



December 4, 2025

Governor's Task Force Co-Chairs
Massachusetts State House, Room 280
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Governor's Anti-Hunger Task Force Co-Chairs Bovell-Ammon, Davidson, and Randle,

The Massachusetts Food System Collaborative deeply appreciates the Healey-Driscoll Administration's proactive approach to ending hunger by establishing and inviting MAFSC to this Task Force in the wake of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act's passage on July 4, 2025, and this administration's rapid response to the federal government shutdown in November that resulted in the unprecedented delay of SNAP benefits. Our partners did heroic work to ensure residents did not go without food. Post shut-down, we must refocus our work to invest in Massachusetts's local food system so it is resilient and sustainable in moments of crisis, and also support the emergency food system.

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 local food system through our several advocacy campaigns and many networks. We work with hundreds of food system partners across the Commonwealth who help us identify our priorities and emerging issues in the local food system. We hope some of these make their way into future state budgets, CIPs, and statute.

We recommend the following for the Administration:

- Consistent Healthy Incentives Program (HIP) communications - The Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) needs to be supported to send out additional alerts to SNAP clients about this benefit. We understand that DTA's HIP team is currently working on a communications plan, especially around the single-swipe update that makes the program much more accessible and equitable, and we continue to appreciate their work.
- Adding new vendors to HIP - Due to a slew of obstacles, many farmer vendors stopped offering the delivery routes they started in the last several years, as they could no longer economically justify them; some have gone out of business completely. One of the businesses that closed is Digger Foods, a mobile market in Brockton and the surrounding area. Digger Foods also received a Massachusetts Food Trust Program award. The investments made possible by the Massachusetts Food Trust Program are now also at stake due to the federal government's cuts to SNAP, as these cuts threaten the sustainability of small, independent retail in food deserts. These small, independent retail stores rely on SNAP clients for a significant position of their customer base and without



these customers, will close. Additionally, many current HIP farmer vendors want additional terminals / points of sale to better provide access to their customers.

- Funding for FSIG in the FY27 capital budget (CIP) - Our understanding is there is no funding programmed for this until the Legislature passes the MassReady Act. To pause the program after the first five year report is released and during this time of increasing food insecurity would slow needed investments that many organizations and businesses are planning to apply for.

We recommend the following with the support and partnership of the Administration and Legislature:

- Continued investment in DTA staffing so clients can reach DTA staff.
- Sustained state funding for HIP - At least level funding of \$28.5 million¹ in the fiscal year 2027 budget so the program can rebuild after the state-enacted cut ended on September 1, 2025 and continue to grow by adding new farm vendors to the program and increasing communications to clients.
- \$6.4 million in the FY27 budget for a Local Food Purchase Assistance (LFPA) Program, as supported by the LFPA Awardee working group, and the farms that supplied food to the awardees. This program is an important component of farm viability and investing in startup and growing farms, especially those started by socially disadvantaged farmers.
- \$12.6 million in the FY27 budget for a Local Food for Schools program, as supported by Mass Farm to School.
- Codification of the FSIG Program into law and the creation of a Next Generation Farmer Fund, as outlined in H.112 / S.55, the FARM omnibus bill in the 2025-26 legislative session.
- Continued focus on farmland access - Implementing the 2023 Massachusetts Farmland Action Plan, including APR land that's been abandoned, assisting beginning and underserved farmers with down payment costs, establishing a revolving fund for MDAR's Buy Protect Sell implementation so that MDAR can retain and reinvest funds from any sales. MDAR, under the leadership of Commissioner Randle, has done tremendous work putting more than 100 acres of state-owned farmland back into active use from 2024-2025, we hope to see more state properties be prioritized for agricultural usage similar to the Administration's existing housing priority.
- A tax credit for farmers and fishermen who have donated food as outlined in H.3154 / S.1043 in the 2025-26 legislative session - Many farmers and fishermen gave away food during the federal government shutdown, or used donations to leverage larger free donations of food via a CSA program, like Dave Dumaresq, owner of Farmer Dave's in

¹ Level funding of \$28.5 million comes from: \$20 million in new funding and \$1.4 million in carried forward funding in the FY26 GAA and \$7.5 million from a FY25 supplemental budget that was passed and carried forward into FY26.



Dracut, who leveraged \$20,000 from his CSA customers to then give away 80,000 lbs of food to hungry families. The Chatham Harvesters Cooperative donated fish stew to Sustainable CAPE for their holiday food give away. Farmers have food left in their fields that they would donate but they cannot spend money on labor and transportation to harvest, and this tax credit would allow them to do so.

Again, the Massachusetts Food System Collaborative appreciates this Administration's focus on a sustainable, equitable, resilient and connected local food system. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this input. We are available at your convenience to discuss any of the above recommendations.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Miller, Policy Director