

**Merrymeeting  
Food Council**

# Barriers to Food Access

Merrymeeting Bay Region Assessment

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# What is the assessment?

It is an initiative to understand what barriers stand in the way of food access in MFC's service area.

For individuals  
For organizations

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# Why is food access important for overall health?

Food access is a social determinant of health, meaning that a lack of it is tied to numerous poor health outcomes

## Most Basically

- Food is integral and necessary to living.

## Other Values

- Prevents diet related diseases
- Increased emotional health
- Eating together builds community; within families, between neighbors
- Proper nutrition increases body functionality

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# How did we do it?

Step 1. Applied for funding

Step 2. Researched Programs; active in our communities, being used across the country

Step 3. Created a team to inform and lead the process

Step 4. Spoke with over 20 organizations and community groups

Step 5. Spoke with or surveyed over 100 people from our communities

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# What we learned:

## Barriers for People

- Transportation
- Lack of awareness of what is available
- Stigma plays a significant role in how people get help
- Limited cooking ability or time
- Insufficient mental health services

## Barriers for Organizations

- Program Competition
- Regulatory guidelines
- Limited Resources

## Other

- Limited awareness of available resources
  - Poor program implementation
  - Community based solutions work well
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# What we are we doing about it?

- Seek to understand what already exists and where the gaps are
- Develop solution models **with** the community
- Create and share assessment report
- Communicate findings to change makers

## On the Ground Work

- Support and build stigma decreasing programs
  - Hunger Vital Signs Program, Sharing Table
- Help build community based meal programs
- Connect resource information to people and organizations
- Transportation problem framing

Share Knowledge, Share Resources, Work Together

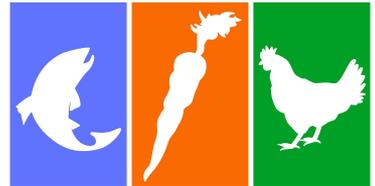
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# Thanks for Listening!

Assessment Team

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# QUESTIONS?

Let me hear 'em!!!!

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