



**COMMUNITY FOOD
ASSESSMENT**

2019 - 2021

AUTHORS /

The Malden Community Food Assessment Core Leadership Team was comprised of staff from:



"Food for the body ... Nurture for the soul!"



CARE TO ♥ THE PEOPLE



Malden is Moving!



OUR VISION /

We envision a healthier Malden community where all people, especially historically marginalized populations, have access to culturally preferred, high quality, nutritious food.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY /

A Community Food Assessment (or CFA) is a systematic process to identify and analyze food system needs and assets. A "food system" is the economic network and chain of activities connecting food production, processing, distribution, consumption, and waste management.¹ The process of identifying these needs and assets is grounded in publicly reported data as well as input from the community through surveys, focus groups, and community meetings. This process raises awareness of food system assets, challenges and opportunities, and provides evidence of the community's needs-- which residents, community organizations, non-profits, and policymakers can use to advocate for effective policy and programs.² The ultimate goal of a CFA is to channel the information gathered into a plan of action to achieve equitable access to healthy food.

The Malden CFA core planning team -- Bread of Life, Cambridge Health Alliance, YWCA Malden, and Malden is Moving! -- came together in 2018 to better understand the critical issues underlying food insecurity in Malden, under the goal of creating a shared understanding of the current state of resources and gaps present within the food system. With that, the community can work toward developing common goals and strategies to ensure our food system more fully and equitably supports the health of Malden's communities and environment.

In the middle of carrying out this CFA, we were confronted with the unprecedented impacts and inequities of the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 has disproportionately impacted communities of color in the United States and around the world, including in the Greater Boston region. Middlesex County, where Malden is located, has consistently seen the highest rate of infection, death, and hospitalizations in MA due to COVID-19. This assessment took on new urgency as Malden collectively worked to address unprecedented levels of food insecurity. Policies and practices that lead to inequities in our food system were exacerbated by COVID-19. Note that the Malden Community Food Security Survey examined pre and post-COVID questions to determine changes/gaps in Malden's food systems. Questions were developed in concert with the Tri-City Hunger Network and were translated into 6 languages (English, Haitian Creole, Portuguese, Chinese, Arabic, and Spanish). The survey garnered 373 valid responses from residents of Malden. Surveyors included Malden High School students participating in a leadership program at YWCA Malden, as well as other community groups and agencies. The survey was also available electronically on the City of Malden website. Survey respondents were representative of the ethnicities languages spoken by Malden residents. Strengths of the Malden community and the food system were channeled to address the community's needs.

This report includes six main sections, with the bulk of the report devoted to assessing four areas of focus of Malden's food system: (1) food consumption, (2) food production, (3) food retail and distribution, and (4) food recovery + waste diversion. Findings and recommendations were guided by a research question for each area of focus, and an overarching set of recommendations was created based on findings that spanned multiple areas of focus. Additional resources and references are included in the [Appendix](#), including a robust exploration of the Social Determinants of Health data related to Malden.

A key overarching recommendation that came out of this assessment is to establish a Food Policy Council (FPC) or comparable organized body as the leading coalition for prioritizing the recommendations of the Malden CFA and creating a Community Food Plan.

We invite you to read on to discover more about Malden's food system!

¹ American Planning Association. Food Systems. Knowledgebase Collection. <https://www.planning.org/knowledgebase/food/>
² <https://www.jhsph.edu/research/centers-and-institutes/johns-hopkins-center-for-a-livable-future/projects/CFA/index.html>