



MARION INSTITUTE

Advancing a Culture of Health Through Food Equity

CONNECTOR
SERIES

FROGFOOT FARM
NEIGHBORS FEEDING
NEIGHBORS

GROW
EDUCATION

SOUTHCOAST
FOOD POLICY COUNCIL

BIOMED
PROGRAMS

GREENHOUSE
INITIATIVES

SFPC Quarterly Meeting May Agenda



- SFPC Working Group Updates and Successes, Next Steps
- Legislative Advocacy Training: Modules 1 and 2 combined
- Action Alert
- Register for the Eat Local Southcoast Challenge
- Volunteer at Frogfoot Farm
- The next SFPC Quarterly Meeting is August 27 at 12 noon

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that this land is the traditional unceded territory of the Wapanaak (Wampanoag). Pre-English invasion, this place, its gifts of fertile soil, waters, wildlife and beauty, had already sustained Indigenous tribes for 12,000 years. We honor and respect the precious food sources discovered, harvested and cultivated by Native peoples and remain grateful to them for their connectedness to this land and their food traditions. We further acknowledge the lands the Cape Verdeans, African Americans, and Latinx people farmed in this area that have been lost to them through structural racism. We make these acknowledgements with intention, and accept the responsibility of all we continue to learn. We will honor the resources which sustain us today through their protection. May food be just one of the many connections we use in our work to repair relationships with Indigenous, and People of Color and of all Nations living here today.

SFPC Working Group Updates



Policy Working Group:

- SFPC members-at-large sent 102 letters to legislators advocating for specific food system food programs and budget priorities. (February and March)
- 8 members of SFPC members lobbied at the Statehouse to protect the Healthy Incentive Program with 12 of 14 legislators. (March)
- SFPC sent House Budget amendments letters to 10 House Representatives, asking for co-sponsorship for The Healthy Incentives Program, the Farm-to-School FRESH grant state SNAP funding for MA immigrants, and local food policy council grants. We also sent an action alert to the SFPC members. On average 50% of Representatives co-sponsored. (April)
- Recent Action alert on House and Senate Budget Amendments, 29 SFPC members contacted their Reps and Senate. Today is the last day!

SFPC Working Group Updates

Food Access Working Group

- GBFB/USDA Commodities- SFPC worked with 4 food pantries in GNB and GFR, and UNGNB Hunger Commission to increase food from GBFB- in 2 months, 609 additional cases of food.

Education and Communication Working Group:

- Eat Local Southcoast Challenge June 24 to July 27
<https://www.marioninstitute.org/programs/sfpc/eat-local-southcoast-challenge-2024/>
- Hunger Sabbath as part of September Hunger Action Month moving forward.

Capacity Building Working Group:

- Via a CAB member, we initiated the Community & Agriculture Resilience Audit Tool (CARAT) in April to lay the groundwork for Food

Legislative Advocacy Training in the Community



Advocacy Training: Due to the Project Bread grant, Moving the Needle we have trained:

- GNBYA Policy Working Group –Modules 1-2 (13 people)
- GNBYA Youth group- HIP Issue Briefing and Advocacy action (12 youth)
- SFPC Members in Working Groups- shared Chapters 1-3
- Old Bedford Village-two listening sessions on interest and tweak advocacy training to fit the needs of the community.

Citizens Legislative Seminar

- 2 days of presentations by Senators. The curriculum includes the "History of the Legislature", "The Formal Legislative Process", "The Informal Legislative Process", "The Budget", "The Parliamentary Role of the Clerk of the Senate" and "The Future of the Legislature". The presentations are made by Senators and Senate staff.
- Twice a year (Spring and Fall). Ask your state Senator to sponsor you.

Next Steps

- Action Alerts
- Eat Local Southcoast Challenge (June and July) Register now! Share with Your networks!
- Journey of Food in the Southcoast- Partner with you in food system education
- Meet the Farmer- Frogfoot Farm-Neighbors feeding Neighbors, volunteer opportunities now open
- Hunger Action Month in September(includes new initiative with faith communities- Hunger Sabbath)
- Food Summit (October)
- Boogie at the Bog
- Candidate Forum (early October, if contested State races)

Legislative Advocacy Training



Module 1: Stepping into Your Power. Learn about different kinds of power and why is it critical to keep checks and balances in a democracy, what is the difference between advocacy and lobbying, and restrictions in lobbying depending on your role.

Module 2: Civic Education and When You Can Take Action. You will learn what policy is, how the state legislature works, how a bill becomes a law, budget advocacy, the timing of budget and non-budget Acts, and when you can take action.

Module 3: Strategize to Win! Create your strategy on an issue with goals, identify your allies to create coalitions, who are the decision-makers, what actions will you take, what research is needed, and what is your message.

Legislative Advocacy Training



Module 4: Exciting Your Community to Take Action! Learn how to use MAlegislature.gov, develop tools to track bills and legislative actions, use templates to write your letter and call your legislators, learn how to give testimony, and how to give issue briefings.

Module 5: More Tools for Winning! Learn how to set up meetings with Legislators, what a legislative meeting entails, how to use social media and other media outlets, and how to recognize your victories and celebrate your successes.

There are many types of leverage and persuasion

- Money
- Numbers of people
- Knowledge and expertise
- Relational
- Positional
- Political
- Force

In Legislative Advocacy, thinking of the organization or agency you represent, what do you use?

Why should I do Legislative Advocacy?

- To solve specific problems through concrete changes in public policies and programs
- To tie the reality of the problem with decision-makers
- To strengthen and empower civil society
- To promote democracy

Advocacy and Lobbying

Examples of Advocacy

- Meeting with a legislator to educate only.
- Educating the public on a specific policy.
- Signing onto another organization's campaign.
- As an individual, writing or sending an email to a legislator, calling and leaving a message with a legislator.
- Using social media to share about film screenings about farmworker struggles and asking for support on a bill.
- Conducting or distributing research on a specific bill.
- Providing information to government agencies upon their request.
- Urging the public to vote or become more engaged like a candidate forum.

Advocacy and Lobbying

Lobbying is a subset of Advocacy that refers to ***influencing*** government officials, specifically legislators and city counselors to take a specific action on a vote. Lobby actions include ***asking for specific support*** on a bill, whether by email or in person.

Mass Gen Law states that “For purposes of this definition a person shall be presumed to be engaged in legislative lobbying that is simply incidental to his regular and usual business or professional activities if he:

- (i) engages in legislative lobbying for not more than 25 hours during any reporting period; and
- (ii) receives less than \$2,500 during any reporting period (6 months) for legislative lobbying.”

Examples of Lobbying

- As a non-profit or private business, if you write or call to ask a legislator to vote for or against a pending bill, that is lobbying.
- As a non-profit or private business, if you contact the general public to urge legislators to take a position on pending Legislation, such as an email alert.
- Conducting and sharing research that presents only a single position on the legislative issues. If you presented opposing ideas that would be advocacy.

Who to talk with in Advocacy? Legislature

Responsibilities of MA Legislature

- The Legislature's main job is to **create** state laws, change existing laws, and pass a balanced budget.
- There are two bodies: The House (160 Representatives) and the Senate (40 Senators).
- When legislatures are not in session, members are in their districts addressing the concerns of the voters and doing their other jobs.
- State legislators are elected every two years.

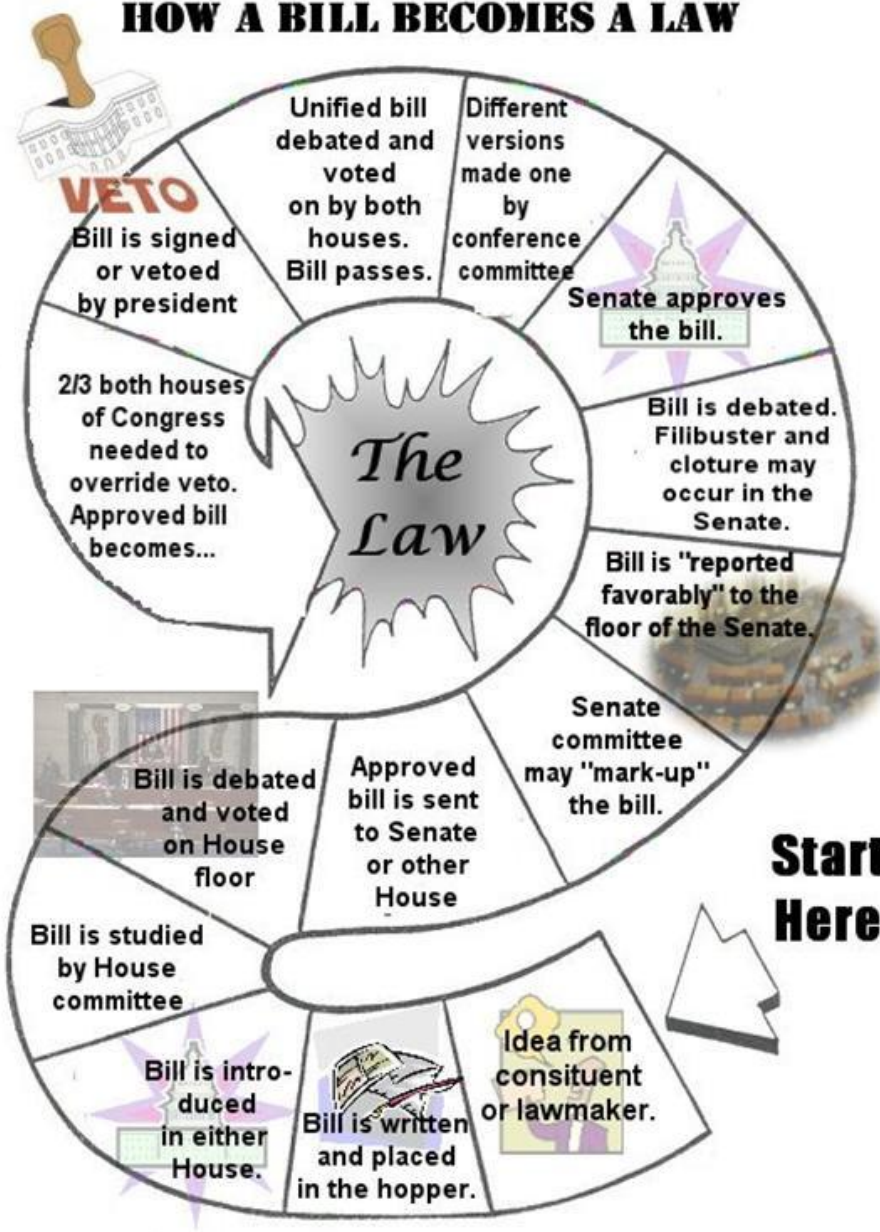
Definitions: What is Policy?

Policy is a set of rules that bind our society, outlining what a government office that manages resources should or should not do for the common good, and what is best for society.

There are three types of Policy:

- state constitution (highest form policy and lays out rights)
- **general laws and statutes that describe programs**
- regulations (how the state administers a program – the public can give feedback)

HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW



2/3
majority

40
Senators:

26 votes
needed

2/3 majority

160
Representatives

106 votes
needed

Realistically...

- MA has a little over 6,000 bills a session (each session is 2 years) and about 100 bills pass. Some bills pass, some die, and some need to go through the cycle again to become law.
- It takes about 3 sessions (6 years) and a large engine (engaged Coalition) to get bills through - but if the bill requires funding, that's where the core action is (in the budget process, not the bill process).

Pat Baker, Mass Law Reform

Yearly Timing with Budget

Fall: Departments and agencies submit their budget needs to the Governor. **This is an excellent time to talk (relationship work) with Department staff and write to the Governor in support of these Department asks.**

Winter: In early January, the Governor proposes a budget to the Legislature.

January through April: The House and Senate Ways and Means hold hearings and develop their budgets. **You can write to the House Ways and Means Committee [here](#) to advocate.**

Yearly Timing with Budget

April: The House Ways and Means releases a budget proposal to the full House, and vote by large bundles of amendments. **In April, you can again write the House Ways and Means and your legislators to advocate at this time.**

May the Senate Committee on Ways and Means go through the same process. **You can write the Senate Ways and Means in May.**

In June, a Ways and Means Conference Committee is formed to reconcile the House and Senate budget and pass one proposal.

By June 30, the governor signs, vetoes, and can suggest changes to the budget for the legislature to consider. **You can urge the Governor to support your budget priorities.**

Timing of Non-Budget Related Bills

Year 1 of 2-year cycle- Example 2023

January 2023- bills filed and assigned a dock, then a bill number.

February 2023- Bill is read on the floor and assigned to a committee, which may re-assign it to a committee after study to determine who is best to review and vet it. **Getting legislators to cosponsor is critical to keeping the bill moving forward in the Committee.**

Spring through Winter 2023- Hearings-Get your written testimony in! You have until the Committee meets to decide on the bill to get your testimony in. **Oral testimony** puts a face and humanity on the issue, and shows how important it is to you.

Timing of Non-Budget Related Bills

Year 2 of 2-year cycle- 2024

February 2024- All bills are required to be reported out from all Committees and Joint Committees as favorably, unfavorably, go to further study, or dead on arrival.

Spring through Summer- Floor votes in House and Senate on all favorably reported bills. **This is everyone writing their legislators to vote favorably to get a 2/3 majority on the floor vote. 106 Representatives and 26 Senators.**

Fall- Legislators running for office. **Host a Candidate Forum!**

Realistically...

Timing of engagement for non-budget-related bills

- Committee hearings for bills are at various times in the year, which requires vigilance and updates from your Coalition or legislative staff. Sign up to follow a bill and get email notifications on when a bill is being heard.
- Votes are taken by the House and Senate at different times of the year.
- You can attend public hearings and do not need to register unless you are providing testimony. You can also view a recording of any hearing.

Resources

<https://reliefweb.int/report/world/peacebuilding-caritas-training-manual>

https://www.wola.org/sites/default/files/downloadable/Advocacy%20Training/past/manual_complete.pdf

<https://www.ncsl.org/ethics/how-states-define-lobbying-and-lobbyist>

Thank you to



Project Bread connects people and communities in Massachusetts to reliable sources of food while advocating for policies that make food more accessible—so that no one goes hungry.

SFPC Food Policy Priorities

- An Act Encouraging the Donation of Food to Persons in Need
- An Act Establishing basic needs assistance to MA Immigrant residents
- An Act Relative to an Agricultural Healthy Incentive Program
- An Act Establishing Farm-to-School Grants
- An Act Supporting Farm and School Partnership program in school meals
- An Act to Promote Food Literacy
- An Act Promoting Equity in Agriculture
- An Act protecting our Soil and Farms from PFAS
- An Act Relative to Raising the Minimum Wage Closer to a Living Wage in the Commonwealth
- MA Food System Budget items
- Congressional Farm Bill (every five years)

Legislative Advocacy Action Alert

Take Action NOW and contact your State Senator to co-sponsor critical Senate budget amendments.

#61. Buy Locals.

#69. Massachusetts Emergency Assistance Program (MEFAP).

#577. State-funded SNAP benefits for MA Immigrant Residents funding.

#658. Farm-to-School Grants funding.

<https://actionnetwork.org/letters/contact-your-state-senator-to-ensure-your-neighbors-and-children-have-enough-to-eat>

Register now for Eat Local Southcoast Challenge



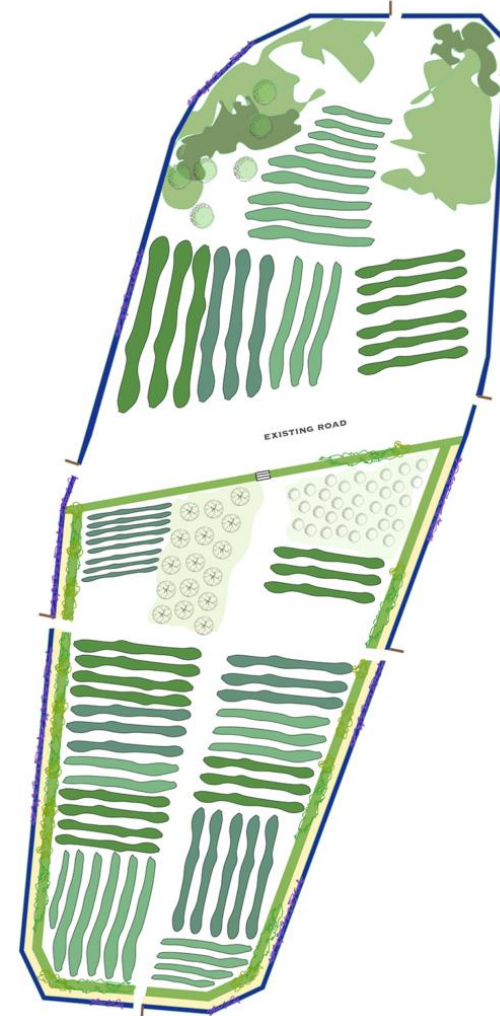
**EAT FOOD FROM
A 200-MILE RADIUS
FOR 6 WEEKS!**

JUNE 24 - JULY 27TH, 2024

#EatLocalSouthcoast
#EatLocalSoCo

Frogfoot Farm-Neighbors feeding Neighbors

Community Farm
Plymouth County, Massachusetts, 6.06 AC +/-



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Review Tasks and Next Meeting

- ❑ **Review Follow-up tasks**
- ❑ **Next meeting- August 27, 12 pm on Zoom**