



January 12, 2024

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

Dear Governor Healey,

Knowing where food comes from, how it affects our bodies, and the role it plays in our culture, our communities, our economy, and our environment is essential. To help Massachusetts children lead healthy, independent, thoughtful lives, all students in grades K-12 should have access to food system education in school, learning about agriculture, nutrition, food justice, and culinary skills. These lessons will teach critical life skills and allow students to make informed decisions as they grow about food.

The Massachusetts Food System Collaborative was established to promote, monitor, and facilitate implementation of the [\*Massachusetts Local Food Action Plan\*](#), accepted by the state in 2015. The Collaborative supports collective action towards a sustainable, equitable, resilient food system, and facilitates the Campaign for Food Literacy.

**To further this goal, the Campaign urges you to include \$1 million in your fiscal year 2025 budget, line item 7010-1192,** to support DESE grant programs to fund professional development opportunities for school staff, food literacy experiential learning, and wellness coaching to support this work. This funding will build off of a \$1 million investment in these programs in FY24, and will support more communities in providing this kind of programming in their schools.

Many students throughout the state are already learning about the food system in science, social studies, wellness, culinary arts, horticulture, and other classes, as well as in cafeterias and school gardens, and in their broader communities. Not every student in Massachusetts has consistent access to high-quality education about the food system. While some food literacy concepts were added to the BESE's updated health and physical education frameworks in calendar year 2023, which we are grateful for, food literacy concepts are still not included in most state frameworks or tested on the MCAS, making it challenging to include these concepts in curriculum. Many teachers feel unprepared to teach about the food system and struggle to find high-quality, culturally appropriate, curriculum-aligned lessons. To ensure that all students have access to food system education, state investments are needed.

This continued investment in food system education will have a lasting impact on hundreds of

thousands of Massachusetts children's health, the environment, and local economic development. We urge you to include it in your budget proposal as a continuing show of support toward ensuring that high quality food education is available to all students statewide.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this input.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Miller, Policy Director

On behalf of these Campaign for Food Literacy supporters:

Backyard Growers  
Berkshire Grown, Inc.  
Chicopee FRESH  
ChopChop Family  
CISA (Community involved in Sustaining Agriculture)  
CommonWealth Kitchen  
Gardening The Community  
Groundwork Somerville  
Grow Food Northampton  
Growing Places  
Health Equity Partnership of North Central Mass Inc (CHNA9)  
Healthy Chelsea  
Hilltown Community Development Corporation  
Island Grown Initiative  
MA Healthy School Lunch Coalition  
Mass. Farm to School  
Massachusetts Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (MAND)  
Massachusetts Environmental Education Society  
Massachusetts Envirothon  
Massachusetts Law Reform Institute  
Massachusetts Seafood Collaborative  
Mill City Grows  
New Entry Sustainable Farming Project  
Northeast Organic Farming Association/Mass Chapter  
Northern Berkshire Community Coalition  
Project Bread  
Regional Environmental Council  
Salem Food for All  
Seeds of Solidarity  
Southeastern Massachusetts Agricultural Partnership (SEMAP)  
Sustainable CAPE  
Terra Cura Inc.  
The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts

The Food Project  
The Food Voice  
The Greater Boston Food Bank  
The Marion Institute  
The Trustees of Reservations  
Worcester County Food Bank  
World Farmers