

2024 Legislative Priorities

The Southcoast Food Policy Council's (SFPC) mission is to connect, convene, and advocate for local food producers, consumers, and community partners who seek to generate policies and practices that strengthen our regional food system, enhance food security, and promote health equity. Our membership constitutes 500+ community partners representing farmers, anglers, food pantry leaders, churches, social service agencies, schools, institutional buyers, and various partner organizations throughout the Southcoast.

The Southcoast Food Policy Council legislative priorities:

1.) An Act relative to an Agricultural Healthy Incentives Program sponsored by Sen. Anne Gobi and Rep. Mindy Domb, would codify the Healthy Incentives Program (HIP) into law. More than 185,000 families have been served by HIP, providing \$44.5 million in sales of healthy fruits and vegetables for farmers. The Healthy Incentives Program is a critical program to fund. As one person at a Fall River farmers market said, "By the end of the month, there is not much left on the SNAP card. But if I buy fresh fruit and vegetables using HIP, money goes back on the SNAP card to buy other stuff I need." Making HIP a permanent part of the budget would ensure that people across MA have access to healthier food.

2.) An Act Promoting Equity in Agriculture sponsored by Sen. Jo Comerford and Rep. Natalie Blais, would establish a commission to develop recommendations to the MA Department of Agriculture to serve socially disadvantaged farmers and address disparities. The 2017 USDA Census showed Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) farmers represented 2.3% of MA farmers, despite people of color comprising 29% of the MA population. The combination of an aging farmer population, lack of racial diversity in farming, and an 8.1% decrease in the number of farms all point to a need to support young and BIPOC people entering the field of agriculture. The commission would not be a cost burden to the Commonwealth. Funding would come from the MA Farmer Equity Commission Fund, a section earlier in the bill. The commission designates who will be on the 17-member commission from BIPOC communities. The research would create transparency in grant-making to promote equitable distribution of funds, greater equity in regulations, and education and marketing assistance.

3.) An Act Establishing Farm to School Grants to Promote Healthy Eating and Strengthen the Agricultural Economy sponsored by Rep. Smitty Pignatelli and Sen. Jo Comerford would codify this program into the MA Budget. The chronic epidemics of obesity, diabetes, and other metabolic diseases increasingly negatively impact our youth. Families are asking for healthier food options in the school cafeterias. This Act would provide equal opportunities for public schools and licensed childcare programs to apply for grant money from the Department of Elementary School and Secondary Education for the purchase of local food for MA students, provide the necessary infrastructure to return to scratch-cooked meals rather than relying on processed foods and educate students about the local Food System. This Act is a win for families, schools, farmers, and the local economy.

4.) An Act to Promote Food Literacy sponsored by Sen. Jason Lewis and Reps. Mindy Domb and Andres Vargas would add food literacy to the list of topics that students would learn about in school. Currently, students do not know nutrition, where their food comes from, or how to grow food. Many do not understand how climate change affects what we eat, nor do they see economic opportunities in the food system. Many teachers feel unprepared to teach about the food system and struggle to find high-quality, culturally appropriate, curriculum-aligned lessons. This program would enable the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to identify suitable curricula, convene a working group of educators to guide the implementation of food literacy, and establish a Food Literacy Trust to support this programming.

5.) An Act protecting Our Soil and Farms from PFAS Contamination, sponsored by Rep. Paul Schmid and Sen. Jo Comerford, would provide financial and liability relief should farmers' ability to grow crops be impacted by perfluoroalkyl and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), as well as establish an account to support technical assistance and education to help farmers adapt to new practices that reduce the use and dispersion of PFAS. New regulations and laws related to PFAS should not harm our food security, including Massachusetts farmers' ability to produce food.



6.) An Act Encouraging the Donation of Food to Persons in Need, sponsored by Rep. Hannah Kane and Sen. Jo Comerford, would provide civil liability protection for individuals and food establishments who donate food directly to consumers, and a tax credit to Massachusetts farmers in the amount of the fair market value of the donated food, with a \$5,000 annual cap per farmer. This would aid the Southcoast Food Policy Council's efforts to increase gleaning and food recovery for local food relief programs.

7.) An Act establishing basic needs assistance for Massachusetts immigrant residents, sponsored by Rep. Antonio Cabral and Sen. Sal DiDomenico restores essential food assistance (SNAP) to legally present immigrants and restores benefits (TAFDC) to families with minor children. Many legally present immigrants (families with minor children, older people, and immigrants with disabilities) who have lived in the state for years, and are the backbone of our economy are not eligible for critical cash and nutrition benefits. This bill would also positively affect victims of violence, low-income immigrants, and DREAMERS.

8.) An Act Regulating Cottage Laws sponsored by Rep. Erika Uytterhoeven would create one standard set of regulations for Cottage Food Laws in the Commonwealth. When farmers and people who make food in home kitchens to sell at farmers markets, direct order to delivery, or online sales - such as jams, bread, tortillas, fruit empanadas, cookies, churros, coffee beans, pickled vegetables, granola, and other non-temperature regulated foods - they are treated like a "food establishment" alongside restaurants, catering operations, and food trucks. This bill would allow all farmers and home cooks throughout Massachusetts to sell low-risk, non-temperature foods without requiring a health department permit, and eliminate obstacles for farmers and small food business owners to sell cottage food directly to consumers. This bill will mitigate climate impacts by reducing wasted food through a required detailed transparent label.

9.) An Act supporting farm and school partnerships in school meals, sponsored by Reps Mindy Domb and Andres Vargas, would create a three-year pilot program incentivizing schools to buy directly from Massachusetts food producers. The bill would provide schools with a \$1 reimbursement for every \$3 spent on food from farmers, food hubs, wholesale distributors, and fishers in the Commonwealth, and provides \$1 for every \$5 spent on food purchased from New England producers. This bill would support students to develop healthy eating habits at a young age, which can prevent diet-related diseases later in life and could reduce health costs for individuals and the state over time. This would also help Massachusetts food producers who struggle to keep their businesses afloat while battling climate change impacts on their farms and waterways.

10.) An Act Decreasing Food Waste by Standardizing the Date Labeling of Food, sponsored by Rep. Hannah Kane and Sen. Edward Kennedy, would standardize the date labeling of food (establishes a quality date and a safety date) to mitigate consumer confusion thereby reducing food waste. The bill also eliminates restrictions on the sale or donation of products whose quality date has passed.

11.) An Act Relative to Raising the Minimum Wage Closer to a Living Wage in the Commonwealth, sponsored by Sens. Jason Lewis and Jacob Oliveira, and Reps. Erika Uytterhoeven and Jack Patrick Lewis would require that in 2027, the state would adjust the minimum wage according to the consumer price index for urban wage earners and clerical workers, thereby ensuring people can manage their costs of living.

12.) MA Food System Budget includes the following programs: Healthy Incentive Program, Food Security Infrastructure Grants, UMass Extension, Local Food Policy Council grants, MDAR staffing, Buy Local Agricultural Organizations, Massachusetts Food Trust, Mass Farm to School, MA Emergency Food Assistance Program (MEFAP), Senior Farmshare Program, School Meals Extension, and Mass in Motion.

13.) A Congressional Farm Bill that promotes food security and addresses climate change. We support an increase to SNAP and to expand SNAP access, ensure just livelihoods for farmers and workers throughout the food system, increase fairness and resilience of local and regional supply chains, break up agriculture consolidation, and center racial justice across all programs.

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Massachusetts Healthy Incentives Program (HIP)

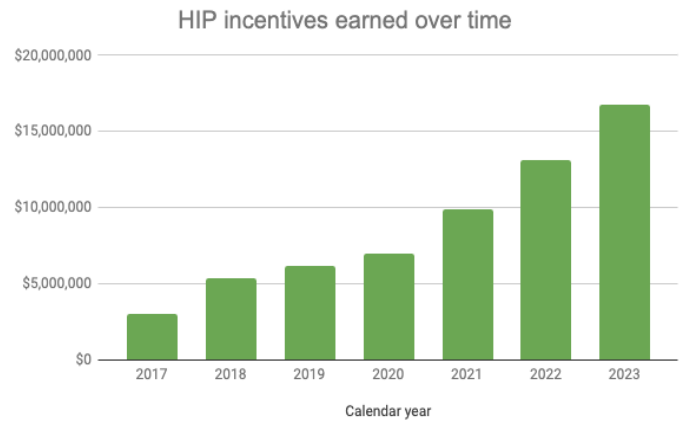
The Healthy Incentives Program means healthy families, sustainable farms, and a strong local economy. Operated by the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance, the program provides a dollar-for-dollar reimbursement when SNAP users buy fresh, healthy, local food directly from Massachusetts farmers.

Since HIP began in April, 2017:

SNAP households have purchased more than **\$61 million** from local farmers in healthy, local foods.

More than **200,000 households / 314,000** individuals have used HIP.

- 44% of those families included seniors, who need less medical attention when they eat healthy foods.
- 30% of those families included children, who do better in school when they eat healthy food.
- 30% of those families include a person with a disability.



294 HIP farmers across the Commonwealth sell food at farmers markets, CSAs, farm stands and mobile markets at **nearly 600 points of sale**.

In a study of program operations, HIP participants on average purchased **1.23 daily servings of fruits and vegetables per person**. This helps reduce the incidence of dietary related illnesses and public health care costs.

HIP helps **lessen MA's estimated \$2.4 billion in avoidable costs related to food insecurity and hunger** in MA by increasing access to healthy foods to vulnerable people.

Each HIP dollar spent results in an additional \$2 in local economic impact, when farmers spend those dollars on local goods and services. So HIP has resulted in **an additional \$122 million in local economic impact**.

To address disproportionately low usage among African American SNAP clients and SNAP clients with disabilities, **in 2022 the program added 100 vendors** who expressed a commitment to addressing these inequities.

HIP helps build an economically sustainable food system, helping make healthy food available to more people, and supporting farmers to be able to charge fair prices for what they grow, allowing them to better steward their land, protect natural resources, and contribute to the local economy.

HIP's Impact



“Participating in HIP has given us an ability to actually provide fresh produce to customers who wouldn’t have access to it otherwise. Our SNAP sales have increased 40% since the HIP program started, and has been able to fund our expansion to more markets and a CSA that offers delivery for customers who can’t make it to the markets. We feel much more integrated into our local food system and able to provide in ways that we couldn’t before.”

- Mill City Grows, Lowell

“My family needs the mobile market. Cooking is what we do. It’s part of our culture, and you can’t cook with bad ingredients. [This market] has the best ingredients I’ve seen in Boston, and I can actually afford it.”

- HIP customer, Roxbury YMCA Trustees mobile market

“Since HIP has been introduced in Massachusetts, I have been able to eat much healthier. As a senior citizen in treatment for incurable cancer, I have lowered immunity. Particularly during the holidays, it is a blessing to have that extra \$40 per month of guaranteed fresh produce for an immunity boost, and with inflation and obvious rising food costs, my SNAP dollars stretch farther due to HIP.”

- Marcia M., HIP customer, Dennis

“HIP helps consumers and farmers. It is a brilliant, simple, effective method for subsidizing healthy vegetables and stimulating the local economy.”

- Elena Colman, Small Farm, Stow



The Caucus chose HIP as a priority because it demonstrates the connections between public health, local food, food access, the local economy, and the environment, and proves that public investments in comprehensive programs can have far-reaching impacts.

- MA Legislative Food System Caucus

MDAR is proud of our collaboration with DTA in connecting our farmers with SNAP recipients to allow them greater access to fresh and nutritious products through HIP. It’s truly a win-win and showcases our commitment to a more just and equitable local food system in Massachusetts.

- MDAR Commissioner Ashley Randle

The Healthy Incentives Program is a powerful tool in our work to address food security issues across the state. The program not only increases access to fresh, locally-grown food for SNAP clients, but also brings critical economic support to our local farms and communities.

- Former DTA Comm. Amy Kershaw

The more than 300 supporters of the Campaign for HIP Funding have successfully advocated for \$59 million for HIP since 2017. Join us in supporting this essential program!

www.hipma.org

FARM TO SCHOOL IN EVERY COMMUNITY

Farm to school is a common sense approach to child nutrition that empowers children and their families to make informed food choices while strengthening the local economy and contributing to vibrant communities. Schools want to serve more local food and kids want to eat it. But outdated kitchen equipment, a need for staff training, and ways to connect with local farms are standing in their way. There's a bill to overcome these barriers, **An Act Establishing Farm to School Grants to Promote Healthy Eating and Strengthen the Agricultural Economy (S.243 & H.558)**.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

- 1/3 of Massachusetts K-12 students currently access local food or food education in school
- 110 farms sell to Massachusetts institutions
- Massachusetts schools spend over \$10 million annually on local foods



Support “An Act Establishing Farm to School Grants to Promote Healthy Eating and Strengthen the Agricultural Economy” (S.243 & H.558)

BILL OVERVIEW

- Introduced by Representative Smitty Pignatelli and Senator Jo Comerford.
- Establishes a competitive grant program within the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for eligible public schools and licensed child care programs.
- Grants build the capacity of public schools and licensed child care programs to purchase ingredients grown and produced in Massachusetts, prepare scratch-cooked meals and educate students about the food system.
- Has cross-sector impact by updating infrastructure, providing job training, supporting local business growth, educating students, and improving public health.

TAKE ACTION

Contact your Massachusetts legislators and ask them to co-sponsor S.243 & H.558. Tell them why you think more farm to school activity will be good for students, for farmers, and for communities.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information, please contact Lisa Damon at lisa@massfarmtoschool.org or 413-253-3844.

IMPACT OF FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Farm to School is a win for students, farmers, fishermen, and communities.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Farm to School keeps purchasing dollars local. Massachusetts schools spend approximately \$75 million on food annually. Let's invest that money in Massachusetts farmers, fishermen and food producers.

Every \$1 spent on direct farm purchases in MA, generates another \$1.12 in local economic activity.

110 Massachusetts farms sell to schools and 25% have grown their businesses to meet this demand.



HEALTH & NUTRITION

Farm to School programs increase student consumption of fruits and vegetables.

Farm to School can increase participation in school nutrition programs, so more kids, especially those coming from homes that are struggling to put food on their own tables, are eating nutritious meals, which help them grow and thrive at school.

25% of Massachusetts teens are overweight or obese and farm to school can help reverse that trend, saving on future health care costs.



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EDUCATION

Farm to School strengthens knowledge and attitudes toward agriculture, food, nutrition, and the environment.

Farm to School improves academic outcomes and social and emotional learning.

Farm to School provides experiential learning opportunities that reach students of all abilities.



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LOCAL FOOD IN EVERY SCHOOL MEAL

H.3993, “An Act Supporting Farm and School Partnerships in School Meals,” would build on the success of a current federally funded local foods incentive, Northeast Food for Schools, which is set to expire at the end of the 2023-24 school year. We’ve already seen how successful a local food incentive can be at driving investments in local farms and food businesses and expanding access to healthy foods for *all* students. Let’s not let the program end when the federal funds run out! A state incentive will enable the incredible local purchasing gains to continue and support our local economy.

BILL OVERVIEW

- Introduced by Representatives Domb and Vargas
- Would establish and evaluate a 3-year pilot program in the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to provide public K-12 schools and licensed early child care programs additional reimbursement for meals featuring locally and regionally grown foods
- Schools would be reimbursed \$1 for every \$3 spent on qualifying Massachusetts foods
- Increases access to healthy high quality foods for all Massachusetts kids
- Directs investment to Massachusetts farmers and fishers for a more resilient food system

TAKE ACTION

Please sign on as a co-sponsor of H.3993, “An Act supporting farm and school partnerships in school meals”



Wow! We have been adding new schools, each week and it is not stopping yet! The volume has pushed us to add delivery days, employee hours, and hire a part-timer. We have been renting an additional truck on some days each week and soon will be adding storage capacity as well as purchasing another truck... This has been great for our local farmers.”

-Shon Rainford, Worcester Regional Food Hub

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please contact Simca Horwitz at simca@massfarmtoschool.org or 413-253-3844 to learn more.

PROVIDING A LOCAL FOODS INCENTIVE MEANS...

More money for Massachusetts' food and farm economy

Every \$1.00 spent on direct farm purchases in Massachusetts generates another \$1.12 in local economic activity. Massachusetts schools spend over \$75 million on food every year and we want more of those dollars going to Massachusetts farmers and fishers.



Increased access to high quality foods for Massachusetts school kids

Every kid in Massachusetts should grow up with local food on their lunch tray. By giving schools and early childhood programs the resources they need to buy from Massachusetts farmers and fishers, we are ensuring equitable access to high quality, local food for all Massachusetts school children.



Expanded markets for Massachusetts farmers & fishers

Over 110 Massachusetts farms sell food to Massachusetts schools and early childhood programs. 25% of those farmers report expanding their businesses to meet school demand. Let's grow the number of producers selling to schools!



School meal programs THRIVE

Universal school meals and a local food incentive can work together to increase participation in school meals, so more students are nourished and ready to learn. When paired, these programs increase meal participation, which gives school food programs more dollars to buy more local food, sending more money back into the local economy.



Feeding Our Neighbors Coalition



Continue to Fund State SNAP Benefits for Legally-Present MA Immigrants in FY25 Budget

The Coalition is deeply grateful to the MA Legislature and Governor for including \$6M in the FY23 Supp. Budget (4400-1032). This restored critical state SNAP benefits for legally-present immigrants who are barred from federal SNAP benefits.

The projected cost in FY25 for these nutrition benefits is between \$12-18M.

We urge the Governor and the MA Legislature to continue to fund this critical nutrition benefit for legally-present immigrant families in need.

Massachusetts leadership lauds state SNAP benefits for immigrants!

"As Massachusetts continues to address the challenges associated with the ongoing humanitarian crisis, it's critical that both the Commonwealth's most vulnerable residents and legally present immigrants have access to SNAP benefits so they are able to feed their families, part of a broader effort to ensure that no child in Massachusetts goes hungry,"
-Speaker Mariano, SHNS 12/12/23

"Massachusetts is better off when the most vulnerable in our communities are cared for [...] Access to food is a priority, no matter where you come from or what part of the Commonwealth you live in, and I was happy to see aid for that purpose included in the supplemental budget."
-Senate President Karen Spilka, SHNS 12/12/23

- **No one in Massachusetts should go hungry.**
- **Many are essential workers and the backbone of our economy, but can't make ends meet.**
- **Some legal immigrants are waiting for their work permits.**

MORE INFORMATION: FeedingOurNeighborsMA.org

Supporting Member Organizations

Allston Brighton Health Collaborative
Ascentria Care Alliance
Boston Children's Hospital
Boston Missionary Baptist Community Center
Boston Public Health Commission, Healthy Baby Healthy Child
Brazilian Worker Center
Building Audacity
Bunker Hill Community College
Cambridge Economic Opportunity Committee (CEOC)
Cambridge Health Alliance
Catholic Charities Boston
Catholic Charities - Southbridge
Central West Justice Center
Child Health Equity Center, UMass Chan / UMass Memorial Health
Children's HealthWatch
Citizens Inn
City of Chelsea Dept of Housing + Community Development
Clarendon Early Education Services, Inc.
Coalition for a Healthy Greater Worcester
Community Action Agency of Somerville, Inc.
Community Teamwork
Dana-Farber Cancer Institute
Economic Mobility Pathways (EMPath)
El Buen Samaritano Food Program Inc
Fall River WIC - HealthFirst Family Care Center
Food Bank of Western Massachusetts
The Greater Boston Food Bank
Greater Boston Legal Services
Groundwork Lawrence
Hardwick Food Pantry
Health Leads
Housing Families
International Institute of New England
Jane Doe Inc.
Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action
Jewish Family & Children's Service
Justice Center of Southeast MA
Justice Resource Institute (JRI)
Kids in Need of Defense (KIND)
La Colaborativa
Latinos Unidos en Massachusetts (LUMA)
League of Women Voters of Massachusetts
Lowell Alliance
Lynn Rapid Response Network
The Marion Institute's Southcoast Food Policy Council
Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center
Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless
Massachusetts Councils on Aging (MCOA)
Massachusetts Food Systems Collaborative
Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition
Massachusetts Immigrant Collaborative
Massachusetts Law Reform Institute
Mass General Brigham
Merrimack Valley Food Bank
MetroWest Food Collaborative
Metrowest Legal Services
MLPB
National Association of Social Workers, MA Chapter
The Neighborhood Developers
Nourishing the North Shore
Office Of Food Access and Healthy Communities, City of Somerville
Our Neighbors' Table
Project Bread
REACH Beyond Domestic Violence
Regional Environmental Council Inc
Rescuing Leftover Cuisine
Rian Immigrant Center
Rosie's Place
Roxbury Community College
SEIU Local 509



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FeedingOurNeighborsMA.org

BACKGROUND

Many **legally present immigrants** **don't qualify** for federal benefits, including:
Pending Asylum applicants,
DACA/Dreamers,
Humanitarian Parole,
Victims of violence
Temporary Protected Status

1 in 6 **Massachusetts residents**, roughly 17%, are foreign born. MA has the 7th largest foreign-born population in the U.S. Recently, MA has received many new arrivals **fleeing violence and persecution** in their homelands.

From 1997 to 2002, the MA Legislature provided state-funded food benefits (SNAP) and cash assistance (TAFDC and EAEDC) to immigrants cut off from federal benefits.

Families with minor children need basic benefits and our most vulnerable **elderly and disabled immigrants** need access to food benefits.

Five states + MA currently provide **state funded benefits** including CA, IL, ME, MN & WA. It's critical we continue these benefits for MA immigrants in need!

In the 1996 "Welfare Reform Law," the **U.S. Congress cut core food and cash assistance benefits** to millions of legally present immigrants in Massachusetts and across the nation.

Bill Supporters





2023-24 Legislative Priorities

The Massachusetts Local Food Action Plan recommended a range of policy solutions toward a sustainable and equitable food system. Many bills have been filed in the 193rd General Court that address these recommendations. The MA Food System Collaborative and the undersigned organizations have identified these bills as priorities for passage this session.



An Act to promote food literacy

S.310: Sen. Jason Lewis / H.601: Reps. Andres Vargas and Mindy Domb

To help Massachusetts children lead healthy, independent, thoughtful lives, all students in grades K-12 should have access to food system education in school. These bills will add food literacy to the list of topics that students should learn about in school, and provide the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) with opportunities and resources to support those lessons.



An Act protecting our soil and farms from PFAS contamination

S.39: Sen. Jo Comerford / H.101: Rep. Paul Schmid

New regulations and laws related to PFAS should not jeopardize our food security, including Massachusetts farmers' ability to produce food. These bills will provide financial and liability relief should farmers' ability to grow crops be impacted by PFAS, as well as establish an account to support technical assistance and education to help farmers adapt to new practices that reduce the use and dispersion of PFAS.



An Act strengthening local food systems

S.42: Sen. Jo Comerford / H.88: Rep. Natalie Blais

Farmers in Massachusetts struggle to remain sustainable, on average earning just 94 cents for every dollar they spend producing food. They must compete in the global marketplace while facing higher input costs, more restrictive regulations, and fewer supportive resources than farmers in other states. These bills will create a "circuit rider" program at MDAR to coordinate support for farmers, establish a \$3 million Next Generation Farmers Fund to provide education grants, direct MEMA to incorporate food production capacity into disaster planning, give MDAR needed tools to help protect farmland, and establish a state food system coordinator position.



An Act promoting equity in agriculture

S.41: Sen. Jo Comerford / H.87: Rep. Natalie Blais

BIPOC farmers are represented on only 2.3% of the Commonwealth's farms, farms that steward just .3% of the land in farming and sell just .4% of the market value of agricultural goods in the Massachusetts, despite people of color making up 29% of the state's population. These bills will establish a commission charged with developing recommendations for MDAR to equitably serve socially disadvantaged farmers to address these disparities.



An Act relative to an agricultural healthy incentives program

S.85: Sen. Anne Gobi / H.150: Rep. Mindy Domb

The Healthy Incentives Program leverages federal SNAP funds by increasing SNAP recipients' ability to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables directly from farmers, improving health outcomes for vulnerable communities and increasing sales for local farms. These bills will establish the framework for the program's long-term sustainability.

An act supporting the Commonwealth's food system

H.92: Reps. Dan Donahue and Pat Duffy

Many state agencies play roles in supporting and regulating the food system, but because of limited communication between them some of these efforts are duplicative, inefficient, or even contradictory. These bills will establish a state food system coordinator position to serve in an advisory capacity to all agencies to coordinate and inventory food programs, and develop and track metrics related to food system goals.

An Act encouraging the donation of food to persons in need

S.920: Sen. Jo Comerford / H.1594: Rep. Hannah Kane

Thousands of tons of edible food are sent to landfills each year because of donors' concerns about liability, and because diverting it to those who need it can be costly. These bills will provide civil liability protection for individuals and food establishments who donate food directly to consumers, and a tax credit to Massachusetts farmers in the amount of the fair market value of the donated food, with a \$5,000 annual cap per farmer.

Proposal for a legislative amendment to the constitution relative to agricultural and horticultural lands

S.13: Sen. Jo Comerford / H.41: Rep. Paul Schmid

Article 99 of the Massachusetts Constitution authorizes lower tax rates for agricultural land, but only on parcels greater than five acres. Changes in management practices have made farming on smaller parcels more sustainable, the subdividing of large tracts of land means many farmers farm on multiple smaller parcels, and rising land prices put larger parcels out of reach for many farmers, particularly beginning farmers and farmers of color. This proposed amendment will remove the acreage requirement, making farmland of any size eligible for tax relief.

The Following Organizations Support these Priorities

About Fresh, Boston
Allston Brighton Health Collaborative,
Allston/Brighton
American Farmland Trust, Northampton
Auburn Middle School, Auburn
Berkshire Bounty, Berkshire County
Berkshire Grown, Great Barrington
Boston Area Gleaners, Acton
Bread of Life, Malden
Central Mass Grown, Rutland
ChicopeeFRESH, Chicopee
CISA (Community Involved in Sustaining
Agriculture), South Deerfield
Clark Organic Farm, Carlisle
Coastal Foodshed, New Bedford
Common Threads, National
CommonWealth Kitchen, Boston
Community Servings, Jamaica Plain
Conservation Law Foundation, Boston
Curley K-8 Schoolyard Improvement
Committee, Jamaica Plain
East Boston Neighborhood Health Center,
East Boston
Eastie Farm, Boston
Food For Free, Cambridge
Food Link, Arlington
Friends of Holly Hill Farm, Cohasset
Gardening the Community, Springfield
Groundwork Somerville, Somerville
Grow Food Northampton, Northampton
Growing Places, Leominster
Hampshire County Food Policy Council,
Hampshire County
Healthy Chelsea Coalition, Chelsea
Healthy Waltham, Inc., Waltham
Island Grown Initiative, Martha's Vineyard

Just Roots, Greenfield
Land For Good, New England
Lovin' Spoonfuls, Newton
Mass Farmers Markets, Waltham
Mass In Motion-Office of Planning and
Economic Development, Holyoke
Massachusetts Academy of Nutrition and
Dietetics, Medway
Massachusetts Cheese Guild, Foxboro
Massachusetts Council on Aging, Statewide
MA Farm Bureau Federation, Marlborough
Massachusetts Farm to School, Beverly
MA Specialty Foods Association, Groton
Mattapan Food and Fitness Coalition, Boston
Mill City Grows, Lowell
Mobile Ministries, Inc, New Bedford
Natick Farmers Market, Natick
New England Vegetable & Berry Growers
Association, Essex
New Entry Sustainable Farming Project,
Beverly
NOFA/Mass, Florence
Northeast Harvest, Topsfield
Nuestras Raíces, Holyoke
Our Grateful Garden, Norwell
Project Bread, East Boston
Project TALC, Bedford
Quincy Farmers Market, Quincy
Regional Environmental Council, Worcester
Rescuing Leftover Cuisine, National
Roots Rising, Pittsfield
Roslindale Village Main Street, Boston
SABURA Youth Programs, Youth SOL,
MACOPGV, Brockton/Boston
School Sprouts Educational Gardens,
Belchertown

Second Chance Composting, Adams
Seeds of Solidarity, Orange
Sheffield Farmers Market, Sheffield
Somerville Food Security Coalition,
Somerville
Somerville Winter Farmers Market,
Somerville
Southcoast Food Policy Council, a program of
The Marion Institute, Marion
Springfield Food Policy Council, Springfield
Sustainable Business Network of
Massachusetts, Cambridge
Sustainable CAPE - Center for Agricultural
Preservation & Education, Truro
Sustainable Nantucket, Nantucket
The Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro South,
Taunton/Brockton
The Farmers Market at Forest Park,
Springfield
The Food Bank of Western MA, Hatfield
The Food Project, Boston/Lincoln/Lynn/
Wenham
The Greater Boston Food Bank, Boston
The John C. Stalker Institute, Framingham
The Trustees of Reservations, Boston
The Urban Farming Institute of Boston,
Mattapan
Topsfield Fair, Topsfield
Tufts Food Rescue, Medford
Watertown Farmers' Market, Watertown
Westfield Farmers Market, Westfield
White Rabbit Farm, Barre
Williamstown Ag Commission, Williamstown
Worcester County Food Bank, Shrewsbury
World Farmers, Lancaster
Youth School of Liberation, Brockton



Building Capacity Through Collaboration

The Greater New Bedford Youth Alliance (GNBYA)

The Greater New Bedford Youth Alliance priority is children and the organizations that serve them, and we ask that this be your priority as well.

The Greater New Bedford Youth Alliance is a partnership of youth serving organizations dedicated to creating a seamless system and network of youth services. With the support of the Community Foundation of Southeastern Massachusetts, ten youth serving organizations convened at a retreat in October of 2014. Their purpose was to discuss the challenges facing youth organizations and to identify common concerns and pathways for working together. Our challenge became finding ways to strengthen youth serving organizations while providing the foundation for quality services to children.

Since its inception, the GNBYA has grown to 52 youth serving organizations that build community partnerships including government, schools, non-profit entities, and others. These partnerships will allow us to strengthen the youth serving community and provide high quality after school and out of school programs for children.

Alliance members are working collaboratively on multiple issues with the goal of maximizing the resources of our member organizations, while creating an environment for quality programs focused on children. The primary goal of the Greater New Bedford Youth Alliance is to build the capacity necessary for a comprehensive system of before school, after school, out of school and summertime programming that improves the overall educational performance of youth in greater New Bedford. Key to our effectiveness and success is focusing on the organizational capacity of all New Bedford youth serving organizations in the areas of Quality Assurance, Professional Development, Information and Data Systems, Marketing and Public Relations, Resource Development and Transportation infrastructure, where members promote healthy living and behavior, reduce isolation, develop social skills and provide opportunities for children to grow.

What we want our legislators to know:

Our priorities are serving all youth before school, after school, out of school and summertime programming because all youth are at risk. We ask that as you face the challenges with this year's budget and the cuts you may have to make, you remember that our future is our youth and youth need to be at the top of all our priorities.

Current GNYBA Members (March 2023)

Members provide a safe haven for children, promote healthy living and behavior, reduce isolation, develop social skills and provide opportunities for children to grow.

3rd Eye Unlimited
Big Brothers Big Sisters
Boys & Girls Club of Greater New Bedford
Buttonwood Park Zoo
Buzzards Bay Coalition
Child & Family Services, Inc.
Children's Advocacy Center of Bristol County
Community Boating Center, Inc.
DATMA
Dennison Memorial Community Center
Dream Out Loud
Friends Academy
Gnome Surf
Good Company NB
Groundwork Southcoast
JRI TAP Program
Junior Achievement of Southern MA
Kennedy Donovan Center, Inc.
Kiddie Kampus
Leadership Southcoast
Little People's College
The Marion Institute
Mass Audubon
MassHire Greater New Bedford Career Center
MassHire Greater New Bedford Workforce Investment Board
Meeting Street
Metta Rising
Nativity Preparatory School New Bedford
New Bedford Art Museum/ArtWorks!
New Bedford Ballet
New Bedford Department of Community Services
New Bedford Health Department
New Bedford Housing Authority
New Bedford Parks Recreation & Beaches
New Bedford Police Department
New Bedford Public Schools
New Bedford Rowing Center, Inc.
New Bedford Star Kids Scholarship Program
New Bedford Symphony Orchestra
New Bedford Whaling Museum
New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park
NorthStar Learning Centers
Our Sisters' School
PAAAC - Insight Youth Services
PACE YouthBuild New Bedford
Playworks New England
St. Andrew's Enrichment Program
The SouthCoast LGBTQ+ Network
UMassD Leduc Center for Civic Engagement
YMCA SouthCoast
Youth Opportunities Unlimited
YWCA Southeastern Massachusetts
Zeiterion Performing Arts Center



The GNBYA is a project of the
SouthCoast Community Foundation.

We wish to once again express our continued gratitude to our sponsors for their dedication to GNBYA and for making a difference in their community by supporting our initiatives.



If you are interested in more information, contact:

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New Bedford, MA 02740
greaternbyouthalliance@gmail.com



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Greater New Bedford
Youth Alliance

Visit our Website:
www.gnbya.org



ADVOCACY

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

AFTER-SCHOOL & OUT-OF-SCHOOL
EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT





Our Motto

Building Capacity through Collaboration

Our Mission

The Greater New Bedford Youth Alliance is a partnership of youth serving organizations dedicated to creating a seamless system and network of youth services.

Our Vision

The Greater New Bedford Youth Alliance envisions a diverse community in which success is within reach for all children.

Our History

With the support of the SouthCoast Community Foundation, ten youth-serving organizations convened at a retreat in October of 2014. Their purpose was to discuss the challenges facing youth organizations and to identify common concerns and pathways for working together. Our challenge became finding ways to strengthen youth-serving organizations while providing the foundation for quality services to children.

Who We Are

The Greater New Bedford Youth Alliance is a network of independent, youth-serving organizations that operates under a shared leadership and responsibility model.

GNBYA has six active committees focusing on key areas to build organizational capacity for all its members. Committees include:

- Advocacy
- Data
- Marketing
- Professional Development
- Resource Development
- Transportation

Our goal is to build and sustain a comprehensive system of before school, after school, out of school, and summer programming that improves the overall educational (academic and social emotional) performance of the youth and children that we serve.

To read more about the programs we offer and connect to our partner organizations, visit our website: www.gnbya.org



Where We Are Going

As we move forward, we will continue to build community partnerships across all sectors: government, schools, non-profit entities, businesses and others. It is these partnerships that will allow us to strengthen the youth serving community and provide high quality after-school and out-of-school programs for children.





Building Capacity Through Collaboration

The I AM Bill

An Act to Increase Access to Disposable Menstrual Products in Prisons, Homeless Shelters and Public Schools: S.1381 and H.534 ([I AM bill](#)).

My name is Leimary Llopiz and I am speaking on behalf of the Greater New Bedford Youth Alliance and I am here to support S.1381/H.534. The I AM bill would provide access to free menstrual products to all menstruating individuals in schools, shelters and incarcerated facilities and contains language to ensure the products are truly accessible without stigmatizing the individual seeking them.

It is an honor to be here with you today in support of menstrual equity, the I AM Bill, and the human dignity of all people who menstruate.

In the Fall of 2018 YWCA launched their Menstrual Access Advocacy Project as part of their Girls Exclusive Program. The girls in this program were inspired to take action by the need they struggled with period poverty in New Bedford.

I began shortly after at the YW and was inspired by the work of the girls. I wanted to get involved in ending period poverty and support the I AM Bill. The bill will provide access to free menstrual products, without stigma, in prisons, homeless shelters and public schools from 6th-12th grade to all menstruating individuals. This advocacy effort will change local, state and federal policies in order to make these products free and accessible.

It also made me reflect on my own experiences. Growing up, my family lived in poverty and it was a struggle to afford basic necessities. Many times I had to wear the same pad throughout the whole day. I felt ashamed, embarrassed, self conscious and isolated myself.

I began my mission to spread awareness to girls and women, especially of color. I serve many low income families weekly. The numbers have tripled since covid-19. In a survey for New Bedford and Fall River: It shows over 50% reported missing school or work because of their lack of access to menstrual products, and over 55% have had to choose between paying for menstrual products and some other necessity.

1 in 5 girls are reported to stay home while on their period. One girl in New Bedford made pads out of socks with her mother. One girl did not have enough money to buy a pad at school so she ended up bleeding through her clothes, and her mother had to leave work to come pick her up. One mother told me she was forced to tell her daughter to use toilet paper as a pad because the only money she had was for rent. For one single-mother of four girls, they rely on the YWCA's products. The YWCA has increased our Menstrual Access Advocacy Project to include menstrual hygiene care and education throughout the community.

I became the co-chair of Advocacy for the Greater New Bedford Youth Alliance in 2022. The first Legislative Priority I Shared with the Advocacy Committee was the I AM BILL and how the members can get involved with how this impacts the youth that they serve.

Together we have done so much work but there is still so much work still to do, if this bill doesn't pass, what's going to happen when we can longer provide products, the donations are not enough anymore.

Join us on February 8th at the State House to support this bill. Period Poverty requires a policy change. By passing the I AM Bill, the Commonwealth will signal to all low-income women and girls that they deserve to live their lives with dignity and respect.

Thank you for your time and attention.



Building Capacity Through Collaboration

Common Start Act

An Act providing affordable and accessible high quality early education and care to promote child development and well-being and support the economy in the Commonwealth. H.489 and S.301

My name is Jennifer Torres and I am speaking on behalf of the Greater New Bedford Youth Alliance. I am here to support H.489 and S.301 which is the Common Start Act, Cosponsored by local state legislators (Representatives Haddad, Straus, Cabral, Fiola, Hendricks, Silvia, Schmid, Markey, and Senators Susan Moran, Montigny, and Pacheco).

Common Start is important because this is an Act providing affordable and accessible high-quality early education to everyone. We as a community are responsible for ensuring that our children's development and well-being are the highest of priorities. Our children are our future and deserve the absolute best. Common Start advocates for affordable, high-quality childcare, especially for our families who experience racial, gender, and income inequality.

Families should not have to worry about leaving the workforce due to the prohibitive costs of day care. Educators should be paid well and many must leave a field they are passionate about due to low wages. This act effects affects early education and care for children birth through five years of age, and children ages 5-12 who need after-school programming.

I am employed by Northstar Learning Centers as the Director of Youth Services. Early education has been the core mission of NorthStar for 50 years. Our agency is in the process of building the Early Learning Academy in New Bedford, which will provide early education and care to 135 low-income families. Having affordable childcare and a place where children will grow and thrive speaks volumes to our agency and the importance of our future generations.

One of Northstar's Youth Services programs is called kinship. This program includes family support and stabilization. As part of this program, we assess what is most important to our participants. Affordable day care and housing are always the main priorities. We advocate for our families and seek affordable, high-quality programs for early childcare. Our families are trying to work and provide for their children, but day care often comes at too high a cost.

I am happy to be the co-chair for my second year now for the Greater New Bedford Youth Alliance Advocacy Committee, along with Leimary Lopiz. I'm proud to advocate for families and to be a part of growing a stronger community that will address everyone's needs. There is so much work to be done to fight for our youth and for a stronger Massachusetts.

I encourage everyone in this room to get involved in creating a solution to this growing problem. Please reach out to me to discuss how you can help.

Where are we headed for the future? I know in my heart I will continue the fight to make early education a top priority in the state of Massachusetts. I am grateful for your time and dedication to serving our youth.



Women's Alliance of Southeastern Massachusetts

Mission

The Women's Alliance of Southeastern Massachusetts is a coalition of community members, dedicated to antiracism and intersectional feminism, who are committed to fostering solidarity between our social justice interests, engaging the community through accessible and inclusive programming, and championing a platform of anti-racist and feminist policies designed to improve the lives of women, girls, and families through systemic change.

Vision/ Impact Statement

In bringing together community members and organizations committed to the work of antiracism and intersectional feminism, the Women's Alliance of Southeastern MA will lead the way to a stronger sense of solidarity, civic engagement, and collective action towards systemic change.

Committees:

- a. Steering Committee
- b. Membership Committee
- c. Advocacy Committee
- d. Our Bodies Our Lives Coalition for Reproductive Justice and Bodily Autonomy
- e. Events/International Women's Day
- f. Lunch and Learn Series
- g. Marketing/Communications

Contact: semawomensalliance@gmail.com

<https://www.wasema.org>

<https://www.facebook.com/womxnsalliancesema>

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Girl
power

4Nite
for
WOMEN

Empowered
Women
Empower
Women



Women's Alliance of
Southeastern Massachusetts

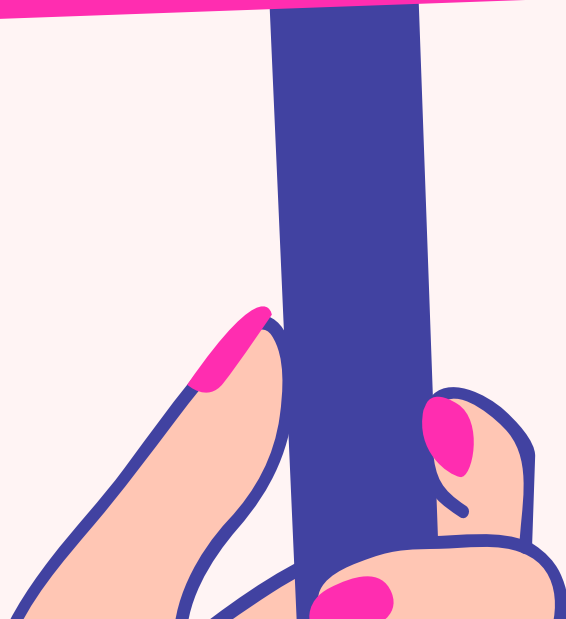
Support
~ all ~
Women

EQUALITY
FOR
WOMEN

≡EQUALITY≡



Boss
Babe





Mission

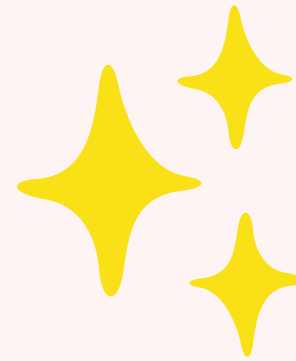
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Vision

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Committees



- Steering Committee
- Membership Committee
- Advocacy Committee
- Our Bodies Our Lives
- Coalition for Reproductive
- Justice and Bodily
- Autonomy
- Events/International
- Women's Day
- Lunch and Learn Series
- Marketing/Communications



1



Youth advocacy day
in the fall

2



Lunch+Learn Series

3



Coalition for bodies
are lives

Contact



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Thank You

