



**The Hunger to Health Collaboratory
Summary of Activities and Results
2018-2021 (v1.0)**

This brief is respectfully submitted to the Honorable James P. McGovern, Chairman of the House of Representatives Committee on Rules, for consideration. This brief begins with a description of the evolution of the Hunger to Health Collaboratory's core strategy, provides an overview of its programmatic and organizational development activities, and illustrates key results of the Collaboratory's first phase (version 1.0) from 2018-2021.

This brief is submitted on March 1, 2022, by Executive Director Nicolene Hengen, nhengen@gbfb.org.

Core Strategy

The Hunger to Health Collaboratory (H2HC) was founded in 2018 as a model for multi-disciplinary stakeholders to take collective action to address the health consequences of hunger. In the succeeding four years, H2HC has developed and evolved in response to external events and to the emergent nature of a new organization.

- In H2HC's first year, **2018**, activities focused on building its membership and coalescing around its core strategy.
- In **2019**, the focus was on supporting the inclusion of screening and referrals for food insecurity in healthcare, planning and managing strategic convenings, and raising awareness.
- As healthcare providers have increasingly taken up the practice of food insecurity screening and referrals, and in response to the effects of COVID-19 on national food and medical systems, in **2020** H2HC focused on supporting stakeholder and broader network COVID responses and convening local and regional actors to share lessons learned and strategize around more sustainable and integrated food and health systems.
- **2021** saw greater focus on federal policy in line with opportunities created by the current administration, engagement of the private sector, and renewed attention to building the organizational foundations of the Collaboratory.

Foundational Components

In late 2021, the Collaboratory hired its first executive director. H2HC has also financially supported the establishment of a vibrant Health and Research Council, which includes leading food and health experts and plays an advisory role for both H2HC and GBFB. The Collaboratory refined its mission statement: *H2HC aligns food, health, and policy through an equity lens to reduce the consequences of hunger*. The new executive director is examining scenarios for the future of the Collaboratory through a planning process that involves stakeholders and the broader network.

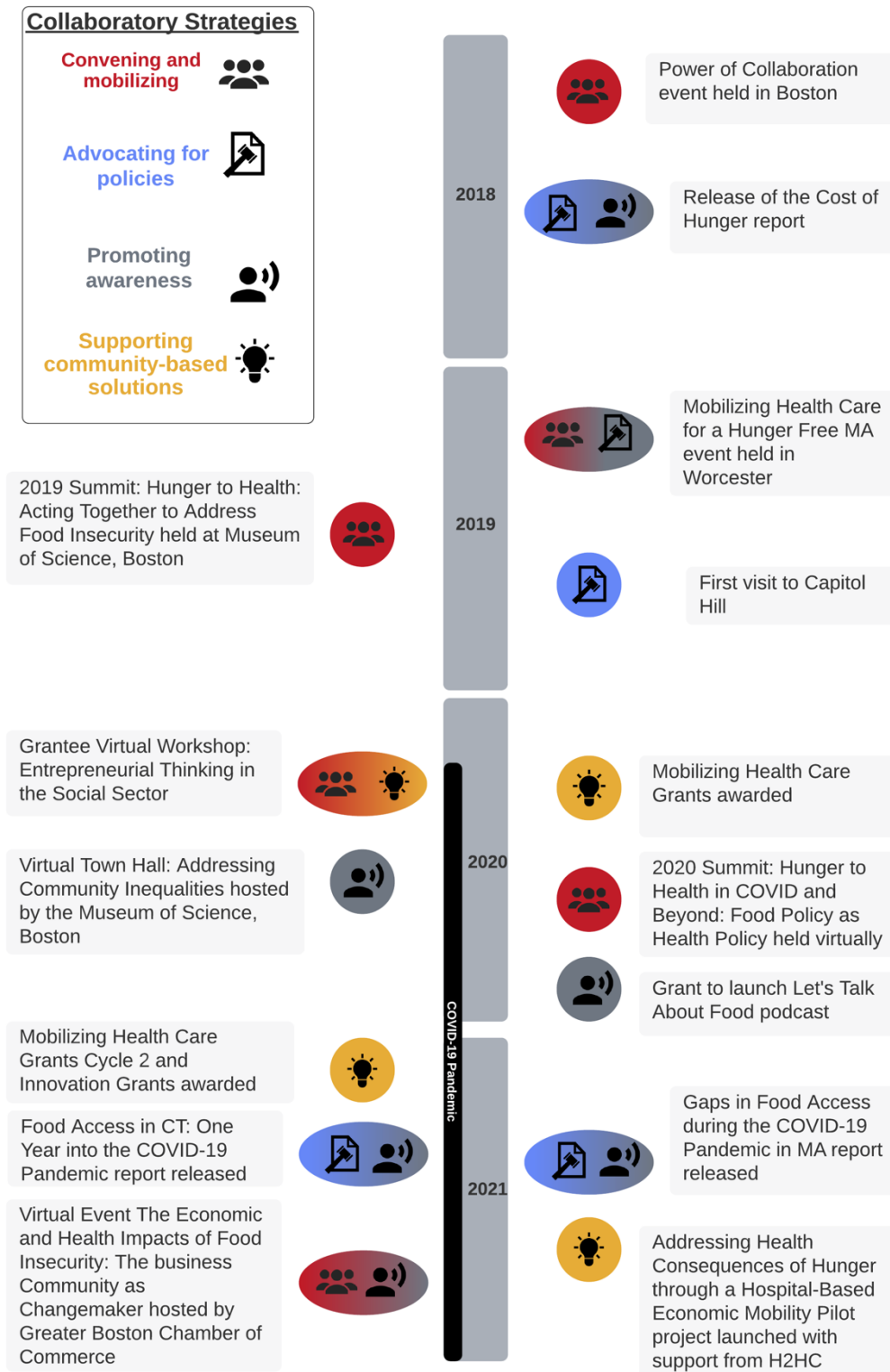
From 2018-2021, the Collaboratory's activities focused on multiple dimensions of the human and financial health burdens of food insecurity and continues to be focused on these five core strategies:

- **Convene and mobilize** multisector leaders and the broader community
- **Promote awareness** of food insecurity and health-related consequences as priority public health issues
- **Advocate for and inform policies** that advance food and health equity
- **Identify and support innovative community-based approaches** through grantmaking

- **Support** seminal hunger/health research

The timeline below highlights H2HC activities over the course of four years.

H2HC Timeline of Activities 2018-2021



Summary of Key Programmatic Activities

Convenings

H2HC convenings (both in person and virtual) have brought together hundreds of stakeholders representing food access, healthcare, academia and research, the private sector, government and social services, philanthropy, public health, and other sectors. Brief descriptions of the three major convenings' expert panels, workshop sessions, and keynote addresses are provided below.

On July 9, 2019, the Collaboratory organized *Mobilizing Health Care for a Hunger-Free Massachusetts* in cooperation with Congressman James McGovern (D-MA) at the UMass Medical School with support from the Massachusetts Public Health Association (MPHA) and their coalition, Alliance for Community Health Integration (ACHI), and facilitated by Health Resources in Action (Hirer). Speakers included Congressman Jim McGovern; UMass Memorial Health Care President and CEO Eric Dickson; Mass Medical Society past president Maryanne Tombaugh, MD, MSc, MBA, FACOG; Boston Medical Center CEO Kate Walsh; H2HC founder and GBFB CEO and President Catherine D'Amato; and Community Servings CEO David Waters. The event mobilized healthcare, government, and food access stakeholders for results-driven conversations examining the economic impact of food insecurity. In a series of panels and facilitated discussions, participants discussed three primary topics: whole person care, community of practice, and innovation. The primary objectives were to create policy and financing solutions that promote food security advancement and disseminate these actions until everyone in Massachusetts who interacts with the health care system is food secure. This event highlighted the report, "[\\$2.4 Billion Cost of Healthcare](#)", by Children's HealthWatch and The Greater Boston Food Bank as a point of inspiration. During the event, H2HC announced a new grant program to advance partnerships between the health care industry and community-based organizations to create a hunger-free Massachusetts.

Participation in Major Convenings

- 2019 Mobilizing Health Care Convening: 100 participants
- 2019 Summit: more than 100 summit participants and 150 stakeholders at the accompanying evening event
- 2020 Virtual Summit: more than 135 participants



Image created during the July 2019 event

The November 12-13, 2019, *Hunger to Health Summit: Acting Together to Address Food Insecurity* brought together more than 100 individuals across sectors to collaborate on reducing the health consequences of hunger at the Museum of Science in Boston. Participants surveyed the current state of hunger and health policy in Massachusetts and heard from national leaders in the fields of health, food security, and systems change. Keynote speakers FSG co-CEO Lauren Smith, MD; Ambassador Ertharin Cousin; and Soil and Shadow founder and CEO Nikki Silvestri spoke about collective impact, moving from hunger to health through national and international policy, and building “fertile systems” using the metaphor of soil health. Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey discussed statewide public health efforts. Presenters from The Coalition to End Hunger, New Jersey Healthy Kids Initiative, Boston Medical Center, Community Care Cooperative, Aunt Bertha, and The Campbell Soup Foundation showcased promising practices for improving health outcomes by addressing the social determinants of health. On the second day, participants worked in small groups to co-design solutions to issues surrounding health and food insecurity. A special evening event featured celebrity chefs Jody Adams and Ming Tsai in a discussion moderated by Director of Public Affairs and Community Services and Executive Producer at WCVB/Channel 5 Boston Karen Holmes Ward.



Keynote speaker Dr. Lauren Smith



Summit participants co-design solutions

The second annual Hunger to Health Summit was held virtually on October 5-6, 2020, in partnership with H2HC members the Museum of Science. The *Hunger to Health in COVID and Beyond: Food Policy as Health Policy* Summit’s goal was to leverage learning from early COVID-19 response efforts and craft collaborative solutions to food insecurity and health disparities with a focus on policy, leadership development, advocacy, and cross-sector connections. More than 135 participants, including food security advocates, policymakers, leaders, and healthcare professionals, convened for a series of panels and group discussions. Speakers included Congressman McGovern (D-MA); MA State Rep. Hannah Kane (R-Shrewsbury), founder and co-chair of the first in the nation Food System Legislative Caucus; Tufts Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy Dean Dariush Mozaffarian; Witnesses to Hunger leader Diane Sullivan; Founder/CEO Chef and the Sioux Chef Sean Sherman; and President and CEO of Boston Medical Center Kate Walsh.

Over the course of the summit, panelists and participants put forward a range of short- and long-term strategies that fell into six main categories: food access, affordability, and equity; building collective political will; systemic solutions to systemic problems; transforming health

systems; leadership from impacted communities; and cross-sector collaborations. The H2HC 2020 On the heels of tackling the first stages of a one-in-a-lifetime health crisis, cross-sector participants

came with a sense of urgency, creativity, and collaboration and brought their wisdom and voices to the table.

In October 2021, the Collaboratory partnered with the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce and Stop & Shop to host a virtual special event, [*The Economic and Health Impacts of Food Insecurity: The Business Community as Changemaker*](#). Special guest Congressman James McGovern (D-MA) opened the panel, which was moderated by flowetik CEO Zamawa Arenas. Stop & Shop President Gordon Reid, Federal Reserve Bank EVP Prabal Chakrabarti, and McKinsey partner Megan Greenfield discussed the urgency and criticality of the business community developing a shared plan and working together to address food insecurity. The event attracted more than 250 participants, and the event materials reached 4,900 people on social media and drew 841 visits to the event webpage. H2HC is now exploring working with Congressman McGovern and his team to convene a regional meeting as a precursor to a potential White House conference.

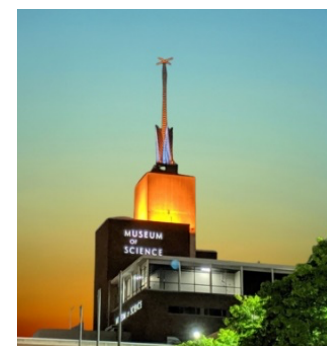


Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce social media report

Advocacy

In September 2019, the Collaboratory conducted a work session on public affairs and policy issues for H2HC members to share tools and policy priorities. The session and subsequent discussions focused on planning and messaging around critical health and food insecurity policy issues. Individual Collaboratory members then identified areas in which their organizations could potentially contribute.

In 2021, H2HC funded the ‘Gaps in Food Access’ Massachusetts report and anti-hunger advocates across the state utilized this report to advance key COVID-19 nutrition policy forward. There was a briefing on the report for the MA Congressional delegation and the MA Food System Legislative Caucus. The report has also served as a roadmap for ARPA state funding requests around food security.



Museum of Science tower illuminated with orange on Boston Hunger Action Day

In 2021, the Collaboratory leveraged heightened national attention around the issue of hunger by engaging bipartisan leaders through briefings and other targeted outreach to highlight the human and economic health costs of food insecurity. The Collaboratory worked with the Massachusetts delegation on a forthcoming Government Accountability Office (GAO) report to encourage examination of the connection between federal agencies and their communities in addressing food insecurity and service implementation between Medicaid and Medicaid/Medicare eligible patients. The GAO report aims to identify critical resource gaps between community-based organizations and health care services to encourage coordinated care across federal agencies and programs, healthcare providers, and social service agencies to ensure access to food assistance and better health outcomes for identified patients.

Communication, Outreach, and Relationship Building

The Collaboratory’s communication approach has been strategically opportunistic and has leveraged other H2HC and its member’s activities effectively. H2HC has steadily built its web

presence alongside in-person and virtual engagement with food security, food health, and food justice networks. The Collaboratory’s events and grant-making program have been instrumental in building awareness of the Collaboratory and its mission among stakeholders in other sectors. As a result of targeted and broad-based dissemination of Collaboratory-supported research, specifically, “*An Avoidable \$2.4 Billion Cost of Hunger*” and “*Gaps in Food Access During the COVID-19 Pandemic in Massachusetts*” report, Collaboratory-supported work has achieved significant reach across the state of Massachusetts. For example, the *Food Access* study was cited in coverage in *The Boston Globe*, *Boston Herald*, *WBUR*, and the *Boston Business Journal*.

In 2019, GBFB Senior Vice President for Advancement Arlene Fortunato presented on H2HC at the FRAC/Feeding America National Anti-Hunger Policy Conference in Washington, DC, in a session, “Building a Bigger and Stronger Tent—A Conversation on Replicable Strategies to Engage Conservative Communities in Anti-hunger Advocacy”.



H2HC awarded a grant to support the launch of the *Let's Talk About Food* podcast in late 2020. Founded by Boston journalist Louisa Kasdon, the podcast, while still in its first year, averages 9,000 downloads per week on the Heritage Radio Network. Episodes focusing on the link between food insecurity and health have featured Community Servings CEO and food as medicine leader David Waters; local agriculture leader Kat Finley; and H2HC stakeholders Catherine D’Amato, GBFB President and CEO and H2HC founder; and Cheryl Kiser, Executive Director of The Lewis Institute & Babson Social Innovation Lab.

Growth of the Collaboratory’s Web Presence

Since May 2020, the website has attracted almost 5,000 visitors.

- 2020 saw steady traffic on the website, attracting an average of 183 visitors/month.
- 2021 saw increasing traffic with an average of 368 visitors/month.

Major drivers of traffic include the call for grant proposals in fall 2020 and the release of the NFACT report in May 2021.

Activity Area: Social Impact Grantmaking and Research Support

The Collaboratory began its social innovation funding program in 2018 with targeted grants and expanded the program by awarding competitive grants in 2020 and 2021. The Collaboratory has made grants in three categories: Mobilizing Health Care (MHC) (awarded through a competitive process), Innovation (awarded through a competitive process), and targeted grants (awarded to organizations uniquely placed to meet objectives that align with key H2HC strategies). H2HC members were central to the review process of assessing proposed projects’ alignment with the H2HC’s mission and geographic and equity considerations.

To date, the Collaboratory has granted more than \$1 million to support innovative community models and groundbreaking research. Across its three grant programs, H2HC has supported 20 organizations in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut that have developed new approaches to persistent problems, conducted timely research, and advanced collaboration between healthcare and food access organizations. H2HC funding has addressed a range of objectives, including providing culturally relevant food access, strengthening healthcare provider referrals for food assistance, and supporting pilot studies on addressing food insecurity challenges through a focus on the social determinants of health. Collectively, H2HC’s grants to community-

based organizations have expanded access to food, advanced partnerships between emergency food services and healthcare and housing organizations and contributed to long-term efforts to support health equity by prioritizing organizations that put Black, Indigenous, and People of Color

(BIPOC) with lived experiences at the center of their activities. The following table provides details on H2HC’s grantmaking:

H2H Grantees 2018-2021

Activity Focus	Grantee	Year	Grant Program	Award	Attended H2HC Convenings
Health Promotion	Quincy Asian Resources	2021	Innovation	\$25,000	
	Africano Waltham	2021	MHC	\$10,000	
Food Policy	MA Food Systems Coalition	2020	MHC	\$5,000	Yes
Food Access	Healthy Waltham and Waltham Fields Community Farms	2020	MHC	\$7,500	Yes
	Growing Places	2021	MHC	\$10,000	Yes
	Just Roots	2021	MHC	\$10,000	Yes
	Rhode Island Community Food Bank	2021	Targeted	\$45,000	
	Ethos	2021	MHC	\$10,000	
	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission	2020	MHC	\$5,000	
Raising Awareness	The Food Voice	2020	Targeted	\$25,000	Yes
	Food Bank of Western MA	2019	Targeted	\$25,000	Yes
Screening and Referrals	Food Bank of Western MA	2021	Innovation	\$25,000	Yes
	Our Neighbors’ Table	2021	MHC	\$10,000	Yes
	Everett Community Growers/ La Comunidad	2021	MHC	\$10,000	
	Melrose Wakefield Healthcare Inc	2020	MHC	\$5,000	Yes
	Northern Berkshire Community Coalition	2020	MHC	\$5,000	
Medically Tailored Food	The Open Door	2020	MHC	\$5,000	Yes
Research	The Greater Boston Food Bank	2018	Targeted	\$400,000	Yes
		2019	Targeted	\$200,000	
		2020	Targeted	\$200,000	
		2021	Targeted	\$30,000	
	Connecticut Foodshare	2020	Targeted	\$10,000	
		2021	Targeted	\$15,000	
Children’s HealthWatch	2019	Targeted	\$100,000	Yes	
	2021	Targeted	\$100,000		
TOTAL				\$1,292,500	

The Collaboratory grantmaking program has gained significant traction over the past two grant cycles. The Collaboratory received 14 grant applications for its 2020 cycle and 46 applications for its 2021 cycle. Additionally, the 2021 grant announcement attracted nearly 250 unique visits to the H2HC website, further demonstrating that the program has reached a widening audience.

Several of the Collaboratory’s targeted grants have supported groundbreaking research. Key research efforts include:

- A 2015 Bread for the World study, “The Cost of Hunger in the United States,” estimated the costs of food insecurity and hunger in the US at \$160 billion. In 2018, H2HC supported the first application of this methodology at a state level, resulting in the Children’s HealthWatch report, “[\\$2.4 Billion: The Avoidable Cost of Hunger in Massachusetts.](#)”
- “[Gaps in Food Access During the COVID-19 Pandemic in Massachusetts](#)”: The 2020-21 survey was supported in part by H2HC and conducted by The Greater Boston Food Bank (GBFB) in partnership with the [National Food Access and COVID Research Team \(NFACT\)](#). The study targeted more than 3,000 individuals in low-income households to identify the prevalence of food insecurity and gaps and disparities in food assistance use to develop data-driven recommendations to ensure adequate access to food.
- “[Food Access in Connecticut: One Year into the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)”: In April and May 2021, the Institute for Hunger Research & Solutions at Connecticut Foodshare surveyed more than 1,000 people throughout Connecticut to understand changes in food access and food security one year after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The study targeted low-income households and people of color to reach those most at risk for food insecurity and job disruptions to identify the prevalence of food insecurity and gaps and disparities in food access.
- A 2021 Children’s HealthWatch hospital-based economic mobility pilot project focused on health equity and food access is designed to help 500 families with children move to greater economic stability over three years. This work will leverage expertise and relationships formed as part of the newly launched Boston Opportunity Systems Collaborative (BOSC), a \$5-million project funded by JP Morgan Chase and led by Boston Medical Center to invest in neighborhood-based economic mobility. This project is engaging H2HC to collectively confront barriers to economic mobility among BMC Pediatrics families with low incomes using the emergency food system.



Collaboratory Organizational Development

In addition to its programmatic activities, the Collaboratory has spent the last four years cultivating stakeholders, strengthening its organization, and defining its foundational components. This evolution has positioned the Collaboratory to launch version 2.0 in January 2022 on the foundation of its small network and evolving strategy.

Stakeholders

Founding H2HC members included Stop & Shop, Babson College, Boston Medical Center, Children’s HealthWatch, C&S Wholesale Grocers, The Greater Boston Food Bank, McKinsey & Company, Museum of Science, and Rasky Partners. October 2021 Collaboratory stakeholders include Stop & Shop, Babson College, Boston Medical Center, Children’s HealthWatch, C&S Wholesale Grocers, The

Greater Boston Food Bank, McKinsey & Company, and the Museum of Science. Stop & Shop leadership helped found H2HC and has generously provided financial support since 2018. C&S Wholesale Grocers has contributed its understanding of the supply chain and a willingness to leverage this expertise for sustainable humanitarian interventions. Children's HealthWatch, with its critical focus on the health of very young children, has been both research partner and grantee. Other key stakeholder contributions have included the Museum of Science's leadership in education, community outreach, and implementing convenings; The Greater Boston Food Bank's critical backbone support; Babson College's facilitation of entrepreneurial skill-building workshops; and McKinsey's valuable insights and perspectives drawn from its research.

Strengthened Organization

Backbone support from The Greater Boston Food Bank (GBFB) has ensured delivery of operations and activities planning. GBFB has provided strategic and organizational support, health and research guidance, and administrative support across the advancement, public policy, HR and finance, and marketing and communications teams.

Summary of Results and Emerging Impact

Through the strategies highlighted above and the participation of Collaboratory and other stakeholders in multiple related activities across the Commonwealth and the region, H2HC has created momentum that has led to the following results.

Result 1: Engagement of leadership and raise awareness of the Collaboratory's work

The 2019 and 2020 Annual Summits were instrumental in engaging national and regional leaders across multiple sectors including Congressman Jim McGovern, Ambassador Ertharin Cousin (former Executive Director of the World Food Program), Executive Vice President & Community Affairs Officer at the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston Prabal Chakrabarti, Stop & Shop President Gordon Reid, Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healy, Tufts Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy Dean Dariush Mozaffarian, and Boston Medical Center CEO Kate Walsh.

The Collaboratory is now a recognizable entity in Congress, having built relationships with key legislators including the Chair of the House Rules Committee and founder of the Congressional Hunger Caucus Rep. Jim McGovern. The Collaboratory continues to develop relationships with federal legislators focused on hunger and is leveraging those relationships to contribute to framing the proposed White House Conference on food, nutrition, hunger, and health along with pivotal federal policies. H2HC is in conversation with Rep. McGovern and his team around working together to host a potential regional New England conference as precursor to a national event. Further evidence of the Collaboratory's successful engagement of political leadership is seen in H2HC's role in initiating the GAO report.

Result 2: Advancement of discussion and awareness of hunger as a health and equity issue

Building on national attention to food insecurity and health disparities spurred by the pandemic and related economic distress, the Collaboratory has contributed to shifting the discourse on hunger from a problem requiring charity-oriented solutions to a multi-dimensional public health challenge that must be addressed systemically at its roots. In addition to advancing these concepts through convenings and engagement, H2HC has specifically focused on equity in its social impact grantmaking work to promote equity around access to food in targeted communities and support for research to identify disparities and gaps in access. Increasingly, national leading organizations such as Feeding America and the Food Resource and Action Center are shifting their focus to issues beyond emergency food access and are looking to the Collaboratory as a model for multi-sector engagement with special emphasis on health partners.

Result 3: Engagement of grassroots organizations at the forefront of health and hunger services

Since its founding, the Collaboratory has engaged those at the forefront of delivering health and hunger relief services across the ecosystem through summits; grants; and participation in local, national, and regional networks. This ongoing, intentional engagement has helped to center individuals and communities most affected by the health consequences of hunger in the Collaboratory's strategies and actions.

Result 4: Informing the next level of collective action

Taking up Dr. Lauren Smith's call to action (issued during the 2019 Summit) to stop admiring the problem and to start addressing it, each major convening has concluded with the generation of strategies for moving forward to inform the next level of collective action. As the Collaboratory enters its next phase of planning and activities, it builds on these strategies to identify and promote areas of priority and mutual benefit.