



Lynn Public Health Coordinator Norris Guscott speaks highly of all the partnerships with the Phoenix Food Hub. (Spenser Hasak) [Purchase this photo](#)

Lynn puts food insecurity under magnifying glass

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Lynn Public Health Coordinator Norris Guscott and the city are working to address the needs of residents experiencing food insecurity.

On Wednesday, Mayor Jared Nicholson attended a ceremony at the Phoenix Food Hub to recognize the the Kenneth E. Pickard Municipal Innovation Award from the Massachusetts Municipal Association that the city and hub recently received.

The work being done at the food hub is the result of 14 different organizations, Guscott said. Nicholson acknowledged the projects and initiatives that are being made possible through these collaborations at the ceremony.

“In Lynn, we are prioritizing connecting our residents to a variety of food resources that improve accessibility and minimize the impacts of food insecurity. We are incredibly grateful for all the work of our partners and the Phoenix Food Hub that make a positive impact on our residents through health, food, and nutrition,” Nicholson said.

There are many different initiatives in the city happening around food, and Guscott said the Phoenix Food Hub is at the center of them all.

“It’s a one-stop food hub that addresses the social and clinical determinants of health,” he said. “As chair, I acknowledge that the food system in Lynn is resilient, but there is still a lot of work to do.”

Guscott also chairs the recently formed Food Policy Council.

“We know our city. Our numbers speak for themselves. We will always be supporting Lynn. We know where the needs are... We will always have the city’s back. I encourage residents to show up at the Food Policy Council meetings,” Guscott said.

The Food Policy Council formed as a task force at the height of the pandemic. Guscott said it did a lot of impactful work then, including holding farmers’ markets and making food deliveries to the most vulnerable members of the community.

“Outside of that, we obtained many grants that went towards empowering food deliveries, putting on programming that targeted nutrition,” he said.

Guscott wants residents to be heavily involved with the Food Policy Council. They can join through Lynn Grows, the resident-led steering committee portion of the council.

“We will be reaching more Lynn residents to let them know what’s happening,” Guscott said. “One of the main purposes of the Food Policy Council is to elevate the voices of folks who aren’t usually in the decision-making process.”

A third of Lynn residents are going to the Salem Pantry, Guscott said, and he wants them to know there are resources here in their own city.

He reviewed data highlighting food insecurity in the city. Roughly 50% of students in Lynn receive lunch for free or at a reduced cost, and one in three seniors are food-insecure, Guscott said.

“We’re looking at this with a magnifying glass,” he said.

Guscott said the council is planning to introduce more initiatives soon. It will conduct community food assessments in partnership with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council to identify the most pressing needs of residents. He said the report will be finished in the coming months.

Guscott added that Lynn has one of the top-ranked food councils in the state, and right now is a good time for people to get involved.

“Through focus groups, through surveys, through conversations, we’ll be able to highlight some trends and some themes we’re seeing to act on them as a Food Policy Council,” Guscott said.



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