

**Southcoast Food Policy Council Public Quarterly Meetin**  
February 27, 2024 <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83655503583>  
28 Participants

**Most of the information is in the PowerPoint slides.**

**SFPC Historical Review**

- The Marion Institute is 30 years old. We have several programs as a non-profit, including GROW Education, Bio/Med Program, Southcoast Food Policy Council, and the newest Program: Frogfoot Farm- Neighbors Feeding Neighbors.
- The MI saw the immense impact a Food Policy Council could create and changed the program from a network to a Food Policy Council. From 2011 to 2019, the current SFPC was called Southeastern MA Food Security Network and was a fiscal sponsor of the Marion Institute. In 2019, the leaders of the Network started their non-profit (Coastal Foodshed), and the Marion Institute turned the program into the Southcoast Food Policy Council as an official program of the Marion Institute.
- From 2019-2021, the SFPC convened weekly and monthly meetings with stakeholders to coordinate regional food efforts due to the pandemic.
- In 2021, recognizing that the SFPC needed to get back into its lane, we officially hired staff and created the SFPC's infrastructure. We invited stakeholders from across Bristol and part of Plymouth County to join as the first group of Community Advisory Board members and began meeting in September 2021.
- From January through March 2022, using the 2021 Southcoast Food System Assessment, the CAB identified 151 priorities and, through a dialogue system, narrowed those to 26 and put Working Groups around the priorities. We recruited more people into the Working Groups and started working on our priorities.

**In 2024, we are planning the following:**

We are focusing on Policy this year as a Food Policy Council. We want to respect the work, not replicate any programming, and see how we can support our partners through the structural justice of Policy. We are creating a "Train the Trainers" series for "How to do the Policy." We will be using this training internally and externally. We will focus on bills that support our original priorities. We have the technology through Action Network via the Project Bread Grant, Moving the Needle, to engage people in easy and accessible action, and now we will begin training.

**Review Legislative Priorities**

In the slide, you can see the new direction we are moving in as each Working Group will take on a few policy priorities.

**Southcoast Food Policy Council Action Alert:**

<https://actionnetwork.org/letters/take-action-today-to-keep-the-bills-moving-in-the-budget-committees>

**HIP (Healthy Incentives Program) Lobby Day**, March 26 at the Statehouse, sponsored by the MA Food System Collaborative.

Register here: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdMyUp136tkSbVEBbq63LJWuj0-wm3DzoV5rtOgFRmHGahcjw/viewform>

**Community Events:**

- Old Bedford Village is interested in inviting SFPC to a community meeting to see how to get involved with the Policy work.
- Andrea Marczylo, Food Access Coordinator | Cape Cod Cooperative Extension

Barnstable County, Regional Government of Cape Cod [andrea.marczely@capecod.gov](mailto:andrea.marczely@capecod.gov)  
(508)375-6944

1.) Food Waste Diversion Forum, March 5, 2024, 9 am – 12:30 pm. Register and details here:  
<https://www.capecod.gov/2024/02/21/attend-the-food-waste-diversion-forum-on-tuesday-march-5th/>

2.) Buy Fresh Buy Local Cape Cod, Cape Cod Cooperative Extension, and Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) is hosting a **FREE Grant Writing Workshop for Farmers and Food Producers** on Wednesday, March 27, from 10 am - 12 pm at the Harbor View Conference Room (3195 Main St., Barnstable). The first half is a 101 granting writing Tutorial and the second half is a presentation by MDAR on upcoming grant application opportunities. Let us know you're coming by contacting Tara at [tara.racine@capecod.gov](mailto:tara.racine@capecod.gov) or call 508-375-6695.

- HIP Lobby Day, March 26. J. Harrison (Essex County, North Shore) - HIP Bill- this is the first year the Governor started the HIP budget higher than anyone at \$25 million. This shows the legislators the importance of HIP. We must continue the momentum and pass the bill to permanently have HIP in the MA state budget. You are not alone- up on the North Shore, our group is working on similar bills that you are working on. When we are further along, I will introduce you.
- Nutrition Education series: Collaboration between the Fall River WIC Nutrition Program, UMass Amherst's Extension Nutrition Education Program, Mass in Motion - Fall River, and Interwoven. Starting from March 15, 2024, to April 5, 2024, join us every Friday at the Cardinal Medeiros Towers Farmers' Market (1197 Robeson St., Fall River 02720) for a fantastic opportunity to learn, connect, and have fun with your family! To register, visit <https://forms.gle/ECUf3hL8nS5PAmR49> or contact Catarina at [wicoutreach@healthfirstfr.org](mailto:wicoutreach@healthfirstfr.org)
- Crock Pot Cooking series in Fall River. The series continues with United Neighbors of Fall River and Partners for a Healthier Community to host 20 low-income families and teach them how to cook with crock pots, and they receive a crock pot, utensils, food, and other things. Contact Marcia Picard [mpicard@fallriverschools.org](mailto:mpicard@fallriverschools.org). In 2023, there was a test run of this program at Keith Middle School in New Bedford. It takes some grant money and strong partners with expertise and capacity to replicate this, but it can be done.
- New Bedford Public Schools update: We will have Summer Feeding in the Park. We are renovating a building off of North Street to build a culinary center kitchen that should be done in December 2024.
- PACE Is hiring a new Food Coordinator for the PACE Food Center with potential plans for a community meal program. The Head Start program got a grant for more programming on the site.
- MOLIFE Food Pantry: The Greater Boston Food Bank/USDA Commodities share pallet program is off to a good start; we got food this week and will debrief and see where this will go. There is a lack of refrigerated, frozen, and dry storage space in the food pantries in our area. Even if food pantries received cold food, they had no storage. This beta test group with GBFB agencies comprises USDA commodity receivers. The SFPC is coordinating this effort with food pantries. We will share the status at the next quarterly meeting.

- **Grants for Food Pantries**- Build more frozen and refrigerated storage space

**RFSI:** <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/about-the-resilient-food-systems-infrastructure-rfsi-program>

**FSIG:** <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/food-security-infrastructure-grant-program>