



We believe healthy food is a human right.

METROWEST FOOD COLLABORATIVE 2024 POLICY PRIORITIES

The MetroWest Food Collaborative (MWFC) actively joins with the community to strengthen the local food system by advocating for policies and programs that support equitable access to nourishing, affordable, and culturally appropriate food.

The MWFC has joined coalitions working to move our region and Commonwealth toward the vision of a **thriving food system that delivers food justice for all**, across all zip codes, with healthy food as a human right.

We urge you to support the following budget and legislative priorities.

Support Healthy Families and Sustainable Farms by Fully Funding HIP

The Healthy Incentives Program (HIP) is a critical program that improves access to fresh fruits and vegetables and supports Massachusetts farmers by matching SNAP benefits (up to a set amount each month) at farmers markets. By including **\$25 million in the FY25 State Budget and \$5.1 million in the FY 24 supplemental budget**, our state can ensure that this program stays strong year-round. (*[Campaign for HIP Funding Coalition](#)*)

The supporting legislation, **An Act Relative to an Agricultural Healthy Incentives Program (S.85/H.150)**, will establish a legal framework for HIP's long-term sustainability.

**This legislation has been incorporated into [H.4387](#), An Act Strengthening the Commonwealth's Farms and Food Systems.*

Continue Funding State SNAP Benefits for Legally-Present MA Immigrants

Thanks to \$6M included in the FY23 Supplemental Budget (4400-1032), this restored critical state SNAP benefits for legally-present immigrants barred from federal SNAP benefits. This money was intended to cover FY24. But, \$2M is needed to prevent interruption to these critical food benefits. We urge the MA Legislature to address this gap by providing **\$2M for state SNAP in the FY24 Supplemental Budget ([H.4496](#))**.

The projected cost is **\$18M for these nutrition benefits in FY25**. We urge the Governor and the MA Legislature to continue to fund this critical nutrition benefit for legally-present immigrant families in need. (*[Feeding Our Neighbors Coalition](#)*)

The supporting legislation, **An Act Establishing Basic Needs Assistance for MA Immigrant Residents ([H.135/S.76](#))** would ensure continued core food and cash assistance benefits for lawfully present immigrants in Massachusetts.

Learn more about our work at MetroWestFoodCollaborative.org.

Protect Historic Regional Transit Investments

Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs) are a lifeline to residents in 250+ communities beyond the reach of the MBTA, including MetroWest residents, particularly people of color, older adults, low-income communities, and people with disabilities or limited mobility. In the FY24 budget, state leaders allocated **\$150M to bolster transit operations in RTA communities**. Please protect this historic level of investment to continue to address gaps and ensure residents can get where they need to go - including to access food. *(The RTA Advocates Coalition)*

The supporting legislation, **An Act To Increase Regional Transit Accessibility In The Commonwealth (S.2277/H.3272)**, also known as the RTA Advancement Bill, will raise the funding floor for RTAs, establish an RTA fund in statute, and address community needs.

Fully Fund Universal School Meals in the FY25 State Budget

Thanks to the passage of School Meals for All, the 1 in 4 households with kids who are facing food insecurity in our state today now have permanent access to free school meals and families have the assurance that their kids won't be hungry at school. Please continue to invest in School Meals for All and **prioritize full funding for Line Items 1596-2422 and 7053-1925 in the FY25 budget**. *(Feed Kids Coalition)*

MDAR Food Policy Council Grant Program

Massachusetts is home to more than 20 food policy councils (FPCs) working to strengthen the food system and increase food security, of which MWFC is one. Since FY23, \$250K a year in grants was administered by the MDAR to increase the capacity and effectiveness of these councils and move the state toward its goal of increased food security. **Please continued funding this program at \$250K** that we benefited from in FY23. *(Massachusetts Food System Collaborative)*

Invest in Food Literacy for Massachusetts Children

This funding helps advance access to food system education in schools for MA students in grades K – 12, enabling them to learn about agriculture, nutrition, food justice, and culinary skills. A level **\$1 million investment in food system education** will have a lasting impact on hundreds of thousands of children's health, the environment, and local economic development. *(Massachusetts Food System Collaborative)*

The supporting legislation, **An Act Relative to Food Literacy (S.2588)**, would provide resources and guidance to districts, schools, and educators on related to food literacy.

COALITIONS & LEAD ORGANIZATIONS

