



TOWN of LINCOLN
Council on Aging & Human Services

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To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing on behalf of the Lincoln Council on Aging & Human Services (COA&HS) in support of the statewide effort to fund lunch 5 days a week in Massachusetts Public Schools. The Town of Lincoln is by all accounts a wealth community. Why then would a community such as ours need universal free lunch for its students? The answer is simply, the cost of living in Lincoln is so high that even those who are solidly middle class are struggling financially. This has been compounded by the economic effects of the recent pandemic, which many of Lincoln households are still experiencing.

A family of 4 living in Lincoln needs to have an income at or below \$112,160 to be considered "low income" (according to HUD FY22 affordable income limits) and to qualify for any number of means-based benefits provided in our town. That is to say, a family with a six-figure income living in Lincoln is low income.

Our low income and moderate-income families are truly struggling. Even before the pandemic, we noted the effect of the high cost of living on the clients we serve. In 2012, the average number of clients served by our Lincoln food pantry was 28. In 2022, that number was 258. That is an 821% change.

Lincoln families are struggling to put food on the table. Continuing to fund lunch 5 days a week in Massachusetts Public Schools ensures that all of our school children have access to at least one nutritious meal per day. Furthermore, it removes the stigma associated with accept charity. Please fund universal free school lunches in our schools.

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