



ENDING HUNGER IN MAINE BY 2030

STATE OF MAINE
129th LEGISLATURE
SECOND REGULAR SESSION

Report as requested
LD 1159 – Resolve to End Hunger in Maine by 2030

Respectfully Submitted
February 10, 2020



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Approach

By adopting LD 1159 in the 129th State Legislature, which was then signed by Governor Mills, Maine has embraced a bold vision to end hunger by 2030. This report defines a process through which we can create a measurable, achievable, and action-oriented strategic plan for making that vision a reality.

As instructed by LD 1159, over the past several months and by using existing resources, the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry has convened, interviewed or otherwise engaged representatives from numerous state departments, non-profits, businesses, and other stakeholders, to inform our understanding of the scope and drivers of hunger in Maine today, and what opportunities exist - or need to be developed - to end hunger by 2030. As mandated by LD 1159, this report serves as a summary of that work to date and lays out initial details of the design for a comprehensive strategic plan and additional resources needed to carry out a full strategic planning process.

This document was developed through interviews, research, and engagement with many people already working to address hunger and food insecurity across the state. It is intended to provide a high-level view of the extent of hunger and food insecurity in Maine and the potential systems that seek to address these issues.

This work began by rooting itself in earlier efforts by various entities in the state to address hunger. Reports and briefs by Maine organizations and agencies covering topics on child hunger, senior hunger, health issues resulting from hunger, homelessness, closing Maine's meal gap, the importance of federal programs, and many other related topics were gathered and reviewed (see Appendix A).

This process sought to leverage and incorporate the research and good thinking of these many previous efforts. However, the irony is that the same problems surrounding education, jobs, affordable housing, income disparity, chronic health issues, and child and senior hunger are highlighted in each report. Yet we have not ended hunger. Instead, Maine has seen the expansion of a charitable food system.

This process identified over 100 people from across the state currently working to close the gap on hunger and food insecurity. Over 45 of these people sat for individual interviews or were part of larger group discussions. The intent was to gain a broad understanding of the work happening today, to identify issues and collect ideas for change, in order to inform a path forward.

An Advisory Group made up of representatives of various state departments, organizations, and agencies, and people that have experienced food insecurity met three times. In addition, many members were available outside of the formal meetings to provide information, review documents, and offer insights throughout this process.

Research on the role that federal food nutrition programs play in Maine was supported by an intern from the University of Southern Maine's Muskie School of Public Policy. Statistics were also gathered by a member of the University of Southern Maine's Food Studies program staff. The contributions these individuals provided were invaluable to this report and the work of the Advisory Group.



As we look forward to the next steps toward completing a strategic plan to end hunger by 2030, we recognize the need to dig deeper into our communities and understand how strategies to address rural hunger may differ from urban strategies. We will need to more fully engage veterans, Tribal members, people experiencing food insecurity, those previously incarcerated, immigrant/refugee, and other marginalized populations. We need to develop strategies that consider the varied needs of different populations of Maine. We need to gain a firmer understanding of best practices being implemented to address near-term food insecurity needs and those that are addressing the more systemic issues surrounding hunger and food insecurity.

We also need to look to other states to learn more about how they are seeking to address the issues of hunger and food insecurity. In addition, we need to continually recognize that federal programs are vulnerable to political shifts and changes in program eligibility and will need to factor this in as we move forward in our work to end hunger.



Definitions

Definitions that guided the development of this report include:

Food insecurity: A lack of consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy life (due to) a lack of available financial resources for food at the household level.ⁱ (U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA))

Hunger: A personal, physical sensation of discomfort (that may result from food insecurity).ⁱⁱ (USDA)

Hunger, End of - The State of Maine is considered hunger-free when the annual USDA food security measure finds for more than two consecutive years that 96% of households in Maine are food secure, and no households are experiencing hunger (subsequently relabeled “very low food security”). The threshold is set at 96% because social and economic circumstances are such that some risk of hunger will always be present as changes in household structure, health conditions, employment situation, and other related circumstances cause interruptions in income, mobility, and access to adequate amounts of nutritious food.ⁱⁱⁱ (Definition developed by Maine’s Millennium Commission on Hunger and Food Security, 2002)



The Nature and Scale of the Problem

Hunger is impacting hundreds of thousands of Maine people today and jeopardizing the vitality of our communities and economy for years to come.

More than a third of our state’s households subsist with below-livable incomes (Table 1). That means they are either actively experiencing or are at-risk for hunger. This includes 40 percent of households with seniors, nearly half the households in our most rural counties (Aroostook and Washington), and a

Table 1 - Maine Households Below Livable Wage				
	Total Number Households	In poverty	Above poverty	Total
All Households - Maine (2018)	505,828	12%	24%	35%
Households with children	113,546	12%	29%	41%
Households with seniors	174,884	10%	30%	40%
Single-adult households with children	31,945	27%	49%	76%
Households without children or seniors	218,749	13%	16%	29%
<i>Households by County/Cty Grouping</i>				
Aroostook & Washington	39,348	19%	29%	48%
Franklin, Oxford, Piscataquis, Somerset	57,632	19%	25%	44%
Penobscot	54,387	14%	31%	45%
Kennebec	47,722	10%	27%	37%
Hancock, Knox, Lincoln, Waldo	66,971	11%	23%	34%
Androscoggin	38,675	10%	29%	39%
Cumberland, Sagadahoc, York	201,093	9%	19%	27%
<i>Source: Maine Center for Economic Policy, Analysis of US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2018 Public Use Microdata and MIT Living Wage Calculator.</i>				

shocking two-thirds of single-parent households. Hunger and food insecurity touch every community across Maine’s 16 counties. It is estimated that over 185,000 people (Table 2) across the state experience food insecurity each day – our neighbors, co-workers, the parents, children, and teachers in our schools, and perhaps you as well.

Looking outside of Maine for

additional context, the USDA has ranked our state as having the highest food insecurity rate of all New England states, and records Maine as the 9th most food insecure state in the nation.

There are many factors that contribute to food insecurity in Maine: the scarcity of livable-wage jobs, high housing and heating costs,^{iv} an aging population, and high medical costs. Life events, such as divorce, addiction, job loss, and disability, can be drivers, as well. Appendix E highlights the percent of food insecurity by population demographic.

Hunger is a crisis in Maine today. And hunger threatens a thriving and vibrant Maine tomorrow. Hunger impacts individual well-being and physical health, academic success, and economic advancement, and can overall impact a community’s ability to thrive.



Table 2 identifies the three counties that have the *greatest number of people* experiencing hunger and food insecurity, as highlighted in blue (noted with *). The same table also identifies the four counties with the *greatest percentage of people* experiencing hunger and food insecurity, as highlighted in orange (or noted with **).

The greatest number of those who experience food insecurity live in Cumberland and York Counties (62,369 people). Conversely, 25 percent of Maine’s counties contain over 16 percent of people who experience food insecurity. With one in five people experiencing food insecurity, this is a significant impact on those communities.

Viewed in this light, it is no exaggeration to state that hunger knows no bounds in Maine: It impacts young and old; lifelong residents and recent arrivals; our most urban and our most rural communities.

Table 2 - Food Insecurity by County			
	Population	# Food Insecure	% Food Insecure
STATE	1,335,907	185,922	13.9%
COUNTY			
Cumberland *	292,500	37,526	12.8%
Penobscot *	151,957	23,441	15.4%
York *	204,191	24,843	12.2%
Kennebec	121,821	17,087	14.0%
Androscoggin	107,651	16,194	15.0%
Aroostook **	67,653	11,251	16.6%
Somerset **	50,626	8,031	15.9%
Oxford	57,439	8,310	14.5%
Hancock	54,497	7,745	14.2%
Washington **	31,593	5,162	16.3%
Waldo	39,832	5,545	13.9%
Knox	39,790	5,068	12.7%
Franklin	29,988	4,264	14.2%
Lincoln	34,204	4,338	12.7%
Sagadahoc	35,392	4,366	12.3%
Piscataquis **	16,773	2,751	16.4%
<i>Sources: maine.gov/cwri 2017 Population; Good Shepherd Food Bank: Food Insecurity by County 2019</i>			

Food insecurity and poverty go hand in hand, and the most direct way to end hunger for a significant number of people in our state is for them to have the resources needed to purchase healthy food and other basics necessities. This means addressing the lack of jobs that provide a living wage and implementing strategies for making child-care, healthcare, and transportation affordable and accessible so all Mainers can live vibrant, healthy, and active lives.

The 2019 *Maine Shared Community Health Needs Assessment State Report* identified “Social Determinants of Health” as a priority for the first time in the collaborative’s history. Specifically, the final report describes food insecurity “as a significant concern, especially for youth, low-income families, and older adults.” The community members who raised this issue have witnessed what the research tells us: those with food insecurity are more likely to have hypertension, coronary heart disease, hepatitis, stroke, cancer, asthma, diabetes, arthritis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and kidney disease.^v

These health outcomes cost us all in terms of quality of life, lost productivity, and healthcare expenditures. For instance, food insecurity is a strong predictor of increased emergency room and office visits, as well as costs associated with ongoing chronic disease management. It is estimated that an individual who experiences food insecurity incurs an additional \$1,863 in health care expenditures annually. Extra healthcare expenditures for those faced with food insecurity dramatically increase for an adult with heart disease (\$5,144), diabetes (\$4,414), or hypertension (\$2,176) when compared to a



food-secure adult.^{vi} As shown in Table 3, the Maine Center for Economic Policy estimates food insecurity costs us \$629 million in health care services annually.

It is not just the hungry who suffer; as a state, we know we need to stimulate economic growth. Yet we

Category	Cost
Health care services	\$629 million
Indirect productivity loss	\$20 million
Special education	\$19 million
Lifetime loss of earning, annualized	\$40 million
Total	\$709 million
<i>Sources: Maine Center for Economic Policy Issue Brief: Food Insecurity in Maine, December 2019.</i>	

inhibit our own success when each day thousands of children show up to school too hungry to learn; where thousands of workers are too economically insecure to thrive; and where millions of healthcare dollars are being spent on entirely preventable effects of poverty. This study

estimates the total cost of food insecurity on Maine’s economy at \$709 million annually (Table 3) in addition to the hundreds of millions of public and philanthropic dollars spent on anti-hunger programs.

Below is a summary of the federal and charitable programs that currently seek to address the issue of hunger across Maine.

Federal Programs

The federal government plays a significant role in addressing food insecurity. There are 15 key federal programs that target nutrition and food insecurity. Table 4 highlights the federal dollars associated with 14 of these programs. See Appendix B for a more detailed description of these programs, including the agencies responsible for administering and overseeing these programs in Maine.

	FY 2018 Cost	Percent
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)	\$ 218,217,647	71.36%
SNAP-Ed	\$ 3,893,706	1.27%
SNAP Employment and Training	\$ 686,998	0.22%
Maine Special Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)	\$ 19,038,661	6.23%
Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) DHHS	\$ 75,000	0.02%
Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) DACF	\$ 943,429	0.31%
Child Nutrition Programs		
Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)	\$ 2,169,829	0.71%
National School Lunch Program (NSLP)	\$ 33,862,711	11.07%
School Breakfast Program (SBP)	\$ 12,783,406	4.18%
Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP)	\$ 1,946,984	0.64%
Community Food Systems (CFS)	\$ 100,000	0.03%
Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)	\$ 8,861,127	2.90%
Food Distribution Programs / USDA Foods		
Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)	\$ 2,021,431	0.39%
The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)	\$ 1,188,664	0.66%
Total	\$ 305,789,593	
Source: FNS Data Tables, https://www.fns.usda.gov/data-research		



The most significant federal program is the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), previously known as “Food Stamps.” SNAP is our nation’s most effective anti-hunger program and, in Maine, accounts for over \$218 million (71.3 percent) of federal food assistance. SNAP is used by single mothers, seniors, the disabled, children, people who are employed, and many others. The USDA states that over 167,800 people receive SNAP benefits in Maine, which includes more than 89,200 households and equates to over 62.4 million meals.^{vii} SNAP benefits provide an average of three dollars and fifty cents (\$3.50) per person per day, which many argue is not adequate to provide nutritional meals. A survey of food pantry clients conducted by Good Shepherd Food Bank and Preble Street in 2017 found that, on average, SNAP benefits run out between day one and day fifteen the month the benefit is received. Even with the significant dollars from SNAP, 37 percent of our food-insecure residents do not qualify for SNAP.^{viii}

In Maine, SNAP is administered by the Department of Health and Human Services. While the USDA provides much guidance and rules on how the program is administered, states have some flexibility that impacts the program’s accessibility and eligibility. This is an area of opportunity when considering how to end hunger in Maine.

SNAP has many advantages over charitable food programs. It does not depend on a separate distribution system, people are able to access food at most any grocery outlet, and they are allowed the dignity to make their own food choices. SNAP has a significant impact on food insecurity, which can be complemented with education on budgeting, food purchasing, and cooking.

SNAP also has an economic impact on communities across Maine. According to the Maine Center for Economic Policy, it is estimated that for every SNAP dollar spent, there is a multiple effect equivalent of \$1.73 of economic activity impact.^{ix} Using this multiplier means that Maine’s \$218 million in annual SNAP benefits accounts for over \$370 million in total economic impact. In 2018, SNAP accounted for 6 percent of all grocery store sales in the state. In some counties, it played an even greater role; in Somerset County, SNAP spending accounted for 18 percent of all grocery store sales; in Androscoggin and Oxford Counties, 13 percent of all grocery store sales were paid for with SNAP dollars.^x

\$218 million in SNAP benefits equals over \$370 million in total economic impact.

Another federal program—the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)—is for pregnant and breastfeeding women and children up to age five and works to ensure healthy children, both cognitively and physically. The WIC program recognizes that a child’s health needs start early (see Appendix D). The WIC program has been proven to reduce low birth weight and preterm labor.^{xi} In Maine, WIC is administered by the Department of Health and Human Services.

Once children are entering school, there are school nutrition programs that ensure students are fed and ready to learn. The six federal child nutrition programs identified in Table 4 seek to ensure that children have access to breakfast, lunch, snacks, after school meals, and summer programs that provide meals. In Maine, the school nutrition programs and the Child and Adult Care program are all administered by the Department of Education. Like SNAP, these programs have guidelines and rules set by the USDA. However, state policies and local district initiatives can have a significant impact on eligibility, as evidenced by the wide disparity in participation rates for these programs across school districts in



Maine. In January 2015, the Task Force to End Student Hunger delivered their report to the 126th Legislature outlining actions needed to address child hunger. This resulted in a focus on leveraging federal dollars and expanding programs to include snack, after school, and summer nutrition programs; however, expansion in this area still presents a significant opportunity to address hunger in Maine.

The USDA provides funding for two direct food programs: The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) and the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP). TEFAP is for qualified, low-income families. CSFP is for qualified, low-income seniors. For both programs, food is purchased by the USDA and shipped to states to be distributed to qualified families. In Maine, the Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry administers both programs and contracts with Good Shepherd Food Bank to manage the warehousing and distribution aspects for most of the programs. For both programs, community partners, including food pantries and the Area Agencies on Aging, perform the direct distribution of the food to the recipients.

Meals on Wheels is managed through the Department of Health and Human Service's Maine Office of Aging and Disability Services. Seniors (60+) and individuals with disabilities receive nutritious home-delivered meals by a volunteer who visits and performs a safety check. Priority is given to those with the greatest social and economic need. There are over 400 people on the waitlist at any given time. The cost of this program for 2019 was over \$1.6 million (federal, state, local, and private dollars) for almost five thousand homebound participants.^{xii}

The Maine Department of Corrections (DOC), in coordination with the University of Maine Cooperative Extension, offers a Master Gardener program to inmates. Participants in this program not only learn transferable skills, but they grow food for the prison kitchens, as well as food pantries in the surrounding areas. The DOC is seeking to expand food production and processing, and thus move more food to the food pantries.



Charitable Programs

As large and robust as the federal response to hunger has sometimes been, it has not kept pace with the need. In response, charitable food programs emerged in the early 1980s. The charitable hunger model relies on food banks to source large volumes of (mostly donated) food and then distribute that food to community-based programs (most commonly food pantries) to hand out directly to food insecure people in their communities. Established in 1981, Good Shepherd Food Bank (GSFB) is Maine’s only food bank operating on a

County	Meals Needed	Meals Provided by GSFB Network	Remaining Meal Gap	% Meal Gap Remaining	% Meal Gap Met
Androscoggin	2,998,450	2,326,551	671,900	22.4%	77.6%
Aroostook	2,304,520	1,524,876	779,644	33.8%	66.2%
Cumberland	6,152,823	4,956,234	1,196,589	19.4%	80.6%
Franklin	790,851	494,364	296,487	37.5%	62.5%
Hancock	1,312,067	834,994	477,073	36.4%	63.6%
Kennebec	3,359,710	2,049,833	1,309,877	39.0%	61.0%
Knox	798,674	552,373	246,300	30.8%	69.2%
Lincoln	761,649	393,984	367,665	48.3%	51.7%
Oxford	1,533,871	1,111,722	422,148	27.5%	72.5%
Penobscot	4,936,449	2,837,166	2,099,283	42.5%	57.5%
Piscataquis	628,809	363,256	265,553	42.2%	57.8%
Sagadahoc	777,103	289,353	487,749	62.8%	37.2%
Somerset	1,752,009	947,913	804,096	45.9%	54.1%
Waldo	1,091,217	854,035	237,182	21.7%	78.3%
Washington	1,140,661	927,391	213,270	18.7%	81.3%
York	3,359,593	2,376,107	983,486	29.3%	70.7%
Grand Total	33,698,457	22,840,155	10,858,302	32.2%	67.8%

Source: Good Shepherd Food Bank December 2019

statewide basis. GSFB partners with Catholic Charities Food Bank to serve Aroostook County. GSFB’s network includes 254 food pantries, 88 health care programs, and 126 school-based food pantries (see Appendix C for breakdown by type and county). In addition, there are several food pantries known to operate outside of the GSFB network. Foodpantries.org estimates there are over 290 food pantries in Maine, and Maine food security advocates speculate that this number may be low. All of these programs are working to address hunger and food insecurity affecting 185,000 people across all of Maine’s 16 counties. Even after the federal programs, there remains a meal gap of over 33 million meals annually. Charitable programs are currently only meeting 68 percent of the gap, leaving a gap of over 10 million meals annually.

The current system for addressing hunger is absolutely necessary and by and large effective in achieving what it sets out to do: making sure vulnerable Maine people have some food on the table. However, it suffers from a number of shortcomings:

- It is focused nearly entirely on the symptom of hunger rather than its root causes.
- The public/charitable patchwork is not well coordinated.
- The charitable system is dependent on philanthropic giving, which makes it vulnerable to economic variables.

Developing a strategic plan for ending hunger will allow Maine to unify its efforts around data-driven best practices, and leverage these practices in a collaborative and measurable way. Hunger is not a result of individual choices but a product of an underperforming political and economic system. It’s time for a coordinated, results-based plan to end hunger in Maine.



Ending Hunger in Maine

Ending hunger in Maine by 2030 requires a broad, long-range approach. Providing hunger relief today, as currently designed, will not end hunger tomorrow. To truly eliminate hunger in Maine, the Advisory Group suggests a multi-sector approach aimed at addressing its root causes.

The time is right. The recent publication of the Maine Economic Development Strategy 2020 - 2029, the revival of the Children's Cabinet, the Maine Shared Community Health Needs Assessment placing food insecurity as a priority issue, the push for comprehensive, high-quality childcare, and the focus on housing needs are all evidence that Maine is ready to look at how to address the underlying issues of food insecurity. We must harness this energy and look for opportunities to ensure that food insecurity and poverty are considered by all relevant stakeholders when enacting policies. Working together is the only way we will have a lasting impact on this complex issue.

The Advisory Group strongly recommends that the development of a comprehensive strategic plan incorporate two overarching priorities as a starting point: the first priority focusing on meeting immediate needs, and the second on addressing systemic changes that will solve hunger longer term. These two proposed priorities, along with six strategy areas, are outlined on the following pages. In addition, the Advisory Group has been assembling a robust list of candidate actions that were identified over the past several months, some of which are included below as bulleted items, that will be tested and vetted as part of the broader strategic planning work. While not every strategy area directly puts food on someone's plate, together, they could lead to greater self-reliance and independence, diminishing the need for safety net programs over time.

Priority 1 -- Ensure all people have consistent access to healthful, culturally appropriate food.

Leveraging existing federal programs plays a significant role in alleviating food insecurity in the near-term.

1 - Provide Consistent Access to Healthful, Culturally Appropriate Food

This priority area has a near-term and long-term focus. The near-term focus considers opportunities to address the current meal gap in Maine by leveraging federal programs. The long-term focus continues to assess opportunities regarding federal programs and, at the same time, to identify opportunities to align more services to the charitable food system (e.g., budgeting, advocacy training, job training).

The Advisory Group identified several near-term actions that could be developed into targeted strategies, including:

- Seeking ways to maximize federal programs for seniors, minorities, children, families, and others.
- Increasing participation in key federal nutrition programs by working to remove barriers, and enhancing outreach for programs such as: WIC, SNAP, School Nutrition, Maine Senior Farm Share Program, and the Child and Adult Food Program.



- Increasing WIC participation by automatically enrolling along with SNAP and Medicaid programs.
- Encouraging adult and child day programs to consider participating in federal nutrition programs.
- Increasing farm participation in the Maine Senior FarmShare Program throughout the state to reach more seniors.
- Encouraging schools with high numbers of free and reduced lunch students to start an afterschool meal program through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) At-Risk Afterschool Meals initiative and to establish more summer meal sites across the state.

Priority 2 - Address systemic changes by eliminating root causes of hunger and food insecurity.

Systemic change can be realized as we incorporate food and income equality into the following strategy areas.

2 - Foster Economic Stability

This strategic area is the culmination of all the other strategy areas below. It considers education, livable income, healthcare, job training, transportation, childcare, housing options, consistent access to food, and social and emotional supports. By addressing many of the challenges in the other strategy areas, economic stability may be experienced by more Mainers. The linkage between ending hunger and food insecurity and Maine’s economic development is significant.

Some of the suggested actions identified for this strategy area include:

- Developing education and training programs that prepare people for higher-wage jobs that also offer benefits.
- Considering leveraging 2-gen programs across the state – these are programs that work with parents and children together and seek to address generational poverty.
- Creating incentive savings accounts and promote match-savings plans with the goal of increasing the number of Mainers who can afford a \$500 emergency expense.

3 - Provide a Safe and Healthy Place to Live

The simple ability to provide a stable place to live is one many of us take for granted. The same can be said for bringing home groceries and being able to put them in the refrigerator and in the cupboards. Yet for far too many Mainers, providing a mailing address on a job application, buying perishable healthy food, or being able to prepare a home-cooked meal is not possible. Partnering with federal, state, and charitable programs to connect people with housing can dramatically improve the lives of those who are unable to secure one of our most basic needs: a safe and healthy place to live, which provides a place to prepare, store and cook food.^{xiii} In doing so, this addresses one of the primary root causes of food insecurity and poverty.

Some of the suggested actions for this strategy area include:

- Considering tenant-based rental assistance programs that provide vouchers or direct cash assistance to allow low-income families more housing options.



- Considering the use of affordable housing bonds.
- Providing assistance for primarily lower-median-income families to weatherize, remove health hazards, and address items to reduce heating bills.

4 - Address Emotional and Social Wellbeing

This outcome area includes social support, a sense of community, mental health services as needed, and access to services for substance abuse treatment. The experience of food insecurity and hunger has an impact on an individual’s emotional and social well-being.^{xiv} Living with food insecurity, poverty, and/or housing insecurity is stressful, and lacking a sense of stability or well-being can impact one’s ability to address hunger, creating a complicated cycle that can be difficult to break. In addition, long-term outcomes for living with chronic stress include negative health impacts on both the brain and the body. This is especially acute in children who grow up with economic hardship and the traumatic experiences that often accompany living in poverty.

Some of the suggested actions for this strategy area include:

- Bringing the food pantry model to centers of opportunity that provide access to food, peer support, and skill development, including advocacy and empowerment, and policy (a community organizing model).
- Considering testing “food resource centers” where people shop, making their own food selections, and gain information about available resources.

5 - Eliminate Health Disparities

Access to preventative healthcare services today can head off the need for costly chronic disease management tomorrow. This strategy area addresses the strong connection between food insecurity and chronic illness and/or brain development. Ending hunger and food insecurity can help reduce the incidence of chronic illness, stem obesity, and ensure a child’s healthy physical and mental development. Even for those who do live with chronic disease, access to a regular physician can reduce the acuity of the disease. Access to health insurance can address the need for preventative and ongoing health care to effectively manage chronic disease.

Some of the suggested actions for this strategy area includes:

- Addressing mental health benefits legislation, regulating insurance companies to increase access to mental health services, including treatment for substance use disorders.
- Encouraging hospitals to have healthy food available and assisting in the development of or alignment with programs that can ensure food-insecure patients, or their caregivers, have access to healthy food.
- Enhancing access to health insurance and preventive services to maintain health and minimize the need for treating costly conditions due to deferred care.

6 - Prepare for Academic and Employment Success

This strategy area considers the importance of food in a student’s ability to learn and an employee’s ability to perform to the level expected for a job. As stated earlier, more than one-third of Maine households subsist on below livable incomes. This strategy area explores expanding education and training programs that can prepare young people for higher-wage jobs and attract the industries which support jobs that provide benefits and economic stability.



Food insecurity not only exists in our K-12 education system, it also exists in our vocational, community, and four-year college settings. Accessing education and employment opportunities can be further challenging due to a lack of access to transportation. Finally, there are also challenges in affordability and accessibility for quality childcare.

Some of the suggested actions for this strategy area includes:

- Working to ensure that all students have the nutrition they need to learn, grow, and thrive, by committing to Universal Free School Meals for all students.
- Continuing to build links between education policy and school nutrition programs through policies that demonstrate that nutrition is a key part of learning.
- Addressing childcare deserts and affordability and supporting safe, affordable childcare that is within the financial reach of families working their way toward economic independence.
- Creating awareness among teachers, professors, and employers as to the signs of food insecurity.



Strategic Plan Development Process

Timeline for Creating a Plan and Defining the Path to End Hunger by 2030

Organizing the work around two overarching priorities and six strategy areas.

Our best estimate is that, in Maine, over \$305 million (Table 4) in public dollars is spent annually to address food insecurity. A high-level scan of readily available information from philanthropic and charitable organizations estimates (perhaps on the low end) that approximately \$25-30M is also spent annually on alleviating hunger.^{xv} Yet hunger still costs us an estimated \$709M in lost wages, preventable healthcare costs, academic and workplace underperformance, and more.^{xvi}

A strategic plan for ending hunger will: 1) identify the evidence-based strategies for addressing near-term needs and root causes; and 2) establish clear objectives and benchmarks to focus and hold to account our public and private efforts to end hunger.

As we move forward, we will continue to investigate what we don't yet know. For instance, it has been identified that charitable programs and funders, although engaged in the process, need more attention and coordination. Population-specific strategies and best practices need further assessment to ensure that the unique needs of more vulnerable populations are addressed.

To design a robust and comprehensive strategic planning process in detail, our next step is to seek and secure resources to engage a qualified person or entity with strategic planning experience to design and lead the process forward. To that end, the Advisory Group feels strongly that a successful strategic planning process for ending hunger must be:

- Dynamic, action-oriented, and responsive.
- Executed in a way that allows near-term needs and opportunities to be expedited through an implementation channel while working to develop strategies to address root cause issues.
- Staffed by creative people who are experienced in working on a project of this scope, and with the ability to balance the two overarching priorities and any others that may emerge as the process moves forward.
- Sensitive to and recognize the financial and time constraints of participants.
- Inclusive with mechanisms for ongoing communication and various ways to ensure involvement across the state.
- Supported by strong facilitation to execute the development of the strategic plan; resulting in a vision, measurable goals, milestones, strategies, actions, and recommendations for implementation.

PROJECT ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

PROJECT COORDINATOR: The project coordinator sits within the Department of Agriculture Conservation and Forestry (DACF). The project coordinator provides backbone and administrative support for the project, working with the project facilitator, the Advisory Group, and others as needed to ensure the successful development the strategic plan.



PROJECT FACILITATOR: This role requires a qualified person or entity with strategic planning experience to design and lead the process forward, which includes facilitating the Advisory Group meetings and other group discussions. The scope of work would include overseeing qualitative and quantitative data gathering and the writing of the strategic plan.

ADVISORY GROUP: The current Advisory Group will expand to include greater representation. We will ensure the advisory group is representative of Maine’s rural and urban counties, various underrepresented populations, and will include people who have experienced hunger and poverty. This Advisory Group serves as a guiding body to the project coordinator and facilitator as they develop plans, monitor progress, and address issues related to the planning process.

INTERNS: Student interns can augment project capacity and create a learning opportunity for the students. This process will include discrete tasks that can easily leverage a student’s skills and knowledge. To date, we have worked with a student intern from the University of Southern Maine, but given that this is a statewide effort, there could be opportunities to engage students from other Maine-based schools and colleges based on student interest and constraints in semester availability.

ENGAGING THE NETWORK

Ending Hunger by 2030 is a statewide initiative that must involve a broad range of organizations and people outside of the Advisory Group, many of whom are already working on food insecurity, housing, childhood hunger and other initiatives across the state, or who have experienced hunger and poverty. We will involve community leaders, businesses, and state leadership to create bold plans to end hunger. Work will be organized around the strategic areas identified in the previous section. People will be asked to engage on topics through various types of forums in order to gather the information needed for a comprehensive strategic plan.

ACTIVITIES & TIMING

On the following page, you will find one example of a high-level plan of activities that can be undertaken to initiate a strategic planning process that is inclusive, collaborative and comprehensive, and intended to establish the roadmap for ending hunger. It is expected that a template such as this would be refined by the project team and Advisory Group in the next phase of this work to best fit the timeline, overarching goals, available resources, team structure, and work already completed to date.



ACTIVITIES	TIMING - MONTHS								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
ORGANIZE THE PROJECT									
ESTABLISH PROJECT MANAGEMENT & OVERSITE									
IDENTIFY CORE TEAM (2)									
CONFIRM DECISION MAKERS & KEY STAKEHOLDERS									
LEVERAGE THE EXISTING ADVISORY GROUP AS STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE (Refine makeup as needed)									
CLEARLY DEFINE PROJECT ROLES AND OPERATING PRINCIPLES									
DEVELOP OUTREACH PLAN THAT LEVERAGES EXISTING NETWORKS AND PULLS IN MUNICIPALITIES, PRIVATE SECTOR AND OTHERS									
DEVELOP THE VISION, MISSION FOR PROJECT									
WORK WITH THE ADVISORY GROUP TO CLEARLY DEFINE THE PROJECT SCOPE, CONSTRAINTS AND DESIRED OUTCOME(S)									
ASSIGN SUB COMMITTEE ROLES FOR PROJECT TEAM & ADVISORY GROUP									
IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDING									
SECURE EXTERNAL RESOURCES									
CLEARLY OUTLINE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR CONSULTANT AND DEVELOP REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)									
REVIEW RFP RESPONSES AND MAKE DECISION									
CONTRACT WITH EXTERNAL CONSULTANT									
ESTABLISH MECHANISM TO FAST TRACK ACTIONS									
REVIEW CANDIDATE ACTION LIST FROM PHASE I AND PRIORITIZE									
ESTABLISH PROCESS TO IDENTIFY AND SET PRIORITIES FOR ADDITIONAL NEAR-TERM ACTIONS									
ESTABLISH PRIORITY FOR ITEMS IDENTIFIED DURING PLAN DEVELOPMENT WORK									
DEVELOP PROCESS FOR STAFFING NEAR TERM ACTIONS									
DEVELOP COMMUNICATION PROTOCOLS FOR NEAR-TERM ACTIONS									
CREATE DETAIL PLAN FOR STRATEGIC PLAN DEVELOPMENT									
REVIEW WORK FROM PHASE I AND DETERMINE GAPS									
WORK WITH CONSULTANT, CORE TEAM & ADVISORY GROUP TO SET THE DETAIL PLAN									
DEVELOP COMPREHENSIVE OUTREACH APPROACH									
DETERMINE HOW PROJECT SPECIFIC ISSUES WILL BE RESOLVED									
SEEK ADDITIONAL FUNDING AS NEEDED									
INITIATE WORK ON PLANNED ACTIVITIES									
LEVERAGE PREVIOUS WORK									
DESIGN INFORMATION GATHERING SESSIONS THAT ENGAGE THE EXTENSIVE NETWORK ACROSS THE STATE									
HOLD INFORMATION GATHERING SESSIONS									
DOCUMENT EVOLVING THEMES, FINDINGS, STRATEGIC ISSUES									
RECOMMEND TIMEFRAMES AND PROCESS FOR REFRESHING PLAN									
DEVELOP STRATEGIC PLAN DOCUMENT & ONGOING PROCESS									
DEVELOP GOALS, STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS									
DEVELOP RECOMMENDATION FOR IMPLEMENTATION									
CREATE INITIAL DRAFT DOCUMENT									
GAIN APPROVAL ON STRATEGIC PLAN									
FINALIZE DOCUMENT									
DEVELOP COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY									
ESTABLISH GUIDELINES & PLAN FOR PROJECT COMMUNICATION									
ESTABLISH GUIDELINES FOR PROJECT REPORTING									
DEVELOP PROJECT COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SHARING PROTOCOLS									
IMPLEMENT AN ENGAGEMENT PROCESS THAT STRIVES FOR ONGOING INVOLVEMENT AND COMMUNICATION									
LEVERAGE TOOLS THAT ENHANCE COMMUNICATION & COLLABORATION									



Estimated Budget

Three of the key functional components to consider and be managed throughout the duration of the next phase of this project are scope, timeline, and cost. The scope is informed by LD 1159, and the timeline may depend on whether and when public dollars are available to meet the cost of the next phase of this work, or if fundraising from outside sources is necessary.

In either instance, we would anticipate a 9-12-month timeline to build on the pre-work to date, as described in this report, to complete a strategic planning process.

Anticipated Costs:

PROJECT STAFFING RESOURCES - \$142,000

Project Coordinator

Project Facilitator

PROJECT EXPENSES - \$10,073

Travel

Lodging

Focus Group Meeting Space

Etc.



Appendix A – Previous Work to Address Hunger

Statewide Initiatives Toward Ending Hunger in Maine since 1990 that Can Inform the Work to Implement LD 1159: Resolve, to End Hunger in Maine by 2030. Below is a sampling of reports.

Community Childhood Hunger Identification Project (CCHIP) – This Maine Report was published in 1994. This research effort came out of the national Campaign to End Childhood Hunger led by the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC). Efforts in Maine were initiated at the University of Maine at Orono and led by Nutrition professor Katherine Musgrave and Social Work professor Bill Whitaker. They, and others, created the 501c3 organization Maine Coalition for Food Security (MCFS). An Executive Director was hired in 1994.

MCFS led the CCHIP research in Maine, which included a survey methodology that became the basis for the USDA measurement of Household Food Security in the United States a few years later. Maine was one of 20 contributors to FRAC’s nationwide CCHIP research and one of only four states to collect enough data to make the research valid statewide. The key finding was that four in 10 Maine children lived in households that directly experienced or were at risk of food insecurity. Among the report’s recommendations were the creation of a commission to address hunger in Maine.

Maine Legislature’s Blue Ribbon Commission on Hunger and Food Security – This report with recommendations was sent to the legislature in 1997. The Commissioners conducted hearings in every Maine County in 1996. Recognizing that the work of ending hunger was a long-term process, among its recommendations was the creation of a follow-up commission (Maine Millennium Commission on Hunger and Food Insecurity).

Maine Millennium Commission on Hunger and Food Security – This report was published in 2002. The follow up to the Blue Ribbon Commission, this Commission developed a plan to end hunger in Maine. The report identified a choice for Maine – to continue addressing the symptoms while the cost of programs and services to alleviate hunger continued to rise or to take a new approach. The Commission proposed a strategy that focused on long-term food security, on ending rather than temporarily alleviating hunger. This report was a useful starting point for structuring the current effort to End Hunger in Maine by 2030.

Campaign to Promote Food Security in Cumberland County – This report was published in 2010. Focused on Maine’s most populous county, this report identified urban and rural opportunities and challenges to addressing food security. This resulted in the creation of the Cumberland County Food Security Council, a unique food council with a focus on addressing the causes of hunger.

Maine Policy Review: Hunger in Maine – This compilation was published in 2011, with a focus on federal food programs, and introduced the need to leverage these programs. This review also looked at the growth of the food pantry network and expansion of the charitable food system. It stressed that to end hunger, Maine needed to address livable wage jobs, affordable housing, and affordable health care.

Task Force To End Student Hunger in Maine – This Task Force, which was established by the 126th Maine Legislature, published its report in 2015. It focused on student hunger and the opportunities to create more access to healthy food through the federal child nutrition programs. It recommended



adopting best practices and maximizing available federal funds for the following USDA Food and Nutrition Service child nutrition programs: National School Lunch Program, Summer Food Service Program, Child and Adult Care Food Program, and At-Risk Afterschool Meals. This work resulted in the creation of Full Plates Full Potential (FP/FP) in 2014. Full Plates/Full Potential brings together public, private and non-profit organizations toward the goal of ending child hunger.

Hunger Pains: Widespread Food Insecurity in Maine – This effort was a collaborative project of Good Shepherd Food Bank and Preble Street which launched a research project to gain a firmer understanding of food insecurity, resulting in a report published in 2017. Data was collected through questionnaires at pantry sites and focus groups in various areas across the state. Again, this highlighted the importance of federal programs and the expansion of charitable programs. This report also highlighted the challenges for families during the summer regarding food access, the importance of transportation to access food and to sustain employment, the extent of hunger in the workplace, and again the need for a livable wage.

Older Mainers, Empty Plates: Research on Senior Food Insecurity in Maine – Published in 2017, this report outlined the challenges of Maine’s seniors and highlighted the fact that this is a growing population. Many of our seniors are on fixed incomes, experience transportation challenges, and face the cost of health care and trading off food for medications. This report noted the need to raise awareness of senior food insecurity and recommended that those working in programs that provide services for seniors also be versed in the signs of food insecurity.

Over the past 30 years, there have been additional efforts to establish statewide and regional food councils and other initiatives to facilitate broader food systems planning, but none have been explicitly focused on the goal of ending hunger in Maine.



Appendix B - Federal Hunger Relief Programs

USDA FOOD AND NUTRITION PROGRAMS				
Program	Description	Maine Administrative Agency	Federal Funding (2019)	Participation (2018)
Food Supplement Program (FSP or SNAP)	SNAP provides nutrition benefits to supplement the food budget of needy families so they can purchase healthy food and move towards self-sufficiency.	Dept of Health and Human Services, Office of Family Independence	\$218,217,647	156,647
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP ED)	A federally funded program that supports evidence-based nutrition education and obesity prevention interventions for individuals eligible for SNAP. As directed through the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, SNAP-Ed embraces comprehensive complementary direct education, community and public health approaches, and multi-level interventions. It is the largest obesity prevention program in the nation.	Dept of Health and Human Services, Office of Family Independence	\$3,893,706	39,697
Supplemental Assistance Program - Employment and Training (SNAP E&T)	The Food and Nutrition Act (the Act) of 2008 provides that the purpose of the E&T program is to provide SNAP participants opportunities to gain skills, training, or experience that will improve their employment prospects and reduce their reliance on SNAP benefits. Additionally, the E&T program offers a way to allow SNAP recipients to meet work requirements stipulated in the Act. The Act mandates that all nonexempt SNAP recipients register for work.	Dept of Health and Human Services, Office of Family Independence	\$686,998	200



Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)	WIC is a nutrition program for thousands of Maine families, helping Maine kids to grow up strong and healthy. WIC food benefits are available based on income guidelines and up-to-date nutrition research. WIC serves Maine families with four services: healthy foods, nutrition education, tips for staying healthy, and referral to services and breastfeeding support and supplies.	Dept of Health and Human Services, Center for Disease Control & Prevention	\$19,038,661	17,476
Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP)	The FMNP was established by Congress in 1992, to provide fresh, unprepared, locally grown fruits and vegetables to WIC participants, and to expand the awareness, use of, and sales at farmers' markets.	Dept of Health and Human Services, Center for Disease Control & Prevention	\$75,000	8,819
Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP)	The purpose of the SFMNP is to provide fresh, nutritious, unprepared, locally grown fruits, vegetables, herbs, and honey through farmers' markets, roadside stands and community-supported agriculture programs to low-income seniors; and increase the consumption of agricultural commodities by expanding, developing, or aiding in the development and expansion of domestic farmers' markets, roadside stands, and CSA programs.	Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry, Bureau of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources	\$943,429	16,558
Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)	The SFSP reimburses providers who serve free healthy meals to children and teens age 18 or younger in low-income areas during the summer months when school is not in session.	Dept of Education, Child Nutrition	\$2,169,829	14,710
National School Lunch Program (NSLP)	NSLP is a federally assisted meal program operating in public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions. It provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or no-cost lunches to children each school day.	Dept of Education, Child Nutrition	\$33,862,711	96,195
School Breakfast Program (SBP)	SBP provides reimbursement to states to operate nonprofit breakfast programs in schools and residential childcare institutions. The School Breakfast Program (SBP) is a federally assisted meal program operating in public and non-profit private schools and residential child care institutions.	Dept of Education, Child Nutrition	\$12,783,406	50,400



Fresh Fruits and Vegetable Program (FFVP)	The goal of the FFVP is to introduce children to fresh fruits and vegetables, to include new and different varieties, and to increase overall acceptance and consumption of fresh, unprocessed produce among children. The FFVP also encourages healthier school environments by promoting nutrition education.	Dept of Education, Child Nutrition	\$2,226,055	44,521
Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)	CACFP helps child and adult care institutions and family or group day care homes provide nutritious foods to young children, at-risk youth, and adults who are chronically impaired.	Dept of Education, Child Nutrition	\$8,861,127	9,485
Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)	CSFP works to improve the health of low-income persons at least 60 years of age by supplementing their diets with nutritious USDA Foods. USDA distributes both food and administrative funds to participating states and Indian Tribal Organizations to operate CSFP.	Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry, Bureau of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources	\$2,021,431	9,229
The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)	TEFAP is a federal program that helps supplement the diets of low-income Americans by providing them with emergency food assistance at no cost. The USDA provides 100% American-grown USDA Foods and administrative funds to states to operate TEFAP.	Dept of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry, Bureau of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources	\$1,188,644	N/A
Sources: FNS Data Tables, https://www.fns.usda.gov/data-research				

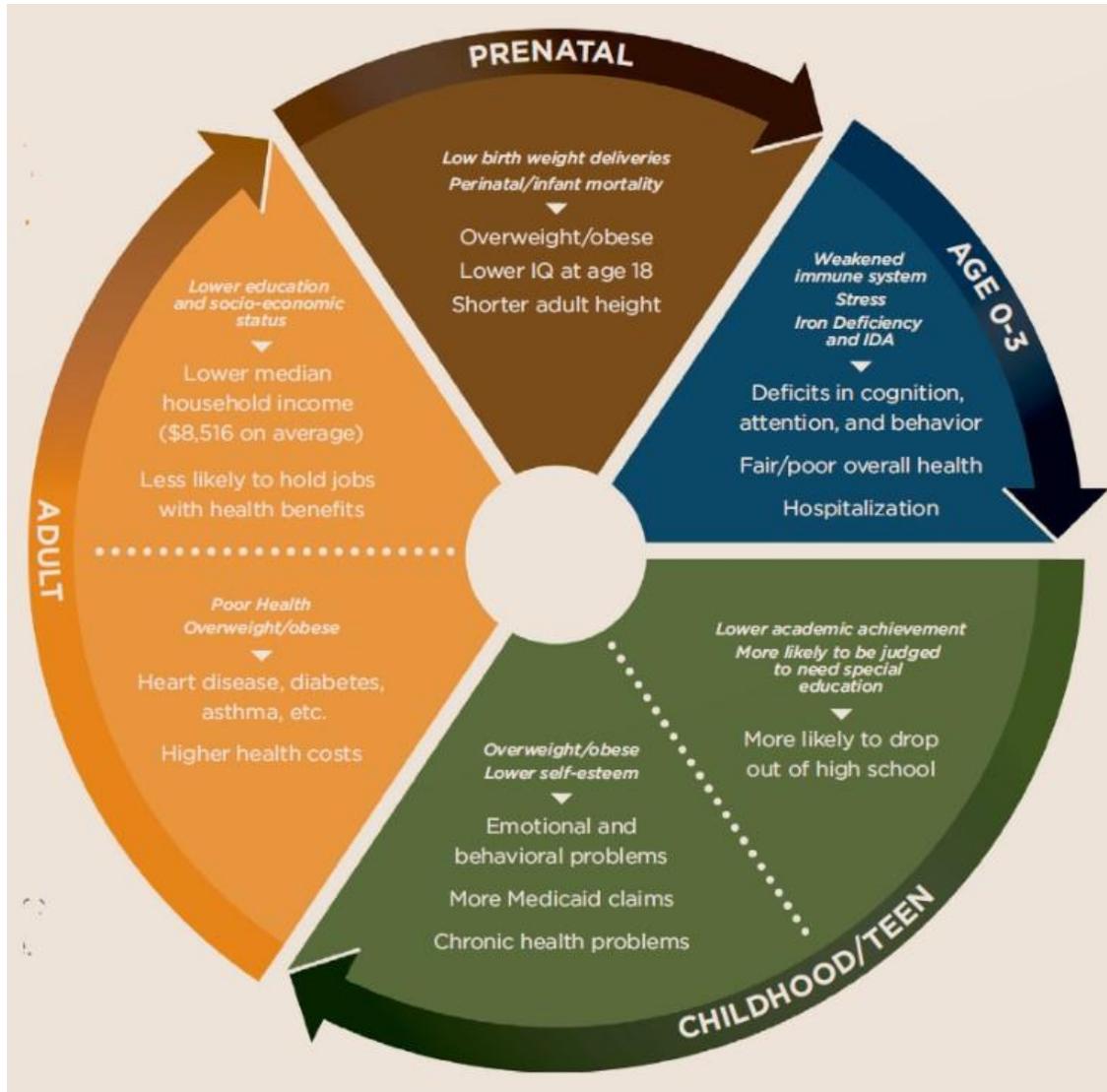


Appendix C - Good Shepherd Food Bank's Partner Types by County

Table 6 - GSFb Partner Organizations					
County	# Food Insecure	Food Pantry	Health Care Organization	School Pantry	Total Food Sites
Androscoggin	16,194	21	5	17	43
Aroostook	11,251	23	4	6	33
Cumberland	37,526	40	16	23	79
Franklin	4,264	7	4	1	12
Hancock	7,745	8	3	1	12
Kennebec	17,087	25	10	7	42
Knox	5,068	10	2	3	15
Lincoln	4,338	9	5	4	18
Oxford	8,310	17	5	5	27
Penobscot	23,441	26	9	12	47
Piscataquis	2,751	5	2	2	9
Sagadahoc	4,366	6	0	3	9
Somerset	8,031	14	2	11	27
Waldo	5,545	11	6	8	25
Washington	5,162	9	8	12	29
York	24,843	23	7	11	41
Grand Total		254	88	126	468
<i>Source: Good Shepherd Food Bank Partners Food insecurity 2019, Partners 2020</i>					



Appendix D - The Lifelong Impacts of Food Insecurity



Source: Feeding America, Child Food Insecurity: The Economic Impact on our Nation (May 2009)



Appendix E - Food Insecurity Variances by Population

Table 7 - Food Insecurity Variances by Population		
The table below is intended to demonstrate the rate at which different populations experience hunger and food insecurity		
Population	% Food Insecure	Source Data Year(s)
Percent of Total Population	13.9	2020
HOUSEHOLDS		
Households headed by 1st or 2nd generation African	51.6%	2015-2017
Black Households (or in combination with another race)	40.2%	2015-2017
American Indian Households	29.5%	2015-2017
All people of color	28.3%	2015-2017
Households headed by black Mainers (indigenous black)	27.7%	2015-2017
Hispanic Households (any race)	23.1%	2015-2017
Non-citizens	18.8%	2008-2017
Asian Households (alone or in combination)	16.4%	2015-2017
U.S. Citizens	15.2%	2008-2017
White non-Hispanic Households	14.7%	2015-2017
GENDER		
Women 18-54 living with their children	18.4%	2015-2017
Men 18-54 NOT living with their children	17.7%	2015-2017
Male	14.9%	2015-2017
Female	14.6%	2015-2017
Women 18-54 NOT living with their children	13.9%	2015-2017
Men 18-54 living with their children	13.7%	2015-2017
Sources: Older Mainers, Empty Plates Research on Senior Food Insecurity in Maine, Good Shepherd Food Bank (2017); Maine Center for Economic Policy analysis of US Census Bureau, Current; Population Survey, Food Security Supplement (years data above)		



Appendix F - Resolve, To End Hunger in Maine by 2030

RESOLVE Chapter 32, LD 1159, 129th Maine State Legislature
Resolve, To End Hunger in Maine by 2030

PLEASE NOTE: Legislative Information **cannot** perform research, provide legal advice, or interpret Maine law. For legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.

Resolve, To End Hunger in Maine by 2030

Preamble. Whereas, the Legislature finds that, for the economic and social well-being of the people of the State, all people must be free from hunger, food insecurity, malnutrition, starvation or endangerment of life from scarcity of or lack of access to nourishing and culturally appropriate food; and

Whereas, the human, social and economic costs of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition to the State are enormous and far reaching, leading to lost productivity, health-related problems, reduced well-being, decreased learning ability, reduced fulfilment of human potential and social and political unrest that undermines development efforts; and

Whereas, one in 4 children in Maine goes to bed hungry every night, 37% of the Maine people who face hunger, food insecurity or malnutrition do not qualify for any public assistance and Maine ranks first in New England and 9th in the nation for food insecurity; and

Whereas, many emergency food relief sites in the State regularly lack fresh fruits and vegetables and other nutrient-dense foods for residents struggling with hunger, food insecurity or malnutrition; and

Whereas, for the consumer, producer and the environment, the cost of food produced by and for the global industrial food system has risen in the last decade; and

Whereas, 90% of the food Maine people consume is imported from elsewhere; and

Whereas, Maine has all the natural resources and hard-working, self-reliant people to grow, catch, harvest and process enough food to reduce imports and provide the people of the State with a diet based more on Maine-produced foods and yet state food policy to date has not significantly reduced hunger, food insecurity or malnutrition for the people of the State; now, therefore, be it

Sec. 1 Plan to eliminate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition in the State. Resolved: That the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, in consultation and collaboration with interested parties and stakeholders, including, but not limited to, statewide and community-based advocacy and emergency food relief organizations and nonprofit organizations, financial institutions, private foundations, interfaith religious councils, farmers, persons who fish commercially, food producers, state and local granges, civic organizations, regional, local and community food policy councils and people who struggle with hunger, food insecurity or malnutrition, shall collaborate with the Department of Marine Resources, the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, the Department of Health and Human



Services, the Department of Labor, the Department of Economic and Community Development, the Department of Education, the Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management, Bureau of Maine Veterans' Services and the University of Maine Cooperative Extension to develop a comprehensive strategic plan to eliminate hunger in the State by 2030. The strategic plan designed under this resolve must at least:

1. Use existing programs, staff and resources to the extent possible;
2. Define and articulate the scope of the food and nutrition situation in the State, including accurate data and information related to the contribution of relevant sectors on nutrition, food consumption and production, food distribution systems, household incomes and other relevant demographic data, in order to address the multiple dimensions of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition;
3. Include any recommendations of legislative commissions, task forces, working groups or studies on ending hunger for any targeted population that will prove effective for the general population;
4. Determine any disproportionate impact of hunger, food insecurity or malnutrition on people living in food deserts across the State and include proposals to close those gaps more quickly as the State moves toward eradicating hunger;
5. Determine the barriers to access to healthy and culturally appropriate food and include proposals to eliminate those barriers for persons who struggle with intergenerational hunger, food insecurity or malnutrition and for persons who struggle with intermittent hunger, food insecurity or malnutrition;
6. Balance supply-side policies and solutions such as increasing agricultural productivity and accessing markets, investing in family farms, small-scale fisheries and forestry and fostering governance of land tenure and natural resources with policies and solutions that promote food self-sufficiency, including hunting, foraging and the policies outlined in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 7, section 219;
7. Establish benchmarks and measurable outcomes based on sound evidence and analysis to monitor progress, assess impacts and interpret outcomes in order to ensure that actions bring the State closer to eradicating hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition by 2030; and
8. Identify and propose adequate resource allocation in order to translate policies, programs and legislation into concrete action.

Sec. 2 Initial design commencement. Resolved: That, no later than 30 days after the effective date of this resolve, the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry shall begin inviting interested parties, stakeholders and the departments outlined under section 1 to convene the first planning session.

Sec. 3 Initial design report. Resolved: That, by February 10, 2020, the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry shall submit a report to the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry detailing the initial design for the plan under section 1. The committee is authorized to submit legislation based on the report to the Second Regular Session of the 129th Legislature.



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