

FOOD INSECURITY INFORMATION SESSION – CHAT NOTES SUMMARY

April 17, 2020

DATA POINT

- 38% of households are now considered food insecure (Source: <https://fulbright.uark.edu/departments/sociology/research-centers/community-family-institute/resources/community-and-family-institute/revised-assessing-food-insecurity-brief.pdf>).
- What is the typical percentage of food insecurity in MA? The latest USDA data reported 9.3% of MA households as food insecure.

KEY RESOURCES AND UPDATES

- **Project Bread FoodSource Hotline:** 1-800-645-8333
 - More information also available at: www.projectbread.org/covid19
 - The FoodSource Hotline has had times when there is a wait (certain times of day). We are looking to hire additional Counselors in the days to come.
 - Many of the counselors on the hotline are bilingual and there is a translator service for over 100 languages.
 - Graphics for use in media:

The image contains two promotional graphics for Project Bread. The top graphic has a light green background and features the text "GET HELP" in large yellow letters on the left. To its right is a white icon of a hand pointing to the right. Further right is the phone number "1-800-645-8333" in large green letters. Below the phone number, in smaller white text, it says "Project Bread's FoodSource Hotline or visit projectbread.org/gethelp". The bottom graphic has a dark green background and features the text "TEXT 'HUNGER' TO 243725" in large light green letters on the left. To its right is a white icon of a hand pointing to the right. Further right is the text "GIVE HELP" in large yellow letters. Below this text, in smaller white text, it says "or visit projectbread.org/givehelp". In the bottom right corner of the dark green section is the Project Bread logo, which includes the text "PROJECT BREAD" and "A COMMUNITY EFFORT" below it.

Project Bread's

FOODSOURCE HOTLINE

Free food assistance for all MA residents



1-800-645-8333

TTY 1-800-377-1292

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FOOD SOURCE

La línea directa y gratuita FoodSource de Project Bread



1-800-645-8333

TTY 1-800-377-1292

ayuda de alimentos para residentes de Massachusetts

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- The **four food banks** across the state are in daily communication. The Food Bank of Western MA and Worcester County Food Banks are point for the western and central parts of the state and GBFB is working very closely with them.
- **CommonWealth Kitchen** should be producing 8-10k meals/week by the end of the month and has been talking to Uber Eats and DoorDash about special arrangements around delivery.
- The **Look4Help Resource Directory's COVID-19 Updates to Resources** is a key source of updated information (For Franklin/Hampshire County/Western Mass area): <https://www.look4help.org/guided-search/covid-19-updates-to-resources/>
- **Recyclingworksma.com** Food Waste Resources: <https://recyclingworksma.com/how-to/materials-guidance/food-waste-2/>
- **Off the Plate:** <https://offtheirplate.org/>

- **Peace Rising** (www.peace-rising.org) has pivoted to municipal policy outreach in Cambridge. If you have policy requests / recommendations based on your understanding of need, please contact team@peace-rising.org.
- **Franklin County** Meal Train: <https://www.recorder.com/A1--meal-train-for-Baystate-nurses-33770953>
- **Town of Ashland** has created a restaurant / pantry partnership: <https://www.ashlandmass.com/DocumentCenter/View/5595/Food-Program?bidId=>

QUESTIONS WITH RESPONSES (THROUGH CHAT)

- What is the typical turnaround time between filing a SNAP application and receiving the benefits?
 - It takes about 5-10 days to get EBT cards out.
- We've heard that people can't use SNAP cards for online ordering for grocery delivery and can't have a non-family volunteer shop using their card. Can that change for people who can't go out to the store?
 - Online ordering with EBT cards is not yet set up in MA, but anyone (relative, neighbor) can take EBT card to grocery store to shop
 - It has been reported that some retailers, particularly farmers, have taken orders and then swiped the card when they deliver the groceries.
- Is SNAP an option for undocumented folks?
 - Households can often get SNAP for members with legal status, but if the entire household is undocumented unfortunately, they can't get SNAP.
- Can you address how food waste, that has been widely reported, can be connected to the Massachusetts Food Bank and pantry system? Is there anyway to source this produce on a large scale and get it to those who need food?
 - Center for EcoTechnology administers RecyclingWorks in MA, which helps businesses with 'food waste' and other recyclables connect with outlets and service providers. For instance, we receive hotlines from businesses from edible food, and help connect them with food banks/food rescue organizations. We also have a guidance document for safe donations and an online database: recyclingworksma.com
- We have a wait list for Brown Bag Program, can those folks be moved on to program??
 - You can email programs@gbfb.org about the Brown Bag programs
- What models are people using to get food resources to the homeless in your communities and those impacted by opioid/substance misuse?
 - For those of you who are working with entities working with the opioid/substance misuse affected populations: www.opioidtaskforce.org/covid-19-resources
- Is Commonwealth Kitchen connected with other incubator/commissary kitchens in MA or New England, and are there conversations about replicating some of what you're doing? Are you in touch with the Western Mass Food Processing Center in Greenfield?
 - We've been in touch with the Western Mass Food Processing Center. They have some different scale and capacity and doing the kind of full meal prep is more challenging. I believe they've been focused primarily on supporting the farm community.
- Is there any kind of "guidebook" for doing the kind of meal production work that is occurring at Commonwealth Kitchen?

- Commonwealth Kitchen has a set of best practices for how we're doing production and distribution. We also have a small business resource guide that we've been sharing. We're updating our website and will have it posted next week.
- What would be needed for SNAP to eligible to purchase hygiene and cleaning supplies as well?
 - Organizations are supporting an increase in Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) benefits. There's a bill pending (H.4622) in the MA Legislature. That would some of the lowest income households an additional cash benefit to use on any of their needs.
- How are communities reaching their immigrant populations, some of whom are reluctant to register for SNAP etc.?
 - Expanding school lunch programs would be one way to reach some of the families of our immigrant communities.
- What is the best way for us to follow up with Congressman McGovern - is there a staff person in your office working on this issue we should contact with ideas and suggestions?
 - Congressman McGovern mentioned Andrea Shropshire as contact in his office on these issues.

QUESTIONS FOR ADDITIONAL FOLLOW UP

- What is the value of school meals?
- Pandemic EBT is for 500K kids on school meals?
- What work is happening with faith-based food pantries state-wide?
- Is GBFB doing any home delivery, especially for seniors?
- Does MA have, or could we benefit from, a resource similar to Crop Mobster <https://cropmobster.com>, or Market Maker <https://foodmarketmaker.com>?
- What other ways are orgs/agencies using transportation resources to meet the food delivery needs, other than volunteer drivers?
- Are there any organizations partnering with moving/ catering companies to increase delivery capacity?
- Is there funding to source produce from local farmers for food access initiatives?
- Local farms and fishermen have lost markets. What ways are there to connect food bank purchases to local producers of produce and seafood?
- If schools are not currently distributing meals does anyone know where those meals/resources should be going?
- Part of the "sales pitch" re: increasing SNAP is that it will mean people have more money to spend in local businesses
- What suggestions are there to reach families not previously in need but now unemployed? Are they SNAP eligible?
- Is there any initiatives the congressman is trying to push that promote win-win efforts for local farmers and food access groups? Such as giving food banks more funding to buy higher quality products from local farmers?