

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS



Department of Agricultural Resources

251 Causeway Street, Suite 500, Boston, MA 02114
617-626-1700 fax: 617-626-1850 www.mass.gov/agr



Maura T. Healey
GOVERNOR

Kimberley Driscoll
LIEUTENANT
GOVERNOR

Rebecca L. Tepper
SECRETARY

John Lebeaux
COMMISSIONER

February 28, 2023

Governor Maura Healey
Massachusetts State House, Room 280
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Governor Healey,

On behalf of the Massachusetts Food Policy Council ("Council"), I am pleased to provide this Annual Report pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 20, Section 6C(e) on the Council's ongoing work related to the Massachusetts Local Food Action Plan ("Plan") (<http://mafoodsystem.org/plan/>).

Please accept this letter as the Council's 2022 Annual Report. Throughout the year, Council members continued to work towards the priorities and goals from the Plan. With the Plan's recommendations continuing to be very relevant, the reverberations from the pandemic continued to challenge the Council and partners to support the Massachusetts food system. Topics focused on racial equity, reducing hunger, food insecurity, agricultural sector support, and programs to offset the wide challenges within the food system.

Council meetings during 2022 had strong participation as continued allowance of public meetings conducted through virtual means allowed real-time public access. The collaborative relationship between the Council, the MA Legislature's Food System Caucus, the MA Food System Collaborative, local food policy councils, and other stakeholders continues to be an asset to develop and support policy and program recommendations. Having communications and relationships in place from the Council has been an asset for efficiency in continuing and advancing new food system initiatives.

The Council respectfully acknowledges the Baker-Polito Administration and the General Court for their continued support in 2022 of the Plan's broad goals and their underlying programs that link them to larger policy discussions. In addition, the Council appreciates the Baker-Polito Administration's and the General Court's ongoing support since Plan acceptance in 2015 of the Plan's vision of a sustainable and equitable food system. We ask that you give continued support as relevant legislative and regulatory actions are developed. As always, members of the Council would be happy to meet with you or your staff to offer further detail on support for the Massachusetts food system or our work to implement the Plan. Electronic versions of this Report and its attachments will also be provided to you forthwith.

Sincerely,

John Lebeaux, Commissioner

Chair, Massachusetts Food Policy Council
2022 Annual Report:

An Act Establishing the Massachusetts Food Policy Council was signed into law on November 7, 2010, which created the 17-member Council that was tasked with developing recommendations for food system goals for the Commonwealth. Pursuant to Section 6C(e) of Chapter 277 of the Acts of 2010, the Council must submit an annual report outlining its findings, conclusions, proposals, recommendations, and progress towards reaching the goals that have been set forth.

In 2022, the MA Food Policy Council (FPC) focused on environmental justice and climate change, forming the meeting themes for the year. The revived FPC's Advisory Committee met and discussed priorities. Throughout the year, Council members continued to review the priorities and goals from the Plan. With the Plan's recommendations continuing to be very relevant, the reverberations from the 2019 coronavirus outbreak challenged the Council and partners to support the Massachusetts food system. Topics focused on reducing hunger, food insecurity, racial equity, agricultural sector support, and programs to offset the wide challenges within the food system. Detailed minutes of all meetings throughout the year are available at: <https://www.mass.gov/massachusetts-food-policycouncil>

Meetings continued to be held remotely in accordance with An Act Relative to Extending Certain State of Emergency Accommodations ("Act"), which was signed by Governor Baker on July 16, 2022. This Act extends the expiration of certain provisions pertaining to the Open Meeting Law to March 31, 2023, allowing a public body to continue holding meetings remotely without a quorum physically present at a meeting location as long as it provides "adequate, alternative" access to remote meeting.

In spite of the MA Local Food Action Plan (Plan) being accepted by the FPC on December 10, 2015, it continues to be pertinent. The Plan was designed to increase MA-grown food; create jobs and improve wages in food and farming; protect the land and water needed to produce food; ensure food safety, reduce waste, hunger, and food insecurity while making fresh and healthy food more accessible for the residents of the Commonwealth. The Plan offers recommendations for the public and private sectors to see these goals through to fruition and continues to be an important foundation for this work.

State Agency Members: John Lebeaux, Commissioner, MDAR; Michael Kennealy, Secretary, MEOHED, Designees: Helena Fruscio and Bobby Mallin, Margret R. Cooke, Commissioner MPH, Designee: Jessica del Rosario, Martin Suuberg, Commissioner, MDEP, Designee: Danah Tench; Jeffrey C. Riley, Commissioner, MDESE, Designee: Robert Leshin; Acting Commissioner Mary Sheehan, MDTA, Designee: Associate Commissioner Brittany Mangini.

Legislative members:

Senator Joanne Comerford, Senator Ryan Fattman, Representative Dan Donahue, Representative Hannah Kane

Industry Members (appointed by the Governor):

Torry Stamm Katsiruobas, Distribution, Amanda Kinchla, M.S., Food Safety Extension Specialist, UMASS Amherst; John Lee, Allandale Farm, Farmer; Mackenzie May, Direct to consumer; Phoebe Walker, Local boards of Health, John Waite, Food processor and handler, Ayn Yeagle, Public health
EEA Secretary appointed member: Caro Roszell, Soil Health

Contact: Bonita Oehlke, MDAR, Bonita.Oehlke@mass.gov

ATTACHMENT A:

Six meetings were held in 2022 and included updates from the Massachusetts Legislature's Food System Caucus and the Massachusetts Food System Collaborative. Remote participation was coordinated by MassDEP. Meetings were held from 9:30 – 11:30 AM.

The January through July meetings were held remotely. On March 10, 2020, Governor Baker, acting pursuant to the power provided by Chapter 639 of the Acts of 1950 and Section 2A of Chapter 17 of the Massachusetts General Laws, declared a State of Emergency due to the outbreak of the 2019 coronavirus ("COVID-19"). In accordance with the State of Emergency, the Massachusetts Food Policy Council ("MFPC") meetings are being conducted through virtual means to allow real-time public access.

The September meeting was also held remotely, meeting remotely in accordance with An Act Relative to Extending Certain State of Emergency Accommodations ("Act"), which was signed by Governor Baker on July 16, 2022. This Act extends the expiration of certain provisions pertaining to the Open Meeting Law to March 31, 2023, allowing a public body to continue holding meetings remotely without a quorum physically present at a meeting location as long as it provides "adequate, alternative" access to remote meeting.

The November annual meeting was hybrid with participation both in-person and remotely, held in Room 428 at the Massachusetts State House, thanks to Senator Bruce Tarr and his staff.

Friday, January 28, 2022

MA Legislature's Food System Caucus: The FSIG program is making a difference for food processors, agriculture, and the seafood sector. The Caucus met with food banks, the MA Food Association, the MA Restaurant Association, and the MA Food System Collaborative about labor issues. Priorities are to support food system challenges and the local public health system. **Officer Reports:** New Council members were introduced. **A motion to accept the Annual Report passed.** A quorum was not maintained through the previous Council meeting. **Revotes were passed** to 1) accept the slate of officers: Chair, Commissioner Lebeaux; Vice Chair, Mackenzie May; Secretary, Danah Tench 2) to accept the Nominating Committee candidates and 3) to allow the Advisory Committee candidate recommendations to move from the November annual meeting to the January meeting. The Bylaws, Council, and Structure Committee shared the Advisory Committee nomination slate <https://www.mass.gov/doc/food-policy-council-advisory-committee/download>. **Program:** Supply chain disruptions and effects on state grocers and food manufacturers were discussed by the MA Food Association. Supermarkets remain under stress with high prices, cardboard shortages, high delivery and energy costs, and driver shortages. Manufacturers are dealing with increased ingredient costs. Identifying how local can be supported is critical. **The Solid Waste Master Plan** and MassDEP's Updated Organics Action Plan was presented. MassDEP's new Gap Energy Grant Program, "Bringing Energy and Resiliency Results to the Water Sector" was promoted.

Friday, March 18, 2022

MA Legislature's Food System Caucus sent a budget letter to both houses to support the MA Emergency Food Assistance Program (MEFAP), UMASS Extension, local food policy councils, FSIG, and other priority recommendations. The **MA Food System Collaborative** discussed the Farmland Action Plan, Climate Change initiative, and New England Feeding New England. **Officer Reports:** The USDA funded Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program supports socially disadvantaged farmers through the purchase of local foods. Massachusetts could receive up to \$7.5M. MDAR and DMF organized the third **Mass Avenue at the Seafood Expo North America** in Boston. The Food Security Task Force's inter-secretariat team is meeting quarterly to identify key sectors and priorities. The **Council's advisory committee** met and shared background information, a framework for future meetings, and a priority focus on climate change and equity. **Updates:** The Ag Innovation Center will assist producers to add value to products to increase business viability. Brittany Mangini, DTA's Director of Food Security and Nutrition Programs, has been selected to receive this year's Patrick

Hughes Award for Social Justice from Project Bread. Rob Leshin also a recipient. Commissioner Kershaw will be leaving DTA. The USDA AMS Local Food Cooperative Agreement Program includes \$3.5M to Massachusetts for purchase of locally produced food with a focus on socially disadvantaged farmers. Commissioner Lebeaux was appointed by USDA to serve on the new Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production Federal Advisory Committee. MDAR's Urban Agriculture Program is one of the nation's first state-wide initiatives dedicated to urban farming. MDAR's Rose Arruda was recognized for her work in this area.

Friday, May 13, 2022

MA Legislature's Food System Caucus: The House has had robust support for food system priorities. The Caucus was thanked for their strong leadership and support/investment in the state's food system.

Officer Reports: MDAR applied to USDA for the Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program (LFPA) to access up to \$7.5M. The pandemic has highlighted the importance of a strong, resilient local food system. DESE is applying to a similar grant for up to \$3.5M. MDAR has begun the process of developing a

Massachusetts Farmland Action Plan to address the farmland needs and goals of the Commonwealth. **Advisory Committee:** a discussion about the Open Meeting Law and guiding principles for working together was discussed, as well as questions such as 1) what does climate change and race equity mean as it relates to the food system and 2) what are the most pressing issues for the Council to tackle around these topics? **Expanding Food Literacy in Massachusetts:** Local Successes and Statewide Opportunities, was presented by the MA Food System Collaborative. A review of the Rural Policy Plan/Rural Policy Advisory Commission included food system and ag based priorities, presented by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments. **Council member updates:** An opportunity to expand HIP vendors across the state is open. Priority communities and populations were highlighted. DPH will be represented in a group of thought leaders in DC to discuss climate change and environmental harms present as social determinants of health and wellbeing driving inequities. MassDEP's new GAP Energy Grant application is open.

Friday, July 15, 2022

MA Legislature's Food System Caucus: Priorities have been set including \$25M for FSIG program. The Caucus Chairs met with EEA leadership to reiterate the importance of FSIG, including grant adjustments and improvements. **Update on school meals:** The newly signed "Keep Kids Fed Act" of 2022, allows waivers for summer meal sites across the state. Guidance has been provided to schools about summer meals, grab and go, and reimbursement. Reimbursement is important considering how inflation and supply chain issues are increasing costs. Upcoming grants to note: the USDA Local Food for Schools, a sister grant to MDAR's program includes \$3.5M that will flow to schools, **MA Food System Collaborative:** During this first presentation of the Massachusetts Farmland Action Plan, feedback was encouraged. The Plan was proposed in 2015 in the MA Local Food Action Plan. In 2020, the Baker administration included funds for this work in the capital budget. MDAR issued an RFR and contracted with the UMASS Donahue Institute, American Farmland Trust (AFT) and the Collaborative. There have been many listening sessions, interviews, and engagement to reach BIPOC and young farmers. Up to a fifth of MA agricultural land could be lost in the next 18 years, underscoring the need for this plan. Comprehensive statewide land planning that includes agriculture is lacking. Participation in policy setting discussions is difficult for BIPOC, immigrant, and aspiring farmers. To enhance access, communications about available land will include BIPOC farmers. Feedback is being sought from community members and stakeholders, agricultural commodity groups, real estate agencies, and attorneys. **Advisory Committee:** Soil health and climate change was the meeting's main program. The Committee continues to explore priority areas. **Program:** Universal free school meals – the future of school meals included a general overview of the school lunch program, current challenges, and its important impact on the state. Well-fed children learn better. **Member updates:** Resources for information on reduced organic waste data was shared. There was an update on the Franklin County Community Development Corporations USDA Ag Innovation Center (AIC) grant. A suggestion was made that the Council discuss PFAS issues at a future meeting.

Friday, September 9, 2022

Officer Reports: The Farmland Action Plan and discussion from the last meeting was intended to keep the Council aware of this relevant food system activity. The Council is not required to take any action relative to the Plan. Engagement was taken very seriously. Efforts and actions were made to engage the BIPOC community. MDAR and its partners were guided by the equity lens outlined in EEA's Environmental Justice Policies. PFAS is a topic coming into clear focus. Resources will be developed. Moving forward, speakers sharing presentations with the Council will be asked to proactively include equity in their discussions: **MA Legislature's Food System Caucus:** Formal sessions have ended and though much has been accomplished, one of the largest pieces, the Economic Development Bill, is held up. The Caucus is advocating to establish HIP in statute and for other food system topics to be included in the final conference committee budget. **MA Food System Collaborative:** The Food System Forum, Reconnecting, Celebrating and Moving Forward will be the first in-person event since 2019. **Program:** Discussion of the \$250,000 earmark for local food policy councils. Input was requested for the development of the RFR. **Updates:** MDAR received \$7.4M in June from USDA's Local Food Purchase Assistance program. MDAR received \$543,000 to develop a mental health program to support the agricultural community. **Member updates:** A study to examine the future of solar in Massachusetts is in process. A survey for public feedback including where solar is located includes agricultural land as an option. The GAP energy program application included food and ag sectors. The Massachusetts Agriculture Innovation Center's new director was introduced. MA is one of five states that are continuing with this program and is providing guidance on implementation. Last year school meals increased by 43%. DESE submitted a local food for schools grant totaling \$3.5M, similar to MDAR's program. The US HHS Secretary visited North Central MA in preparation for the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health. DTA announced the onboarding of 123 new HIP vendors, a 61% increase, including many more access points. **Advisory Committee:** Without a quorum, the Committee didn't meet. A new meeting will be organized.

Thursday, November 17, 2022, In-person and virtual. Massachusetts State House Room 428

Members of the legislature shared comments in support of the food systems. Partners noted that much has been accomplished though there is plenty of work that's outstanding. The **MA Food System Collaborative** reported on a successful forum, with many participants attending for the first time. The \$25M for FSIG passed as part of the Economic Development bill. Some 32 organizations are supporting the Collaborative's food literacy campaign. Commissioner Lebeaux was recognized for his leadership of the Council. **Officer Reports:** The Local Food Policy Council's RFR has been posted. Each Council member and state agency is welcome to provide a letter that will be an addendum to the annual report. After a ten-year trade dispute ended, Massachusetts shellfish growers met with importers in the EU to build trade. The industry is growing, so new markets are important. A Food System Mapping RFI seeks examples of how mapping could support community assessment goals or other work. A survey regarding the impacts of the Food Security Infrastructure Grant is being conducted. Since the program's inception, the Legislature has appropriated over \$100M in funds for its operation. The Farmland Action Plan is under review. The USDA **Local Food Purchase Assistance** award of \$7.5M for purchase of food from underserved farmers has 16 awarded contracts. The **USDA Northeastern Regional Food Business Center Partnership** will be supported by MDAR with Cornell, Farm Credit East, NEASDA, and other partners as the leads. EEA released their **Environmental Justice** draft policy for review. The Council's focus on equity and climate change in programming, as well as the reinvigoration of the Council's Advisory Committee was discussed. **Program: Improved Access to Fresh Healthy Food in Disadvantaged Communities of the Commonwealth - Massachusetts Food Trust update:** The program included a four-year review including specific success stories from across the state. **Update on Massachusetts Food Waste Disposal Ban:** the waste ban dropped from 1 ton to ½ ton which will double the number of participants to 4,000. **Council Advisory Committee:** A focus of the Committee will be local communities and making connections to the state, including through the local food policy councils. The Committee elected officers. **Council member updates:** MassDEP's **GAP grant** program to support clean energy alternatives, open to food and ag operations for the first time, had several farm and food pantry applicants. **DESE's priorities** include cultivating safe and healthy learning environments and meeting the basic needs of students including housing, mental health, and food and nutrition. The **Healthy Soils Action Plan** was discussed, including plans to support its release and implementation. The **MA Agriculture Innovation Center** is active and has worked with 42 businesses so far. Commissioner Lebeaux was recognized for his work and dedication to the Council and the Food System. **Comment:** Commissioner

Lebeaux shared his gratitude to Council current and former members, the Collaborative, his staff, and the system at large. In eight years, he missed just one meeting.

The **Advisory Committee** to the Massachusetts Food Policy Council met five times: March 7, April 21, July 12, Nov 15, and informally on Dec 6. All meetings but the last were held remotely. Meetings focused on background from outside presenters, developing rules of conduct and electing officers, and discussions about environmental justice and climate change in the food system.

Addendum:

Massachusetts Food System Caucus
Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection
Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance



THE GENERAL COURT OF MASSACHUSETTS
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1053

December 12, 2022

2022 Massachusetts Food Policy Council Annual Report

Food System Caucus- Massachusetts State Legislature. Four members of the Legislature are voting members of the MA Food Policy Council. This year, Representative Hannah Kane, Representative Daniel Donahue, Senator Jo Comerford and Senator Ryan Fattman served. This report is based on the elected officials' roles in the Legislature's Food System Caucus.

2022 Update: Massachusetts Food System Caucus (mafoodsystemcaucus.com)

Overview: The Massachusetts Legislature's Food System Caucus (FSC) is bicameral, bipartisan, and currently has 140 members. In 2022, the Co-Chairs were Representative Hannah Kane, Representative Daniel Donahue, Representative Paul Schmid, Representative Andy Vargas, Representative Mindy Domb, Senator Jo Comerford, Senator Anne Gobi, Senator Eric Lesser, and Senator DiDomenico. The FSC's mission is to support and grow the local food system in the Commonwealth through three priority focus areas: food access/insecurity, farmland, and economic development.

Food Security Accomplishments

The Food System Caucus (FSC) engaged in advocacy for the FY23 budget which included \$12 million for the Healthy Incentives Program (HIP), plus \$12,409,988 in funds carried forward from FY22. The FSC also advocated for the \$30 million in funding for the Massachusetts Emergency Food Assistance Program, \$695,570 for UMASS Extension, \$250,000 for Local Food Policy Councils and \$100,000 that went to the Massachusetts Food Trust Fund. Massachusetts Farm to School was funded \$120,000 and \$110 million was allocated to Universal Free School meals. Students throughout the Commonwealth will receive free school meals, regardless of household income, resulting in fewer students going hungry in Massachusetts.

The Food Security Infrastructure Grant Program (FSIG) has made a significant impact on the Commonwealth this past year. By providing grants to farmers, food businesses, food banks and institutions throughout the state, this program ensures that residents of the Commonwealth have increased, equitable access to food that is produced

locally. This program not only creates a strong, resilient food system, but increases production, sales, and consumption of Massachusetts-grown foods. The food networks throughout the Commonwealth produce and distribute food that nourishes communities and reduces malnutrition rates as residents have access to high quality, healthy, locally produced food.

Several of the caucus's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) priorities were granted funding in ARPA 1.0. \$44.8 million went to support and address food insecurity and to strengthen the local food system through creating jobs and economic opportunities in food and farming. Additionally, the Agricultural, Fishing, and Cranberry-Growing Industries received a total of \$14 million for grant funding. This funding aims to protect the land and water needed to produce food, maximize environmental benefits from agriculture and fishing, and ensure food safety.

Legislation and Policy

The Food System Caucus endorsed and prioritized several pieces of legislation throughout this session. The caucus prioritized, H91 *A proposal for a legislative amendment to the Constitution relative to agricultural and horticultural lands*, S1441 *An Act relative to in-state meat inspection programs*, and S1532 *An Act to promote domestic meat and poultry production*. H91 has been placed on file with the House and Senate and both S1441 and S1532 have been extended to December 31, 2022. The caucus also prioritized H1702/S954/S1063, *An Act encouraging the donation of food to persons in need*, H3144/S2116 *An Act establishing the Executive Office of Food Resources*, and H250/S108 *An Act relative to an agricultural healthy incentives program*. These bills currently reside in either the House Committee on Ways and Means or the Senate Committee on Ways and Means. In the FY22 and FY23 budgets, the MA Legislature adopted language to close the SNAP Gap. Over 600,000 MassHealth residents can now seamlessly apply for SNAP through their healthcare applications. On August 10, 2022, Governor Baker signed Chapter 174 of the Acts of 2022, establishing the "Common Application" for Massachusetts.

Households who receive SNAP benefits are automatically enrolled in the Healthy Incentives Program. In February of 2021, DTA launched DTAfinder.com to assist SNAP clients locate vendor options near them. In August 2022, the DTA announced an additional 100 HIP vendors.

In May of 2021, the Food System Caucus submitted testimony to Congressman James McGovern, Chairman of the House Rules Committee, reiterating the transformative steps Massachusetts has taken to address food access and insecurity, highlighting the Healthy Incentives Program, the Food Security Infrastructure Grant Program, the 2015 Local Food Action Plan, and the formation of the Food System Caucus. This testimony was provided as work began to plan a national conference, hosted by the White House, on ending hunger.

The 2022 Massachusetts Food System Forum was held in Sturbridge on October 12th, 2022. Several FSC members joined the hundreds of advocates, farmers, and other food system stakeholders to celebrate victories over the past year, and plan for the future.

Five legislators, Representative Kane, Representative Domb, Representative Vargas, Senator DiDomenico, and Senator Comerford attended the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health. They have been working with advocacy partners such as food banks to bring the conversation back to the Commonwealth on how they can work together to meet the conference goal to end hunger by 2030 and tackle diet-related disease, while adding a Massachusetts focus to also strengthen the local food system. These legislators are hosting a briefing in December with House and Senate members and staff to share takeaways from the conference and discuss how Massachusetts is working to reach this goal. While there is much left to do, Massachusetts is a leader in food security work. You can also read more about Massachusetts presence at the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health in this Boston Globe article: <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2022/09/28/nation/white-house-gains-partners-end-us-hunger-within-decade/>.



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100 Cambridge Street 9th Floor Boston, MA 02114 • 617-292-5500

Maura T. Healey
Governor

Kimberley Driscoll
Lieutenant Governor

Rebecca L. Tepper
Secretary

Gary Moran
Acting Commissioner

2022 Massachusetts Food Policy Council Annual Report MA Department of Environmental Protection

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) is pleased to provide this report to supplement the Massachusetts Food Policy Council's (Council) Annual Report pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 20, Section 6C(e). MassDEP through its Commissioner, Martin Suuberg, is one of six state agencies that sits on the Council pursuant to M.G.L., Chapter 6C(a). The agency actively works toward meeting its goals under the Massachusetts Local Food Action Plan, one of which is to reduce food waste. (Inputs Goals 1.) In 2022, MassDEP also provided financial assistance to support efforts outlined in Goal 2 of the MA Local Food Action Plan, "funding infrastructure improvements" and Goal 3, "increasing energy efficiency and sustainable food practices."

In early 2022, MassDEP worked with the Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) staff to design and extend the Gap III Energy Grant Program (Gap Energy Grant) to provide energy efficiency and clean energy funding to nonprofit agricultural/food producing organizations and to small businesses engaged in food distribution and processing. The extension of this grant to this new sector provides funds to invest in infrastructure development, both to facilities and for equipment for these agricultural and food entities, supporting Goal 2 of the Local Food Action Plan. The third goal of the MA Local Food Action Plan, to increase energy efficiency and sustainable food production, will also be advanced with these grants. The extension of the Gap Energy Grant to this new sector was made available through a streamlined on-line application process that allowed potential applicants to provide basic information on their energy usage, and potential savings to be made by their grant proposal.

The agencies worked to ensure that potential applicants were aware of the grant opportunity. MassDEP made available up to \$2.5 million dollars in funds to the food sector, among others. MassDEP's Clean Energy Results Program (CERP) staff held two informational conferences for potential applicants and answered questions both verbally and in writing responding to questions from farmers, food pantry applicants and small businesses that expressed an interest in funding for their projects. These funds will assist farmers and other agricultural businesses in upgrading their buildings and equipment to be more energy efficient and for some, to provide a clean source of renewable energy for their business and organizations. This effort accomplishes two objectives. The grants will meet a need for additional financial assistance to these organizations and allow them to reduce their energy usage and save on energy costs. These cost savings can then be reinvested into their organizations' mission and businesses. In addition, the investment will result in grant recipients reducing their greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) which will contribute to the Commonwealth reaching its GHG emissions reduction goals.

The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs' Climate Protection and Mitigation Expendable Trust provided funds for the Gap Energy Grant.

**Baker-Polito Administration Cross-Secretariat Food Security Work
Summary provided for the 2022 Massachusetts Food Policy Council Annual Report -- Addendum**

The Baker-Polito Administration COVID-19 Command Center convened a Food Security Task Force on April 22, 2020, in response to increased demands for food assistance. The task force was comprised of a broad group of public and private members charged with ensuring food insecurity and food supply needs were addressed during the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Building on the work and investments from the Food Security Task Force, a Food Security Work Group (FSWG) continues to meet monthly. This cross-Secretariat team of state agencies with responsibility for food security, agriculture, public health, healthcare, economic development, transportation, and education, is comprised of directors and subject matter experts that have a role in food access, food security, and the food system. The Food Security Work Group has identified five key areas of focus that are critical to the state's on-going work to address food insecurity. These include:

- Planning for upcoming sunset of COVID programs, operational flexibilities, and funding sources
- Reaching families, individuals, and populations who may be eligible for but not accessing food security resources
- Promoting a robust, sustainable food infrastructure
- Supporting new food delivery and distribution models to maximize access to food
- Developing consistent food security data measurements and analytics

During 2022, the Administration continued to invest in supporting resident food security and building a more just and equitable food system, including:

Fortify the food bank system

- Massachusetts received a \$942,290 USDA TEFAP (Emergency Food Assistance Program) Reach and Resiliency fund grant to (1) support Greater Boston Food Bank's on-going study *Gaps in Food Access*; (2) implement a shared client data collection platform at TEFAP partner agencies; (3) provide capacity building sub-grants to TEFAP partner agencies; (4) support an expansion of the Brown Bag: Food for Elders program into underserved areas in collaboration with the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts; and (5) translate TEFAP materials into more languages.
- Distributed over \$70 million in **TEFAP funds** for food and \$6 million for administration to the food banks since the start of the pandemic.
- The **Massachusetts Emergency Food Assistance Program (MEFAP)**, administered by the Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR), was funded at \$30 million in FY22 with \$28,420,000 going directly to the Greater Boston Food Bank to support the purchase of food which is distributed through the Commonwealth's four (4) food banks.
 - This funding supports both Core Food purchases (\$26,218,871) as well as Mass Grown purchases (\$2,201,129) and equates to 29,424,903 meal equivalents distributed in FY22.

Maximize federal resources for food and nutrition

- Announced that residents can now easily **initiate a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) application when applying for or renewing their MassHealth benefits online**, improving the customer experience by streamlining the process to apply for SNAP benefits while residents are already submitting information needed to determine their healthcare eligibility.

- Received federal approval to expand and extend the state's innovative **Medicaid (MassHealth) section 1115 waiver** through December 2027.
 - One of the primary goals for the newly approved 1115 demonstration includes expanding the Flexible Services and Community Supports Programs to address health-related social needs such as nutrition and housing.
- Pursued all federal SNAP and Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) waivers to make it easier to apply for and maintain benefits.
 - The Massachusetts SNAP caseload has increased 40% compared to pre-pandemic levels, with over 600,000 households (one million+ individuals) receiving benefits.
 - The Massachusetts WIC caseload has increased almost 17% compared to pre-pandemic levels, with nearly 122,000 people receiving benefits.
- Added additional vendors to the **SNAP online purchasing program**.
 - As of November 2022, \$240 million has been spent on SNAP online purchases.
 - New vendors include BJ's, Big Y, Daily Table, Geissler's Supermarket, McKinnon's Supermarkets, Price Rite, Shaws, Star Market, and Wegmans.
- Provided **SNAP Emergency Allotments** since March 2020 to increase household's SNAP benefits to the max monthly amount for their household size, at a minimum of \$95 a month; over \$1 billion brought into the state, over ~\$90 million a month.
- Opened a Request for Responses (RFR) in Summer 2022 to procure new vendors for the Commonwealth's **SNAP Nutrition Education (SNAP-Ed) program**.
 - First time in 10 years vendors could apply to participate, with \$7.4 million of federal funds available.
 - Selected new vendors: Ascentria Care Alliance, the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, the University of Massachusetts Extension Nutrition Education Program, and the YMCA of Greater Boston.
- Released a Notice of Opportunity (NOO) in Summer 2022 to strategically onboard restaurants and food trucks for the **SNAP Restaurant Meals Program (RMP) pilot**. Pilot expected to open for clients in 2023.
 - Under federal rules, the RMP allows individuals experiencing homelessness, people with disabilities, and older adults (aged 60+) to use their SNAP benefits at select, participating restaurants/food trucks.
- Submitted a letter of intent to the USDA to participate, if selected, in a **Mobile EBT Pilot** that would allow clients to use a mobile wallet similar to Apple Pay to transact their SNAP and Economic Assistance benefits.
- Provided the federally funded **enhanced fruit and vegetable benefits to WIC** recipients through fiscal year 2022; approximately \$25.5 million dollars was spent by WIC participants on fruits and vegetables in the past 12 months.
 - These enhanced benefits are being provided into FY23 and will most likely become permanent with upcoming WIC food package changes.
- Was a national leader in establishing and maintaining **Pandemic EBT (P-EBT)**.
 - During school year 21-22, P-EBT supported 451,610 infants and kids, bringing \$66,316,238 into the state; 2022 Summer P-EBT supported 668,734 infants and kids, bringing \$263,338,267 into the Commonwealth's economy.
 - Since the start of P-EBT, the program has provided over \$1 billion in food funds to 831,197 infants and kids.
- Implemented **universal free school meals** for all K-12 students during the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school years.
 - During school year 2021-2022, approximately 565,000 free lunches and 255,000 free breakfasts were served daily.
 - With universal free school meals, there has been a 42% increase in student participation compared to pre-pandemic levels, which equates to 53,000 more school lunches served daily in Massachusetts.
 - To-date, 65% of students are eating school lunch in school year 2022-2023.

- The stigma and shame for being a free or reduced-price student continues to be eliminated for over 180,000 students enrolled in non-Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) schools, the USDA program providing universally free meals, because of the state funding for universal school meals.
- The **Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)** served more than 110,000 meals daily to children in child care centers and at-risk afterschool programs in 2022.
- Schools and community partners served over 100,000 free lunches daily during Summer 2022 through the **Summer Eats program**.
- Estimated **8.8 million home delivered meals and 1.1 million congregate meals** were served to older adults and people living with disabilities in FY22.
 - Final meal numbers will be available in January 2023.
- The **Department of Higher Education** awarded 13 grants totaling \$2,325,193 in funding to establish the **Massachusetts Community College Campus Hunger Program** in December 2022. It is anticipated that this pilot program will serve 28,764 community college students over the next two years.
 - This two-year pilot program is designed to advance Community College campuses' efforts to increase degree attainment and student success by piloting projects across the Commonwealth that investigate and tackle student hunger, food insecurity systems, and associated stigma.

Expanding access to local food to meet local need

- \$27.5 million was awarded to 147 organizations in 2022 via the **Food Security Infrastructure Grant Program**, \$12.5 million of which was targeted to help alleviate ongoing supply chain issues.
- Launched additional rounds of the **SNAP equipment grant** to support new and existing farm vendors at mobile locations throughout Massachusetts.
 - In total, this grant provided SNAP processing equipment and services valued at over \$160,000 to 110 farms and farmers' markets.
- Increased the number of **Healthy Incentives Program (HIP)** vendors by 60%, adding over 100 new vendors to the program.
 - Newly selected vendors will serve families in 25 of 26 Gateway Cities, and 76% of towns previously identified as having low HIP access for their SNAP client population will be served by the newly selected HIP vendors.
 - Collectively, selected vendors are able to provide HIP access in more than 25 languages.
- **WIC farmers' market coupons** stayed at the increased amount of \$30 during the summer 2022 season for purchasing fruits and vegetables at participating farmers' markets and farm stands.
- In 2022, 25,523 Massachusetts older adults and disabled individuals participated in the **Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP)**, compared with 24,661 in 2021.
 - Participants received a benefit of \$25 per person for the 2021 and 2022 growing seasons.
 - This year, the program re-instated financial support for food demonstrations at farmers' markets through the UMASS Nutrition Education Program.
- Massachusetts will receive a **\$3.5 million Local Food for Schools (LFS) Grant** for purchases of domestic local foods for distribution to schools, strengthening the food system for schools by helping to build a fair, competitive, and resilient local food chain, and expand local and regional markets with an emphasis on purchasing from historically underserved producers and processors.
- MDAR received **\$7.5 million in funding through the USDA Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program (LFPA)**. The program provides funds to groups who will buy food from socially disadvantaged farmers and producers to distribute to underserved communities.
 - MDAR has contracted with 16 organizations to carry out the goals of the program, which will run through May 2024.
- Opened **Massachusetts FRESH (Farming Reinforces Education and Student Health) Grant** applications, with \$300,000 in funding available to support K-12 and early education and care centers to start up or expand their local foods purchasing and education efforts via farm to school and farm to early care grant program.
- The **MA Community Health and Healthy Aging Funds**, created through a landmark revision of the Determination of Need process overseen by the Department of Public Health (DPH) and administered by

Health Resources in Action in partnership with DPH and the Executive Office of Elder Affairs, awarded a second round of funding in summer 2022, distributing a total of \$30.6 million to 56 grantees across the Commonwealth.

- Grants focused on addressing root causes of health inequities, disrupting and removing barriers to health, and advancing racial and health equity by tackling institutional and structural racism. Many of the awarded grantees focus on improving community conditions to improve and ease access to healthy, affordable food.
- DPH awarded a total of \$1.3 million to 10 grantees for the **Mass in Motion Municipal Wellness & Leadership Initiative** in Spring 2022.
 - Working in 42 communities, Mass in Motion grantees will implement local policy and practice change strategies with municipal government, community-based organizations, and resident partners to increase access to healthy, affordable foods and opportunities for safe physical activity, two of the three major risk factors for chronic disease.