



2022 ANNUAL REPORT
**Anchored in the Power
of the Network**

**RI FOOD
POLICY
COUNCIL**



RHODE ISLAND FOOD SYSTEM HIGHLIGHTS



\$12B

Economic impact of Rhode Island's food system



63,900

Number of food systems-related jobs in Rhode Island



\$13.73

Average hourly wage for workers in RI's largest category of food system jobs: food preparation and serving. These are the lowest wages of any occupational category in the state.



56,864

Acres of agricultural land in Rhode Island



\$600M

Annual sales from Rhode Island's seafood and fisheries sector



348

Acres of aquaculture farms in Rhode Island waters



31%

Households in Rhode Island that are food insecure and unable to afford adequate food



100,000

Tons of food waste (vegetative and protein) entering the landfill. This compostable and sometimes edible material is the biggest single type of waste entering RI's landfill.

LETTER FROM THE NETWORK DIRECTOR

THE MOST WIDESPREAD AFFLICTION THAT PEOPLE SUFFER FROM IS A LACK OF BELIEF IN THEIR OWN POWER
— YUNG PUEBLO



2022 was another incredibly challenging year for all of us. Severe drought, high rates of food insecurity, and myriad challenges for food businesses – from farms and seafood distributors to grocery stores and restaurants. Existential threats to a just and resilient food system call for a powerful response, and the RI Food Policy Council stepped up to fight for an equitable, accessible, economically vibrant, and environmentally sustainable food system in the Ocean State with all of the power inherent in our network.

Black and Brown Rhode Islanders continue to suffer disproportionately from systemic inequality in our food system. In the face of this, we came together to achieve a number of hard-won victories. These victories advance racial justice and lay the groundwork for more progress in 2023 and beyond. Our work has never been more important, or more promising.

Throughout this report you will learn more about our victories, meet some of our amazing members, and get a look at our ambitious plans for 2023.

In 2022, we gained unprecedented state support for the Rhode Island Local Agriculture and Seafood Act Grant Program. We fought successfully for the passage of a Cottage Food Law allowing residents to legally sell homemade baked goods. We fought for our state's critical farmland protection programs and advocated for important changes to make it easier for older Rhode Islanders to apply for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Our seminal report on *Policy Recommendations for Rhode Island's Food System: 2023-2030* lays out top priorities for achieving a just and resilient food system

in the state, and exhorts state officials to lead on these issues. We helped dozens of farms, fishers, and food businesses to apply for state and Federal funding, which resulted in hundreds of thousands of dollars flowing into this critical economic sector. And we built on our wins for food equity when we led development of the state's first Environmental, Sustainability, and Management Associate Degree at the Community College of Rhode Island, which launched this past August.

These victories benefit all Rhode Islanders, and they help make our state a national leader in supporting small and beginning farmers and fishers, cultivating underserved food entrepreneurs, and integrating food systems priorities into long-range climate policy and state plans. In 2023, we will leverage this momentum to further our strategic objectives to:

- Increase food access, security, justice, and sovereignty for marginalized Rhode Islanders by coordinating and advocating for changes that enable all people to eat healthy, nutritious, culturally and religiously appropriate food of their own choice, regardless of zip code.
- Support the economic strength and resilience of RI food businesses, especially those that have been historically under-served and/or under-resourced.

- Create, contribute to, and advocate for policy that integrates climate, justice, environment, and food recovery in a way that centers social responsibility and economic equity at the municipal, state and Federal levels.
- Provide leadership, resources, and direction to state food system planning and policymaking in alignment with RIFPC's commitment to equity.
- Empower the network - current Council, Council alumni, and the broader network – to build community power and affect positive change in alignment with our mission.

Our network has proven time and time again that real change is possible and in fact inevitable when we work together toward a common goal of a just and resilient food system. Thank you all for your ongoing support of RIFPC!

Sincerely,



Nessa Richman
Network Director

2022: A PIVOTAL YEAR

We stayed true to our mission this year and made substantial progress toward our vision of a more just and resilient food system. We remain aligned with the State of Rhode Island’s food strategy and the Food Solutions New England “50 by 60” vision. RIFPC is also broadening our reach into supporting a more sustainable regional food system as a partner in the New England Feeding New England initiative.

RIFPC’s network grew in size, strength, character, and diversity in 2022. We stayed focused on our core strengths, centered equity more strongly than ever before, and together, we:



Supported food sovereignty for marginalized RI residents



Influenced an increase in the amount of public funding flowing to the development of our local and regional food system



Gained more statewide and regional recognition by expanding outreach and advocacy that champions more equitable food systems policy



Leveraging the Local Agriculture and Seafood Act Grant Program for All



Driving Investments and Helping Build Capacity for Fellow Local Food Systems Champions



Making Advocacy More Accessible to All



Supporting Structure, Sustaining Stakeholders

Leveraging the Local Agriculture and Seafood Act Grant Program for All



The goal of the Local Agriculture and Seafood Act (LASA) grant program is to support the growth, development, and marketing of local food and seafood in Rhode Island. In 2022, this support was funded via non-state sources in an effort to encourage more applications from underserved applicants and full utilization of expanded funding availability, however, applications are in the English language only, and require the use of technological tools.

LASA funding expanded to \$700,000 this year, largely in part thanks to advocacy work by members of the RIFPC network. In order to support more underserved farmers and fishers, RIFPC provided grant preparation support to potential applicants and legislative advocacy in the form of testimony, annual impact reports, and more.

Driving Investments and Helping Build Capacity for Fellow Local Food Systems Champions



Providing technical assistance to state agencies, food system businesses, nongovernmental organizations, and community-based organizations increased their success in leveraging public (Federal) and private funding. RIFPC identified relevant resources and did direct outreach to eligible applicants, as well as offered a variety of technical assistance by way of meetings, group webinars, one-on-ones, NOFA reviews, proposal management services, narrative and budget reviews, and other useful services applicants requested.

MAKING PROGRESS THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

As a network-based organization, everything we do is done through partnerships. This year we worked to deepen our connections with partners as well as build new relationships that enriched the Council's network and increased our collective efficacy. Our partners – a majority of which serve BIPOC communities - informed programs, pilots, and advocacy initiatives around:

Food Access

- We submitted an LFPP which will support three nonprofits
- We have supported applications on the part of others through at least 10 letters of support

Food Business

- We provided technical assistance with language support to at least 6 nonprofits, 4 farms, and 6 food businesses
- We partnered with core technical assistance providers to leverage their considerable capacity for supporting our food sector businesses
- Our Food Business Work Group, together with small business owners and business service providers informed business-related policy and investment priorities that address current food business sector pain points
- We helped the state apply for programs including LFPA, the Farm to School Grant Program, the EDA program
- We built network ties with business service providers who primarily serve BIPOC owned businesses in order to inform this process and engage them as partner

Food Systems and Climate

- We engaged with the Director of Food Strategy, Commerce RI, and the RI Department of Labor and Training to ensure that state programs and services are a well represented and established element within the process

Food Education

- We launched the new Environment & Sustainability Management Associate Degree program at the Community College of Rhode Island, in partnership with the RI Landscape & Nursery Association

Making Advocacy More Accessible to All



In part of welcoming more engagement in work groups and advocacy-related efforts, RIFPC was active in creating various channels and holding space for Rhode Islanders to share their perspectives, highlight important issues, and speak up within their personal comfort-levels. We were successful in advocating for equitable food system policy priorities related to food access & public health, food business, seafood, and food & environment by connecting with lawmakers and food systems influencers through:

- Sharing frequent public reminders inviting anyone interested to join in Work Group activity
- Developing and widely sharing RIFPC's Policy Recommendations for Elected Officials 2023-2030
- Hosting three legislative roundtable events that welcomed 10 legislators, elected officials, representatives from Co-Dels, and other food systems stakeholders
- Launching a new, content-rich website that includes RI's most comprehensive food systems information database

- Submitting a Letter of Testimony for making it easy for older adults to sign up for SNAP to the RI Legislature
- Memo to General Assembly in Support of \$10 Million in Governor's Budget
- Submitting our network's priorities to the team planning the national strategy to end hunger, improve nutrition and physical activity, and close the disparities surrounding them (announced at the White House Conference on Hunger, Health, and Nutrition)
- Submitting a Letter of Support for the cottage food bill to RI's General Assembly

“RIFPC workgroups and sessions have truly made me feel like I have been granted ‘behind the scenes’ access on how certain things happen in RI. In simply attending and listening, I have learned much about processes and have picked up a few resources that I have been able to share with my teams to help in our daily work. The people are always welcoming, and open to share ideas. I am able to speak my mind, share my experience around many topics, and bring the voice of my community with me to these tables.”

— **Swanette Salazar**

Community Health Worker

Family Service of Rhode Island

2022: A PIVOTAL YEAR

Supporting Structure, Sustaining Stakeholders

RIFPC proudly serves as the backbone network for food system stakeholders in Rhode Island and co-lead the New England State Food System Planners Partnership for the 'New England Feeding New England' project. We are dedicated to being a trusted resource, dependable partner, and authentic leader in championing justice and resiliency.



ENGAGEMENT INCREASES

We have experienced a surge of interest and engagement since 2021. Enhanced staffing capacity, intentional development of a more diverse network, and an increase of public interest in food-related issues have all contributed to the broadest, and most interactive network RIFPC has ever fostered. All of these numbers have exceeded 2021's counts by a significant amount.

29%

Overall increase in web-based followers

38

Record number of individuals to apply to join the Council

50%

New BIPOC-identifying Council Members to onboard

512

Record number of respondents to our Annual Food Systems Stakeholder Survey

161

Attendees at RIFPC-hosted educational and informational events

7,012

Web-based followers since January 2021 (an increase of 29%)

7

Active work groups

+46

Number of BIPOC individuals participating in the Hunger Elimination Task Force

9

BIPOC-led Community Based Organization and food producers we helped apply for funding and support



THE NETWORK, BY THE NUMBERS

Staying connected and informed has never been more important to making progress. RIFPC continues to adapt and innovate ways to engage current, former, and future network members. We have invested in cultivating strong relationships across sectors, engaging in diverse learning and professional development opportunities, and in providing a community in which all Rhode Islanders can be their authentic selves.



NETWORK METRICS

8

Board Meetings

5

Full Council Meetings

275

Work Group members



POLICY METRICS

\$26.9M

Investments recommended for ARPA funds

7

Times testimony was provided

200

Food systems-related bills tracked



EDUCATION METRICS

16

Presentations by staff and Council

35

Educational meetings/trainings organized

196

People attending organized meetings/trainings

REFLECTIONS ON 2022 FROM THE BOARD

The power of working together in groups, even very small groups, is always revealed over time. What seems impossible one day turns out to be doable; what sounds crazy idealistic becomes a possibility. Margaret Mead said it best: “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.” We learn this lesson, happily, every year at the RI Food Policy Council.

For working on food system projects great and small in 2022, thank you to the wide world of food makers, activists, funders, eaters and all others who worked on getting more good food to more people through more local food businesses. There is a rich list of ‘to do’s’ for 2023 and we look forward to your company.

— **Diane Lynch**

RIFPC Board President and Council Alumni

2022 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Diane Lynch

President

Steven J. Arthurs

Courtney Bourns

Thea Upham

2022 STAFF

Nessa Richman

Network Director

Josh Daly

Associate Director

Caitlin Mandel

Food Access & Equity Program Manager

Allison Montagnon

Communications Manager

2022 COUNCIL

Denisse Abreu

MPH, CCHW, Care New England

Steve Arthurs

Rhode Island Food Dealers Association

Jazandra Barros

Southside Community Land Trust, Co-Chair

Tara Lynn Cimini

Thundermist in collaboration with
Warwick & Woonsocket Health Equity
Zones, Weaver Library Farmers Market
& D'Abate Youth Garden

Raul Figuera

Fuerza Laboral

Rose Forrest

Sodexo

Meghan Grady

Meals on Wheels RI

Alice Howard

Washington Trust & SunRise Forever, Inc.

Amber Jackson

The Black Leaf Tea & Culture Shop & Farm
Fresh Rhode Island

Ella Kilpatrick Kotner

Groundwork RI

Joan Kwiatkowski

PACE RI

Piedade Lemos

Providence Public Schools

Bevan Linsley

Aquidneck Community Table

Adena "Bean" Marcelino

Black Beans PVD

Angel Mendez

Red Tomato

Andrew Morley

Sweet & Salty Farm

Deborah Perry

YWCA

Dana Siles

Rescuing Leftover Cuisine

Jair Perez

Trap Box PVD

Lisa Primiano

RI Housing

Esteban Quijada-Link

Private Chef

V. Raffini

Southside Community Land Trust

Sarah Rejouis

Waffle Hive

Patch Tseng-Putterman

LCSW, Movement Ground Farm

Thea Upham

Farm Fresh Rhode Island, Co-Chair

2022 INTERNS

Sam Caplan

Research Fellow,
Brown University

Max De Faria

Municipal Food Systems Research Intern

Mariana Fajnzylber

Food Systems Research Intern,
Brown University

Joleen Owusu-Sekyere

Food Security Research Intern,
Brown University

Elijah Smith

Community Engagement Intern,
Johnson & Wales University

Anne Underhill

Food Access & Equity Intern, Be Well
Solutions Distance Dietetic Internship

FINANCIALS

FY2022: 1/1/2022-12/31/2022

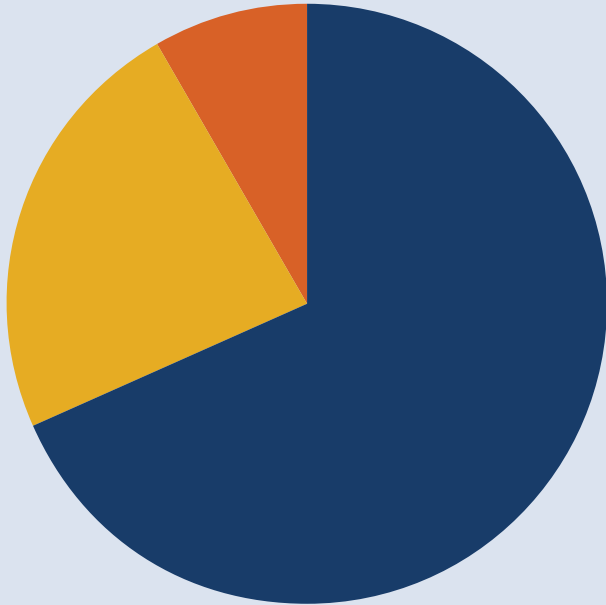
REVENUE



- Private Foundations — \$214,203
- Government Grants — \$179,270
- Contracts — \$205,270

TOTAL — \$598,743

EXPENSES



- Personnel — \$331,363
- Contracts — \$133,038
- Program & Admin — \$39,148

TOTAL — \$503,549

FUNDING PARTNERS

Our funding partners are critical to our success. We are grateful for their ongoing support, which allows us to leverage innovative, inclusive ideas that create solutions to complex challenges, and foster a healthier, more prosperous food system in Rhode Island, as well as the Northeast region.

Rhode Island Foundation

Center for Science in the Public Interest

Henry P. Kendall Foundation

Rhode Island Department of Health

Angell Foundation

USDA Rural Development

Island Foundation

USDA Agricultural Marketing Service

van Beuren Charitable Foundation



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