



Getting Food at Different Life Stages

School	School Lunch Participation (%)		Change: 2019-2025 (percentage points)	Average % Low Income Students (2019-2025)
	2019	2025		
Argenziano	64.5	80.0	15.5	39.1%
Healey	83.5	82.1	-1.4	62.3%
Brown	45.3	61.0	15.7	13.9%
Capuano	67.1	97.3	30.2	38.6%
East	79.5	77.7	-1.8	55.9%
Full Circle	100.0	100.0	0.0	78.0%
Kennedy	53.9	68.8	14.9	26.1%
Next Wave	100.0	100.0	0.0	84.1%
SHS	49.3	66.6	17.3	50.6%
West	63.0	65.2	2.2	36.3%
Winter Hill	95.6	76.8	-18.8	56.1%
ALL SCHOOLS	66.0	74.0	8.0	46.4%

- **Universal Free School Meals are a major policy win** from the last few years, improving school food by:
 - » ensuring kids are fed,
 - » destigmatizing and increasing participation in free lunch, and
 - » reducing the paperwork burden for SPS FNS.
- Recent summer meals programming has been under-utilized.

- **Food options for HS students during out-of-school time are limited**, and less nourishing convenience foods are currently the most accessible option.
- Respondents named businesses like Gaya, LP's, Dunkin Donuts, Mobile, and Pearl St. Market as common places they get food. 16 of 23 respondents said \$10 or less was a comfortable price point for food.

YOUTH IDEAS ABOUT SUPPORT FOR FOOD ACCESS AFTER SCHOOL:

- “ Food pantries, soup kitchens, free lunch, programs that allow teens to get food **without scrutiny or feeling awkward**.
– Youth Worker Network Panel Discussion, 2025
- “ Food programs at all the public schools and libraries with free/ discounted food and more different types of foods.
– Food Assessment HS student survey respondent
- “ More programs where you can access affordable food especially during summer. I know a lot of families that have bigger expenses during summer and can't fully provide to their kids.
– Food Assessment HS student survey respondent

High school students surveyed for the assessment said they ate most often at home or at a friend's house after school.



Afterschool program



Fast Food



Store



Home or Friends's House

Less Often

More Often

“ I could buy extra groceries [with free transportation from the Taxi to Health Program]; living on disability benefits and with rent that **does not leave much left for groceries**”.

– Interviewee who benefited from free transportation to grocery stores through the Taxi to Health program

Services for Older Adults and Adults with Disabilities

	Older Adults	Adults with Disabilities
Grocery Access and Fresh Food:		
MA Home Care	yes	yes
Just Eats grocery boxes*	yes	yes
Farmers market coupons	yes	–
CSFP grocery boxes	yes	–
Prepared Meals:		
COA congregate meals/pickup meals	yes	yes
SCES Ensure Drinks	yes	yes
SCES home delivery meals	yes	available to people under 60 that live in elderly/supportive housing
SCES congregate meals	yes	free to people under 60 that live in the building
Transportation to Food:		
COA taxi rides to grocery stores	yes	yes
Door to Door Shuttle Service and Scheduled Rides	yes	yes
Reduced Cost Bus and T Fare	yes	yes
Transport to congregate meals	yes	–
SNAP Assistance & Nutrition Education		
COA nutrition classes	yes	yes
Extra support getting and keeping SNAP	yes	yes
SNAP medical deduction	yes	yes

*service of Food For Free

- Older adults have access to several prepared meal, grocery, and transportation support programs, although **many older adults still worry about food access**.
- **Adults under 60 with disabilities** can access many of the resources aimed at older adults, but there is a **gap in access** to free or affordable food to prepare at home and delivered prepared meals.
- **Certain populations, such as high-school aged students and people with disabilities, have unique needs.** Current programming does not always meet these needs, especially when it is targeted at a broader population.
 - » These populations are not well represented at meetings where gaps in food access are discussed.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE FOOD ACCESS AT ALL AGES:

- **Increase summer meals utilization** by moving locations of open sites and increasing the time window to longer than 15 minutes.
- Further explore the **best approach** to improving food access for **HS students**: enabling food trucks, supporting food businesses around the High School, or piloting a fresh vending machine in the building.
- Partner with the Youth Workers’ Network to determine the best way to **ensure youth representation** in the Somerville Food Coalition.
- Collaborate with the **Disability Commission and Human Rights Commission to join the Somerville Food Coalition** and center people living with disabilities and food access.

Want to learn more?
Find the full
assessment here:

