



**Project Bread  
Proposal to Framingham State University  
Nonprofit Giving Course**

Project Bread is pleased to submit this proposal to Framingham State University's Nonprofit Giving Course for \$10,000 to support our organization's work to improve food security for eligible families in Framingham by enrolling them in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

***Mission***

From community-based meal programs, to early childhood and school nutrition initiatives, to improved access to farm-to-table and local food resources, we approach hunger as a complex problem with multiple solutions that often work best in combination, and through cooperation and collaboration between communities and organizations. With deep local engagement and support, we pioneer and facilitate innovative initiatives, fund and promote effective programs, advocate for research-driven change in government policy, and educate the public to increase our impact—all to eradicate hunger in our state and give everyone in need the dignity and voice they deserve.

We believe that the best help meets people where they are- and is close to being invisible. We believe that people need a hand up, not a hand out. And if they can participate in accessing healthy, affordable food, we can increase dignity, decrease shame, and change habits going forward. Even better if solutions are sustainable, culturally appropriate, and build our urban and agrarian economies.

Project Bread runs and supports programs that connect community farms to local food pantries; screen kids for hunger within pediatric health centers; make it possible for families to pick up discounted CSA boxes in health clinics (at the same time doctors and nurses pick up theirs); teach refugees to farm the foods they're used to; rescue just-outdated food to serve up in summer meals; and make free, "universal" breakfast available in 284 elementary schools. If everyone is eating, no child is singled out.

***Programming***

At Project Bread we know there is no single path to eradicating hunger in MA. But through developing innovative programs that meet a diverse range of needs, we work towards sustainable solutions. Through community initiatives and local investments, Project Bread serves the 700,000 people across the state that struggle with food insecurity. Our core programs include mobilizing people through the annual Walk for Hunger; funding over 360 community food programs statewide; offering a statewide, toll-free FoodSource Hotline that answers over 50,000 calls per year; working with low-income school districts and community partners to maximize participation in the School Breakfast and Summer Food Service Program; providing SNAP application assistance to nearly 2,000 families in Massachusetts; working with school districts to provide healthy, affordable and appealing school meals to over 44,000 children, and introducing nutritious foods and nutrition education to over 2,500 low income children in Head Start programs.

Over the next five years we will to make progress towards the following goals:

*Goal 1: Investing in a diverse set of local food solutions*

Project Bread invests in thriving local food initiatives, including farmer's markets, community-supported agriculture programs, urban agriculture, and double value coupons at farmers' markets. These initiatives provide sustainable solutions to hunger, while offering working families a hand-up, not a hand out.

*Goal 2: Improving access to healthy food*

By bringing chefs into more schools, Head Start programs, public markets, and community agencies, we work to ensure that all people have access to sustainable, reliable, nutritious food; and that both children and adults are educated about healthy options so they can make better informed decisions about what they eat.

*Goal 3: Increasing participation in federal nutrition programs*

We aim to enroll all eligible children, families, and seniors in federal nutrition programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the National School Breakfast and Lunch Programs, and the Summer Food Service Program. Enrollment in these programs ensures access to healthy food and brings substantial federal revenue to local economies.

*Goal 4: Helping meet immediate basic needs for nutritious food*

Community solutions are necessary for the over 700,000 people across the Commonwealth that struggle with food insecurity. We believe in responding to the immediate needs of families and individuals throughout the state with dignity and kindness. We work to connect people to local food resources, and enable them to participate in their local food economies and the marketplace.

Project Bread's Executive Director Ellen Parker oversees a diverse staff of 40, many of whom have years of experience with community-based programming anti-hunger work. Funds for the organization are raised through private philanthropy, corporate and private foundations, government contracts and the Walk for Hunger, which is made possible by the over 2,000 volunteers and 30-40,000 Walkers who participate each year. A 13-member Board of Directors oversees all of Project Bread's programs and services.

**Community Need**

Twelve years ago almost all people with a full time job in Massachusetts could expect to earn enough money to put food on the table and a roof overhead. The faces of hunger in our state were largely confined to the unemployed, the elderly, and those with chronic disabilities.

But today, post- recession, more Massachusetts residents than ever are struggling to put food on the table. Currently there are 700,000 people in Massachusetts who face food insecurity. Between 2003 and 2013, food insecurity rates increased by a staggering 71% and have stayed there. The challenging job market and stagnant wages have hit people across the state, and the number of people in Massachusetts who face food insecurity is 40% higher than it was before the recession in 2008. In Framingham, a staggering 48.4% of children are eligible to receive free or reduced price school meals.

Increasingly working people don't earn enough money to consistently and reliably feed their families. Today, the face of hunger in Massachusetts is often that of a working family. Despite having jobs, thousands of people cannot work their way out of poverty and reliably protect themselves from hunger. Moreover, unpredictable hours and varying paychecks make it hard to budget and ensure that fresh, healthy food is on the table.

**Project Description**

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), a federal program that offers nutrition assistance to millions of eligible, low-income individuals and families, is a huge economic support for low-income, working families -- the USDA average monthly SNAP benefit for a household is \$254 monthly. Unfortunately, many low-income, working families don't think they are eligible for SNAP, are not able to take time from work to go

through the application process, and/or feel that needing food assistance reflects poorly on how hard they are working.

Moreover, the SNAP application process can be daunting and confusing. Everyone who applies for benefits must fill out a lengthy application and have in-person interviews with case workers at the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA), which administers the SNAP program in Massachusetts. For many clients that don't speak English, interacting with case workers (who often speak only English and don't always utilize translation services) can be an extraordinary obstacle.

Since 2009 Project Bread has provided one on one SNAP outreach and assistance to families and individuals in Boston and Worcester, where our outreach coordinator works individually with clients through health centers to help them enroll in SNAP. Over the years, we have helped thousands of households to access SNAP benefits, which have enabled them to buy nutritious food for their families. This work also creates a stronger local community, bringing in over \$2 million a year in federal resources through these benefits.

Like families in Worcester and Boston, many of those in Framingham face regular stress about not being able to feed their families. In order to broaden our impact and reach more people through our efforts, in the next year we will expand our program to families in the city of Framingham. Our SNAP outreach coordinator will work directly with clients at the Edward M. Community Health Center, pre-screening all interested households for SNAP using Project Bread's web tool [www.gettingfoodstamps.org](http://www.gettingfoodstamps.org); enrolling those determined to be eligible using the Massachusetts Virtual Gateway application tool; serving as liaison between the client and the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA); tracking the application; assisting with the re-certification process; and providing additional case management services as needed.

We will use the following metrics to document program success:

- Prescreen 200 households for SNAP eligibility
- Assist 150 households in submitting a SNAP application or recertification
- Provide follow up to all households assisted in applying and work diligently with DTA to appeal all denials
- Help an additional 80 households who submitted SNAP applications on their own to navigate the process
- Achieve a 75% SNAP application success rate
- Connect 100% of denied applicants with other food resources and help through the FoodSource Hotline and additional referrals
- Promote usage of Project Bread's FoodSource Hotline
- Provide health centers in Framingham with food vouchers to assist 40 households with emergency food needs
- Help to bring \$859,770 in federal benefits into Worcester over the course of the year

Over the years of providing SNAP assistance and outreach in Worcester and Boston and successfully advocating on behalf of clients with the DTA, Project Bread has achieved a SNAP application success rate of 75%, a figure that most other agencies that provide SNAP assistance in the state are not able to meet. We expect to achieve the same rate of success through our SNAP outreach work in Framingham. For those that are denied benefits, we are dedicated to ensuring that other forms of assistance are made available to those clients. We immediately refer every client who gets denied SNAP benefits to our free FoodSource hotline, which connects food insecure people with public resources and local help. The Hotline, which is available in 160 languages, provides customized assistance for people based on their individual needs. Frequently our hotline connects those denied benefits with information on Fuel Assistance, Utility Assistance, Legal Aid, Housing Assistance/Housing Authorities, Council on Aging/Elder Services, MassHealth, and Child care resources.

## ***Conclusion***

Project Bread seeks \$10,000 from Framingham State University's Nonprofit Giving Course to enroll residents in Framingham in the SNAP program. For many low-income working people in the community, their hourly wage simply isn't enough to ensure access to consistent, adequate food. By assisting low-income working people in Framingham to access SNAP benefits, we help ensure that they are given help without stigma and are offered a hand-up, not a hand out.