OUR VISION IS A RHODE ISLAND WITH:

- Increasing Production of, and Demand for, Local Food
- A Thriving and Just Food Economy
- Access to Affordable, Healthful, Culturally Relevant Food for All Residents
- Community Health for all Residents
- A Sustainable Environment
OUR MISSION

To promote an equitable, accessible, economically vibrant, and environmentally sustainable food system for all Rhode Islanders.
AGENDA

- Why food policy is important
- How laws are made in RI
- Why advocate?
- How do I advocate?
- Food policy priorities for 2023
- Panel discussion
- Q&A
RHODE ISLAND FOOD SYSTEM HIGHLIGHTS

$11B
FOOD SECTOR
ECONOMIC OUTPUT

75,800
FOOD JOBS

55,000
ACRES IN FARMLAND

1,043
FARMS

$100M
WILD-CAUGHT SEAFOOD AND
AQUACULTURE VALUE

1 IN 6
HOUSEHOLDS STRUGGLING
WITH HUNGER

RIFPC’s mission aligns with the state’s food strategy:
KEY POINTS FROM THE 2022 NETWORK SURVEY

High-Priority Activities for Improving RI’s Food System by 2030:

- Preserve and protect agricultural land
- Reduce inequity in the food system
- Support small food businesses (providing capital & technical assistance)
- Ensure access to affordable, culturally-appropriate food for all people
- Promote climate-smart practices

512 TOTAL RESPONSES
ADVOCACY

noun
ad·vo·ca·cy
/ˈadvəkəsē/

Public support for or recommendation of a particular cause or policy.
WHY ADVOCATE?

The nonprofit sector can’t do it alone.

Public policy can play a powerfully positive role in making the world a better place, but can also be a destructive force.
“While all lobbying is advocacy, not all advocacy is lobbying. Advocacy is any action that speaks in favor of, recommends, argues for a cause, supports or defends, or pleads on behalf of others. It includes public education, regulatory work, litigation, and work before administrative bodies, lobbying, nonpartisan voter registration, nonpartisan voter education, and more.”

- The Alliance for Justice
ADVOCACY CAN BE...

- Asking your community’s zoning board for permission to have a farmer’s market in an underserved neighborhood
- Requesting a parking variance in a park to allow for a meal truck to serve people without housing
- Arranging a meeting with an elected official and then educating them about the value of a job training program for food businesses that uses public funding
- Convening community leaders in an emergency to develop solutions for community members in need
LOBBYING IS...

Communicating with decision makers (elected officials and staff; voters on ballot measures) about existing or potential legislation and urging a vote for or against.

All three components of this definition are required: **decision makers + actual legislation + asking for a vote**
HOW MUCH LOBBYING CAN A NONPROFIT DO?

Nonprofits can lobby; the key is to make sure it remains at a level that is acceptable to the IRS.
ADVOCATING IN AN ELECTION YEAR

✅ YOU CAN

- Advocate for an issue
- Sponsor a candidate appearance
- Sponsor a candidates debate
- Invite an elected official to an event
- Try to persuade an elected official to agree with you on an issue and take a public stand
- Work to get your issues on a political party’s platform
- Get out the vote! (In a nonpartisan way)

🚫 YOU CAN’T

- Contribute any cash or in-kind support to a campaign
- Support a specific candidate
- Endorse a candidate
IT ISN’T EASY...

Influencing public policy change can be difficult and complex, particularly for those with limited power and resources.
BUT WE CAN DO IT!

1. Inform and activate your network
2. Research the impact of policy issues
3. Educate policy makers and the public
4. Join forces to create a louder voice
POLICY PRIORITIES FOR THE 2023 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Preserve our farms

Ensure food access

Protect our environment

Support our businesses
Support land access for farming across Rhode Island by ensuring consistent, adequate funding for the Agriculture Land Preservation Commission, increased and sustained funding for the Farmland Access Program, and by creating a funded “Urban Farmland Access Program.”
Develop a comprehensive strategy for minimizing and diverting wasted food going into the landfill that includes tax incentives for excess food donation as well as wider mandates and increased support for residential and commercial organic waste composting.
Support new, sustainable avenues for local farmers, seafood harvesters and other businesses (e.g., manufacturers and restaurants) to easily sell and deliver nutritious food to direct and indirect wholesale (e.g. school) markets that serve food insecure communities and residents.
POLICY PRIORITIES FOR THE 2023 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Support our businesses

Support second stage food businesses with shared-use infrastructure, marketing and technical assistance, grants, tax incentives, and low-cost loans. Require that a set percentage of selected incentives and grants go to historically underserved business owners.
PANEL DISCUSSION
MEET OUR PANELISTS

KERRI CONNOLLY
Deputy Director
RI Public Health Institute

PRISCILLA DE LA CRUZ
Senior Director of Government Affairs
Audubon Society of RI
President
Environment Council of RI

RYAN MULCAHEY
Director of Legislative Affairs
RI Department of Environmental Management
QUESTIONS?
TAKE ACTION, GET INVOLVED!

Right Now:

- Follow @rifoodcouncil on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn & Twitter
- Sign up for our newsletter rifoodcouncil.org/news
- Join a Work Group (Climate, Food Access, Food Business, Wasted Food, Farm Bill)
- Join the Hunger Elimination Task Force (next meeting October 18)

In January:

- Apply to be a Council Member (Applications open January 10)

In April:

- Respond to our annual stakeholder priorities survey