

## Project Bread's FoodSource Hotline SNAP Assistance in 2012

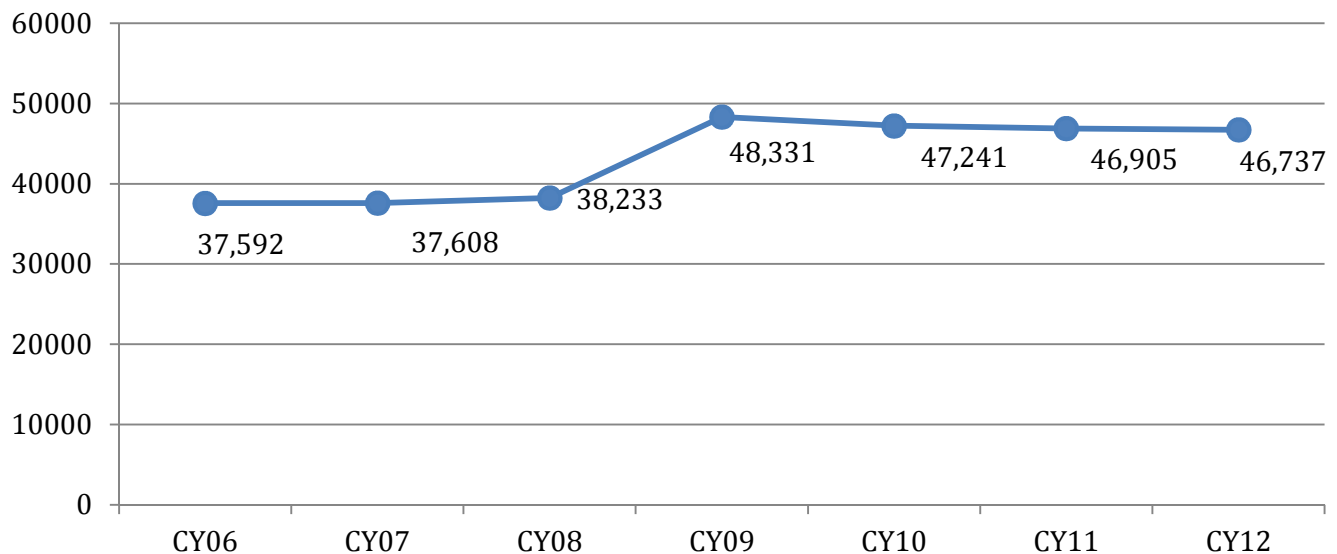
Project Bread's *FoodSource Hotline* is an information and referral service designed to connect people in need with SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) and a variety of food resources in their local community. During these difficult times Project Bread's FoodSource Hotline provides a critical link between the hungry person and the food resources they so desperately need. In 2012, the Hotline responded to 46,737 calls.

FoodSource Hotline counselors assess each caller's situation and offer the following services: connect callers to emergency food resources in their community and provide information about SNAP, school meals, summer food sites for kids, elder meals programs, and WIC. They screen callers for eligibility for SNAP and help them with the application and explain verifications needed. Their goal is to help the caller find as many resources as possible to put healthy food on the table. When relevant, they also connect callers with other resources such as utility and fuel assistance, and MassHealth. All information is kept strictly confidential.

The FoodSource Hotline can provide information in 160 different languages and the Hotline can serve the hearing impaired community through its TTY line, 1-800-377-1292. Project Bread's FoodSource Hotline is open from 8am - 7pm, Monday - Friday and 10am - 2pm on Saturdays at 1-800-645-8333.

In addition to the Hotline service, Project Bread operates the website [www.gettingSNAP.org](http://www.gettingSNAP.org) which includes the ability to live chat in English or Spanish with Project Bread's FoodSource Hotline's staff about applying for SNAP and emergency food resources.

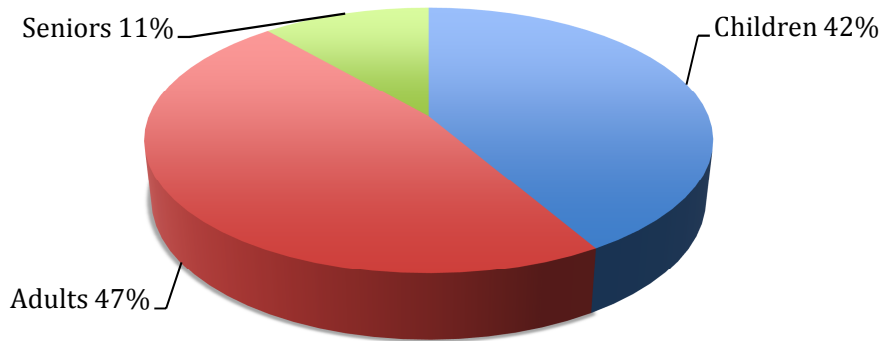
### Growth of FoodSource Hotline Calls 2006 - 2012



In 2012, the FoodSource Hotline answered 46,737 calls, representing 76,645 household members, many of whom were children.

- 47% were adults under 60 (35,861)
- 42% of the household members were children under 18 (32,111)
- 11% were elders (8,673)

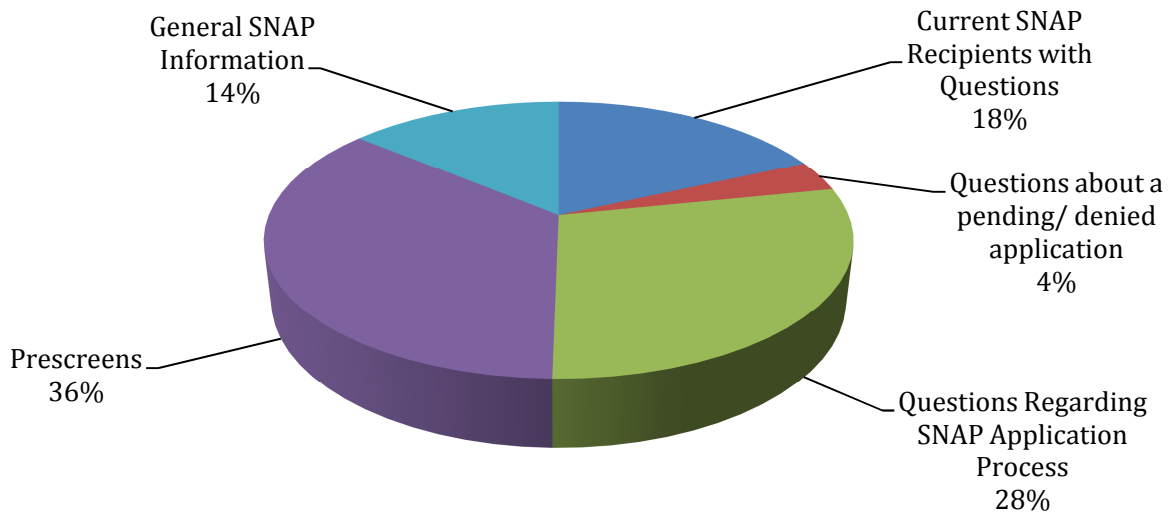
### Ages of Callers' Household Members



### Providing SNAP Information and Screening to Hotline Callers

**Total SNAP Calls:** 13,974 callers received information about SNAP. Hotline counselors prescreen callers for SNAP eligibility; if the caller is eligible, the counselors will offer to help them complete an online SNAP application.

### Types of SNAP Calls



**Screened for SNAP:** Hotline counselors screened 4,989 callers for SNAP eligibility and 70 percent of those who completed the screening were found to be eligible for SNAP benefits.

#### Household Type of Callers who were Screened for SNAP:

- 36% were Elderly Households
- 27% were Able Bodied Adults with Dependents
- 28% were Families with Children
- 10% were Disabled Households

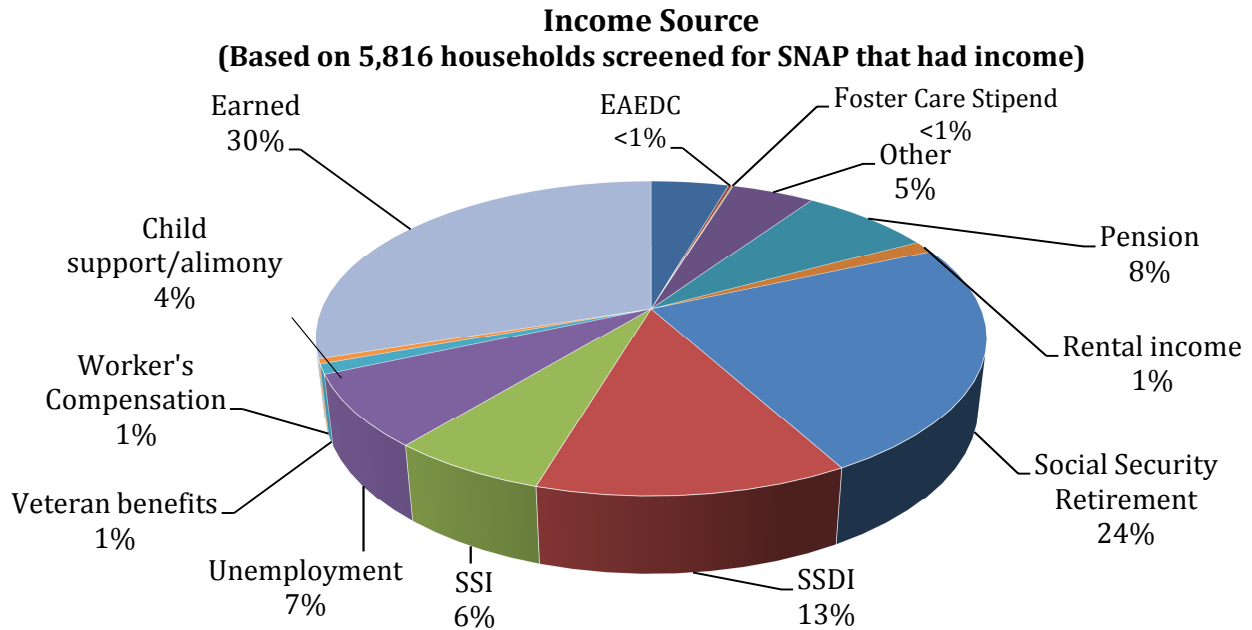
#### For callers who were found to be eligible for SNAP, Hotline counselors:

- Assisted 464 households complete an online SNAP application
- Assisted 1,853 households complete a paper SNAP application

## Income Sources of Callers who were Screened for SNAP

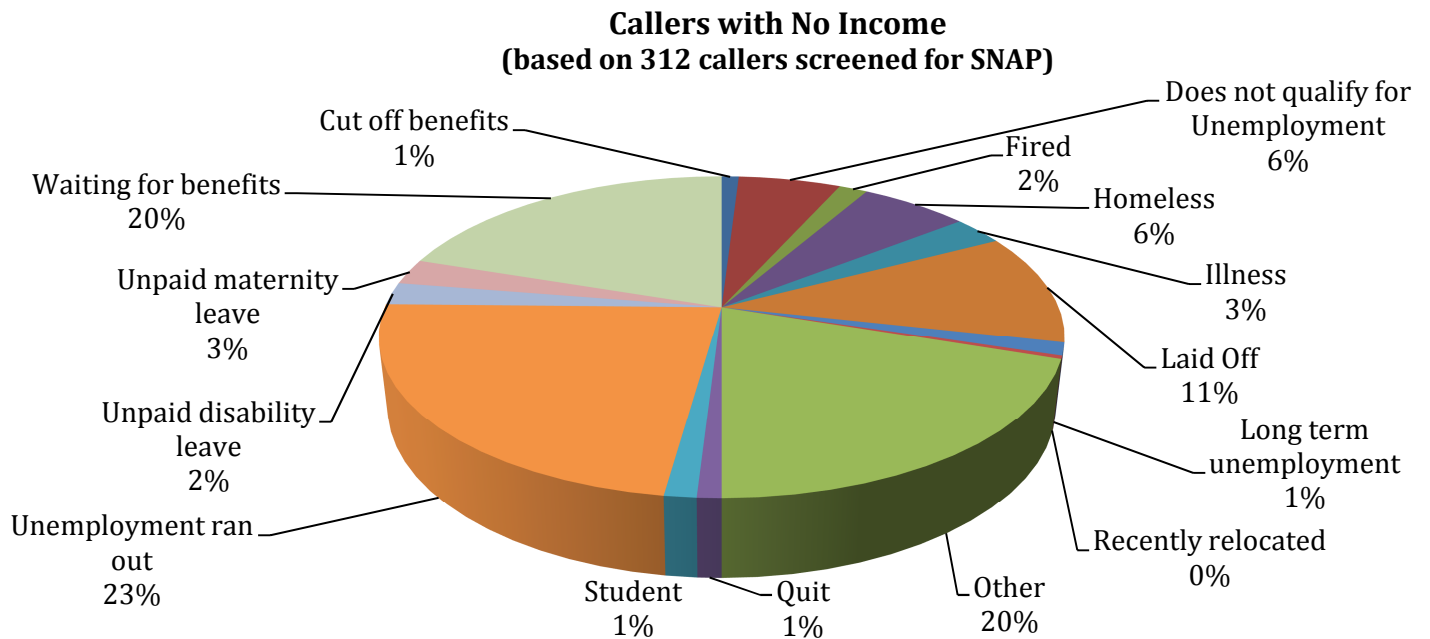
### Callers with Income:

- 30% of callers were working
- 7% of callers were receiving unemployment



**Callers with No Income:** Project Bread found 16% of callers screened for SNAP reported having no income in the past 30 days.

- 23% reported that their unemployment had recently run out
- 11% reported that they were laid off
- 20% reported that they were waiting for benefits to start (disability, unemployment)

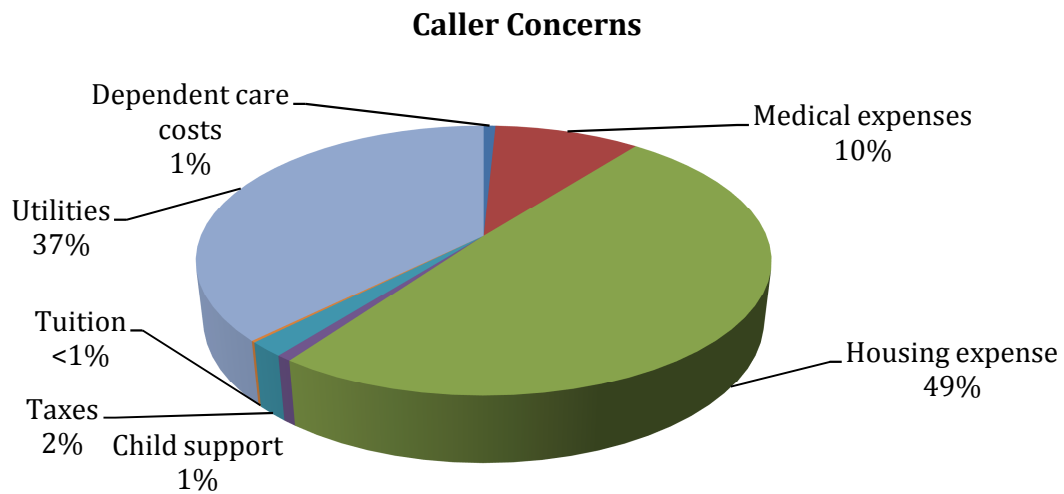


## Callers Report Concerns Meeting Basic Needs

Many Hotline callers have trouble paying for their housing, heating, medical and food expenses. For this reason, Hotline counselors offer appropriate referrals to other programs that help low income people.

### Concerns of Callers who were Screened for SNAP:

- 49% reported having difficulty paying their rent or mortgage.
- 37% reported concerns paying high utility costs
- 10% reported concerns about paying monthly medical expenses
  - Average monthly medical expense: \$219
- 1% reported concern about monthly dependent care
  - Average monthly dependent care expense: \$352



### Total Referrals

Over 48,000 referrals to resources other than SNAP were provided to callers based on their situation and the programs available.

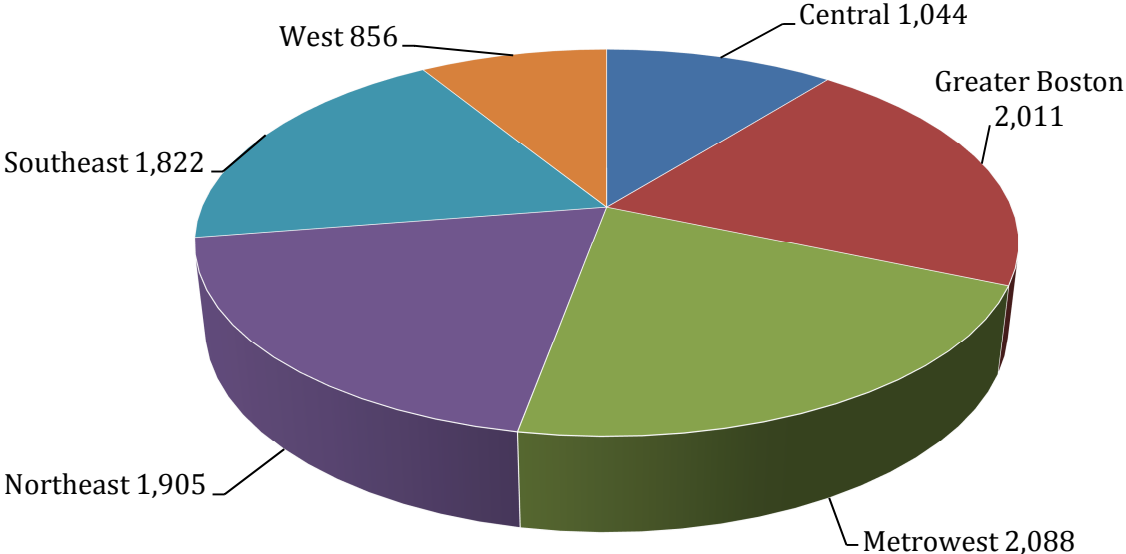
#### FoodSource Hotline Referrals: Total of 48,123

Food Resources Referrals		SNAP Referrals		Other Referrals	
Food Pantry	33,069	General DTA Information	4,043	Other State Hotline	2,583
Summer Food Service Program	379	Mail SNAP Application	1,853	Utility Assistance	660
Congregate Meal Program	207	Recipient Services	719	Fuel Assistance	158
Fair Foods	199	Medical Expense Brochure	602	Hotline-General & Crisis	117
		FSH Virtual Application	454	Elder Programs	111
		EBT/Store Helpline	110	WIC	51

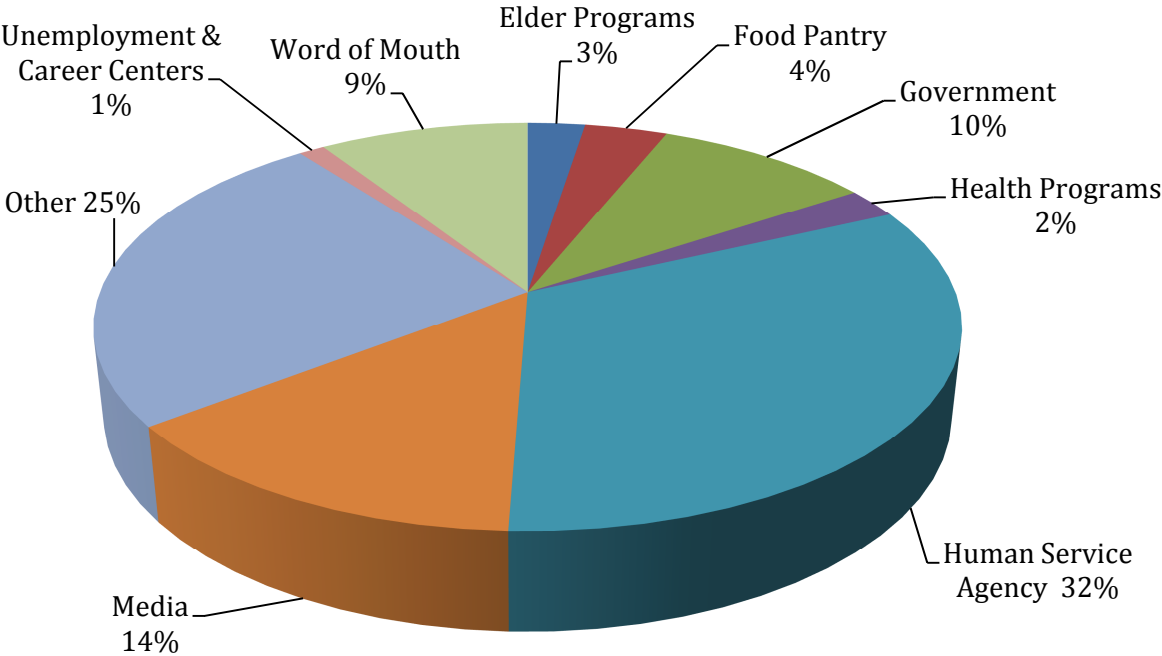
# Callers by Geographic Region and How they Heard about the Hotline

Project Bread's FoodSource Hotline helps people throughout Massachusetts put healthy food on the table.

### SNAP Calls By Region



### How Callers Hear About the FoodSource Hotline (New Callers)



## Hotline Accomplishments 2012

### Continued partnership with AARP

AARP included the FoodSource Hotline's toll-free number in an article on SNAP published in their newsletter. This generated 394 calls to the hotline of which 309 were screened for SNAP eligibility. Those callers eligible for SNAP were either assisted in the completion of an online application or mailed a paper application.

### LiveChat Feature on [www.GettingSNAP.org](http://www.GettingSNAP.org)

The LiveChat feature continued to be a successful approach to reach people with questions about the SNAP program. LiveChat is an option on Project Bread's [www.GettingSNAP.org](http://www.GettingSNAP.org) website which has information in English and Spanish about the SNAP program along with a benefits estimation calculator and an informational video about helping people apply for SNAP. People who would like more information can 'chat' with Hotline counselors by typing their questions and getting responses in real time. Hotline counselors responded to 1,881 chats in 2012.

### Summer Meal Texting Program

The Hotline partnered with Project Bread's Child Nutrition Outreach Program to respond to texts from teens looking for summer food sites. The Summer Food Service Program provides free meals during the summer to kids under 19 years old but teens are underrepresented at the programs. This texting service helps teens find a meal site near them and the hours of operation. The Hotline responded to 48 requests for information during the summer.

## Stories from Hotline callers as told to our counselors

*A Boston man who had called the Hotline regularly for two year for a referral to a pantry told me that the food he received monthly at the pantry was especially helpful now because his hours at work had been cut. When I asked if he received SNAP and he said "no", I screened him for SNAP. His household of three (he, his wife and five year old child) appeared to be eligible. I mailed him an application along with information on the Fair Foods program. He told me that his five year old daughter would soon be entering Kindergarten at a public school so I mentioned that she might be eligible for free or reduced meals as well.*

*I got a call from a woman staying in Medford. She started the conversation by telling me that she, her husband, and their four kids were homeless and staying with a friend. Her husband lost his job six months ago after suffering a massive heart attack. She was the only one working and her income alone wasn't enough to pay the mortgage so they lost their home. The person they are staying with said they have to leave within two weeks. I told her what information our hotline provides and what we could help her with. She is currently receiving SNAP but wanted to know if there are any other programs that she could sign up for. I gave her four food pantries located in Medford and also told her about school meals for her children. I gave her information on family shelters and housing programs.*

*A single dad of three children called from Brockton. He said he is self employed but his business is doing poorly as his clients have not been paying their bills. He told me that he and his wife are divorced and he has full custody of their children. I was able to screen him for SNAP and from the information he gave me I estimated that he would qualify for about \$180 per month in SNAP benefits. He is already receiving WIC for his two year old, which he says helps a great deal. I gave him information on the Summer Food Service Program in Brockton and on the school meals program.*

*A woman from Holbrook called because her husband's unemployment benefits had been exhausted and he wasn't eligible for an extension. They have three children that are under 18. The mother works per diem at a local hospital but says that income alone will not help pay the mortgage for the month. She told me that a year ago she had applied for SNAP but was categorically eligible for \$0. She had an application on hand to re-apply but wanted information on any other programs. I was able to connect her to a food pantry in her area and the Summer Food Service Program for her children.*