



**Massachusetts Food System Collaborative
2022 State Representative and Senator Questionnaire**

Your name: David LeBoeuf

Office Sought, including district: State Representative, 17th Worcester district

Website: <https://www.davidleboeuf.org/>

What are three of your priorities that reflect your commitment to a healthy food system for Massachusetts and your constituents?

Priority 1

Fully funding the Healthy Incentives Program and improving the SNAP technology system to make it easier for vendors to participate in the program.

Priority 2

Creating a new statute for urban areas very similar to Agricultural Preservation Restrictions in urban areas that have a smaller lot acreage and can be used for the establishment of community gardens.

Priority 3

Supporting small business incubators and community commercial kitchens to bring access to more locally sourced food into neighborhoods with food deserts.

How would you support the Healthy Incentives Program?

My priorities are to continue for fully funding the program and also advancing funds to improve technology so the POS system is easier for vendors to participate in the program.

How would you support farmers in adapting to climate change?

In my district it is critical to have greater efficiency in our water systems to conserve the supply and also reduce costs of irrigation operations. The Commonwealth should also look at incentives to encourage carbon farming practices to reduce emissions.

How would you help to ensure that children understand where food comes from, the importance of healthy eating, and other essential food literacy issues?

I firmly believe in the food is medicine model and it's inclusion in health curriculums and public's health interventions. Public schools should either have community gardens or partner with nonprofits that manage community gardens. I grew up in an urban area, and having these programs helped me to understand what agriculture was, the benefit to a community, and how food was much more than something you consume.

What policies or investments would you support to protect farmland and increase farmland access?

I am a strong supporter of APR land and want to make sure that farmers have opportunities to diversify their cash crops in order to preserve valuable food production. Specifically I support allowing individuals to grow hemp on APR land for commercial use. I am also re-filing a bill that would make a version of the APR statute for urban areas in order to provide for community gardens.

What strategies would you support to reduce food waste?

To reduce the impact of food waste on our environment, we must have policies that incentivize putting food waste to use. I would support efforts and pilots to expand composting programs for businesses and urban neighborhoods.

How would you work to ensure that food system stakeholders of color - consumers, workers, farmers, landowners, and others - have equitable access to opportunities in all aspects of the food system?

The greatest barriers that entrepreneurs of color face is access to financial capital, especially in industries that require high start up costs and land acquisition. The Commonwealth needs to support pro bono technical assistance, and financing that is flexible enough to serve the needs of different industries. Furthermore we need to address the challenge of food deserts, which are located predominantly in black and brown neighborhoods. This can partially be addressed by the acquiring vacant land to convert into community gardens, and prioritizing Transformative Development Initiative districts in food deserts. Also, it is our responsibility to examine supplier diversity contracts in the State and the diversity of MDAR grants to see how it impacts our farmers of color.