



**Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

**Executive Office of  
Health and Human Services**

# Governor Healey's Anti-Hunger Task Force Meeting

January 29, 2026



# Agenda



- Review Governor's House 2 Budget Request
- Discuss report recommendations
- Next steps





# Governor's House 2 Budget

# Anti-Hunger Initiatives in Governor's FY27 Budget and Supplemental Investments



**Beyond continued investment in DTA caseworker staffing and proposed tax credit, the FY27 budget proposal includes \$338M in Anti-Hunger program investments, representing a 12% increase over the FY26 GAA.**

Department	Program	FY26 GAA	FY27 H.2
<b>MDAR</b>	Emergency Food Assistance Program	50,575,000	55,000,000
	School Breakfast Program	4,467,639	4,429,965
<b>DESE</b>	School Lunch Program	5,314,176	5,314,176
	Universal School Meals	180,000,000	198,000,000
	Hunger-Free Campus Pilot Program	500,000	500,000
<b>DTA</b>	Food Stamp Participation Rate Programs	5,294,419	5,762,115
	Supplemental Nutrition Program	8,276,185	11,000,000
	Healthy Incentives Program	20,100,000	29,700,000
<b>DPH</b>	Women Infants and Children Nutrition Services	15,489,915	15,500,388
<b>AGE</b>	Nutrition Services Program	12,757,217	13,410,963
<b>Total</b>		<b>302,774,551</b>	<b>338,617,607</b>

# Additional Governor's FY27 Budget and Supplemental Investments in areas highlighted by the Task Force and Listening Sessions as important for food security



## Child Care Access

- \$1.22 billion for child care financial assistance (CCFA) (\$189 M increase from FY26 GAA to support anticipated increase in DTA/DCF caseload)
  - Reminder eligible DTA families have access to CCFA as an entitlement, including SNAP clients participating in a SNAP Path to Work program

## Affordable higher education

- \$137.05 million to maintain free community college
- \$103.3 million to sustain the MASSGrant Plus expansion and other financial aid

## Workforce Supports

- \$5 million in fair share for continued efforts to reduce the ESOL waitlist
- \$8.9 million for Career Technical Institutes (CTIs), which aim to close skills training gaps by expanding access to vocational education for adults

## Transportation

- \$993 million for MBTA, supporting affordability initiatives including income eligible reduced fare program
- \$66 million in supplemental State Contract Assistance to expand service hours, operate weekend service, and enhance routes and other operational improvements for RTAs
- \$35 million to support systemwide, year-round fare-free transit on RTAs
- \$15 million for micro transit and last mile innovation grants in the Fair Share supplemental budget to extend transit and mobility opportunities to underserved populations and communities



# Report recommendations review



# Recommendation formulation review

*The Anti-Hunger Task Force and Working Groups met to formulate recommendations to the Governor on how to address SNAP cuts. We have also hosted 6 listening sessions statewide, met with 140 anti-hunger advocates through the Make Hunger History Coalition, and talked with SNAP participants to inform recs.*

## Working Groups:



**Increasing access to food assistance for directly impacted populations**

(Subgroups on immigrants, families w/ children and persons with disabilities & older adults)



**Building rural resiliency and sustaining local food systems**



**Funding opportunities & scaling solutions: Philanthropy & advocacy**

## Timeline:

Aug-Dec: Task Force and Working Groups met to provide recs

Nov/Dec: Listening sessions hosted across MA to gather feedback from community members

Dec: TF and WGs meet to refine recs based on feedback

Dec/Jan: Co-chairs draft report based on discussions

Jan: Task Force meets (1/29) to discuss final report & submits to Governor



We are here



# Key Areas of Recommendations

*The recommendations from the Task Force are captured in five key areas:*

1. Investing in DTA clients and infrastructure
2. Maximizing Nutrition Programs
3. Supporting the Emergency Food System
4. Supporting Rural Resilience and Sustaining Local Food Systems
5. Deepening Public-Private Partnerships



# 1) Supporting DTA clients and infrastructure

- DTA infrastructure support: Continue to invest in DTA as an entity, including through financial and resource support for staffing and IT systems.
- Robust outreach: Conduct robust outreach to ensure clients and communities are aware of the federal changes impacting eligibility and where to receive assistance in their own language, including through train-the-trainer and peer-to-peer support models. There should be broad engagement, including with school, health care entities/pediatricians, higher education, caregiver coalitions, veteran service organizations and the faith community. This outreach should include awareness of the benefits of receiving SNAP for eligible children in mixed-immigrant families, as well as how work rules apply to unpaid forms of work, such as caregiving activities.
- SNAP outreach partners: Expand the number of SNAP outreach partners in impacted communities, particularly Councils on Aging that can assist older adults with claiming exemptions to the work requirements/meeting the expanded requirements.
- Outreach materials toolkit: Provide multilingual, accessible outreach materials in plain language that organizations and communities can use. This includes sample robo call, text message, email, and social media copy language, as well as flyers and graphics.
- Employment and training: Expand SNAP Path to Work providers and maximize employment and training opportunities available, including community service/volunteering opportunities as well as virtual options. This includes engaging with philanthropy to support stipends for clients participating in non-SNAP Path to Work opportunities like transportation and site capacity, with a focus on community service/volunteering.
- Guidance on accessing public benefits: Create and share guidance around accessing public benefits during a changing federal legal landscape for immigrants.
- Support immigrant families: Examine opportunities to support access to immigration legal services for immigrants seeking to change their immigration status.
- SNAP loss mitigation: Assess operational feasibility and resource availability of creating new programs, including state administered supports, for people previously eligible for SNAP



## 2) Maximizing nutrition programs

- WIC outreach: Conduct robust outreach in impacted communities on the Special Supplemental Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) eligibility for children up to age 5.
- Farmer market participation: Explore funding opportunities for WIC and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program to ensure consistency and sustainability of program operations. Further, leverage existing innovative models to expand access and modernize the experience.
- Child nutrition program participation: Increase school breakfast, Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) (child care/supper) and summer meal participation in impacted communities.
- Publicly available data: Create a public data dashboard on nutrition program participation to understand access and gaps (e.g., CACFP, school breakfast, WIC, summer meals, senior nutrition programs).
- CACFP reimbursement rates: Explore opportunities to supplement CACFP reimbursement rates for meals and sponsors, subject to available resources.
- High-quality meals: In alignment with the School Meals Nutrition Standards Commission's recommendations, explore efforts to increase scratch cooking, source local foods and products, and engage with culinary training and expanding regional culinary center district partnerships for school meals.
- College food security: Continue investing in the hunger-free campus initiative and explore universal campus meal plans that could be included in student aid packages.
- School meals: Identify school districts that have their community eligibility provision (CEP) renewal date in the next year and an identified student percentage (ISP) rate near the cut off (ISP 31.25% = 50% area eligible) to boost outreach for direct certification.
- Afterschool and supper: Identify Summer Eats and CACFP afterschool and supper meal sites that have an area eligibility close to 50% area eligibility (31.25% CEP site ISP) to explore redetermining eligibility that would extend area eligibility for five more years.



### 3) Supporting the Emergency Food System

- Safe food pantry access: Create food pantry specific guidance related to immigration enforcement and offer robust trainings and materials on it, including a convening for food pantries with legal aid experts to discuss best practices/strategies.
- Commodity Supplemental Food Program: Maximize state participation in the Commodity Supplemental Food Program.
- Food delivery/boxes: Work with philanthropy to expand meal delivery, prepared meals, and food box programs, including partnering with organizations that are already going to people's homes, schools and senior housing buildings to provide access to food that meets people's dietary needs.
- MA Emergency Food Assistance Program (MEFAP): Continue to invest in MEFAP and identify opportunities to increase the program's purchase of locally produced foods directly from local farms, producers, fisheries, and food hubs. This includes assessing the capacity and needs of local producers (e.g., logistical, price points, and supply chain challenges) to supply more food into the emergency feeding system. Set reasonable targets for MEFAP funding to source from Massachusetts grown, raised and harvested foods, as well as from bordering states to further bolster the local food supply chain and increase fresh and local food access to food insecure communities. Provide support and education to farmers who are exploring becoming MEFAP suppliers, including smaller and diverse farms, and establish a tracking system to measure progress towards diversifying suppliers to MEFAP.
- Mutual aid: Partner with mutual aid organizations and engage with grassroots community organizations to support community food security efforts.
- Resource databases: Work with local, regional and statewide leaders to promote information on food resources across the state for people seeking assistance.



## 4) Supporting Rural Resiliency & Sustaining Local Food Systems (1/3)

- Grocery prices: Examine ways to strengthen state consumer protections that increase affordability and mitigate against surveillance pricing and unlawful price collusion.
- Federal local purchasing: Advocate for Congress and the federal government to re-establish the Local Food Purchasing Agreement (LFPA) and Local Food For Schools (e.g., through the *Local Farmers Feeding Our Communities Act*), and explore state-level program opportunities subject to available resources. LFPA was a successful federally-funded program that operated in Massachusetts over two rounds totaling \$14 million and was eliminated by the USDA in 2025, with \$7 million of funding terminated right before the 2025 growing season. LFPA was a transformative program that provided public funds for community-based organizations to purchase food from Massachusetts farmers to distribute to food insecure families. It was a more flexible, urgent response that was complementary to the more large-scale food banking model by directly connecting small-scale historically underserved farmers and fishers with trusted community-based intermediaries that provided food to communities experiencing food insecurity and with barriers to accessing food pantries. Through Local Food For Schools, Massachusetts received \$3.5 million in federal funding that enabled 230 School Food Authorities to purchase local food grown, raised, or harvested within 400 miles during the 2023-2024 school year.
  - If re-established, future LFPA and LFS programs should connect with Tribal Governments and Native-led non-profits to ensure support for Indigenous foodways and food distribution programs, as well as support food donations through technical assistance and funding to help intermediaries administer the funds.
- State local purchasing: Update the budget language for MEFAP to allow for funding to be dispersed to food access intermediaries to procure directly from small and underserved producers, specifically when there is a unique circumstance such as a more rural community that could buy more directly from local farms and fishers (e.g., rural areas, Cape and Islands). Also, explore funding mechanisms to allow for more small and underserved producers to sell directly to food access organizations and sites, similar to LFPA.
- Food Security Infrastructure Grant (FSIG) Program: FSIG supports initiatives that improve food security and ensure equitable access to locally grown, raised, harvested, and caught foods by strengthening Massachusetts' food supply chain. Encourage support for the Mass Ready Act proposal for \$125 million in dedicated authorization for the FSIG program. Future grants should prioritize impacts to areas most impacted by the SNAP eligibility changes and other federal policy safety net changes, in addition to transportation, distribution, and middle of the supply chain gaps, particularly in rural areas, for farm and seafood businesses.



## 4) Supporting Rural Resiliency & Sustaining Local Food Systems (2/3)

- Healthy Incentives Program (HIP): Ensure adequate funding at the beginning of each fiscal year for HIP and codify the program into law to enable sustainable outreach and expanded vendors/access points. This includes evaluating the ability to increase the number of HIP vendors based on needs of rural, suburban and urban communities and gaps in geographic distribution of vendors, as well as conducting strategic planning around the diversity of vendors and diversity of clients served.
- MDAR's Land Licensing Program: Explore expanding MDAR's land licensing program to support farmland access for food production for new, beginning, and immigrant farmers, as well as to improve access to land for production of local fruits, vegetables, culturally relevant crops, and meat. This also includes funding for infrastructure, such as irrigation, as well as resources and technical assistance for licensees in order to ensure the farmland is productive and the farms are successful. Further, explore opportunities to connect County Sheriffs' farms to emergency feeding system network and state land licensing program to expand production.
- Technology access in rural communities: Explore partnerships and funding opportunities to address technological barriers to food access programs in rural communities. This includes working with the MA Broadband Institute and municipalities to enhance connectivity at farmer's market locations, equipping markets and retail outlets with greater connectivity so farmers and participants can access food benefit programs that increasingly rely on technological solutions.
- Transportation access in rural communities: Explore ways to strengthen access to public transportation to critical food access points, which is often cited as a key barrier for rural residents to access food. This includes assessing needs, grant opportunities and collaborative initiatives.
- Workforce development in the local food system: Assess ways to strengthen the local food system workforce through research of existing state models, like [Maine's recently published report](#), as well as the needs of the state's Agricultural High Schools and career technical schools to prepare the next generation food system workforce.
- Agricultural Food Safety Improvement Program (AFSIP): Explore food safety programming and funding opportunities that support produce, aquaculture, and wild-caught seafood operations to improve food safety practices that minimize risks of microbial contamination and food-borne illnesses while increasing market access. Lack of food safety trainings and certification are often a barrier to market access and food donation opportunities.



## 4) Supporting Rural Resiliency & Sustaining Local Food Systems (3/3)

- MassWildlife's Hunters Share the Harvest Program (MWHSH): Deepen public-private partnerships to increase capacity for MWHSH. The MWHSH program acts as a secure, in-state backstop to any food program disruptions by the federal government and provides a fresh, local source of protein in high demand by local distributors. Explore sustainable funding sources to cover deer processing costs, program coordination, distribution, and equipment, and coordinate with the Department of Public Health to update custom slaughter regulations to clarify the legal standing of free-ranging wild game processing.
- Our Fish Our Plate (Share the Catch) pilot: Explore partnership opportunities that increase access to seafood, bolster demand for local fish, and strengthen the local seafood system. Share the Catch provides locally caught seafood to food banks for distribution to food insecure residents. This includes support for seafood purchases and promotion and research on the success of the initial pilot program. Further, seafood should continue to be included in any future local food distribution and infrastructure programs, including LFPA/LFS and FSIG.
- Plant the Future Grant: Explore establishing targeted funding to help Massachusetts farmers establish orchards, vineyards, and other perennial crop systems (e.g., apples, pears, walnuts), including through existing state grant programs that can incentivize more planting of edible perennial crops (e.g., FSIG, Urban Ag, Greening the Gateway). Farmers could receive funding to support the purchase of trees, plants, vines, and necessary planting costs and then four to five years after planting additional funding to support good management and plant survival.



## 5) Deepening public-private partnerships (1/2)

Strategic fundraising campaign: Create a clear, dedicated fundraising campaign to coordinate philanthropy and establish mechanisms for communication, transparency, and collaboration to support food security responses statewide with a focus on local and regional solutions.

Cross-sector partnerships: Support and expand grant opportunities for partnerships between anti-hunger organizations, community-based groups and agriculture organizations to feed residents, including Local Food Policy Councils.

Municipal engagement: Engage municipalities and regional planning entities to incorporate food security pillars into municipal planning initiatives to promote access to food through cross-cutting initiatives.

Access to benefits: Identify philanthropic opportunities for assisting residents with low incomes to remain connected to SNAP, including through investment in opportunities for residents to meet strict work requirements and support for SNAP outreach providers impacted by federal cuts.

Data and research: Fund evaluation of outcomes of initiatives and publicly communicate findings, measure food security trends across the state, assess community-level access to food, and identify opportunities for institutions, organizations, and government agencies to partner on research initiatives on food affordability, access, and equity.



## 5) Deepening public-private partnerships (2/2)

Build capacity: Identify and fund opportunities to address capacity and infrastructure challenges of local programs and close gaps in communities where access to food and ability to afford food is greater, including efforts to increase capacity in rural areas, marginalized communities, and services provided to disproportionately impacted people, including, but not limited to, older adults, immigrants, people with disabilities, unhoused individuals, and working families.

Health system engagement: Encourage health care organizations to support access to healthy foods through screening for food insecurity and referring patients to resources, including SNAP, forming partnerships with food access organizations, and investing in community-based food security efforts.

Business engagement: Engage businesses and industries, particularly businesses that employ SNAP participants, on addressing systemic barriers to food access and promoting food security.

Food donation: Increase food donations and food rescue efforts and deepen impact of current efforts through education campaigns, expanding infrastructure, and leveraging state-level efforts, such as the Food Waste Ban.

Emergency planning: Assess lessons learned from the SNAP lapse during the federal shutdown, including strengths, challenges, opportunities, and gaps, to integrate into planning for future crises and provide education and resources to first responders on the impact of food insecurity to integrate into emergency response.



# Discussion



## Next steps

1. Task Force members send feedback on recommendations to the chairs by Thursday, Feb 5th.
2. Chairs incorporate feedback, finalize report and submit report to Governor Healey
3. Task Force and Working Groups prioritize initiatives and develop implementation plans identifying initiative owners, key stakeholders, milestones, and timelines
4. Meeting times for working groups forthcoming from chairs