connected and many households lack access to healthy food options due to income and transportation barriers.

Food insecurity is linked to many adverse effects to overall health, including increased instances of diet-sensitive chronic diseases such as diabetes and high blood pressure. Many food-insecure households are not necessarily food insecure all the time, and often need to make trade-offs between important basic needs and purchasing nutritionally adequate foods.

For children, food insecurity is particularly devastating. Research shows an association between food insecurity and delayed development in young children; risk of chronic illnesses; and behavioral problems like hyperactivity, anxiety and aggression in school-age children.

Fortunately, there are an abundance of resources and information available: **SEE REVERSE**

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This guide was made possible by the Town of Weymouth Health Department and Mass in Motion. Content adapted from the Healthy Eating Community of Practice, a statewide partnership working to increase food access for all residents in Massachusetts: www.mass.gov/lists/communities-of-practice-strategies#healthy-eating.

Data Sources: Feeding America (2018) Map the Meal Gap; MassLegal Services (2018) Fact Sheet on MA SNAP Gap

Local Resources

Weymouth Farmers Market cultivates community engagement by creating a place where residents, farmers, and producers connect for a happier, healthier Weymouth. The Weymouth Farmers Market is coordinated by the Town of Weymouth and funded in partnership with the Weymouth Food Pantry and Mass in Motion, an initiative of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

<https://www.weymouth.ma.us/farmers-market>

Weymouth Food Pantry provides free groceries to approximately 3,610 people in Weymouth at any given time, distributing about 420,000 pounds of food per year and growing. The Weymouth Food Pantry offers food assistance and education through a variety of avenues: at its pop-up pantries, through grocery delivery to our home-bound elders and residents with disabilities, at the farmers market, in local schools, and through teaching basic cooking and home gardening skills.

<https://www.weymouthfoodpantry.org/>

Weymouth Food Pantry Weekend Backpack Program provides nutritious, non-perishable, easy to prepare food to children in the elementary and middle schools in the Weymouth Public School System who experience any level of food insecurity. We work collaboratively with teachers at each school to ensure these students get enough food on weekends and holidays when they can't depend on school meals to avoid hunger. This is a self-identify opt-in program made available to all students and their families.

Weymouth Market Offered in partnership with the Greater Boston Food Bank, the Weymouth schools host the Weymouth Market on the 1st Wednesday of the month. The market provides free food for all Weymouth residents. Bring a reusable grocery bag. All residents welcome. For more information, contact Jeremy.Angelos@weymouthps.org

Additional Resources

Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) is a meal service option for schools/school districts with 40% participation in free and reduced-price meals. CEP allows schools and districts to serve breakfast and lunch at no cost to all students without the burden of collecting household applications.

www.doe.mass.edu/cnp/nprograms/cep/

Executive Office of Elder Affairs Senior Nutrition Program provides food at community meal sites and home delivery to senior citizens (60+) and people with disabilities under 60 who live in elder housing facilities. The program includes culturally-appropriate and therapeutic meals.

www.mass.gov/elders/meals-nutrition/

Healthy Incentives Program (HIP) provides a 1-to-1 match for SNAP dollars spent on produce at farmers' markets, farm stands, mobile markets, and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs. The earned incentive is added to the recipient's EBT card for immediate or future use at any SNAP retailer on any SNAP-eligible foods. HIP is being implemented by the MA Department of Transitional Assistance (the agency providing emergency living assistance to residents). mafoodsystem.org/projects/HIP/

MA Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) provides eligible elders (60+) and WIC participants with coupons for produce redeemable at farmers' markets. Coupons are available from early summer through October each year. www.mass.gov/agr

MA Women, Infant, and Children (WIC) is a free nutrition program funded by the federal and state government that provides healthy foods, nutrition education, breastfeeding support, and referrals to healthcare and other services to all MA families who qualify, including women who are pregnant and children under 5. www.mass.gov/wic

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides nutritious food to eligible low-income individuals and families. It is implemented by the federal USDA's Food and Nutrition Service, which works with state agencies, retailers, nutrition educators, and neighborhood organizations. Every \$1 in SNAP benefits generates about \$1.70 in local economic activity. www.mass.gov/snap