

Remote participation:

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Dial in by phone +1 857-327-9245,,248705249# United States, Boston

January 8, 2026

In person and remote

11:00 AM – 1:30 PM

MA Food Policy Council annual meeting

Room 428, State House, Boston

Draft Agenda

Call to order

Acceptance of minutes (vote required)

MA Legislative Food System Caucus

MA Food System Collaborative

Officer and Committee Reports

Chair: updates including Governor's Anti-Hunger Task Force

Committee Reports

Program

Infrastructure and Supporting the Middle of the Supply Chain. State and federal grant programs have supported transformative changes to the Massachusetts food system.

State funded Food Security Infrastructure Program (FSIG). Five-year overview, Juli Stelmaszyk, Food Security Director, MDAR.

- Boston Area Gleaners/Boston Food Hub, Acton. Usha Thakrar, Executive Director. BAG has critical infrastructure to ensure local food is distributed to the emergency feeding system. (\$1.8M) Also, LFPA, MFVP and MEFAP recipients.
- Reed Farm, Sunderland. Kat Chang Laznicka, co-owner. They are building a USDA poultry processing facility. They are new/beginning farmers focused on providing sustainable local protein. (\$495,760).

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- Boys & Girls Club Metro South, Taunton. Derek W. Heim, President & CEO; and Monica Lombardo, Vice President. Their recently built Blue Spoon Kitchen has been critical during emergency food response efforts. They also have a freight farm where they grow food for their kitchen. (\$848,000)_

USDA funded Regional Food Security Infrastructure Program (RFSI). Overview, Julia Nelson, Grants Management Specialist, MDAR.

- Island Creek Oysters, Duxbury. Maya Bennett, Island Creek Ambassador. ICO operates the state's only cannery. Equipment acquired, installed, and trained on with grant funds will automate current processes and expand formatting options to diversify and expand the mix of local and regional agricultural products it can work with. (\$339,537)_
- Worcester Food Hub, Mike Kane, Economic Development & Public Policy Associate. The grant supported equipment for the expansion of the Hub's wholesale operations in Central Massachusetts, to exponentially increase the number of farms, producers, and institutional buyers that they interact with. (\$83,520)

Food Ventures Program. Overview, Rose Arruda, Urban Agriculture, Food Venture Program, and Food Trust Program.

- Commonwealth Kitchen, Boston. Jen Faigel, Founder and Executive Director. The Kitchen works to transform the local food economy by strengthening capacity, creating connections, and unleashing the collective power of diverse entrepreneurs to start and grow successful food businesses. Large scale food processing equipment. (\$85,000)

DESE snapshot: Rob Leshin, Director, Office for Food and Nutrition Programs

Updates

Council member updates

Healthy Soils Update, Caro Roszell

Announcements

2026 Council meeting dates, 9:30 – 11:30 AM: March 12, May 8, July 10, Sept 10, Nov 10. Annual meeting, Jan 7, 2027, 11AM – 1:30 PM.

Public Comment

Adjournment (vote required)

MA Grown & Fresher reception. Bring your favorite baked goods, snacks, beverages or other items!

This meeting is being held remotely via teams in accordance with an Act Relative to Extending Certain State of Emergency Accommodations ("Act"), signed on July 16, 2022, and extended pertaining to the Open Meeting Law to June 30, 2027.