



April 6, 2022 CHIP Network Meeting “Menu”

1. Welcome + a brief CHIP Overview
2. **Ingredients:** Food Justice Concepts
3. **Recipes for Equity:** Spotlight on Local Initiatives
4. **Today’s Special:** MA Healthy Incentives Program (HIP)
5. **What’s Cooking:** HIP Advocacy Opportunities

Recording of the meeting (Access Passcode: CHIP2123-7)

Definitions of Key Terms and Concepts

Rachel Stoler, co-chair of the 2021-2023 CHIP Active Living and Healthy Eating work group, introduced us to some key terms and concepts related to health equity and food justice.

Food Justice:

The right of all people to an adequate, safe, nutritious, and sustainable food supply

<https://www.gardeningthecommunity.org/food-justice--equity.html>

Food Sovereignty:

“The right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts the aspirations and needs of those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations.”

– from the Declaration of Nyéléni, the first global forum on food sovereignty, Mali, 2007

<http://usfoodsovereigntyalliance.org/what-is-food-sovereignty/>

Food Deserts* (or Food Apartheid / Food Oppression):

Often defined as areas where residents' access to affordable, healthy food options (especially fresh fruits and vegetables) is restricted or nonexistent due to the absence of grocery stores within convenient traveling distance.

Another defining characteristic of food deserts is socio-economic: that is, they are most commonly found in Black and Brown communities and low-income areas (where many people don't have cars). Studies have found that wealthy districts have three times as many supermarkets as poor ones do, that White neighborhoods contain an average of four times as many supermarkets as predominantly Black ones do, and that grocery stores in African-American communities are usually smaller with less selection.

People's choices about what to eat are severely limited by the options available to them and what they can afford—and many food deserts contain an overabundance of fast food chains selling cheap “meat” and dairy-based foods that are high in fat, sugar and salt. Processed foods (such as snack cakes, chips and soda) typically sold by corner delis, convenience stores and liquor stores are usually just as unhealthy.

The term “food desert,” is widely used but it emphasizes geography over other factors such as racism, cost of living, people being time poor and cash poor, cultural appropriateness of available foods, the ability of people to grow their own foods, etc. Terms such as “food apartheid” and “food oppression” are more accurate.

Adapted from the Food Empowerment Project - <https://foodispower.org/access-health/food-deserts/>

Food Insecurity and Hunger:

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines “food insecurity” as a lack of consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy life. It is important to know that though hunger and food insecurity are closely related, they are distinct concepts. “Hunger” refers to a personal, physical sensation of discomfort, while “food insecurity” refers to a lack of available financial resources for food at the household level.

Source: <https://hungerandhealth.feedingamerica.org/understand-food-insecurity/>

Examples of food insecurity screening questions:

1. “We worried whether our food would run out before we got money to buy more.” Was that often true, sometimes true, or never true for your household in the last 12 months?
2. “The food that we brought just didn’t last, and we didn’t have money to get more.” Was that often, sometimes, or never true for your household in the last 12 months?

Meeting the Need / Shortening the Line

“For decades, the focus of efforts to end hunger in the United States has been on feeding the immediate need of people who are hungry today. That’s what has built the system of food banks, food pantries, and community meals as well as programs like SNAP (formerly known as Food Stamps). Feeding the immediate need is crucial, but until we address the root causes of poverty and hunger, we won’t be able to “shorten the line” of people at those food pantries and meal programs who are food insecure.

To address food security in our community, we need to work to both feed the need AND shorten the line. Hunger does not exist in a vacuum... people are hungry because their jobs don’t pay a living wage, or too much of their income goes to pay for housing, medical care, heat, transportation and other basic living expenses. To shorten the line, we need to address some of these root causes of poverty and hunger.”

From The Franklin County Hunger Task Force’s [“53 Ways YOU Can Help Change the Story About Hunger and Increase Food Security In Our Community”](#)

For more on the “Hunger Industrial Complex” and how that system has been built to benefit corporate interests without addressing the issues that contribute to hunger in the first place, see <https://www.bighunger.org/>

Examples of Local Initiatives Working to “Shorten the Line”

The Franklin County Hunger Taskforce

<https://www.communityaction.us/franklin-county-hunger-task-force>

This network of local organizations and community members is dedicated to improving food security for residents of Franklin County and nearby communities. They meet regularly and welcome new members! Contact Mary McClintock – mmclintock@communityaction.us – for more information.

One activity of the Hunger Task Force is offering workshops called “Changing the Story,” through which participants examine existing efforts to address hunger in their communities, identify which ones work to meet the need for food and which ones work to shorten the line, and strategize how to increase efforts to shorten the line while still making sure there are ways to meet the need for food.

CHIP 2021-2023 Active Living/Healthy Eating Workgroup

<https://frcog.org/chip-healthy-living/>

This work group’s goal is to support the FRCOG’s Transportation and Open Space & Recreation planning efforts, Mass in Motion, Age-Friendly Franklin County, and food justice and systems change initiatives to continue to evolve the built environment to reduce barriers to active living and healthy eating.

Our work is focused on addressing community level risk factors associated with Type 2 Diabetes and other chronic diseases. By examining why people in our community lack access to healthy food, transportation, open space and recreations, we identify ways in which policy and systems on the local, state, national, and international level play a role in who has access and who does not. The issue our workgroup has chosen to focus on that relates most to food justice is access to mobile markets. This group meets regularly and welcomes new members! For more information, contact Rachel Stoler – rstoler@frcog.org

Stone Soup Café

<https://www.thestonesoupcafe.org/>

Stone Soup Café offers a pay-what-you-can gourmet meal prepared, served and

delivered by volunteers every Saturday afternoon outside the All Souls Church in downtown Greenfield.

This May, Stone Soup Café is launching a Culinary Institute, which will prepare students for various types of cooking positions in the diverse field of foodservice. The 12-week program will result in a Food Handlers License, a ServSafe Certificate, and job skills and references for securing work in the vibrant and emerging food culture here in Pioneer Valley. [Culinary Institute - Stone Soup Cafe \(thestonesoupcafe.org\)](http://thestonesoupcafe.org)

Just Roots

www.justroots.org

This Greenfield-based non-profit's goal to change the food system. Just Roots is a leader in the effort to include and engage all people in the local food economy and to develop integration between healthcare and local food access as a mechanism for driving equitable and better health for people and planet.

Just Roots developed and operates the largest SNAP-enrolled, low-income Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farm share program in Massachusetts! Farm shares for Summer 2022 are available now. Just Roots has farm shares for everyone – they offer two sizes, a sliding scale fee, pick-up locations in downtown Greenfield and on the farm, and delivery options. More info: [CSA Farm Shares 2021 \(justroots.org\)](http://www.justroots.org)

The Franklin County Jail and House of Correction

The goal of the Treatment and Programs Division at the FCSO is to support offenders' successful reintegration into the community upon release -- work toward reentry begins on an inmate's first day of incarceration. FCSO offers adult education classes to support students in basic literacy, attain a high school equivalency, and learn financial and computer skills. The FCSO proudly partners with Greenfield Community College to offer introductory college programming. Education pathways exist to enter the farm & food systems as well as manufacturing field. <https://www.fcsoma.us/inmate-programs>

Franklin County Community Development Corporation Food Processing Center

<https://www.fccdc.org/food-processing-center/>

Freezes locally grown produce using an IQF (Individually quick frozen) process. Packages frozen produce in cases for institutional use and bags for retail sale. The FPC is interested in selling local produce to schools for use in their cafeterias, but the challenge of distribution and storage is still being addressed.

CISA (Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture)

www.buylocalfood.org

This non-profit strengthens farms and engages the community to build the local food economy. CISA sponsors the “Be a Local Hero, Buy Locally Grown®” program, provides technical assistance for farms and food businesses, including processors, distributors, and producers of value-added products like jams, cheeses, and pickles.

CISA is a local champion of the Healthy Incentives Program (HIP), through which consumers can use SNAP benefits to purchase local food at farmers markets, farm stands, mobile markets, and CSAs. At this meeting, CISA/TerraCorps Service Member Ellery Pool gave a [presentation on HIP](#). Ellery is available to present to groups throughout the region! To contact Ellery Pool: ellery@buylocalfood.org

The Healthy Incentives Program

What it is, How it works, How to teach clients about it!

SNAP Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

Healthy Incentives Program
Fresh, Canned, Dried, Frozen.
It's HIP to be healthy!

CISA community involved in sustaining agriculture

Ellery Pool ● ellery@buylocalfood.org ● TerraCorps Service Member, CISA

The big takeaway from the HIP presentation was that community members, clients, friends, and family who get SNAP benefits have an extra \$40-\$80 on their EBT card for fresh fruits and vegetables at eligible locations.

Find a local HIP Business near you: buylocalfood.org/hip-map

For those of you who would like a PRINTABLE HIP Locations List, please share the links below with your clients, include in your e-newsletters, or print out physical copies to help those without internet access!

- [All Pioneer Valley locations](#)
- [Franklin county locations](#)
- [Hampshire county locations](#)
- [Hampden county locations](#)

Meeting attendees shared other examples and resources:

WIC, Meals on Wheels, the Great Falls Apple Corps, advocacy for public transportation, mobile markets at high-density low-income housing sites such as Oak Courts and Elm Terrace

Project Bread: 1-800-645-8333

Community Action Resource Advocates: 413-475-1570

Rep Susannah Whipps noted the additional challenges posed by the fact that many items that are household essentials are not SNAP eligible.

Phoebe Walker noted that she has been appointed to the MA Food Policy Council as the public health rep, and she welcomes input from us on how she might use that platform.

Opportunities to Advocate for HIP!

HIP is a Massachusetts program, currently funded annually through the state's operating budget.

The process of developing the MA state budget for the upcoming year is underway now. (Here is a description of the steps in the state budget development process: <https://massbudget.org/2022/01/25/state-budget-101/>)

The MA Food Systems Collaborative leads **The Campaign for HIP Funding**, which is asking for \$20M in funding in the FY23 budget to allow the program to run year-round without interruption

Learn more: <https://mafoodsystem.org/projects/campaign-for-healthy-incentives-program-funding/>

Next steps: The MA House of Representatives will be debating the version of the budget released by the House Ways and Means Committee next week; the MA Senate will do the same in mid-May. Now is a great time to tell your reps and senators about what matters to you!

See also - <https://mafoodsystem.org/news/call-to-action-support-fy23-budget-priorities-for-the-local-food-system/>

HIP-related legislation in the current legislative session includes:

An Act relative to an agricultural healthy incentives program

[S.108](#): Sen. Anne Gobi / [H.250](#): Rep. Paul Mark

This will establish the framework for the program's long-term sustainability. The bills have been reported out favorably and have moved to the Joint Committee on Health Care Financing for second reading. The next step is to get them onto the floor for a vote.)

Check out the **MA Food System Collaborative** (<https://mafoodsystem.org/>) for toolkits, tips, updates, and answers to questions like:

- Who are **my legislators**?
- I know my legislators' names, but how do I **contact them**?
- How does the **legislative process** work in Massachusetts?
- Is there a handy **one-page guide with legislative advocacy tips**?
- Where can I find more in-depth **advocacy tips and information on running a campaign**?
- I work for a nonprofit. Can I **still be an advocate**?