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PRESS RELEASE

Baker-Polito Administration Announces Grants to Support Buy Local Organizations

Grants will support agricultural industries in western, central, northeastern, and southeastern Massachusetts.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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BOSTON — The Baker-Polito Administration today awarded $500,000 in grants to regional Buy Local organizations across the Commonwealth for projects that will support the agricultural industries in western, central, northeastern, and southeastern Massachusetts. These organizations work to generate consumer

awareness and demand for locally grown food products while improving logistical access to these important food sources.

“The challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic have highlighted the importance of reinforcing local food system connections and encouraging residents and businesses to buy local,” **said Governor Charlie Baker.** “Regional Buy Local organizations have been doing great work promoting the Commonwealth’s agricultural industry, and these efforts will be just as important in the future to sustain the farming community and local food sectors for generations to come.”

“These grants build on our administration’s efforts to improve food security and support local food and agricultural businesses during these difficult times, including through our new $36 million Food Security Infrastructure Grant Program,” **said Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito**. “We remain committed to helping the regional Buy Local organizations continue and grow their efforts as a valuable resource for the promotion of the farm and local food sector throughout the Commonwealth.”

These grants build upon the Baker-Polito Administration’s efforts to support regional economies across the Commonwealth. On August 25, 2020, the Administration **announced** (/news/massachusetts-launches-my-local-ma-campaign-to-drive-economic-activity-and-safely-support) the launch of the “**My Local MA** (https://www.findmylocalma.com/)” campaign to encourage residents across the Commonwealth to support their local economies by shopping at local Massachusetts businesses and attractions, either in person, online, or by using curbside pickup or takeout.

“We commend the regional Buy Local organizations for recognizing the needs of the agriculture, food, fiber and fishing industries and providing programs geared to these sectors as well as promotional opportunities for consumers,” **said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Kathleen Theoharides.** “Massachusetts is home to a vibrant local food sector, and supporting these Buy Local organizations will lead to increased business opportunities for farmers, fishermen, and food producers throughout the Commonwealth.”

“The Department of Agricultural Resources values the great partnership we have with each of the regional Buy Local organizations, as well as the spirit of collaboration they have amongst themselves,” **said MDAR Commissioner John Lebeaux.** “We are proud of all of the hard work each organization does to identify and address the technical and promotional needs of the agricultural industry within their region.”

Buy Local groups across the Commonwealth offer members and consumers a variety of resources. From technical assistance information to marketing assistance, consumers, farmers, and food producers alike can find resources to help them grow, buy, cook, and eat healthy, locally grown products.

“I was glad to work to get this funding included in the COVID relief bill,” **said State Senator Anne Gobi (D-Spencer), Chair of the Joint Committee on the Environment, Natural Resources, and Agriculture**. “This pandemic has shown gaps in our food delivery chain and our Buy Locals play an extremely important part in assuring food security to those most in need. I thank them for all they do and to the farmers that supply them.”

“CISA is an unparalleled champion for our region’s farms and farmers — calling us all to buy local and in doing so, strengthening food security, regional economic security, and public health,” **said State Senator Jo Comerford (D-Northampton)**.

"As a member of the Massachusetts Food System Caucus, I know that the Commonwealth needs to nurture the production and dissemination of local food," **said State Senator Joan B. Lovely (D-Salem)**. "I am pleased that Northeast Harvest of Topsfield will receive this grant to help farmers bring even more of their healthful and tasty products to North Shore residents and other grateful consumers in our region."

"Now, more than ever, it is inspiring to see the administration remaining committed to investing in our local growers," **said State Representative Smitty Pignatelli (D-Lenox), Chairman of the Joint Committee on the Environment, Natural Resources, and Agriculture**. "These are the kind of local investments that help keep our local food infrastructure strong and growing. I can personally vouch for the great work my grow local organization does and I know that these investments will be returned ten-fold by the hard work and dedication of our Massachusetts' farmers."

"Representing a district that really thrives off of its agriculture, I am pleased to know that all parts of our Commonwealth will be receiving grants to better fund our locally grown food, said **State Representative Brad Hill (R-Ipswich)**. "This current pandemic that we're in really brought some light onto how important it is to have resources readily available on a local level. I am looking forward to see Essex County benefit from this help!"

"Our farms play an integral role in our local economies and food system," **said State Representative Natalie Blais (D-Sunderland)**. "I am proud to have worked alongside Senator Gobi to secure this funding in support of Buy Locals like CISA who will stretch every dollar to maximize the benefits for Massachusetts farmers and consumers."

The following nine projects have been funded this year:

Organization	Location	Funding Amount	Project Description
Berkshire Grown	Great Barrington	$67,719	Berkshire Grown will support farmers and food access in the time of COVID-19 with consumer-supportive winter farmers markets, increased recognition of Massachusetts agriculture, and strengthen the business enterprise of local farms.
Buy Fresh Buy Local Cape Cod	Barnstable	$56,928	Buy Fresh Buy Local Cape Cod will promote locally grown land and sea products and enhance the local food system by expanding the visibility and access of local food and retail operations that sell local products, and strengthen connections between food, health, economic development, and production agriculture while respecting social distancing standards during these uncertain times. This grant will also provide the assistance needed for the continued growth and sustainability of the various marketing initiatives and outreach events.

Central MA Grown	Worcester	$69,572	Central Mass Grown will work collaboratively to increase access to local food in Worcester County. Well planned events, branding initiatives and strategic marketing programs will raise consumer knowledge and engagement with local producers. These consumer engagement initiatives will increase consumer and restaurant participation with the local food system and launch new modalities of sale for farmers, retailers and restaurants within the region.
Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture (CISA)	South Deerfield	$76,500	CISA will help local farms through the COVID-19 pandemic by driving customer recognition and farm sales through *Be a Local Hero, Buy Locally Grown*® in Franklin, Hampden, and Hampshire counties.
Island Grown Initiative (IGI)	Martha's Vineyard	$13,270	IGI plans to work in partnership with the Martha's Vineyard Agricultural Society, the West Tisbury Farmers Market, and Slough Farm Foundation to actively promote and increase direct consumer access to farmers, to provide up-to-date information on local farms, and to purchase and process locally grown and raised produce and other food products for food equity distribution. IGI will also continue its active participation in the statewide Buy Local Coalition.
Northeast Harvest	Topsfield	$67,047	Northeast Harvest proposes to increase cash receipts for farmers in Essex and Middlesex counties by increasing sales of agricultural products, by increasing the recognition of Massachusetts agriculture in the northeastern region by working directly with other agricultural associations, by engaging regional partners among traditional and non-traditional groups to support and promote agriculture in the region. Northeast Harvest will invest in supporting their local farmers and farmers' markets, educating the consumer, enhancing their website, and supporting the State initiative "MA Grown and Fresher" campaign.
Southeastern Massachusetts Agricultural Partnership (SEMAP)	South Dartmouth	$68,934	SEMAP will take a leadership role in specific projects related to promoting local food and farms in the SEMAP region. Such projects include: promotion and expansion of the SNAP/HIP programs and will provide technical assistance when appropriate. SEMAP will provide targeted organized promotional programs and will coordinate the 2021 SEMAP Food & Agriculture Conference. SEMAP will continue

			their collaboration with organizations around the topic of climate change and will also produce a SEMAP paper newsletter.
Sustainable Business Network (SBN)	Cambridge	$49,000	SBN will expand the Local Food Business and Eater Connection Program. This program will support the production and delivery of the 11th Annual Boston Local Food Festival to be held in September, 2021 on the Rose F Kennedy Greenway, the Fourth Annual "Eat Local MA" campaign (including the new Eat Local MA mobile app), and the coordination of educational local seafood tours.
Sustainable CAPE	Truro	$31,026	Sustainable CAPE will strengthen the marketing potential of agricultural businesses and agricultural products in southern Massachusetts by developing new programming not previously funded creating a Buy Local campaign for existing and new partners including veterans, schoolchildren & families, elders and our low-income neighbors on Cape Cod. Sustainable CAPE is focused first and foremost upon farmers and their harvest, and will now collaborate with free meal delivery organizations to deepen their reach and work. Using nine donations of local food as a springboard for education, they will build community alliances as they grow awareness of our local farmers' and their harvest, which will expand the farmers' customer base and increases sales.

This year, in light of the cancelation of the Big E Fair MDAR launched a **website** (/service-details/massachusetts-state-exposition-building-exhibitors) dedicated to promoting the 2020 Massachusetts State Exposition Building exhibitors and showcasing Massachusetts agriculture, commerce, culture and tourism. The Massachusetts Building, located on the Avenue of States on the grounds of the Big E in West Springfield, is managed by MDAR. This page recognizes the hardworking team of local exhibitors and provides the public with the opportunity to shop for exhibitors' products and support local businesses.

In May 2020, the Baker-Polito Administration **announced** (/news/baker-polito-administration-invests-56-million-to-combat-food-insecurity-in-massachusetts) a Food Security Infrastructure Grant Program as part of a $56 million investment to combat urgent food insecurity for some Massachusetts families and individuals as a result of COVID-19. The Administration has now awarded over $17.7 million in grants through four rounds of funding.

In August 2020, MDAR launched the **MassGrown Exchange** (https://massnrc.org/farmexchange/), 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.

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Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
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The Department's mission is to help keep the Massachusetts' food supply safe and secure, and to work to keep Massachusetts agriculture economically and environmentally sound.

More (/orgs/massachusetts-department-of-agricultural-resources)

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