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Baker-Polito Administration Awards Over $4.7 Million to Support Food Security in Massachusetts

Fifth Round of New Grant Program to Increase Access to Local Food as Holiday Season Approaches

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Office of Governor Charlie Baker and Lt. Governor Karyn Polito

Governor's Press Office

Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

Executive Office of Health and Human Services

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BOSTON — Today, the Baker-Polito Administration announced over $4.7 million in grants to address urgent food insecurity for residents across the Commonwealth as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This funding is being awarded as part of the fifth round of the new $36 million Food Security Infrastructure Grant Program, created following recommendations from the Administration's COVID-19 Command Center's Food Security Task Force, which promotes ongoing efforts to ensure that individuals and families throughout the Commonwealth have access to healthy, local food.

"As Massachusetts residents celebrate Thanksgiving this week, we recognize that food insecurity remains a significant challenge for many families throughout the Commonwealth, making our efforts to secure a resilient, diverse local food supply chain even more critical," **said Governor Charlie Baker.** "Through a $56 million investment through our Food Security Task Force, our Administration is committed to investing in our local food infrastructure and ensuring a secure supply of food, which will enable us to ensure that families throughout Massachusetts can access local, nutritious food as they continue to meet the challenges created by the pandemic."

"During this holiday season it is important that families across Massachusetts, especially those living in underserved communities, receive better access to healthy, local food," **said Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito.** "The investments made through this program will help Massachusetts' farmers and food producers build on the progress our state has made since the onset of the pandemic to ensure a strong local food chain."

The goal of the Food Security Infrastructure Grant Program is to ensure that individuals and families throughout the Commonwealth have equitable access to food, especially local food. The program also seeks to ensure that farmers, fishermen and other local food producers are better connected to a strong, resilient food system to help mitigate future food supply and distribution disruption.

The fifth round of the grant program includes 54 awards for a total of $4,742,293 to fund critical investments in technology, equipment, capacity, and other assistance to help local food producers, especially in the distribution of food insecure communities. When evaluating the applications, considerations included equity, economic impact and need, sustainability and scalability of efforts, and ability to support producer readiness to accept SNAP and HIP benefits. In the program's first four rounds, the Administration awarded over $17.7 million to more than 137 recipients.

"The upcoming holiday season marks a new and challenging milestone in the Commonwealth's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and ensuring residents throughout Massachusetts maintain access to healthy, local food remains a critical focus," **said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Kathleen Theoharides.** "These grants support Massachusetts' agricultural and food businesses while building better access to healthy, nutritious food for our underserved neighborhoods and communities."

"As Massachusetts weathers a second surge in confirmed COVID-19 cases, food pantries and meal providers across the Commonwealth have indicated a need for increasing food availability and efficiency of services. This additional funding from the Food Security Infrastructure Grant program will allow for the expedited support of our community partners as they see an increased need for food services," **said COVID-19 Response Command Center Director and Secretary of Health and Human Services Marylou Sudders.** "Local grassroots organizations are keeping our communities fed and are the boots on the ground that reach residents who participate in existing nutrition programs like SNAP and WIC to ensure they are well supported during this difficult time."

Today, the Baker-Polito Administration also announced the COVID-19 Command Center's new food program for isolating and quarantining individuals in collaboration with local boards of health and the Community Tracing Collaborative (CTC), which invests nearly $1.2 million to support residents in isolation. Communities across the Commonwealth have developed innovative, local solutions to support families who are dealing with the direct impacts of COVID-19, for which access to nutritious and culturally appropriate food is crucial. For a portion of low-income households, and in certain geographic areas, food security remains a top concern while isolating. This new program will be coordinated with local health departments, the CTC, food pantries, municipalities, and other local partners to assess needs and gaps in service at the individual and community level, and develop and deploy local solutions to ensure the foods security needs of those isolating and quarantining can be met.

As part of the announcement, Secretary Kathleen Theoharides and Department of Conservation and Recreation Commissioner Jim Montgomery visited the Melnea A. Cass Recreational Complex, which has been used by the YMCA of Greater Boston as a distribution location for its food bank services beginning in October 2020. The site is used as a delivery point for pallets of food which are broken down and repackaged into donation bags which are distributed to neighborhood organizations and Massachusetts residents in need. The space in the Melnea A. Cass Recreation Complex supports the efforts of the YMCA while furthering DCR's efforts to serve the community, an excellent example of public-private partnership.

The YMCA of Greater Boston is also receiving a $183,847 grant in this round of the Food Security Infrastructure Program, which will enable it to establish mobile food pantries to deliver food to underserved neighborhoods in Boston. The mobile food pantry will provide full-service food pantry operations, and will rotate on a weekly basis to deliver to as many neighborhoods as possible.

“The DCR Melnea A. Cass Recreation Complex is a critical resource in the Roxbury neighborhood for indoor/outdoor recreation, community outreach, and education,” **said DCR Commissioner Jim Montgomery.** “What better way to continue the Complex’s legacy than to welcome the YMCA food security operations into the facility, illustrating an excellent example of public-private partnership.”

Eligible grantees include entities that are part of the Massachusetts local food system including production, processing and distribution, the emergency food distribution network, Buy Local, community and food organizations, school meal programming, urban farms and community gardens, non-profits, and organizations that provide business planning, technical assistance and information technology services. The Request for Responses for project proposals closed on September 15, 2020. Applications submitted before the proposal deadline will continue to be evaluated for future rounds of funding.

This grant program implements the recommendations of the Food Security Task Force, which was convened by the Massachusetts COVID-19 Command Center in response to increased demands for food assistance. The task force is composed of a broad group of public and private members charged with ensuring food insecurity and food supply needs are addressed during the COVID-19 public health emergency.

The Food Insecurity Infrastructure Grant Program was announced in May 2020 as part of a $56 million investment by the Baker-Polito Administration to combat urgent food insecurity for some Massachusetts families and individuals as a result of COVID-19. The Administration also announced a $5 million increase for the **Healthy Incentives Program** (/healthy-incentives-program-hip) to meet increased demand for local produce and to increase access points that process SNAP and HIP benefits, $12 million for the provision of 25,000 family food boxes per week through a regional food supply system, and $3 million in funding as an immediate relief valve to food banks.

Several new HIP vendors are receiving funding through this round of the Food Security Infrastructure Grant Program to purchase new equipment to process SNAP and HIP benefits. Everett Community Growers, a coalition of Everett residents who sell culturally significant produce for the area, including collards, squash, and radishes, and Mycoterra Farm, which runs Mass Food Delivery, an online ordering platform sourcing local farms. As HIP vendors, they will be able to home deliver local produce to low-income households, several senior centers, and housing facilities throughout multiple counties, using minimal/contactless delivery service.

In addition to expanding HIP, the Administration continues to leverage federal food and nutrition resources during COVID-19, including **federal flexibilities for SNAP** (/info-details/dta-covid-19-frequently-asked-questions#snap-) to ensure individuals and families have stable access to these critical benefits. Over $16.4 million has been spent by households using their SNAP benefits to buy food online from Amazon and Walmart since launching the SNAP Online Purchasing Program in May. Since March, SNAP households have received extra benefits to bring their monthly benefits up to the maximum amount for their household size, providing over $335 million in food support to over 280,000 households. The most recent federal appropriation extended **Pandemic EBT** (https://www.map-ebt.org/) (P-EBT) through the entire 2020-2021 school year. To date, Pandemic EBT has helped over 550,000 students buy food.

In August, the Baker-Polito Administration **launched** (/news/baker-polito-administration-launches-online-platform-to-enhance-food-system-connections) the **MassGrown Exchange** (/service-details/massgrown-exchange), an online platform designed to facilitate business-to-business connections within the local food system for products and services. Developed by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR), in collaboration with the Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF), this platform was established to both address COVID-19 disruptions to the local food supply and to serve as a helpful tool and resource for Massachusetts growers and producers in accessing markets beyond the duration of the COVID-19 emergency.

“We understand that these uncertain times have unfortunately meant many families are without hot meals,” **said James O’S. Morton President and CEO of The YMCA of Greater Boston.** “We are honored to partner with amazing organizations allowing us to provide comfort to our community during the holiday season and continuing our dedication to helping those in need.”

“Hunger has been one of the most rampant and devastating side effects of this pandemic, and over the past several months food insecurity in Massachusetts has climbed dramatically,” **said State Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz (D-Boston).** “These organizations, serving communities across the Commonwealth, have stepped up to fill a critical need throughout this prolonged crisis--and I particularly want to honor the great work being done at the Melnea A. Cass Recreational Complex, which has opened its space to help keep Boston residents nourished. By investing in their and others' operations, we can expand access to local, healthy food and help care for our neighbors, ensuring they have enough to eat this holiday season.”

“Healthy and locally grown products have not always been easily accessible to low income individuals,” **said State Senator Dean Tran (R-Fitchburg).** “Thank you to the Baker-Polito administration for their continued support and investment in equipment for local organizations to help make their products available to the underserved population.”

"I'm grateful for the Baker-Polito Administration's efforts to strategically fund initiatives that meet our neighbors’ basic needs since the global pandemic hit here," **said State Representative Liz Malia (D-Boston).** "This fifth round of food security infrastructure grants is a significant boost to the awardees and the families they feed."

"I'm so glad that Growing Places is being recognized for their vital work with a Food Insecurity Infrastructure Grant,” **said State Representative Natalie Higgins (D-Leominster).** “This funding will help Growing Places expand its ability to connect low income community members to fresh local produce throughout North Central Mass." Representative Natalie Higgins

The awardees for the fifth round of the Food Security Infrastructure Grant Program include:

Awardee Name	Location	Project Summary	Funding
YMCA of Greater Boston	Boston	The funding will enable the YMCA of Greater Boston to establish mobile food pantries to deliver food to underserved neighborhoods in Boston. The mobile food pantry will provide full-	$183,847

		service food pantry operations and it will rotate on a weekly basis to deliver to as many neighborhoods as possible.	
Double C Ranch	Granby	The funding will aid in the stabilization of the beef supply within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts by assisting the ranch with the installation of a walk-in freezer for additional storage, the purchase of a refrigerated vehicle to increase product delivery.	$40,748
Citizens for Citizens	Fall River	To increase the capacity and distribution of food to those in need within the Fall River region, funding will assist the organization with the purchasing of a refrigerated truck and facility equipment.	$112,009
World Farmers	Lancaster	The funding will enable the organization to expand the availability of its products to low income individuals and families by investing in equipment that enables SNAP/EBT payments to be directly made. Simultaneously, the investment will facilitate the growth and development of small-scale vegetable farms owned and operated by immigrant and refugee farmers through the Flats Mentor Farm (FMF) program.	$5,397
Caretaker Farm LLC	Williamstown	Caretaker Farm will build a clean, safe, and efficient wash station area that will assist in providing high quality produce to local consumers by streamlining operations.	$29,075
All Nations Church Food Pantry	Springfield	In an effort to meet the increased demands of food assistance from the food insecure and low-income residents of Hampden County, funding will enable the food pantry to renovate and equip a new facility space. Funding for renovations and equipment includes refrigerator and freezer units, electrical service upgrades, plumbing services, HVAC & installation, and the installation of counters.	$87,446
Park Hill Orchard LLC	Easthampton	To further reach food insecure residents within Hampshire County, the funding will assist Park Hill Orchard LLC with the purchase of an insulated cargo van to distribute fresh and shelf stable fruit products via farmer’s markets, roadside stands, pantries, and direct delivery.	$36,890
Full Well Farm	Adams	The funding will enable the farm to expand the availability of products to low income individuals and families within the Town of Adams by investing in equipment that enables SNAP/EBT payments to be directly made.	$1,128

Edgartown Council on Aging	Edgartown	To aid in the efforts to fulfill the organization's essential goal in addressing food insecurity and access in Dukes County, program funding will allow for a larger volume of meals to be made in advance, enhanced storage, and protect frozen meals until they are consumed or safely stored by recipients. Funding will go towards the purchase of new equipment, such as a freezer and carts and shelving for storage.	$3,738
Southbridge Public Schools Federal Lunch Program	Southbridge	In an effort to serve both students and members of the community, funding will aid the Southbridge Public School Federal Lunch Program with the purchasing of equipment to establish an on-site farm, which will grow and harvest greens for salads. The on-site farm will increase the production and consumption of MA grown food, it will ensure food safety as the lettuce is grown free of herbicides and pesticides, and will help reduce hunger and food insecurity.	$116,000
Buzzards Bay Fisheries, Inc.	New Bedford	Funding will assist in the purchasing and installation of a haddock cutting machine for Buzzards Bay Fisheries, Inc. Importantly, the new equipment will provide an increase in fresh seafood for residents within the region and throughout the state, as well as, reduce labor time while increasing safety for staff.	$100,000
The Neighborhood Farm, LLC	Wayland	To reach food insecure residents within the Middlesex County area, the funding will assist the Neighborhood Farm LLC with the purchase of a new delivery van and truck for food distribution to markets, food pantries, meal kitchens, and home deliveries during the fall and winter months.	$119,000
Farming Falmouth, Inc.	Falmouth	The funding will assist individuals, including those with disabilities, with the opportunity to plant and harvest vegetables at a Town of Falmouth owned property by providing gardening infrastructure, such as wheelchair accessible beds and irrigation in an effort to foster healthy eating habits of organic produce at a low cost.	$5,600
Mountain Girl Farm, Inc.	North Adams	Due to the closure of local farmers markets because of the ongoing public health emergency, access to farm-to-table produce has become limited since March 2020. Funding will aid in the purchasing of a vehicle to be used to deliver fresh produce to individuals, including those utilizing SNAP benefits, in Northern and Central Berkshire County.	$35,600
Holiday Farm	Berlin	The funding will increase refrigeration capacity at the farm stand	$1,020

		to not only store additional produce but to also increase its longevity, ensuring better availability of vegetables and other products at the facility for the public to obtain.	
Great Falls Farmers Market	Turners Falls	The funding will enable the organization to expand the availability of its products to low income individuals and families by investing in equipment that enables SNAP/EBT payments to be directly made.	$1,150
Diemand Egg Farm, Inc.	Wendell	The funding will increase storage capacity at the egg farm by purchasing a new commercial walk-in freezer for onsite storage. With the new refrigeration equipment, perishable products will be more widely available to the local community to obtain.	$121,850
Cottone Inc. FV Sabrina Maria	Gloucester	With the need of nutritious proteins being made readily available within the local community and region, funding will purchase fish processing equipment on the deck of the Sabrina Maria, a groundfishing vessel out of Gloucester, Massachusetts.	$72,000
Maria F.S. DeLume Inc FV Santo Pio	Gloucester	With the need of nutritious proteins being made readily available within the local community and region, funding will purchase fish processing equipment on the deck of the Santo Pio, a groundfishing vessel out of Gloucester, Massachusetts.	$72,000
First United Methodist Church	Southbridge	Funding will assist the organization, which offers free food and meals to those in need, to increase food storage through the purchasing of a freezer unit.	$800
Hart Farm	Conway	In an effort to increase product storage and preservation, and for better food distribution, funding for the project will go towards the purchasing of important infrastructure, such as a walk-in cooler.	$10,538
Julia Coffey DBA Mycoterra Farm	South Deerfield	The funding will enable the farm to expand the availability of its products to low income individuals and families by investing in equipment that enables EBT payments to be directly made.	$3,200
Steppingstone, Inc.	Fall River	Working with high risk, low income populations, the organization is seeking to make upgrades to its food storage and delivery infrastructure to reduce waste, which will simultaneously provide more individuals in need with food. Equipment includes a cargo van, freezer unit, storage bins, and food preparation equipment.	$38,500

The Gray House, Inc.	Springfield	To meet the demand to provide food to those in need, funding will assist the food pantry to make important infrastructure improvements to increase food storage and distribution. New equipment includes food carts, a freezer, and a computer.	$45,513
Malden Public Schools	Malden	Program funding will enable the school system to expand its meal distribution services to students in need with the purchasing of a food truck.	$110,309
Everett Community Growers	Everett	Funding will enable the organization to expand the availability of its products to low income individuals and families within the community by investing in equipment (a receipt printer) that enables SNAP/EBT payments to be directly made.	$319
The Keith Farm	Westport	To further the farm's efforts to increase produce yields and food distribution to the local community, funding will assist in the purchasing of a greenhouse, non-commercial kitchen, and a refrigerated vehicle in the New Bedford/Fall River area.	$248,290
People Helping People Food Pantry	Burlington	To ensure COVID-19 guidance compliance and further improve the distribution of food to those in need, the food pantry's project will update its infrastructure with the purchase of a freezer, and outdoor refrigeration unit, a refrigerated vehicle, kitchen infrastructure, and a generator.	$106,517
Chelsea Public Schools	Chelsea	The Chelsea Public Schools will utilize program funding to enable the purchasing of new equipment and point of sale tablet technology, which will assist in food distribution through its grab and go meals program.	$80,743
Fishing Vessel Cheryl Ann	Scituate	With the need of nutritious proteins being made readily available within the local community and region, funding will purchase fish processing equipment on the deck of the Cheryl Ann, a groundfishing vessel out of Scituate, Massachusetts. Importantly, a portion of the catch will be donated to the Scituate Food Pantry for those in need.	$82,600
Daily Table	Dorchester	To meet the demand to provide food to those in need, the organization will utilize program funding to purchase equipment that will increase its capacity to provide 75,000 meals per month. Equipment includes refrigerators and transportation.	$374,750

Berkshire Community Action Council, Inc.	Pittsfield	To better serve the residents of the region, the organization will use program funding to purchase a delivery vehicle. Additionally, storage and a refrigeration unit will be purchased to assist the distribution of food to those in need.	$96,914
Wendell Good Neighbors, Inc.	Wendell	To reach and provide individuals and families in need, the organization will utilize the funding to purchase a vehicle to distribute over 10,000 pounds of food per month in the Town of Orange.	$59,298
Greater Fall River Community Food Pantry, Inc.	Fall River	To better serve the residents of Fall River and the surrounding communities, the food pantry will use program funding to purchase a refrigerated delivery vehicle. Additionally, storage and IT equipment will be purchased to streamline the process to better transport and provide food to those in need.	$78,287
Brockton Public Schools	Brockton	In an effort to increase fresh produce, funding will enable the school system to purchase a climate-controlled freight container farm, which will be able to support over 13,000 plants.	$118,260
Fund For the Needy of St. Bonaventure Parish	Plymouth	In an effort to increase food storage, funding for the project will go towards the purchasing of a food refrigeration unit. The project will assist in the organization’s dedication to providing food to families within the area.	$3,800
Sweet Morning Farm, LLC	Leyden	To expand the food harvesting season and meet local demand, project funding will enable the farm to purchase a greenhouse to improve food production during the winter months.	$27,898
Book and Plow Farm	Amherst	With the purchase of a new shipping container to store produce, the farm will be able to increase its food distribution efforts to meet increased demand of products within the area.	$24,500
Food Link, Inc.	Arlington	To better serve individuals and families in over 25 area communities in Eastern Massachusetts, program funding will enable the organization to purchase a new vehicle for food distribution.	$73,625
Chicopee Public Schools Food Service Department	Chicopee	Program funding will enable the purchase of a food truck to deliver meals for distribution to both in-person and remote students.	$153,300

Our Neighbors' Table	Amesbury	Project funding will provide critical infrastructure investments at several of the organization’s food distribution locations, such as churches, public schools, and councils on aging to improve the distribution of food insecure populations.	$141,000
Massachusetts Military Support Foundation Food4Vets Program'	Bourne	Program funding will assist in the distribution of food to members of the military (both active and inactive service) and their families through the acquisition of a delivery vehicle and a food refrigeration unit.	$91,579
LEO Inc.	Lynn	To better serve the residents with the City of Lynn who are in need, the organization will utilize program funding to purchase a refrigerated cargo van. Additionally, storage and important kitchen infrastructure will be purchased, commercial refrigerator and freezer units, worktables, and insulated food containers.	$152,157
Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston	Boston	The funding will enable the organization to implement a Facility Adaption Project, which includes updates and adaptations to BGCB Clubs to prepare for the reopening and/or to safely conduct programming in order to provide services to youth during the 2020-21 program year.	$142,770
Laura Inc.	Gloucester	With the need of nutritious proteins being made readily available within local communities, funding will purchase fish processing equipment as well as a chilling tank.	$160,109
Park Hill Orchard	Easthampton	To increase the longevity of fruit, reduce waste, and ensure a higher availability of produce for residents, funding will enable the organization to purchase freezer and refrigeration units.	$9,410
Princess Diana 1 Inc.	Gloucester	In an effort to increase groundfish harvesting, which a portion of the catch will go to local partners, such as food pantries, funding will purchase and install semi-pelagic trawl doors and electronic trawl door sensors on the groundfishing vessel FV Orion. The equipment will provide invaluable information regarding the location of fishing gear in relation to the bottom of the sea floor and how it is performing.	$84,000
Little Bit Farm & Apiary	Leicester	In an effort to increase produce for the public, funding will enable the organization to extend its harvesting season with the purchase	$7,714

		of a heater for a greenhouse. Additionally, to increase the longevity of perishable foods, a new refrigerator will be purchased, which will ensure higher availability of products.	
RMV Inc.	Gloucester	To increase the longevity of harvested fish, RMV Fishing Corporation will be assisted with funding to purchase fish processing equipment to increase its shelf life and store it at a safe temperature. Furthermore, the funding of this project will help with the transporting of the product to local partners, which includes food pantries.	$102,000
Lowell Public Schools	Lowell	In an effort to meet the increased need of food services due to the pandemic, the school system will utilize program funding to build a new refrigeration system, which will expand its remote feeding program. New equipment includes a refrigerated truck and walk-in freezer.	$180,691
GROWING PLACES GARDEN PROJECT INC	Leominster	The funding will enable the organization to expand the availability of its products to low income individuals and families by investing in equipment that enables SNAP payments. Furthermore, kitchen infrastructure, such as refrigeration storage, will allow better distribution of food to underserved individuals and families within the community.	$66,100
Berea Church Food Pantry (Greater Boston Food Bank Agency #455)	Dorchester	To better serve the residents within the City of Boston neighborhoods, the food pantry will use the program's funding to purchase a delivery vehicle. Additionally, storage and IT equipment will be purchased to streamline and strengthen the process to distribute food to those in need.	$171,784
Reed Farm	Sunderland	To meet the demand within the region for high quality, local poultry, the farm will utilize funding to make significant upgrades to its existing poultry facility. These upgrades include the design and installation of a new septic system, a walk-in cooler and freezer, and a propane generator.	$495,760
Neighbors In Need Food Pantries	Lawrence	In an effort to meet an increased demand due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the food pantry, which distributes food to 13 locations within the Greater Lawrence area, will utilize funding to expand their food storage capacity. New Equipment includes refrigeration and freezer units, shelving, and tables.	$54,757

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Office of Governor Charlie Baker and Lt. Governor Karyn Polito

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