Campaign to Promote Food Security in Cumberland County

Coalition Report
2010
The Coalition

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Executive Summary

The Campaign to Promote Food Security in Cumberland County

A Collaborative Effort
In response to the growing and immediate need, the United Way of Greater Portland, TD Bank, the Muskie School of Public Service, and Preble Street convened a coalition of stakeholders in January to lead Cumberland County’s first collaborative effort to examine and address hunger and food access issues faced by vulnerable populations in the region. The sixty-member Coalition was representative of all aspects of food production, distribution, research, rescue, and resource support.

The Coalition adopted values, goals, and a mission statement by which to guide its efforts. Furthermore, the Coalition decided to direct its work toward achieving food access, meaning that members of vulnerable populations have adequate resources to obtain healthy and appropriate foods for a nutritious diet. The Coalition agreed to focus primarily on vulnerable populations, or those in Cumberland County who are disproportionately susceptible to food insecurity.

Research Methodology
The Campaign to Promote Food Security in Cumberland County (CPFS) followed a detailed 12-month work plan. The aims of the Campaign Coalition were to inventory food access issues in Cumberland County and create a specific and actionable work plan to remedy gaps in services and barriers to food access. The process included full Coalition meetings as well as more frequent meetings of an Executive Committee and Coalition chairs and staff.

The Campaign process included comprehensive and ongoing research and data review, in which local, state, and national reports, studies, programs, statistics, and initiatives surrounding food access were compiled and vetted. The data were then presented to the Coalition and integrated into the report; the Resource Guide appended to this report itemizes many of the sources that informed the CPFS recommendation process.

Expert presentations regarding public programs, emergency food distribution trends and practices, and community-based and innovative food access initiatives were a key component of the Coalition’s review. The presentations provided the Coalition with direct testimony regarding current programs and practices in Cumberland County related to food access, existing gaps or barriers to resources, and reforms or expansions that are needed.

In addition to the data review and presentations, Coalition members participated in an electronic survey. The survey asked members to comment on various aspects of food security issues. The CPFS also engaged the community in identifying the issues, holding three public forums directed at vulnerable populations and the recipients of food access programs.

Introduction: A Hidden Crisis

National
In 2009, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Economic Research Service (ERS) reported that 14.7 percent of U.S. households (17.4 million) experienced food
insecurity at some point during that year. This is a 32% increase from the 2007 rate of 11.1% and the highest rate of food insecurity ever measured since the first national food security survey was conducted in 1995. This means that 50.2 million individuals lived in food insecure households in 2008, including 17.2 million children.

Low food security rates are rising even with a simultaneous increase in the number of people receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. More than 35 million low-income Americans (16 million households) received federal Food Stamp/SNAP benefits in June 2009, an increase of nearly 25% over the 13 million households that received assistance in June 2008.

A survey conducted by Feeding America, the nation’s largest domestic hunger-relief organization, in September 2009 questioned its network of 205 food banks to which it provides food every year. Of the 176 food banks that participated in the survey, ninety-nine percent (99%) reported increases in demand from summer 2008 to summer 2009, with the average demand increase being thirty percent (30%). From this same survey, food banks nationwide cited unemployment as being a critical factor in the rising demand at a rate of ninety-one percent (91%). Underemployment was cited as a significant contributor at a rate of seventy-nine percent (79%).

**Maine**

A 2009 report published by the USDA ERS ranked **Maine as the ninth (9th) most food insecure state** in the nation and the **most food insecure state in New England** from 2007-2009. The Maine Department of Health and Human Services saw a 30% increase in the number of individuals receiving SNAP benefits, from January 2008 to January 2010.

Good Shepherd Food Bank (GSFB), the largest statewide distributor of emergency food, distributed nearly 12 million pounds of food to emergency feeding organizations (EFOs) throughout the state in FY 2009. In FY 2009, the Maine Department of Agriculture recorded over 2 million visits to those EFOs who opt to receive food from The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP). A Cumberland County survey conducted in 2010 by the Maine Hunger Initiative, however, reports that only around 50% of county EFOs receive resources from either GSFB or TEFAP, suggesting a much higher food pantry usage rate than these reports suggest.

**Cumberland County**

Cumberland County is Maine’s most affluent and economically diverse county. However, there has been a steady rise in food insecurity and increased demand for food resources, which require immediate and concerted attention.

In Cumberland County, the number of individuals receiving publicly-funded food benefits rose thirty-seven percent (37%), from 2008 to 2010. With an estimated county population of 278,559, this means that **over twelve percent (12%) of Cumberland County residents rely on government assistance for food purchases.**

The Maine Hunger Initiative recently catalogued more than fifty (50) food pantries in Cumberland County, documenting increases in demand and persistent barriers to adequate service. Of those pantries that were surveyed, forty-two percent (42%) reported an increase in the number of clients that they serve over the last year. Twenty-one percent (21%) of those pantries reported a more than one-hundred percent (100%) increase in number of clients served. Due to these recent increases, **eighty-two percent (82%) of pantries have had to modify**
services, including decreasing quantities of distributed food and having to turn clients away.

According to GSFB data, Cumberland County has the largest gap between food resource need and provision in the state. GSFB, the largest statewide food bank, distributed about 1.3 million pounds of food in 2009 in Cumberland County. This was against an estimated need of more than 6.2 million pounds, leaving a gap of 4.9 million pounds of food, or 78% of demand, which was not met by GSFB.

**Call To Action: Strategic Community Goals**

As a result of its planning process, the Campaign to Promote Food Security in Cumberland County has identified six overarching strategic goals to increase food access for vulnerable populations in Cumberland County. These strategic goals are designed to mobilize a systemic and sustainable community response, through both the creation of a food access council and collaborations with like coalitions and efforts, to address food insecurity in Cumberland County.

- **Address the economic and environmental systemic issues that limit food access to vulnerable populations.**

- **Influence public policies and programs at the community, regional, state, and national levels that affect food access for vulnerable populations.**

- **Maximize the efficiency, effectiveness, transparency, and availability of the Emergency Food Distribution System.**

- **Enable expansion of innovative, community-based initiatives that increase food access for vulnerable populations in a sustainable way.**

- **Increase overall capacity for Cumberland County to respond to food access issues.**

- **Raise the visibility of the ongoing problems around hunger and lack of food access among vulnerable populations in Cumberland County.**

**The Economics of Food Access**

**The Economy and Vulnerable Populations**

The lack of sufficient income is one of the most significant reasons persons and families experience food insecurity. The current economic climate has left nearly twenty percent of the population underemployed, or unable to find full-time work. Even among the employed population, individuals’ ability to meet their basic needs with traditional wage earnings has diminished. Often people who are underemployed or not earning sufficient income rely on public benefit programs and Emergency Food Organizations (EFOs) to meet basic needs.

A 2009 Feeding America survey cited un- and under-employment as major contributing factors behind the rising number of clients utilizing EFOs at a rate almost double what it was just two years prior. The report cited other factors that lead to increased demand for emergency food, including housing and healthcare costs and the rising cost of food.
Making Food Access Sustainable
For those seeking support, either through food supplements and entitlement programs, or informally from food pantries and soup kitchens, reliable access to healthful and appropriate foods can be difficult. Sustainably-minded, innovative best practices are key components of any strategy to increase access to healthful and appropriate foods.

Promoting locally produced foods increases the likelihood that the food is fresh and minimally processed, stimulates the economy, minimizes transportation costs (financial and environmental), and concentrates control of product variety within the community in which the food will be consumed. Local farm projects and partnerships lend themselves to more innovative distribution models, facilitating access to those vulnerable populations who lack independent means of transportation. Mobile farm stands and community-based small-scale farm projects could increase food access beyond what is possible through the use of centralized food pantries and governmental store-bound food supplements.

The Coalition has drafted a number of recommendations that recognize food insecurity as a symptom of the larger problem of poverty, inability to earn a living income, and lack of affordable social services. The recommendations also include efforts to better connect vulnerable persons to benefit programs and a consideration of the long-term and often invisible costs of environmental threats to sustainable food access.

Federal/State/Local Food Support Programs
Maine administers a number of programs that provide supplemental food and funds to augment the food budgets of eligible individuals. For instance, the Department of Agriculture operates The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), which draws on federal funds to increase the purchasing power of contracted EFOs operating in Maine. The USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) puts purchasing power directly in the hands of eligible participants through a food supplement card. General Assistance (GA) provides residents with financial assistance when, despite utilizing other assistance programs, they lack the fiscal resources to meet their most basic needs. Other publicly-funded programs include: the Maine Senior FarmShare Program; the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP); the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP); and the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the National School Breakfast Program (NSBP).

TEFAP recorded over two million visits to its cooperating EFOs in Maine in FY2009; the average benefit value received by SNAP recipients in Cumberland County rose over 30% from January 2008 to January 2010. The number of individuals statewide enrolled in SNAP also increased by 30% between 2008 and 2010. In Portland, there was an eleven percent (11%) increase in the number of individuals receiving GA benefits from 2008 to 2009. The amount of GA expenditures in Portland that were spent on food assistance specifically rose fifty-four percent (54%) in that one year. The CSFP, which provides food commodities to organizations that serve primarily seniors, currently serves just fifteen percent (15%) of those eligible in the state.

The percentage of enrolled students in Cumberland County who receive meal benefits (through NSLP and NSBP) has increased from 22.1% in 2005 to 30.8% in 2010. With close to one-third of Cumberland County public
school students and nearly half of students in Portland public schools receiving free or price reduced meals during the school year, the potential effect of extended school vacations becomes formidable. While 12,465 free or reduced meals are served daily during the school year, only 1,723 free meals are served from sites over the summer. This leaves a summer gap of 10,742 meals.

The safety net of government programs is essential to those who are experiencing food insecurity. Increasing participation in and access to these programs for vulnerable populations in Cumberland County, including children, the elderly, and others who lack transportation, is vital to achieving the Coalition’s group of supporting recommendations around this issue.

**Emergency Food Distribution**

The Emergency Food Distribution System includes food banks, food rescue programs, emergency food organizations, pantries, and kitchens that provide limited assistance to individuals or families. In Cumberland County non-profit organizations that provide emergency food service can choose to operate either independently or in cooperation with the federal government and/or a larger food bank network.

Recently, Preble Street launched the Maine Hunger Initiative (MHI), a multi-level direct service and advocacy approach to address the growing hunger needs in Maine. One of MHI’s first projects was to catalogue, survey, and organize food pantries in Cumberland County, receiving a ninety-six percent (96%) response rate of those pantries identified to be operating in the county. Of the forty-eight pantries surveyed, sixty-five percent (65%) have some requirement in order for people to receive food. Almost half of the food pantries surveyed have no operating budget. Of those with an operating budget, on average eighty-one percent (81%) of the pantry budget is for purchased food.

In the past year, surveyed pantries reported a forty-two percent (42%) increase in the number of clients they serve. Of those food pantries, twenty-one percent (21%) catalogued more than a one-hundred percent (100%) increase. Due to recent increases in demand, eighty-two percent (82%) of the food pantries surveyed have modified their operations, either by distributing less food to each client or by turning people away. Other challenges also inhibit distribution of emergency food: twenty-eight percent (28%) of food pantries surveyed said they do not have adequate space to operate their pantry; twenty percent (20%) said they do not have freezers or refrigerators on site. The lack of refrigeration leads to a limit in food diversity: twenty-five percent (25%) of pantries surveyed do not supply produce or meat; forty-three percent (43%) do not supply dairy products.

Good Shepherd Food Bank (GSFB) is Maine’s Certified Affiliate of the national Feeding America Food Bank Network. GSFB has contractual partnerships with more than 640 hunger relief non-profits in the state, including 120 partnering agencies in Cumberland County. In 2009, GSFB distributed 964,000 pounds of donated and salvaged food in Cumberland County. In addition to donated and salvaged food, GSFB distributed 200,000 pounds of purchased food to partnering agencies in Cumberland County. Fresh and healthful foods, with their limited shelf lives and refrigeration requirements, are the hardest supplies to obtain and make available in EFOs.

The Coalition offers a number of recommendations in support of increasing the capacity and accessibility of the Emergency Food Distribution System, infusing the system
with more fresh, local, and culturally acceptable foods, and exploring community-focused alternative methods of emergency food distribution.

**Local Farmers and Innovative Programs**

While governmental food support programs and emergency food suppliers constitute the bulk of the resources available to food insecure individuals, a growing array of alternative programs holds tremendous potential for offering both sustainability and dignity of choice. For example, programs that offer instruction in food production or preservation foster self-sufficiency and lessen reliance on emergency or subsidized foods. Programs that capture and utilize fresh and local foods reduce individuals’ and EFO’s reliance on transported or purchased food or foods with lesser nutritional value.

The non-profit Cultivating Community administers the New American Sustainable Agriculture Project (NASAP), assisting immigrant and refugee farmers in subsistence and commercial farming that is consistent with their culture, lifestyle aspirations, and individual goals. By helping people produce their own food, this project increases food options and choices in the sorts of food they eat. Also, by supporting a community urban garden in a predominately immigrant and refugee neighborhood, NASAP centralizes the distribution of fresh and local foods and facilitates nutrition education.

According to the Maine School Garden Network, there are school gardens in Scarborough, Portland, South Portland, Chebeague Island, and Freeport schools. Garden-to-cafeteria opportunities can facilitate school composting projects, and health and nature education efforts. There are also inherent educational advantages to outdoor and kinesthetic gardening activities; gardening projects that market their produce can connect schools with the larger community and provide students with an income-producing business opportunity.

Outside of individual food production and preservation, there are a number of innovative ways to offer fresh and local food to vulnerable populations. Cultivating Community operates ElderShares, providing the funds to triple the value of a participating individual’s Senior Farm Shares coupon. Its Double Coupon Voucher Program increases the value of WIC and SNAP benefits for any user at select farmers markets. Jordan’s Farm is among a small number of farm stands that accept SNAP benefits at market. This number remains small primarily because of the high costs and administrative burdens of SNAP-payment compatibility that rest fully on the farmer.

The need for collaboration, education, and locally-controlled food access formed the basis of a set of recommendations. The recommendations include maximizing the involvement of local food producers by facilitating collaboration through gleaning projects (where trained volunteers capture unharvested produce from the fields of cooperating farmers), subsidized SNAP card-reading machines, and tax incentives for food donations.

**Building Capacity**

It became clear in the work of the Campaign that a cohesive assembly with broad representation and capacity is needed to affect meaningful change around the accessibility of food for vulnerable populations in Cumberland County. The development of a single collaborative
charged with increasing food security in the area will facilitate access to funding, information sharing, program coherence, and accountability throughout the food access system.

**Raising Visibility**

In order to ensure this significant issue is addressed in an ongoing and effective manner, it must receive more attention in public policy arenas and in the public eye. Keeping food insecurity in the forefront of social issues in Cumberland County will encourage deliberate and varied efforts to alleviate the problem. Transparency and monitoring of progress will hold the community accountable for improvement in this area. Consistent information-sharing and the raising of public awareness will allow for the sort of community-based and collaborative efforts that have proven most successful in combating food insecurity as well as providing resource information for those in need. As a basic necessity, food security needs to be addressed with the same degree of urgency as housing, and health care issues.

**Public Forums and Discussion Groups**

In addition to extensive research and expert opinion, the Coalition made a concerted attempt to incorporate the views of individuals who experience difficulty accessing food in Cumberland County, vulnerable populations, and those who are often recipients of the programs and services the Coalition had assessed. The Campaign Coalition held a series of public forums and informal discussions to better capture this first-hand perspective.

**Resource Guide**

Over two hundred resources are included at the end of this report, including national model programs, books, reports, local supports, and funders.

**GIS Mapping**

Two Geographic Information System (GIS) maps are included at the end of this report, detailing poverty and pantry location in Cumberland County. These maps are starting points of larger on-line projects that could potentially display food access needs and resources in a current and interactive way.

**Community Strategic Goals and Recommendations Document**

The Strategic Community Goals and Recommendations Document itemizes and explains the six overarching goals and underlying recommendations as defined by the Coalition.
The Campaign to Promote Food Security in Cumberland County

History of the Coalition

In response to the growing and immediate need, the United Way of Greater Portland, TD Bank, the Muskie School of Public Service, and Preble Street convened a coalition of stakeholders in January to lead Cumberland County’s first collaborative effort aimed at reducing and ultimately eliminating food insecurity for vulnerable populations in the region.

The Campaign to Promote Food Security in Cumberland County (CPFSCC) is a sixty member collaborative, including three Coalition chairs, an eleven member Executive Committee, a thirty-two member Coalition, seven staff members, and a growing email distribution list/advisory council.

The CPFSCC chairs represent the board of United Way of Greater Portland, the board of Preble Street, and the TD Bank Charitable Foundation. Staff support is provided by the Muskie School of Public Service in addition to Preble Street and United Way. Members of the Executive Committee and the Coalition are representative of all sectors of the food access system, including production, distribution and retail, rescue, and access support programs. There are members from the public, private, and non-profit sectors and advocates representing a number of the vulnerable populations towards whom the work of the Coalition is directed.

Mission / Values / Goals

Established early to guide the work of the CPFS Coalition, the following mission, values, and goals were developed and ratified:

For purposes of this Campaign, Food Access is defined as a state or condition wherein members of vulnerable populations that are experiencing food insecurity in Cumberland County have adequate resources to obtain healthy and appropriate foods for a nutritious diet. By Vulnerable Populations, the Coalition signifies the elderly, children, immigrants and refugees, disabled persons, those who are underemployed or out of work, single-parent households, and others who lack the income to meet basic needs such as food.

Mission: The mission of the Campaign to Promote Food Security in Cumberland County is to ensure that healthy, appropriate food is accessible to vulnerable populations that are experiencing food insecurity in Cumberland County in a way that reduces, and ultimately eliminates, food insecurity.

Values: We Believe That

- Food Access is a basic human right and must not be compromised. Therefore, Food Access will not be denied due to race, religion, sexual orientation, age, income, gender, or disability.
- Food Access should be geographically diverse and community-focused. The Coalition is committed to promoting local produce, involving local producers, and maximizing access to high quality and healthy foods.
Reliance on a broad range of strategies and programs is important to achieving change and ensuring sustainability.

**Goals:** In order to achieve our Mission Statement, the Coalition intends to

- Focus on program development, collaboration, coordination, and capacity-building strategies that advance food accessibility.
- Design, develop, and implement recommendations and strategies that will substantially, efficiently, effectively, and quantifiably increase Food Access for vulnerable populations in Cumberland County over the next three years.
- Reform local, state, and national public policies so that they reflect best practices in food accessibility.
- Make food accessibility easily understandable and highly available to users, providers, and stakeholders.

**Research Methodology**

The Campaign to Promote Food Security in Cumberland County utilized a multi-pronged approach in the process of information-gathering and recommendation development. This process included primary and secondary data gathering, presentations from experts in the field, small group discussions, a Coalition member survey, three public forums, and discussion groups.

**Secondary Data Review**

The Coalition staff conducted a thorough and on-going secondary data review of articles, programs, and statistics regarding Food Access across the nation, in Maine, and in Cumberland County. The Resource Guide appended to this report itemizes many of the sources that informed the CPFS recommendations and report.

At the beginning of its work, the Coalition was presented with a comprehensive county profile, including demographics, term definitions, current programs, and instances of food insecurity in Cumberland County. This data was augmented throughout the process and informed the recommendations in the report.

**Expert Presentations**

Presentations from experts working in Cumberland County in areas relevant to food access were provided to the Coalition. These presentations, and the primary data they offered, played an important role in the drafting of the report. The presenters were supplied with a template according to set parameters by which to format their reports. Specifically, the template asked each presenter to itemize the food access programs available through their program or agency, to identify recent usage trends, and to list potential needs or barriers that currently prevent service effectiveness or expansion. The presentations covered a wide range of food related resources, including (1) federal/state/local food support programs, (2) emergency food provision, and (3) innovative practices and sustainability.
1. These presentations focused on the publicly-funded programs that are available to vulnerable populations and those experiencing food insecurity. The presentation offered by the Maine Department of Agriculture explained federally funded programs such as TEFAP and CSFP, which have seen recent increases in demand. The City of Portland presented information on its General Assistance program, which provides temporary funds to households unable to meet their basic need. The Maine Department of Health and Human Services presented data surrounding the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and the supplemental food program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC). Portland Public Schools explained the federal school lunch and breakfast programs, the summer feeding program, and other efforts to get fresh fruit and vegetables into schools.

2. Presentations given by professionals in the Maine Emergency Food Distribution System focused on the availability of donated, rescued, and purchased food at food pantries and soup kitchens in Cumberland County, utilization trends, and barriers to service. New models of delivery and best practices regarding access were suggested by the experts in this field.

3. Local farmers and locally-based organizations that are implementing community-focused and innovative initiatives presented their service models to the Coalition. These presentations explicated the benefits of locally-based and sustainably-minded programs; they reported the results of these programs on food access and community engagement; and they enumerated the persistent barriers to program access and expansion.

The presentations were analyzed, reviewed, examined, thoroughly vetted, and commented on by the coalition in small groups. The presentations were then summarized by Coalition staff; converging or parallel issues were identified; and gaps in services as well as potential solutions began to emerge.

**Member Survey**
An electronic survey gave Coalition members another opportunity to respond to the draft Report, goals, and recommendations. The Coalition was also asked about the comprehensiveness of the collected data, reported gaps in services, and proposed areas of reform.

**Public Forums**
The Coalition reached out to the community by attending a meeting of the NAACP at the Root Cellar in Portland, and holding two public forums, one in Portland at the Public Library and one in Standish at St. Joseph’s College. The purpose of these forums was both to share the work of the Coalition with the public and also to garner support and feedback on the nature of the recommendations being proposed.

**Discussion Groups**
In addition to the public forums, the CPFS Coalition facilitated three informal discussion groups, specifically designed to include the voices of Cumberland County residents currently experiencing difficulty accessing food. Discussion groups were held at the Preble Street Food Pantry and at two Preble Street residences for the chronically homeless (Florence House and Logan Place). The discussion groups gave the Coalition first-hand anecdotes regarding the challenges of food access, what is currently successful, and what still is needed.
Introduction: A Hidden Crisis

National

In recent years, Americans have been inundated with news regarding the economic downturn with banks collapsing and unemployment persistently high. The global economic crisis has dominated dinner table conversations across the country. Less has been said, however, about the dinner tables themselves. Chronic under- and under-employment, reduced spending power, and other resource hardships are severely affecting Americans’ ability to access one of the most basic and vital human necessities: food.

According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Economic Research Service (ERS), the past few years have seen a significant rise in food insecurity, the official term for households who are uncertain of having, or unable to acquire, enough food to meet the needs of all their members because they had insufficient money or other resources for food. In 2009, the USDA ERS reported that 14.7 percent of U.S. households (17.4 million) experienced food insecurity at some point during that year. This is a 32% increase from the 2007 rate of 11.1% and the highest rate of food insecurity ever measured since the first national food security survey was conducted in 1995. This means that 50.2 million individuals lived in food insecure households in 2008, including 17.2 million children.

Of the 50.2 million Americans experiencing food insecurity in 2009, 12.2 million adults and 5.4 million children lived in households with very low food security. That term, which replaced “food insecurity with hunger,” means that in spite of using supplementary methods of obtaining food, such as food stamps, food pantries, and kitchens, the household still at times had to skip meals or reduce intake of food due to lack of resources.

A survey conducted by Feeding America, the nation’s largest domestic hunger-relief organization, in September 2009 inventoried its network of 205 food banks to which it provides food every year. Of the 176 food banks that participated in the survey, ninety-nine percent (99%) reported increases in demand from summer 2008 to summer 2009, with the average demand increase being thirty percent (30%). From this same survey, food banks nationwide cited unemployment as being a critical factor in the rising demand at a rate of ninety-one percent (91%). Underemployment was cited as a significant contributor at a rate of seventy-nine percent (79%).

Lower and middle income households are most severely affected by rising rates of food insecurity. “Most higher income households can reduce food spending somewhat and still provide adequate diets for all household members. But for households with food budgets already stretched thin, reducing food expenditures often means compromising diet quality and variety and, in some cases, adequate food intake.” From 2000 to 2007, rates of very low food security for the second lowest income quintile (meaning households whose earnings fall into the second lowest fifth of all earners) increased by close to fifty percent (48.7%), rising from 3.9 percent to 5.8 percent.

Rates of low and very low food security, the gradients of food insecurity, are rising despite simultaneous increases in the number of people receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits and the increase in the amount of benefits awarded to program participants. More than 35 million low-
income Americans (16 million households) received federal Food Stamp/SNAP benefits in June 2009, an increase of nearly 25% over the 13 million households that received assistance in June 2008. In order to accommodate food price inflation, and due to changes in the 2008 Farm Bill and state policies expanding benefits and eligibility, SNAP maximum benefits rose 8.5 percent in October 2008. In April 2009, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act raised maximum allotments by 13.6% from the June 2008 rate.

Participation in federal food assistance programs can boost the local economy. The USDA’s Food and Nutrition Service asserts that every $5 in SNAP benefits yields $9.20 in local economic activity. In addition to participation rates, efforts have recently worked to expand the options available to recipients of such benefits. Purchases made using the SNAP Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards are restricted to stores and vendors equipped with the technology to accept such payment. Farmers markets, which previously accepted paper benefits, typically do not have the ability to accept the new EBT debit cards.

In fact, according to the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy:

In 1993, the last year when all food stamp transactions were paper-based, 549 markets across the country accepted food stamps. $9.3 million in food stamps were redeemed at farmers markets that year, or approximately 0.04% of total food stamp redemptions for the year. As of 2009, 936 markets nationwide were accepting food supports with electronic card readers. $4.3 million in food supports were redeemed at farmers markets, or 0.009% of all SNAP redemptions for the year.

Considering the often high cost of fresh and local produce and considering the important health benefits of those products, it is important to extend food assistance resources to clients interested in shopping at local farm stands and markets. Alternative programs, including gleaning programs and urban farming projects, can also facilitate the availability of fresh and local foods to vulnerable populations unable to afford high market costs.
Maine

From 2002-04 to 2005-07 ... rates of food insecurity ... increased by statistically significant percentages in Delaware, Maine, Minnesota, New Hampshire, Nevada, and West Virginia, with the largest increases observed in Maine and Minnesota. During the same period, the prevalence of very low food security increased by statistically significant percentages in 12 States. The largest increases were in Maine, and Mississippi.13

A 2009 report published by the USDA Economic Research Service (ERS) ranked Maine as the ninth (9th) most food insecure state in the nation and the most food insecure state in New England from 2007-2009.14 During those three years, 14.8% of Maine households experienced food insecurity or were unable to consistently access adequate amounts of nutritious food, while the national average was 13.5% of households.15 Good Shepherd Food Bank estimates that 19.5% of Mainers under the age of 18 are food insecure and 18.8% of Maine children under the age of 5 are food insecure.16

The USDA ERS report also recorded the rate of very low food security in Maine as being 6.7% for the period between 2007 and 2009. This ranks Maine as the state with the second highest rate, exceeded only Alabama, of very low food security, characterized by occasions when eating patterns of one or more household members were disrupted and food intake reduced because the household lacked money and other resources for food.17

Due to rising unemployment18, unprecedented numbers of Maine residents are turning toward public and community programs for assistance in accessing food. The Maine Department of Health and Human
Services saw a **thirty percent (30%) increase in the number of individuals receiving SNAP benefits**, rising from 174,507 in January 2008 to 226,981 in January 2010.\(^9\) Maine was recently awarded the Commodity Supplemental Food Program by the USDA, but the more than $1 million in food allotted for the program will **only serve a small fraction of the low income seniors who are eligible.**\(^{20}\)

Good Shepherd Food Bank (GSFB), the largest statewide distributor of emergency food, distributed nearly 12 million pounds of food to emergency feeding organizations (EFOs) throughout the state in FY 2009. Despite this significant support of hungry Mainers, GSFB reports that Maine needs an additional 25 million pounds yearly to feed everyone who accesses their food through emergency feeding organizations.\(^{21}\) The USDA also provides food to EFOs through The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP). In FY 2009, the Maine Department of Agriculture recorded over 2 million visits to those EFOs who opt to receive food from TEFAP.\(^{22}\) (Although state figures are not available, of the food pantries recently surveyed in Cumberland County by the Maine Hunger Initiative, only half received food from TEFAP, suggesting that this figure is a significant underestimate of all EFO visits statewide.\(^{23}\))

According to a 2010 report by the Good Shepherd Food Bank,

- Forty-one percent (41%) of the members of households served by GSFB are under the age of eighteen. Eleven percent (11%) of household members are under the age of five, and fifteen percent (15%) are over the age of sixty.\(^{24}\)

- Statewide, there are 74,814 Maine residents under the age of eighteen that are currently receiving Temporary Assistance to Needy Families and/or Food Supplement benefit, of which 27,663 are under the age of five.\(^{25}\)

- Among households with school-age children that utilized GSFB-sponsored EFOs in 2009, fifty-six percent (56%) report participating in the federal school lunch program, while only nine percent (9%) reported participation in the summer feeding program.\(^{26}\)
Cumberland County

Cumberland County is Maine’s most populous and affluent county, not typically indicators of high rates of food insecurity. The data, however, are revealing: a growing substratum of vulnerable individuals in Cumberland County experience persistent unemployment, poverty, and hunger.

In FY 2010, 21,274 General Assistance (GA) applications were filed (note: an individual may apply more than once a year), representing a 27% increase in the number of GA applications filed in FY 2009. Portland, Maine’s largest city, often attracts vulnerable persons in need of assistance. Portland general Food Supplement cases, meaning applicants approved for SNAP and other food-related benefits, made up 16% of the state’s total number of cases in 2009.

In Cumberland County, the number of individuals receiving Food Supplements from January 2008 to January 2010 rose thirty-seven percent (37%), from 25,720 cases in 2008 to 35,312 in 2010. With an estimated county population of 278,559, this means that over twelve percent (12%) of Cumberland County residents utilize government assistance for food purchases. In addition to seeking such public assistance as GA and SNAP, many Cumberland County residents are relying more heavily on the Emergency Food Distribution System (EFDS), or a network of food banks, food pantries, soup kitchens, and other emergency feeding organizations (EFOs).

The Maine Hunger Initiative recently catalogued more than fifty (50) food pantries in Cumberland County, documenting increases in demand and persistent barriers to adequate service. Of those pantries that were surveyed, forty-two percent (42%) reported an increase in the number of clients that they serve over the last year. Twenty-one percent (21%) of those pantries documented a more than one-hundred percent (100%) increase in number of clients served. Due to these recent increases, eighty-two percent (82%) of pantries have had to modify services, including decreasing quantities of food distributed, and having to turn clients away.

Although fifty-nine percent (59%) of food pantries only offer food to clients only once every one to two weeks and forty-one percent (41%) of food pantries allow clients to receive food only once every one to three months, eighty percent (80%) of distributed food is only intended to last one week or less. Many pantries cannot supply perishable food at all due to lack of refrigeration: twenty-five percent (25%) of
pantries surveyed do not supply produce or meat; forty-three percent (43%) do not supply dairy products.³⁰

According to GSFB data, **Cumberland County has the largest gap between food resource need and provision in the state.** GSFB, Maine’s largest statewide food bank, distributed about 1.3 million pounds of food in 2009 in Cumberland County. This was against an estimated need of more than 6.2 million pounds, **leaving a gap of 4.9 million pounds of food, or 78% of demand**, which was not met by GSFB.³¹

Wayside Food Rescue, another large emergency food distributor in Cumberland County, recently initiated a neighborhood-based Supplemental Meals Program. Since the inception of this new decentralized distribution of emergency food, Wayside has recorded a forty-three percent (43%) increase in child participation over what was common in their previous soup kitchen model. They also recorded a twenty-five percent (25%) increase in women served and a two percent (2%) increase in elders served.³² GSFB also operates an emergency food program. Its two Food-Mobiles, mobile food pantries, distribute supplies to every county in the state of Maine. De-centralizing food access through such programs can eliminate transportation and other physical access barriers.

Several efforts in the area facilitate both the production and the availability of local produce. Wholesome Wave, a non-profit that began in 2007, helps farmers markets accept EBT benefits by providing funds to double SNAP benefits when they are used at select farmers’ market stands. In Greater Portland, Wholesome Wave works with the nonprofit Cultivating Community, which operates farm stands throughout Portland. These market stands are unique because all of the food sold is organic produce grown at one of the four area farm plots run by the Cultivating Community New American Sustainable Agriculture Project (NASAP).³³ Even so, SNAP participation by farmers markets has dramatically decreased since the program’s switch to EBT debit cards, affecting both the diversity of products available to SNAP benefit recipients and the local food industry.
Call To Action: CPFSCC Strategic Community Goals

The Campaign to Promote Food Security in Cumberland County was guided by the four Coalition goals in its construction of the following six Strategic Community Goals and underlying recommendations. These strategic recommendations are designed to inform the efforts of the Cumberland County Food Access Council and other stakeholder organizations in their attempts to reduce and ultimately eliminate food insecurity in Cumberland County.

Address the economic and environmental systemic issues that limit food access to vulnerable populations.

Influence public policies and programs at the community, regional, state, and national levels that affect food access for vulnerable populations.

Maximize the efficiency, effectiveness, transparency, and availability of the Emergency Food Distribution System.

Enable expansion of innovative, community-based initiatives that increase food access for vulnerable populations in a sustainable way.

Increase overall capacity for Cumberland County to respond to food access issues.

Raise the visibility of the ongoing problems around hunger and lack of food access among vulnerable populations in Cumberland County.
The Economics and Vulnerable Populations

The lack of sufficient income is one of the most significant reasons persons and families experience food insecurity. Unprecedented economic turbulence has resulted in high unemployment rates across the country. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 9.6 percent of Americans (14.8 million) were unemployed in September 2010; there was a loss of 95,000 jobs in that month alone. In Maine, the unemployment rate was 8.0% in August and slightly lower at 7.7% in September.

In addition to those who are out of work, the number of underemployed workers is also rapidly increasing. A September 2010 Gallup poll showed an underemployment rate of 18.8%. This rate, which includes both the unemployed and those who are employed part-time yet looking for full-time work, spiked at 20.4% in April 2010 and has not gone below 18.3% all year. During the month of September 2010, the number of persons unable to find full-time work rose by 612,000 to 9.5 million workers. Underemployed individuals rarely receive employee benefits and often cannot earn a sufficient income to meet the basic needs of themselves and their families.

The faltering economy disproportionately affects minority and vulnerable populations. For example, unemployment rates among workers over age 55 have risen to unparalleled levels. The jobless rate among older Americans hit a record high of 7.2 percent in December 2009 and dipped only to 7.1 percent months later. Rates of unemployment among older Americans have spiked for two reasons. Fewer jobs are protected by unions and seniority rules than in past years, and fewer workers are eligible for early retirement benefits. When older workers lose their jobs, concerns over the sufficiency of their retirement savings, exacerbated by the 2008 stock market collapse, cause them to stay active in the labor force, searching for work.

Even among the employed, many households struggle with rising costs of food, healthcare, energy, and housing. Specifically, nationwide, an estimated 12 million renter and homeowner households pay more than fifty percent (50%) of their annual income on housing costs. This is considered a severe housing cost burden according to the commonly accepted definition of affordable housing as costing no more than thirty percent (30%) of a household’s income. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, the average renter in Maine needs an hourly income of $15.07 in order to afford a 2 bedroom shelter without paying more than 30% of their wage on housing. This hourly rate is more than double the Maine minimum wage.

The minimum wage in Maine was adjusted in October 2009 to $7.50 per hour. The minimum wage in Maine has consistently been higher than the federal minimum wage since 2002, although its real value dropped 21 percent from 1968-2008. Despite efforts to increase the minimum wage and expand programs such as the earned income tax credit, Maine falls short at providing adequate wages to its workers. In 2010, the $7.50 per hour minimum wage would leave the income of a family of four with one full-time worker at nearly thirty percent (30%) below the federal poverty level.
A living wage, defined by the Glossary of International Economics as “a real wage high enough for the worker and family to remain healthy and comfortable,” is pay that is sufficient for a family to meet at least basic needs without public benefits. The calculation of a living wage accounts for costs related to housing, utilities, food, transportation, healthcare, childcare, taxes, and other basic necessities. According to a report prepared for the Maine Department of Labor (DOL), the hourly wage required to provide a living wage in Cumberland County is $11.29 for a single adult and $22.04 for a single adult with two children. In the Portland metropolitan area, the wage necessary to provide for basic needs is higher: $12.38 per hour for a single adult household and $23.55 per hour for a single adult with two children.

Individuals and households who are unable to meet basic necessities due to insufficient employment and/or wages can access a number of public benefits programs in order to supplement their budgets. Significant increases in the Cumberland County enrollment figures of programs such as General Assistance and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) may signify the impact that the weakened economy is having on some households’ ability to meet their needs. In addition to publicly-funded programs, Emergency Food Organizations (EFOs) are also being accessed at higher rates as a result of decreasing financial stability. In a 2009 Feeding America survey, 99 percent of their member food banks nationwide reported an increase in demand for emergency food assistance in the past year. Of food banks surveyed, 91 percent cited unemployment as a critical factor in the increasing demand.

**Making Food Access Sustainable**

For those seeking support, either through food supplements and entitlement programs, or informally from food pantries and soup kitchens, finding reliable access to healthful and appropriate foods is very difficult. The values of the Campaign to Promote Food Security assert that Food Access is a basic human right that must not be compromised or denied because of demographic factors, including income. Issues, such as the depressed economy and accelerating environmental degradation, threaten our finite resources, complicate the pursuit of universal food access, and demand the usage of innovative and sustainable practices.

Future food access should be geographically diverse and community-focused, involving local producers and maximizing access to high quality and healthy foods. Geographic diversity will allow urban and rural areas of Cumberland County equal access to a variety of affordable food sources. Promoting locally produced foods increases the likelihood that the food is fresh and minimally processed, stimulates the immediate economy, minimizes transportation costs (financial and environmental), and concentrates control of product variety within the community in which the food will be consumed.

Rising food costs in a weak economy have led many large distributors to become more efficient with their buying practices, decreasing the amount of surplus food that can be donated to an EFO. Despite liability protections, many donors tend to provide EFOs with non-perishable or highly processed food rather than meat or fresh vegetables, which spoil more quickly. As a result, EFOs have to purchase more foods that are fresh or high in protein. Gleaning locally farmed produce or raised animals for donation to EFOs would diversify supply and ensure the availability of fresh and healthful foods.

Locally gleaned food would also lessen EFOs’ reliance on long-distance transportation. Separating the Emergency Food Distribution System (EFDS) from centralized industrial food by expanding local
production would make the emergency food distribution system somewhat independent from rising oil costs and scarce natural resources. An emphasis on locally grown food would not only involve area farmers in gleaning projects or wholesale partnerships, but also small farm projects in neighborhoods and at schools could assist in the development of the local food movement while incorporating nutrition education and community involvement.

Local farm projects and partnerships will lend themselves to more innovative distribution models, facilitating access to those vulnerable populations who lack independent means of transportation. In Cumberland County, outside of Greater Portland, mobile farm stands and community-based small-scale farm projects could increase food access beyond what is possible through the use of centralized food pantries and governmental store-bound food supplements. Also, smaller, community-based food production and distribution projects can incorporate educational and recreational programming.

Fortunately, Cumberland County has numerous agencies, programs, and volunteers to address food security issues. This network will continue to play a vital role in providing short term assistance to our most vulnerable citizens; however, as a region, we must also focus on agricultural sustainability, innovation and strategies that result in increased income. Consequently, the Coalition is devoting a portion of the report to supporting recommendations that will increase the possibility that we are able to permanently reduce food insecurity.

**Strategic Community Goal:**

**Address the economic and environmental systemic issues that limit food access to vulnerable populations.**

**Recommendations:**

1. Advocate for and influence federal, state, and local policies, programs, and laws which recognize: (a) food insecurity as a symptom of the larger problems of poverty, inability to earn a living income, and lack of affordable social services; and (b) poverty, inability to earn a living income, and food security as problems of the community as a whole, deserving of high-priority government and charitable institutional support.

2. Work with the Maine Commission on Poverty to develop public policies that support livable wages, equitable tax reform, expansion of the earned income tax credit, as well as access to transportation, health care, job training and education, and affordable housing. Develop policies that will stimulate jobs and growth in personal income.

3. Consider and develop programs to meet gaps in food access services identified by the Coalition’s work. (a) Develop short-term measures to meet increasing demands on the emergency food access system, and (b) develop long-term, sustainable solutions to chronic hunger, including preparedness for possible increases in the amount of chronic hunger and the cost of providing increased food access.

4. Develop an educational campaign to improve citizen awareness of and access to income transfer programs and entitlement programs, such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP),
General Assistance (GA), and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).

5. Promote local food growing policies, laws, and regulations which support sustainable and environmentally-sound growing practices. These efforts should (a) recognize climate change and fossil fuel use implications for growing food, and (b) address challenges/threats to food and water supply safety.
Federal/State/Local Food Support Programs

Programs and Trends
At the state level, Maine administers a number of programs that provide supplemental food and funds to augment the food budgets of eligible individuals. For instance, the Department of Agriculture operates The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), which utilizes federal funds to increase the purchasing power of contracted Emergency Feeding Organizations (EFOs) operating in Maine. The Maine Department of Agriculture (DOA) recorded over two million visits to its cooperating EFOs in the last year, a marked increase from the 800,000 yearly visits recorded ten years ago.57

The Maine DOA consistently accepts bonus commodities (funds and goods beyond ordinary allotments) as they are made available by the USDA. Although these bonus supplies are voluntary offerings, the DOA never refuses to participate as the need is generally greater than supply. Unfortunately, “bonus commodities through TEFAP have decreased significantly. These surplus commodity deliveries through TEFAP have declined approximately seventy percent (70%) nationwide over the past several years, at the same time that requests for emergency food have increased.”58

Unlike TEFAP, which provides food and commodities to cooperating soup kitchens, food pantries, and other EFOs, the USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), operated by the Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), puts purchasing power directly in the hands of eligible participants through a food supplement card. The average benefit value received by food supplement recipients in Cumberland County has risen from $93 in January 2008 to $135 in January 2010.

The number of individuals statewide enrolled in SNAP increased by thirty percent (30%) between 2008 and 2010, going from 174,507 in January 2008 to 226,981 in January 2010. In Cumberland County, the number of individuals receiving food supplements dramatically increased by thirty-seven percent (37%) during the same period (January 2008: 25,720; January 2010: 35,312). The majority of the increase in Cumberland County was seen in persons between the ages of 19 and 59, whose participation in the SNAP program rose by forty-eight percent (48%) during that two year period. Individuals under age 18 in Cumberland County are receiving food supplements in 2010 at a rate twenty-eight percent

Opportunities for Change:
Benefits of SNAP:
SNAP participation is at an all-time high; in January 2010, close to 40 million people, or about 1 in every 8 Americans, were receiving food supplement benefits through the SNAP program. (1) Even so, the USDA reported that as of 2007 only 66% of those eligible for SNAP benefits participated. Increased participation not only affords vulnerable populations with greater ability to access appropriate food with minimal barriers, it also bolsters the local economy. Low-income households who receive SNAP benefits spend more locally on food purchases than those not receiving assistance. Every $5 in new SNAP benefits generates $9.20 in total community spending. “If the national participation rate rose five percentage points, 1.9 million more low-income people would have an additional $978 million in benefits per year to use to purchase healthy food and $1.8 billion total in new economic activity would be generated nationwide.” (2)

(28%) higher than that of two years earlier. For those aged 60 or older, the rate has increased twenty-one percent (21%).

The overall participation rate among individuals aged 60 or older is much lower than that for the other two age brackets, suggesting that the population is underserved. Factors such as social stigma and lack of transportation may contribute to this population being underserved. Among those individuals over age 60 who do receive food supplements, the majority are seniors who live alone.

Cumberland County SNAP (food supplement) Recipients By Age Group Jan 2008-Jan 2010 Source: (OIAS – ACES)

Cumberland County SNAP Recipients Aged 60+ By Household Size Jan 2008 – Jan 2010 Source: (OIAS – ACES)
General Assistance (GA) provides residents with financial assistance when, despite utilizing other assistance programs, they lack the fiscal resources to meet their most basic needs. The state reimburses municipalities fifty percent (50%) of the expenditures for this program. GA is intended as a last resort, after all other available resources have been exhausted or are still insufficient.

In FY 2009, the GA program provided direct financial assistance to 4,173 individuals in Portland. This is an eleven percent (11%) increase in the number of individuals receiving assistance compared to FY 2008. GA expenditures for the city of Portland, including amounts reimbursed by the state, have increased eighty-six percent (86%), from $6,190,512 in 2000 to $11,493,872 in 2008. Portland’s GA expenditures for providing food assistance increased from $365,792 in FY 2008 to $562,890 in FY 2009, an increase of fifty-four percent (54%).

Though they are required by Maine state law to provide assistance to eligible residents, many GA offices in Cumberland County have very restricted office hours and do not accept clients who appeal for GA without an appointment. In some cases mandated in-person interviews can create transportation problems for vulnerable individuals. The limited hours and other requirements can inhibit access for many people seeking assistance.

### Vulnerable Populations

Certain supplemental food programs are targeted towards specific vulnerable populations such as the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP), known in Maine as the Maine Senior FarmShare Program. The Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), which, like TEFAP, captures federal funds and commodities to fortify feeding programs, focuses its efforts toward those organizations serving seniors. CSFP is new in Maine; an estimated fifteen percent (15%) of those eligible are currently being served.

While there is an array of services available to new Americans, the decentralization of those services and service providers makes quantifying the immigrant and refugee populations and identifying their needs a difficult task. Language barriers, social stigma, and insufficient methods of outreach can also contribute to this vulnerable population’s high rates of food insecurity. Maintaining clearer data on the immigrant and refugee population in Cumberland County, identifying their food access needs, and providing a sustaining support system to ensure long term food security is important to the area’s embrace of a dynamic and changing population.

Another public program geared toward specific vulnerable populations is the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). This USDA sponsored program provides grant money to states to reimburse eligible

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**Model Programs:**

**SNAP For Seniors**

**Wisconsin** – Through a two-year Food Stamp Program Outreach grant project funded in FY 2005, the City of Milwaukee Housing Authority teamed with Milwaukee County and Wisconsin Department of Health and Human Services to schedule stops of its **Mobil Benefits Van** at public housing sites. Interviewing clients on the spot using four work stations inside the van made it possible for elderly and disabled residents to be qualified for benefits without having to make a long and sometimes intimidating trek to the local office. Ninety-nine percent of those interviewed were able to provide the necessary documentation to qualify that day and receive their EBT card within two days.

*Quoted from:*

day care centers, afterschool programs, and emergency shelters for serving healthy meals and snacks to child and adult participants. Clients at approved centers must be children, under the age of 12, at risk youth, under the age of 18, disabled adults, or persons over the age of 60 who come from low-income households or neighborhoods.\textsuperscript{61} This program can help augment gaps in healthy meal access for children when they are not in school.

**Schools**

For vulnerable children and youth, the majority of food support programs are available in schools. In 1995, the Department of Defense expanded its Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP), which provides produce to military installations, federal prisons, and Veterans Hospitals, to public schools.\textsuperscript{62} Though most of the produce comes from centralized American farmers, in 2006 the FFVP was opened to include subsidized school purchases of local produce under certain approved conditions.\textsuperscript{63}

The most common school-based meal programs are the National School Lunch Program and the National School Breakfast Program, which provide federally reimbursable meals to qualifying children during the school day. Nationally, a record 20.5 million students were eligible for subsidized school lunches at the end of the 2009-2010 school year.\textsuperscript{64} The percent of enrolled students in Cumberland County who receive meal benefits has increased from 22.1 percent in 2005 to 30.8 percent in 2010. The percent of enrolled students in Portland who receive meal benefits has increased from 41.7 percent in 2005 to 48.8 percent in 2010.\textsuperscript{65}

With close to one-third of Cumberland County public school students and nearly half of students in Portland public schools receiving free or price reduced meals during the school year, addressing the potential effect of extended school vacations is a formidable task. Although there is a Summer Food Service Program, where federal reimbursements help agencies provide daily meals at neighborhood sites, the current operation of that program lags far behind the number of meals potentially needed in Cumberland County. While 12,465 free or reduced meals are served daily during the school year, only 1,723 free meals are served from sites over the summer. This leaves a summer gap of 10,742 meals per day.

Participation rates, even during the school year, are also a source of concern. Social stigma, poorly timed school transportation, and other obstacles prevent students from accessing the subsidized breakfasts or lunches for which they are eligible. The breakfast program participation rate is particularly low: less than half of students receiving free or reduced lunch participate in the breakfast program. Participation in the reduced fare lunch program also is consistently lower than that of the free lunch program, suggesting that the $0.40 per meal cost may present a problem for low-income families enrolled in the program.

**Gaps in Services:**

The following gaps in services have been identified:

*Collaboration and Access*

- A lack of cooperation and collaboration between agencies that provide food assistance leads to duplication of effort and the inefficient use of resources.
• Transportation barriers make it difficult to attend in-person interviews to receive service.

• Families not automatically qualified for free and reduced lunch because of TANF or SNAP enrollment (1/3 of those eligible) must complete paperwork applications yearly. This process can be complicated and is especially difficult for English Language Learners.

• Individuals receiving Social Security Income (SSI) and a small supplemental income, who spend up to 45% of their income on rent due to changes in Portland Housing/Housing and Urban Development (HUD) policies, do not qualify for SNAP though they need the benefits.

**Stigma and Program Design**

• Data is not available quantifying food insecure immigrant and refugees.

• Homeless persons can face barriers receiving mailed benefit information.

• There is a stigma, especially in the elderly population, attached to receiving food supplement assistance.

• Stigma and social devaluing of school meals lower participation rates in school meal programs.

• There are not enough summer feeding sites. Even where meals are served, they often are not accompanied by educational or recreational programming, a factor that may affect participation rates.

**Strategic Community Goal:**

Influence public policies at the community, regional, state, and national levels that affect food access for vulnerable populations.

**Recommendations:**

1. Increase in Cumberland County the number of eligible residents over sixty-five who participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

2. Create in Cumberland County more transportation options, including public transit education and access facilitation, for vulnerable populations that need to access food.

3. Support and build in Cumberland County upon existing Federal Nutrition Programs such as local School Breakfast and School Lunch Programs, Summer Nutrition Programs, and the Child and Adult Care Food Programs, including identifying need, increasing participation, and including nutritious, fresh, and locally-grown food in meals served.

4. Introduce legislation that will require the provision of summer school feeding programs in school districts where fifty percent (50%) or more of the students qualify for free and reduced lunch.

5. Eliminate the category of “reduced price lunch” and qualify those children for the Free Lunch
6. Support legislation to restructure Maine’s Food Council or create a separate entity devoted to food access for vulnerable populations.

7. Advocate for and influence federal, state, and local policies, programs, tax and other laws, which redesign, strengthen, and/or expand the existing safety net of governmental programs for vulnerable population food access.
Emergency Food Distribution

The Emergency Food Distribution System (EFDS) includes food banks, food rescue programs, emergency food organizations, and pantries and kitchens that provide limited assistance to individuals or families. These largely non-profit organizations can choose to operate independently, or they can cooperate with and receive food support from either the federal government or a larger food bank network.

As of May 2010, fifty-four percent (54%) of surveyed food pantries in Cumberland County did not receive USDA/TEFAP food, and forty-eight percent (48%) did not receive food from Maine’s two largest surplus food distributors: Good Shepherd Food Bank and Wayside Food Rescue. Reasons given for nonparticipation in one of these more organized emergency food networks included lack of 501(c) (3) non-profit status, lack of ability to transport supplies of food, and a desire to avoid geographic and income-related eligibility requirements of their clients.

Participation in a larger emergency food pantry network, however, can facilitate pantry collaboration and standardize operations, such as proper food storage and prohibiting discrimination. Outside of these networks, Emergency Food Organizations (EFOs) can have widely varying administrative practices, including hours of operation, access requirements, and quality, quantity, and diversity of food selection.

Programs and Trends

Recently, Preble Street launched the Maine Hunger Initiative (MHI), a multi-level direct service and advocacy approach to address the growing hunger needs in Maine. One of MHI’s first projects has been to catalogue, survey, and organize food pantries in Cumberland County. The surveyed was completed by 96% of pantries identified to be operating in the county.

- These food pantries collectively serve 5,107 households per month or approximately 13,613 individuals. Some of the pantries have been recently formed, while others have been in operation for over 30 years.
- Of the forty-eight pantries surveyed, sixty-five percent (65%) have some sort of requirement in order for people to receive food. For example, seventy percent (70%) of the food pantries serve only the residents of the town/neighborhood in which they are located. Proof of residency is one of the policies mandated by pantries who participate in the Good Shepherd Food Bank EFO network.

- Clients can receive food once every 1-2 weeks from fifty-nine percent (59%) of the food pantries, while 41% of the food pantries allow clients to return only once every 1-3 months. Despite these restrictions on frequency of access, eighty percent (80%) of food given out at food pantries is intended to last a week or less.

- Almost half of the food pantries surveyed have no operating budget. Of those with an operating budget, eighty-one percent (81%) of pantry budgets goes toward purchasing food.

- These pantries collect resources from a variety of sources, including retail grocery stores, private donations, and the statewide Good Shepherd Food Bank.

- In the past year, surveyed pantries reported a forty-two percent (42%) increase in the number of clients they serve. Of those food pantries, twenty-one percent (21%) catalogued more than a hundred percent (100%) increase.

- Due to recent increases in demand, eighty-two percent (82%) of the food pantries surveyed have modified their operations, either by distributing less food to each client or by turning people away.

- Other challenges also inhibit distribution of emergency food: twenty-eight percent (28%) of food pantries surveyed said they do not have adequate space to operate their pantry; twenty percent (20%) said they do not have freezers or refrigerators on site.

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**The Pantry Experience: Food Sources**

Breakdown of all of the food in Cumberland County

- Donations: 25%
- Discount: 5%
- USDA: 9%
- Retail Grocery: 10%
- Wayside Food Rescue: 13%
- Local Food Rescue: 15%
- Good Shepherd Food Bank: 23%
- The lack of refrigeration leads to a limit in food diversity: twenty-five percent (25%) of pantries surveyed do not supply produce or meat; forty-three percent (43%) do not supply dairy products.

- The food pantries in Cumberland County are often independently run; ninety-eight percent (98%) of them depend on volunteer help to operate the pantry. Thirty-eight percent (38%) of the pantries surveyed were in need of more volunteers.

While most food pantries and soup kitchens are run independently by religious or other local organizations, the programming and trends of larger service agencies can offer important insight into the EFDS in Cumberland County.

For example, Preble Street Soup Kitchens are located at the Preble Street Resource Center, the Teen Center, and also at Florence House, serving over 900 meals every day. Preble Street also operates a food pantry, serving as many as 140 families every week. This year (2010), Preble Street will serve 480,000 meals (40,000 meals a month). That includes: 19,624 meals served at the Resource Center; 2,094 meals served at Florence House; 1,733 meals at the Teen Center; and 16,556 meals served out of the Food Pantry. In addition to food service, Preble Street provides a range of social services including drop-in services, housing and employment services, advocacy work, and case management.

Good Shepherd Food Bank (GSFB) is another important resource in the Maine EFDS. GSFB is Maine’s Certified Affiliate of the national Feeding America Food Bank Network. GSFB has contractual partnerships with more than 640 hunger relief non-profits in the state, including 120 partnering agencies in Cumberland County. Good Shepherd Food Bank recently surveyed 428 of their 585 participating agencies across the state of Maine. Of those who were in existence in 2006, eighty-one percent (81%) of pantries, sixty-eight percent (68%) of kitchens, and sixty-five percent (65%) of shelters reported that there had been an increase since 2006 in the number of clients who come to their emergency food program sites.66

GSFB currently operates a Food-Mobile Program with two mobile food pantries that distribute food to every county in Maine. In 2009, the GSFB food-mobile distributed 84,000 pounds of food over the course of 12 visits to sites in Cumberland County. In July 2010, the Food Bank opened a Portland warehouse and food distribution center to increase and improve access to food in Cumberland and York Counties. Temporary cold storage capacity is included at the facility, and a permanent 40,000 cubic foot freezer/refrigeration unit is planned for installation within the first year of operation.

In addition to donated and salvaged food, GSFB purchases food, particularly foods that are high in protein or fresh fruits and vegetables. In 2009, GSFB distributed 200,000 pounds of purchased food to partnering agencies in Cumberland County. Fresh and healthful foods, with their limited shelf lives and refrigeration requirements, are the hardest supplies to obtain and make available in EFOs.

According to Preble Street, pantry shelves are being depleted due to a number of reasons:

- a six-year decline in USDA commodities (from 2002-2007);
more efficient purchasing and the growth of secondary retail markets, which dramatically reduced food industry surplus available to food programs;

- escalating food prices, which limited buying power;

- inadequate school breakfast, summer meal, and senior nutrition programs;

- more people losing their jobs and homes and seeking emergency food.

In response to the growing demand for food in 2007, Wayside Food Rescue, another major player in the EFDS of Maine, consolidated its efforts to Cumberland County only and began exploring alternative frameworks for addressing food insecurity.

Working from a recently altered service model, Wayside is spearheading an innovative community meals program that strives to bring food into the neighborhoods and communities where it is needed, rather than retaining it for pick-up at centralized locations. Wayside Food Rescue is working to provide a system for community based volunteers to serve prepared meals where such meals are needed, and to foster collaboration among hunger agencies in the development of an efficient network for the collection and equitable distribution of food.

Since the establishment of the neighborhood-based Supplemental Meals Program, Wayside has seen a forty-three percent (43%) increase in child participation over what was typically seen in the old soup kitchen model. They have recorded a twenty-five percent (25%) increase in women served and a two percent (2%) increase in elders served meals through the community meals program. These increased participation rates signify the positive effects removing access barriers, such as transportation, may have on food access in the county.

Gaps in Services:

- There is an insufficient supply of fresh vegetables and fruits and high-protein foods in the Emergency Food Distribution System (EFDS).

- The region lacks quality nutrition education programs and effective ways of recruiting and utilizing volunteers for the EFDS.

- The EFDS lacks sufficient cold storage at distribution sites, needed to preserve food that will otherwise be wasted.

- A lack of technology in the EFDS prohibits meaningful collaboration between agencies.

- Gaps in coordination and lack of standardization of food pantries lead to underutilized resources. For example, eligibility requirements and access barriers can prohibit people from accessing what they need.

- Food pantries are also challenged by limited: diversity of products; availability of non-food items; physical space; transportation; community awareness and collaborations; and summer meal programs, the season when need is highest and supplies are most depleted.
**Strategic Community Goal:**
Maximize the efficiency, effectiveness, transparency, and availability of the Emergency Food Distribution System.

**Recommendations:**

1. Increase by 500 tons the amount of food available for the Emergency Food Distribution System in Cumberland County over the next three years.

2. Encourage food pantries, kitchens, and meal programs in Cumberland County to consider and develop best practices, such as (a) examining eligibility requirements and keeping barriers to a minimum, (b) reducing redundancies, (c) standardizing policies to make services more efficient and accessible, (d) increasing the hours programs are open, and the accessibility of services, where possible, (e) reducing stigma around food assistance, (f) using a client choice distribution model, and (g) measuring and documenting program outcomes.

3. Assist food access programs and agencies in Cumberland County to develop cost-effective efficient practices and programs, increase their food sourcing abilities, and maximize use of community volunteers to meet the need. Also assist food access programs and agencies in developing and effectively utilizing technological resources.

4. Develop in Cumberland County the capacity to link clients to social services at food pantry sites and other feeding sites.

5. Use (a) mapping and connectivity software to determine location of vulnerable populations and services in order to plan best future delivery and use of food access services in Cumberland County and (b) business-modeled survey research to maximize delivery of food access services.

6. Using Farm-To-Pantry models, along with farmers and other appropriate public and private organizations, develop a plan in Cumberland County that will increase the amount of fresh foods available to vulnerable populations and address cold storage and food preservation issues.

7. Work with the Finance Authority of Maine (FAME) to establish a loan program for food access agencies or programs that serve vulnerable populations and need financial resources to cover start up costs or complete capital improvements.
Local Farmers and Innovative Programs

While governmental food support programs and emergency food suppliers constitute the bulk of the resources available to food insecure individuals, alternative programs are growing and hold tremendous potential for offering both sustainability and dignity of choice. For example, programs that offer instruction in food production or preservation foster the self-sufficiency of food insecure people, lessening their dependence on emergency or subsidized foods. Programs that capture and utilize fresh and local foods that may otherwise be wasted relieve individuals’ and EFOs’ reliance on transported or purchased food or foods with lesser nutritional value.

Farming

Farms cover over 1.3 million acres of Maine land. There are over 8,100 farms in Maine, eighty-five percent (85%) of these are family or individually owned. From 2002 to 2007, the number of Maine farms grew from 7,196 to 8,136 farms, a 13.1 percent increase. The majority of the farm growth, seventy percent (70%), was in the smaller farm size category, between 1 and 49 acres, while the number of large farms, over 180 acres, declined. In Cumberland County, 630 farms cover 51,727 acres of land. Despite a small increase in the number of farms, the total farm acreage has decreased steadily from 57,556 acres in 1997, to 54,455 acres in 2002, to the 51,727 acres reported in 2010. The increase in small farms is indicative of a larger national move to more direct-sales farming.

Cultivating Community administers the New American Sustainable Agriculture Project (NASAP), assisting immigrant and refugee farmers in subsistence and commercial farming that is consistent with their culture, lifestyle aspirations, and individual goals. This project addresses the food insecurity of members of one vulnerable population at its source. By helping people produce their own food, this project lessens their dependence on social programs while allowing them dignity of choice in the sorts of food they eat. Also, by supporting a community urban garden in a predominately immigrant and refugee neighborhood, NASAP centralizes the issue of fresh and local foods and facilitates nutrition education.

Opportunities for Change: Gleaning Projects

Gleaning, or collecting crops from farm fields after the commercial harvest, can provide food to food insecure individuals that would otherwise have been wasted. A gleaning project in Pierce County, WA, recruited 50 gleaners who collected over 110,000 pounds of fresh produce from local farms and orchards. Of that, 85,000 pounds (77%) were donated to the state Emergency Food Network and 25,000 pounds (23%) were taken home by the gleaners. The participant gleaners applauded the program for: stretching their food budget; enabling them to eat healthier and fresher foods; allowing them to do good work for their community; and teaching them useful skills such as harvesting and food preservation. The farmers who participated were glad to have volunteers, trained in harvesting, put to good use the foods they were unable to sell yet lacked the time to collect for donation.

Education and Service

Cultivating Community works to educate youth about food production, marketing, and nutrition through its various volunteer and service learning projects. By involving young people in the production and commercial sale of fresh produce, as well as through their partnerships with area neighborhoods and schools, Cultivating Community imparts the benefits of a local, sustainable diet and helps make healthy eating accessible. Similarly, the Eat Well program, operated by University of Maine’s Cooperative Extension, provides weekly nutrition education, healthy snacks, and physical activity at sixty-four percent (64%) or fourteen (14) out of the twenty-two (22) Summer Feeding Sites in the greater Portland area.

According to the Maine School Garden Network, there are school gardens in Scarborough, Portland, South Portland, Chebeague Island, and Freeport schools.73 These gardens enable garden-to-cafeteria opportunities and also facilitate school composting projects, and health and nature education efforts.

There are also inherent educational advantages to outdoor and kinesthetic gardening activities; gardening projects can connect schools with the larger community and can provide students with an income-producing business opportunity.74 School and community gardens can also serve as a gathering site for youth participating in a summer feeding program.

The University of Maine Cooperative Extension also administers the Master Gardener and Master Food Preserver programs, together harnessing close to 7,000 hours of volunteer service. Other projects run by Cooperative Extension include Plant-a-Row for the Hungry, which has donated 13,338 pounds of gleaned or home-grown food to local pantries, and the Preserving the Harvest program, which teaches participants how to safely store fresh food for out-of-season use.

Fresh and Local Food

Outside of individual production and preservation, there are a number of innovative ways to provide fresh and local food to vulnerable populations experiencing food insecurity. Cultivating Community operates ElderShares, providing the funds to triple the value of a participating individual’s Senior Farm Shares coupon. Cultivating Community’s Double Coupon Voucher Program doubles the value of WIC and SNAP benefits for any user at select farmers markets. William H. Jordan Farm in Cape Elizabeth also accepts SNAP benefits, a phenomenon that is growing, but still not widespread.

Opportunities for Change:
Farm to School Legislation
2009 Maine Legislative Resolve Chapter 106
LD1140 was a resolve, directing the Department of Education and the Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources and the Department of Health and Human Services to convene a work group to strengthen farm to school efforts in the state. That work group generated a number of recommendations for the state in a report issued in February and then again in June, 2010. Recommendations included:

1. Expand (to include all local foods) and fund the Local Produce Fund, which provides reimbursements to schools for money spent on locally grown produce.
2. Allow a five percent (5%) tax credit for Maine growers and food producers selling to schools and other public institutions.
3. Adopt a state procurement policy that mandates a minimum percent of food purchases to be spent on local food.

Report can be found at:
http://mainemarinelicensing.net/education/sfs/documents/farm_to_school/Maine%20Farm%20to%20School%20Report_Revised_entire%20June%202010.pdf
William H. Jordan Farm in Cape Elizabeth is engaged in a number of efforts aimed at combating food insecurity in the area. It donates unsold and gleaned produce to the Food Cupboard in South Portland, Good Shepherd Food Bank, The Root Cellar, and Wayside Food Rescue, in addition to working with area schools to integrate more local and fresh foods into their menus while not overtaxing their budgets. William H. Jordan Farm also participates in the Maine Senior FarmShare Program, expanding upon the original project model by establishing a mobile farm stand that lessens the transportation burden for participating seniors. Additionally, William H. Jordan Farm accepts SNAP at their farm stand.

Despite William H. Jordan Farm involvement in food support programs, it is important to stress that farms, even small-scale and family farms, are businesses. As such, for any food security efforts to attract farmer participation, the programs must be of minimal cost and inconvenience to the farmer. According to Penny Jordan, most farmers will voluntarily participate in efforts to contribute their produce to vulnerable populations in need, but only if the process does not lead to a loss in their revenue or adversely affect their established business structure.

**Gaps in Services:**

- Demand for subsidized or donated fresh, local produce has grown significantly and currently outstrips the supply.

- The Senior Farm Share program to a large degree does not address growing and unmet demand, particularly in Portland.

- The SNAP application to become a certified vendor and the wireless technology can be cost-prohibitive for farmers market vendors, especially for small-scale farmers and producers.

- There is a lack of funding and available farmland, which could be used to employ more young people during the summer and supply new farmers with hands-on training.

- Restrictive town ordinances can pose obstacles to small-scale farming.

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**Opportunities for Change:**

**SNAP in Farmers Markets**

From 1994 to 2008, the amount of SNAP dollars spent at Farmers Markets declined 71%. Nationwide in 2009, the percentage of SNAP transactions used at Farmer’s Markets was only 0.008% of total SNAP purchases. American consumers in general spend around 0.2% of their food dollars at Farmers Markets. Perpetuating the decline in SNAP use at Farmers Markets was the shift from paper vouchers to electronic benefit cards, which made it more difficult for the mostly cash-only markets to accommodate SNAP benefits customers.

A 2010 report titled “Real Food, Real Choice” itemized ways to facilitate the use of SNAP benefits at Farmers Markets:

- Subsidize costs of operating EBT terminals (USDA or state SNAP agencies, such as in Iowa and CA, should do this)
- The 2012 Farm Bill should incentivize the use of SNAP benefits at Farmers Markets through double voucher programs or state grants.
- Farmers Markets should be educated about SNAP and encouraged to locate and time markets to appeal to lower income or benefit-receiving communities.

Taken from “Real Food, Real Choice,” found at http://www.foodsecurity.org/pub/RealFoodRealChoice_SNAP_FarmersMarkets.pdf
• Small and medium scale producers are often underrepresented when developing local, state, and federal policies.

• There are transportation gaps and barriers, both for rural clients to reach food sources and for urban clients to transport food back to their homes.

• Poor dental health and care can create problems in encouraging healthy eating.

**Strategic Community Goal:**

Enable expansion of innovative, community-based initiatives that increase food access for vulnerable populations in a sustainable way.

**Recommendations:**

1. Work with DHHS to increase the number of farmers and farmers’ markets in Cumberland County that accept SNAP benefits and General Assistance vouchers.

2. During the next legislative session, introduce a bill that will provide farmers with a state tax credit if a donation of products is made to a food pantry or emergency food organization.

3. Increase the number of farmers in Cumberland County who will participate in a formal gleaning program.

4. Identify and implement ways for pantries, food rescue organizations, and individuals to absorb the volume of products available from local farms during the peak growing season. Programs could include subsidized Community Supported Agriculture memberships, an EFO styled after the Winter Cache and Master Food Preserver models, doubled SNAP values accepted at markets, and/or stronger Farm-to-Pantry programs.

5. Encourage municipalities in Cumberland County to authorize the use of vacant lots and other properties for community gardens.

6. Advocate for and influence federal, state and local policies, programs, tax and other laws, and land use regulations which encourage (a) local food production, infrastructure and resources, (b) creation, preservation and utilization of local farmlands, agriculture, neighborhood and community gardens, and (c) the promotion of local and vulnerable population food access, and self-sufficiency.

7. Develop more innovative in-home and community-based feeding programs in Cumberland County that provide fresh food, emphasize proper nutrition, and provide on-going education about food related issues.

8. Utilize local schools, faith centers, community centers, municipal facilities and meeting places in Cumberland County as food access distribution and storage centers, and for meal programs where additional capacity is needed.

9. Advocate and promote school life skills and health curricula which include food growing, preparation,
preservation and storage, and planning/preparing nutritious meals.

10. Work with local dentists to increase the availability of dental services for vulnerable populations in the region so that certain vulnerable populations can comfortably eat more nutritious foods.
Capacity in Cumberland County

Food Policy Councils are becoming more common across the nation in response to rising rates of food insecurity and obesity. These councils often combine efforts around food security with those related to agriculture and food production business; they focus on a range of issues from health and nutrition, to economic development, to land use planning and sustainability. In common, these councils share a collaborative nature, involving policymakers along with local food producers, researchers, advocates, and members of the community. These collaboratives have helped to increase access to farmers markets, expanding nutrition education, preserving farmland, and meeting other food access and environmental objectives.

The Michigan Food Policy Council, for example, includes members from multiple state agencies as well as representatives from farming and land use organizations, the food processing sector, schools, anti-hunger organizations, organized labor, and other stakeholders. The Council was created by an Executive Order and funded in partnership with the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. Currently the Michigan Food Policy Council is working with the Michigan Farmers Market Association through a grant received from the USDA “Know your Farmer, Know your Food” initiative to assist new farmers markets in acquiring electronic card readers so that SNAP recipients have greater access to fresh and healthy food.

The Ohio Food Policy Council, also created by a Governor’s Executive Order, was established to jointly encourage and sustain Ohio’s food system industries and also to improve food security rates in the state. Current initiatives include preservation of farmland, reducing barriers to food assistance programs, facilitating access to locally-produced foods for low-income residents, and better connecting buyers and producers in order to encourage local procurement and food business. On the county-level, the Portland/Multnomah Food Policy Council is a citizen advisory group that reports to the City Council and the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners on issues surrounding food access, land use planning, local food purchasing, and other related initiatives.

The state of Maine’s Commissioner of the Maine Department of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Resources created a food policy working group and advisory council in 2005. In 2006 the group submitted “A Food Policy for the State of Maine” to the Maine legislature. The report outlined a food policy guide for the state with specific goals, benchmarks, and guiding principles. The report also drafted legislation calling for the formation of a statewide food policy council, which would oversee the work of drafting and implementing food policy in Maine. This legislation was never passed, however, and Maine remains without a statewide food policy entity.

Cumberland County, as well, lacks a unified and inclusive entity focused on improving food access through collaboration, advocacy, and program development. It became clear in the work of the Campaign to Promote Food Security in Cumberland County that a cohesive assembly with broad representation and capacity is needed to affect meaningful change around the accessibility of food for vulnerable populations in Cumberland County. The development of a single collaborative charged with increasing food security in the area will facilitate access to funding, information sharing, program coherence, and accountability throughout the food access system.
**Strategic Community Goal:**
Increase overall capacity for Cumberland County to respond to food access issues.

**Recommendations:**
1. Establish the Cumberland County Food Access Council for the purpose of overseeing the implementation of the Coalition’s goals and recommendations.

2. Support the efforts of other coalitions, programs, and collaboratives that are currently working in Cumberland County on food access issues.
Raising Visibility

The data surrounding food insecurity in Maine is startling. Maine was the most food insecure state in New England from 2007 – 2009. Also in 2009, Maine had the second highest rate in the nation of very low food security, meaning trouble accessing food with incidences of reduced food intake or hunger. Nevertheless, food insecurity is an under-recognized problem in Maine. Without distinct pockets of poverty or specific food deserts, many assume that food is easily accessed. Research into the vulnerable populations of Cumberland County, however, discovered myriad problems, including lack of transportation, insufficient incomes, and other factors that leave too many residents without consistent access to adequate food.

In order to ensure this significant issue is addressed in an ongoing and effective manner, it must receive more attention in public policy arenas and in the public eye. Keeping food insecurity in the forefront of social issues in Cumberland County will encourage deliberate and varied efforts to alleviate the problem. Transparency and monitoring of progress will hold the community accountable for improvement in this area. Consistent information-sharing and the raising of public awareness will allow for the sort of community-based and collaborative efforts that have proven most successful in combating food insecurity as well as providing resource information for those in need. As a basic necessity, food security needs to be addressed with the same degree of urgency as housing, and health care issues.

**Strategic Community Goal:**

*Raise the visibility of the ongoing problems around hunger and lack of food access among vulnerable populations in Cumberland County.*

**Recommendations:**

1. Create a food access web site that regularly updates data and information regarding food access and resources in Cumberland County.

2. Develop marketing and multimedia campaigns to regularly inform and educate the public and key stakeholders about hunger and food access issues in Cumberland County.

3. Promote educational, public relations, and media outreach goals in Cumberland County of making food access easily understandable and highly available to vulnerable populations, including the reduction of stigma around food assistance.

4. Issue an annual report about the Council’s progress in meeting goals and benchmarks regarding hunger and food access in Cumberland County.
Campaign to Promote Food Security in Cumberland County

A partnership between the United Way of Greater Portland, TD Bank, Preble Street, and the Muskie School of Public Service

Community Strategic Goals and Recommendations Document

2010
CPFSCC Strategic Community Goals

The Campaign to Promote Food Security in Cumberland County was guided by the four Coalition goals in its construction of the following six Strategic Community Goals and underlying recommendations. These strategic recommendations are designed to inform the efforts of the Cumberland County Food Access Council and other stakeholder organizations in their attempts to reduce and ultimately eliminate food insecurity in Cumberland County.

Address the economic and environmental systemic issues that limit food access to vulnerable populations.

Influence public policies and programs at the community, regional, state, and national levels that affect food access for vulnerable populations.

Maximize the efficiency, effectiveness, transparency, and availability of the Emergency Food Distribution System.

Enable expansion of innovative, community-based initiatives that increase food access for vulnerable populations in a sustainable way.

Increase overall capacity for Cumberland County to respond to food access issues.

Raise the visibility of the ongoing problems around hunger and lack of food access among vulnerable populations in Cumberland County.
**Economic and Environmental Systemic Issues**

The rising cost of food, especially of nutritious whole, natural, and local foods, makes access to diverse and healthful foods increasingly difficult for certain vulnerable populations. Persistent unemployment and underemployment combined with low wages compound this problem. These factors are counter to a primary value of the Coalition: that food access is a basic human right that must not be compromised or denied.

**Address the economic and environmental systemic issues that limit food access to vulnerable populations.**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Advocate for and influence federal, state, and local policies, programs, and laws which recognize: (a) food insecurity as a symptom of the larger problems of poverty, inability to earn a living income, and lack of affordable social services; and (b) poverty, inability to earn a living income, and food security as problems of the community as a whole, deserving of high-priority government and charitable institutional support.</td>
<td>Policies, Laws, and Regulations</td>
<td>County, State, National</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Work with the Maine Commission on Poverty to develop public policies that support livable wages and equitable tax reform, such as expansion of the earned income tax credit, as well as access to transportation, health care, job training, education, and affordable housing. Develop policies that will stimulate jobs and growth in personal income.</td>
<td>Policies, Laws, and Regulations</td>
<td>State</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Consider and develop programs to meet gaps in food access services identified by the Coalition’s work. (a) Develop short-term measures to meet increasing demands on the emergency food access system, and (b) develop long-term, sustainable solutions to chronic hunger, including preparedness for possible increases in the amount of chronic hunger and the cost of providing increased food access.</td>
<td>Program Development</td>
<td>County</td>
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<td>4. Develop an educational campaign to improve citizen awareness of and</td>
<td>Educational Resources</td>
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access to income transfer programs and entitlement programs, such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), General Assistance (GA), and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).

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<td>5. Promote local food growing policies, laws, and regulations which support sustainable and environmentally-sound growing practices. These efforts should (a) recognize climate change and fossil fuel use implications for growing food, and (b) address challenges/threats to food and water supply safety.</td>
<td>Policies, Laws, and Regulations</td>
<td>Local</td>
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**Resource Accessibility**

Vulnerable populations need more resources in the short-term that will increase their ability to easily and affordably access a diverse array of food. Government plays a major role in immediate and supplemental food access through the provision of various services. Ongoing reviews of legislation affecting food access in Cumberland County and advocacy for policies that encourage the fair and efficient use of public resources are necessary. Similarly, the largely private- and nonprofit-led Emergency Food Distribution System works diligently to provide temporary assistance to vulnerable populations experiencing food insecurity. While many of these programs adhere to best practices, more work is needed coordinating their efforts and increasing the transparency and availability of the services they provide.

**Influence public policies and programs at the community, regional, state, and national levels that affect food access for vulnerable populations.**

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<td>1. Increase in Cumberland County the number of eligible residents over 65 who participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).</td>
<td>Program Awareness / Accessibility</td>
<td>County</td>
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<td>2. Create more transportation options in Cumberland County, including public transit education and access facilitation, for vulnerable populations that need to access food.</td>
<td>Program Awareness / Accessibility</td>
<td>County</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Support and build upon existing Federal Nutrition Programs in Cumberland County such as local School Breakfast and School Lunch Programs, Summer Nutrition Programs, and the Child and Adult Care Food Programs, including identifying need, increasing participation, and including nutritious, fresh, and locally-grown food in meals served.</td>
<td>Policies, Laws, and Regulations, Program Development</td>
<td>County</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Introduce legislation that will require the provision of summer school feeding programs in school districts where fifty percent (50%) or more of the students qualify for free and reduced lunch.</td>
<td>Policies, Laws, and Regulations, Program Development</td>
<td>County</td>
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5. Eliminate the category of “Reduced Price Lunch” and qualify those children for the Free Lunch Program. (The yearly cost of such an effort in Cumberland County would be $112,896.)

6. Support legislation to restructure Maine’s Food Council or create a separate entity devoted to food access for vulnerable populations.

7. Advocate for and influence federal, state, and local policies, programs, tax and other laws, which effectively redesign, strengthen, and/or expand the existing safety net of governmental programs for vulnerable population food access.

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<td>2. Encourage food pantries, kitchens, and meal programs in Cumberland County to consider and develop best practices, such as (a) performing an asset-based assessment of the EFDS in Cumberland County, (b) examining eligibility requirements and keeping barriers to a minimum, (c) reducing redundancies, (d) standardizing policies to make services more efficient and accessible, (e) increasing the hours programs are open, and the accessibility of services, where possible, (f) reducing stigma around food assistance, (g) using a client choice distribution model, and (h) measuring and documenting program outcomes.</td>
<td>Program Development, Program Awareness / Accessibility</td>
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Maximize the efficiency, effectiveness, transparency, and availability of the Emergency Food Distribution System.
3. Assist food access programs and agencies in Cumberland County to develop
cost-effective efficient practices and programs, increase their food sourcing
abilities, and maximize use of community volunteers to meet the need. Also
assist food access programs and agencies in developing and effectively utilizing
technological resources.

| Program Development, Program Awareness / Accessibility, Community Collaboration | County |

4. Develop in Cumberland County the capacity to link clients to social services
at food pantry sites and other feeding sites.

| Educational Resources, Program Development | County |

5. Use (a) mapping and connectivity software to determine location of
vulnerable populations and services in order to plan best future delivery and use
of food access services in Cumberland County and (b) business-modeled survey
research to maximize delivery of food access services.

| Community Collaboration, Educational Resources, Program Development | County |

6. Using Farm-To-Pantry models, along with farmers and other appropriate
public and private organizations, develop a plan in Cumberland County that will
increase the amount of fresh foods available to vulnerable populations and
address cold storage and food preservation issues.

| Community Collaboration, Program Development | County |

7. Work with the Finance Authority of Maine (FAME) to establish a loan
program for food access agencies or programs that serve vulnerable populations
and need financial resources to cover start up costs or complete capital
improvements.

| Program Development, Program Awareness / Accessibility | State |
**Innovative and Local Solutions**

Increasing Maine’s reliance on locally grown foods and community-based programs will enfranchise vulnerable populations, giving them more control over their food provision. By capitalizing on community collaboration and natural community strengths, food access programs can more efficiently utilize resources and benefit from economic growth.

**Enable expansion of innovative, community-based initiatives that increase food access for vulnerable populations in a sustainable way.**

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<td>2. During the next legislative session, introduce a bill that will provide farmers with a state tax credit if a donation of products is made to a food pantry or emergency food organization.</td>
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<td>3. Increase the number of farmers in Cumberland County who will participate in a formal gleaning program. (Gleaning is a process where trained volunteers capture unharvested produce from the fields of cooperating farmers.)</td>
<td>Community Collaboration, Program Development</td>
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<td>4. Identify and implement ways for pantries, food rescue organizations, and individuals to absorb the volume of products available from local farms during the peak growing season. Programs could include subsidized CSAs, an EFO styled after the Winter Cache and Master Food Preserver models, doubled SNAP values accepted at markets, and/or stronger Farm-to-Pantry programs.</td>
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<td><strong>6.</strong> Advocate for and influence federal, state, and local policies, programs, tax and other laws, and land use regulations which encourage (a) local food production, infrastructure and resources, (b) creation, preservation and utilization of local farmlands, agriculture, neighborhood and community gardens, and (c) the promotion of local and vulnerable population food access, and self-sufficiency.</td>
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<td><strong>8.</strong> Utilize local schools, faith centers, community centers, municipal facilities, and meeting places in Cumberland County as food access distribution and storage centers, and for meal programs where additional capacity is needed.</td>
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<td><strong>9.</strong> Advocate and promote school life skills and health curricula which include food growing, preparation, preservation and storage, and planning/preparing nutritious meals.</td>
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<td><strong>10.</strong> Work with local dentists to increase the availability of dental services for vulnerable populations in the region so that certain vulnerable populations can comfortably eat more nutritious foods.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Capacity Building**

A cohesive community response is necessary to reduce the persistent and pervasive problem of food insecurity. An ongoing structure, responsible for working collaboratively to maximize efficiency and ensure seamless access to food, is critical to changing the dynamics of food access in Cumberland County. In addition, the issues of hunger and food insecurity must be prominent in the public eye, with information regularly available to members of the community, policy-makers, and other interested stakeholders.

**Increase organizational capacity for Cumberland County to respond to food access issues over the next three years.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Area of Action</th>
<th>Level of Implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Establish the Cumberland County Food Access Council for the purpose of overseeing the implementation of the Coalition’s goals and recommendations.</td>
<td>Community Collaboration</td>
<td>County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Support the efforts of other coalitions, programs, and collaboratives that are currently working in Cumberland County on food access issues.</td>
<td>Community Collaboration, Program Awareness / Accessibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Raise the visibility of the ongoing problems related to hunger and lack of food access in the community in Cumberland County.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Area of Action</th>
<th>Level of Implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Create a food access web site that regularly updates data and information regarding food access and resources in Cumberland County.</td>
<td>Educational Resources</td>
<td>County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Develop marketing and multimedia campaigns to regularly inform and educate the public and key stakeholders about hunger and food access issues in Cumberland County.</td>
<td>Community Collaboration, Educational Resources</td>
<td>County</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Promote educational, public relations, and media outreach goals in Cumberland County of making food access easily understandable and highly available to vulnerable populations, including the reduction of stigma around food assistance.

| Community Collaboration, Educational Resources | County |

4. Issue an annual report about the Council’s progress in meeting goals and benchmarks regarding hunger and food access in Cumberland County.

| Community Collaboration, Educational Resources | County |
Appendix B: Public Forums and Discussion Groups

The Campaign to Promote Food Security in Cumberland County (CPFS) conducted a vigorous review of food access data and integrated the expertise of people working in various food access-related sectors during the development of its report. Along with this effort, the Coalition made a concerted attempt to incorporate the views of individuals who experience difficulty accessing food in Cumberland County, vulnerable populations, and those who are often recipients of the programs and services the Coalition had assessed. The Campaign Coalition held a series of public forums and informal discussions to better capture this first-hand perspective.

The Coalition held three public forums, which had the participation of approximately one hundred Cumberland County residents. The public forums, held in turn at the Root Cellar in Portland, the Portland Public Library, and St. Joseph’s College of Maine in Standish, gave the Coalition an opportunity to briefly describe the work that has been done to assess food access for vulnerable populations in Cumberland County. The forums allowed for extended discussion, where stakeholders were able to speak on issues, challenges and opportunities related to food access. Certain comments highlighted specific areas for improvement and reiterated the challenges outlined in the report.

Some thematic challenges identified in the public forum discussions included:

- **Increased demand for food** and the problems, with both administrative capacity and limited food supply, this is creating for food and service providers;
- **Administrative Challenges** inherent in a largely volunteer-run emergency food system, including lack of technology, insufficient storage and refrigeration, burden of transportation, and the relative absence of funding;
- **Inconsistent quantity and quality of emergency food** that is not responsive to the cultural and dietary needs of vulnerable populations and is decreasing in availability as food prices rise;
- **The lack of coordination among emergency food providers** that can leave clients without comprehensive resource information and often leads to duplications of effort or missed opportunities to share funding or much-needed supplies;
- **Access to government programs**, which is often complicated by lack of information, absence of transportation, and, at times, by administrative practices such as limited hours of operation;
- **Larger economic and environmental concerns** that threaten the food access system’s dependence on the centralized food industry model. Food access as an issue cannot be addressed without consideration of the effects and constraints of a weakened economic system. Food access is also tied closely to other environmental concerns such as sustainable agriculture, the ecological impact of long-distance food transport, and the instability of food prices due to climate change.

Opportunities and positive examples of improvements in Cumberland County food access that were mentioned included:

- **Gardening programs**, in communities and in schools, which can provide gardening, cooking, canning, preserving, and nutritional education;
- **Innovative distribution models**, that meet the need at its source, consolidate resources, and facilitate access;
- **Pantry collaboration** in terms of food storage, transportation, grant funding, and best practices;
- **Education and visibility** of the issue, to facilitate both access and advocacy.

While the forums were primarily attended by service providers, advocates, and other professional stakeholders, the discussion groups were geared toward persons currently utilizing the food access system in Cumberland County. Three discussion groups were held in Portland, one at the Preble Street food pantry, one at Logan Place, a permanent housing community for formerly chronically homeless adults, and one at Florence House, a comprehensive center for homeless women. The discussion groups featured smaller, more intimate conversations.

Particular challenges regarding food access were identified.

**SNAP Benefits:**

- **SNAP benefit allotments are insufficient.** Many people who are working or receiving an alternate form of fixed income (e.g. Social Security Income, widow’s benefits) are eligible for only a small amount of SNAP benefits or none at all. It was reported that SNAP benefits never last an entire month and program participants must turn to food pantries and kitchens to make up the difference.

- **SNAP allotments are also too low to allow free range of food choice.** Participants in the program must either eat a significantly reduced amount of food or, more frequently, turn to less healthy, cheaper options in order to shop within a tight budget. Participants said their food choices are directly affected by the high costs of food rather than by preference or health.

- **Access to SNAP has been problematic** for a number of discussion group participants. Confusing paperwork and mailings, mandatory interviews, and fluctuating benefit allotments make the SNAP program unpredictable and inconvenient for some users. Also, the inability of SNAP participants to buy non-food necessities has left some people still in need.

- **Participation in a shelter program, such as Florence House, cuts individuals SNAP benefits because meals are served in the shelter.** This is a problem because residents who also work or are busy during mealtimes are left without food. Residents in Logan Place, which has kitchens in each unit rather than serving communal meals, did not cite SNAP benefit reduction.

**Emergency Sources of Food:**

- Food pantries operate according to a wide variety of administrative and operational models. The **requirements to receiving food, hours of operation, and frequency of allowed visits** vary among pantries, complicating efforts by those seeking support to access available resources. Forum participants described an elaborate process of moving between pantries depending on when they could be accessed, and going to a particular pantry multiple times in one day in order to reserve a place in line.
- **Accessing food from a food pantry can be a time consuming and often difficult task.** Most forum participants lacked transportation and are limited in which pantries they can access and how much food they can obtain. It is important to note that these difficulties are exacerbated outside of Portland, where fewer pantries are located along bus lines and towns are less easily walked.

- **Inventory at pantries does not meet the food needs or preferences of food pantry clients.** Produce is often close to expiration when it arrives at the pantry, mandating immediate use. Discussion group participants expressed a need for more staple foods and more healthy whole food choices, such as milk and rice, rather than cakes or snack foods. The needs of those who have specific nutritional considerations according to medical condition, cultural heritage, or religious preference are not adequately met at food pantries.
## Appendix C: Resource Guide

### FOOD SECURITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>URL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Food Security Coalition</td>
<td><a href="http://www.foodsecurity.org">http://www.foodsecurity.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa State Food Insecurity &amp; Hunger</td>
<td><a href="http://www.extension.iastate.edu/healthnutrition/hunger/">http://www.extension.iastate.edu/healthnutrition/hunger/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wisconsin Food Security Consortium</td>
<td><a href="http://endhungerwi.org/">http://endhungerwi.org/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>California Food and Justice Coalition</td>
<td><a href="http://cafoodjustice.org/">http://cafoodjustice.org/</a></td>
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<td>Food for Oregon</td>
<td><a href="http://foodfororegon.oregonstate.edu/">http://foodfororegon.oregonstate.edu/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Growing Power</td>
<td><a href="http://www.growingpower.org/">http://www.growingpower.org/</a></td>
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<td>Project Bread</td>
<td><a href="http://www.projectbread.org/">http://www.projectbread.org/</a></td>
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<td>Hartford Food System</td>
<td><a href="http://www.hartfordfood.org/">http://www.hartfordfood.org/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Good Food L.A.</td>
<td><a href="http://goodfoodla.org/">http://goodfoodla.org/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Food Advocates, TN</td>
<td><a href="http://www.communityfoodadvocates.org/">http://www.communityfoodadvocates.org/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Missoula County Community Food and Agriculture Coalition</td>
<td><a href="http://missoulacfac.org/">http://missoulacfac.org/</a></td>
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<td>Food Solutions New England at UNH</td>
<td><a href="http://www.foodsolutionsne.org/">http://www.foodsolutionsne.org/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>USDA Community Food Security Initiative</td>
<td><a href="http://attra.ncat.org/guide/a_m/cfsi.html">http://attra.ncat.org/guide/a_m/cfsi.html</a></td>
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### Maine Food Security

<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>Mid Coast Hunger Prevention Program</td>
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### No longer active:

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Portland Food Security Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maine Coalition for Food Security</td>
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<tr>
<td>Partners in Ending Hunger</td>
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**FOOD POLICY COUNCILS**

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<th>Website</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Toronto Food Policy Council</td>
<td><a href="http://www.toronto.ca/health/tfpc_index.htm">http://www.toronto.ca/health/tfpc_index.htm</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dane County Food Council (Madison, WI)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.countyofdane.com/foodcouncil/">http://www.countyofdane.com/foodcouncil/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York State Council on Food Policy</td>
<td><a href="http://www.nyscfp.org/index.html">http://www.nyscfp.org/index.html</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Connecticut Food Policy Council</td>
<td><a href="http://www.foodpc.state.ct.us/">http://www.foodpc.state.ct.us/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas Food Policy Council</td>
<td><a href="http://kansasruralcenter.org/kfpc.html">http://kansasruralcenter.org/kfpc.html</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seattle-King County Food Policy Council</td>
<td><a href="http://king.wsu.edu/foodandfarms/foodpolicycouncil.htm">http://king.wsu.edu/foodandfarms/foodpolicycouncil.htm</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detroit Food Policy Council</td>
<td><a href="http://www.detroitfoodpolicycouncil.net/">http://www.detroitfoodpolicycouncil.net/</a></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Complete list of councils around the country

**Saco River Lake Region FPC**

http://eatmainefoods.ning.com/forum/topics/saco-river-lake-region-food

**NATIONAL SCOPE: Programs and Organizations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Name</th>
<th>Website</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food Research and Action Center (FRAC)</td>
<td><a href="http://frac.org/">http://frac.org/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>National Farm to School Network</td>
<td><a href="http://www.farmtoschool.org/index.php">http://www.farmtoschool.org/index.php</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maine Profile</td>
<td><a href="http://www.farmtoschool.org/state-home.php?id=25">http://www.farmtoschool.org/state-home.php?id=25</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Real Food Challenge</td>
<td><a href="http://realfoodchallenge.org/">http://realfoodchallenge.org/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Feeding America</td>
<td><a href="http://feedingamerica.org/">http://feedingamerica.org/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wholesome Wave</td>
<td><a href="http://wholesomewave.org/">http://wholesomewave.org/</a></td>
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<td>Farm to Plate Initiative</td>
<td><a href="http://www.vsf.org/projects/2/sustainable-agriculture">http://www.vsf.org/projects/2/sustainable-agriculture</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>National Good Food Network</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ngfn.org/">http://www.ngfn.org/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group</td>
<td><a href="http://www.nefood.org/">http://www.nefood.org/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Meals on Wheels</td>
<td><a href="http://www.mowaa.org/">http://www.mowaa.org/</a></td>
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<td>Ample Harvest</td>
<td><a href="http://ampleharvest.org/">http://ampleharvest.org/</a></td>
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<td>Share Our Strength</td>
<td><a href="http://strength.org/">http://strength.org/</a></td>
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<td>Environmental Commons</td>
<td><a href="http://www.environmentalcommons.org/index.html">http://www.environmentalcommons.org/index.html</a></td>
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<td>Slow Food</td>
<td><a href="http://www.slowfood.com/">http://www.slowfood.com/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Marine Stewardship Council</td>
<td><a href="http://www.msc.org/">http://www.msc.org/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>American Farmland Trust</td>
<td><a href="http://www.farmland.org/">http://www.farmland.org/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institute for Food and Development Policy</td>
<td><a href="http://www.foodfirst.org/">http://www.foodfirst.org/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Local Harvest</td>
<td><a href="http://www.localharvest.org/">http://www.localharvest.org/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Health Care Without Harm</td>
<td><a href="http://noharm.org/all_regions/issues/food/">http://noharm.org/all_regions/issues/food/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Food Industry Market Maker</td>
<td><a href="http://national.markettaker.uiuc.edu/">http://national.markettaker.uiuc.edu/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FoodDeclaration.Org</td>
<td><a href="http://fooddeclaration.org/">http://fooddeclaration.org/</a></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**MAINE FOOD ORGANIZATIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Belfast Coop</th>
<th><a href="http://belfast.coop/">http://belfast.coop/</a></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buy Local</td>
<td><a href="http://www.portlandbuylocal.org/">http://www.portlandbuylocal.org/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cape Farm Alliance</td>
<td><a href="http://capeelizabethfarms.com/">http://capeelizabethfarms.com/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cobscook Community Learning Center</td>
<td><a href="http://www.thecclc.org/">http://www.thecclc.org/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Crown of Maine</td>
<td><a href="http://www.crownofmainecoop.com/">http://www.crownofmainecoop.com/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultivating Community</td>
<td><a href="http://cultivatingcommunity.org/">http://cultivatingcommunity.org/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Eat Local Foods Coalition</td>
<td><a href="http://www.eatmainefoods.org/">http://www.eatmainefoods.org/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By Land and By Sea</td>
<td><a href="http://eatmainefoods.ning.com/page/by-land-and-by-sea">http://eatmainefoods.ning.com/page/by-land-and-by-sea</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Food Policy Forum</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food for Maine's Future</td>
<td><a href="http://savingseeds.wordpress.com/">http://savingseeds.wordpress.com/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Gulf of Maine Research Institute</td>
<td><a href="http://gmri.org/">http://gmri.org/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Kitchen Gardeners International</td>
<td><a href="http://kitchengardeners.org/">http://kitchengardeners.org/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Kneading Conference</td>
<td><a href="http://www.kneadingconference.com/">http://www.kneadingconference.com/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Local Sprouts</td>
<td><a href="http://www.localsproutscooperative.com/">http://www.localsproutscooperative.com/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Maine Ag Trader</td>
<td><a href="http://meagtrader.org/">http://meagtrader.org/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Maine Businesses for Sustainability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maine Farm Bureau</td>
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<td>Maine Food Trader</td>
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<td>Maine Nutrition Network (MNN)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.maine-nutrition.org/Contact/About.htm">http://www.maine-nutrition.org/Contact/About.htm</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>MOFGA (and the Maine Local 20)</td>
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<td>Port Clyde Fresh Catch</td>
<td><a href="http://www.portclydefreshcatch.com/productcart/pc/home.asp">http://www.portclydefreshcatch.com/productcart/pc/home.asp</a></td>
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<td>Seacoast Local</td>
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<td>UM Cooperative Extension</td>
<td><a href="http://extension.umaine.edu/">http://extension.umaine.edu/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Western Mountains Alliance</td>
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**GOVERNMENT**

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<tr>
<td>SNAP Retail Locator</td>
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<td>Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)</td>
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<td>Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)</td>
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<td>Farm to School Initiative</td>
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<td>Office of Family Assistance, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)</td>
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<td>Nat'l Conference of State Legislatures</td>
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**State**

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<td>Department of Agriculture, Food Assistance</td>
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<td>Feed ME</td>
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**City of Portland**

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**New England Governor's Conference**

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<tr>
<td><strong>MAINE’S EMERGENCY FOOD DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM</strong></td>
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<td>Good Shepherd Food Bank</td>
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<td>Preble Street</td>
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<td><strong>2-1-1 Information and Referral Search</strong></td>
<td><a href="http://www.211.org">www.211.org</a></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**ARTICLES AND REPORTS**

**Hunger Reports**

- Senior Hunger in the United States - Differences across states and rural/urban areas | [http://www.mowaa.org/hungerbystate](http://www.mowaa.org/hungerbystate)

**Access**

- Top 10 Barriers to Local Food Access for Low Income Individuals | [http://organicconsumers.org/articles/article_11228.cfm](http://organicconsumers.org/articles/article_11228.cfm)

**Policy and Food Security**


**Local Foods**

- Advancing the Science of Local and Regional Foods | [http://nercrd.psu.edu/LocalFoods/LocRegHypothesis.pdf](http://nercrd.psu.edu/LocalFoods/LocRegHypothesis.pdf)

**Public Assistance**
<p>| Real Food, Real Choice: Connecting SNAP Recipients with Markets | <a href="http://www.foodsecurity.org/pubs.html#fmsnap">http://www.foodsecurity.org/pubs.html#fmsnap</a> |
| <strong>Kids and Schools</strong> |  |
| Report and Recommendations of the ME Farm to School Workgroup | <a href="http://mainemarinelicensing.net/education/sfs/documents/farm_to_school/Maine%20Farm%20to%20School%20Report_Revised_entire%20June%202010.pdf">http://mainemarinelicensing.net/education/sfs/documents/farm_to_school/Maine%20Farm%20to%20School%20Report_Revised_entire%20June%202010.pdf</a> |
| <strong>Public Health</strong> |  |
| Healthy Food, Healthy Communities | <a href="http://www.policylink.org/site/apps/nlnet/content2.aspx?c=lkIXLbMNJrE&amp;b=5136581&amp;ct=8020083">http://www.policylink.org/site/apps/nlnet/content2.aspx?c=lkIXLbMNJrE&amp;b=5136581&amp;ct=8020083</a> |
| <strong>Background</strong> |  |
| The Mighty Rise of the Food Revolution | <a href="www.alternet.org/story/147661/">www.alternet.org/story/147661/</a> |
| <strong>Inspiration</strong> |  |
| The City that Ended Hunger | <a href="http://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/food-for-everyone/the-city-that-ended-hunger">http://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/food-for-everyone/the-city-that-ended-hunger</a> |
| <strong>Mapping Resources</strong> |  |</p>
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<td>Janet Poppendieck</td>
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<td>Sasha Abramsky</td>
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<td>Gary Paul Nabhan</td>
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<td>Barbara Kingsolver</td>
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<td>PAS 554</td>
<td><em>Planners Guide to Community and Regional Food Planning</em></td>
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<td>[Wendell Berry, Francis More Lappe, Barry Commoner, Bill McKibben]</td>
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Appendix D: GIS Mapping

The following maps utilize a Geographic Information System (GIS) to depict specific data in a dynamic and interactive way. Online, these maps can be easily adjusted to show a variety of variables affecting food security, giving a user access to resource information, demographic data, and current statistics. The first map provides a visual representation of food pantry location in relation to poverty identified by census tract in Cumberland County. The second map shows walkability and public transit in relation to food pantries in the Greater Portland area.
Greater Portland Food Pantry Walkability and Access by Public Transit

Walkability is defined as the distance an average adult can walk carrying 30 pounds of groceries: 1,056 feet.

Endnotes


16 Good Shepherd Food Bank, “Food Insecurity in Maine and throughout the Nation...Growing at Alarming Rate,” Hunger in Maine (Portland, ME: Good Shepherd Food Bank, 2010), http://gsfb.org/hunger/hunger_in_maine.php.


20 Randy Mraz, “Campaign to Promote Food Security in Cumberland County: State of Maine Department of Agriculture” (presentation, Meeting of The Campaign to Promote Food Security in Cumberland County Coalition, Portland, Maine, March, 31, 2010).

21 Good Shepherd Food Bank, “Food Insecurity in Maine and throughout the Nation...Growing at Alarming Rate,” Hunger in Maine (Portland, ME: Good Shepherd Food Bank, 2010), http://gsfb.org/hunger/hunger_in_maine.php.

22 Randy Mraz, “Campaign to Promote Food Security in Cumberland County: State of Maine Department of Agriculture” (presentation, Meeting of The Campaign to Promote Food Security in Cumberland County Coalition, Portland, Maine, March, 31, 2010).

23 Mark Swann and Michelle Lamm, “Maine Hunger Initiative May 2010” (presentation, Meeting of The Campaign to Promote Food Security in Cumberland County Coalition, Portland, Maine, May, 26, 2010).


25 Maine Department of Health and Human Services, *Summary Count of 5 Year Olds and Younger Active on TANF and/or Food Supplement as of July 31, 2010: Detail Counts by County* (Augusta, ME: Maine Department of Health
and Human Services, Office of Integrated Access and Support, July 2010),


30 Mark Swann and Michelle Lamm, “Maine Hunger Initiative May 2010” (presentation, Meeting of The Campaign to Promote Food Security in Cumberland County Coalition, Portland, Maine, May, 26, 2010).

31 Good Shepherd Food Bank (GSFB recognizes that this data does not account for other food resources that are available in Cumberland County to people seeking food assistance.)

32 Susan Violet, “Wayside Food Rescue & Supplemental Meals Programs” (presentation, Meeting of The Campaign to Promote Food Security in Cumberland County Coalition, Portland, Maine, May, 26, 2010).


Rick Small, “Mission, Programs, Vision Good Shepherd Food Bank, Presentation for the Campaign to Promote Food Security in Cumberland County” (presentation, Meeting of The Campaign to Promote Food Security in Cumberland County Coalition, Portland, Maine, May, 26, 2010).

Randy Mraz, “Campaign to Promote Food Security in Cumberland County: State of Maine Department of Agriculture” (presentation, Meeting of The Campaign to Promote Food Security in Cumberland County Coalition, Portland, Maine, March, 31, 2010).


[A brief search of Cumberland County town offices, where GA is applied for and from which it is awarded, found varying levels of accessibility. All offices required appointments to be made by GA applicants. While some offices, like the combined Freeport and Yarmouth office, are open multiple days a week, some offices were only open once or twice a week, sometimes for only an hour or two at a time. Cumberland, for example schedules GA appointments only on Wednesdays from 9:30 a.m. until noon. Sebago is open for appointments only on Thursdays, from 10:15 – 11:00 a.m. Portland, with the greatest volume of GA applicants and recipients, makes appointments on only three days of the week for only a few hours each time, all hours conflicting with a typical 9 – 5 workday.]


Wayside’s new Supplemental Meals model has increased its ability to serve populations physical, psychological, and social needs, and has created a greater sense of community interaction and ownership in such efforts. In March 2010, two community-based meal delivery sites were established, with five more to be added throughout this year and next. Though the expansion of this new community meals program is an intentionally gradual one, 13,000 meals were served in its first two months of operation. Wayside hopes to serve 10,000 meals every month by the end of 2011.


