Hunger in Massachusetts

We all need to eat. Food is the most basic of human needs. In Massachusetts—one of the wealthiest states in the country—1 in 10 people go without enough to eat. Despite our strong economy, more than 720,000 people in our Commonwealth are struggling to afford an adequate diet. Here’s why.

MAJOR FACTORS: HIGH-COST OF LIVING

- **MINIMUM WAGE IN MA IS**
  
  $12/hr

  A living wage for a single adult in Massachusetts is $13.39. 20% of the Massachusetts workforce earns minimum wage.

- **UTILITY COSTS IN MA ARE**
  
  66% higher than the national average

  A worker earning minimum wage would need to work over 80 hours per week to afford a one-bedroom apartment at fair market rent in Massachusetts.

- **MASSACHUSETTS HAS THE 4th most expensive employer-based health insurance costs in the country**

- **HIGH COST OF RENT IN MA**

  Massachusetts has the most expensive child care in the country.

FOOD INSECURITY HAS LASTING CONSEQUENCES

Kids need healthy food to grow. Lacking access to an adequate diet diminishes their physical and emotional health and compromises their ability to be a successful student. Trapping many in the vicious cycle of food-insecurity and poverty.

- 167,450 children in Massachusetts—1 in 8 children—do not have enough food to eat at home
- 23% of low-income parents say they have cut the size of their children’s meals due to lack of money
- 32% of households that receive SNAP benefits have children in them
  
  (91% of all SNAP recipients in MA are children, adults 60 or older, or people with a disability)
- Food-insecure children are 31% more likely to be hospitalized than children who have adequate access to healthy food
- Half of all public school students eat the lunch served to them in their school’s cafeteria each day—they are a vital source of nutrition
- 15% of working parents in MA earn minimum wage. 255,000 children will benefit from MA minimum wage increasing from $11 to $12 in 2019