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FOOD POLICY COUNCIL





MARION INSTITUTE  
SOUTHCOAST FOOD POLICY COUNCIL

# April 2023 Quarterly Meeting



# Agenda

- Introductions for CAB and Subcommittee members and new staff
- Land Acknowledgement
- Changes to the structure of the SFPC
- Food Equity Advisors
- Goals and activities of four SFPC Subcommittees
- Issue Briefing-Farm Bill
- What YOU can do
- Questions



# Introductions



# Land Acknowledgement



We acknowledge that this land is the traditional unceded territory of the Wapanaak (Wampanoag) and Massa-adchu-es-et (Massachusetts). Pre-English invasion, this place, its gifts of fertile soil, waters, wildlife and beauty, had already sustained Indigenous tribes for 12,000 years. We honor and respect the precious food sources discovered, harvested and cultivated by Native peoples and remain grateful to them for their connectedness to this land and their food traditions. We further acknowledge the lands the Cape Verdeans, African Americans and Latinx farmed in this area that have been lost to them through structural racism. We make these acknowledgements with intention, and accept the responsibility of all we continue to learn. We will honor the resources which sustain us today through their protection. May food be just one of the many connections we use in our work to repair relationships with Indigenous, and People of color and of all Nations living here today.

# Changes to the SFPC Structure

- **Hired a new staff member. Rita Higgins has been hired as the Director of Food Access and Innovation to help steer our Capacity Building and Food Access working groups.**
- **Invited all working group members to join the CAB so they can understand the bigger picture.**

# Food Equity Advisors- Update

- ❑ We have three Food Equity Advisors from the towns of New Bedford, Fairhaven and Fall River.
- ❑ Completed the 3<sup>rd</sup> Focus Group with Mujeres Victoriosas in New Bedford.
- ❑ The other two joined the Food Access and Education and Communication Working Groups.
- ❑ One of the members wrote an advocacy letter in March to support HIP funding.



# Education and Communication Working Group

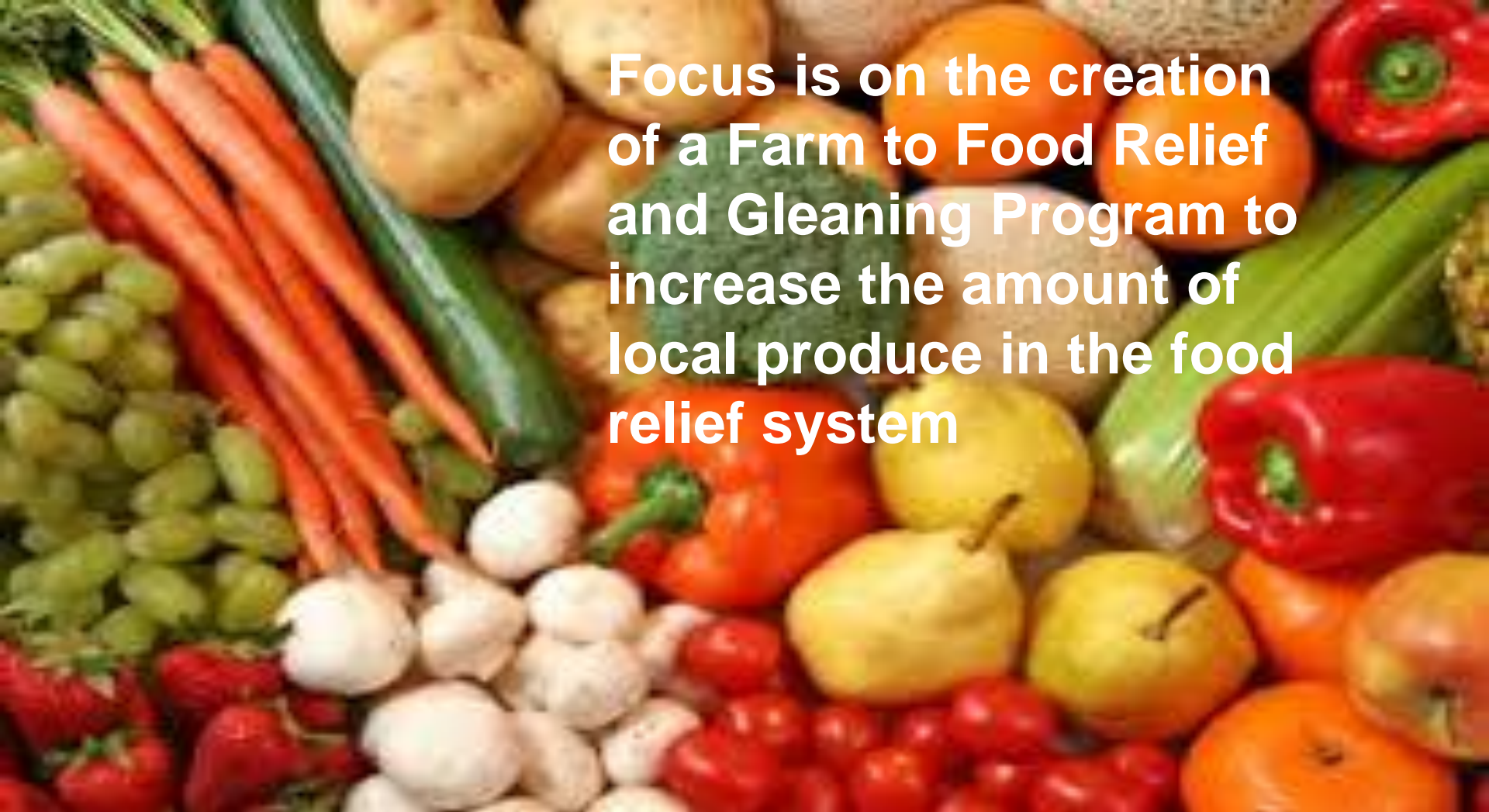
Create and  
Implement Food  
Education  
Campaigns



# Education and Communication Subcommittee



# Food Access Working Group



Focus is on the creation of a Farm to Food Relief and Gleaning Program to increase the amount of local produce in the food relief system



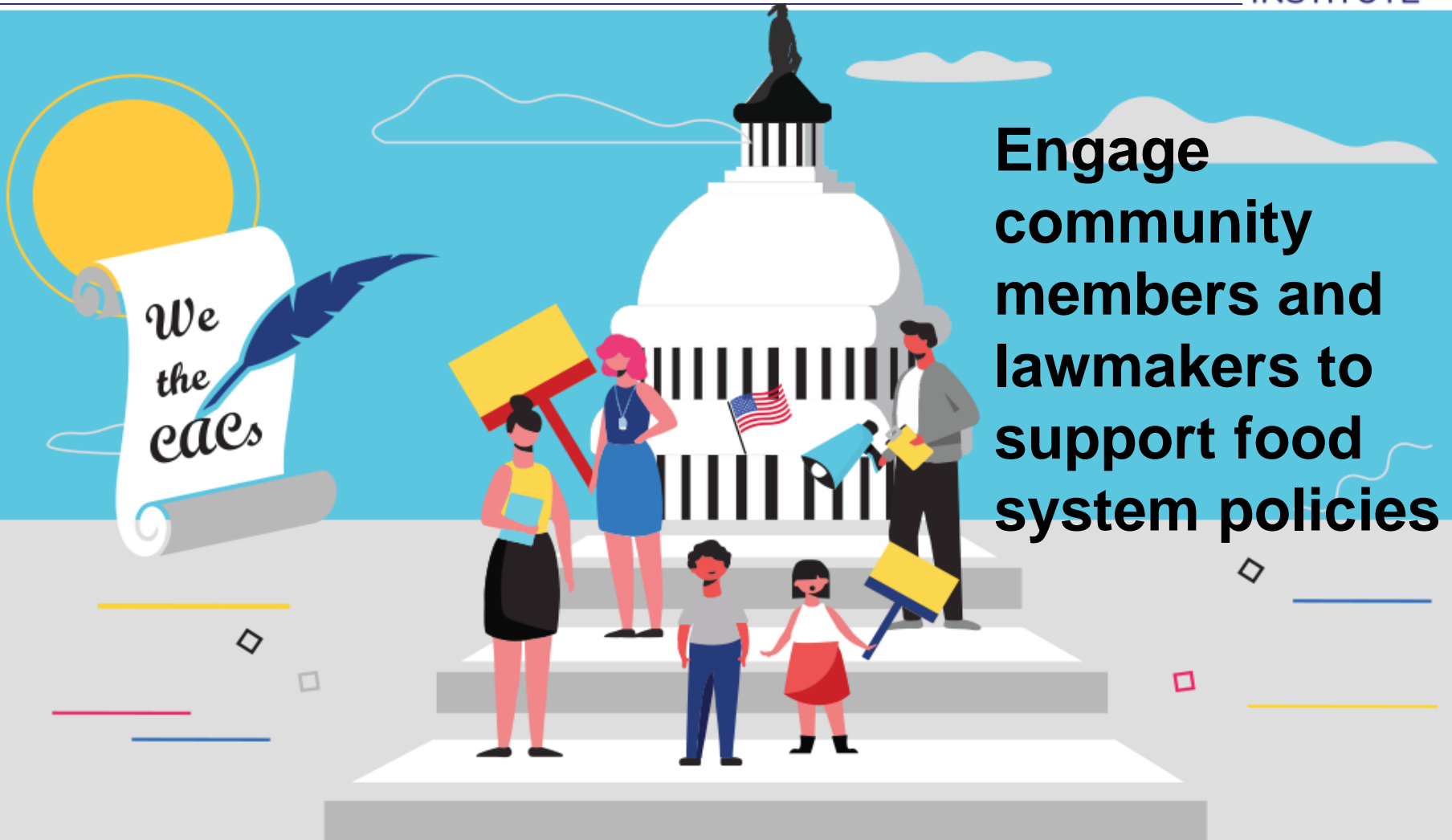
# Capacity Building Working Group

Build the physical  
infrastructure and  
networking  
capacity to create  
a regional food  
system in  
Southeastern MA





# Policy Working Group



**Engage  
community  
members and  
lawmakers to  
support food  
system policies**

# Policy: January and February

Two letters asking for co-sponsorship from 12 Senators and Representatives and sent Action Alert. **STILL RELEVANT Until Hearing!**

- ❑ An Act relative to an Agricultural Healthy Incentives Program-5
- ❑ An Act Promoting Equity in Agriculture-1
- ❑ An Act Establishing Farm to School Grants To Promote Healthy Eating and Strengthen the Agricultural Economy - 4
- ❑ An Act to Promote Food Literacy-2
- ❑ An Act Relative to Universal School Meals-5
- ❑ An Act protecting Our Soil and Farms from PFAS Contamination -4
- ❑ An Act Supporting the Commonwealth's Food System-0
- ❑ An Act Encouraging the Donation of Food to Persons in Need-3
- ❑ Act establishing basic needs assistance for Massachusetts immigrant residents which would restore basic needs like cash assistance and SNAP to lawfully present immigrants.- 3

# Policy: February

Wrote one Letter to House Ways and Means asking for specific support of Governor Maura Healey's FY23 Supplemental Budget

- 130 Million for 3 months of extra state-funded SNAP,
- \$2 Million to replace SNAP benefits stolen through skimming,
- \$65 million to ensure universal school meals for the remainder of the school year

**Passed the House and Senate Ways and Means, and Governor signed into law.**



**Wrote a letter asking to the House Ways and Means** to ensure food system funding:

- Healthy Incentives Program \$24 Million (level funding from FY23)
- Food Literacy \$1,250,000 (new program)
- Food Security Infrastructure Grant Program \$25 Million (as proposed in H.1)
- Department of Agricultural Resources \$11,068,149 (as proposed in H.1)
- Department of Environmental Protection \$51,969,763 (as proposed in H.1)

**Still Relevant through April!**

We will advocate in May for the Senate Ways and Means in the Food system, so look for that Advocacy Alert.

# Issue Briefing: The Farm Bill

- ❑ Comprehensive legislation that authorizes policies regarding food and agricultural programs. Reauthorized every 5 years and the 2018 “Agricultural Improvement Act” which was \$428 Billion expires in September 30, 2023
- ❑ Important: Includes programs to support: small, beginning and social disadvantaged farmers; programs, to increase production and distribution of healthy local food; provides incentives for sustainable farming practices; funds nutritional programs, such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which is 80% of the FY18’ budget.
- ❑ There are 12 Titles or sections. We are advocating in most Titles.
- ❑ House Agricultural Subcommittee on Nutrition (Rep. Jim McGovern MA-02), and the Senate Agricultural Subcommittee on Nutrition, Specialty Crops, and Agricultural Research

# The Farm Bill: Highlights

- ❑ Working with the Northeast Organic Farmers Association, SEMAP (Southeastern Massachusetts Agricultural Partnership), FRAC (Food Research and Action Center), MLRI (Mass Law Reform Institute), the *SFPC* has a comprehensive message:

## **We want a Farm Bill that:**

- ✓ Promotes food sovereignty and provides nutritional security for all.
- ✓ Invests in and protects organic agro-ecological practices as a core solution to Climate Change.
- ✓ Ensures just livelihoods for farmers and workers throughout the food system.
- ✓ Increases fairness and resilience of local and regional food supply chains.
- ✓ Supports small to medium-sized farms to mitigate the supply chain vulnerabilities caused by agricultural consolidation.
- ✓ Centers racial justice across all programs and repairs past and ongoing racial harm.



# The Farm Bill: Highlights

- ❑ Advocating for 12 Bills, 5 of the bills are in Nutrition.

Title 1: Commodities: Milk from Family Dairies Act

Title 2: Conservation Agriculture Resilience Act

Title 4: Nutrition: Closing the Meal Gap Act, The Improving Access to Nutrition Act, The Enhanced Access to SNAP Act, The SNAP Plus Act, The Lift the Bar Act.

Title 5: Credit: Justice for Black Farmers Act

Title 6: Rural Development: Strengthening Local Processing Act

Title 12: Miscellaneous: Farm Systems Reform Act

- USDA Program: Local Agriculture Market Program (LAMP)
- Agricultural Policy that lies outside the Farm Bill: Food and Agribusiness Merger Moratorium and Antitrust Review Act

# The Farm Bill: Resources

- 1.) Northeast Organic Farmers Association:  
<https://www.nofamass.org/policy/> Find the Farm Bill
- 2.) Food Research and Action Center:  
<https://frac.org/research/resource-library/2023-farm-bill-priorities>
- 3.) Join the SNAP Coalition: <https://mlri.org/advocacy-issue/hunger-food-insecurity> for Nutrition Advocacy on the Farm Bill
- 4.) Want to know more? Contact [sfpc@marioninstitute.org](mailto:sfpc@marioninstitute.org) and if there are more than 5 people, we'll set up a zoom training.

# Contact the MA Congressional Delegation

- 1.) Contact both your Congressional Representative and Senator at <https://www.congress.gov/members/find-your-member>
- 2.) Go to their congressional website to the contact page.
- 3.) Cut and paste the template letter we have and fill in your information upon request. Send them an email within the website.
- 4.) Let us know if you sent a letter and to who at [sfpc@marioninstitute.org](mailto:sfpc@marioninstitute.org)



# What you can do

## Be Engaged!

- **Take action when we send legislative alerts to take action**
- **Participate in our events**
- **Donate and support our work**
- **Contact [sfpc@marioninstitute.org](mailto:sfpc@marioninstitute.org)**



# Contact information

Christine Smith

[csmith@marioninstitute.org](mailto:csmith@marioninstitute.org)

Rita Higgins

[rhiggins@marioninstitute.org](mailto:rhiggins@marioninstitute.org)

Liz Wiley

[lwiley@marioninstitute.org](mailto:lwiley@marioninstitute.org)

