



Since our inception in May 2000, the Massachusetts Medical Society and Alliance Charitable Foundation has supported more than 125 community-based organizations across the Commonwealth. By investing in physicians and the communities they serve, we have helped to leverage their knowledge and leadership, as well as fill a major gap in care and services. ***Please consider joining us as we work to improve the health and well-being of people across Massachusetts by making a tax-deductible contribution today!***

## GRANT SPOTLIGHT

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines food insecurity as the lack of consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy life. The USDA's 2018 *Household Food Insecurity Report*, released in September 2019, reports an average food insecurity rate of 9.3% in Massachusetts, up from an average of 8.3% 10 years prior. Research has linked food insecurity to negative health outcomes and health disparities. Poor nutrition can increase the risk of developing health problems, including diabetes and hypertension. Food insecurity also exacerbates the complex challenges of managing a chronic disease. A report from the Greater Boston Food Bank estimates health-related costs attributable to food insecurity in the state of Massachusetts to have been more than \$1.9 billion in 2016. This being so, the Foundation is proud to support organizations across the Commonwealth working to reduce food insecurity and improve health outcomes.



Through the Farm to Future program, apprentices gain a comprehensive understanding of sustainable agriculture and our local food system, including skills in growing and harvesting produce, farm-to-table culinary arts, and the marketing and sales of produce. Ten paid apprenticeships were available in 2019 to underserved youth.

**Farm and Community Collaborative** in Lakeville was founded in 2018 and connects farms and community organizations to alleviate food insecurity through agriculture apprenticeships that improve access to farm fresh produce for the underserved populations within the Gateway cities of Brockton, Fall River, New Bedford, Taunton, and surrounding communities. Accessing fresh produce is a challenge for many families, particularly those living in low-income neighborhoods, communities of color, and urban areas. The USDA's Food Environment Atlas indicates that 31% of people in Bristol County, 35% in Norfolk County, and 45% in Plymouth County had low access to a supermarket or large grocery store. Working with farm partners, the Collaborative will donate 10,000 lbs. of produce to PACE's Emergency Food Bank in 2019.



Just Roots volunteers at a local food clinic.

**Just Roots** in Greenfield is the provider of the largest low-income community-supported agriculture (CSA) farm share program in Massachusetts and an innovator in the food access and health equity field. Its program partners include the Community Health Center of Franklin County, the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, the Center for Self Reliance, Low Income Housing Developments of Greenfield, and the People's Medicine Project. Together, they will reach residents living in low-income housing developments in Franklin County and provide a Local Food Clinic focused on connecting residents with local food and health resources aimed at addressing food insecurity and building the habits of health.



## Supporting Physicians, Patients, and Communities

### Our Neighbors' Table (ONT)

in Amesbury is partnering with Children's Health Care (CHC) pediatric practice to fully integrate food insecurity screening into all well-visits. In northeastern Essex County, one out of eight children is food insecure and while high-quality fresh food is available, it is unaffordable to many families. Those struggling to put nutritious food on their children's plates are identified and

offered options for support and ways to improve health outcomes, including the opportunity to "shop" at ONT's market, which offers a wide variety of fresh produce, milk, eggs, meat, pasta, soup, juice, and cereal — everything needed to stock a pantry and refrigerator. Additionally, a Food Resource Advocate discusses eligibility and connects families with resources like SNAP, WIC, and free/reduced lunch from school.



CHC's Dr. Lungren and patient Grace.

**Lovin' Spoonfuls** was founded in 2010 in Greater Boston and is dedicated to facilitating the rescue and distribution of healthy, fresh food that would otherwise be discarded by utilizing a direct distribution system to pick up excess perishable food from grocery retailers, farms, CSAs, wholesalers, and hospitality sites and deliver those items to local shelters, food pantries, and crisis centers within the same day. In 2016 the model was replicated successfully in MetroWest. Funding from the Foundation supports replication in Hampden County. The model not only increases fresh foods being offered, but also plays an important role in reducing food waste. Americans waste approximately 40 percent of food that is produced or 1,400 calories per person per day. Eliminating food waste would go a long way to eliminating hunger and malnutrition.



Amherst Survival Center's food pantry is open to residents in 13 surrounding towns four days a week and the third Saturday of the month.

**Amherst Survival Center's** Free Health Program forges meaningful partnerships for health improvement while offering medical care to underserved/uninsured individuals. The center hosts an array of free, comprehensive basic needs programs that strengthen food security, health, community engagement, and social connectedness for over 6,000 individuals annually. Additionally, through its outreach campaign, ProjectHungeRX, the center provides training and tools to local providers to support them in assessing their patients for food insecurity, and in making referrals to local food and nutrition programs.

**South Middlesex Opportunity Council's (SMOC)** Food Security and Nutrition Education Program educates families residing in their transitional housing for the homeless in MetroWest in nutrition, healthy meal planning, and safe food preparation in an effort to meet the overall goals of improving health, recovery, employability, and housing. SMOC organized and manages the Greater Framingham Hunger Network, a partnership of over 29 community agencies involved in advocacy work to reduce hunger, increase food security, and enhance nutrition for those in need in the MetroWest community.

**The Massachusetts Food is Medicine State Plan** provides a blueprint to building a health care system that truly recognizes the critical relationship between food and health and ensures access to the nutrition services our state residents need to prevent, manage, and treat diet-related illness. <https://foodismedicinema.org/>

To learn more about the Foundation's activities or to contribute, visit [www.mmsfoundation.org](http://www.mmsfoundation.org) or call Jennifer Day at (781) 434-7044.



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