

What is the Phoenix Food Hub?



The **Phoenix Food Hub** is a collaborative project spearheaded by **Greater Lynn Senior Services (GLSS)** as part of the **Lynn Food Security Task Force** and involving many organizations across the city intended to bring together—under one roof—as many nutrition-related supports as possible. The Phoenix Food Hub will **serve folks of all ages with nutrition needs in and around the Lynn area**. The idea is to offer a one stop shop—or something as close to that as possible—where individuals and families at risk of nutrition insufficiency can access a variety of resources to effectively address this critical challenge.

This innovative Food Hub model is designed to address both the immediate needs that might bring people into the food pantry part of the Hub, for example, and providing them, while they are on-site, with a range of other nutrition and related services which may be required to truly eliminate nutrition deficiencies.

Key partners of the Phoenix Food Hub include the organizations comprising the Lynn Food Security Task Force: City of Lynn; Catholic Charities; FoodShare Table/Eastern Nazarene Church; Greater Lynn Senior Services; LEO; Lynn Community Health Center; Lynn Grows; Lynn Public Schools; Lynn Salvation Army; Mass General Brigham Salem Hospital; Mutual Aid Lynn/Creative Collective; My Brother's Table; New American Center; New Lynn Coalition; Project Bread; The Food Project; UMass Extension Nutrition Program; YMCA. The task force is led by Norris Guscott, Public Health Coordinator & Food Security Task Force Leader, City of Lynn. Catholic Charities operates a food pantry adjacent to the Phoenix Food Hub program space.



Greater Lynn Senior Services

8 Silsbee Street • Lynn, MA 01901 • (781) 599-0110 • www.glss.net

How did the idea for the Phoenix Food Hub come about?

There were really two currents intersecting in ways that made a Food Hub for Lynn seem like an excellent solution to a critical community need. First, GLSS has always been aware of food insecurity needs relative to its own consumers and has operated Meals on Wheels and congregate meal sites throughout its catchment area for many years. The pandemic, of course, intensely exacerbated this issue. Discussions with the Lynn Food Security Task Force made clear that together—as many organizations collaborating—we could strengthen our capacities to effectively reach more at-risk individuals and deliver more comprehensive nutrition supports.

At the same time, GLSS was considering how it was going to repurpose the very large first floor space in its 8 Silsbee Street office that had previously housed the Lynn Senior Center. Using that space to support a different kind of Center—one that focused on the nutrition needs of all Lynn residents—resonated as an excellent solution both within GLSS as well as with the Lynn Food Security Task Force. Having a space large enough to provide food distribution; screening, education and counseling; other vital nutrition supports; as well as wrap-around services—all delivered as a result of great partnering across multiple organizations—is an exciting solution to a hugely important problem.

When will the Phoenix Food Hub officially open?

Some programs are already beginning, and more will continue throughout the coming year, but we are anticipating a full launch by the end of 2022. Programs that have begun include:

- Nutrition screening, counseling, and tracking program jointly operated by GLSS and the Lynn Community Health Center
- Development of a centralized digital nutrition resource inventory (full launch scheduled for December)
- Delivery of meals to younger adults (ineligible for the elder services Home Delivered Meals program) but who are at risk of nutrition insufficiency
- Ongoing “brown bag” and farmer’s market food distributions (in coordination with Task Force partners).

What role does GLSS play in the Phoenix Food Hub?

GLSS is the lead agency and responsible for operating the space, managing the infrastructure, and making sure the programs are running well on a day-to-day basis. But GLSS will be working closely with the Lynn Food Security Task Force which will help ensure all is going according to plan; that the various partners are able to effectively offer their programs to their constituents; and that together we are reaching our goal of eliminating food insecurity for as many people as possible. It is the collaborative and comprehensive nature of the Phoenix Food Hub that both distinguishes it as a pioneering effort and that ensures its success.

What else will the Phoenix Food Hub offer?

By the end of 2022, we anticipate the Phoenix Food Hub—housed on the ground floor of 8 Silsbee Street—will include:

- A state-of-the-art teaching kitchen offering healthy cooking classes
- Food distribution/meal delivery/farmer's markets, etc.
- Nutrition screening, counseling and education (1:1 and workshops), and tracking of appropriate clinical indicators
- Supports for getting to markets, reading labels, planning menus, managing dietary requirements
- SNAP, WIC, and other nutrition-related benefits counseling
- Wrap-around service supports including housing, mobility, stress management, financial management, and more
- Data systems that will capture both social determinant of health indicators as well as clinical indicators, correlating these appropriately, and clearly identifying how Phoenix Food Hub and its programs are improving overall community health and lowering health care costs.

In addition to these programs and services, there will be access to an adjacent, on-site food pantry funded and operated by Catholic Charities.

How will the Nutrition Counseling Program work?

The Phoenix Food Hub Nutrition Counseling program is a joint initiative of the Lynn Community Health Center (LCHC) and Greater Lynn Senior Services. The plan is that referrals will eventually be “bi-directional”—meaning flowing from the LCHC to the Food Hub as well as from the Food Hub to LCHC for consumers who need primary care supports. When it is fully operational, this program will include:

- Patient Navigator to facilitate referrals
- Nurse (LCHC) and Nutritionist (GLSS) to assess, counsel, and monitor individuals referred to the Phoenix Food Hub
- Community Health Worker(s) to assist consumers in effectively accessing and preparing healthy foods as well as managing special diets
- Classes/workshops on healthy eating and food prep
- Food distribution
- Access to other wraparound supports (housing, mobility, etc.)
- Effective data gathering to assess program impact.



Pilot Launch—November 2021

For the pilot “soft” launch, we have set up a system with LCHC where:

- Referrals come from LCHC to the Food Hub
- Patients whose Social Determinant of Health assessment identifies them as food insecure AND who have a history of hypertension will be referred
- LCHC will refer appropriate patients to the Phoenix Food Hub via secure email.

Because this is a soft launch, we are limiting the number of referrals and are steadily building to full capacity:

- Currently, we are requesting that each LCHC Care team refer one patient per week
- LCHC will notify individual of the referral
- GLSS will acknowledge receipt of each referral and begin a Phoenix record for the individual
- GLSS will contact the individual to set up an appointment to meet (virtually or in-person) with the Nutritionist
- The Nutritionist will conduct a full assessment, prepare an individualized nutrition plan, provide ongoing counseling as necessary, and make referrals to available and appropriate resources
- Follow-ups will be scheduled
- GLSS will track progress and share data with LCHC as appropriate.



How is the Phoenix Food Hub funded?

To date, Phoenix Food Hub has received generous grant support from: Mass General Brigham; Element Care; Essex County Community Foundation; Point32Health Foundation; Alfred E. Chase Charity Foundation, Bank of America, N.A., Trustee; Charles H. Farnsworth Trust, Bank of America, N.A., Trustee; and the City of Lynn. In addition, Phoenix Food Hub has received many donations from private individuals and organizations.

The Mass General Brigham grant will provide 5 years of support to the Phoenix Food Hub collaboration, including substantial funding to renovate the space, ensuring its full accessibility and capacities to offer a state-of-the-art teaching kitchen.

GLSS and the Lynn Food Security Task Force will continue to seek funding to ensure Phoenix Food Hub can develop and maintain critical communications and database infrastructures (to demonstrate program impact), ensure appropriate staffing to fully deliver programs that meet the needs of all residents, and maintain the facility as well as secure necessary equipment (e.g., freezers, mobile refrigerated vans, stove, etc.).