

Cooking Matters Massachusetts,

a program of Share Our Strength



SHARE OUR STRENGTH'S
**COOKING
MATTERS**
NO KID HUNGRY

Share Our Strength's Cooking Matters® Massachusetts (Cooking Matters MA) teaches families at risk of hunger how to get more food for their money and better nourishment from those foods. Cooking Matters MA partners with community organizations and volunteer culinary and nutrition instructors to provide food skills education that empowers families to make healthy choices and prepare affordable meals on limited budgets. Serving a diverse population of low-income families—most of whom are enrolled in food assistance programs including SNAP (food stamps) and WIC—Cooking Matters MA envisions a future in which all Massachusetts children have the nutritious foods they need to grow, learn, and thrive, and all parents and caregivers have the knowledge and skills to prepare delicious and balanced meals.

Founded 1994
as Operation Frontline,
a program of Share Our Strength®

\$420,000
Current Program Budget

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INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY

Cooking Matters MA aims to raise \$1 million over the next two years to continue expanding its program. Meeting the growing demand for its food skills education throughout Massachusetts will require developing a strong statewide volunteer base and building internal capacity to extend program reach.

THE NEED

Food insecurity is the inability to obtain adequate nutritious food for a healthy life because of insufficient financial resources. It can cause hunger, malnutrition, and obesity, which can create health and development problems with serious economic repercussions for individuals, families, and society. Food assistance programs such as SNAP, WIC, and free/reduced price school meals are only part of the solution to addressing these problems. Without basic nutrition knowledge or cooking and food resource management skills, families with access to food can still struggle to make healthy choices and prepare nutritious meals affordably.

- Nearly one in five Massachusetts children lives in a food insecure household
- Kids who regularly do not eat enough nutritious food have higher level of behavioral, emotional, and academic problems, and are more likely to need special education, repeat a grade, and not finish high school
- Adults who experienced childhood hunger tend to bring lower levels of education and technical skills to the workforce, limiting their lifetime earnings and ability to hold jobs with health insurance benefits
- Costly but preventable diet-related health problems in children and adults include obesity, heart disease, and Type II diabetes

THE OPPORTUNITY FOR SOCIAL IMPACT

While government and other food assistance programs are designed to increase low-income families' access to food, many people find themselves caught in a critical gap between access and ability to make healthy choices and prepare balanced meals. Cooking Matters MA bridges this gap by teaching how to stretch food resources in ways that are delicious and healthy.

- Cooking Matters MA courses and educational outreach events teach nutrition, cooking, and food resource management skills for maximizing nutritional value and minimizing cost
- Experiential, participatory classes enable learning and facilitate the adoption of new behaviors
- Graduates of Cooking Matters MA programming consistently demonstrate development of lifelong skills and significant, positive behavior changes
- Cooking Matters is a key component of Share Our Strength's No Kid Hungry® campaign to end childhood hunger by pairing knowledge and skills for healthy eating with access to food

TWO-YEAR GOALS

- Serve all highest-need communities in the state, emphasizing accelerated growth in western Massachusetts
- Graduate 25 percent more families from six week signature courses in 2013 and an additional 20 percent in 2014
- Reach 4,000 and 7,100 families in 2013 and 2014 respectively through educational outreach events
- Hire two additional course coordinators
- Develop a training program for volunteers without professional culinary or nutrition experience

WAYS TO INVEST

- Financial**
 - \$100,000 – Pays for the volunteer instructor training certification program
 - \$4,000 – Sponsors a six week signature course reaching eight to 16 families
 - \$100 – Funds a Shopping Matters® tour for 10 families
- In-Kind**
 - Office space in the Boston area
 - Groceries or grocery gift cards
 - Cooking utensils for course graduates

"I think that the [Cooking Matters MA] program will make our nation a healthier place. If only every kid could take the class. Instead of going out to fast food, we could cook equally good food. This is a great program."

—Emerson, age 10, Cooking Matters for Kids graduate

Signature Six-Week Courses:

Cooking Matters MA collaborates with community--based organizations like Head Start centers and after--school programs to reach families in familiar and accessible settings. In addition to recruiting course participants, community partners provide kitchen and classroom space, as well as interpreters and childcare as needed. A Cooking Matters MA course coordinator serves as the liaison to the community partner and brings all cooking supplies, ingredients, and class materials to the site. Coordinators also recruit and train volunteer instructors for each course. Volunteer instructors share their education and experience in the culinary and nutrition fields, teaching course participants skills ranging from knife techniques to choosing healthy, affordable fruits and vegetables at the grocery store. Engaging volunteers keeps program administration costs down and builds community wealth by providing an opportunity for volunteers to take action against hunger.

Cooking Matters courses are designed as six weekly, two--hour lessons. By initiating discussions and introducing activities that build upon participants' own experiences, instructors create effective learning opportunities. Course participants build confidence in their new skills through active class participation, enabling positive behavior changes in daily life. Classmates also help one another by sharing feedback on each other's progress. Participants receive ingredients weekly to practice making the class recipes at home. By using what they learn in class at home, Cooking Matters MA course graduates maximize their food resources, make healthier choices for their families, and prepare balanced, delicious meals. Because proper nutrition is critical for children's health, development, and ability to learn, acquiring these skills can return important long--term benefits for a family's physical and economic well-being.

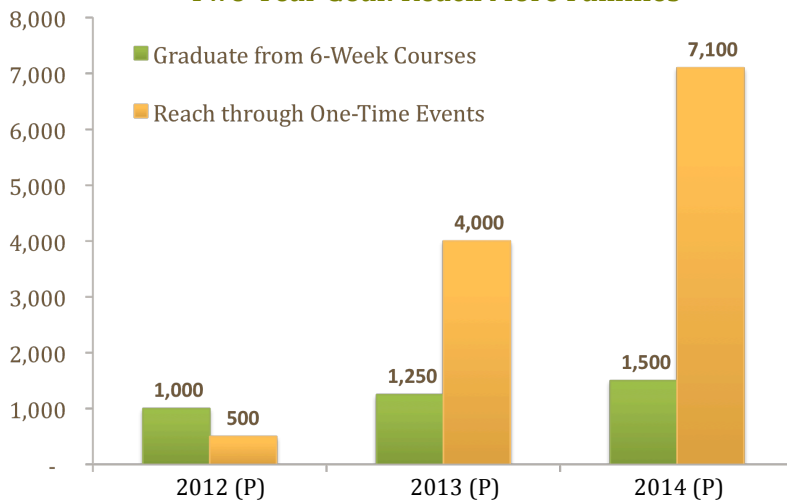
SOCIAL INNOVATION IN ACTION: THE COOKING MATTERS MA MODEL

Cooking Matters MA brings together hundreds of community organizations and volunteer instructors to build the food and nutrition knowledge, skills, and experience that empower low-income families to make choices for long-term health and wellness. Its six-week courses and one-time educational outreach events link access to food with skills needed to make healthy and affordable meals. Courses and outreach events use interactive, hands-on activities to teach skills for shopping strategically, choosing healthier foods, and preparing balanced meals.

Linking Access to Food with the Skills Needed to Make Healthy Meals



Two-Year Goal: Reach More Families



One-Time Educational Outreach Events:

Building on the proven success of the six--week courses, Cooking Matters MA also offers one--time educational outreach events that provide busy families an opportunity to learn and practice some of the food skills education taught in the six week courses. Events include community health fairs, nutrition and cooking lessons at local food pantries, and Shopping Matters®, a free, guided grocery store tour that teaches low--income adults how to get the most nutrition for their food dollars. During Shopping Matters® tours, participants practice key food shopping skills like buying fruits and vegetables on a budget, comparing unit prices, reading food labels, and identifying whole--grain foods. At health fairs and food pantries, families learn select recipes and key concepts that can help them stretch their food resources in ways that maximize nutritional content and flavor.

"This class has made a huge difference in my home and the health of my family. I find myself reading labels, eating whole grains, and making better decisions about the foods that I purchase. I am more confident in my kitchen and my family enjoys my cooking. I came out of this class more knowledgeable and ready to shop healthy for my family. Thank you!"

—Jennifer, Cooking Matters for Adults graduate



SUCCESS STORY: MISHY

A single mother of two young boys, MiShy struggled with challenges familiar to many parents around mealtime: time constraints and finding healthy foods kids will eat. Complicating matters for MiShy, however, was the added stress of trying to feed her family the most balanced and nutritious meals on their limited food budget and food assistance benefits. Now a graduate of a Cooking Matters MA course, MiShy feels confident in her new abilities to shop strategically, make healthier food choices, and prepare nutritious and affordable meals that she and her boys will enjoy.

“The best element of the course for me was the gathering of parents. We all pretty much have the same lifestyle situations with our children...and we want to feed our kids the best that we possibly can.”

“A lot of different things have been incorporated into my diet that I’ve learned directly from this class. It’s been amazing for myself and for my children. The whole thought process from this experience has been just completely life changing I would say.”

TEAM AND GOVERNANCE

Massachusetts Director Alicia McCabe brings extensive experience as a culinary professional to her leadership role. Prior to joining Cooking Matters MA in 2006, she employed her talents and passion for cooking in social service organizations, critically-acclaimed Boston restaurants, and a university culinary arts education program. From feeding the residents of a homeless shelter to managing a restaurant kitchen, Alicia has developed expert skills in logistics management, staff development, and event coordination.

Joining Alicia in the Massachusetts leadership team are Michelle Camiel, eastern Massachusetts manager, and Jessica Maillet, RD, central Massachusetts manager. At a national level, Share Our Strength provides professional-level curricula and instructional materials, training, evaluation and additional leadership and governance.

Cooking Matters MA’s advisory board is comprised of Steve Dunn, chef and food blogger at Oui, Chef; Meghan Johnson, MS and MPH candidate at Tufts University; Syrah McGivern, MS, RD, community transformation coordinator for the city of Medford; Janet Schwartz, RD, consumer sciences department chair and food and nutrition professor at Framingham State University; Jeffrey Tenner, VP, executive chef at Bertucci’s corporation; and Erica Vogelei, account director at Cone, Inc.

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Between 1994 and 2007, Cooking Matters MA programming and growth were focused on greater Boston. Recognizing the need for its services in central and western Massachusetts, Cooking Matters MA began laying the foundation for statewide expansion in 2007. Committed to extending its reach without compromising quality, Cooking Matters MA formalized training protocols for new staff, enhanced its orientation and support for volunteers, engaged community partners, and chartered a new advisory board to assist with growth and development. By 2010, Cooking Matters MA was approved as a USDA nutrition education provider for SNAP recipients. In 2011, substantial grant awards from several local foundations boosted revenue considerably and supported an increase in programming. To reach thousands more families in 2013 and 2014, Cooking Matters MA’s next step in its continued growth is raising \$1 million over the next two years.

KEY INVESTORS

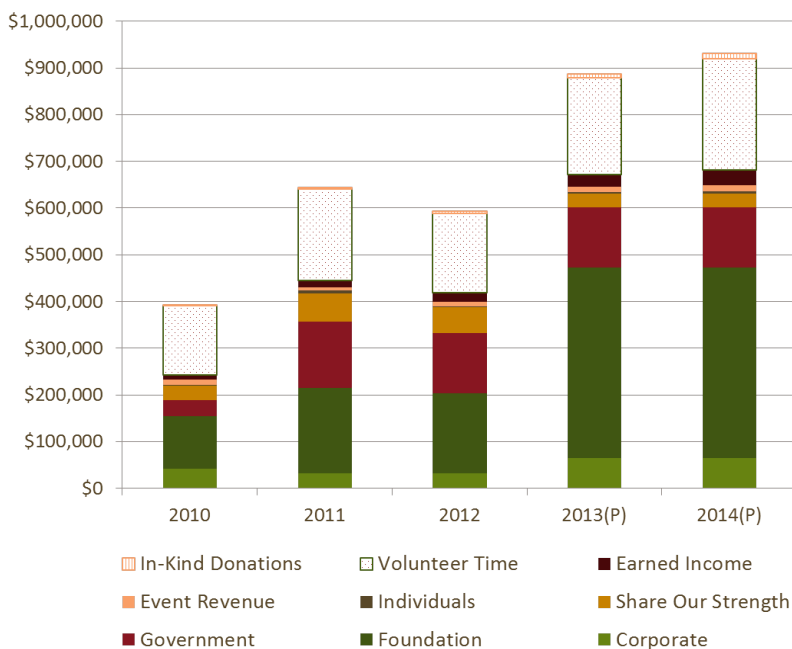
Massachusetts Sponsors

- Associated Grocers of New England
- Hannaford Supermarkets
- MA Department of Public Health—WIC Program
- MetroWest Health Foundation
- New Balance Foundation
- The Trefler Foundation
- USDA Snap-Ed
- Whole Foods Market

National Sponsors

- ConAgra Foods Foundation
- Walmart

Sources of Revenue and Other Support



As a program of Share Our Strength and part of the national Cooking Matters network, Cooking Matters MA is responsible for funding more than 90 percent of its own operations. In the coming years, the additional foundation and private donor support it seeks to raise will serve families at risk of hunger in underserved communities throughout Massachusetts. Because a growing pool of volunteer culinary and nutrition instructors is essential to program growth, Cooking Matters MA plans to develop a certification program to train non-professional culinary and nutrition educators in the core competencies necessary to teach its courses. To accelerate expansion into central and western Massachusetts, Cooking Matters MA will contract a professional culinary and nutrition educator to teach six week courses while staff members recruit and train volunteers in these new regions.

In addition, Cooking Matters MA aims to hire an educational outreach coordinator in the fall of 2012 to plan and execute hundreds of one-time educational outreach events in the next two years. Cooking Matters MA also seeks to add one new course coordinator in 2013 and another in 2014.



PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

Program Performance and Organizational Health:

Below is a summary of the key measures that Cooking Matters MA will track to demonstrate progress, capture lessons learned, and make course corrections as needed. Note: Fiscal year is January 1 – December 31.

	FY 2012	FY 2013 (P)	FY 2014 (P)
Program Performance			
Graduate more families from six week courses	1,000	1,250	1,500
Maintain graduation rate for six week courses	91%	91%	91%
Reach more families through educational outreach events	500	4,000	7,100
Expand presence in highest-need areas of central and western Massachusetts	--	Initiate accelerated regional expansion strategy	Continue developing strong volunteer instructor base in new regions
Organizational Health/Capacity Building			
Establish Cooking Matters MA volunteer certification program	Engage consultant to design program	Pursue program research and development	Implement program in Massachusetts
Add an educational event coordinator and two new course coordinators to the staff	Hire educational outreach event coordinator	Hire a course coordinator	Hire a course coordinator
Establish and implement a strategic development plan	Develop plan	Implement plan	Review progress and adjust as needed
Total Revenue	\$420,000	\$672,000	\$682,000

Social Impact:

Cooking Matters MA measures the extent of the changes in behavior, skills, and confidence that participants report at the conclusion of a six-week course— in regard to nutrition, food budgeting, and cooking. The table below reflects a sample of the behavior change data tracked in all six week courses. Successful results are consistent from course to course and year to year.

Frequency with which Course Participants Now:	Change Since Start of the Course
Plan meals ahead of time	+47%
Use the “Nutrition Facts” label to make food choices	+131%
Eat at least 2.5 cups of vegetables per day	+68%
Eat at least 2 cups of fruit per day	+70%
Drink more water	58%
Run out of food before getting money to buy more	-21%
Thaw frozen food at room temperature	-49%