

# POLICY IN FOCUS

**A**t the Food Bank, we support households who need healthy food in the short term and also confront the underlying conditions that cause food insecurity in the first place. In September 2022, Congressman Jim McGovern convened a national conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health hosted at the White House. One of the goals from the conference is the call to end hunger in our country by 2030.

The Advocacy team at the Food Bank is proud to be part of a statewide group of anti-hunger advocates to bring this goal to fruition. Included in our public policy priorities for this year are **Massachusetts** legislative bills to:

- Require all schools to make school breakfast and lunch available to all students at no charge to the student or their family.
- Create a grant program at the Department of Higher Ed for state two- and four-year colleges to mitigate hunger on campus
- Expand Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits to legally present immigrants
- Establish funding to create and expand food literacy curriculum in K-12 schools.
- Permanently fund the Healthy Incentives Program
- Increase funding for Regional Transit Authorities

We're also working to implement the Cliff Effect Pilot Program we successfully advocated for in partnership with the Massachusetts legislature. Passed in the



Left to right: Dawn Creighton, former Mass. Senator Eric Lesser, Representative Pat Duffy, Laura Sylvester, and Kristen Joyce celebrating the passing of a bill studying ways to mitigate the Cliff Effect.



Congressman Jim McGovern (left) meeting with students from the Hunger Free Campus Coalition at an advocacy gathering at Worcester State University.



The Hunger Free Campus Coalition gathering at the Massachusetts State House before meeting with legislators to discuss solutions to college hunger.

Economic Development Bill in December 2022, this innovative pilot will provide job training and financial coaching for up to 100 families throughout Massachusetts, giving them cash assistance to make up for the sudden loss of SNAP, housing, or other benefits that result from their increase in earned income.

We also work on **federal** legislation including bills to:

- Strengthen and increase SNAP benefits
- Increase USDA funding for The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)
- Expand the child tax credit and pay it out monthly rather than yearly

During the COVID pandemic, the Biden Administration expanded the child tax credit to \$300 per child and paid it monthly to families. This tax credit alone resulted in a nearly 46% decrease in child poverty across the country,\* providing much-needed breathing room for millions of American families. Making the child tax credit permanent would be life-changing for so many who are struggling to make ends meet and go a long way toward ending hunger.

Massachusetts is already a national leader in many policy areas – expanding SNAP benefits for three months past the ending of the COVID emergency, expanding universal school meals for an extra year, and easing SNAP eligibility requirements for college students. Yet, there is so much more we can do. If you'd like to join us to end hunger in Massachusetts, you can sign up for advocacy alerts at [foodbankwma.org/get-involved/advocate/](https://foodbankwma.org/get-involved/advocate/) or email [advocacy@foodbankwma.org](mailto:advocacy@foodbankwma.org).

\* source: U.S. Census Bureau