

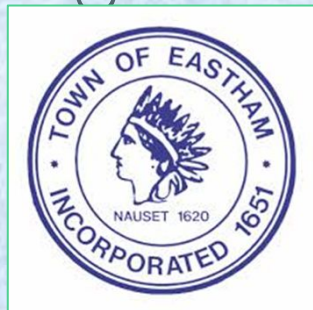
**Massachusetts Health Officers Association – November 6,  
2025**



# **CREATING A SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY REFRIGERATOR PROGRAM**

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CONSERVATION AND HEALTH DIRECTOR, EASTHAM, MA**

**PATRICE BARRETT, MPH  
(FORMERLY BARNSTABLE COUNTY)**







# **MY QUESTION TO HILLARY WHEN SHE MOVED FROM WELLFLEET TO EASTHAM AS HEALTH DIRECTOR IN JANUARY 2023**

**“YOU KNEW WELLFLEET FOR YEARS...AND WE DID THAT ASSESSMENT.**

**WHAT IS EASTHAM LIKE ?”**



# NATIONAL RESEARCH

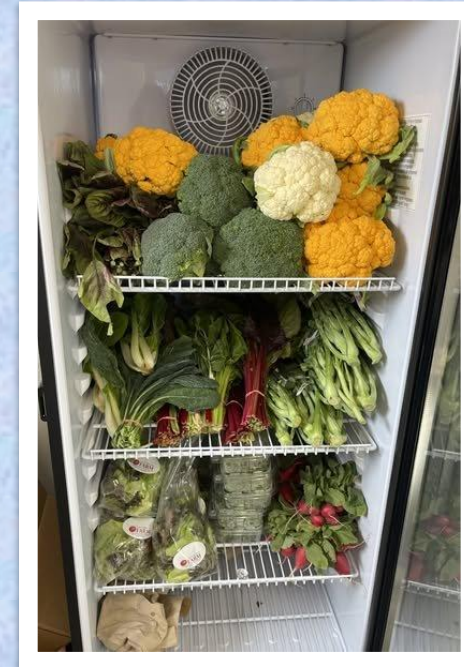




# PRESENTATION AGENDA

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 2. TEN ESSENTIAL PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES
- 3. DATA EVIDENCE FOR THE PROGRAM
- 4. STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES/ROLES
- 5. FUNDING – GRANTS, PHILANTHROPY, etc.
- 6. GETTING STARTED
- 7. MAINTAINING/ RUNNING THE PROGRAM







**Eastham MA beach**

- **Why do towns in one of the wealthiest land value regions in the US need community refrigerator programs ?**

**What does this program have to do with public health services?**

**There are public health issues not strictly statutory (just a little...)**

**Examine your population from a human health and SES perspective to truly learn who you serve.**

# COMMUNITY FRIDGE: WHY IT MATTERS

**9% of children and 10% senior  
Eastham residents are living in  
poverty**



**Tons of edible food are wasted each year**



**Encourages community connection and  
sustainability**



**Nutrition and healthy food reduce and  
prevent chronic disease**

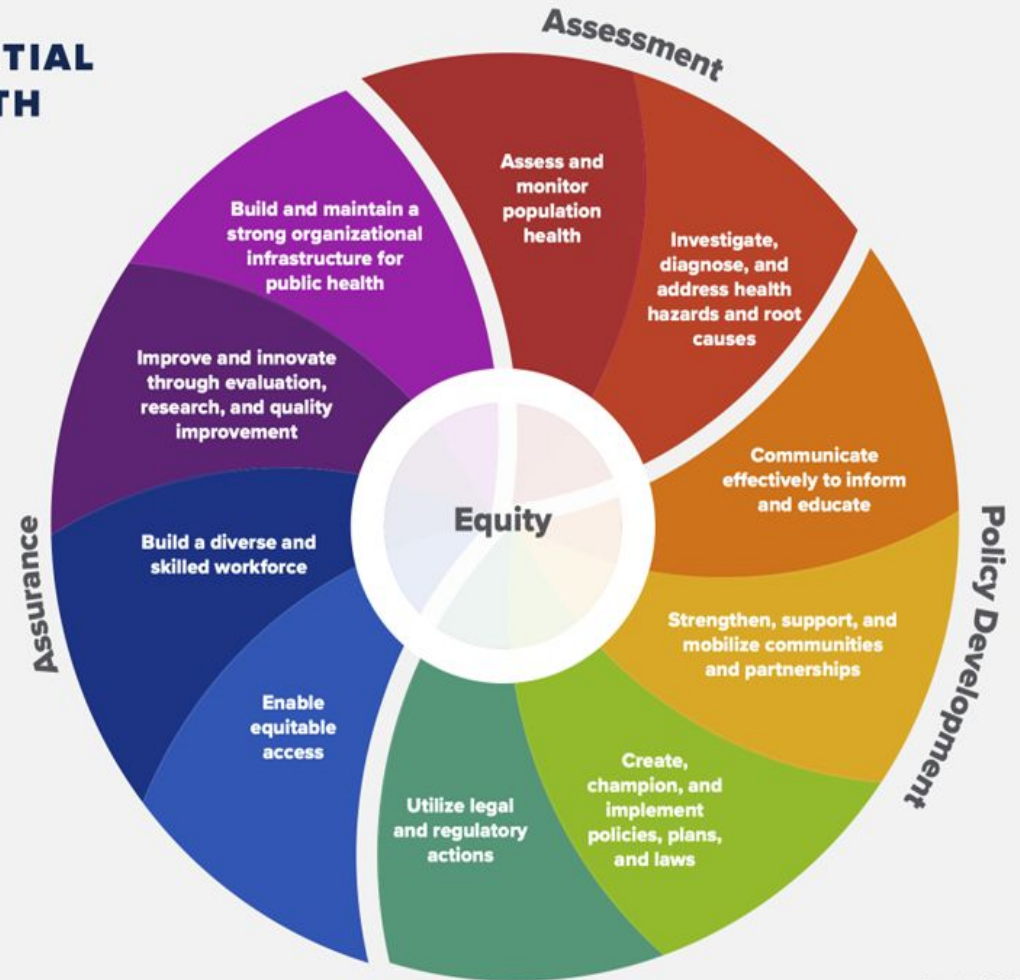


UNDERLYING ALL  
THE SERVICES IS  
**EQUITY** –  
EQUAL ACCESS  
TO RESOURCES  
FOR ALL TO  
ACHIEVE AN  
OPTIMALLY  
HEALTHY LIFE.  
WE ARE ALL  
FAMILIAR WITH  
THIS.

## THE 10 ESSENTIAL PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES

*To protect and promote  
the health of all people in  
all communities*

The 10 Essential Public Health Services provide a framework for public health to protect and promote the health of all people in all communities. To achieve optimal health for all, the Essential Public Health Services actively promote policies, systems, and services that enable good health and seek to remove obstacles and systemic and structural barriers, such as poverty, racism, gender discrimination, and other forms of oppression, that have resulted in health inequities. Everyone should have a fair and just opportunity to achieve good health and well-being.



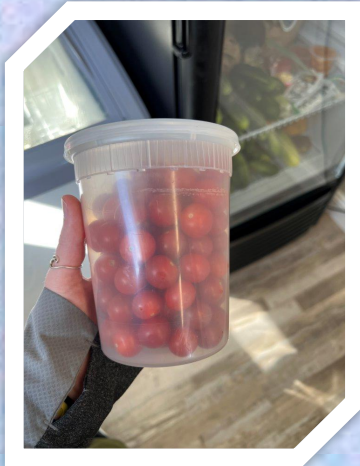
Graphic: CDC.gov



**TEN ESSENTIAL  
PUBLIC HEALTH  
SERVICES CHOSEN –  
NOT ALL OF AT ONCE**

**ASSESS/IMPLEMENT  
TO ASSURE/DEVELOP  
POLICY FOR  
SOLUTION**

[HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/MUZPB46F.](https://tinyurl.com/muzpb46f)



- **WE CHOSE TO FOCUS ON:**
- **#1 ASSESS** FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE HEALTH, COMMUNITY NEEDS
- **#3 COMMUNICATE** EFFECTIVELY TO INFORM AND EDUCATE PEOPLE
- **#4 STRENGTHEN, SUPPORT, AND MOBILIZE** COMMUNITIES & PARTNERSHIPS TO IMPROVE HEALTH
- **#5 IMPROVE AND INNOVATE** PH FUNCTIONS THROUGH ONGOING EVALUATION, RESEARCH AND CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT



# ALTERNATE INTERPRETATION: FOUNDATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH AREAS AND CAPABILITIES

| <b>Foundational Area Public Health Services</b> |  | <b>Foundational Capabilities for Public Health Services</b> |  |
|-------------------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Communicable Disease</b>                     |  | <b>Assessment &amp; Surveillance</b>                        |  |
| <b>Chronic Disease Prevention</b>               |  | <b>Community Partnership Development</b>                    |  |
| <b>Environmental Public Health</b>              |  | <b>Equity</b>                                               |  |
| <b>Maternal Child &amp; Family Health</b>       |  | <b>Organization Competencies</b>                            |  |
| <b>Access to Linkages with Clinical Care</b>    |  | <b>Policy Development &amp; Support</b>                     |  |
|                                                 |  | <b>3 areas not relevant</b>                                 |  |



# INFO EXCERPTED FROM EASTHAM COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT AUGUST 2024

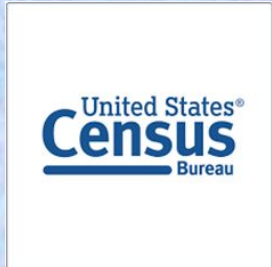
- **Priority Needs in Eastham as described in Eastham's Public health needs assessment**



- **24/7 access to healthy food options for all age groups was identified**
- **Enhanced coordination of resources and interdepartmental promotion of programs**
- **Initiatives to promote mental health and reduce isolation for all age groups**



# RESEARCH - RELEVANT DATA



## **State of Mass. Health and Social Services data:**

- **A. SNAP data trends**
- **B. Transitional Assistance  
Families with Dependent  
Children recipient numbers**
- **C. Medicaid enrollment  
trends**

## **US CENSUS DATA**

- **Overall town population**
- **Median age**
- **Stratified age  
categories**
- **Income data**
- **Housing data**
- **Household  
Composition**



# THE DATA – EASTHAM MA DEMOGRAPHICS

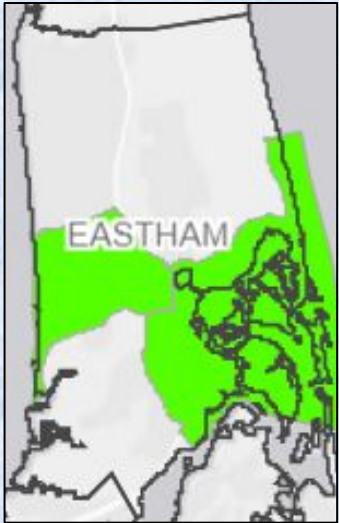
|                                                                                                         |                                                                                |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Pop. 2020 US Census</b><br><b>5752 residents</b><br><br><b>2860 Households</b>                       | <b>89% White</b><br><b><u>Per Capita Income:</u></b><br><b><u>\$51,930</u></b> |
| <b>Town Median age = 60.2 yrs</b><br><b>= 40.1 yrs in Mass.</b>                                         | <b>1.7% gave birth in last year</b>                                            |
| <b><u>9.2 % Poverty rate</u></b><br><b><u>33% make under 50K</u></b><br><b><u>In expensive area</u></b> | <b>38% Eastham population between 60 and 79</b>                                |

**MASS DTA NUMBERS  
YEAR- ROUND, EVEN in  
HIGH TOURIST SEASON  
MONTHS, NUMBERS OF  
EASTHAM SNAP AND  
TAFDC RECIPIENTS VARY  
BY ONLY A FEW PERSONS  
ELDERLY NON-DIVERSE  
POPULATION THAT IS NOT  
GROWING**

U.S. Census Bureau (2023). American Community Survey 5-year estimates. Retrieved from Census Reporter Profile page for Eastham town, Barnstable County, MA



# DIFFERENT PICTURE WITH EASTHAM EJ CENSUS TRACTS - CONSIDER BOTH



- Block Group 2, Census Tract 103.04
- EJ population with the criteria: Income
- Minority population: 15%
- Median household income:
  - \$46,806 -This is 55%
  - of the MA MHHI
- No Household language isolation

- Block Group 3, Census Tract 103.04
- Eastham is an EJ population with the criteria: Income
- Minority population: 7%
- Median household income: \$37,168
- This is 44% of the MA MHHI
- The municipality has a median household income of \$67,127 which is 80% of the MA MHHI.

<https://tinyurl.com/3zsue58d>



# PLANNING /FINANCING



- Hold both large and small meetings with **stakeholders (VALUABLE)**
- National Research on programs
- Stakeholder categories – town librarian, senior services, WIC, veterans' liaison,...anyone who knows your population “on the ground” and “the usual suspects”
- Research who has a program already or would know about it – was two Cape public libraries, but looked for other models also

• Grant research to fund frig. freezer and purchasing contents at

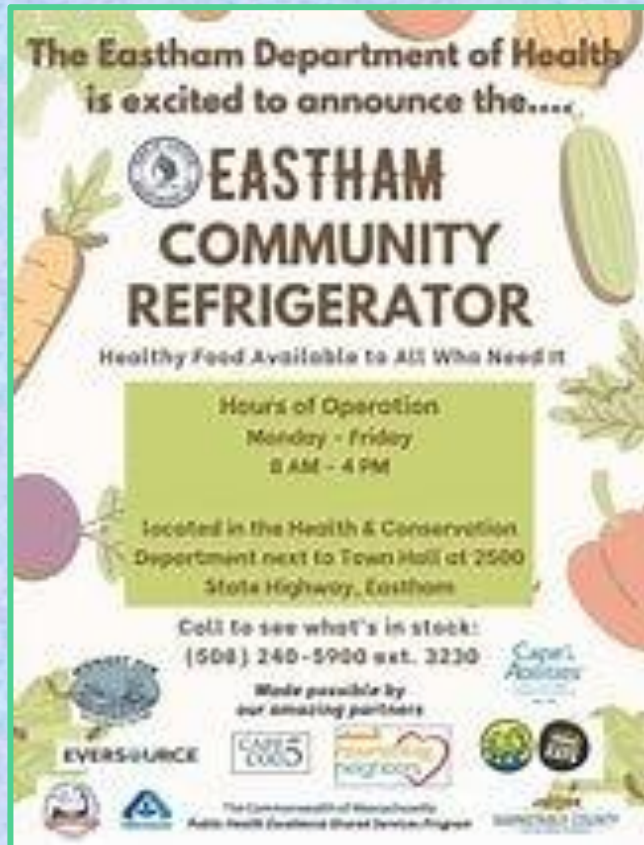


# OPERATIONAL PROCESS





# COMMUNICATION ABOUT THE FRIG PROGRAM



- Social Media
- Word of Mouth
- Direct Contact
- COA Newsletter
- Press
- Local Access TV
- Web Site
- Podcast



Hillary Spotify podcast 10/25/2025 on the fridge program:  
<https://open.spotify.com/episode/6r23iUOJLaQwX3lmahvZLZ>.



# COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT...IT TAKES A VILLAGE...AND A COUNTY AND THEN SOME

**Local Food Pantries**

**Eastham COA**

**Eastham Public  
Library**

**Eastham Town  
Administrator**

**Eastham Department  
of Public Works**

**Eastham Housing  
Coordinator**

**Cape Cod  
Cooperative  
Extension Services –  
Food Access and  
Nutrition**

**Provincetown  
Library  
Amy Raff**

**Hyannis Library  
Director Antonia  
Stephens**

**Food Access  
Working Group –  
Part of Outer Cape  
Community  
Solutions**

**Other Communities-  
Off Cape with  
Similar Concepts**

**Eastham Board of  
Health**





- **Community Refrigerator Program Policies:**

- 1. Only fully packaged foods or raw produce may be allowed in the refrigerator.
- 2. No person may be denied access to the food in the Community Refrigerator or the area surrounding the refrigerator. There is no eligibility criteria or verification necessary.
- 3. Any person or organization/business may donate prepackaged food, fresh or uncut produce (fruits and vegetables) to the Community Refrigerator with prior approval from the Health Department.
- 4. Only town Health Department staff or volunteers trained by the Health Department may clean the refrigerator, or restock, and monitor the refrigerator contents for freshness.
- 5. The Community Refrigerator Policies, Maintenance Checklist, and Log Sheet shall be available upon request in the Health Dept office.



# REFRIGERATOR LOCATION - NETWORKING

- The refrigerator is located at City Hall, a central location in town
- It has created greater communication with town residents who do stop by but one premise of the program is anonymity
- Stakeholders have lines of communication with one another
- Frequently solutions are found to other issues when dealing with the frig





## **BILL EMERSON GOOD SAMARITAN FOOD DONATION ACT**



**Freezer for overflow donations**

- **Purpose: Encourage safe, liability-protected food sharing to reduce waste and support community food access**
- **FEDERAL PROTECTIONS - 42 U.S.C. Section 1791**
- **TAKE AWAY: THE ACT EMPOWERS MUNICIPALITIES TO HOST COMMUNITY FRIDGES SAFELY – PROMOTING FOOD RECOVERY WHILE MINIMIZING LIABILITY WHEN OPERATED IN GOOD FAITH**



# CURRENT ISSUES TO PLAN FOR



**SIZE AND  
FUNCTIONALITY OF  
EQUIPMENT**



**FOOD  
STORAGE**



**NEEDS EXCEED FOOD  
AVAILABILITY**



**FRIDGE IS ONLY  
OPEN DURING  
HEALTH  
DEPARTMENT  
OPERATING  
HOURS**



**SUSTAINABLE  
FUNDING**



## **DONATIONS, PARTNERSHIPS & FOOD GRANTS**

### **GRANT FUNDERS:**

**Eversource**

**Shaw's Markets dba  
Albertsons**

**United Way of Barnstable  
County**

- **Food 4 Kids**
- **Family Table  
Collaborative**
- **Cumberland Farms**
- **Midnight Our Clams**
- **Cape Abilities**
- **Cape Cod Organic  
Farm**
- **Chatham Harvesters**
- **Eastham Residents**





# WITH GRATITUDE



- **Antonia Stephens at the Hyannis Library who got us started and righted our perspective when lost.**
- **Amy Raff of the Ptown Public Library always shares her wisdom when asked and is usually right.**
- **Andrea Scarpellini from Barnstable County Food Access Program always remembers we were one delivery away from empty.**
- **Carrie and Jenn from the Harwich Health Dept. who meet weekly to work out the latest roadblock solution.**
- **Others numerous to name**



# SOURCES

(\*NOT CURRENT BECAUSE OF US GOVT LIMITATIONS)

- **Kaiser Family Foundation. *U.S. Public Health.***  
<https://www.kff.org/other-health/health-policy-101-u-s-public-health/?entry=table-of-contents-what-is-public-health>. Updated 10-5-2025. Accessed 10-15-2025
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<https://mass-eoea.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=535e4419dc0545be980545a0eeaf9b53>. Accessed 10-24-2025
- **Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance. Department of Transitional Assistance caseload by zip code reports. Eastham. Updated monthly. Accessed 10/24/2025.**
- **U.S. Census Bureau (2023). *American Community Survey 5-year estimates.*** Retrieved from **Census Reporter Profile page for Eastham town, Barnstable County, MA**  
<http://censusreporter.org/profiles/06000US2500119295-eastham-town-barnstable-county-ma/>\*



# CONTACTS

- **Hillary Greenberg-Lemos**
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- **Hgreenberg-lemos@eastham-ma.gov**

- **Patrice Barrett**
- **patricebarrettmph@gmail.com**