Solving Hunger in the Granite State



NH HUNGER SOLUTIONS

ENDING HUNGER IN NEW HAMPSHIRE



Who We Are

NH Hunger Solutions is a non-profit that advocates to end food insecurity, improve equitable access to nutritious food, and address hunger's root causes for all people in New Hampshire.

Presenters:

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Executive Director

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Visualizing Food & Nutrition Supports

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Think of our food system of food and nutrition supports as a **power grid. The grid is well developed in some areas and patchy or non-existent in others.**



Where are the weak connections in NH?

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46th School Breakfast Participation
Only 47% of children who eat free lunch also eat breakfast

10.5k Eligible children not enrolled in Free and Reduced Meals

32% Eligible people receive SNAP

47% Eligible people receive WIC

Rising costs of housing, childcare, and food = increased food insecurity

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As of September 16, 2024...

39% Children

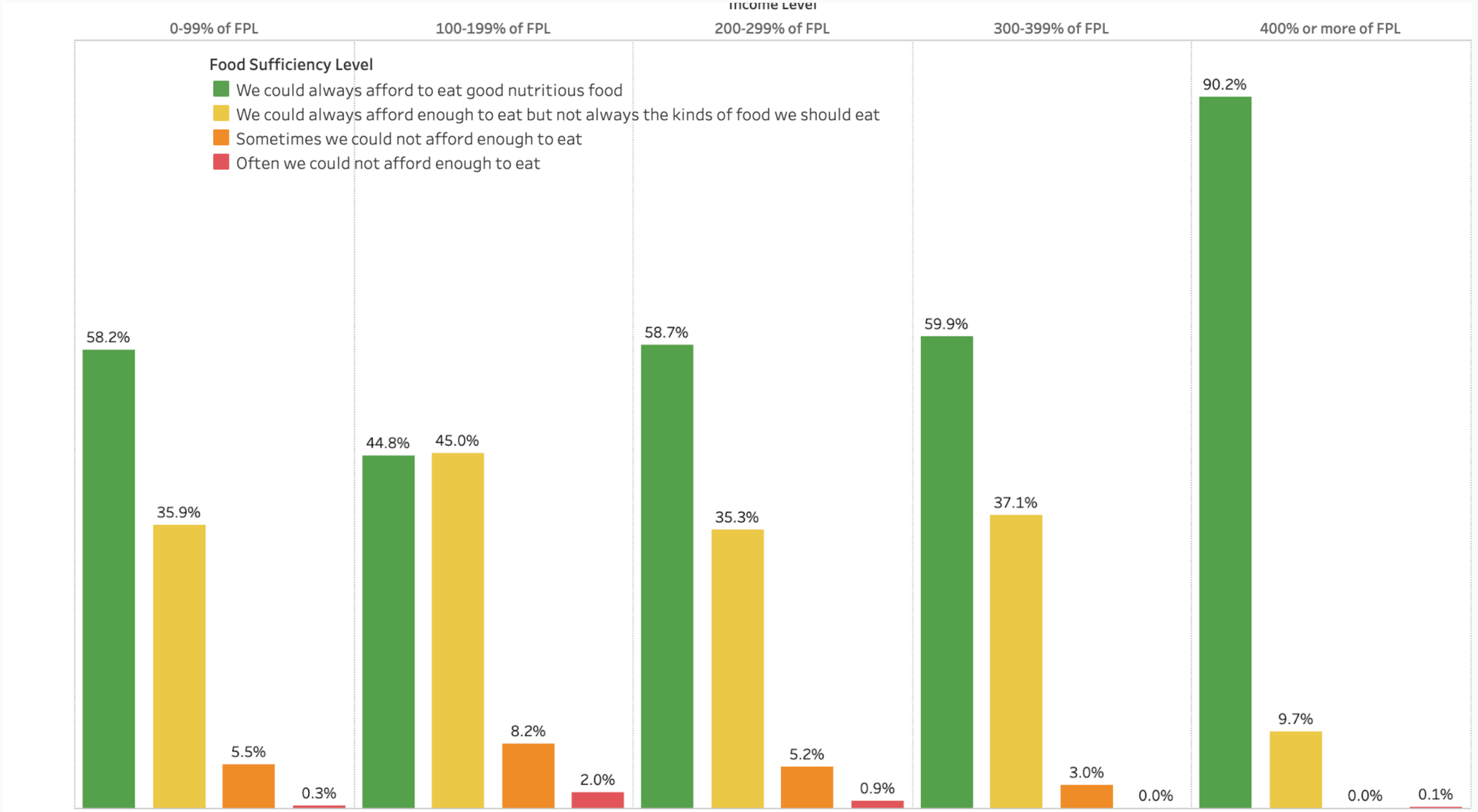
31% Adults

27% Older Adults
80,251 adults ages 65+

...lived in households that reported having insufficient food.

Census Household Pulse Survey, September 16, 2024

Challenges Affording Nutritious Food Extend to Middle-Income Households



The charitable sector can't solve hunger alone

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For every meal a food bank provides...



SNAP Provides Nine



Food pantries and emergency food networks are vital – but alone cannot solve hunger.

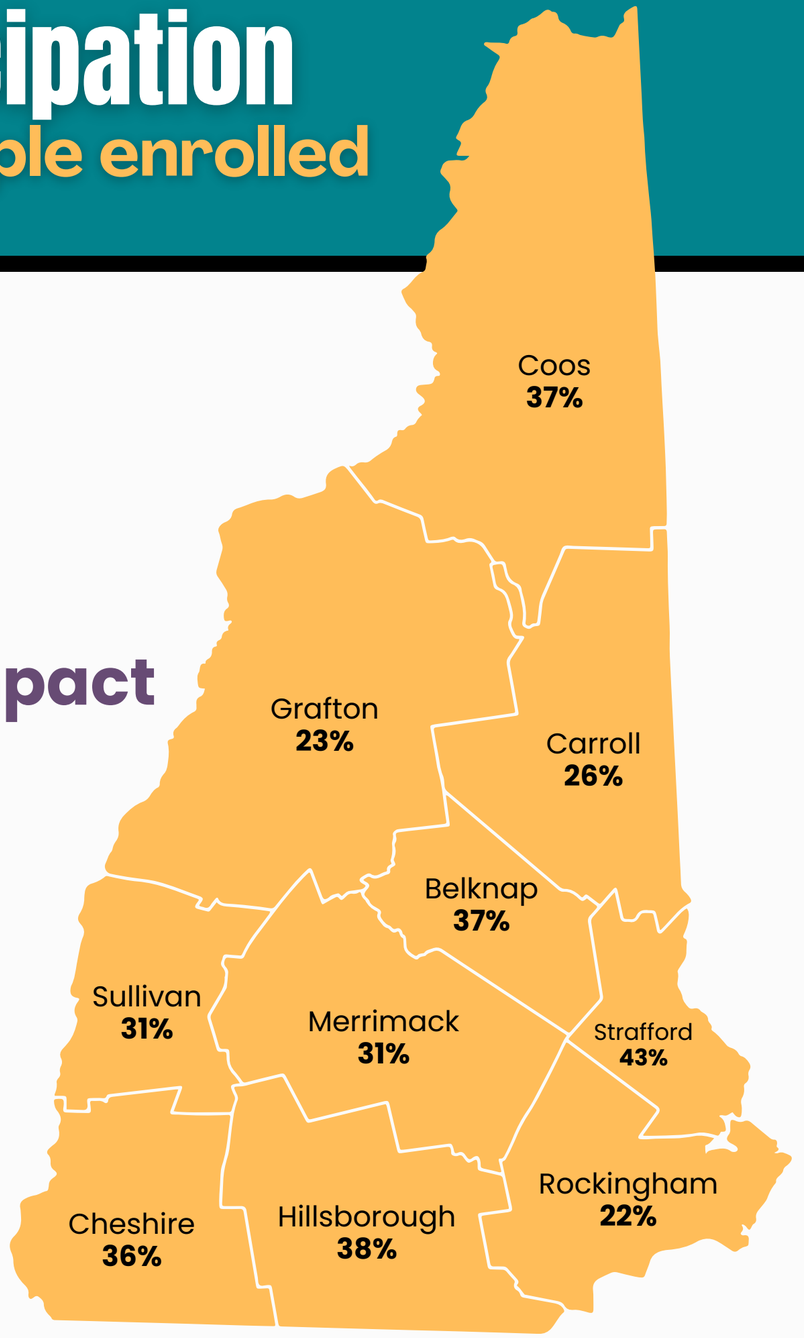
Systemic changes and state/federal programs are the most sustainable tools to eliminate hunger.

NH is 39th in the Nation for SNAP Participation

32% of SNAP eligible people enrolled

Strong enrollment means stronger local economies

- Each SNAP dollar has over **$1.50 in economic impact**
- **SNAP supports 1,063 retailers in NH.**
- In 2024, SNAP brought in **$154,254,645 to NH**



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Who relies on SNAP?

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3,552
Veterans participate in SNAP

39%
of SNAP households include older adults

54%
of SNAP households have kids

45%
of SNAP households include a person with a disability

- The average SNAP benefit is **$5.49** per day.
- SNAP helped **76,628** (6% of households) people in NH put food on the table.
- **77%** of NH SNAP households include someone who is working.

Data as of 2024

The Wave of Federal Changes

H.R. 1, the federal Budget Reconciliation Bill, **significantly weakened the SNAP Program** and shifted significant costs to states to run the program.

The changes have already increased food insecurity for **thousands of New Hampshire residents** who rely on SNAP for food, and hurt the retailers and farmers who rely on those sales.

SNAP Changes in H.R. 1 + Cost Shifts to States

- **Legal immigrant families cut from SNAP.**

- **New Work Rules Cut People Off SNAP:** Adults ages 18-65 (previously 18-55), parents of children 14 and up, burdened with heavy paperwork requirements

- **Child Nutrition:** Losing SNAP cuts children off from direct enrollment in free/reduced school meals and Summer EBT.

COSTS SHIFTED TO NEW HAMPSHIRE

OCTOBER 1, 2026

NH will pay **75% of SNAP operating costs**, up from 50%.

=

$4.5-6M more per year

New SNAP Administrative Costs

OCTOBER 1, 2027

NH pays 10% of SNAP food benefits because the state's error rate is 8.85%.

=

$15M more per year

SNAP Benefits Penalties

SNAP Error Rates

Overpayments + **Underpayments**

benefits issued
above the eligible amount

benefits issued
below the eligible amount

Both types of errors count against the state.

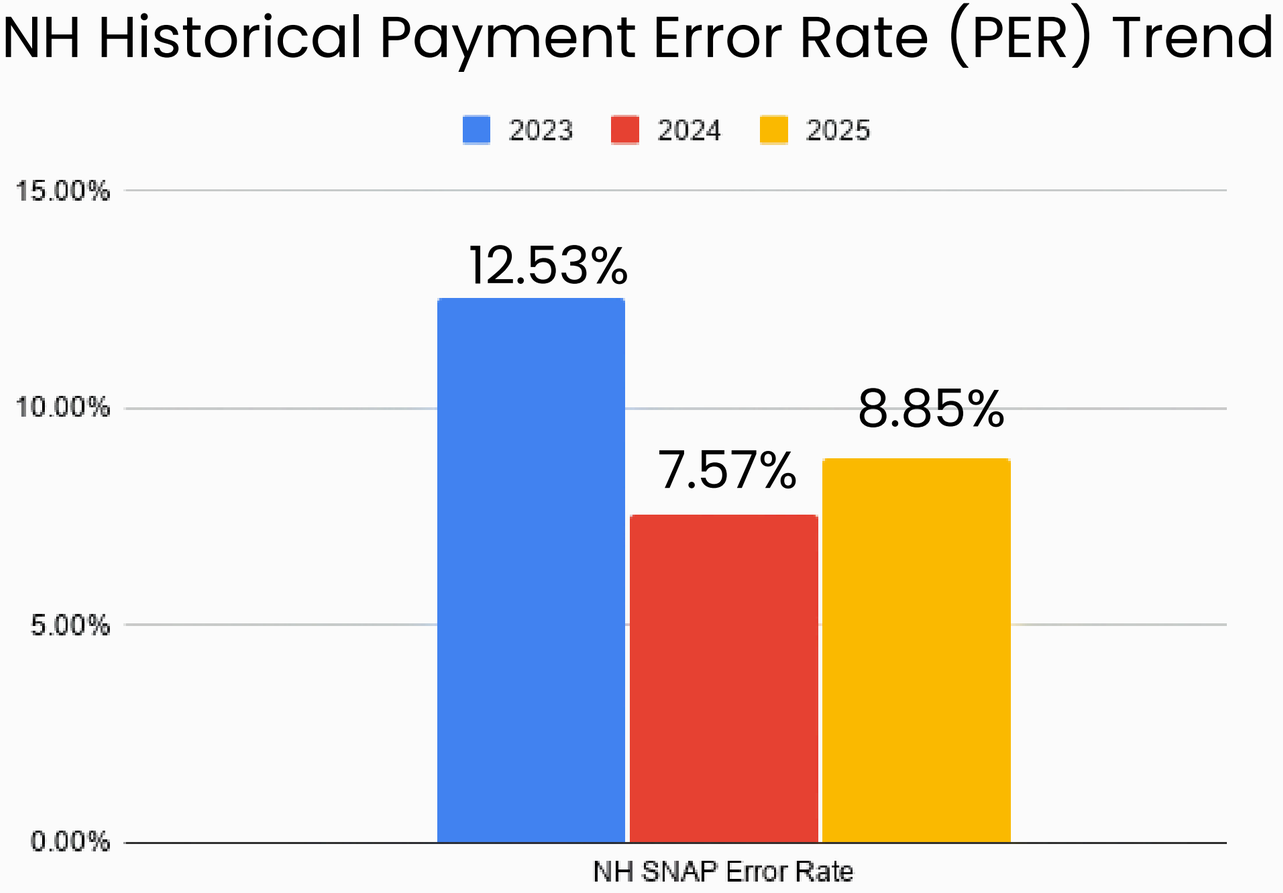
SNAP error rates have nothing to do with fraud.

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Error rate cost-shift

HR 1 shifts SNAP Benefits Costs to States with error rates above 6%.

- Based on NH's 8.85% (FY 2025) Error Rate, (6.15% Overpayments/2.70% Underpayments), NH will be saddled with $15 Million more per year starting 10/1/2027
- New Hampshire demonstrated its ability to drive errors down - from 12.53% in FY 2023.
- The uptick in 2025 was a predictable response to the changes required to be implemented quickly in H.R. 1



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Solutions to improve SNAP error rate

Staffing and Training:

- Ensure full staffing of SNAP caseworkers
- More training for SNAP caseworkers
- Allocate dedicated resources to recruit, train, and retain Bureau of Family Assistance eligibility specialists.

Make SNAP accessible to families:

- Preserve Simplified Eligibility
- Avoid Asset Tests
- Streamline Reporting Rules
- Modernize NH EASY

Investments in Outreach:

- Invest state dollars in SNAP Outreach
- Fund community-based application assistors to guide families through complex intake. (Ensuring accurate wage and deduction reporting directly cuts overpayments and underpayments.)

SNAP connects children to free school meals

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Children living in SNAP households are directly certified for free school meals

That means that those children:

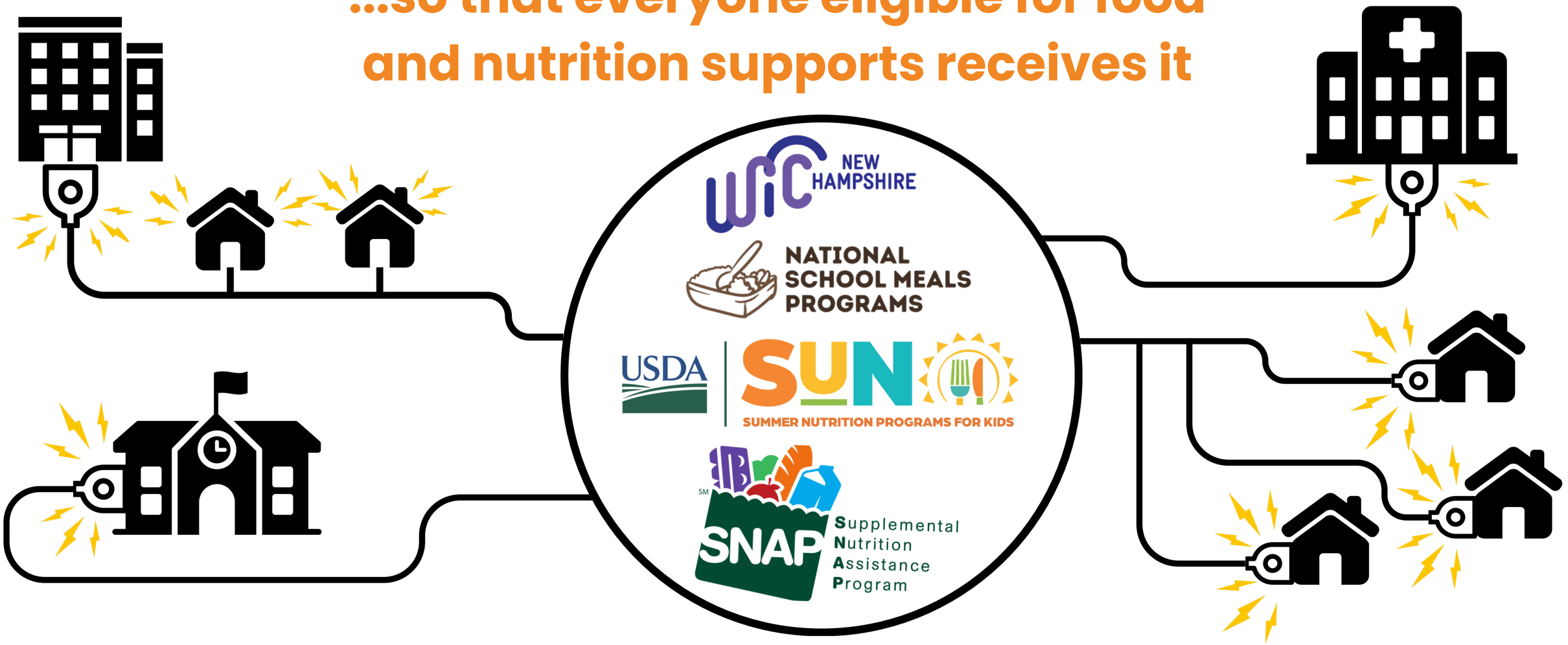
- Are healthier overall
- Have lower rates of communicable disease, excess weight, and asthma
- Need fewer health care services and emergency room care
- Have better success in school... and in their lives

Food is as important to learning as teachers, and books, and desks.

We need to connect more communities and households to the grid...

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...so that everyone eligible for food and nutrition supports receives it



Our Work



Policy & Advocacy



Education & Awareness



Child Nutrition



Food Access Coalitions

Policy & Advocacy

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Working to close the gap between those eligible for and those enrolled in federal nutrition programs

SNAP Outreach - Helping families navigate applications; NH Food Bank able to match private dollars with federal dollars.

Summer Electronics Benefits Transfer (Summer-EBT) - provides NH families of children on free and reduced meals with additional food benefits during the summer. **Fed over 40,000 kids.**

ESAP -Elderly Simplified Application Project- to make it easier for older adults (above 60) and people living with disabilities to certify for SNAP less often. Auto enrollment began July 2025 for over **23,000 people.**

Defeated attacks on SNAP



Medicaid Direct Certification

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Directly certifies children whose families' incomes qualify them for free or reduced meals who are on Medicaid - without their family having to fill out another form.



Medicaid Direct Certification Benefits

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Benefits to kids

- Improved academic performance
- Reduced behavioral problems
- Fewer trips to the nurse
- Stronger attendance and higher graduation rates

Benefits to schools

- Reduced administrative costs (no processing school meal applications)
- Reduced school meal enrollment certification errors
- Reduced unpaid student meal debt
- Increased state and federal funding

Benefits to towns/municipalities

- 10,500 children eligible – but not enrolled in – free or reduced meals means schools/towns are being asked to do more with less. MDC would correct this miscounting.
- Free and reduced applications are complicated, burdensome, and must be filled out anew every year.

School Meal Debt & Shaming

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Problem

Many NH school districts struggle with school meal debt. (When a child goes through the lunch line and their family can't pay.)

To get families to pay off their debt, some districts use tactics that harm children:

- Deny a child food entirely
- Require "alternative meals" that stigmatize
- Expose their families' confidential financial information

These tactics increase child hunger.

Solution

- Prohibit schools from involving students in collecting debt from families.
- Ensure family privacy and protect children from public shaming.
- Medicaid Direct Certification - ensures eligible children are enrolled without additional paperwork
- Raise eligibility for free meals
- Feed all children at school

Raising Eligibility for Free School Meals

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Problem

- Free and reduced eligibility levels are low
- Families above the current threshhold for free and reduced meals are struggling to make ends meet
- School meal debt levels are high
- More children in NH are food insecure than ever before
- Hungry children can't learn

Solution

- Use state dollars to raise the eligibility for free meals to at least 200% FPL

Food Program Coverage

for a family of three

Upper limit for **Free meals**	Upper limit for **Reduced meals**	Upper limit for **SNAP**	NH Living Wage
$35,516	**$50,542**	**$53,300**	**$109,290***

More than $55,000 Gap

*MIT Living Wage Calculator

Child Nutrition

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Work with schools and communities to increase participation in school meals

- NH misses providing breakfast to **13,773 students** who normally receive free school lunch. As a result, NH misses out on **over $6 million federal dollars** per year.

- NHHS works with schools to promote School Breakfast through the **School Breakfast Challenge** and **Breakfast After the Bell (BAB)**

Breakfast After the Bell

- **Evidence-based** approach to increasing breakfast participation
- **Makes breakfast a part of the school day** so everyone can participate
- **Reduces stigma** because all children can eat (no one knows whose breakfast is free/reduced/paid)
- **Approaches to BAB:**
  - Grab and go carts
  - Breakfast in the classroom
  - Healthy breakfast vending machines

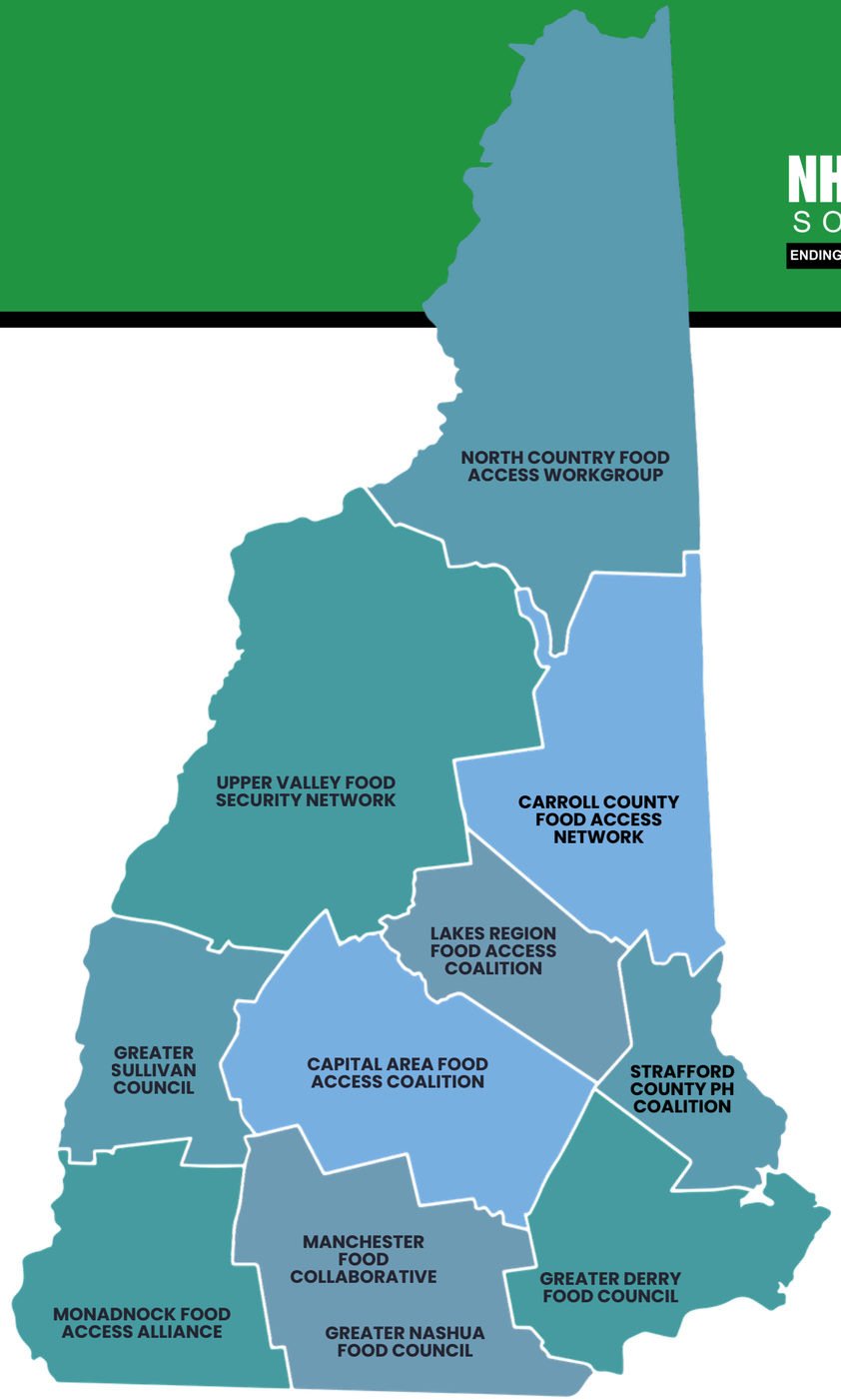


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Food Access Coalitions

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Food access coalitions are community partners from an array of backgrounds and sectors that come together to improve local food systems and address hunger.



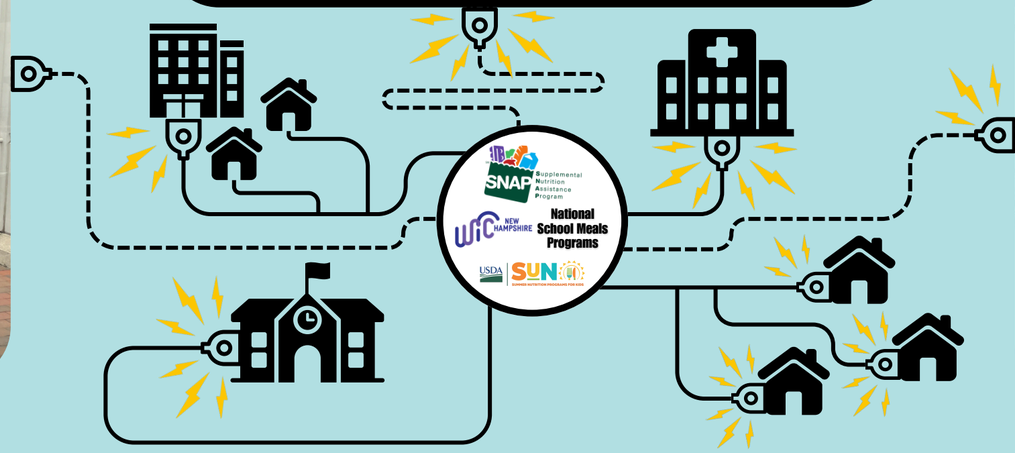
We're here to help

- Sign up for our Newsletter and/or policy action alerts
- Reach out to us! We can:
  - Be a resource for anti-hunger legislation
  - Provide expertise on state and federal nutrition programs
  - Provide data on SNAP participation, school meal participation, or connect you with resources
  - Connect you with others in the food advocacy space

We're not just reducing hunger today, we're changing the system so that fewer people face hunger tomorrow.









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Discussion & Questions

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