

**SFPC Quarterly Meeting Thursday, April 14, 2022 at 12 noon-1pm**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83233982521>

21 people attended.

**Agenda**

- 1.) Introduce CAB, Chair and Co-Chairs
- 2.) Summary of what has been done between Jan and April, Questions or observations
- 3.) Working Groups, invitation to join, questions
- 4.) Resident Equity Advisors, questions
- 5.) Legislative Updates, questions
- 6.) Grant opportunity: MA Community Health and Aging Funds
- 7.) Community updates
- 8.) Next Quarterly meeting, July 7, 12 noon

• **Introduce new Chair/Co-Chairs/CAB members**

CAB members unmuted themselves and introduced who they are as part of the CAB.

• **Summary of accomplishments since January 2022:**

- We presented the 2021 Food System Assessment key takeaways at the January Quarterly meeting.
- Over the past few months, the SFPC Community Advisory Board (CAB) completed our community-driven strategic planning process that will help set and define the Council's work in the upcoming year. Based on <https://www.marioninstitute.org/programs/sfpc/food-system-assessment>, a dialogical approach in our decision-making process, where everyone talked about their ideas and was able to clarify all 155 ideas. We voted multiple times on issues and identified over 20 priority initiatives assembled into four Working Groups: Education and Communication, Policy, Food Access, and Capacity Building.
- Additionally, the CAB identified overarching themes that will be infused within each Working Group, such as using systems thinking approach, centering equity and inclusion in our decision-making processes, engaging Food Equity Advisors (community members impacted by food insecurity) so they have a voice in these conversations and elevating climate change mitigation concepts into our initiatives. Meeting monthly, the Working Groups will create short and long-term goals to help us reach our outcomes.

• **Working Groups (See slides 5-8)**

**You are invited to join any of the Working groups.** Please complete this application or email

[sfpc@marioninstitute.org](mailto:sfpc@marioninstitute.org) or call 508-748-0816 x110.

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScmzF6wfKsgbTi\\_Q9VGonU5g6Bva7Tu5X4Nt3AfSf0x3SAmog/viewform?blm\\_aid=0](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScmzF6wfKsgbTi_Q9VGonU5g6Bva7Tu5X4Nt3AfSf0x3SAmog/viewform?blm_aid=0)

- **Food Equity Advisors**

We are now seeking Food Equity Advisors to create and support programs that reduce food barriers and improve food access. Food Equity Advisors are residents in southeastern MA that have lived experiences of food insecurity. Their understanding and ideas related to food and other challenges faced are so important to the work of the Southcoast Food Policy Council as we collectively build a regional food system that is inclusive of all.

Food Equity Advisors:

- Deeply rooted in and care about their neighborhood and community relationships.
- Become important agents for food equity change in our region.
- Inform food policymakers about their context of lived experiences related to the food environment.
- Use their lived experiences and voices to inform, advise, and update food system policies.
- Voluntarily attend and participate in RFEA meetings once a month, by phone, in person, or online for 1.5 hours to explore the different aspects of the SFPC priorities and provide tangible steps for each discussion topic.
- Share perspectives, recommend actions, and provide feedback to the CAB.
- Attend any CAB meeting to represent your perspective if comfortable doing so.
- Receive a stipend of \$50 per meeting of the Food Equity Advisors, for your expertise and participation in these monthly meetings, and not for every SFPC you may wish to attend.

If you know someone who would be interested, please let me know at [sfpc@marioninstitute.org](mailto:sfpc@marioninstitute.org) or call 508-748-0816 x110.

- **Legislative updates**

We are currently working on two issues:

- Ensuring the Food System budget items are fully funded
- Ensuring the language for the Common application

- 1.) The following recommendations for funding priorities will ensure that the food system is sustainable, equitable, irreplaceable, and supports the MA Local Food Action Plan goals. Budget recommendations include support for education, food access, community-based services, production infrastructure, and necessary state agency capacity.

**(SLIDE 9)**

Success: Thanks to your advocacy efforts and other statewide efforts, we have wins in food system budget funding from the House side in Green on slide 9. Thank you all for reaching out to your legislators when we asked you to take action!

If you want to see the MA Food System Collaborative **Legislative briefing on the Budget**, they have posted it on Youtube: <https://youtu.be/28nP93Rh2Nw>

Question: School meal extension- does that mean free lunch continues in MA? Yes.

2.) We ask you to take action now!

**Please reach out to your [representative](#) and ask them to support [amendment #242](#) to support Food Policy Councils. This \$250K ask would be grants to help Food Policy Councils.** Around 20 food policy councils exist across the state and they work, often without funding, to help address food insecurity at the regional or city level. These councils bring together public health organizations, food pantries, urban ag groups, food rescue, institutions, schools, farmers, and people experiencing food insecurity to share information and strengthen their communities

Question: Will there be a large sign-on for that? It makes a big impact with many organizations signed on.

Answer: Yes, I will put that together.

Please email or call them soon. Here is a script:

Hello Rep ---,

My name is ---- and I am part of the Southcoast Food Policy Council, a program of the Marion Institute. I am urging you to support amendment #242 in the House Budget. Around 20 food policy councils exist across the state, and they work, often without funding, to help address food insecurity at the regional or city level. These councils bring together public health organizations, food pantries, urban ag groups, food rescue, institutions, schools, farmers, and people experiencing food insecurity to share information and strengthen their communities.

Our food policy council has completed the 2021 Southcoast Food System Assessment; coordinated information sharing in the region; helped connect and coordinate a food assistance program during COVID; supported healthier schools through the Farm to School and GROW Education work, and engaged residents to help strengthen their community.

Food policy councils need funding to continue to do their essential work. Additional funding would enable our Southcoast Food Policy Council to provide stipends for community members to participate; create an outreach strategy to draw more community members into Working Groups.

Thank you for considering supporting amendment #242 to strengthen local food policy councils.

Your name and address

3.) We are on the SNAP-Gap/Common Application Coalition. Currently, if you apply for MassHealth for healthcare, and you are eligible for SNAP due to your income level, your information is immediately sent to the folks in the Dept. of Transitional Services, and you are automatically enrolled in SNAP. So you apply once for healthcare, and you do not need to apply for SNAP. This should help eliminate the barriers to SNAP.

What we are working on now in the budget language is to expand that idea. We are working toward one common online application for all poverty-level benefits. So, if you apply for Mass Health and are income-eligible, your information automatically gets you enrolled in SNAP, but you would be enrolled for fuel assistance, Veterans assistance, WIC, etc. We have written the Bristol County legislators on this matter. Yesterday, we found out that the Budget did not include this outside language.

Look for an call for action over the next week for this and the budget items.

### **Grant information: Emily Breen, MA Community Health and Healthy Aging Funds**

- Emily is representing the Health Resources in Action.
- Health Resources in Action is a program of the MA Community Health and Healthy Aging Funds
- Purpose of the Fund: Disrupt and remove barriers to health-structural and institutional racism, poverty, and power imbalance through community-centered policies and system and environmental change approaches.
- Approach- Invest in community-centered approaches that improve population health outcomes, address social determinants of health and disrupt the root causes of health inequities.
- Funding streams:
  1. Policy, systems, and environmental change
  2. Community Health Improvement Planning
  3. Healthy Aging
- Eligibility: Massachusetts-based non-profit 501c3 organizations, quasi-government organizations, and municipalities are eligible to apply.
- QUESTION: If I am not a 501c3 but have a fiscal sponsor, can I apply?
- ANSWER: Yes, as long as the fiscal sponsor is a 501c3.
- The funding cycle is coming up fast. We have office hours for technical assistance in grant writing for our grants. Please take advantage of that.
- CONCERN: Some small groups do not have the capacity. We can do the work in the community; we need the capacity to get the money and the will to make changes.
- Sign up for our newsletter: <https://mailchi.mp/0e9f286f9d2d/ma-health-funds>
- Contact me, Emily Breen, at [ebreen@hria.org](mailto:ebreen@hria.org) and website: [www.mahealthfunds.org](http://www.mahealthfunds.org)

Next Meeting: **July 7, 12 noon** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83233982521>

**Ideas for future meetings:** Talk more about racism and inequities, especially because it impacts the food system. Talk about racism and inequity in the grant funding and how to open more doors for grants to other communities.