

# FOOD CHALLENGES AFTER COVID-19

JUNE 28, 2023

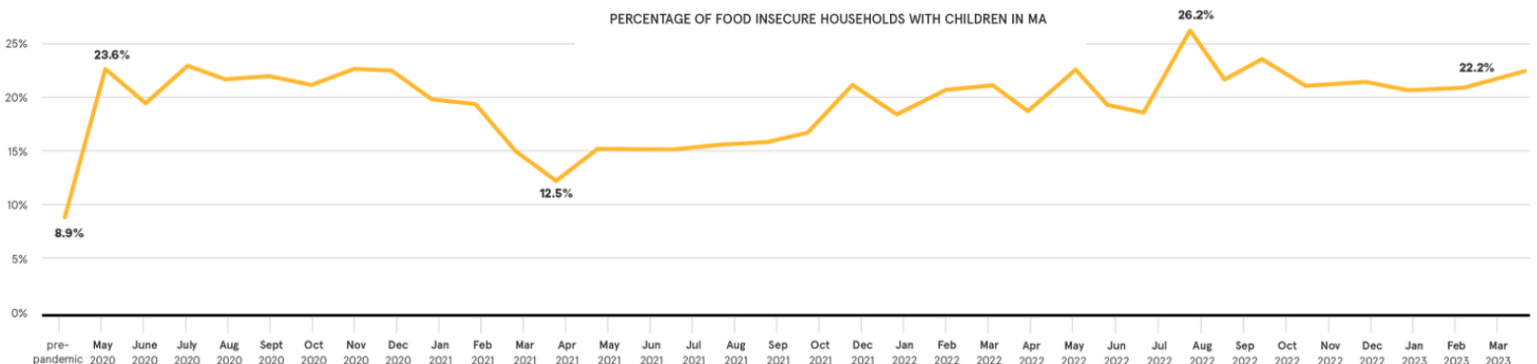


## PROBLEM STATEMENT

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In March 2023, COVID SNAP benefits ended, leaving residents in some towns/cities in the Metrowest such as Marlborough, Framingham, and Milford, at a substantial risk for food insecurity. Food insecurity has been trending upward. Food insecurity peaked in May 2020 at 23.6%. This was followed by a decrease to 12.5% in April 2021. In July 2022, food insecurity increased to 26.2%. Since that time food insecurity has remained close to its peak in 2022. As of February 2023, an estimated 22.2% of households with children are facing food insecurity in Massachusetts.<sup>1</sup>

We believe that many households in these towns are unaware of other additional benefits and resources that are accessible to them.



Note. Project Bread. Get the Facts

# BACKGROUND

## FOOD INSECURITY

Food insecurity, which is the lack of consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy life, is a complex issue that is influenced by a variety of factors, including income, employment, housing, and access to food sources. These factors can disproportionately affect communities of color due to systemic inequities and discrimination.

According to USDA in 2022, food prices increased by 9.9 percent. Prices for food consumed at home increased by 11.4%, while prices for food consumed away from home saw a slightly lower increase of 7.7%.<sup>1</sup>

COVID-19 had already caused a significant increase in food insecurity rates, and it is concerning that these rates are remain near peak levels observed during the pandemic. It is essential to ensure that households, especially those with children, are aware of the additional benefits and resources that are accessible to them to help mitigate the effects of food insecurity.



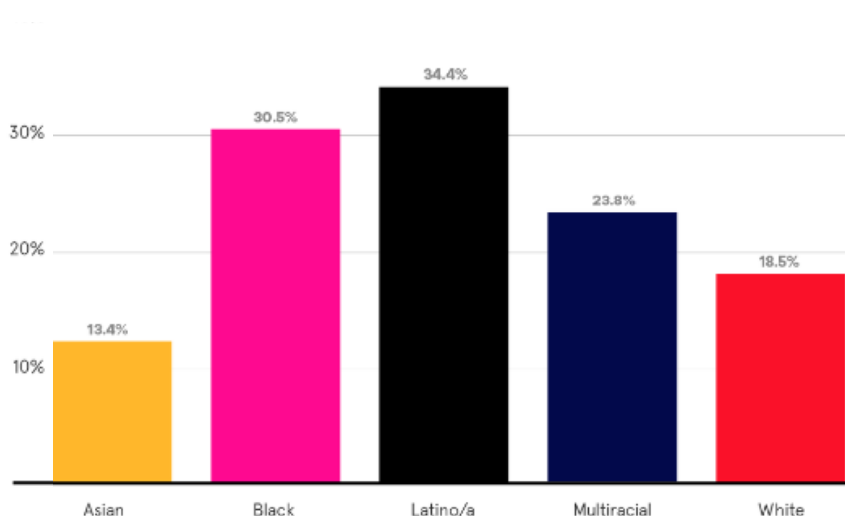
## STATISTICS

In MA the statistics highlight the disproportionate impact of food insecurity on Black and Latino households with children compared to white households with children. The US Census Household Pulse Survey reports 1 in 6 (18.5%) white households with children compared to 1 in 3 (30.5%) black households with children and about 1 in 3 (34.4%) Latino households with children in the past six months.

Despite numerous food assistance programs, high levels of food insecurity remain among people of color. Structural racism plays a role in perpetuating these disparities, further exacerbated by the impact of COVID-19.<sup>2</sup>

This highlights the need for targeted solutions to address root causes of food insecurity and to reduce disparities in accessing healthy food.

FOOD INSECURITY IN MASSACHUSETTS AMONG HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN BY RACE/ETHNICITY



Note: Project Bread. Get the Facts

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## POTENTIAL RECOMMENDATIONS THAT COULD ADDRESS THE ISSUE OF FOOD INSECURITY IN MARLBOROUGH, FRAMINGHAM, AND MILFORD

### 1. Increase Access to Food

- Establishing community gardens and urban farms can provide fresh produce to the local community.
- Partnering with local supermarkets and restaurants to donate excess food to food banks and shelters can help reduce food waste and provide meals for those in need.
- Creating mobile markets that bring fresh produce to underserved areas can also increase access to healthy food options.
- Implementing policies that incentivize grocery stores to open in food deserts can ensure that all members of the community have access to affordable and nutritious food.

#### Meals on Wheels

Meals on Wheels is an organization dedicated to addressing senior isolation and hunger. It is a volunteer-based network that delivers nutritious meals, offers friendly visits, and safety checks to seniors. Their goal is to help our senior population live nourished lives with independence and dignity.

Find your local Meals on Wheels office: <https://www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org/find-meals>

#### Project Bread

Project Bread is an organization that connects communities to reliable sources of food. Their goal is to ensure community members have access to affordable food.

For more information on Project Bread visit: <https://projectbread.org/about-us>

#### Flexible Services

The Flexible Services Program may pay for health-related nutrition and housing support for certain ACO/MassHealth members. The Flexible Services Program supports the broader MassHealth goal of addressing the health-related social needs of its members as part of the ACO program.

For more information on Flexible Services: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-delivery-system-reform-incentive-payment-program#flexible-services->

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### WIC

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) is a federal assistance program in the United States. Its primary goal is to improve the health and well-being of pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers, and young children up to the age of 5. WIC provides nutrition education, nutritious foods, and access to healthcare services.

For more information on WIC: <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/women-infants-children-nutrition-program>

### Transportation

Access to healthy affordable foods can be hard for some. The Ride Match will connect you to private and public transportation: <https://massridematch.org/>

## 2. Educate the Community and Providers:

- Using social media, community events, and other outreach efforts to share information about the impact of insecurity in the community.
- Providing resources in multiple languages can help providers and community members learn more about food insecurity and how to address it.
- Partnering with local organizations such as food pantries, community health centers, and other community-based organizations can help increase awareness and education about food insecurity.
- Screening patients for food insecurity by providers and referring patients to food assistance programs and other resources.
- Advocating for policy change at the local, state, and national levels can help address the root causes of food insecurity and address issues such as structural racism and income inequality.



# RECOMMENDATIONS

## POTENTIAL RECOMMENDATIONS THAT COULD ADDRESS THE ISSUE OF FOOD INSECURITY IN MARLBOROUGH, FRAMINGHAM, MILFORD

Increase awareness of available food resources by partnering with local organizations:

### YMCA

- **Framingham:** offers a convenient grocery pickup service in their branch parking lot every Monday and Friday from 3:00 - 5:00 PM, or until they run out of supplies. This service aims to provide essential food items to anyone, even if they are not Framingham's residents. The pickup location is situated at 280 Old Connecticut Path, Framingham.
- **Milford:** Hockomock YMCA has collaborated with multiple community organizations to establish a mobile food pantry program. The mobile food pantry operates monthly, with the location and schedule varying depending on the month. Typically, it is set up in the parking lot adjacent to the Youth Center in Milford. To find the day when the mobile food pantry is in Milford, check the Milford Youth Center's website [www.milfordyouthcenter.org](http://www.milfordyouthcenter.org). Grocery bags are also available at the Hockomock YMCA 45 Forge Road, Franklin, MA every Wednesday, 1:00 -2:00 pm and 5:00 -6:00 pm. Pull into the driveway at the main entrance of the YMCA. Pop your trunk and a staff member will place your family food bag into your car trunk. During the summer meal program held at Memorial Elementary School 12 Walnut Street in Milford, grocery bags are generally available on Fridays.

### Senior Centers

1. **Framingham Callahan Center:**  
Please contact 508-532-5980
2. **Milford Senior Center:** Meals on Wheels Delivery. For more information contact Tri-Valley at 1-800-286-6640.
3. **Marlborough Senior Center:**  
Meals Delivered or On-Site for senior citizens. For more information contact (508) 573-7200

### Community Food Calendars

**Milford** - CHNA 6 has a monthly calendar of community meals available in the area, other resources available (e.g., Catholic Charities, Salvation Army, etc.), and local and regional food pantries. This calendar is updated monthly and is a Google doc so that it can be easily translated into other languages using Google Translate. The food calendar can be accessed from the CHNA 6 website [CHNA6.org](http://CHNA6.org) under resources.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## POTENTIAL RECOMMENDATIONS THAT COULD ADDRESS THE ISSUE OF FOOD INSECURITY IN MARLBOROUGH, FRAMINGHAM, MILFORD

### Public Schools

In the communities of Marlborough, Framingham, and Milford, Family Resource Centers, Wrap-Around Services, websites, community resource maps, brochures, and links to information effectively increase the awareness of available food resources. These collaborative efforts between the centers and local organizations ensure that families have multiple avenues to access vital information and support related to food assistance.

1. Marlborough Public Schools Wrap Around Services information:  
<https://ma02212715.schoolwires.net/Page/1320>
2. Milford Public Schools Family Resource Center information:  
<https://www.milfordpublicschools.com/Page/3460>
3. Framingham Public Schools Wrap Around Services information:  
<https://www.framingham.k12.ma.us/Page/9122>

### Summer Meal Providers

#### 1. Milford

**Memorial Elementary School**- 12 Walnut Street, Milford, MA 01757

Monday, June 26, 2023 - Friday, August 18, 2023  
11:00 am -12:30 pm.

This program also will provide a meal for a parent if accompanied by a child. The program also includes weekly grocery bags to provide food for the weekend and a backpack with school supplies at the end of the summer. No registration is required for the summer meal program.

2. **Marlborough** - Will have open sites at the following locations:

**Marlborough High School**- 431 Bolton Street  
Breakfast 7:30-9:00am  
Lunch 11-12:30 pm

**Trinity Anglican Church**- 52 Church Street  
Breakfast - 7:30-8 am  
Lunch -11:30-12

Students 0-18 are eligible to come and receive a meal.  
All students are required to consume the meal on the premises.

3. **Framingham** - Information currently not available

**Project Bread**- Free meals for kids and teens in MA: Summer 2023 locations will be determined, but haven't been posted  
<https://www.projectbread.org/summer-eats-program>

**By implementing and educating the public about these recommendations, the affected towns/cities can help mitigate the effects of food insecurity and ensure that households, especially those with children, are aware of the additional benefits and resources available to them.**

# SOURCES:

1. Project Bread. (n.d.). Hunger & food insecurity in Massachusetts. Project Bread. Retrieved June 12, 2023, from <https://www.projectbread.org/hunger-by-the-numbers>
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4. Changes to snap benefit amounts - 2023. Food and Nutrition Service U.S. Department of Agriculture. (n.d.). <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/changes-2023-benefit-amounts#:~:text=Households%20that%20receive%20S,NAP%20and,reflect%20the%20cost%20of%20living.>

