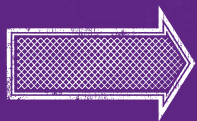


FRESH IDEAS

**PROJECT
BREAD**
A FRESH APPROACH
TO ENDING HUNGERSM



OUR 2013 STATUS REPORT ON HUNGER IN MASSACHUSETTS



**“Too much month,
too little money.”**

—PARTICIPANT AT COMMUNITY MEALS PROGRAM

Unemployment in Massachusetts is down. Productivity is on the rise. Retail sales are increasing steadily. All signs confirm that the recession that has gripped our state since 2008 has ended, and good economic news is making headlines.

But Project Bread has some different news to share.

 CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

IN THIS ISSUE

✖ **2**

Letter from the director

✖ **3**

What hunger looks like in 2013:
a status report

✖ **6**

At highest risk: children and
disabled people

✖ **7**

Happenings

✖ **8**

Partner spotlight: Whole Foods



Letter from THE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends:

For most of us, hunger is a fleeting need we can satisfy quickly, much like when we dive under water and then come up for air. We barely give it a second thought.

But hunger isn't fleeting for 11.4% of Massachusetts's households: the 700,000 children and adults who can't confidently predict where their next meal is coming from. The federal government tells us that the Massachusetts rate of food insecurity rose almost 40% during the Great Recession—and for now, it appears to be fixed in that position.

Statistics are an important tool to help us gauge the need in our state, but the experiences of the people behind the numbers mean much more to Project Bread. I recently had a chat with a man sitting down to eat lunch at a community meals program, and he told me, “You can call it food insecurity. I say it's too much month and too little money...and after the first time it bit me, I always feared it would get me again. And it did.”

The life he's led is a hard one, and it's only gotten harder as he's grown older. Trained as a manufacturing technician, the decline of good jobs in industry eventually forced him into the low-wage labor force. But he enjoys eating lunch at a church-sponsored meals program. The volunteers know him well, and he feels like a member of the community.

Twenty or twenty-five years ago, only people at the margins lived with the fear that economic change could throw their lives into crisis—but the Great Recession changed that. The “middle” contracted and the “margins” expanded. People who once held good jobs saw their paychecks disappear as companies were shuttered, sold, or relocated. Finding a replacement job in a decent pay sector is now a significant challenge.

The job sectors that have shown real growth in Massachusetts—retail sales, hospitality, and leisure—are known for their high percentage of low-wage positions. Even though unemployment has declined in some areas of the state, many people still cannot earn enough money to make ends meet. These people are stuck on the margins, and there are more of them experiencing food insecurity than ever before. The structure of our economy has fundamentally changed...and the income gap in Massachusetts has become a chasm.

So how can we solve a big and complex problem like hunger? Project Bread believes that effective solutions begin with a better understanding of what hungry people *need*:

- They need to be seen as a diverse group, with different situations and experiences.
- If they are working full time, they need to earn enough money—a real living wage—to pay for the basics: food, shelter, and transportation.
- They need access to skills and information in order to budget effectively, and stretch their food dollars.
- They need convenient and predictable support to maintain their capacity to feed their families; e.g. SNAP, Bounty Bucks coupons, and universal access to healthy school meals.
- They need to feel “normal”: to shop in the same stores as everyone else, to eat alongside everyone else at school...to receive food in ways that preserve their dignity.

Most importantly, people need help anchored by hope.

Everyone stuck at the margins wants a pathway out of their circumstances and a chance to create a better life. And we have the ability to offer them that hope, if we're willing to think and act beyond traditional anti-hunger solutions. To start, we should stand as one in favor of an increased and indexed minimum wage in Massachusetts. And we need to join with others to build a more robust regional food system—and leverage it to increase access to healthy food.

We need a range of solutions equal to the range of challenges: solutions that make dignity and self-sufficiency a priority, and incorporate the knowledge and resiliency of the people and communities most deeply affected by food insecurity and hunger. When we invest in people, the economy, and the regional food system, we find common ground to achieve the common good. Project Bread is taking the lead.

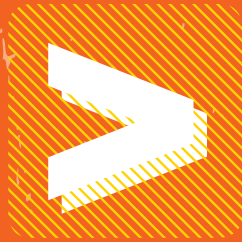
Sincerely,

Ellen Parker
Executive Director

**You can help children in need to grow to their fullest potential:
give today to support our school meals programs at www.projectbread.org.**

31

MONDAY



“Too much month, too little money.”

More than 700,000 people in the Commonwealth struggle with food insecurity—a number almost 40% higher than it was prior to the recession, and almost 80% higher than it was at the beginning of the last decade.*

Food insecurity is a very real problem here. Which means the right action can make a huge difference.

On the following pages, we take a look at the state of hunger in Massachusetts—and at the wide range of resources and solutions Project Bread is creating, funding, and facilitating to meet the needs of individuals and communities.

What hunger looks like in 2013: a status report

You’ve likely heard the good news somewhere: unemployment is down. Productivity is up. These are the indicators some use to confirm that the recession that hit Massachusetts in 2008 is finally over.

But for hundreds of thousands of families in Massachusetts, their struggle shows no signs of letting up. Our minimum wage hasn’t kept pace with our cost of living, which means people who are employed full-time at low-wage jobs cannot meet their basic needs—or the needs of their families. In fact, more than 200,000 children in our state have a parent who makes less than \$11 an hour.*

While some residents are now financially stable, others have tapped out their savings, maxed out their credit...and find themselves at the end of their rope. As a result, the rate of food insecurity is still almost 40% higher than it was before the recession started—and almost 80% higher than at the start of our new century.

In the United States, families with children headed by a single mother have a food insecurity rate (35.4%) that is more than twice the national food insecurity average.*

In 2010, researchers estimated that the healthcare cost of hunger in the United States was \$130.5 billion.*

Most of us know the cost of living in our own communities—a glance at our checking account tells the tale—but what about the next town over? What does housing cost? What does the average grocery bill look like? And do the available jobs nearby pay enough to survive and thrive there?

Because Project Bread works across the state, it's important for us to understand the economic climate in each community; that's how we match the types of solutions and programs to meet needs in particular places.

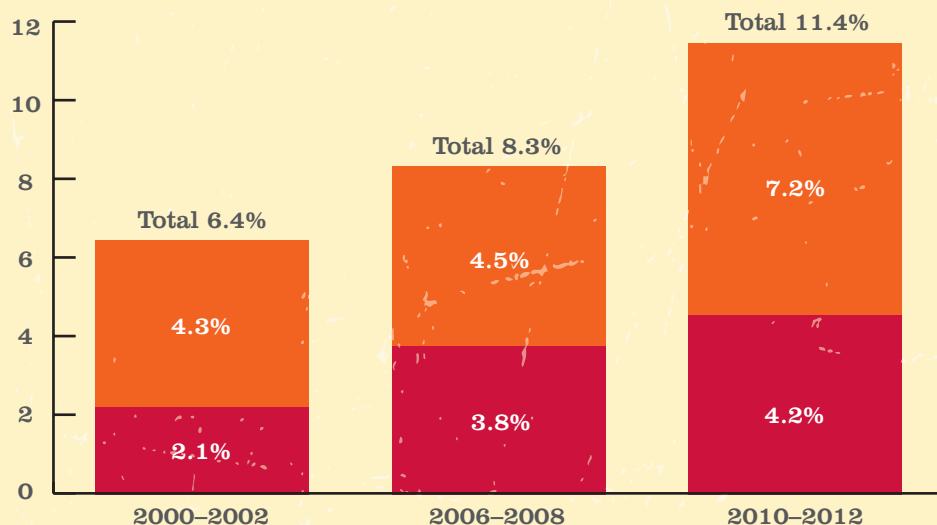
On the following pages, we give you a glimpse into the economic reality of three households in three different communities—each of which struggles with food insecurity. Their stories are diverse, their needs are unique, and their challenges call for an array of solutions—all in all, a fresh approach to anti-hunger work.

Project Bread has found again and again that the most effective way to overcome hunger is to offer a set of helpful solutions, woven together. Integrated, these solutions can stabilize the lives of low-income individuals and families—and ultimately strengthen the communities in which they live. 🍞

In 2011, 8.3% of seniors over the age of 60 were identified as food insecure. This is twice the rate in 2001. The prevalence of food insecurity was higher among seniors caring for grandchildren and those under the age of 69.*

Food insecurity and hunger

In 2012, 11.4% of Massachusetts households were found to be food insecure (or to have low food security). These households include over 700,000 adults and children.



The food insecurity rate in Massachusetts remains nearly 40% higher than it was before the 2008 recession. (Source: *American Community Survey*, US Census Bureau, 2012; *Household Food Security in the United States in 2012*, USDA-ERR No. 155, 2013; and *Household Food Security in the United States in 2011*, USDA-ERR No. 058, 2012.)

Low food security Very low food security

The stories behind the statistics

WORCESTER: "THE HEART OF THE COMMONWEALTH"

- Unemployment rate: 9.3%
- Average monthly rent for a 2-bedroom apartment: \$966
- Monthly food bill: \$564
- Hourly rate an adult would need to earn to support a family of three without relying on any government assistance: \$27.59 (over \$57,000 a year)*



Sam's story

Sam has worked full-time at the fast-food restaurant three blocks from his house for five years. Two years ago, he became

an assistant manager, and now makes \$11 an hour. He has a baby daughter with his girlfriend—and his girlfriend recently lost her job. Although he has health insurance for himself through his work, his girlfriend and daughter have just applied for MassHealth. Until last month, Sam and his family were living with his parents—a huge help in making ends meet—but now his parents are moving to New Hampshire. Sam is anxious about leaving with them and facing the pressure of finding a new job, but the cost of living is so high in Worcester that he can't support his young family with less than \$23,000 a year.

Sam's solutions

By the time Sam and his family arrived at the local health center for their son's "Well Baby" visit, it had been several months since they had been on their own. Their son's clinician, trained to identify telltale signs of food insecurity, knew that the family was struggling to get by. She gave them a \$25 food voucher (funded by Project Bread) they could use that day to purchase groceries, and the number for Project Bread's FoodSource Hotline to connect with some long-term support. When Sam called the Hotline later that day, the counselor connected them to three resources:

- She referred Sam's girlfriend and his son to the WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) program to receive supplemental food benefits and nutrition education.
- She helped Sam apply for SNAP (food stamps) over the phone. He was prescreened for \$200 a month in benefits.
- She told Sam about the Regional Environmental Council (REC) program in Worcester which offers a mobile farmers' market and double value coupons—enabling Sam to double his SNAP purchases.

Sam is still anxious about supporting his family, but he is relieved to have connected with Project Bread, and his resulting access to WIC, SNAP, and REC. With these resources in place, Sam can ensure his family has enough healthy food to grow and thrive. That doesn't mean he's happy with his economic situation, however; though Sam works full time, he's still worried about falling behind each month.

He's given a lot of thought to how problems like his could be solved—and has some pretty good ideas to pass on. That's why Sam now actively supports legislation to increase and index the minimum wage in Massachusetts—an action Project Bread encourages everyone to do.

EAST BOSTON: "THE FIVE ISLANDS"

- Boston unemployment rate: 7.6%
- Average monthly rent for a 2-bedroom apartment: \$1,444
- Monthly food bill: \$752
- Hourly rate an adult would need to earn to support a family of three without relying on any government assistance: \$25.70 (nearly \$54,000 a year)*



Maria's story

Eating well has always been important to Maria. She loved to cook with her mother and grandmother growing up, and has tried to pass down her knowledge and skills to her own children. She used to work as a baggage handler at nearby Boston Logan Airport, but after a back injury, has been unable to perform her duties. She is receiving disability benefits while she recovers.

Prior to her injury, Maria was able to support herself and her two children in a modest apartment in East Boston, and stretch her grocery budget with good deals on produce at local markets. But the disability benefits don't stretch far enough—and most months, Maria simply runs out of food.

Maria's solutions

Although she was embarrassed to have to ask for help, a close friend suggested that Maria call Project Bread's FoodSource Hotline. The counselor connected Maria with three resources:

- She helped Maria apply for SNAP for her whole family over the phone. They now receive \$180 a month.
- The counselor reminded Maria to have her children take advantage of free breakfast and lunch at school. A Project Bread chef is training the staff to make healthier, tastier meals that use fresh food, in partnership with the Massachusetts Farm to School Project.

- Finally, she connected Maria to the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program at the East Boston Neighborhood Health Center. Maria can use her SNAP card to purchase a subsidized weekly share of vegetables from Farmer Dave's in Dracut, right alongside doctors, nurses, and community members purchasing full-price shares.

Maria can once again cook affordable, healthy, and fresh food for her children (that she purchases where others shop, too) through Project Bread's market-based solutions—preserving her dignity, and alleviating her fears about taking "charity".

WESTFIELD: "THE BRICK CITY"

- Unemployment rate: 8.8%
- Average monthly rent for a 2-bedroom apartment: \$935
- Monthly food bill: \$632
- Hourly rate an adult would need to earn to support a family of three without relying on any government assistance: \$23.83 (nearly \$50,000 a year)*



Gloria's story

Gloria works hard, and takes great pride in providing for herself and her two boys. Now that her sons are in school, she has been able to come off public assistance and work during the day. At night, she does medical coding and

In a recent study released by the Universities of California at Berkeley and Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, researchers found that 46% of fast-food workers in Massachusetts (two-thirds of whom are adults) are both eligible for and relied on \$173 million in SNAP, Medicaid, and the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) to try and meet their basic expenses each month in 2011.*

billing online to earn extra money. During the school year, Gloria can pay all of her bills without falling short—and that means a lot to her.

But in the summer, when the boys have no school during the day, things get more challenging. Summer camps and child care can run up to \$500 a week for both boys, and Gloria just doesn't have that kind of money. By the end of July, Gloria usually runs out of money for food, and August doesn't look any more promising. How can she make ends meet at such a tough time of year?

Gloria's solutions

Before this past summer began, Gloria's friend gave her the number for Project Bread's FoodSource Hotline. The counselor referred her to the summer camp program at Westfield's Boys & Girls Club. Not only was financial assistance available for the boys to participate in the program, but a healthy breakfast and lunch would be included in their schedule each day.

Project Bread helped the city of Westfield access the Summer Food Service Program: it provides free, nutritious meals to children who rely on school breakfasts and lunches during the academic year to get enough to eat. These meals are often served up with enrichment activities like camp programs. Gloria's boys found a safe and fun place to thrive and grow during the summer—and they would be more ready than ever before to dive back into classes in the fall. 🍷

A popular belief is that minimum and low-wage jobs are predominantly held by teenagers, but over 200,000 children in Massachusetts have a parent who earns less than \$11 an hour.*

***For a complete list of the data sources used for this report, please visit www.projectbread.org/statusreport.**

A closer look at two vulnerable populations

If you're listening to the debates in Washington, or tuning into talk radio during the ride to work, you've heard the discussions about public benefits. Too often, these conversations are peppered with anecdotes "proving" that many hungry people are actually able to work and should be self-sufficient.

But a different picture emerges when we look at the populations at the highest risk of hunger: low-income children and disabled adults. They are more likely than others in the wider population to live in food insecure households.

Their special and distinct vulnerability commands our attention and concern for two reasons. There's the need to understand the level of deprivation that they risk—and to gain insight into strategies for prevention.

A recent USDA report examining the relationship between food insecurity and disability revealed stunning information. Across the nation, disabled working age adults experience food insecurity **at nearly three times** the rate of non-disabled working age people.*

In addition, disabled people experience food insecurity in its most severe form. 38% of them experience very low food security; that is, they regularly run out of food and miss meals.*

16.5% of Massachusetts children live in food insecure households.*

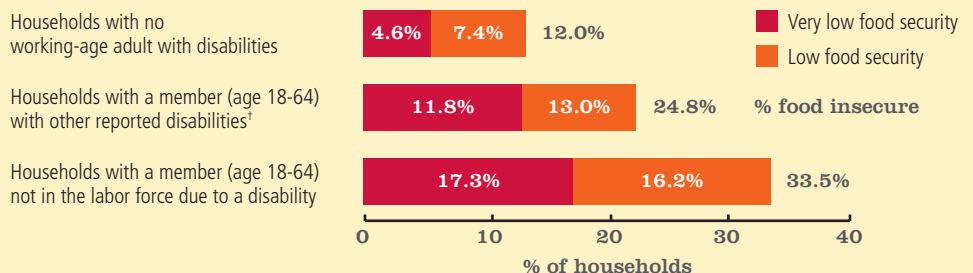
Children, especially young children, in low-income families are also at high risk of hunger. The most recent report on household food security found 20% of American children to be food insecure. In Massachusetts, the story is not quite as grim, but with 16.5% of our children living in food insecure households, we have work to do.*

What does prevention look like for these two populations? This year Project Bread will be taking a closer look at strategies to meet the particular needs of disabled adults living in Massachusetts. For some, community meals programs are a time-tested way of getting healthy meals, served up by people who care. Project Bread funds these programs statewide. And as an early and continuing supporter of *Community Servings* in Boston, we've also seen firsthand the great benefit of home-delivered meals for adults with disabilities.

Children always rank high on Project Bread's list of priorities. Through the Chefs in School program, we've pioneered a cafeteria-based system of preparing and serving healthy school meals for low-income children. With a focus on younger children, Project Bread's Chefs in Head Start works with both young children and their parents, and combines cooking lessons for the adults and healthy lunches for the Head Start children.

We know that there's no one-size-fits-all solution to end hunger. It's important to know the facts, and question the conventional wisdom. The most vulnerable people in Massachusetts are counting on us to make progress.

Food insecurity is high among households that include adults with disabilities



† Other reported disabilities are hearing, vision, mental, physical, self-care, or going-outside-home disability, with no indication that the disability prevented employment. (Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from 2009 and 2010 *Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement*.)

Happenings



Cooking with Chef Guy in Dorchester

Project Bread's Chef Guy is teaching a cooking class for teens at Dorchester Academy this fall. This seven-week course, made possible by funding from the Treffler Foundation, will show the students how to prepare healthy *and* tasty food on a budget—complete with guest appearances from local chefs! Dishes on the course menu include sweet corn and black bean salad, Chinese dumplings, and sweet potato fries. The final week of the course will even include a guided supermarket tour, to encourage smart grocery shopping skills.



Striking out hunger

Willem Offerhaus of iBasis and Ellen Parker of Project Bread recently traded their office desks for lanes, pins, and fun—all toward the goal of ending hunger. Project Bread's 5th annual Strike Out Hunger Bowl-a-thon was sponsored by iBasis at Lucky Strikes/Jillian's, where participants bowled alongside Team JAM'N 94.5, and raised more than \$20,000 to provide people in need with access to healthy food.



Project Bread and Let's Talk About Food

Over the first weekend of October, Project Bread took part in the LET'S TALK ABOUT FOOD FESTIVAL in Copley Square. On Friday night, Ellen Parker was part of a panel that explored issues around food, ethics, and the community. On Saturday, Project Bread co-produced A FRESH APPROACH TO ENDING HUNGER, showcasing partner organizations who are working on innovative ways to address hunger in the community. Of the collaboration, Louisa Kasdon, Founder and CEO of LET'S TALK ABOUT FOOD said, "We were so thrilled to have Project Bread as our partner at the LET'S TALK ABOUT FOOD FESTIVAL. Project Bread has incomparable depth and network in the communities and organizations that focus on hunger and food justice issues. The program that they put together allowed thousands of our fellow citizens to take a fresh, deep look at hunger and to get more engaged in finding solutions."

The event also included cooking demonstrations and taste tests featuring Project Bread's School Food Chef Guy Koppe, Chef Didi Emmons, and the Massachusetts Farm to School Project.

Mark your calendars for the 46th annual Walk for Hunger!

On Sunday, May 4, tens of thousands of people from all walks of life will raise both hunger awareness and much-needed dollars to help combat hunger in our state. Join us as a Walker, sponsor, or both! As the largest public fundraising walk in the Commonwealth, the WALK is a powerful example of what's possible when we join forces to create, advocate for, and support meaningful change.

FRESH IDEAS



2013 Annual Status
Report on Hunger

**PROJECT
BREAD**
A FRESH APPROACH
TO ENDING HUNGERSM

145 Border Street, East Boston, MA 02128-1903



Please help us meet the needs of the increasing number of hungry families by giving the most generous gift you can today.

Every dollar counts.

You make our vital work possible—and you play a critical role in our mission to alleviate, prevent, and ultimately end hunger in Massachusetts.

DONATE NOW AT WWW.PROJECTBREAD.ORG

Whole Foods Market shoppers are ready to “Give Bread”



It's that time of year again! Whole Foods Market is helping Project Bread provide for more people in need this the holiday season. During the month of December, shoppers at Whole Foods Markets across the state can support Project Bread through the “Give Bread” program. Shoppers can add donation

coupons in the amount of \$2 or \$5 to their grocery bill. In addition to “Give Bread,” Whole Foods Market sells Project Bread Holiday Cards throughout the holiday season in their Whole Body section. With the generous support of Whole Foods Market and its shoppers, Project Bread is able to support a wide range of hunger solutions. Thank you Whole Foods Market for your continued support! 