



WINTER/SPRING 2025

METROWEST FOOD COLLABORATIVE NEWSLETTER

Dear MetroWest Community,

It has been a difficult few months and I know many of us are acutely feeling the weight of what federal attacks on food access and health equity mean for our communities. In the face of this, at our recent annual Food Access Summit, we were heartened to be surrounded by many of the passionate, brilliant leaders and legislative champions who are working alongside us to protect our neighbors from harm. And, as we continue these federal fights, we were reminded of the current opportunities to bolster SNAP and HIP here in MA.

For Giuliana and me, an important bright spot is that we are also headed into warmer and sunnier months, which means more events and chances to get out into the community - and community is what our work is all about. I hope you are all finding your bright spots too.

With gratitude,

Kali Coughlan
MetroWest Food Collaborative Manager



In the News

- [See Project Bread's motivating piece](#) on **how we stay focused and steadfast in our work to prevent hunger** while federal nutrition programs are under attack.
- [House Democrats held a hearing](#) and [Senator Markey held a virtual meeting with MA food advocates](#) on **how proposed Republican federal budget cuts would impact the vitally important SNAP program and how we fight back.**
- Despite strong advocacy, HIP cuts are still in effect since December and the [FY26 Governor's Budget](#) only includes \$18.8M for this program. **See the Advocacy section of this newsletter for more on how to help push for full HIP funding** to ensure the strength of this program into the future.

MWFC UPDATES

SCENES FROM THE FOOD ACCESS SUMMIT

This year's Food Access Summit, held at Framingham State University (FSU) on March 19th, focused on the current federal landscape and the proposals that threaten food access for our communities. These include a proposed \$230 billion in cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) over 10 years, as well as federal grant freezes impacting schools and farms.

During the Summit, FSU Provost Kristen Porter-Utley, State Representative Priscila Sousa, and keynote speaker Congressman Jim McGovern spoke about the **state of food access initiatives and policy from the hyper-local to the federal level**, as well as what low-income people, students, farmers, and immigrant families are facing. We also heard from Becca Miller of the MA Food System Collaborative, Vicky Negus of Massachusetts Law Reform Institute (MLRI), and Lino Covarrubias of JFS of MetroWest on a panel facilitated by Alex DePalo of Open Table about **what MA can do to break down barriers and protect SNAP and HIP**. The data and thoughtful analysis shared during the event can support us all in our advocacy efforts.

[Please check out the full recording linked here.](#)

The event was made possible by many amazing partnerships and individuals, including Megan Mayer of FSU who helped secure the space, as well as the MetroWest Food Collaborative's Advocacy Working Group members, who took on a significant role in planning. And importantly, we have Lanie Silva of MetroWest Shared Public Health Services to thank for [capturing the morning in photos](#).



Follow us on social media! →



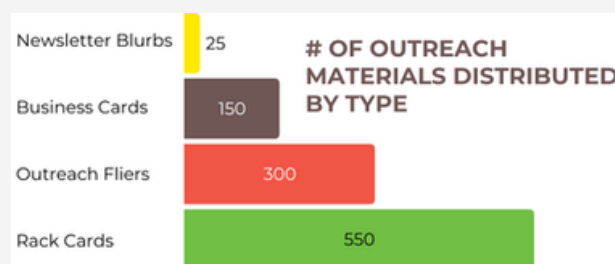
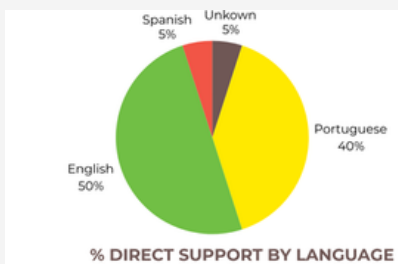
MWFC UPDATES

SNAP & WIC OUTREACH HIGHLIGHTS

Giuliana is more than six months into her role as the MWFC's SNAP & WIC Outreach Coordinator, thanks to a grant we secured last year from the MetroWest Health Foundation to launch an **outreach pilot that addresses the regional SNAP and WIC Gaps**. She has focused efforts so far in Framingham, Hudson, and Milford.

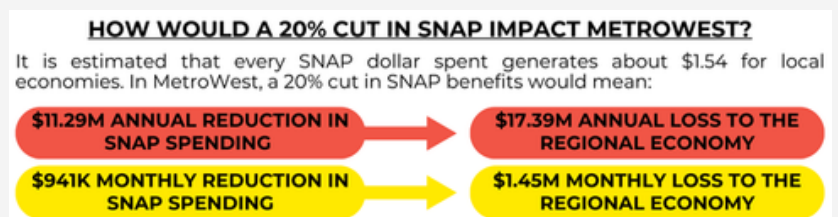
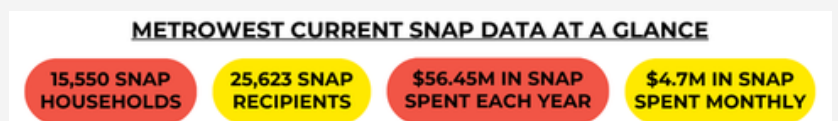


Here is a glimpse at our outreach by the numbers, which is [available as a full PDF one-pager on our website](#). Efforts have included tabling at partner sites, receiving partner referrals, and distributing tri-lingual outreach materials. Throughout, we have learned from the community about what works best and our Community Engagement Working Group has provided strategic direction.



SNAP/WIC IN METROWEST: DATA & UPDATES

During the Summit, we also shared some data on SNAP in MetroWest. [You can find the full breakdown by municipality here](#), to support your advocacy.



Two important SNAP/WIC items:

- **Starting 5/1, MA is required to re-instate a federal 3-month time limit for certain SNAP recipients ages 18 through 54**, in what are known as ABAWD Work Rules. (*ABAWD = "Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents"*.) However, many people are exempt. See an upcoming MRLI training opportunity on the next page to learn more.
- Exciting news! **All Massachusetts WIC families can now use their WIC Card to buy WIC-eligible food online at Walmart** for pick-up or delivery at: www.walmart.com/wic *Delivery/shipment fees may apply and are not covered.

Interested in joining a working group?

Email us at: MetroWestFoodCollaborative@gmail.com

PARTNER UPDATES

SPOONFULS APRIL FOOD WASTE CHALLENGE

Did you know that 237 million tons of food in the U.S. goes unsold or uneaten every year? This Earth Month, you can do your part to change that. Spoonfuls is back with the 2025 edition of their Food Waste Challenge! Learn more, commit to the challenge, find a calendar of daily actions, and see upcoming events [on their website, here](#).



MW HEALTH FOUNDATION OFFICE HOURS



Kate Baker, Research Director at the MetroWest Health Foundation (and a member of our Steering Committee), hosts Health Data Office Hours on the **2nd Tuesday of each month from 9am - 10am and the 4th Thursday of each month from 1pm - 2pm**. These office hours are a great opportunity to talk through data-related projects or help you define data-related questions regarding food access and health equity issues. *(We know - we joined one to get Kate's support with SNAP data!)* You can email Kate directly for Zoom links: kbaker@mwhealth.org

MLRI TRAINING: ABAWD WORK RULES FOR SNAP

Join MLRI on 4/10 at 2 PM ([register here](#)) for a training to learn more about the so-called "ABAWD Work Rules" that will re-start on 5/1, who these rules apply to, and what you can do to help make sure vulnerable adults are not terminated from SNAP.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR: COALITION MEETINGS

Make Hunger History Coalition: 2nd Tuesday of the month, 12pm - 1pm. Join the Coalition list [here](#) to receive future invites.

MA SNAP Coalition: 4th Tuesday of the month, 10am - 11:30am (next one is 4/22). To join, contact: Pat Baker at pbaker@mlri.org or Vicky Negus at vnegus@mlri.org.

Want an update shared with our network?

Email us at: MetroWestFoodCollaborative@gmail.com

ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITIES

1 HELP STOP FEDERAL SNAP CUTS

Congressional Republicans aim to pass a budget resolution that paves the way for massive cuts to life-saving programs, including [\\$230 billion in SNAP cuts](#), over the next 10 years. The plan was [greenlighted by the U.S. Senate](#) in a 51-48 vote on 4/4. This is an all hands on deck moment. We need to put mass pressure on Congress to stop these cuts. Two Senate Republicans voted against the recent resolution, so they are feeling the heat - let's make our opposition impossible to ignore. **Here are three things you can do right now:**

1) [Read this Project Bread piece](#) to ground before you act. You can also read [this Commonwealth Fund analysis](#), [watch the House Democrats hearing](#), and [see our MetroWest SNAP factsheet](#) for more on the impact of proposed cuts.

2) Call and email your Congresspeople. [Find contact information here](#). If you want a starting point, you can use [this FRAC email action tool](#) as a template and personalize your message.

3) Tap into your networks. Urge your friends and family in red and purple districts - especially those depicted in the graphic - to immediately pressure their Congresspeople to vote against cuts.

Member of Congress	District	SNAP Recipients	Margin of Victory
Nick Begich	AK-AL	63,661	7,876
David Schweikert	AZ-01	47,505	16,572
Juan Ciscomani	AZ-06	58,431	10,822
Kevin Kiley	CA-03	57,541	46,179
David Valadao	CA-22	172,112	11,461
Young Kim	CA-40	45,453	40,361
Ken Calvert	CA-41	81,495	11,987
Jeff Hurd	CO-03	82,375	19,804
Gabe Evans	CO-08	60,000	2,449
Laurel Lee	FL-15	48,063	42,973
Mariannette Miller-Meeks	IA-01	58,278	799
Zach Nunn	IA-03	62,318	15,784
Bill Huizenga	MI-04	68,951	49,848
Tom Barrett	MI-07	56,924	16,763
John James	MI-10	86,874	26,074
Ryan Zinke	MT-01	47,568	24,746
Don Bacon	NE-02	35,443	5,829
Tom Kean, Jr.	NJ-07	26,094	23,306
Nick LaLota	NY-01	46,079	42,745
Mike Lawler	NY-17	75,931	23,946
Mike Turner	OH-10	74,937	68,275
Ryan Mackenzie	PA-07	67,520	4,062
Rob Bresnahan	PA-08	86,026	6,252
Scott Perry	PA-10	53,196	5,133
Jen Kiggans	VA-02	40,180	15,732
Bryan Steil	WI-01	53,502	40,113
Derrick Van Orden	WI-03	56,422	11,256

2 URGE MA ELECTEDS TO FULLY FUND HIP

At the end of 2024, MA legislators failed to provide HIP with additional funding needed to keep the program running at full strength. As a result, HIP benefits have been cut to just \$20 for all MA households, regardless of size. To keep HIP running strong year-round in the future, we need the program fully funded at \$25M in the FY26 budget (the current Governor's Budget falls several million dollars short of this).



Action Item: The MA House will be debating their budget later this month. Please reach out to your State Representative to ask them to support \$25M for HIP in the FY2026 budget! [Find your legislators here](#).

Questions about Advocacy?

Contact us: MetroWestFoodCollaborative@gmail.com

RESOURCES FOR YOU

Food Access Calendars & Food Resource Flyers by City/Town

*(In English, Spanish, Portuguese,
and Haitian Creole)*

[Click here](#)

Connect with Giuliana for SNAP/WIC help

[Click here](#)

Local Farmers' Markets Info & Educational Flyers

[Click here](#)

Project Bread's FoodSource Hotline: 1-800-645-8333

Monday-Friday: 8am-7pm
Saturday: 10am - 2pm

Assistance in 180 languages.

Trouble with SNAP? Get Help When you Can't Reach DTA

[Click here](#)

What to Do If You've Experienced Benefit Theft

[Click here](#)