Food Access and Health

**a 2015 snapshot of conditions in Massachusetts and goals of the MA Local Food Action Plan**

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**Costs**

- The cost of living is 32% higher than the national average.
- Groceries are 16% more expensive than national prices.

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**Nearly 12%** of people are living below the poverty level, and the poverty rate for children is 15%.

**13%** of people use a food bank or food pantry.

**17%** of children are food insecure.

Nearly 12% of all people are food insecure, a rate that is 71% higher than 10 years ago.

**1/4** of people eat 5 servings of fruits or veggies a day.

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**Hunger**

- Living in a food desert, or a place without convenient access to grocery stores, is linked with having higher rates of obesity, diabetes, and other diet-related diseases.

- And hunger impacts all types of people, including working people, students and elderly.

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**Diet**

- People eat about 142 pounds of sugar a year or 30 teaspoons daily.

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**Health**

- Diabetes rates vary by race and rates have increased 28% in the last 10 years.

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**Goals**

1. Everyone will be able to afford more healthy and local foods.
2. Everyone who qualifies for SNAP will receive the benefits that are available to them.
3. More people will be able to purchase healthy foods using public food assistance incentive programs.
4. Healthy food education and choices for all children and adolescents will be expanded.
5. The roles of health care providers, institutions, and insurers in fostering access to healthy food will be expanded.
6. Food pantries and meals programs will increase their distribution of locally produced foods.
7. Healthy and locally produced food will be more accessible through better public transportation and food infrastructure.
8. More people will be aware of the direct effects that nutrition has on their health and will take part in effective nutrition education programs.

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Learn about the plan to improve food access at mafoodsystem.org.