

Legislative and Advocacy Priorities 2023

Each year, the Worcester Food Policy Council decides on a set of priority issues and legislation that have the potential to affect the food system in the City of Worcester. This year, our priorities include:

Local Policies

Affordable Housing	Worcester Chickens	Good Food Procurement	Equitable Funding Model
Families experiencing food insecurity are 60% more likely to experience housing instability. We continue to advocate for strong inclusionary zoning and other policies that will make housing more affordable in Worcester.	We support an ordinance that will allow the keeping of chickens on residential property in the City of Worcester.	We are researching the impact of adopting a Good Food Procurement policy by major institutions in Worcester.	The WFPC is seeking ways to best understand and promote models of equitable funding to address racial equity and root causes of food insecurity.

State Legislation

Main Priorities

Protect the Safety Net (S.117/H.187)		Feeding Our Neighbors (HB135/SB76)	
Championed by Rep. Keefe and Sen. DiDomenico, this act will enact mechanisms to prevent DTA and other agencies that provide safety net services from relocating or closing offices without community feedback.		This bill would restore basic food and cash benefits for low-income, legally present immigrants in Massachusetts. For more info: www.feedingourneighbors.org	
Hunger-Free Campus (S.835/H.1293)	Lift Our Kids (H.144/S.75)	Universal School Meals (H.603/S.261)	Common Start (S.301/H.489)
This bill will provide guidance, funding, and capacity to help colleges and universities reduce campus hunger. For more info: www.hungerfreecampusma.org	This bill will increase the maximum grants for TAFDC (families) and EAEDC (elders and persons with disabilities) by 25% a year until they reach Deep Poverty, and then increase grants to keep pace with inflation. For more info: www.liftourkidsma.org	This bill will make Universal School Meals permanent, allowing schools to provide breakfast and lunch to every student at no cost to their families. For more info: www.feedkidsma.org	This act builds upon a framework to provide high-quality, affordable early education and child care to all families in the state. For more info: www.commonstartma.org
The HIP Campaign (H.150/S.85)	Encouraging Food Donation (H.1594/S.920)	Farm to School Grants (HD.350/SD.605)	
HIP leverages federal SNAP funds by increasing SNAP recipients' ability to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables directly from farmers, improving health of the community and increasing sales for local farms. For more info: https://mafoodsystem.org/projects/campaign-for-healthy-incentives-program-funding/	This bill provides protections for businesses that donate food, to persons in need, reducing food waste and increasing food donations.	This bill will establish permanent Farm to School grants, which support efforts by schools and districts to include more healthy, locally grown foods in school meals, as well as strengthen relationships between children and local agriculture. For more info: www.mafoodformakids.org	

Federal

HR1519 Improving Access to Nutrition ends SNAP time limits	Enhance Access to SNAP improves SNAP access for college students	SNAP Plus Act permanently ends the ban on hot prepared foods in SNAP
Lift the Bar Act lifts the 5-year residency bar to SNAP for immigrants	Ensuring Equitable Food Access increases SNAP allotments and extends SNAP to U.S. territories and tribal populations	HR 3037/S. 1336 Closing the Meal Gap Base SNAP on Low-Cost Food Plan and boost monthly benefits for families and older adults