

January 14, 2026

Dear Governor Healey,

In December a group of eighty Massachusetts farmers, fishermen, and nonprofit organizations responsible for implementing the Local Food Purchase Assistance (hereinafter, LFPA) programs sent the following letter to your Anti-Hunger Task Force highlighting the profound impact of LFPA funds on both Massachusetts growers and families facing food insecurity.

Coming from across the state and representing many different roles, the signatories on the letter share a commitment to a simple truth: communities are strongest when everyone has access to nourishing food and when the people who grow and distribute that food can count on stable, dignified work. LFPA helped make that possible in ways Massachusetts had not seen before.

The LFPA and LFPA Plus supported values that resonate far beyond agriculture. These values reflected a belief in fairness, in shared responsibility, and in the power of local relationships to meet local needs. LFPA and LFPA Plus programs connected food producers, food access organizations, and communities in ways that honored each group's contributions. These grant programs created steady markets for farmers and fishermen, especially BIPOC and underserved farmers who have been excluded for far too long and ensured that households facing hardship received regular access to foods that supported their health and reflected their cultures.

LFPA and LFPA Plus were broad and meaningful: \$11.3 million of Massachusetts' LFPA awards were spent on food purchased from local farmers and fishermen. 31 projects received support; nearly 500 farmers and food producers participated, 40% of whom self-identified as BIPOC. More than 700 community sites received local food, including pantries, senior centers, schools, health programs, and mutual aid efforts. These numbers matter, but what mattered more was the trust and consistency that communities experienced.

Across Massachusetts, farms and organizations shaped their seasons and staffing around LFPA and LFPA Plus. They aligned planting and distribution schedules, strengthened storage and transportation capacity, and built partnerships rooted in trust and shared purpose. These programs helped build infrastructure and relationships that extended beyond program administration – we were weaving together a community food system.

**LFPA Stories from across Massachusetts:**

Unique and significant to Massachusetts' LFPA and LFPA Plus programs were the regional models developed by each organization and tailored to the specific needs and conditions of the foodsheds across the state. Notable examples from across the Commonwealth include:

**In Boston:** Through LFPA funding, Boston Area Gleaners was able to support over 60 growers across the state and generate a steady supply of fresh produce to communities in Metro-west and Greater Boston. Most critically, LFPA allowed the Gleaners to crop plan with several new farmers - the guaranteed sale of their product gave them time and flexibility to focus on building their business. On the other end of the supply chain, our pantry partners received fresh, locally grown produce as well as a range of items rarely seen in the emergency food system.

**In North Central Massachusetts:** Growing Places distributed Fresh Boxes valued at \$50 each, containing locally grown whole and lightly processed produce — such as freeze-dried apples and ripple-round butternut squash cuts — through diverse community-based organizations serving food-insecure populations. Each Fresh Box also included information about SNAP and the MA Healthy Incentive Program (HIP), along with a QR code linking recipients to local application assistance and retailers

**In Worcester:** World Farmers partnered with nine community organizations and churches spearheading emergency food efforts to distribute food sourced from immigrant, refugee, and other farmers in Massachusetts. In Worcester, World Farmers' distribution partner was the Southeast Asian Coalition of Central Massachusetts (SEACMA). Through SEACMA's work in community access to healthcare, housing, youth/elder programs, and programs facilitating economic development, SEACMA has relationships with a wide network of food insecure families in Central Massachusetts and beyond. Through LFPA, SEACMA developed food access programming to meet the growing needs of their constituents, increasing food security for some of the most hard-to-reach individuals. More than distributing food, this program served as an avenue for information distribution, public health education, and contact with isolated individuals.

**In Essex County (North Shore):** Farmer Stacey Apple from Iron Ox Farm (Hamilton, MA) says that the program “provided massive purchasing support that has been vital to our farm. About 1/3 of our wholesale business revenue was from Nourishing the North Shore buying produce from us in 2024. They are doing something unique and so needed. Our low-income residents who are food insecure deserve to eat as well as anyone else. Farmers also deserve to be paid fair prices for their produce.”

**In the Greater New Bedford and Greater Fall River area:** Kate Hunter of Real Pickles said “We were honored to partner with Coastal Foodshed in distributing fresh, locally sourced, healthy food to those facing food insecurity - free of charge! Working with a mission-aligned organization that is committed to creating a stronger and more equitable food system helps us in our mission of working towards a more democratic food system in which people have more power to decide what food is available and how it is produced, resulting in a cleaner, safer, more diverse food supply.

**On Cape Cod:** The LFPA Land and Sea initiative advanced Cape Cod Cooperative Extension's (CCCE's) food access work by getting fresh, locally sourced food from the region's farms and food producers into underserved communities through an extensive network of organizations, healthcare agencies and schools. CCCE's comprehensive plan involved a multi-faceted approach:

- At least 100 bags of locally sourced produce were provided weekly (at no cost), to organizations across Cape Cod through a partnership with Cape Abilities Farm, which cultivates a diverse and inclusive community for people of all abilities. LFPA funds were used to purchase and assemble 6,140 bags of produce, distributed to over 65 organizations.
- LFPA funds supported the Cape Cod fishing industry by purchasing locally caught and processed haddock chowder and fish stew from Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen's Alliance (CCCFA), and distributed, at no cost, to socially underserved communities.
- Cape Cod has been an immigration destination for hundreds of years, yet Cape Cod's farming community today largely lacks diversity. Cape Cod Cooperative Extension provided financial support for the Haitian, Jamaican, Brazilian and Cape Verdean's culturally appropriate community gardens to grow food for their communities. By providing this support, a self-sufficient model for sustainability was established.

**In Springfield:** a collaboration between the Springfield Food Policy Council, Gardening the Community, World Farmers, and five established nonprofit distribution partners, distributed produce and protein shares to low-income households through free culturally informed farm shares. They purchased from refugee, immigrant, and BIPOC farmers in Hampden County to increase participation in wholesale market sales.

- Participating Socially Disadvantaged farmers demonstrated an increase in sales as a result of the partnership's technical assistance and wholesale market opportunity;
- Low-income and BIPOC populations experienced increased access to healthy foods that were customized to meet their cultural food preferences;
- Successful collaborations with distribution partners resulted in a stronger, more resilient local food system with equitable access to healthy food at its core.

**In the Connecticut River Valley:** At the Northampton Survival Center, \$69,000 of LFPA funds were used to purchase locally grown produce, eggs, and milk from area farmers, prioritizing sourcing from socially disadvantaged growers and women-owned businesses. These products reached over 4,000 food-insecure residents of Hampshire County served by the Center's three modes of distribution: drive-through pantry hours, on-line ordering with curbside pick-up appointments, and deliveries to low-income, senior, and disabled housing sites, as well as others who are unable to travel to the pantry.

**In the Hilltowns:** Through the Hilltown Market, the Hilltown CDC provided free CSA shares for food-insecure residents, expanded our free “Help Yourself” fridge, brought free pop-up farmers markets to senior housing sites, and delivered local seasonal food to nine rural pantries. A voucher program also allowed households to choose local products with free home delivery. These efforts directed the full value of the grants back into the local food system, supporting 37 small farms while also increasing access to healthy, locally grown food.

**In the Berkshires:** Over the course of the two LFPA grants, Berkshire Grown used the funding to purchase \$1,083,526 of locally grown produce, meat, dairy, and eggs from 49 local farms.

- LFPA Plus funds enabled us to distribute approximately \$45,000 of locally grown food every month for 17 months, to more than 12,000 individuals per week at 26 food access sites across Berkshire County.
- The large-scale purchasing contracts enabled participating farms to scale up, with some farms using advance funding to buy additional equipment in order to grow their production.
- LFPA funding provided farms with the assurance of contracted product sales and contributed to the bottom line of their financial stability.

In March 2025, USDA awarded Massachusetts \$6.4 million of funding for a future round of LFPA. Weeks later, USDA cancelled the federal program. The decision to stop the LFPA grant program landed hardest on the people who had already planned, budgeted, and committed their time and labor based on the promise of continued support. Farmers lost the reliable markets they had prepared for months in advance and organizations had to reduce or cancel food distributions that their communities were counting on. Early investments in aggregation, storage, processing, and distribution were suddenly paused. Canceling LFPA was not simply an administrative change. It disrupted a growing ecosystem of trust, coordination, and shared responsibility. Communities that had finally started to experience stability felt it slip away again.

Massachusetts now has the opportunity to honor the work that has already been done and to continue moving toward a more resilient and just food system. A state-led program, modeled on the best of LFPA, would:

- Rebuild reliable and fair markets for local producers.
- Restore consistent access to fresh, locally grown, culturally meaningful foods in underserved communities.
- Strengthen the local supply chain infrastructure that organizations and communities depend on.
- Increase long-term resilience by protecting Massachusetts from abrupt federal funding shifts.
- Advance food equity for the people most affected by food insecurity.

We urge you to include \$7,000,000 in your 2027 budget for the creation and funding of a Massachusetts-based version of LFPA. As a group of dedicated nonprofit leaders, we will work with you to match that \$7 million with support from corporate philanthropy, which we believe will proudly jump on board when they witness your enthusiastic support of the LFPA model.

With your strong leadership, Massachusetts can transform what began as a temporary federal response into a lasting commitment to local food, community wellbeing, and economic justice. The Commonwealth has the expertise, the partnerships, and the proven models to build a program that reflects our values and protects our food system from federal uncertainty. Without state action, the progress made over the past three years will be lost, and the burden will fall on those already carrying the heaviest load.

Thank you for your commitment to a resilient, just, and locally-rooted food system in Massachusetts.

Sincerely,

**LFPA Working Group**

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Robyn Burns, Executive Director, The Salem Pantry

**Farmers, food producers and food security organization signatories:**

Aeonian Farm, Westport

AgeSpan, Essex County  
Among Friends Meal Program, Newburyport  
Bardwell Farm, Hatfield  
Barrett's Mill Farm, Concord  
Baystate Health, Springfield  
Berkshire Bounty, Berkshire County  
Bigfoot Farm, Williamstown  
Bombeta Farms, Worcester  
Bread of Life Ministry, Lancaster  
BRIDGE - Solidarity Farm & Garden, Great Barrington  
Copicut Farms, Dartmouth  
Damien's Food Pantry, Wareham  
Dancing Greens Farm, Great Barrington  
Educare Springfield, Springfield  
Fab Farms, Worcester County  
Field of Love Farm, Sheffield  
Fitchburg Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Fitchburg  
Flying Carrot Farm, Dartmouth  
Food For Free, Middlesex County  
Gardner Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Gardner  
Groundwork Farm, Westport  
Heart Beets Farm, Berkley  
High Road Farm, Essex County  
Hilltown Market, Worthington  
Hopes Farms, Worcester County  
Intervale Farm, Westhampton  
Iron Ox Farm, Hamilton  
JuahKumbah Farm, Worcester County  
Jwakis USA Farms, Worcester County  
Kitchen Garden Farm, Sunderland

Late Bloom Farm, Haverhill  
Lexavah Farms, Clinton  
Lilac Hedge Farm, Holden and Rutland  
Marty's Local Inc., South Deerfield  
Merrimack Valley Food Bank  
Momentum Ag / The Farm Lab, Chesterfield and Florence  
Mumbet's Freedom Farm, Berkshire County  
New Song Farms, Worcester County  
Noel's Farms, Worcester County  
Off the Shelf Farm, Great Barrington  
Our Neighbors' Table, Salisbury  
PACC Global, Brockton  
PACE Inc., New Bedford  
Pioneer Valley Growers Association, South Deerfield  
Public Health Institute of Western MA, Springfield  
Reed Farm, Amherst and Sunderland  
Round the Bend Farm, Dartmouth  
Savoy Mountain Farm, Savoy  
Sibling Crops, Brockton  
Skinny Dip Farm, Westport  
Southeast Asian Coalition of Central Massachusetts, Worcester County  
Southeastern Massachusetts Agricultural Partnership, Bristol, Norfolk and Plymouth Counties  
Stonebridge Farm & Keshtyar Seed, Chesterfield  
Temple Sinai of Sharon, Sharon  
The Marion Institute, Marion  
The Neighborhood Farm, Westport  
The Trustees of Reservations, Appleton Farms, Ipswich  
Three Sisters Garden Project, Ipswich  
Tiani Gardens, Stoughton and Norfolk  
Trinity Farms, Worcester County

Underground Mushroom Co., Gloucester

Winter Moon Roots, Hadley

Winters Farm, Rehoboth