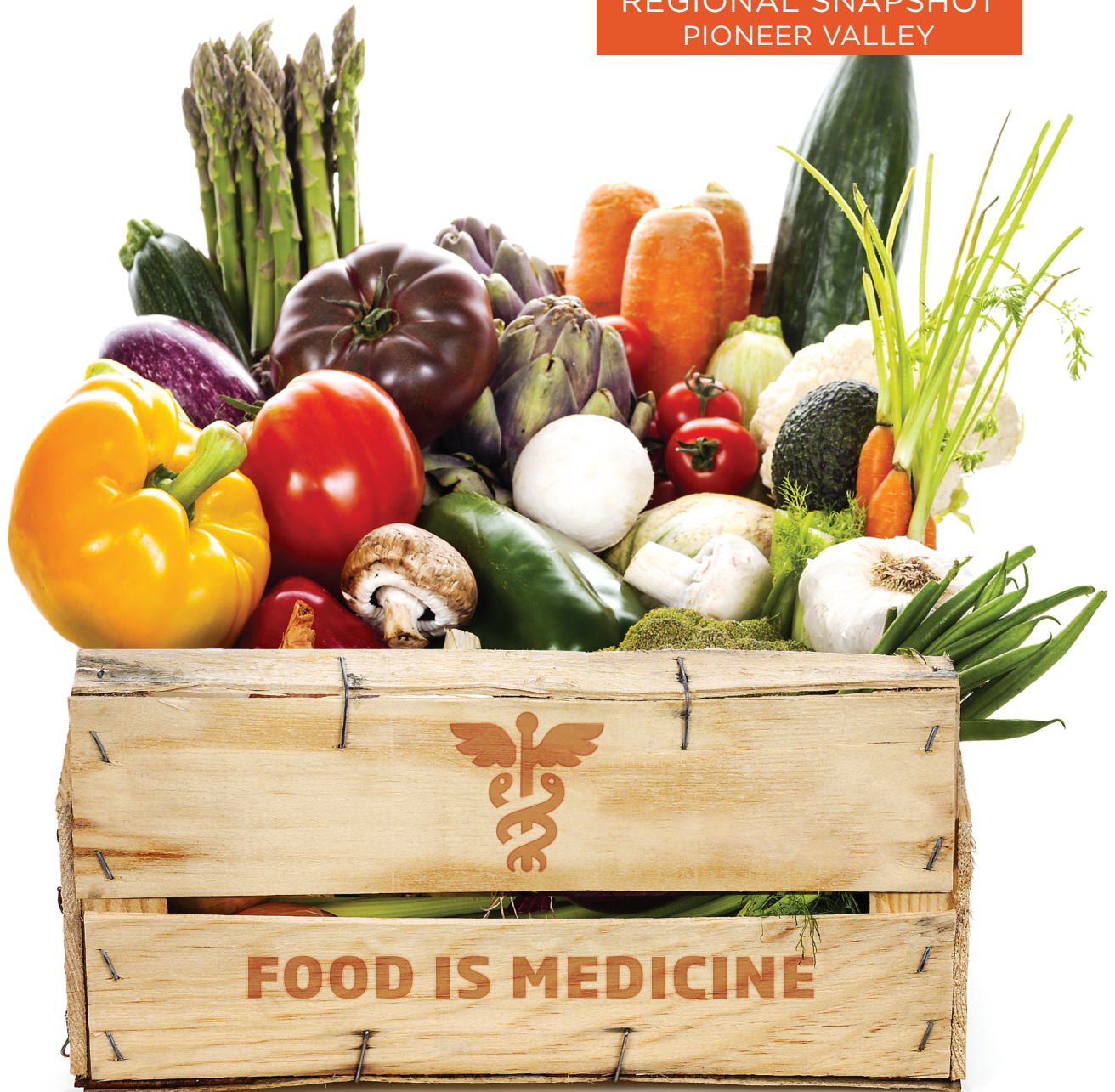


MASSACHUSETTS

# Food is Medicine

STATE PLAN

REGIONAL SNAPSHOT  
PIONEER VALLEY



JUNE 2019

# Regional Snapshot

## PIONEER VALLEY

### FRANKLIN, HAMPSHIRE, AND HAMPDEN COUNTIES

Massachusetts' Pioneer Valley encompasses the 69 cities and towns within Franklin, Hampshire, and Hampden Counties. High rates of food insecurity, low vehicle access, and chronic disease burden make Springfield, Chicopee, Holyoke, Agawam, and West Springfield priority towns for Food is Medicine interventions. Hampden County is rich in racial and ethnic diversity; however, residential racial segregation and high concentrations of poverty raise concerns about resource access and availability of culturally appropriate services. Lack of health care providers and environmental concerns also contribute to high rates of chronic disease. Food is Medicine interventions are enriched by the region's robust agricultural economy; hunger-relief efforts that improve regional health also contribute to the local economy.

### SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

#### Air Pollution

Exposure to air pollution can result in health conditions such as asthma and cardiovascular disease.<sup>1</sup> In fact, 27% of the towns in Pioneer Valley have asthma rates higher than the state average and three out of the ten towns with the highest asthma rates in the state are in Pioneer Valley. Cardiovascular disease is 40% more prevalent in Springfield and Holyoke than the rest of the county.<sup>2</sup> Both cities have major roadways running through their neighborhoods.

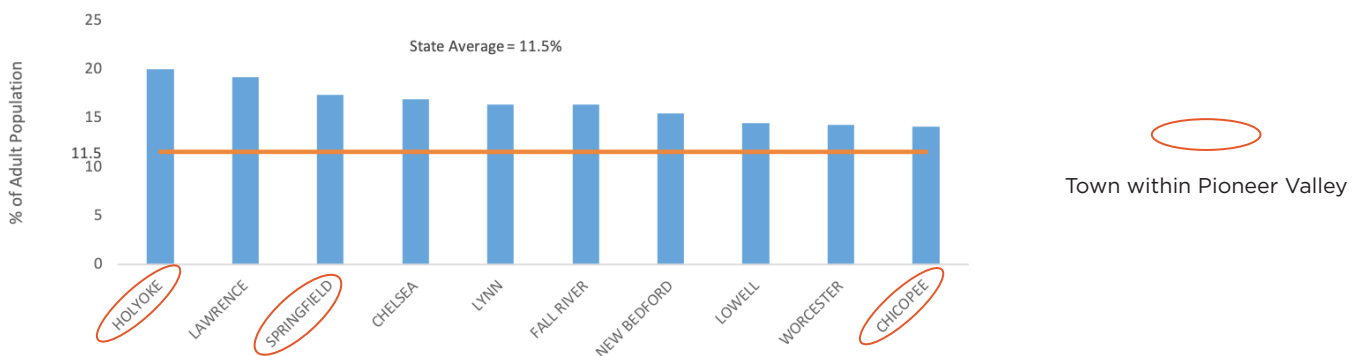
#### Racial Segregation and Concentrations of Poverty

Residential racial segregation, corresponding with low levels of opportunities and resources in communities of color, is a form of institutional racism that impacts health.<sup>3</sup> Springfield has an estimated 66% minority population and is ranked the most segregated area in the country for Latino/Hispanics and the 22<sup>nd</sup> most segregated for African Americans.<sup>4</sup> Longmeadow, East Longmeadow, and Wilbraham, adjacent to Springfield, are predominantly White (90% or more) and have the highest median family incomes in the region compared to Springfield, where the median family income is \$35,742.<sup>5</sup> Beyond Springfield, Hampden County has the second highest poverty rate (17.2%) and lowest median income (\$52,205) in the state.<sup>6</sup> Food is Medicine programming in the region should consider and address resource access issues and availability of culturally appropriate services.

#### Health Care Provider Shortage

Limited availability of health care providers may exacerbate chronic disease in Pioneer Valley. Over half (54%) of Hampden County residents live in an area with a shortage of health care professionals.<sup>7</sup> As a result, residents may miss or delay health care visits, resulting in poorer health outcomes.

Appendix Figure 3: Top Ten Towns with Highest Adult Asthma Rates in Massachusetts



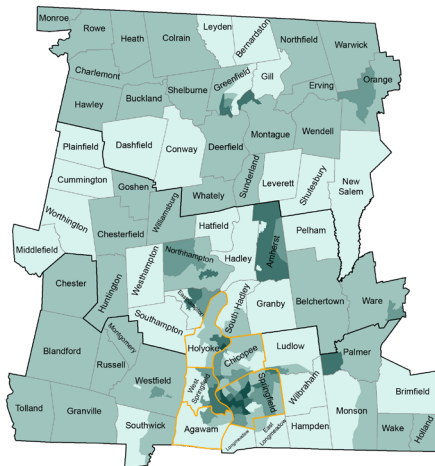
Source: Massachusetts Town-level Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey, CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTIONS-MDPH, (2018)

# FOOD IS MEDICINE INDICATORS OF NEED

## PIONEER VALLEY SNAPSHOT

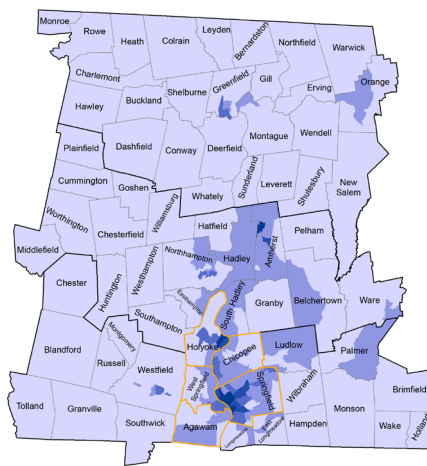
### MASSACHUSETTS 2018

#### FOOD INSECURITY



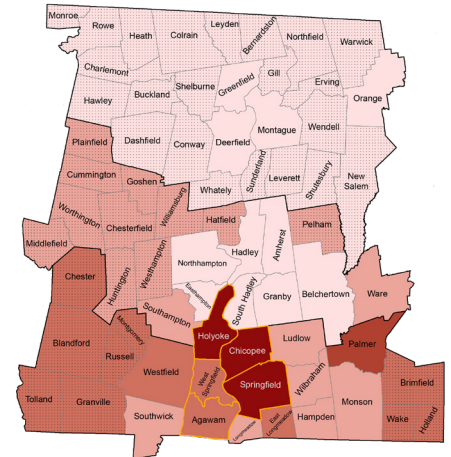
January 2019; Projected Coordinate System: NAD 1983 2011 StatePlane Massachusetts Mainland FIPS 2001; Sources: US Census, Feeding America

#### VEHICLE ACCESS

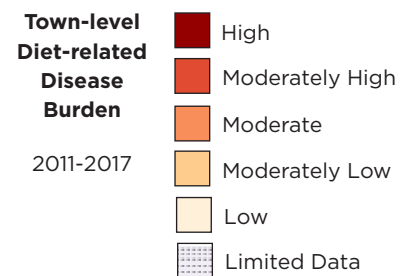
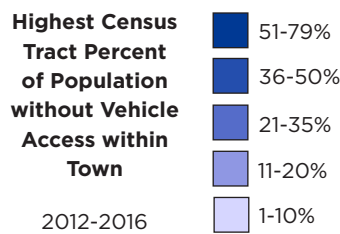
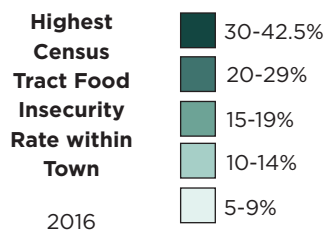


January 2019; Projected Coordinate System: NAD 1983 2011 StatePlane Massachusetts Mainland FIPS 2001; Sources: US Census, ACS 2012-2016 5-year Estimates

#### DIET-RELATED CHRONIC DISEASE BURDEN



January 2019; Projected Coordinate System: NAD 1983 2011 StatePlane Massachusetts Mainland FIPS 2001; Sources: US Census, MassDPH (Massachusetts Acute Care Database/BRFSS), Massachusetts Cancer Registry



Appendix Table 2: Food is Medicine Indicators of Need, Pioneer Valley

Food is Medicine Indicators of Need	Regional Data
<b>Food Insecurity</b>	Forty percent of the region's census tracts have food insecurity rates higher than the state average (10.9%). Holyoke contains a census tract with the highest food insecurity rate in the region (30.7%), yet Springfield has the biggest concentration of food insecurity in the region with a town average of 18%. <sup>8</sup>
<b>Vehicle Access</b>	Pockets of low vehicle access rates are found in Springfield and Holyoke. In one area of Springfield, over half of households lack access to a vehicle. Public transportation in this region is not adequately comprehensive or a reliable substitute for a personal vehicle. <sup>9</sup>
<b>Chronic Disease</b>	All three counties in Pioneer Valley lead the state in asthma rates among adults, exceeding the state rate by 42%. <sup>10</sup> Nearly 60% of the towns with publicly available diabetes data in the region have prevalence rates above the state average. Hampden County has the second highest rate of hospitalizations from cardiovascular disease in the state, while Hampshire County has higher rates of breast cancer and colon and rectal cancers than the state average. Over half of Hampden County residents live in an area with a shortage of health care professionals. <sup>11</sup>

# FOOD IS MEDICINE PRIORITY ANALYSIS

## PIONEER VALLEY SNAPSHOT

### MASSACHUSETTS 2018

#### FIM Priority Level

- High
- Moderately High
- Moderately Low
- Low
- Limited Data

#### Food is Medicine Programming

- Medically Tailored Meal Provider
- MTM Not Restricted to Seniors (60+)
- Medically Tailored Food Provider
- Produce Prescription Program Site
- Population-Level Healthy Food Program Site

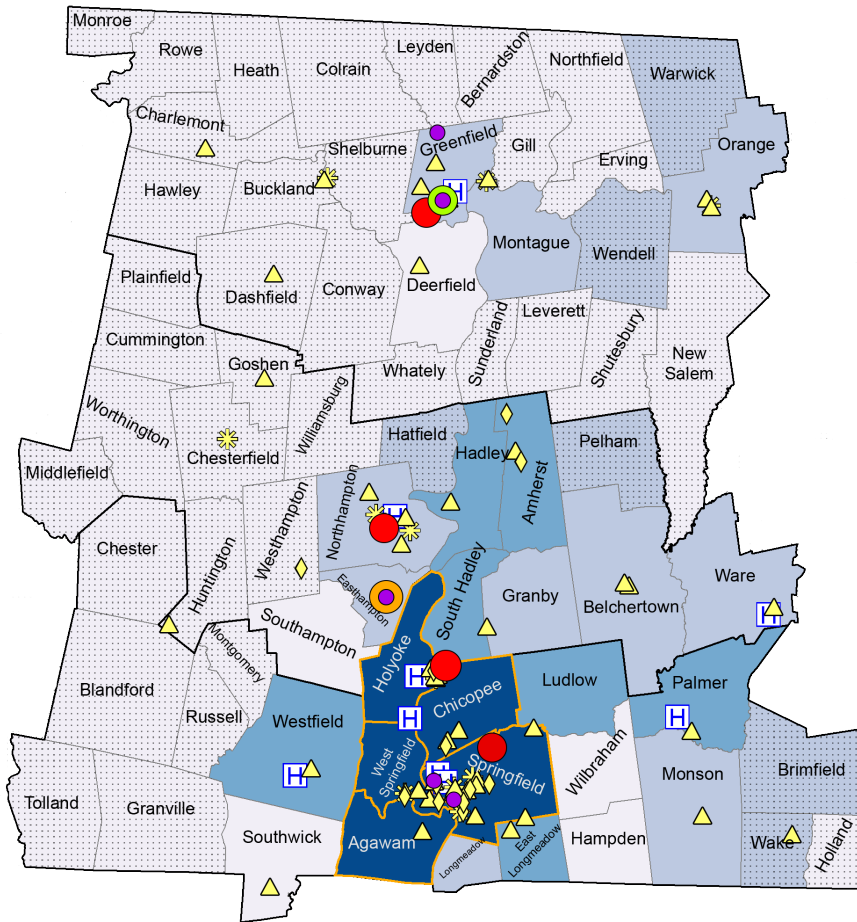
#### Emergency Food Providers

- Voucher Program
- Food Rescue Organization
- Low Cost Food Program
- Meal Program
- Food Pantry and Meal Program
- Food Pantry

#### Context

- County Border
- Town Border
- FIM Priority Town
- Hospital

January 2019 | Projected  
 Coordinate System: NAD  
 1983 2011 StatePlane  
 Massachusetts Mainland  
 FIPS 2001  
 Sources: U.S. Census  
 Bureau, MassDPH,  
 Feeding America,  
 MassGIS, Massachusetts  
 Cancer Registry, Project  
 Bread, MA Food is  
 Medicine Data Collection



## INNOVATION IN PIONEER VALLEY

Pioneer Valley is home to a quarter of all farms in Massachusetts. Local farms form the backbone of hunger-relief efforts by providing fresh produce to emergency food programs and CBOs that focus on food and health. Just Roots, a Planning Council member to the Food is Medicine State Plan, is an organization in Greenfield, MA committed to increasing access to whole, healthy, local food. Aside from operating the Greenfield Community Farm that hosts workshops, field trips, a local food clinic, and a community garden, Just Roots' Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program is designed to address barriers that traditionally limit low-income participation in CSAs. As a result, Just Roots is the largest SNAP-enrolled CSA program in the state. The organization is also dedicated to addressing the research gap surrounding CSAs. In 2017, they launched a two-year, USDA/Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation-funded research study in partnership with the Community Health Center of Franklin County and Dr. Seth Berkowitz of the University of North Carolina School of Medicine to evaluate the impact CSA participation has on health outcomes and health care costs.

# Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Robert Brook et al., *Air Pollution and Cardiovascular Disease*, *CIRCULATION*, (2004)
- <sup>2</sup> *Massachusetts Town-level Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey*, CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTIONS-MDPH, (2018).
- <sup>3</sup> Central MA Regional Public Health Alliance. (2018). 2018 Greater Worcester Community Health Assessment. [http://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/ba131b\\_d50f500c6c36489ba359b5e4a67d125a.pdf](http://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/ba131b_d50f500c6c36489ba359b5e4a67d125a.pdf) ; Central MA Regional Public Health Alliance. (2015). 2015 Greater Worcester Community Health Assessment, [https://www.umassmemorialhealthcare.org/sites/umass-memorial-hospital/files/Documents/About/UMass\\_Memorial\\_CBI\\_Measures-CHAFINAL.pdf](https://www.umassmemorialhealthcare.org/sites/umass-memorial-hospital/files/Documents/About/UMass_Memorial_CBI_Measures-CHAFINAL.pdf). 2015 Community Health Assessment of North Central Massachusetts [https://www.umassmemorialhealthcare.org/sites/umass-memorial-hospital/files/Documents/Members/5-21-15%20Final%20Community\\_Health\\_Assessment\\_of\\_North\\_Central\\_MA.pdf](https://www.umassmemorialhealthcare.org/sites/umass-memorial-hospital/files/Documents/Members/5-21-15%20Final%20Community_Health_Assessment_of_North_Central_MA.pdf)
- <sup>4</sup> *Springfield Health Equity Report*, PARTNERS FOR A HEALTHIER COMMUNITY, (2014).
- <sup>5</sup> *Springfield Health Equity Report*, PARTNERS FOR A HEALTHIER COMMUNITY, (2014).
- <sup>6</sup> *Selected Demographic Table: Selected Economic Characteristics (DP03)*, AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY 2013-2017 5-YEAR ESTIMATES, U.S. CENSUS BUREAU.
- <sup>7</sup> 2015 Community Health Assessment of North Central Massachusetts, p. 66, [https://www.umassmemorialhealthcare.org/sites/umass-memorial-hospital/files/Documents/Members/5-21-15%20Final%20Community\\_Health\\_Assessment\\_of\\_North\\_Central\\_MA.pdf](https://www.umassmemorialhealthcare.org/sites/umass-memorial-hospital/files/Documents/Members/5-21-15%20Final%20Community_Health_Assessment_of_North_Central_MA.pdf)
- <sup>8</sup> Craig Gundersen et al., *Map the Meal Gap 2018: A Report on County and Congressional District Food Insecurity and County Food Cost in the United States in 2016*, FEEDING AMERICA, (2018).
- <sup>9</sup> *Household Size by Vehicle Available [Percent no Vehicle]*, AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY 2012-2016 5-YEAR ESTIMATES, U.S. CENSUS BUREAU.
- <sup>10</sup> *Massachusetts Town-level Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey*, CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTIONS-MDPH, (2018).
- <sup>11</sup> *2016 Community Health Needs Assessment*, MERCY MEDICAL CENTER, <http://www.mercycares.com/documents/Mercy%20CHNA%202016.pdf> (last visited Mar. 13, 2019).

# MASSACHUSETTS FOOD IS MEDICINE STATE PLAN REGIONAL SNAPSHOT

Copyright ©2019

