



MEETING SUMMARY & NOTES:

RI Hunger Elimination Task Force Q4 Meeting

October 22, 2024 | 2:00 - 3:30 pm

Theme: State of the State of Hunger

OBJECTIVES

- *Hear updates regarding RI 2030 Food Strategy and the RI Food System Preparedness & Recovery Plan.*
- *Learn about how food security in Rhode Island has changed over 2024.*
- *Announce transition of Hunger Elimination Task Force in 2025.*

MEETING SUMMARY

The last Hunger Elimination Task Force (HETF) meeting of 2024 was on October 22. Discussion focused on the funding and sustainability needs of food delivery in Rhode Island. Panelists - Meghan Grady of RI Meals on Wheels, Jeanette Nessett of Lifespan Community Health Center, and Mariana Roa Oliva of Cartwheel - shared challenges and opportunities related to providing food delivery. Rachel Newman Greene of the RI Food Policy Council, then, introduced new HETF Action Groups, the first of which will focus on recommendations to State Agencies to improve opportunities to sustain food delivery in Rhode Island. This first HETF Action Group is meeting 3 times between now and May 5, 2024. More information on their work is to come.

AGENDA

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| 2:00 pm | Welcome |
| 2:05 pm | Updates on 2030 Food Strategy |
| 2:10 pm | Updates on RI Food System Preparedness & Recovery Plan |
| 2:15 pm | State of the State of Hunger in Rhode Island |

- Andrew Schiff, RI Community Food Bank
- Jessica Patroliia, Department of Education - Child Nutrition Programs
- Meghan Grady, Meals on Wheels RI
- William O'Donnell, RI Department of Human Services - SNAP
- Ann Barone, RI Department of Health - WIC Offices

3:00 pm Audience Question & Answer with Panelists

3:10 pm Looking Forward to 2025

3:30 pm Close

NOTES

**2:00 pm Welcome and Introductions
(Facilitated by Rachel Newman Greene, RI Food Policy Council)**

- The Hunger Elimination Task Force is a statewide network of food access, nutrition, and public health champions that work to reduce hunger and increase access to healthy, culturally-appropriate food for all RI residents. This task force is owned by the RI State Agencies involved in food system work and is facilitated by the RI Food Policy Council.
- The goal of the Hunger Elimination Task Force is to reduce hunger and increase access to healthy, culturally-appropriate food for all Rhode Island residents.
- Today's agenda begins updates on the 2030 Food Strategy and the RI Food System Preparedness and Recovery Plan. A panel of the state's anti-hunger leaders will share information regarding how food security has changed in 2024 for Rhode Islanders. Finally, we will close today's meeting with an announcement on the transition of the Hunger Elimination Task Force. with a review of key challenges for funding food delivery, discussing the state of food security and hunger in Rhode Island. We'll begin by reviewing Rhode Island's role in the New England Feeding New England partnership and these regional efforts to increase local food consumption by 2030. After our panel, we will discuss goals for the Hunger Elimination Task Force in 2024.

**2:05 pm Updates on the 2030 Food Strategy
(Overview by Alison Macbeth, RI Commerce)**

- The RI Food Strategy 2030 continues to make progress. We are in the process of updating Rhode Island's first food strategy, known as Relish

Rhody. This new plan will provide a shared roadmap to help us collectively achieve goals for a more just, resilient and sustainable food system.

- Over the summer 40 co-authors worked with over 110 contributors to draft 23 briefs. These briefs will address the current conditions, opportunities, and challenges of our food system. Each brief provides 4-6 recommendations of how we can work together to improve individuals and communities experiences with food - whether that's production of local food, access to nutritious and culturally appropriate food, or economic viability of Rhode Island food businesses. Last HETF meeting the Food & Nutrition Security co-author team shared their brief with the Hunger Elimination Task Force.
- Additionally, we convened with over 50 organizations and 80 individuals at a forum this summer. These individuals reviewed the recommendations. Teams worked together to determine priority objectives. This process is intended to create a shared vision for what we can accomplish to improve our food system by 2030.
- We are aiming to publish a final plan by early next year. Keep your eye out for public comment.

2:10 pm

**Updates on RI Food System Preparedness & Recovery Plan
(Overview by Rachel Newman Greene, RI Food Policy Council)**

- Rhode Island Food Disruption Plan is being developed in close partnership with RIEMA, RI Department of Health, Commerce Director of Food Strategy, Department of Environmental Management, EOHHS and other state offices.
- We have received input from more than 200 including people on this call who contributed.
- Plan will include 4 policy briefs on topics that were identified as specific needs through the conversations we've had throughout the state. It will also include maps of food access points around the state developed by Mark Kravatz that many of you have seen at HEZ Learning Community events. The 4 policy briefs will cover:
 - State-Level Leadership for Food-Related Emergencies
 - Capacity Building for Municipal and Tribal Emergency Management Agencies
 - Enhancing Communication Before, During and After Emergencies

- Expediting Funding in Emergencies
- Now, we are in the drafting stage, as well as answering key questions about where the plan will “sit” and responsible roles for implementation within the State. Expected completion in mid-November. More information will be released in the coming months.

2:15 pm

Panel: State of the State of Hunger in Rhode Island

Andrew Schiff, RI Community Food Bank | Jessica Patroliia, RI Department of Education | Meghan Grady, Meals on Wheels RI | William O'Donnell, RI Department of Health & Human Services

3:00 pm

HETF Transition

(Overview by Randi Belhumer, RI Department of Health)

- The Hunger Elimination Task Force was originally launched by State Government under the Raimondo Administration and then Director of Food Strategy, Sue Anderbois. Seven years ago, in October of 2017, under the leadership of Sue and the Interagency Food and Nutrition Policy Advisory Council (IFNPAC), the Hunger Elimination Task Force was born. It included the state agencies, the Food Bank, URI SNAP-ED, SNAP Outreach, the RI Public Health Institute, and the RI Coalition for the Homeless, to name a few of the organizations who served. The Task Force met for a year to discuss social determinants of food insecurity, and in October of 2018, a set of recommendations were presented to Raimondo and the IFNPAC. At that time, the recommendations were presented in five focus areas:
 1. Economic Development
 2. Expansion of Food Purchasing Power
 3. Streamlining and Maximizing Participation in Existing Assistance Programs
 4. Addressing Transit and Transit Challenges
 5. Grounding Ourselves in Data
 6. Fully Supporting the Safety Net
- Over the next year, so into 2019, the Task Force broke into groups to address some of these focus areas. There were some outcomes that came to be within these focus areas, which I don't have time to run through today, but which are available to us as we move forward with the new Food Strategy. These issue areas aren't very different now from what they were in 2018.
- Then, we had a major detour with COVID-19, this work came to a stop and, around the same time, Sue left her role as DFS. Many in state government and community came together to address the critical nature of food access throughout the pandemic. In 2020, RIDOH asked

the RI Food Policy Council to lead the Hunger Elimination Task Force while state agencies managed food access needs during the pandemic. The RI Food Policy Council, under the leadership and guidance of Nessa Richman, humbly took this on, with funding that they procured to support staff time to lead the Task Force. I was asked to step in as the RIDOH food systems liaison upon the retirement of RIDOH's Division Director. In 2021, I was able to procure COVID funding to support the Council in administering the Task Force. Fast forward to 2024, where we are about to embark on a new Food Strategy. And former DFS, Juli S. decided that now is the time to move the Task Force back into state government, where it initially began in 2017 under our new Food Strategy, 2025-2030.

- And so, here we are today, moving forward with the second edition, or new chapter of our food systems journey. On behalf of the IFNPAC, I want to thank Nessa, Max, Rachel, Allison, Josh and everyone at the Council for your continued commitment to addressing food access and nutrition insecurity in RI. You have continued to execute with grace and perseverance. And all of us within the IFNPAC look forward to working with you as this journey continues.

3:10 pm Announcements

3:30 pm Close

- Information regarding the status of the Hunger Elimination Task Force will come from members of the RI Department of Health and RI Commerce in the coming months.