



WHY INCREASE MEFAP

Massachusetts Emergency Food Assistance Program (MEFAP) Line Item: DAR 2511–0105

REQUEST FOR FY18: Please increase MEFAP funding to \$20,000,000 (\$19,000,000 for Core Food and \$1,000,000 in administrative support) for the following urgent reasons:

- 1. The need remains acute.** One in nine Massachusetts' residents (about 750,000) are food insecure—meaning they don't know where their next meal will come from. This is significantly worse than its pre-Great Recession level of one in 12.5.
- 2. Critical to closing the meal gap.** The \$3 million increase means the Food Bank Coalition of Massachusetts can provide an additional 2 million more healthy meals to those in need.
- 3. Consistent healthy food source.** MEFAP constitutes a significant and consistent source of the staples of a healthy, balanced diet. Research shows food insecure people are in poorer health and are at higher risk of chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and obesity.
- 4. Supports Massachusetts businesses.** Seven out of 12 vendors providing MEFAP product are Massachusetts-based, and more than 30 Massachusetts farmers, supply nearly 8 percent of MEFAP-purchased produce.
- 5. Helps fill the Meal Gap.** About 33 percent of people in need in Massachusetts do not qualify for government benefits, such as SNAP or food stamps and WIC.* To feed their families, they rely on the network of more than 800 food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters served by the four nonprofit Massachusetts food banks.
- 6. Rising food costs.** The \$3 million increase request reflects rising food costs (Food prices in Massachusetts are about 10 percent higher than the national average. In eastern Massachusetts, prices are 14 percent higher, and in Suffolk County 28 percent higher.*), the continuing decrease in food industry donations, and the acute need for a consistent source of nutritious food for the 750,000 people at risk of hunger every day in the Commonwealth.

*Gundersen, C., A. Dewey, A. Crumbaugh, M. Kato & E. Engelhard. Map the Meal Gap 2016: Food Insecurity and Child Food Insecurity Estimates at the County Level. *Feeding America, 2016*



MERRIMACK VALLEY FOOD BANK
Lowell, MA
www.mvfb.org



THE FOOD BANK OF WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS
Hatfield, MA
www.foodbankwma.org



THE GREATER BOSTON FOOD BANK
Boston, MA
www.gbfb.org



WORCESTER COUNTY FOOD BANK, INC.
Shrewsbury, MA
www.foodbank.org