

### Notes for the SFPC Quarterly meeting February 17, 2026

The Southcoast Food Policy Council (SFPC) mission is to convene, connect, and advocate for food system stakeholders to strengthen the regional food system, improve community health, and eliminate food insecurity across the Southcoast.

#### **The Food System Framework**

The SFPC views the Food Policy Council's role through a "nested ring" model. The inner ring represents the core food system: production, processing, distribution, access, consumption, and waste recovery. The SFPC focuses its work on the outer ring—addressing the socioeconomic, environmental, and public health policies that impact the inner system's stability.

#### **Organizational Structure and History**

Founded in 2020, the SFPC is supported by two staff members, a consultant, and an Executive Team comprised of staff and two Community Advisory Board members. The SFPC's Community Advisory Board is a group of 30–35 regional food system stakeholders and 3–5 Food Equity Advisors—individuals with lived experience of food insecurity who receive stipends for their expertise. Key historical milestones include the pandemic emergency response, the publication of the 2021 Food System Assessment, the launch of the annual Food Summit and the Eat Local Southcoast Challenge, advocacy for six identified policies that address many of the priorities, and the implementation of "one-click" legislative action alerts.

#### **Working Group Initiatives and Policy Goals**

##### *1. Education and Communication*

This group manages the Eat Local South Coast Challenge, Food Summit, FarmCoast Documentary, and the recently formed Aquaculture Policy Coalition. To address long-term food literacy, the Council is advocating for:

- Farm to School Grants bill: Funding for local procurement and school gardens.
- Food Literacy Bill: Establishing permanent K-12 food education standards in Massachusetts.

##### *2. Food Access*

This group manages the Emergency Food Resource meetings to increase local food access, address pain points, and prepare the community for upcoming crises. Legislative priorities include:

- Healthy Incentives Program (HIP): Seeking \$29.7 million to make this SNAP-matching program permanent.
- Basic Needs Assistance: State-funded SNAP for legal immigrant residents.

##### *3. Capacity Building and Policy*

The Council is using the CARAT (Community and Agriculture Resilience Audit Tool) to identify gaps in programs, policies, and processes across six counties and to build the soft infrastructure needed to re-regionalize our food system. Current legislative efforts focus on:

- Donation of Food to Persons in Need: A tax credit for producers' donations to non-profit food distribution points.
- Equity in Agriculture: Establishing a commission to address barriers for BIPOC farmers.
- Coastal Wastewater Infrastructure Financing Commission: Seeking billions in funding to modernize regional wastewater systems to protect local fisheries.

#### **2026 Outlook and Engagement**

In the coming year, the Council will release the 2026 Food System Assessment of Southeastern Massachusetts and a documentary titled *FarmCoast*. Strategic changes include dissolving the standalone Policy Working Group to integrate advocacy directly into the three remaining Working Groups.



Register here for upcoming events:

<https://www.marioninstitute.org/programs/sfpc/events/> or



- **February 19** Lunch and Learn Issue Briefing, 12- 1 MA Food System Budget
- **February 26** Lunch and Learn Issue Briefing, 12-1 pm HIP and SNAP for MA Immigrants Bills
- **March 3** Lunch and Learn Issue Briefing, 12-1 pm Farm-to-School grant and Food Literacy Bills
- **March 4** Emergency Food Resource Meeting, 2-3 pm, Training for Service Providers to get families ready for ICE.
- **March 12** Lunch and Learn Issue Briefing, 12-1 pm Donation of Food Tax credit and Equity in Agriculture bills
- **March 26** HIP Lobby Day at the Statehouse <https://forms.gle/K9RAHjxTj4y1SWgn8>