Public Policy Priorities 2023

At The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, we lead the community in advocating for food security and promote solutions that address the underlying causes of hunger in our region, including institutional racism and funding inequities. The policies we promote help advance our mission to feed our neighbors in need and lead the community to end hunger.

Federal:

**Tier 1—We actively work on these priorities.**

- Protect and Strengthen Federal Nutrition Programs
  - SNAP
  - Child Nutrition Reauthorization
  - TEFAP—The Emergency Food Assistance Program
  - Farm Bill Reauthorization

**Tier 2—We work on these priorities in coalition with other organizations who are taking the lead.**

- Protect and Strengthen Programs that are anti-poverty and anti-racist:
  - Budget, tax proposals, and welfare reform
  - Earned Income Tax Credit
  - Expand the Child Tax Credit permanently, pay out monthly
  - Encourage participation in the democratic process

- Enact and implement relevant pillars of the White House National Strategy on Hunger, Health, and Nutrition
  - Pillar 1: Improve Food Access and Affordability:
    - Help more individuals experiencing food insecurity benefit from federal assistance programs
    - Invest in community and economic development to increase food access
  - Pillar 2: Integrate Nutrition and Health
    - Provide greater access to nutrition services to better prevent, manage, and treat diet-related diseases
    - Screen for food insecurity and connect people to the services they need
  - Pillar 3: Empower all consumers to make and have access to healthy choices
    - Empower consumers with updated and more accessible food labeling
    - Create healthier food environments and a healthier food supply so the healthier choice is the easier choice
    - Support robust and tailored nutrition education

State:

**Tier 1—We actively work on these priorities.**

- Cliff Effect legislation: An act concerning public assistance for working families and the creation of a pilot program to address the impacts of the Cliff Effect.
- Hunger-Free Campus Initiative
- MEFAP—the Massachusetts Emergency Food Assistance Program
- HIP—the Healthy Incentives Program
- Transportation
Tier 2—We work on these priorities in coalition with other organizations who are taking the lead.

- Universal School Meal Campaign
- Health Equity at All Levels (HEAL) Legislation
- Expand food literacy in MA schools
- State-funded nutrition benefits to immigrants not eligible for SNAP

Tier 3—We support efforts of other organizations by adding our name to sign-on letters, etc.

- Affordable housing and utilities
- Access to affordable services/education, such as childcare, higher education, behavioral health services, substance abuse treatment, and services for seniors and disabled people.
- Universal access to affordable health insurance
- Support other organizations’ policy priorities when overlapping and appropriate (for example: MA Food System Collaborative, CISA, MA Public Health Association, Lift Our Kids Coalition).