



Everyone at the Table:

MAINE'S ROADMAP TO END HUNGER

→ by 2030

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FROM THE COMMISSIONER

This roadmap was born out of the 129th Legislature's LD 1159, authored by then-Rep. Craig Hickman and signed by Governor Mills. It results from over two years of collaborative work by and contributions from hundreds of individuals from both inside and outside of State government.

Four generous philanthropic funders—the Elmina B. Sewall Foundation, the John T. Gorman Foundation, the Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation, and Hannaford Supermarkets—supported the research, the planning, and the dozens of community convenings that went into this document. And I want to offer my sincere thanks to the Legislature and the Governor for entrusting the Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry to facilitate the creation of this plan. While DACF is central to feeding Maine people—both through our support of agricultural producers and as part of the

web of providers meeting the needs of Mainers living with food insecurity—we know that ending hunger in Maine will truly require that everyone be at the table.

My biggest thanks go to the hundreds of Maine people who committed their time, talent, and personal and professional experiences to make this plan a reality. In three phases of work (interrupted by a global pandemic), upwards of 200 Maine people brought clear eyes and open minds to wrestle with the rampant and corrosive presence of hunger in our state. These people included legislators, nonprofit and business leaders, educators, policy experts, and concerned Maine residents. Importantly, it included Mainers with lived and living experience of hunger who bravely shared intimate portraits of hunger as it's faced each day and who shined an invaluable light on the solutions that can end this ongoing yet preventable emergency.

In a very real sense, DACF has merely been the steward of this plan. It comes from and belongs to the people of Maine.

While the effort to create this plan was significant, it is just the first step in this process. The work that remains requires continued commitment, compassion, and courage. The Department looks forward to taking this journey with you.

Sincerely,

Amanda E. Beal

AMANDA E. BEAL
Commissioner,
Department of Agriculture,
Conservation & Forestry



THE VISION

We envision a Maine free from hunger which we have defined as **no very low food security** (hunger) and **4% low food security**.¹

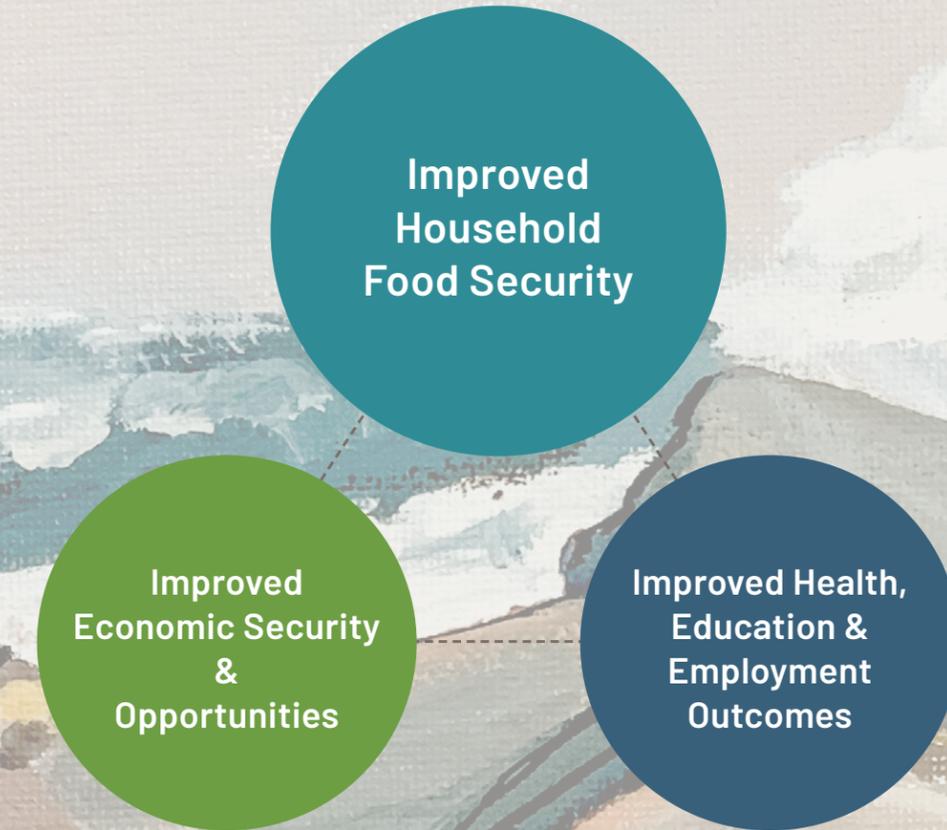
Ending hunger is not something that one group does for the benefit of another. Ending hunger is our North Star, guiding a collective commitment to creating a state that offers all its people a stable foundation on which to build a good quality of life.

In hunger-free communities, everyone has access to the resources they need, and no one is forced to make the impossible trade-offs that result in food insecurity—

trade-offs like skipping meals to pay for housing, medicine, or heat, or staying in an unsafe relationship because leaving jeopardizes your ability to keep food on the table for your children.

Ending hunger interrupts generational cycles of harm and trauma and opens doors to opportunity and prosperity for the people, families, and communities of Maine.

OUR THEORY OF CHANGE → The Outcomes





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Everyone at the Table— Maine's Roadmap for Ending Hunger by 2030

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY → Our Theory of Change → Strategy

STRATEGIC GOALS:



- A** Build the infrastructure and capacity necessary within and outside state government to coordinate the implementation of Maine's Roadmap to End Hunger.
- B** Ensure consistent, easy access to healthy, culturally appropriate food.
- C** Promote, bolster, and ensure economic security and opportunity.
- D** Change the narrative of food insecurity to focus on collective responsibility and center the voices of impacted people.
- E** Close the equity gap in household food security by addressing underlying structural inequities in all Ending Hunger 2030 goals.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

"Hunger is not caused by a scarcity of food but a scarcity of democracy."

— FRANCES MOORE LAPPÉ

Maine's Roadmap to End Hunger by 2030 aims at the root causes of hunger and food insecurity in our state. This approach was indicated in the authorizing legislation, 2019's "Resolve to End Hunger in Maine by 2030" (LD 1159), and explicitly endorsed in the unanimously accepted "Ending Hunger in Maine by 2030" Report to the 129th Legislature (a.k.a., the Interim Report).

To understand this roadmap and its recommendations, it's critical to grasp a seeming paradox: food security in Maine has little to do with food. Or, more accurately, the causes of food insecurity have little to do with a scarcity of food. Food insecurity is most often a function of economic insecurity; hunger is a symptom of poverty.

"Everyone at the Table" unequivocally affirms the role that food and food distribution play in responding to hunger today. Community-level solutions like compassionate, user-centered charitable food initiatives; opportunities that empower people to grow their own food; and programs that make local foods accessible to food-insecure people are enriching the lives of Maine people in untold ways. Moreover, as the pandemic has underscored, a healthy, localized food system is essential to our community resilience. That is why the plan

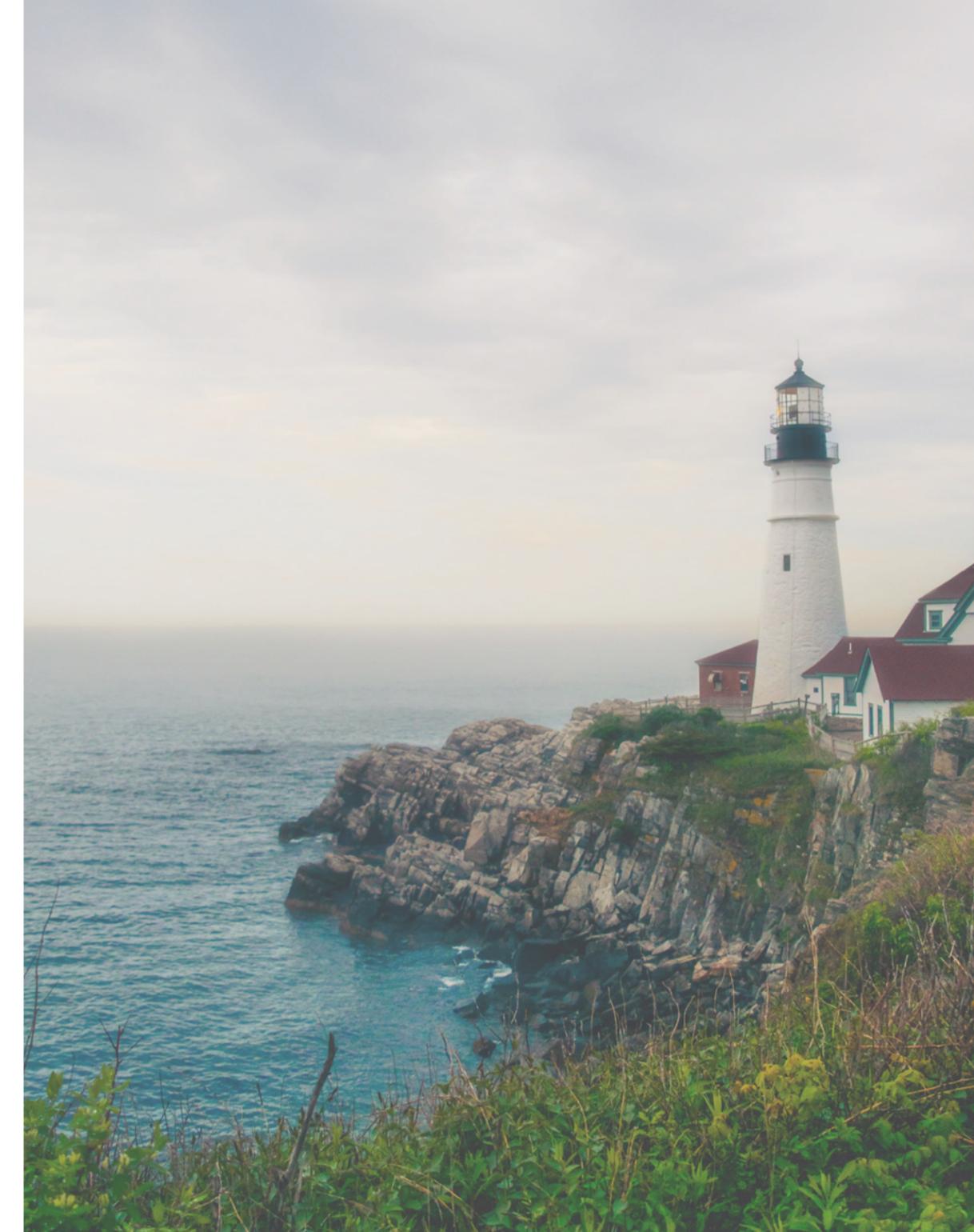
recommends investing in Maine's food infrastructure and food businesses as ways to simultaneously safeguard our food supply as we grow jobs in Maine's important natural resource sectors.

That said, the aim of this plan ultimately is to end hunger, and to do so by foregrounding root-cause strategies that prevent the problem from happening in the first place. That's why the plan's overwhelming focus is on income and resources—and the forces that hold income and resource inequality in place. For those who pick up this plan and ask, "What do affordable childcare or the Maine Jobs and Recovery Plan have to do with hunger?" The answer is, "Everything." When we create a robust and equitable economy for those who can work, and a user-centered and adequate social safety net for everyone, we will end hunger.

This roadmap leverages expertise from across State government. Contributing Departments include Education; Economic and Community Development; Health and Human Service; Transportation; Labor; the Office of the State Economist; and The Governor's Office on Policy, Innovation, and the Future. These policy makers were joined by a broad swath of legislators, nonprofit and business leaders, educators, policy experts, and concerned Maine residents. Importantly, contributors included Mainers with lived and living experience of hunger. This Maine-based expertise was deepened by research into best practices and success stories from anti-hunger work in other communities and around the globe.

The result is a roadmap rooted in:

- evidence-based solutions to hunger,
- the unique nature of the problem in Maine, and
- the priorities of Maine people.



It's clear why Maine's Legislature and Governor were moved in 2019 to make ending hunger the State's objective.

First, hunger and food insecurity are a lethal if often invisible epidemic. When most recently measured, one-in-eight Maine people and one-in-five Maine children were hungry or at risk for hunger. That is a breathtaking level of suffering: it means that each day thousands of children show up to school too hungry to learn, thousands of workers are too economically insecure to thrive, and thousands of Maine people are contending with entirely preventable ill health. Were the State to continue to choose not to tackle hunger, we would be quite literally hobbling every community in our state.

Second, hunger's human toll has an economic impact Maine can ill afford. Each year we incur \$709 million in hunger-related costs from lost productivity, increased need for special education services, preventable health conditions, and more. That's on top of

the \$370 million spent feeding people [see pp. 25-27]. If we allocated resources to end hunger rather than to treat it, we estimate we would need far less than the \$1 billion currently being spent—directly and indirectly—and we'd create more flourishing and joyful communities in the process.

Third, the problem of hunger is solvable. It is true that poverty and hunger are persistent, multifaceted challenges. History and recent events, however, suggest that we know what works to end them. In 2020, for example, we endured the most significant economic contraction since the Great Depression. Nevertheless, after briefly trending upward, poverty and food insecurity fell measurably against this catastrophic backdrop. They fell because government chose to do simple things—like prepaying the Child Tax Credit and expanding SNAP benefits—that kept millions

of Americans and thousands of Mainers from going without. If we can do that in times of economic calamity, imagine what we can do in times of relative prosperity—should we choose to.

Maine's Roadmap to End Hunger by 2030 proposes two overlapping strategy areas—strengthening our response to food insecurity today and preventing food insecurity tomorrow—along with three cross-cutting goals that define priorities for how that work gets done:

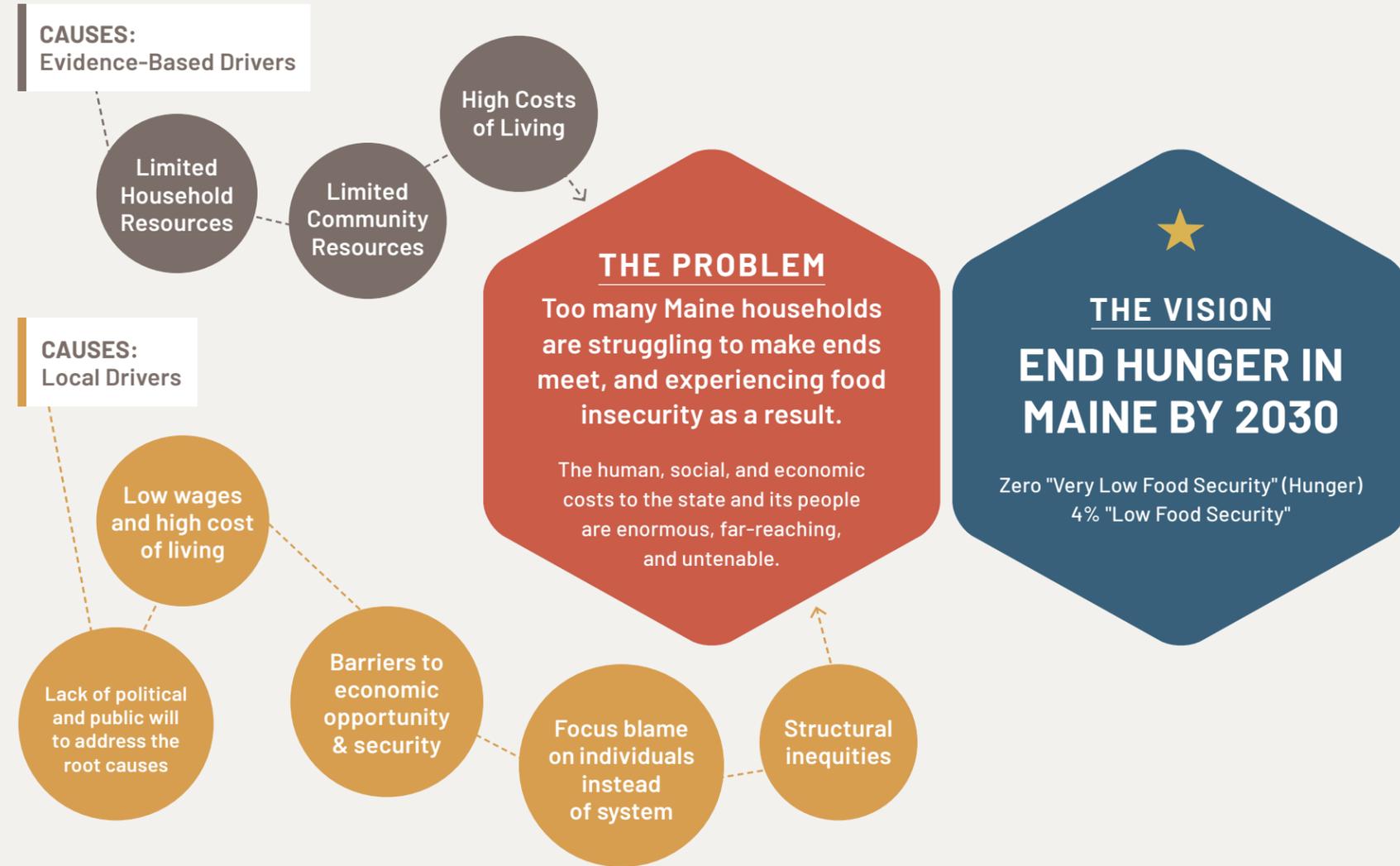
- **build** the capacity needed to implement the plan,
- **reframe** our narratives around hunger and poverty to emphasize that structural forces not individualized behaviors, create most poverty, and
- **prioritize** equity every step of the way.

To strengthen our response today, we must improve the accessibility and impact of public and nonprofit food assistance; burdensome systems contribute to a vicious cycle of poverty. To prevent food insecurity tomorrow, we must address the economic and cultural conditions which hold the problem in place.

Some of this work is underway. The Department of Education has implemented free meals for every Maine student, the Department of Health and Human Services is exploring options for making accessing programs more integrated and user-centered, and the Department of Transportation is launching pilots that provide reliable transportation to low-income job seekers and workers—to name just a few examples.

That said, much work remains—and everyone has a role to play in implementing this plan. This bold vision requires ongoing collaboration, investment, and innovation across sectors and across experience.

The willingness of plan contributors and many other Mainers to commit to the goals articulated within signals that the opportunity to truly End Hunger by 2030 is very well within reach.



FOOD INSECURITY IN MAINE:

It's About More than Food

FOOD INSECURITY IN MAINE

Food Insecurity Defined:

Lack of consistent access to enough food for an active and healthy life for all household members due to the inadequate economic resources at the household level. (USDA)



Food insecurity is a crisis in Maine, impacting 11.4% of households in the state, or over 153,000 people a year².

That's roughly equivalent to the combined populations of Maine's four largest cities. The problem is even more pervasive among Maine's children, of whom almost one in five, or 18.1%, are impacted³. These numbers represent people living, working, growing up, and growing old in every community in Maine.

Although the problem is widespread, dramatic disparities exist. Food insecurity rates are two to four times higher in certain communities or among certain demographics, including African immigrants (food insecurity: 51.6%), single-parent households (42%), people with a disability that prevents them from working (39%)⁴, and all People of Color (28.3%)⁵. There are also significant geographic and occupational differences. (For more, see pp. 18-21)

FOOD INSECURITY IN MAINE

Food Insecurity in Maine is More Common, More Severe, and Happens at Higher Incomes Than Elsewhere in New England and the U.S.

Maine has been an outlier, nationally and regionally, with above average rates of household food insecurity every year since 2005 (USDA, Feeding America). Even as the national food insecurity rate recovered following the 2008 recession, the problem in Maine grew worse, reaching a high of 16.4% for 2014-2016. Since at least 2005, Maine has had the highest rate of food insecurity in New England, a region otherwise notable for its low food insecurity.

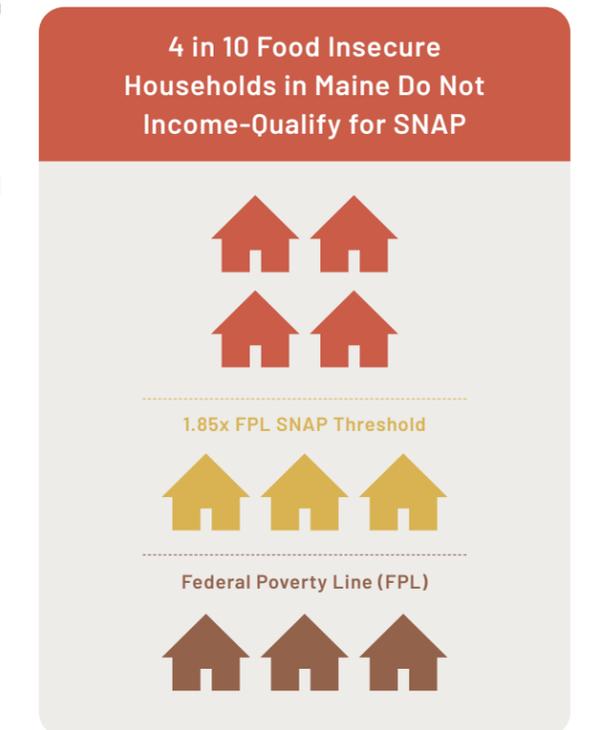
This outlier status reflects the unique nature and scale of economic hardship in our state where food insecurity is more severe and happens at higher income levels than it does regionally and nationally. Maine had the second highest rate of very low food security (the most severe level of the problem) in the

nation in 2017-2019, representing over half of all food insecure households – a share far above the national average (USDA).

Among food-insecure Mainers, 43% have incomes higher than the eligibility threshold for SNAP and WIC, the most effective anti-hunger programs available.⁶ The phenomenon of struggling with food insecurity yet being ineligible for anti-hunger programs afflicts far fewer families nationally, indicating that the way poverty is defined and calculated is particularly ill-suited for capturing the economic realities and living costs in Maine.

Struggling Maine households without safety net access are severely disadvantaged by our state's unique economic challenges marked by low wages and a high cost of living. Meanwhile, those who do income-qualify for safety net programs are often derailed by "benefits cliffs"—the distressingly common phenomenon of modest income

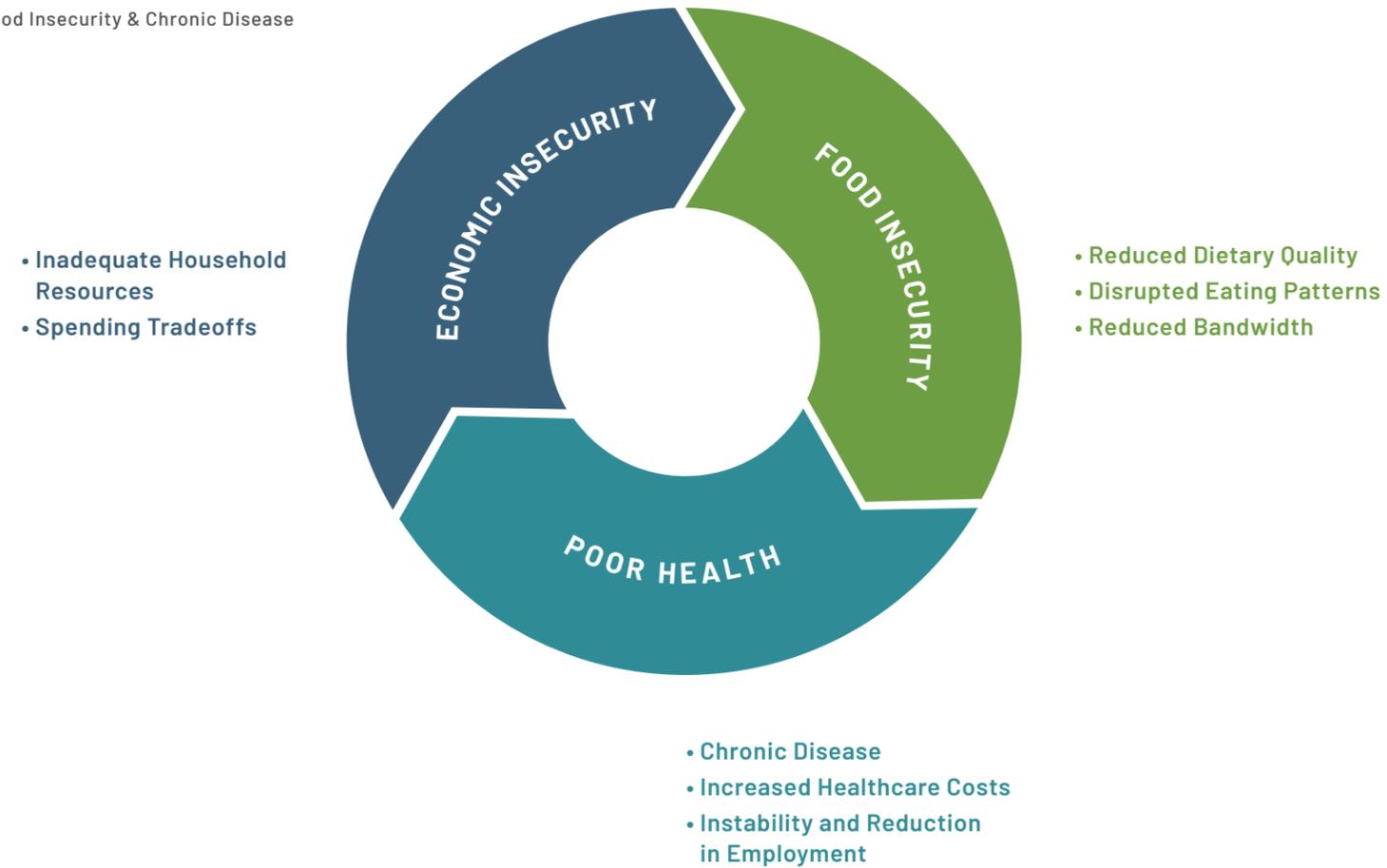
gains triggering significantly larger benefits losses (e.g., when an additional \$100 of monthly income precipitates the loss of \$600 of monthly benefits). This dynamic creates barriers to financial stability and keeps food security out of reach.



FOOD INSECURITY IN MAINE

The Cycle of Economic Insecurity, Food Insecurity & Poor Health

Adapted from Feeding America's Conceptual Framework:
Cycle of Food Insecurity & Chronic Disease



THE EQUITY GAP

in Household Food Security in Maine



THE EQUITY GAP IN HOUSEHOLD FOOD SECURITY IN MAINE

Food insecurity is a key indicator of both economic well-being and equity in the state.

It shows us how many households are struggling to make ends meet and experiencing inconsistent access to food as a result, and which communities are impacted most severely and most disproportionately.

Food Insecurity Rate by Race & Ethnicity in Maine
2015 - 2017

51.60% African Immigrants

40.20% All Black Households

29.50% American Indian

28.30% All People of Color

27.70% Black Non-Immigrant

23.10% Hispanic

16.40% Asian

14.70% White non-Hispanic

THE EQUITY GAP IN HOUSEHOLD FOOD SECURITY IN MAINE

Food insecurity measures show us how many households are struggling to make ends meet and which communities are impacted most severely and most disproportionately.

Addressing disparities is a priority embedded in the legislative roots of Maine's Roadmap to End Hunger by 2030. LD 1159 called explicitly for a plan which would identify and close equity gaps on the road towards eradicating hunger in the state. That work began with the Ending Hunger in Maine by 2030, Report as requested by the 129th Legislature (the Interim Report). The Interim Report disaggregated data and found that Black, Indigenous, and People of Color in Maine are experiencing food insecurity at a rate two to nearly four times higher than the state average⁷.

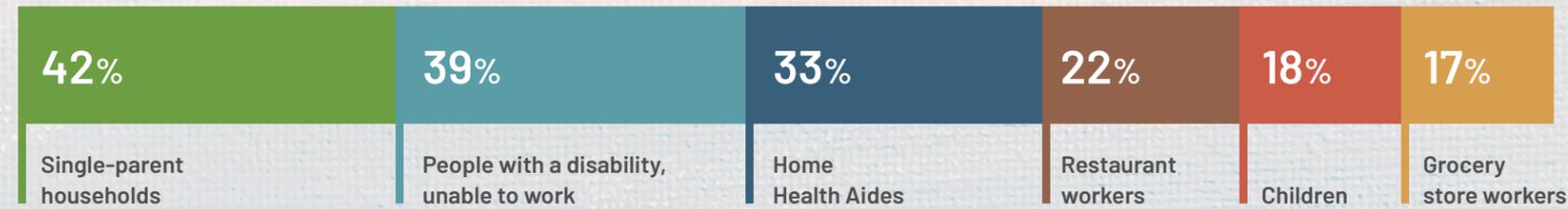
The connection between household characteristics and increased risk and experience of food insecurity reflect underlying inequalities, like structural racism, which cause economic and social

disadvantages. Racial disparities in Maine permeate the metrics, which research has identified as the key drivers of food insecurity: economic security, education, health access, home ownership, and involvement with the criminal justice system.⁸

Immigrants in Maine face particular barriers to employment and economic security, like having unrecognized foreign professional credentials, ineligibility for public benefits, and lack of culturally-responsive services, which can be exacerbated by racial discrimination for People of Color.

THE EQUITY GAP IN HOUSEHOLD FOOD SECURITY IN MAINE

Groups Impacted Severely by Food Insecurity in Maine



Single-parent households are also among the groups experiencing the highest rates of food insecurity in the state at an estimated 42%.

Food insecurity is predictably high among low-wage workers, affecting, for instance, one in three home health aides and around one in five grocery store and restaurant workers. For Maine people whose disability prevents them from working, 39% are food insecure; a rate more than three times higher than the state average.⁹

THE EQUITY GAP IN HOUSEHOLD FOOD SECURITY IN MAINE

Recent trends in disparities are heading in the wrong direction. The 2021 USDA Household Food Insecurity Report delivered good news overall but bad news in terms of equity.

As a result of expanded government aid programs, overall household food insecurity rates in 2020 declined despite the economic upheaval caused by the pandemic. At the same time, higher-than-average food insecurity rates among Black households and households with children persisted and increased. Meanwhile, new data from the U.S. Census Bureau revealed that nationally, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender adults are nearly twice as likely to live in food-insecure households.¹⁰

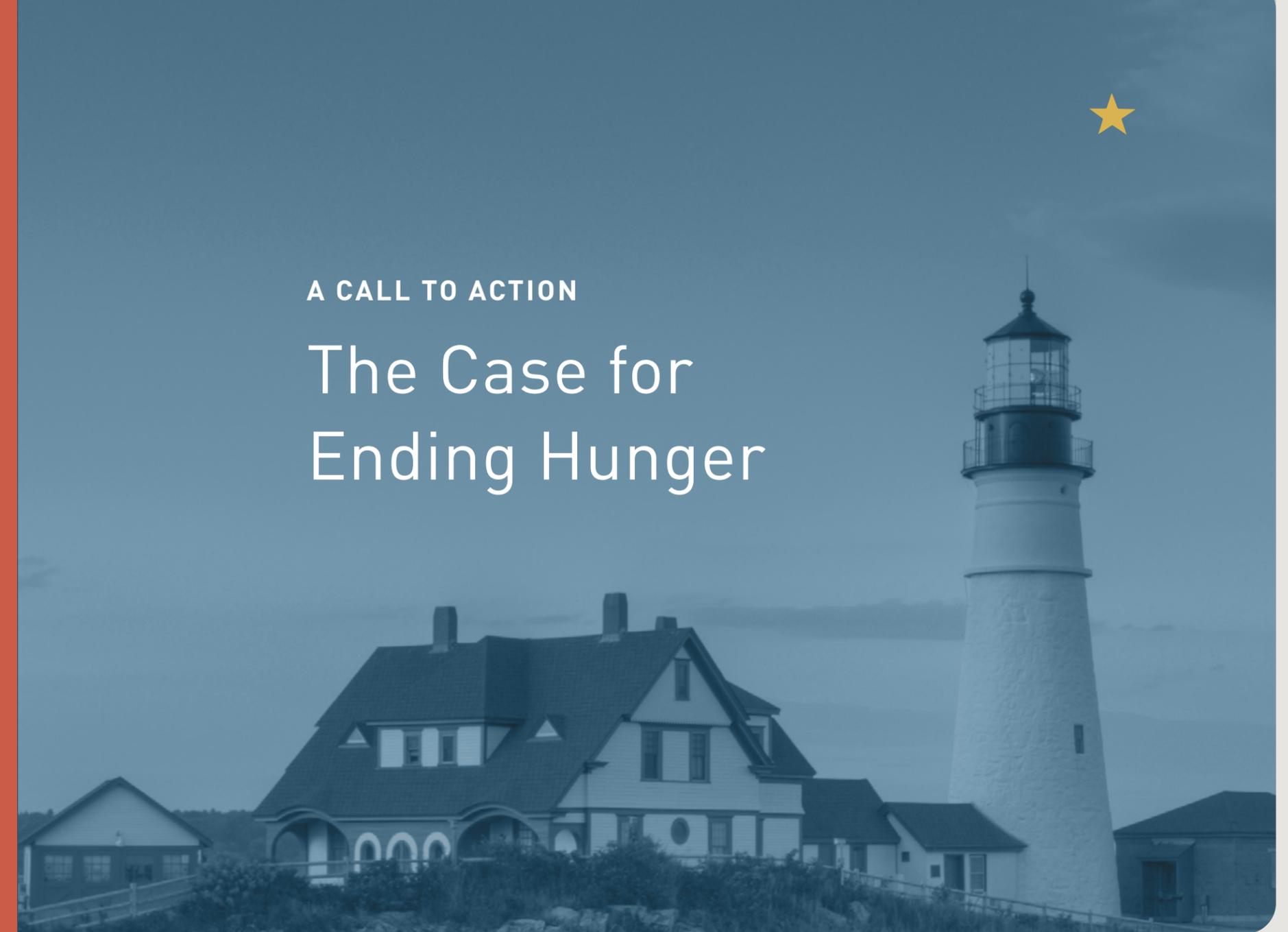
Evidence of worsening disparities amidst other progress highlights the need for a deep commitment to addressing equity gaps as we drive toward zero hunger. Many of the disparities we see can be traced directly to historic harm done to communities. That is why hunger rates are so much higher,

for example, among Black and Indigenous Mainers. Everyone at The Table has been developed with prioritizing equity in mind. We have evaluated our goals, strategies, and initiatives, using an equity framework¹¹, and we recommend ongoing evaluation of progress towards reducing disparities. We have also identified where capacity building and investment are needed to monitor and evaluate equity in outcomes.



" My mother was poor. My grandmother was poor. I didn't do too much better - not because I didn't have high hopes and big dreams, but just because of what I was able to access. Hopefully, my kids are going to be okay "

– EH2033 CONTRIBUTOR, Impacted Community Recommendations
& Review on the Interim Report for Ending Hunger by 2030 –



A CALL TO ACTION

The Case for Ending Hunger

THE CASE FOR ENDING HUNGER

When we asked EH2030 contributors about what causes or exacerbates food insecurity in our communities, we heard the same challenges facing our economy generally: the decline of Maine’s manufacturing and other sectors; a lack of affordable housing, especially near available jobs; and the need for higher wages.

In many ways, the State’s vision for ending hunger and its vision for creating a thriving economy with a place for everyone are deeply related. We cannot end hunger without growing wages. And we cannot grow the workforce without addressing the childcare, housing, and transportation issues that create the same barriers to opportunity that cause food insecurity.

The status quo of food insecurity in Maine comes at great cost to the state, socially and economically. Food insecurity is traumatic and harmful. It damages human potential, depriving people of not only food, but health and well-being, opportunity, and security.

For many Mainers, the effects are generational and take an especially hard and long-lasting toll when experienced as a child. Among many associated serious impacts are chronic physical health issues, behavioral and psychological health issues, delayed development in young children, and barriers to economic stability, employment, and educational achievement—all contributing to the vicious cycle of poverty¹².

As noted earlier, we currently spend \$305 million per year in public funds on supplemental nutrition programs like SNAP, while the charitable food sector spends another \$64 million on food. According to Feeding America, that \$369 million in annual expenditures falls short by about \$105 million in terms of meeting the actual resource needs of Maine families.

THE CASE FOR ENDING HUNGER

Total Annual Food Budget Gap for Food Insecure Households in Maine

\$105M

When we don’t find a way to fill that \$105 million shortfall, we end up incurring an additional \$709 million in negative impacts from things like lost productivity, increased need for special education services, preventable health conditions, and more. Totaling the direct expenses (\$369 million) and the negative economic toll (\$709 million), **the status quo of not ending hunger is costing us about \$1.08 billion per year, whereas a solution might cost as little as \$474 million.**

\$1 BILLION
Estimated Annual Economic Cost of Food Insecurity in Maine

GOALS & STRATEGIES

Maine's Roadmap to End Hunger by 2030



MAINE'S ROADMAP TO END HUNGER BY 2030 → GOAL A

A Build the Infrastructure & Capacity Necessary Within and Outside State Government to Coordinate Implementation of the Maine's Plan to End Hunger

Eliminating hunger by 2030 in Maine requires all sectors of the state and many sectors of state government to work in concert.

Systems, safeguards, and supports are needed to guide and coordinate this cross-cutting work. Through clear reporting structures and data collection systems, Maine can measure its progress and ensure that critical targets are being met.

Strategy 1:

Coordinate EH2030 implementation from the Governor's Office to support the cross-cutting and collaborative efforts necessary to end hunger.

Proposed Initiatives and Investments:

- Fund and staff efforts to implement the EH2030 plan.
- Strengthen relationships and align action across governmental, educational, social service, philanthropic and private sectors.
- Track and facilitate coordination among allied departmental and legislative initiatives.

Strategy 2:

Encourage, Stimulate, and Support Local and Regional Collaborative Efforts and Public-Private Partnerships to Meet and Address Meal Gap and Systemic Causes of Hunger

Proposed Initiatives and Investments:

- Identify, promote, and support the scaling of effective local models and models successfully implemented elsewhere.
- Leverage DACF's Ending Hunger in Maine VISTA project to spur and coordinate the regional implementation of Ending Hunger by 2030 initiatives and strategies.
- Cooperate and coordinate with the philanthropic sector to align funding opportunities with plan objectives.

MAINE'S ROADMAP TO END HUNGER BY 2030 → GOAL A

Strategy 3:

Maintain an Advisory Committee to Guide Implementation of the State Roadmap to End Hunger, including Inclusion of Those with Lived Experience

Proposed Initiatives and Investments:

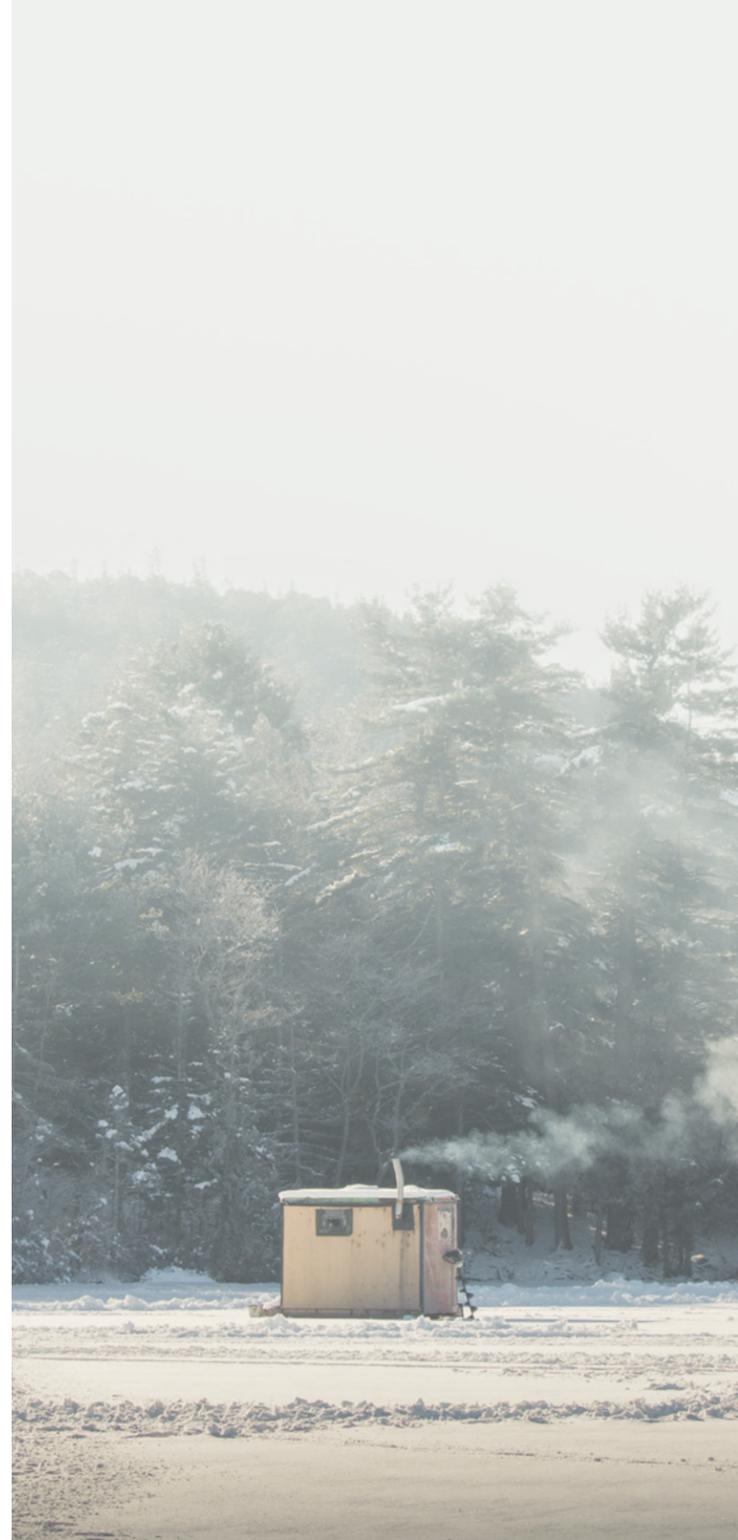
- Issue an annual report on the state of hunger in Maine, progress made toward ending hunger, and progress made on implementing the roadmap.

Strategy 4:

Develop and Maintain Data Systems for Tracking Progress, Measuring Disparities, and Continuous Learning and Improvement

Proposed Initiatives and Investments:

- Establish the capacity to disaggregate data on key outcomes for people and outcomes for systems to track and report on disparities at the county and municipal levels.
- Develop specific output, outcome, and impact indicators for each plan strategy.



MAINE'S ROADMAP TO END HUNGER BY 2030 → GOAL B

B Ensure Consistent, Easy, & Equitable Access to Healthy & Culturally Appropriate Food

In order to end hunger in Maine, the first step is to ensure that all Maine residents have easy, consistent access to healthy and culturally appropriate food today.

Federal nutrition programs like SNAP, WIC, GusNIP, and the National School Lunch Program are powerful, proven tools for addressing food insecurity. The challenge and opportunity for Maine is to maximize the utilization and impact of those federal dollars, especially in light of recent program expansions.

The charitable food system, meanwhile, does a heroic job keeping food flowing on-the-ground, directly to those who need it. Food banks, food pantries, school backpack programs, mutual-aid community food distributions—all overwhelmingly staffed by

volunteers—have met the unprecedented demand of our moment with creativity, ingenuity, and caring. We can and should continue to augment these volunteer supported efforts. At the same time, we recognize that the charitable food system alone cannot end hunger today, and it takes more than just food to end hunger tomorrow. A strong and active role by State and federal governments as a partner in this effort is essential to successfully ending hunger in Maine by 2030.

For those reasons, this goal is focused on investments which improve the accessibility and impact of food assistance programs through cross-sector coordination and support, and by strengthening our regional food system and supply chains. Given that specific communities, for historical reasons, are disproportionately impacted by hunger and food insecurity, our solutions must

address and reduce those inequities as we ensure food security for all Maine residents. The communities include all People of Color, particularly Black Mainers, new Americans and historically present Black Americans; Indigenous and tribal communities; individuals under the care of the State (e.g., individuals in the correctional system, disabilities system, and foster care system), Female-headed households; LGBTQ residents, and those living in rural communities. As such, the more collectively supported, user-centered, accessible, and equitable our food assistance programs are, the more they contribute to pathways to economic and food security for all. Meanwhile, building the resilience of our regional food system safeguards nutrition security for Maine's future while contributing to our state's climate action and economic development goals.

Strategy 1:

Maximize Federal Nutrition Programs & Child Nutrition Programs and Policies

Proposed Initiatives and Investments:

- Use Broad-Based Categorical Eligibility (BBCE) for SNAP to raise the gross income threshold to 200% of the federal poverty level and remove asset limits.
- Seek to maximize participation in federal nutrition programs including school nutrition programs and nutrition incentive programs, taking special care to foster initiatives and partnerships that address barriers to access and cultural relevance for disproportionately impacted communities.
- Advocate for nutrition program eligibility criteria and definitions of poverty that would encompass all Maine residents who are food insecure.



What does **THE PLAN IN ACTION** mean?

Everyone at the Table sets a course for a hunger-free Maine. There will be many pathways toward our destination, and this roadmap isn't intended to provide detail on every possible initiative or investment that will move us closer. At the same time, we recognize that recommendations that are too general may be harder to envision or act on. When you see this symbol  under the banner "The Plan in Action," we provide a concrete example of the kind of aligned initiative that is already underway in Maine or has proven successful elsewhere.

THE PLAN IN ACTION:

Scaling Benefits to Match Economic Realities is Critical

On October 1, 2021, Maine residents who qualify for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program got a boost in their buying power. The US Department of Agriculture announced a 21% permanent increase to the program after re-evaluating the cost of healthy meals. It took into account convenience foods, like pre-cooked canned beans and pre-cut salads, chopped frozen vegetables, and pre-cut salads have been added to help increase nutrition values for each meal.

[READ MORE >](#)

THE PLAN IN ACTION: Universal School Meals Lowers Barriers to Child Nutrition



The federal government made breakfast and lunch free for all students during the coronavirus pandemic, and Maine will continue to offer free meals at least through 2023. The effort has highlighted the importance of providing meals to all students, not just those who meet income eligibility requirements. Making school meals free for all students dramatically improves access to healthy food for thousands of Maine children.

According to the Maine Department of Education, about 38%, or 65,000 students, are currently eligible for free or reduced-price meals. [READ MORE >](#)

Strategy 2:

Expand the Impact and Capacity of Food Assistance Programs through Cross-Sector Investment, Collaboration, & Coordination

Proposed Initiatives and Investments:

- Continue to invest in charitable and community-based food assistance programs as a necessary complement to the inconsistent nature of philanthropic funding and to bolster capacity among providers to ensure the system can meet the need.
- Improve coordination and collaboration across charitable food programs, public programs addressing food and economic insecurity, and the health system.
- Invest in innovative public-private partnerships and strengthen existing programs which increase low-income access to local, healthy food.

Strategy 3:

Transform Food Assistance Programs with an Increasingly User-Centered, Culturally Responsive, Low Barrier, and Equity-Driven Approach

Proposed Initiatives and Investments:

- Include people using food assistance programs or impacted by hunger in program design and delivery to ensure programs benefit from the expertise of lived experience and meet the needs of the community.
- Encourage and support the capacity of food assistance providers to adopt best practice standards that maximize choice, quality, and dignity.

- Promote and invest in community-based initiatives in a variety of models (e.g., school-based pantries, mutual aid groups, etc.) to ensure barrier-free, culturally responsive access to food.
- Build, expand, and strengthen relationships with organizations and community groups embedded in impacted communities. Emphasize relationships that will improve access for disproportionately impacted communities who are underserved by charitable and public food assistance programs.
- Expand mobile and home delivery access models in communities to serve those that are homebound or have transportation barriers.
- Integrate complementary services and supports (e.g. connections to public assistance programs, food and otherwise) with food assistance programs, and co-locate food access points at locations providing other community and public services.
- Expand use of technology to enable solutions such as ordering ahead, scheduling appointments, and other applications that allow for more efficient private food access.
- Develop better data sharing models to measure the extent to which programs are meeting the needs of all populations.



THE PLAN IN ACTION: Grassroots Mutual Aid Models Ensure Stigma-Free and Culturally Appropriate Food

When the COVID-19 pandemic first arrived, organizers with Presenté! Maine were quick to recognize the crisis' impending impacts on Latinx communities, People of Color, and low income people across the state. Just days after the first COVID case was recorded in the state, Presenté launched the Food Brigade, a mutual-aid project that delivers weekly food rations to people in need. Since its first week of operation, during which rations were distributed to 50 people, the Food Brigade's capacity has grown massively: Every week, the project now delivers 15,000 pounds of food to 2,200 people in Portland, Lewiston and surrounding towns. [READ MORE >](#)

THE PLAN IN ACTION: Sharing Power by Sharing Resources

Recognizing that community-led and community-based organizations are often better situated to provide aid (including culturally appropriate food), the Good Shepherd Food Bank launched its Community Redistribution Fund. GSFBR grants money it has raised to organizations led by or working closely with BIPOC, immigrant, and refugee communities. Use of grant funds can include but is not limited to: the purchase of food for direct distribution or meal preparation; gift cards/credits to culturally specific markets for community members; food sovereignty projects; farming/agriculture projects; transportation; storage; and distribution costs. Awards are available for up to \$10,000. [READ MORE >](#)

Strategy 4:
Improve Nutrition Security by Supporting and Sustaining a Diverse, Local, and Robust Food Supply System in Maine¹³

Proposed Initiatives and Investments:

- Invest in and strengthen Maine's food infrastructure—from farmland and working waterfront protection to processing capacity to distribution networks—to ensure that Maine-grown and produced, healthy food is abundant and available for all.¹⁴
- Leverage USDA- and state-supported programs (Maine Harvest Bucks, Farm Fresh Rewards, Maine Senior Farm Share, WIC FMNP, Farm-to-School, Mainers Feeding Mainers, etc.) to maximize the use of local foods in nutrition security programs, particularly those that empower people with the ability to make choices about what types of food they consume.

- Invest in farm, fishery, and food-related businesses as a means for creating living-wage jobs, enabling access to culturally appropriate foods, and contributing to thriving local economies, emphasizing investment in socially disadvantaged producers to address historical inequities.
- Promote personal and regional food self-provisioning and self-sufficiency by protecting and restoring farmland and fisheries and encouraging urban agriculture and community gardens.
- Include all workers—including food supply chain workers—in wage and workplace protections to prevent food insecurity among food system workers.
- Expand food rescue and gleaning programs that collect quality food that would otherwise go to waste and redistribute it to food security and other community-based organizations.



C **Promote, Bolster, & Enable Economic Security and Opportunity for All Maine Households**

Ending hunger and ensuring food security means that people in Maine have the resources they need to prevent the difficult tradeoffs caused by economic insecurity and that result in food insecurity.

Today, too many people encounter barriers to economic security and opportunity in the Maine economy or through safety net programs. As noted throughout, these barriers are not experienced equally across Maine communities; strategies that do not explicitly address these disparities are highly likely to leave them in place.

The existing public benefits system is historically burdensome and often insufficient. As noted in the August 2021 DHHS Lift Report on Measures of Economic Security¹⁵,

significant efforts are underway to streamline, strengthen, and simplify Maine's public benefits system. In fact, many of the challenges identified during the EH2030 process have been addressed or are targeted for improvement under existing plans. However, and as was also noted in that report and the 2020 LIFT Working Group Report, to keep Maine families out of food insecurity, more work needs to be done. For example, insufficient access to quality, affordable childcare has repeatedly been found to be a barrier keeping heads of households—especially women—out of the workforce or out of higher-paying workforce opportunities. Similarly, high costs of housing, transportation, and healthcare and/or health insurance undermine household financial stability—and thus food security.

Economic security goes far beyond simply being employed. Not all jobs are created equal,

nor are all local infrastructures and economic conditions the same. Investing in supportive infrastructure, as recommended in the Maine Economic Development Strategy 2020-2029¹⁶, reflects the interconnected and mutually reinforcing systems¹⁷ that can help eliminate these barriers so that all Maine residents can thrive.

Maine is making policy advances—progress that was accelerated by pandemic-related funding for programs and by a pandemic-necessitated willingness to offer flexibility and innovation around how programming is accessed and delivered. Many of these advances are measurably reducing poverty and hunger. It will be crucial to ensure that this progress is safeguarded and institutionalized even after the pandemic subsides.

MAINE'S ROADMAP TO END HUNGER BY 2030 → GOAL C

Strategy 1:
Align Efforts with the 2020-2029 Maine Economic Development Strategy and other State initiatives¹⁸ to Create a Diverse, Inclusive, and Sustainable Economy Where All People of Maine have Access to Good Paying Jobs and the Opportunity to Thrive

Proposed Initiatives and Investments:

- Raise the minimum wage to a thriving wage.
- Focus on equity in the implementation of the Maine Economic Development Strategy and Maine Jobs and Recovery Plan¹⁹, ensuring, for example, investments

in entrepreneurship and workforce development reach Maine people from historically underrepresented backgrounds.

- Promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in Maine's workforce, including additional training, increased flexibility regarding foreign credentials, etc.
- Support Department of Labor efforts to increase apprenticeship and industry partnership. Emphasize those activities (embedded coaching, evaluation and reporting) demonstrated to support the hiring, retention, and advancement of workers from historically marginalized communities.

- Expand education and training programs with a focus on whole-family approaches²⁰ that prepare/reskill people for higher-wage jobs and foster economic stability.
- Encourage employer policies and practices that enhance employment stability and opportunity, such as paid family leave; catastrophic leave pools; emergency assistance funds; and more.
- Support efforts to make broadband internet access universally accessible and available to all Maine people, regardless of where they live.



THE PLAN IN ACTION: Equity in Economic Development and Recovery Expands Economic Opportunity

Everyone at the Table calls for economic development efforts to explicitly support groups disproportionately impacted by food insecurity. The Maine Jobs and Recovery Plan has allocated \$3 million for encouraging business diversity. Encouraging and supporting business owners from underrepresented backgrounds will enhance Maine's business diversity, create new investment opportunities, and connect these business owners to further financing options through federal programs. These funds will support technical assistance, outreach, training, marketing, and access-to-capital programs for business owners from underrepresented backgrounds, build upon successful support programs to scale them more broadly, and explore how the State could encourage business diversity through State procurement. [READ MORE >](#)

MAINE'S ROADMAP TO END HUNGER BY 2030 → GOAL C

Strategy 2:
Put Maine People at the Center of the Public Benefits System and Align the System's Redesign and Stabilization with the 2020 LIFT Working Group Report²¹ and 2021 LIFT Report on Measures of Economic Security

Proposed Initiatives and Investments:

- Include people accessing the public benefits system or impacted by poverty in program design to ensure programs gain from the expertise of lived experience and meet community needs.
- Assess gaps in federal assistance programs and explore how to best meet them through allocation of state and local resources.
- Coordinate and invest in the establishment of a secure, user-centered, single point of enrollment for State and federal benefits programs. Examples of current or contemplated related or building-block

efforts include:

- Expansion of My Maine Connection
- Expansion of the Department of Labor's online portal
- Expanded use of navigators across benefits programs

- Ensure cross-enrollment for programs for which public benefits recipients are likely eligible (e.g., tax credits, LIHEAP, TANF, WIC).
- Leverage and enhance existing benefit programs to provide basic income security.
- Explore innovative models, such as Employment First²² that provide adequate income supports and employment opportunities for the most vulnerable, including individuals with disabilities and behavioral health disorders, youth exiting foster care, and previously incarcerated people.²³

- Continue to review and revise policies for benefits to expand eligibility, increase transparency, and remove cliffs and penalties to make it easier to get and keep needed benefits.
- Continue to review and implement criminal justice reforms that would minimize food insecurity among families of incarcerated or previously incarcerated people.
- Explore opportunities to support wealth building, such as ABLE Accounts.²⁴



THE PLAN IN ACTION: Expanding the Safety Net Improves Lives and Redresses Inequity

In Maine, the number of families struggling with child hunger decreased by 6% when monthly payments from the Child Tax Credit program began in July 2021. The expanded child tax credit, which was passed as part of the COVID-19 relief package, resulted in children from the lowest-income households being eligible for the full credit for the first time. While families in all racial and ethnic groups have seen drops in child hunger following the expansion of the tax credit, the gains are especially notable in the Black and Latino communities, where "food hardship rates" are about double that of White people, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. [READ MORE >](#)

THE PLAN IN ACTION: Integrating Benefits Humanizes the Safety Net

Getting and keeping the benefits for which one is eligible can itself be a full-time job—one that can be dehumanizing and dispiriting. The State of Minnesota tried to tackle that by creating MNBenefits.mn.gov, an easy-to-use, all-in-one application for safety-net benefits like SNAP, childcare assistance, housing support, and flexible cash. Minnesota residents can now apply for nine different benefits programs through the integrated site, reducing the average time it takes to apply for benefits from 110 minutes to less than 20 minutes, with positive outcomes for clients and caseworkers.

Strategy 3:

Align Efforts with MaineDOT's Impending 2022 Statewide Strategic Transit Plan and Community-Based Transit Plans to Ensure that Transportation is Accessible, Available, and Affordable for All to Connect People to Jobs, Opportunities, and Resources

Proposed Initiatives and Investments:

- Support MaineDOT efforts to develop an innovative, efficient, effective, accessible system that people around the state can use easily and choose to use. Invest in the

expansion of bus lines and other forms of transportation and increase the frequency of service in both urban and rural areas.

- Encourage cities and towns to adopt sustainable community design principles (e.g., walkable and bikeable cities, creating Transit-Oriented Development plans, ensuring complete streets, and protecting open spaces).
- Reduce barriers to private transportation, including the expansion of transitional transportation services to unemployed or low-income families, making driver's

education and licenses more affordable, expanding the use of GO MAINE,²⁵ and ensuring that historically marginalized communities have equitable access to these programs and resources.



THE PLAN IN ACTION: Workforce Transportation Investment Connect People to Opportunity

Everyone at the Table notes that transportation is frequently a barrier to getting or keeping thriving-wage employment. As recommended by Maine Won't Wait, the State's four-year plan for climate action, the Maine Jobs and Recovery Plan has allocated \$5 million to launch a workforce transportation pilot program. Expanding worker access to reliable transportation supports economic security and workforce development, especially in rural areas where transportation options are limited. This funding, as competitive grants from the Department of Transportation, will support local, regional, or state Workforce Transportation Pilot Projects to connect workers and employers and create community and economic benefits with funding for small buses and vans, as well as program start-up costs. [READ MORE >](#)

Strategy 4:

Reduce Housing Instability

Proposed Initiatives and Investments:

- Maximize the use of all available mechanisms (including federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credits and State investments) to expand incentives for affordable housing development.
- Encourage and incentivize municipalities to reduce zoning and other barriers to the development of affordable housing and the conversion of existing buildings into affordable housing.
- Encourage and advocate for strategies that support affordable homeownership and that enable people to remain in their own homes.
- Increase access to housing vouchers and reduce barriers, exclusionary criteria, and sanctions for individuals using these vouchers.

THE PLAN IN ACTION: Thoughtful Policy Adjustments Can Reduce Housing Instability

Having a disability too often leads to food insecurity, and housing insecurity exacerbates food insecurity. How disability assistance is funded and structured can worsen food insecurity because it can force people to choose between receiving the services they need or remaining in their homes. Maine has sought and received Home and Community Based Waivers to redress this weakness in federal policy. Thanks to these waivers, MaineCare can cover life-saving and life-enhancing services for people with disabilities and their care givers while allowing people to remain in the homes and communities that can support them best.



Strategy 5:

Make Healthcare Affordable and Accessible for All

Proposed Initiatives & Investments:

- Increase the affordability of health insurance and the options available to obtain affordable health insurance as is being done via the State of Maine's American Rescue Plan Funding investments.
- Leverage healthcare and health insurance systems to screen for, measure, and address food insecurity and those factors that drive it.
- Close insurance gaps around behavioral health, dental health, and other coverages, the absence of which can drive household expenses, limit work opportunities, or both.
- Restore the capacity of Maine's public health infrastructure.

Strategy 6:

Align Efforts with the Overarching Goals of the Children's Cabinet²⁶ and the Recommendations of the Economic Recovery Committee²⁷ to Strengthen the State's Early Care and Education System

Proposed Initiatives & Investments:

- Increase access to affordable early care and preventive and early intervention services for young children and their families.
- Support expansion of Head Start programs.
- Raise the quality of our early care and education system, and support families to access quality programming.
- Adequately fund childcare programs and benefits, and adjust eligibility and copayment requirements to ensure that childcare and out of school time programs are affordable and accessible for all families who need it.

- Build and retain a skilled early childhood education workforce to prepare children for lifelong academic and career success; partner with the Children's Cabinet and Department of Labor efforts to examine policy options for the state and federal governments to better support the early childhood education workforce with salary supplements, stipends or other forms of compensation to provide opportunities to build career pathways with higher wage opportunities.
- Evaluate and address the current workforce and business model challenges that impede the growth and expansion of childcare programs in our communities.

Strategy 7:
Ensure Educational Success for All Students from Pre-Kindergarten Through Post-Secondary

Proposed Initiatives and Investments:

- Promote post-secondary opportunities for all Maine residents at the vocational, community college, and university levels that support attainment of a post-secondary degree or other recognized credential of value that leads to high-growth jobs. This includes apprenticeships and other credentialing pathways.

- Explore new initiatives to ensure post-secondary program affordability and reduce student debt.
- Increase high school and post-secondary graduation rates, paying special attention to disparate outcomes for students of color and other populations disproportionately impacted by food insecurity.
- Align efforts with workplace development efforts and expand paid internship and apprenticeship opportunities.
- Ensure that educational efforts throughout the state enhance the quality of living and enable citizens to live a life of value.
- Expand and maximize access to programs that support the entrance of those with low incomes to higher education.
- Strengthen linkages between educational institutions and employers to identify workforce development needs and public/private partnerships to meet those needs.
- Think holistically about the overall economic well-being of college students and the other challenges they face, including tuition, debt, and housing.

D Change the Narrative of Food Insecurity to Focus on Collective Responsibility & Amplify the Voices of Impacted People

Poverty and hunger in our communities are the result of systemic failures and structural inequities.

Yet in the public conversation about hunger and poverty, one tends to hear a lot about what people who are poor should be doing differently and less about how the systems that create poverty can and must be reformed.

Changing the narrative about food insecurity means shifting the focus from individual blame to an understanding of the historic, social, and economic forces which create and perpetuate poverty—and thus food insecurity.

Strategy 1:
Reframe Hunger and Food Insecurity and their Costs as a Collective Responsibility to Be Addressed with Urgency and Ones That Impact All Maine People

Proposed Initiatives & Investments:

- Develop and implement a human-centered public awareness campaign regarding Everyone at the Table and what is required of us to end hunger in Maine by 2030.
- Emphasize the systemic drivers of hunger and poverty.
- Emphasize the economic and social costs—not just to people who poor and hungry—for allowing hunger to persist.
- Spotlight policy innovations and other successes that are reducing hunger and food insecurity.

Strategy 2:
Empower and Invest in the Leadership & Inclusion of Impacted People

Proposed Initiatives & Investments:

- Build capacity to support individuals with lived experience to take on leadership roles within public and private initiatives addressing hunger and poverty.²⁸
- Create or expand tools, resources, and initiatives focused on building the capacity of nonprofit and governmental entities to collaborate across experience, lived and otherwise by:
 - Creating safe and inclusive spaces for collaboration and engagement²⁹.
 - Building and strengthening relationships with organizations and groups embedded in impacted communities.

THE PLAN IN ACTION: Engaging impacted People in Program Design and Implementation Improves Impact

Inspired, in part, by the work of national poverty expert Dr. Donna Beegle and multiple trainings she has led in Washington County, the Community Caring Collaborative (CCC) supports direct work to address poverty at multiple levels. CCC poverty initiatives, as a whole, are designed to increase awareness, change practice and policies, create necessary supports, and remove barriers for community members impacted by poverty. Neighbor Group is a group of community members currently living in poverty who support each other through sharing resources, organizing guest speakers, and providing input to CCC about developing and incubating programs. [READ MORE >](#)

THE PLAN IN ACTION: Changing the Narrator Helps Change the Narrative

"Nothing about us without us" is a rallying cry of democracy going back to the 16th Century. Yet too often, public policies are crafted without the input of people who will be most impacted. Including impacted people was a priority identified in EH2030's 2019 Interim Report. In early 2021, Resources for Social Change (ROSC) was asked to invite people with lived and living experiences of poverty and hunger to weigh in on the policy recommendations made in the Interim Report. This process resulted in the publication of a 32-page report that offered testimonies describing lived experiences of poverty and hunger, feedback on Interim Report recommendations, and community-generated solutions for addressing the root causes of hunger, poverty, and social inequities. Participants continued their engagement in the State's planning efforts to end hunger by 2030 as active members of regional teams that identified assets, opportunities, and a vision for what food secure communities would look like in their region of Maine. [READ MORE >](#)



Strategy 3:

Enlist the Private Sector as Full Partners in the Plan to End Hunger in Maine by 2030

Proposed Initiatives and Investments:

- Develop a private-sector tool kit of policies and practices to address and eliminate hunger and food insecurity in the workforce.
- Engage area chambers of commerce and private industry associations to identify areas of common concern and opportunity.
- Support partnerships with private employers and the public and social sectors to augment efforts to have Maine employers become "employers of choice" by investing in practices such as:
 - family-sustaining wages and benefits,
 - necessary on-the-job training that leads to advancement
 - mentorship and interpersonal supports
 - a fair, safe, and inclusive workplace environment.

THE PLAN IN ACTION: Employment Policies Can Stabilize Families

According to the Federal Reserve Bank, more than one-fourth of American adults are just one \$400 financial setback away from being unable to pay their monthly bills.³⁰ A setback could be a car repair, a hot water tank leak, an illness of a family member, or any number of unexpected expenses. With no savings or buffer, these setbacks can precipitate a food-security crisis, forcing people to choose between eating or dealing with the emergency. An Employee Relief Fund (also called an Employee Assistance Fund) is something employers can establish to help employees cope with unexpected hardships so these setbacks don't place undue financial stress on them and their families. The availability of such a fund also helps position human resource departments as navigators to connect employees with other available resources available inside and outside their organizations. The Maine Credit Union League is one employer who created such a fund. They estimate that seventy-five times since its inception, the fund has prevented financial shocks experienced by team members from snowballing into more dire emergencies.



E Close the Equity Gap in Household Food Security by Addressing Underlying Structural Inequities in all Ending Hunger 2030 Goals

In Maine, the prevalence and severity of hunger and food insecurity differ across geography and across household characteristics like race and ethnicity, parental status, and occupation.

Some segments of our population experience food insecurity at a rate 2-4 times higher than the state average. To eliminate hunger in Maine, we need to address the underlying cultural and structural inequities that drive disparities in household food security.

Strategy 1:
Apply an Equity Test to EH2030 Implementation

Proposed Initiatives & Investments:

- In plan implementation, continue to apply equity tools and screens such as those proposed in the 2020 Recommendations to the Legislature from The Permanent Commission on the Status of Racial, Indigenous and Maine Tribal Populations³¹ to ensure disparities are being reduced.
- Partner with and leverage existing public, private, and community-based efforts to promote equity. Examples include:

- Bureau of Rehabilitative Services programs to support individuals with disabilities including progressive employment, benefits counseling, and independent living services.
- Department of Corrections partnerships that create employment opportunities for people involved in the criminal justice system.

THE PLAN IN ACTION: Seeing Disparate Impacts is a Key Step in Addressing Them

The Maine Department of Health and Human Services recently established the Office of Population Health Equity (OPHE) within the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC) in order to identify and address health disparities in communities throughout Maine. The OPHE is focusing on data-driven interventions to advance health equity for a number of populations, including but not limited to racial and ethnic populations, women, LGBTQ+ individuals, people with disabilities, and other groups for which disparate health outcomes—and, not coincidentally, disparate food security outcomes—are present in Maine.



Strategy 2:

Prioritize Disproportionately Impacted Communities in Pilot Programs and Include Impacted Voices in the Design and Leadership of Pilots to Ensure Disparities are Addressed as a Priority

Proposed Initiatives and Investments:

- Invest in the design, implementation, and analysis of new strategies and pilot programs intended to support disproportionately impacted communities and which are led by or incorporate input from communities impacted by hunger and food insecurity.

THE PLAN IN ACTION: Land Access for Socially Disadvantaged and Underserved Farmers is Essential

Liberation Farms in Wales, Maine is one small but significant step in marginalized farmers achieving land access. Liberation Farms, the Community Farming Program of the Somali Bantu Community Association, provides Somali Bantu families struggling with food insecurity with the tools and resources to grow healthy, culturally-appropriate foods for themselves and their community by securing land and providing access to seeds, training, technical assistance, and marketing. It demonstrates what's possible when marginalized communities have the opportunity to organize and lead themselves. [READ MORE >](#)



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Partners & Collaborators



MAINE'S ROADMAP TO END HUNGER BY 2030 → ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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p. 7 & p. 22: Hillary Holmes /
Green Barn Studio

p. 11: Shreyas Sane

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MAINE'S ROADMAP TO END HUNGER BY 2030 → ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Rep. Michele Meyer	Tabatha Remeschatis	Kathy Smith	Avesta Housing	Governor's Office of Policy, Innovation, and the Future
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MAINE'S ROADMAP TO END HUNGER BY 2030 → ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Maine Center for Economic Policy	Maine Network of Community Food Councils	RSU 5	Washington County, Maine (county gov.)
Maine Community Health Needs Assesment	Maine Roads to Quality	RSU 10	Westbrook School Department
Maine Credit Union League	Maine Seacoast Mission	RSU 24	Winslow Food Cupboard
Maine Department of Administrative & Financial Services	Mid Coast Hunger Prevention Program	RSU 68	York County Community Action
Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry	Midcoast Maine Community Action	Rural Community Action Ministry	York County Community College
Maine Department of Economic & Community Development	MSAD 41	Southern Maine Community College	York County Community College
Maine Department of Education	New Mainers Public Health Initiative	St. Mary's Nutrition Center	Youth Full Maine
Maine Department of Health & Human Services, Office of Family Independence	New Ventures Main	Sunrise County Economic Council	
Maine Education Association	Northern Light Health	Survivor Speak USA	
Maine Equal Justice Partners	Northern Maine Development Commission	Tedford Housing	
Maine Federation of Farmers Markets	Penquis Community Action Program	Ummah Gardens	
Maine Food Convergence	Piscataquis Regional Food Center	United Way of Southern Maine	
Maine General	Preble Street	University of Maine Cooperative Extension	
Maine Housing	Presente! Maine	University of Southern Maine	
Maine Immigrant Rights Coalition	Prosperity Maine	Washington County Career Centers	
	Resources for Organizing and Social Change	Washington County Community College	
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	RSU 3		

MAINE'S ROADMAP TO END HUNGER BY 2030 → ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Materials Informing the Development of the Plan:

The plan was informed by EH2030 process content, an extensive review of national evidence-based and local food insecurity research and reports, and existing State plans and initiatives.

Process Content:

- [Ending Hunger in Maine by 2030: Interim Report to the Legislature](#)
- Resources for Organizing and Social Change: [Impacted Community Recommendations and Review on the Interim Report for Ending Hunger in Maine by 2030](#)
- Regional Narratives from EH2030 Phase III ([text and audio versions](#))
- What We Heard in Phase III (Appendix 2)

State Plans, Reports, & Initiatives:

- [Maine Economic Development Strategy 2020-2029, a Focus on Talent and Innovation](#)
- [Governor's Economic Recovery Committee Economic Support and Stabilization Recommendations](#)
- [Maine Won't Wait, A Four-Year Plan for Climate Action](#)
- [Maine Children's Cabinet: A Plan for Young Children](#)
- [DHHS 2020 Lift Working Group Report: Reduce Child Poverty by Leveraging Investments So Families Can Thrive](#)
- [DHHS 2021 LIFT Report on Measures of Child and Family Economic Security for Families Participating in Maine's Public Assistance Programs](#)
- [Permanent Commission on the Status of Racial, Indigenous and Maine Tribal Populations: Recommendations to the Legislature \(September 2020\)](#)
- [The New England Food Vision](#)
- [Transit Tomorrow: The Long-Range Public Transportation Plan for Greater Portland, Maine \(2020-2050\)](#)
- [Maine Department of Labor Workforce Strategy](#)



" Creating legislation and system change requires a personal change as well. Asking anyone who benefits from the system to change it is going to be hard, because they don't want to give up their place in power. The first step in this change is for the non-poor to realize that every single human deserves food, clothes, healthcare, and other resources. Not only the bare minimum, but GOOD food, clothes, and healthcare as well. See us as equals. "

— PARTICIPANT OF IMPACTED COMMUNITY REVIEW PROCESS, JUNE, 2021 —

FOOTNOTES

¹ [Definition and ranges of household food security, USDA ERS](#)

² [Household Food Security in the United States in 2020](#), USDA

³ Gundersen, C., Strayer, M., Dewey, A., Hake, M., & Engelhard, E. (2021). Map the Meal Gap 2021: An Analysis of County and Congressional District Food Insecurity and County Food Cost in the United States in 2019. Feeding America.

⁴ Myall, J. 2019. [Issue Brief: Food Insecurity in Maine](#). (MECEP).

⁵ US Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Food Security Supplement (2015-2017), Analysis by Maine Center for Economic Policy (MECEP)

⁶ Feeding America estimates that 43% of food insecure households in Maine have incomes above the current gross income threshold for SNAP in Maine, 185% FPL (2019). <https://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2019/overall/maine>

⁷ [Ending Hunger in Maine by 2030 Interim Report to the Legislature, 2020](#)

⁸ Engelhard, E. & M. Hake (2020). [Food Security Evidence Review: Key Drivers and What Works To Improve Food Security](#). Available from Feeding America.

⁹ Myall, J. 2019. [Issue Brief: Food Insecurity in Maine](#). (MECEP).

¹⁰ [U.S. Census Bureau, Household Pulse Survey](#). (2021)

¹¹ <https://www.raceforward.org/practice/tools/racial-equity-impact-assessment-toolkit>

¹² Feeding America, Impact of Hunger, <https://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/impact-of-hunger>

¹³ The New England Food Vision has called for 50% of New England's food to be produced in the region by 2060. <https://foodsolutionsne.org/a-new-england-food-vision/>

¹⁴ This also aligns with the Maine Won't Wait Climate Action Plan which advocates that by 2030, 30% of the food Maine people eat will come from Maine https://www.maine.gov/future/sites/maine.gov/future/files/inline-files/MaineWontWait_December2020.pdf

¹⁵ <http://legislature.maine.gov/doc/6990>

¹⁶ https://www.maine.gov/decd/sites/maine.gov/decd/files/inline-files/DECD_120919_sm.pdf

¹⁷ The State economic development plan identifies supportive infrastructure as transportation, housing, health care, early care and education/out of school time programs, and PK-16 education

¹⁸ Includes Department of Labor initiatives

¹⁹ <https://www.maine.gov/covid19/sites/maine.gov/covid19/files/inline-files/MaineJobs%26RecoveryPlan.pdf>

²⁰ The fundamental goal of two-generation work is to build family well-being by intentionally working with children and the adults in their lives simultaneously.

²¹ <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/sites/maine.gov/dhhs/files/inline-files/Reduce%20Child%20Poverty%20by%20Leveraging%20Investments%20so%20Families%20Can%20Thrive%20%28LD%201774%29%20--%20Cover%20Letter%20and%20Report%209-2020.pdf>

FOOTNOTES

²² <https://employmentfirstmaine.org/>

²³ This NIH study A Pilot Study Examining Food Insecurity and HIV Risk Behaviors among Individuals Recently Released from Prison found that 91% of incarcerated people returning to the community qualified as food insecure <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3733343/>

²⁴ <https://www.ablenrc.org/state-review/maine>

²⁵ <https://www.gomaine.org/>

²⁶ https://www.maine.gov/future/sites/maine.gov/future/files/inline-files/GOPIF_CC_PlanYoungChildren.pdf

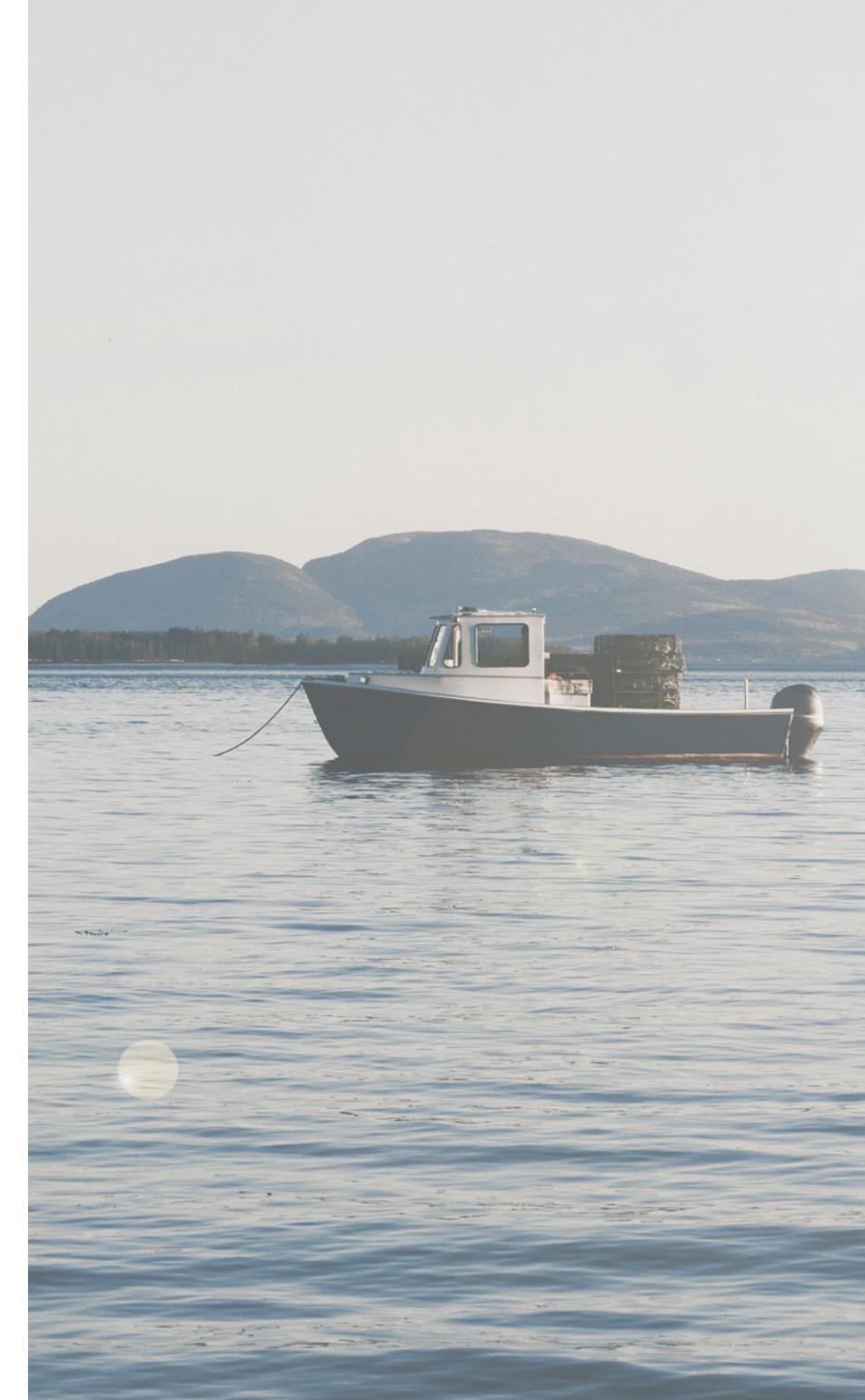
²⁷ https://www.maine.gov/future/sites/maine.gov/future/files/inline-files/Maine%20ERC%20Report_FINAL_11242020.pdf Includes Department of Labor initiatives

²⁸ This was included in the 2020 LIFT Working Group Recommendations.

²⁹ <https://results4america.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Tokenization-Handout-and-Worksheet.pdf>

³⁰ <https://www.federalreserve.gov/publications/2021-economic-well-being-of-us-households-in-2020-dealing-with-unexpected-expenses.htm>

³¹ https://www.maine.gov/labor/pcrit/reports/2020_LegReport.pdf, p. 29-32,





MAINE'S ROADMAP TO END HUNGER by 2030 was commissioned by:



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