



IFNPAC Q1 Meeting

Interagency Food and Nutrition Policy Advisory Council

Thursday, March 20, 2025
11:00am – 12:30 pm
Rhode Island Commerce



Agenda

1. Welcome & Introductions of New Members
2. Approve Q4 Meeting Minutes
3. Formal welcome Director of Food Strategy & DCYF to the Council
4. Local & Healthy State Food Procurement Subcommittee Update
5. RI Food Strategy 2030 & Food System Research
6. IFNPAC Agency Updates: Funding and Program Status
7. Public Comment

Welcome & Introductions

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Council Members



Department of Environmental Management (DEM)

Chair, Terry Gray, Director

Ken Ayars, Chief of Agriculture

Department of Health (RIDOH)

Randi Belhumeur, Health Program Administrator

RI Commerce Corporation (RICC)

Georgina Sarpong, Director of Food Strategy

Department of Education (RIDE)

**** Rosemary Reilly-Chammat**, Director, Office of School Health and Wellness (on IFNPAC while hiring for Child Nutrition Program Coordinator)

Department of Administration (DOA)

Max Righter, Chief Procurement Specialist

Department of Corrections (DOC)

Terrence McNamara, Administrator Physical Resources

Office of Healthy Aging (OHA)

Maria Cimini, Director

Department of Human Services (DHS)

Jenna Simeone, Assistant SNAP Administrator

Department of Children Youth & Families (DCYF)

Brandi DiDino, Deputy Director

Approve Quarter 4 Meeting Minutes

Formal welcome Director of Food Strategy & DCYF to the Council

Local & Healthy Food Procurement Subcommittee Update

Sarah Blau, HEAL Program, RI Dept of Health

Sub-committee Convening Update

- January 27, 2025 – attended RIFPC Food Business Working Group Meeting
- January 30, 2025 – first convening held
 - Reviewed project charter
 - Identified sub-committee interest, challenges and opportunities
- Identified key goals
 - Increase purchasing transparency
- Upcoming: send invitation for regular meetings

RI Food Strategy 2030



Georgina Sarpong, Director of Food Strategy

Alison Macbeth, Food Strategy Project Manager

RI Commerce



Planning for RI's Food Strategy 2030



- ✓ 2024 - 2030
- ✓ Planning supported by backbone agencies Commerce, RIDEM & RIDOH
- ✓ Co-created and “whole of government” approach
- ✓ Dynamic and iterative
- ✓ Equity-centered and participatory planning informed by impacted communities, industries and stakeholders
- ✓ Accessible and measurable impact metrics

Development of the 2030 Food Strategy has been guided by four principles:



Collective impact: Effective implementation and enduring success is dependent upon cooperation across a broad and inclusive network of collaborators. Collective impact brings people together in a structured way to learn together and align their actions in service to achieving systems change.



Equity: Negative impacts of environmental, economic and public health outcomes of our food system disproportionately impact communities of color and low-income communities. Decision-making must be designed to involve all those that stand to be impacted by action—or inaction—and prioritize outcomes that strengthen equity throughout the food system.



Sustainability: Food system impacts natural ecosystems and are uniquely vulnerable to changes in weather and climate. Rhode Island's future food system activities must operate in alignment with nature, recognizing, respecting, and working within natural boundaries, which includes transitioning from extractive to regenerative practices.



Regionality: Disruptions to global and national food system can have immediate and persistent impacts locally, but when we don't have enough farmers or fishermen Rhode Island cannot simply pivot to supporting demand with local production. A resilient food system is defined by its ability to mitigate disruption, maintain food security amidst shocks, and recover or adapt with expediency to changes. Resiliency can be increased through strategically redundant and flexible infrastructure, diversified and transparent supply chains, active partner networks and regional collaboration.

RI FOOD STRATEGY - PROCESS



PHASE 0 (Process Development & Fundraising)

- ✓ [Steering Committee](#) Formed
- ✓ [Northbound Ventures](#) was selected through a competitive bid process to provide consulting services throughout process.
- ✓ Funding through the [Henry P. Kendall Foundation](#), [Rhode Island Foundation](#) and [RI Commerce](#) secured.

PHASE 1 (Initial Outreach & Early Engagement)

- ✓ [Advisory Board](#) established
- ✓ The [5 Year Retrospective](#) published
- ✓ Develop Crosscutting, issue and market briefs co-authored by subject matter experts

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- ✓ Develop Crosscutting, issue and market briefs co-authored by subject matter experts

PHASE 2 (Research & Development of RI Food Strategy 2030)

- ✓ Draft strategies/plan from the issue briefs
- ✓ Hold public listening sessions
- ☐ Public comment period

PHASE 3 (Public Launch, Outreach, & Implementation)

- ☐ Launch & widely distribute completed plan
- ☐ Drive implementation of strategies – integrate!



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PRIORITIES are the desired outcomes of collective action

Links are provided to relevant **BRIEFS**

INDICATORS with publicly available data are highlighted (data sources are linked in each Brief)

PARTNERS include organizations that can increase the odds of collective success

RELATED PLANS AND PROGRAMS include other resources related to the recommended Action



ACTION 1.1

Maintain Rhode Island's limited farmland in sustainable production

BRIEF:

6. Stewardship of Food Producing Lands

INDICATORS:

Number of Farms
1,054

Land in Agriculture
59,076 acres

Farmland under Conservation Easement
8,253 acres

Farmland Real Estate Value
\$22,900

Value of Ag Sales
\$86,647,363

Sales by Size of Farm
2.1% of farms accounted for 49.7% of sales

Working lands are areas actively managed for agriculture, forestry, fiber, or other production practices. In 2022, Rhode Island had 59,000 acres of land in agriculture, with 46% (27,500 acres) concentrated in Washington County alone. The state's 864 food-producing farms generated \$30.6 million in sales (35.3% of total agricultural sales) from vegetables, milk, fruits, berries, livestock, grains, and hay. As temperatures and extreme precipitation increase, disruptions such as flooding, extreme heat, and drought will increasingly impact growing conditions for crops and the health of livestock and workers, compounding existing pressures of development and the highest cost of farmland per acre in the United States (\$22,000 per acre). Under a "Business as Usual" scenario, the American Farmland Trust projects that Rhode Island could lose 13.7% of current farmland (8,100 acres) to development by 2040, even as the region's food resiliency vision, [New England Feeding New England](#), calls for the region to add **almost one million acres** into production. That is an area the size of Rhode Island. Since 1985, the [Farmland Preservation Program](#) has conserved 8,253 acres by easement.

The cost to lose working lands will be far greater than protecting them, so efforts need to accelerate to meet the rate of loss. Helping farmers to increase profitability and scale existing production would be a valuable and a sustainable model for increasing local production. Reductions in restrictions, support with market fluctuations, investments in the market chain to stimulate markets, supports with scaling operations, and dealing with the disparities in the cost of production versus market value would all be beneficial.

PARTNERS

Farmers	Municipalities	RIIB	RI Commerce
Legislators	Department of Administration: Division of Planning Land Use Section	RI Resource Conservation and Development Area Council	Agricultural Lands Preservation Commission (ALPC)
Land trusts	State Conservation Commission	Conservation advocates (e.g., American Farmland Trust)	Researchers

RELATED PLANS AND PROGRAMS:

- [Farmland Preservation Program](#)
- [Land Use 2025](#)
- [2025 Climate Action Strategy](#)
- [Local Open Space Grant Program](#)
- [Farmland Access Program Competitive Grant Program](#)

ACTIONS are specific interventions – capacity building, coordination, funding and investment, research and knowledge sharing, policy and regulations—identified to advance each priority

A **CHAMPION** is the lead state agency or food system network organization best positioned to centralize information and coordinate activity among partners—individuals, organizations, and coalitions—who have an interest or expertise to be incorporated

DESCRIPTIONS seek to establish the current context of challenges and opportunities for each topic



1. Secure the state's long-term food production and harvesting capacity

ACTION 1.1

Maintain Rhode Island's limited farmland in sustainable production

ACTION 1.2

Increase land access for farmers through fair succession transactions and use agreements and ensure beginning, BIPOC, and veteran farmers are competitive in acquisition processes

ACTION 1.3

Expand urban and peri-urban food production

ACTION 1.4

Accelerate adoption of restorative ecosystem practices to mitigate climate change and ensure adequate healthy water and soils

ACTION 1.5

Incentivize new entrants to the agricultural and commercial fisheries professions

ACTION 1.6

Encourage and facilitate coordination and communication between regional, state, interstate and federal regulatory bodies and fishing and aquaculture industry operators

ACTION 1.7

Invest in climate-smart indoor fresh food production



2. Invest in local and regional food value chain development

ACTION 2.1

Increase wastewater processing infrastructure to relocalize small-to-medium capacity seafood processing

ACTION 2.2

Increase funding for and expand participation in the Local Agriculture and Seafood Act

ACTION 2.3

Develop second-stage food business capacity

ACTION 2.4

Support local and regional food hubs as essential value-chain partners in small food business viability



3. Create community food environments that promote equitable food access and contribute to regional resiliency

ACTION 3.1

Support community-led efforts to improve neighborhood access to fresh, local and culturally relevant food

ACTION 3.2

Simplify access to integrated nutrition

ACTION 3.3

Engage grocery retailers and food service establishments to source more Rhode Island and regional food

ACTION 3.4

Increase public institutional procurement of local products, including locally-landed and processed seafood

ACTION 3.5

Build support for universal free school meals in Rhode Island schools

ACTION 3.6

Restore Indigenous sovereign rights to waterways, hunting grounds and open space for food gathering

ACTION 3.7

Provide a living wage to food preparation and serving workers



4. Scale up wasted food prevention, recovery, and recycling efforts

ACTION 4.1

Strengthen RI's Food Waste Ban and ensure sufficient funding for agencies to provide staffing for enforcement

ACTION 4.2

Maximize surplus food value and reduce wasted food by creating alternative pathways and partnerships

ACTION 4.3

Incentivize and remove barriers to increasing residential and commercial composting infrastructure and implementation

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR COUNCIL MEMBERS

- Based on the time spent creating this plan and now looking at the priorities, what are your first thoughts on how these actions will be implemented?
- What can IFNPAC do to operationalize the RI Food Strategy 2030?
- How can the Food Strategy program support each IFNPAC agency in implementation?

IFNPAC Agency Updates

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NEXT IFNPAC MEETINGS 2025

Tuesday, June 10th, 9:30-11am

Tuesday, September 9th, 9:30-11am

Tuesday, December 9th, 9:30-11am