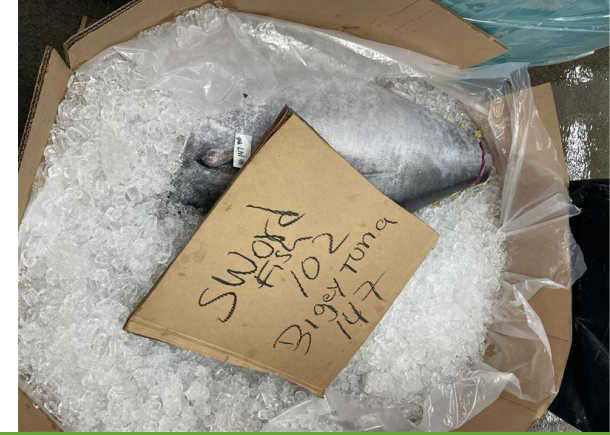




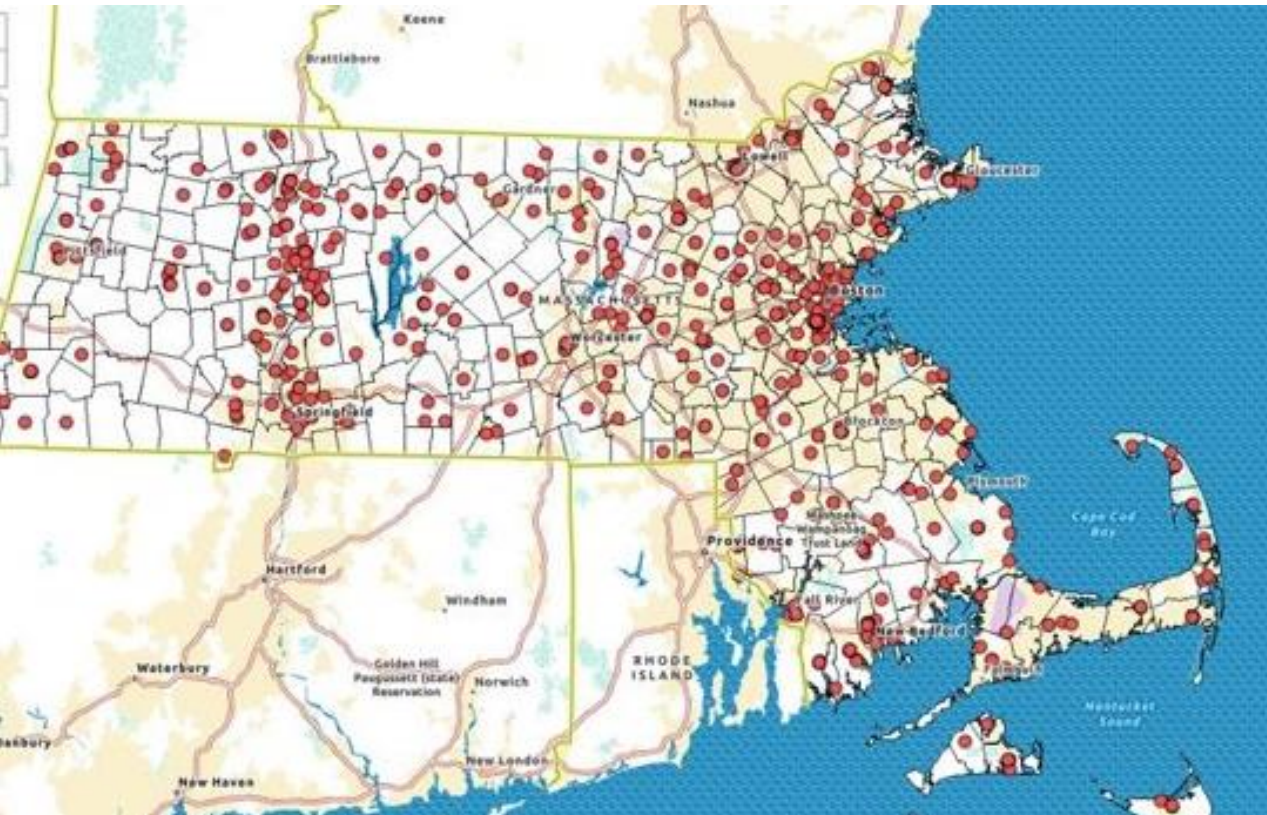
Measuring Impact: Five Years of the Food Security Infrastructure Program

Juli Stelmaszyk, Director, Division of Food Security

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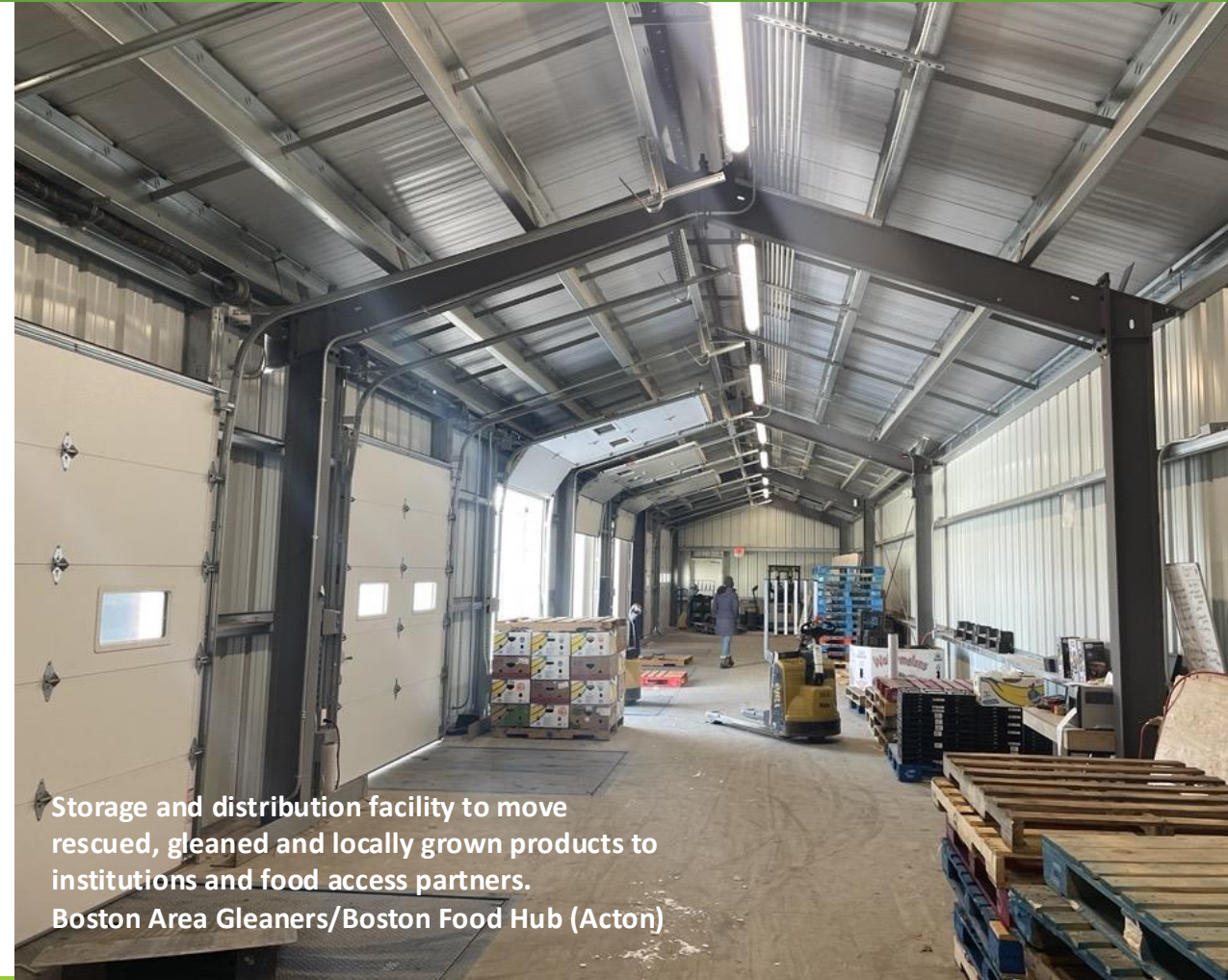
Food Security Infrastructure Grant (FSIG)



- Established in 2020 using ARPA funds as part of the State Food Security Taskforce to address supply chain disruptions and widespread food insecurity.
- Addresses supply chain disruptions and long-term food security through infrastructure and equipment investments across supply chain
- FSIG has awarded \$126.6 million to 927 projects
- Historically has been \$25 million per year
- Managed by MDAR since 2025

Measuring the Impact of FSIIG after 5 Years

- Why is public investment in food infrastructure necessary?
- How does FSIIG contribute to a more resilient, safe, reliable and equitable food supply for Massachusetts?
- How should the program evolve to meet needs of food security in coming years?
- How can the program increase efficiency, demonstrate impact and reduce barriers to participation?



Storage and distribution facility to move rescued, gleaned and locally grown products to institutions and food access partners.
Boston Area Gleaners/Boston Food Hub (Acton)

Six Dimensions of Food Security

AVAILABILITY

Physical availability of sufficient quality and quantity of food.

Is there enough food available?

UTILIZATION

Intake of safe and sufficient food to meet nutritional needs, including individuals' knowledge, skills and ability to procure and cook food.

Is food safe and/or culturally appropriate? Do people have ability to prepare the food?

AGENCY

Power of individual and community capacity to make decisions about and shape what they eat.

Do people have influence/power over the way their food is produced?

ACCESS

Economic, social and physical access of an individual or household resources to obtain food.

Can people access affordable food?

STABILITY

Reliable food supply that can maintain access and availability during system shocks, disruptions or natural disasters.

Is food consistently available and affordable?

SUSTAINABILITY

Food system practices that contribute to long-term regeneration of natural, social and economic systems to meet the needs of future generations.

Can the food system continue to provide food and nutrition security in the long-term without harming the environment and society?

Source: HLPE. 2020. Food security and nutrition: building a global narrative towards 2030. A report by the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security, Rome.

Recent threats to Massachusetts' Food Security

COVID-19 Pandemic

food safety, addressed food shortages with local food distribution/transportation, connected farms/fishers with vulnerable communities

Global/national food supply chain disruptions

Ukraine/Russia war impacts wheat supply; formula shortage; Avian flu

Climate-disasters in New England

2022 drought; 2023 flood in MA

Tariffs, Farm labor shortages

Federal govt shutdown halts SNAP

2020

2025



PBS

The current baby formula shortage sheds light on longstanding weaknesses within the industry

The conditions that led to a shortage of baby formula were set in motion long before the February 2022 closure of the Similac factory tipped...

May 19, 2022

COVID-19 Threatens Food Supply Chain As Farms Worry About Workers Falling Ill

MARCH 18, 2020 - 6:19 AM ET



WBUR

Slammed by climate emergencies, Mass. farmers ask, 'Now what?'

Volatile weather fueled by climate change has ruined nearly 3000 acres of crops in Massachusetts, affecting more than 100 farms and costing...

Aug 9, 2023



WBUR

Mass. residents line up for food donations to fill SNAP gap

Massachusetts residents who receive SNAP benefits may get about half their usual monthly payment of \$324, on average.



WDSU

Egg shortage hits American markets as avian flu spreads

American food markets are running short on eggs, and the situation may not improve for months. The highly contagious avian influenza has wreaked havoc on the...

Jan 14, 2025



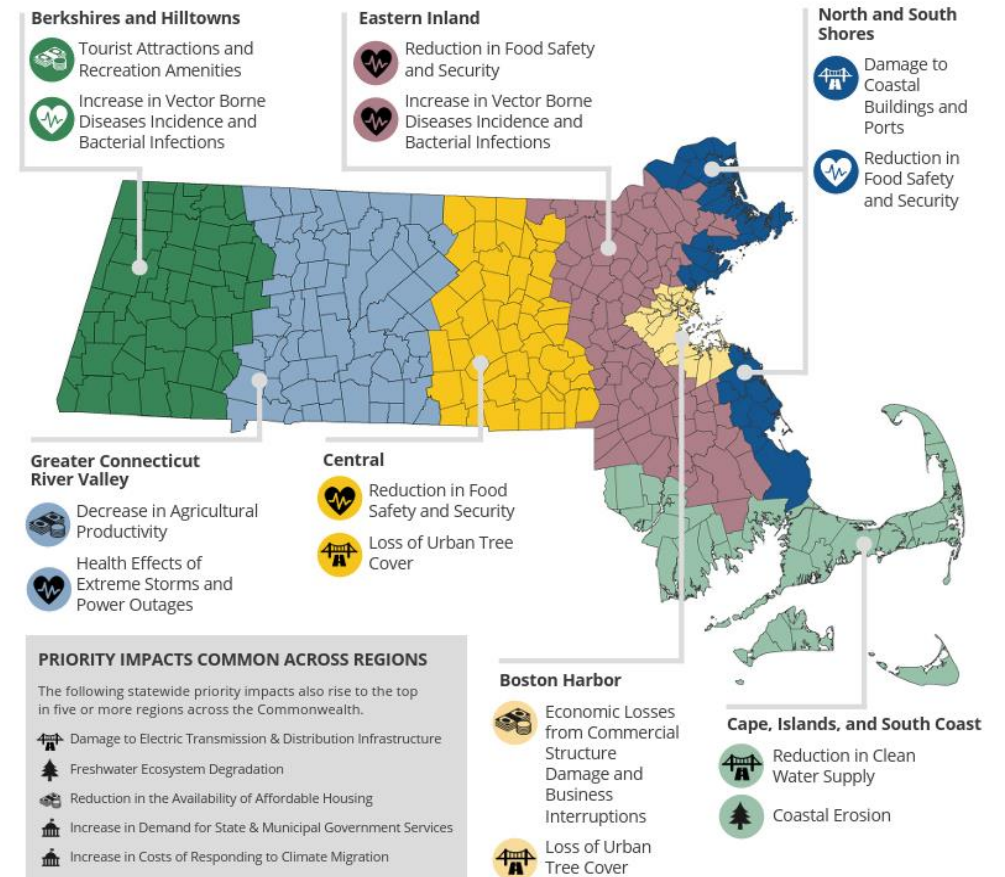
FSIG builds a more resilient, regional & equitable food system for the Commonwealth

A strong food economy....

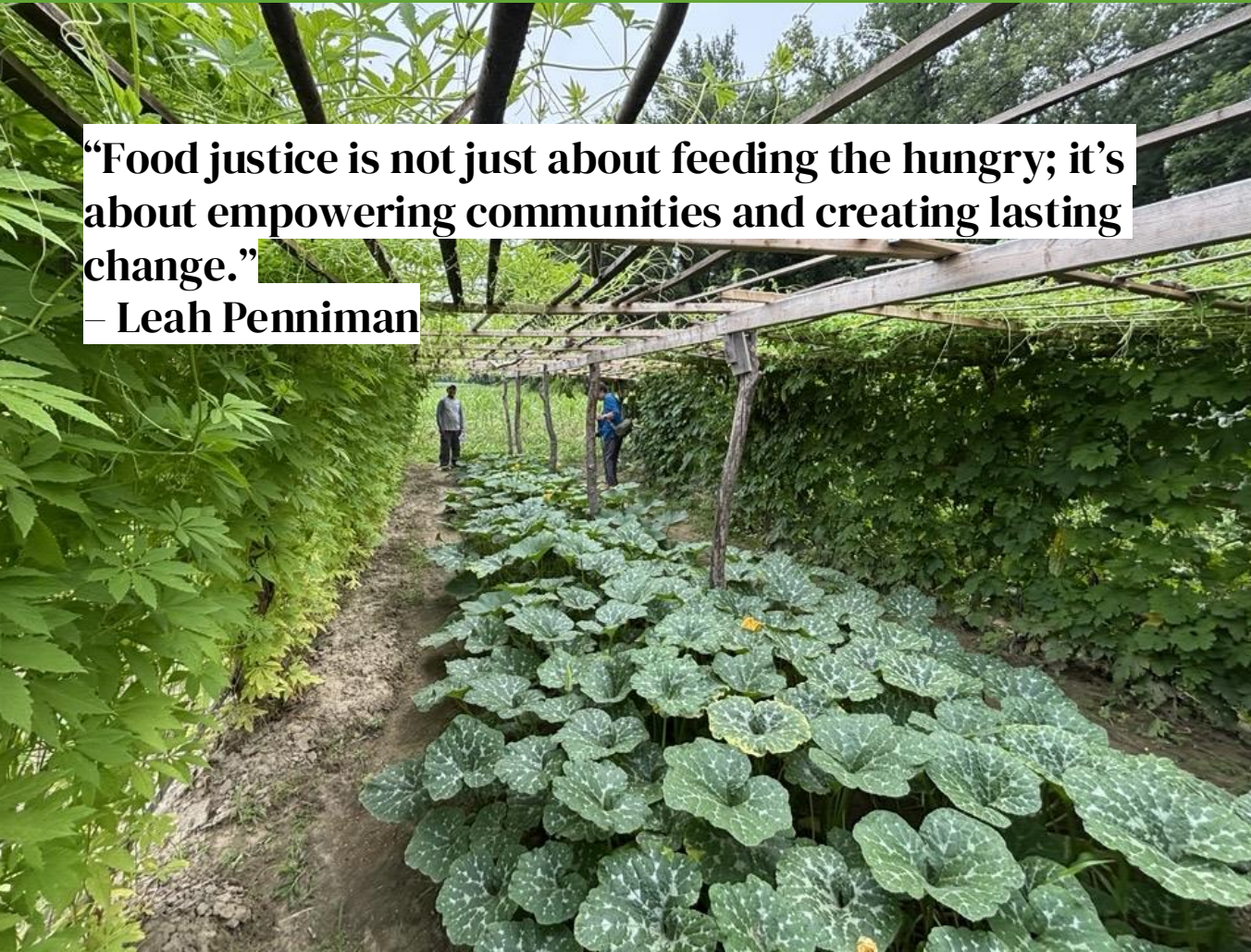
- \$151 billion food economy
- \$78 billion consumer food spend
- ~500,000 jobs

...within a fragile food system

- **Reliant on imported food** - 90% comes from outside the region
- **Rising food access disparities** - 1 in 3 households are food insecure
- **Most expensive farmland in the country** with low-margins for farms (15 cents for every \$1 spent on food in U.S.)
- **Rapid farmland loss** - 113,000 acres lost in MA since 1997
- **Market concentration** limits consumer choice – 3 chains have 50% market share
- **Climate change threatens food production** – more extreme weather events like floods and droughts



Why should locally grown, raised and caught foods be part of emergency feeding system?



“Food justice is not just about feeding the hungry; it’s about empowering communities and creating lasting change.”

– Leah Penniman

- ✓ **Reliable wholesale market for small farmers and fishermen support local food economy**
- ✓ **Builds more resilient and responsive food supply during times of disruption or crisis**
- ✓ **Strengthens community’s ability to recover from disaster**
- ✓ **Empowers farmers and fishers to feed their community**
- ✓ **Ensures people in need have same access to fresh, nutritious, culturally appropriate foods**

Measuring the Impact of FSIG 2020 – 2025: Methodology

How does FSIG contribute to a more resilient, safe, reliable and equitable food supply for Massachusetts?

Document Review and Data Analysis

Auribus Consulting compiled, reviewed, and analyzed existing qualitative and quantitative data related to the FSIG Program including information from the MDAR & EEA, MA Food System Collaborative Report (2021), and the Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture (ENRA) Committee Legislative Report

FSIG Grantee Final Reports

FSIG grantees from FY21 – FY25 grant cycles completed final project reports and responded to a survey of questions about the before and after impacts of their projects. Response rate of 64%.

Interviews and Focus Groups with Subject Matter Experts

Stakeholder engagement with subject matter experts state agencies and various food sector groups.

Case Study Interviews with FSIG Awardees

10 case study interviews with a diverse group of FSIG awardees, varying in operation size, award amount received, location, and sector.

FSIG Awardee Survey in 2025

Survey to all 800+ FSIG awardee contacts with 122 respondents (15% response)



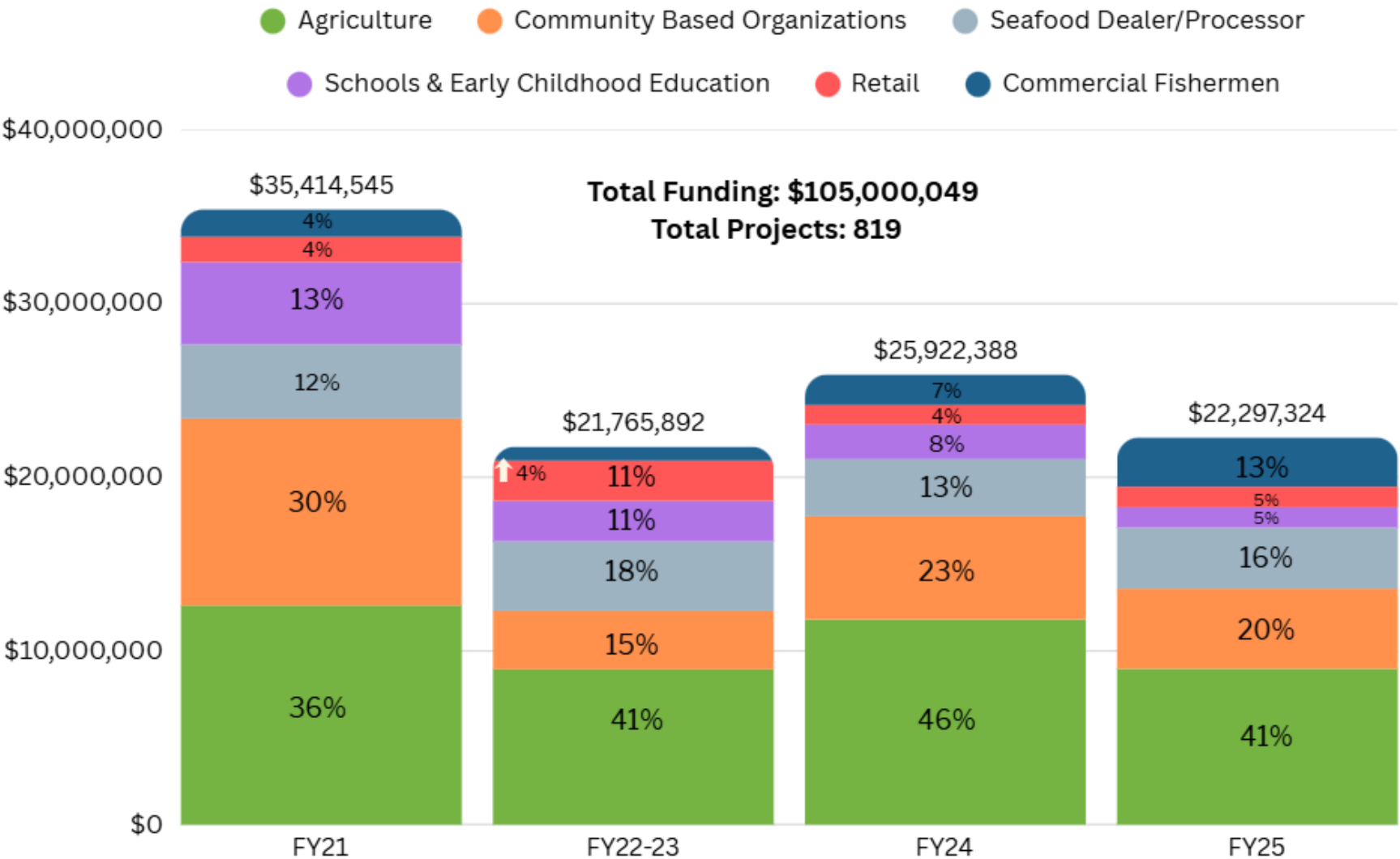
Reed Farm in Sunderland has rapidly scaled poultry production to be USDA certified processing facility, serving institutions and wholesale markets

FSIG Program changes over time

FY21	FY22-23	FY24	FY25	FY26
	Max award amount \$500,000			Max award amount \$1,000,000
Applicants were allowed to submit up to three applications	Only one application allowed per applicant			
No match requirement			Applicants requesting over \$25,000 are required to demonstrate a 25% cash-match of total project costs	All applicants are required to demonstrate a 20% cash-match of total project costs
Eligible applicants were defined broadly as any entity involved in the local food production and distribution system			Definition included agricultural operations as defined by Massachusetts law, with a focus on entities that contribute to food access and have been in operation for at least three years.	
Administered by EEA			Administered by MDAR	

Total Funding Awarded by Sector

FY21 - FY25

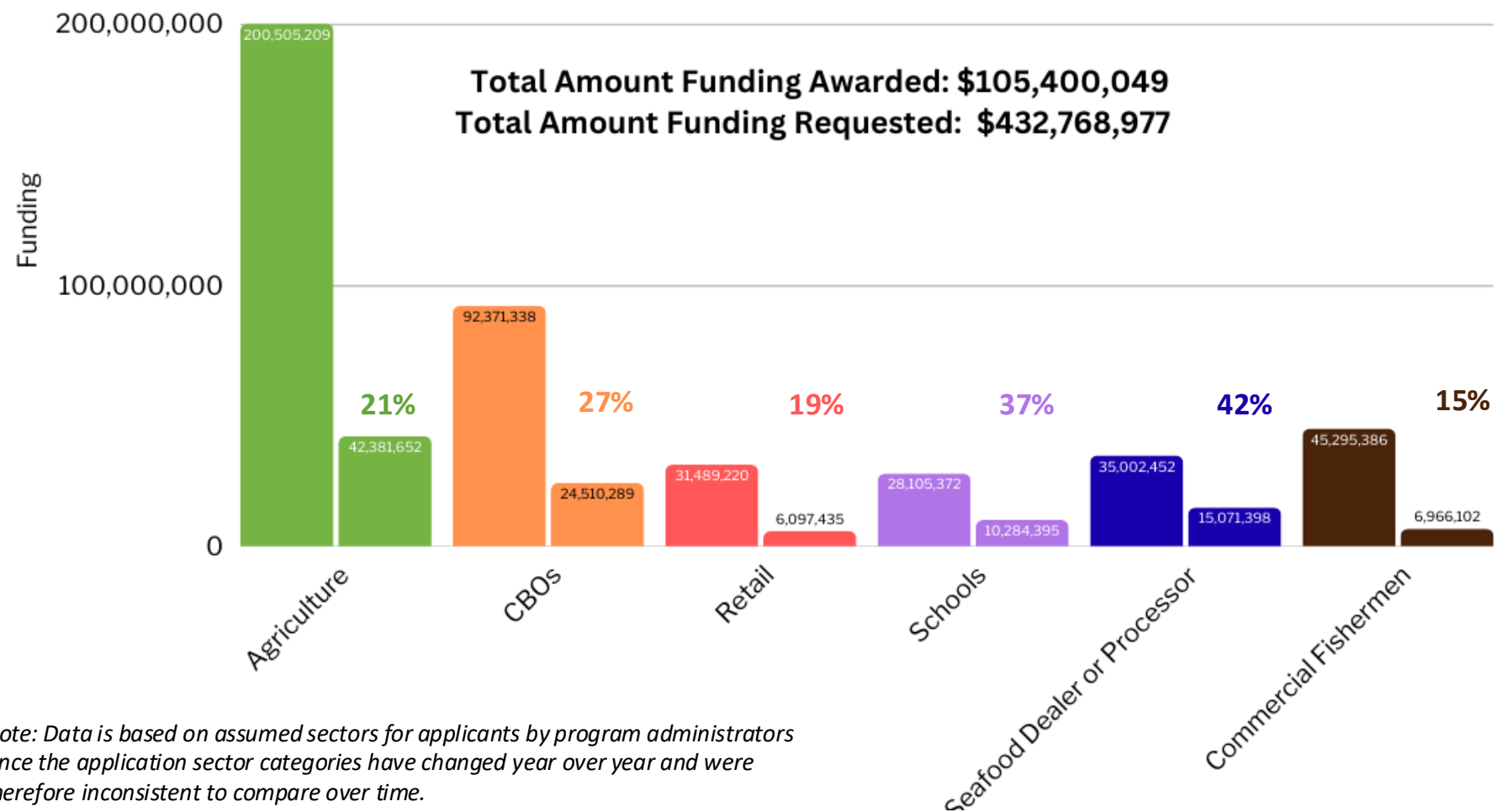


KEY TAKEAWAY

Excluding the first year COVID response (1000+ applications) funding awarded by sector remained fairly consistent with majority going to farms and community based/food access organizations

Total Funding Awarded vs. Requested

FY21 - FY25



Note: Data is based on assumed sectors for applicants by program administrators since the application sector categories have changed year over year and were therefore inconsistent to compare over time.

KEY TAKEAWAY

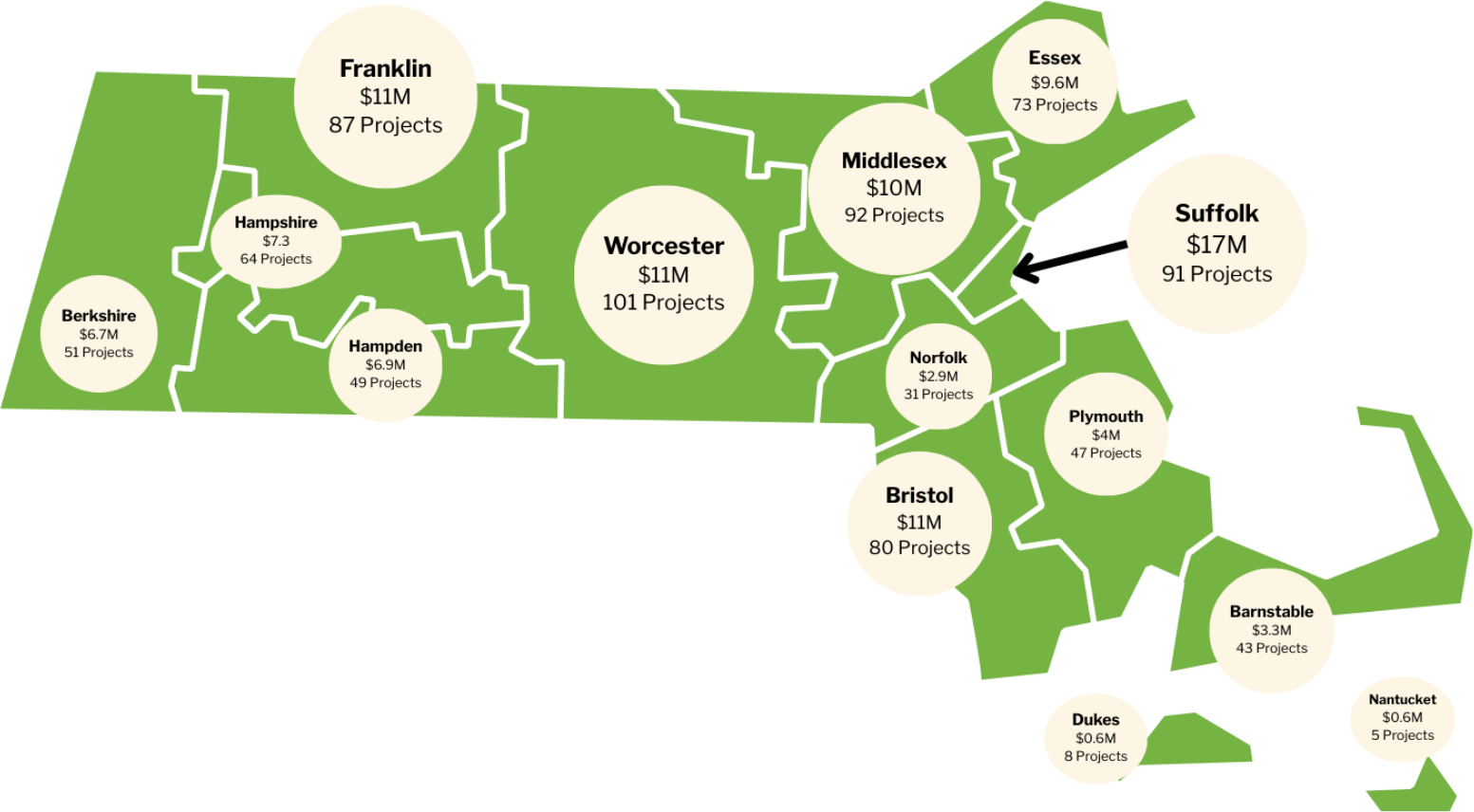
Demand far exceeds available funding.

Most sectors received a proportionate amount of funding to their request.

The application has changed over the years with different sector categories. From FY25 on the application and program goals will be more consistent.

Total Funding by Geography

FY21 - FY25

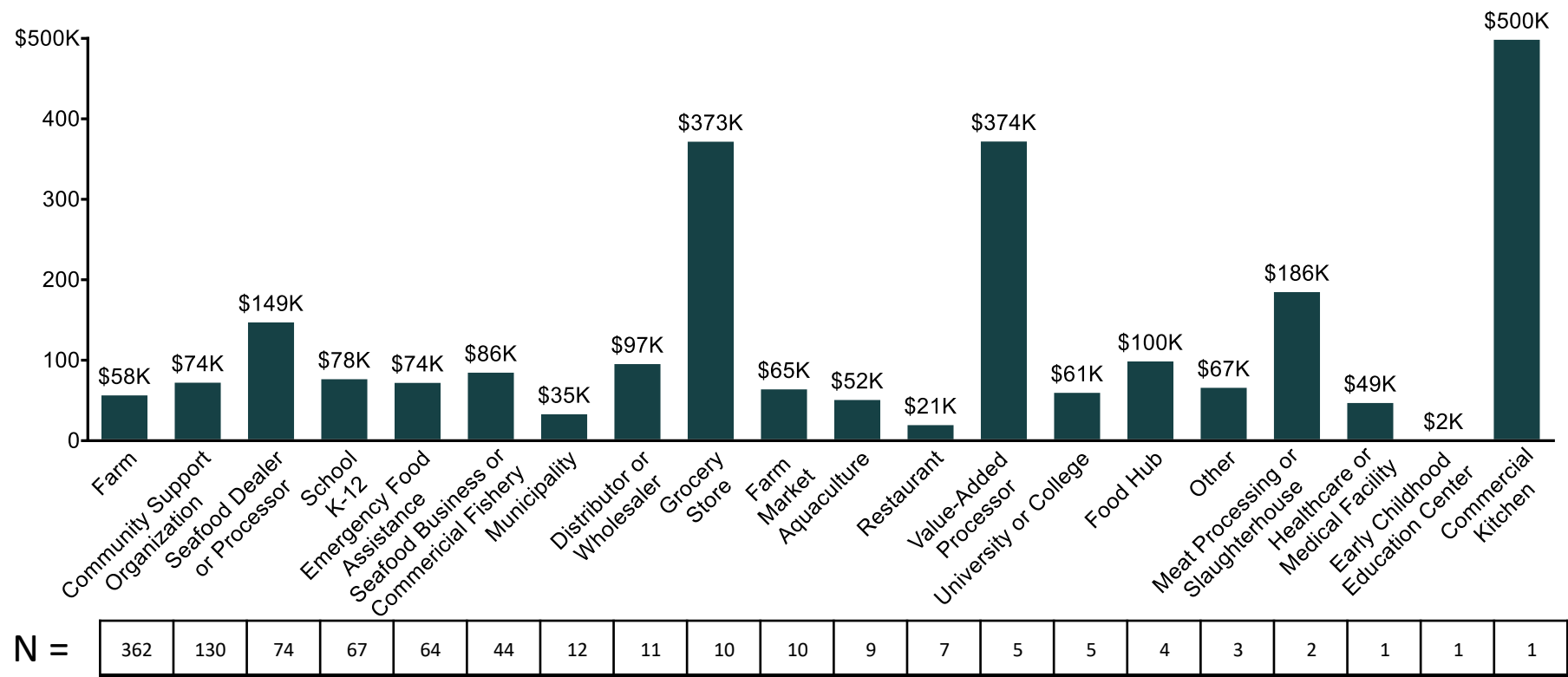


KEY TAKEAWAY

Grantees represented all 14 counties in MA with some disproportionate to the level of food insecurity rates, such as Hampden and Hampshire.

However, there is more to understand about how funding by county impacts food security given the nature of capital infrastructure investments and regional/national food supply chains.

Median Award by Sector FY21-FY25



Median FSIG award was \$73,000 demonstrating that small investments can have big impact

KEY TAKEAWAY

Grantees represented all 14 counties in MA with some disproportionate to the level of food insecurity rates, such as Hampden and Hampshire.

However, there is more to understand about how funding by county impacts food security given the nature of capital infrastructure investments and regional/national food supply chains.

What did applicants seek funding for?



*based on Final Report Survey FY21-FY24 (427 respondents)

Smaller equipment project examples:

- wash and pack equipment, IT equipment, pallet trucks, shelving and boat engines

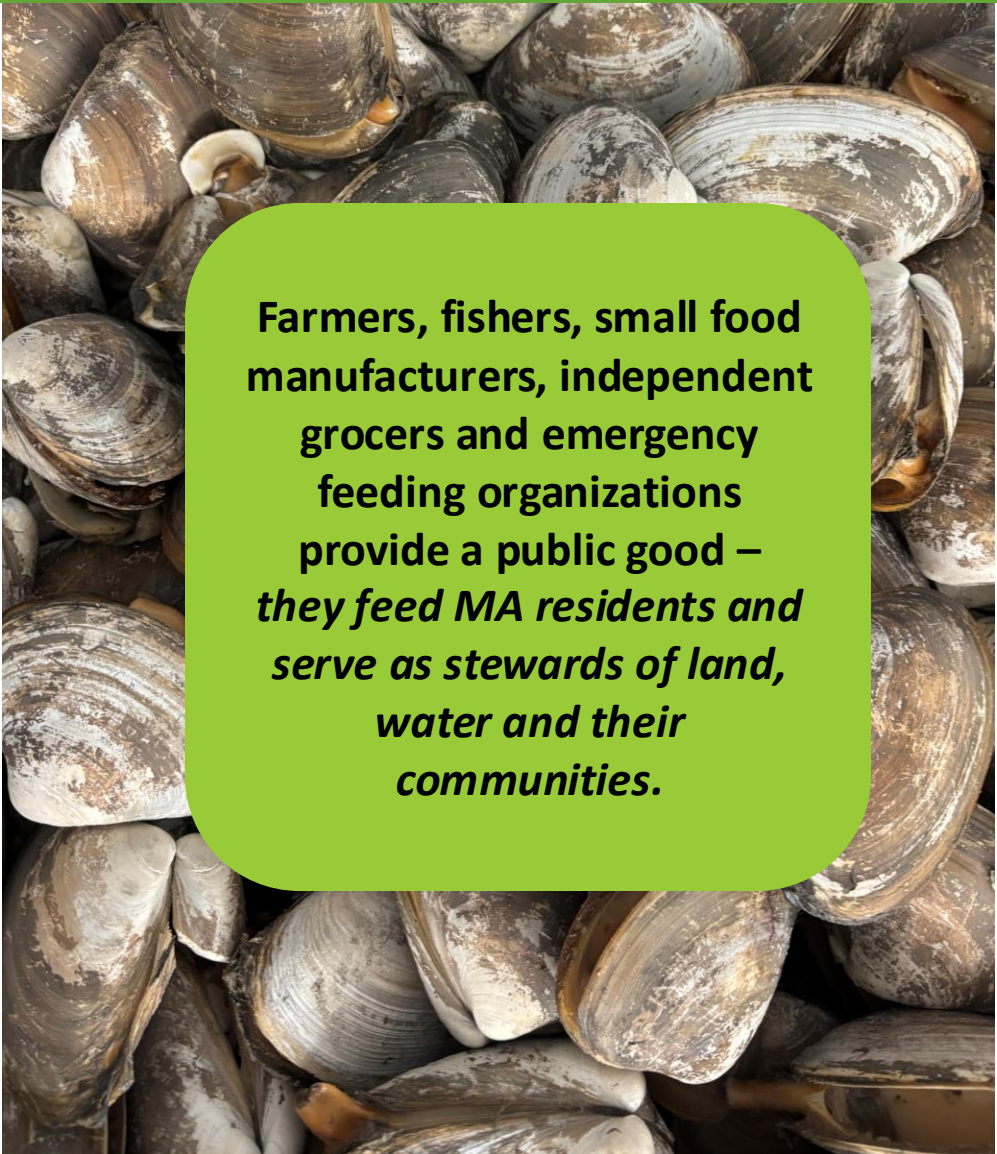
Large equipment and infrastructure project examples:

- USDA meat/poultry processing facilities
- loading docks
- large scale cold storage
- silos for grain storage
- shellfish hatchery equipment and fish processing machines



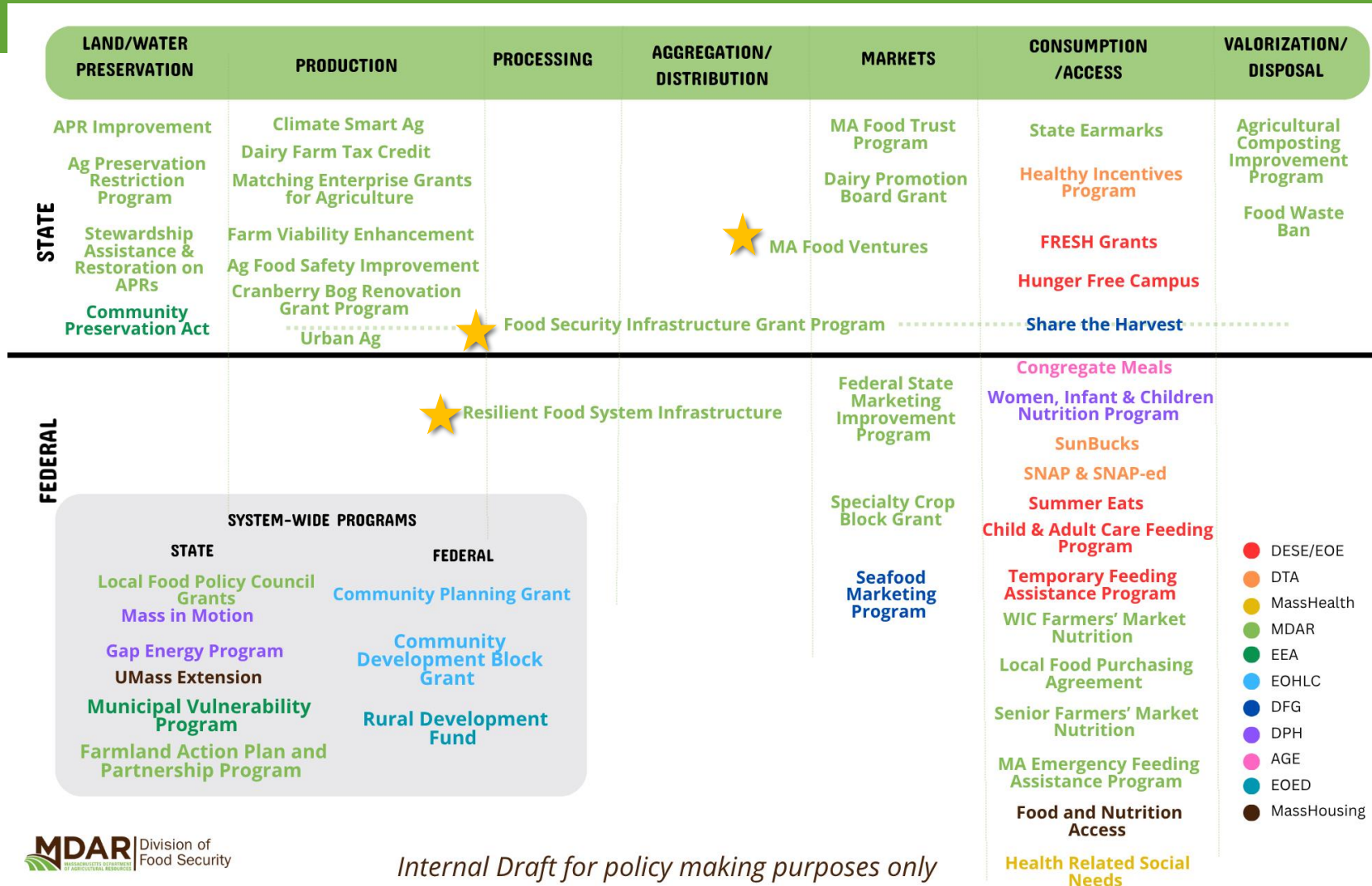
Why is public investment in capital infrastructure necessary?

- **Lack of access to capital** - most farms and fishermen are small businesses with low-margins and high input and labor costs facing challenges to traditional debt financing.
- **Increased uncertainty and food system shocks exacerbates food insecurity and threatens stable food supply** – environmental and economic disruptions place more stress on emergency feeding system, create price volatility and squeeze already struggling small/independent food businesses
- **Market consolidation and high input/labor costs make it challenging to sustain farm, food or seafood businesses in New England** – Market conditions and desire for “cheap” food make it hard to compete with multi-national corporations and agribusinesses. Majority of food is imported – to be more self-reliant and prepared for food supply disruptions we need to invest in more regional food production and distribution.



Farmers, fishers, small food manufacturers, independent grocers and emergency feeding organizations provide a public good – *they feed MA residents and serve as stewards of land, water and their communities.*

FSIG fills a gap in public funding for mid-supply chain food infrastructure



★ MDAR Grant Programs that strengthen mid-supply chain infrastructure, increase access to local and healthy foods

Key Impacts

How does FSIG contribute to a more resilient, safe, reliable and equitable food supply for Massachusetts?

Resilience to food system disruptions



- 30% strengthened critical food supply chain infrastructure
- 95% improved their ability to withstand future supply chain disruptions, due to impacts like power outages, droughts, flooding and food shortages
- 68+ new supply chain partnerships established

More food production and stronger food economy



- 68% increased food sales and distribution, of which 98% included local foods
- 50% increased agricultural and seafood production
- 4 new jobs created per project, on average

Increased food security and equitable food access



- 92% increased food access for low-income residents
- 96% felt they contributed to a more equitable food system by expanding programming, culturally appropriate foods or increasing transportation for low-income seniors and home-delivered meals

The Future of FSIIG: Recommendations

How should the program evolve to meet needs of food security in coming years?

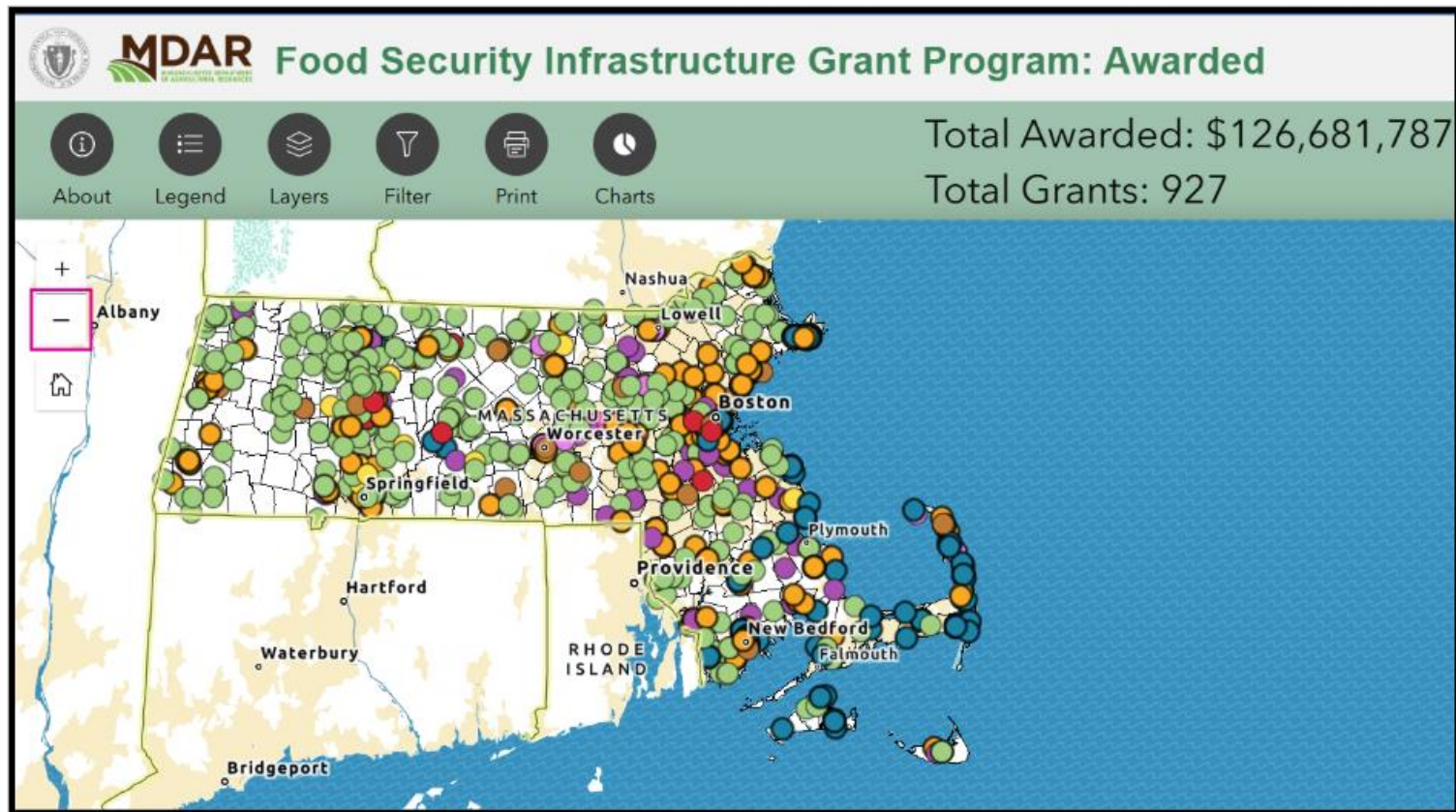
How can the program increase efficiency, demonstrate impact and reduce barriers to participation?

Program challenges:

- Limited administrative capacity restricts support for grantees, program evaluation
- Inconsistent funding restricts timeline for grantees and limits planning for applicants and program managers
- Program legislation and procurement rules do not allow for more flexible funding for used equipment or in-house labor

Recommendations & Opportunities:

- Maximize impact through cross-sector partnerships to leverage private and public funding
- Improve program efficiency and evaluation through stable funding and staffing
- Establish consistent and measurable impact metrics for evaluation
- Strengthen connections between grantees to leverage existing infrastructure
- Increase coordination across State government with shared goals



Thank you!

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For grant-related questions contact
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For more information visit MDAR's
Division of Food Security page

Check out the new interactive map of
FSIG grantees!