



2018 ANNUAL REPORT

# RHODE ISLAND FOOD POLICY COUNCIL

# **OUR MISSION**

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The Rhode Island Food Policy Council's mission is to promote a more equitable, accessible, and sustainable food system.

We coordinate a statewide network of diverse, committed, and engaged stakeholders from all sectors of the food system. We create partnerships, develop policies, advocate for improvements, and lead projects that enable the state to sustain and expand farming and fishing industries, support local food businesses, ensure food security for all Rhode Island residents, and protect the health of our abundant natural resources.

## MESSAGE FROM THE NETWORK DIRECTOR

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In 2018 we made it clear that our state's food system would be improved under our watch on all levels: economic, social, and environmental. We supported our food producers and harvesters in building large, consistent, and profitable new markets. We worked directly with diverse food businesses to promote a food sector that offers meaningful careers and economic opportunities. We helped ensure that all Rhode Island residents have enough to eat. We supported efforts to bring excess food to those in need, and to keep food waste out of our landfills.

Throughout this report you'll see evidence of our work to strengthen partnerships and create programs with state agencies, the nonprofit sector, and institutions of higher education, to advance an agenda at the State House, and to build a coordinated network of stakeholders with a shared vision for an environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable food system in Rhode Island.

You'll see how our work in 2018 is already paying off in 2019 – and how much more we must do. The priorities we have set – thriving farms and fisheries, a vibrant food economy, food access for all, and well-managed food recovery and food waste programs – are critical if our state's food system is going to overcome systemic obstacles and reach its potential. We made exciting advances in 2018, giving us incredible momentum for the work to come.

These wins should be celebrated, but our work is far from finished. We have set an ambitious course of action for 2019 and beyond. I am encouraged by the strength of our network, united to advance Rhode Island's food future. Together, we will ensure that our vision is achieved.

**Nessa Richman**





A food system encompasses all of the processes involved in feeding people: it includes food production, harvesting, and processing; food distribution and marketing; consumption (whether at home, in schools and institutions, or in restaurants); and, ultimately, the recycling and disposal of food waste.

Right now Rhode Island is in the middle of implementing its first 5-year food strategy — Relish Rhody — launched by Governor Gina Raimondo in May 2017. RIFPC’s mission is fully aligned with this strategy; we work to:

- Preserve and grow agriculture and fisheries industries
- Sustain and create markets for RI food and beverage products
- Enhance climate for food and beverage businesses
- Ensure food security for all Rhode Islanders
- Minimize food waste and divert it from the waste stream

RIFPC started tracking implementation of Relish Rhody in 2018. Our work has resulted in the Rhode Island food system metrics dashboard, which is embedded in our new website: [www.rifoodcouncil.org](http://www.rifoodcouncil.org).

In 2018 RIFPC helped to implement the Rhode Island food strategy, *Relish Rhody*, an actionable vision which builds on the state's momentum in growing its local food economy in a way that benefits all Rhode Islanders, enhances Rhode Island's environment, and celebrates the state's unique food cultures and landscape.



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**PRESERVE & GROW  
AGRICULTURE,  
FISHERIES INDUSTRIES  
IN RHODE ISLAND**

We worked to retain and expand land in agriculture and to sustain our commercial fishing industry by improving capital access and coordination of resources.



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**ENHANCE THE  
CLIMATE FOR FOOD &  
BEVERAGE BUSINESSES**

We helped grow institutional and other wholesale markets for Rhode Island's diverse food products and supported increased investment in our state's food businesses.



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**SUSTAIN & CREATE  
MARKETS FOR RHODE  
ISLAND FOOD,  
BEVERAGE PRODUCTS**

We provided technical assistance for farmers, fishers, and food entrepreneurs so they could assess and access new markets, products, and partnerships.



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**ENSURE FOOD  
SECURITY FOR ALL  
RHODE ISLANDERS**

We contributed to statewide efforts to reduce hunger by improving access to critical supplemental food programs and saving excess food from entering state landfills.



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**MINIMIZE FOOD  
WASTE & DIVERT  
IT FROM THE  
WASTE STREAM**

We built a network of our state's diverse food waste leaders, amplifying their efforts and encouraging them to build a common vision for reducing waste from food and food-related trash.

# STRENGTHENING YOUNG AND BEGINNING FARMERS AND FISHERS

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The Rhode Island Local  
Agriculture and Seafood Act  
Grant Program has literally  
transformed my business, and  
I am forever grateful for that.”

Early LASA grantee





## A grant program that supports our farming and fishing future

Over the past 5 years, the Local Agriculture and Seafood Act Grant Program has provided nearly 100 small grants to Rhode Island farmers and commercial fishers that have directly benefited and strengthened the local food system.

### **Tiny but Mighty**

This small grant program leveraged over \$2.5 million in additional grant and loan funding, created over 80 new jobs, increased sales by more than \$5.05 million and launched scores of new products into new markets.

### **Advocating for Full Funding**

RIFPC strongly believes this program deserves adequate, secure funding. In 2018, RIFPC staff went to the State House to meet with legislators and testify on behalf of the Local Agriculture and Seafood Act Grant Program to ensure it continues to provide outsized impacts for Rhode Island farmers and fishers



## A plan to address food industry businesses' employment needs

In 2018 RIFPC served on an advisory committee assembled to assess Rhode Island's food industry cluster workforce needs. Industry clusters are groups of related businesses within a geographic area. By virtue of these businesses' colocation, economic linkages, and shared needs, the "cluster" framework can be a useful lens for assessing segments of the economy. Rhode Island's food cluster is one such industry cluster – it includes all businesses in the state that relate directly to the movement of food through the economy, from farms to processors to distributors to retailers and restaurants.

RI's food cluster in 2017 accounted for 69,357 jobs – about 17% of Rhode Island's total private employment. The cluster saw job growth of 22% in the 15 years from 2002 to 2017 – a period during which total employment in Rhode Island grew by just 3%. According to projections, Rhode Island's food cluster will add 4,656 jobs from 2016 to 2026 – a growth rate of 7.8%. This is higher than both Rhode Island's overall

projected job growth (5.9%) as well as that of the United States as a whole (7.4%).

The assessment showed that food industry employers want a more qualified pipeline of job candidates, better pre-screening of and matchmaking with job candidates, trainings that engage and retain existing employees while improving their skills, and opportunities for leadership to engage and connect with staff about the meaning of their work within an overall vision of their company's place within the Rhode Island food system.

### A Partnership with Real Jobs RI

This planning work led to a partnership between RIFPC and Real Jobs RI. Real Jobs RI was launched by Governor Gina Raimondo in 2015. Together, RIFPC and Real Jobs RI plan to connect stakeholders across Rhode Island with a common interest in enhancing the climate for food businesses, helping employers and employees across the food sector achieve greater success through an innovative Real Food Jobs RI project. The partnership lasts for five years and will offer employees a career path toward higher paying, higher-skilled jobs within the food industry.

This partnership is committed to growing a vibrant food industry. Food sector employers will be able to work with RIFPC to find and train workers who might otherwise be jobless or in lower wage jobs, thereby improving the livelihood of Rhode Island residents, supporting the state economy, and helping food industry members succeed.





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Real Jobs RI is pleased to support the “Real Food Jobs RI” partnership and shares its commitment to ensuring that well-trained job seekers fill jobs across Rhode Island’s food system and that our state’s employers are well-linked to assets and resources that allow them to find, train, and retain their workers”

Alyssa Alvarado, Program Director  
of Real Jobs Rhode Island

AN EMERGING OPPORTUNITY TO  
GROW A STRONGER WORKFORCE

# LEVERAGE INVESTMENTS

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CDFA is very proud to announce the launch of our partnership with the Rhode Island Food Policy Council. We're excited to bring this opportunity to Rhode Island and are very pleased to have the support and expertise of the RIFPC as we continue our work in this arena.”

Toby Rittner, CEO of Council  
of Development Finance Agencies





## Establishing food infrastructure as a target for investment

RIFPC is exploring how to make food infrastructure an attractive investment opportunity for all types of finance, including bonds, tax increment financing, and tax credits.

### A new partnership spurs meaningful change

In 2018, we established a partnership with the Council of Development Finance Agencies to leverage traditional finance to increase funding to the food sector, as well as to improve connectivity and efficiency of capital flows across lenders, investors, public and private funders, and food sector enterprises.

RIFPC brings deep experience and a wide network to the state in terms of work with community development financial institutions and development finance agencies.

### Overcoming barriers to seafood processing for our commercial fishing industry

Rhode Island's seafood industry is a critically important part of the state's economy. Rhode Island is home port to over 200 Federally permitted vessels and issues over 1,600 state commercial fishing licenses per year. The economic impact of the fishing

industry is sizable. In 2016, Rhode Island vessels landed 82.5 million pounds of seafood, with an ex-vessel value of close to \$100 million. A 2018 report by the University of Rhode Island estimated that the fishing and seafood sector contributes over \$538 million and over 4,000 jobs to the state's economy.

The intent of this project is to identify investment opportunities in Rhode Island's commercial fisheries industry that would increase seafood processing capacity and contribute to the economic and environmental sustainability of the state's fishing and fish processing businesses. There is strong evidence of interest in increasing seafood processing among small, medium-sized, and larger, vertically integrated seafood companies. The goal of the project team is to identify investment opportunities that benefit the widest possible number of fishermen. As part of this project, we are also exploring ways to eliminate a severe wastewater processing constraint in the Port of Galilee and other seafood processing areas. The economic and environmental impacts of this project could directly benefit Rhode Island, and indirectly benefit southern New England and the entire global supply chain of seafood products. Upon completion, this project could create roughly 100-200 new jobs and save between 500-2500 existing jobs either directly or indirectly involved in the seafood sector.



Working with RI schools, hospitals, and colleges to increase local food procurement.

In collaboration with the RI Commerce Corporation and the Rhode Island Director of Food Strategy, this project builds upon and helps to coordinate RI efforts to grow new local food supply chains for institutions in the state via a process of supply chain facilitation, targeted technical assistance, education, and marketing.

**A systemic approach addressing both supply and demand**

RIFPC is co-leading an integrated approach to developing the institutional market for local food with state agency staff and experts from across the Northeast. Pulling from best practices developed in New England and across the country we are implementing a plan that includes:

**TAILORED SUPPORT FOR INSTITUTIONS**

We work with selected institutions to set and achieve goals and build relationships between institutional food buyers, food service management companies, and local food providers that result in more local food being purchased.

**TARGETED WORKSHOPS**

We organize and advertise high-value workshops to prepare both sides of the institutional marketing chain – supply and demand – with the tools and knowledge they need to work together better.

**A team approach to getting local food into state institutions**

We partner with partners including RI Commerce Corporation’s SupplyRI program, RI DEM, the RI Director of Food Strategy, the Cornell Small Farms Program, Farm to Institution New England, and Karen Karp & Partners consulting on this project. This public-private partnership approach has been supported by private, state, and federal funding sources.



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We envision that every New England school, college, and hospital will preferentially purchase healthy, regionally-grown food. RIFPC's Local Food to Institution Project moves Rhode Island toward this goal.”

Peter Allison, Executive Director,  
Farm to Institution New England

BUILD MARKETS



# MANAGE EXCESS FOOD AND FOOD RESIDUALS

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The 'RI Excess Food Solutions' Community of Practice, established in 2018, convenes leaders from across the state who focus on the value of food past the traditional first use. This means focusing on source reduction, feeding people in need, feeding animals, composting and energy production.”

Dlane Calvin  
Executive Director, foodSCAPE





## Convening state experts to keep food out of our landfills.

Statewide, Rhode Island sends over 100,000 tons of wasted food per year to the central landfill. Towns and cities spend an estimated \$2.5 million each year to dump excess food and food scraps. The RIFPC Community of Practice convenes leaders in excess food policy and on-the-ground work to keep food out of our state's landfills by focusing on education and market development, especially technical assistance to excess food generators such as grocery stores, restaurants, and institutions.

### Focus on nutrition in food recovery

RIFPC members bring passion and a wide breadth of expertise to their work recovering excess food. Eva Agudelo, Executive Director of Hope's Harvest RI,

mobilizes volunteers to support local farms and reduce food insecurity by rescuing surplus fruits and vegetables from farmers fields and delivering them to food pantries. foodSCAPE, run by Diane Calvin, promotes share tables and donation of surplus food from schools and the summer meals program. Together, members of the Community of Practice advocate at the State House for better food donation laws.

### Returning nutrients to the soil

We convene the leaders in food waste management so they can work better together. Council member Jayne Merner Senecal operates Earth Care Farm, which has been producing high quality, farm-made compost at a large scale for over 40 years. Earth Care Farm takes in a large variety of inputs for composting including food scraps from food processors, restaurants, schools and camps. Council members are hard at work educating residents, businesses and government officials about the value of excess food and the potential cost savings of keeping it out of the landfill.

## STAFF & LEADERSHIP

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### STAFF

Nessa Richman, Network Director

### 2018 COUNCIL MEMBERS

Chair: Dawn King, Brown University

Vice Chair: Eva Agudelo, Hope's Harvest

Anna Malek, NOAA Fisheries

Annajane Yolken

Antonia Bryson

Bridget Sweet, Johnson & Wales University

Betsy Skoda, Health Care Without Harm

Candace Clavin, New England Tonia & Syrup, Water Way Farm

Cristina Liberati, Equal Exchange

Diane Calvin, Foodscape RI

Diane Lynch, Social Enterprise Greenhouse

Eliza Cohen, RI Public Health Institute

Gerald Texieria, Brown University

Georgina Sarpong

Jumoke Akinrimisi, African Alliance of RI

Joshua Daly, RI Small Business Development Center

Leigh Vincola, Farm Fresh RI

Michael Hallock, RI Mushroom Company

Margaret Read

Nicole Richard, University of Rhode Island

Rachelle Crosby, West Elmwood Housing Corporation

Vanessa Garcia

### 2019 COUNCILMEMBERS

Diane Lynch, Chair

Thea Upham, Vice Chair

Anna Malek, NOAA Fisheries

Bridget Sweet, Johnson & Wales University

Betsy Skoda, Health Care Without Harm

Candace Clavin, New England Tonia & Syrup, Water Way Farm

Cathryn Kennedy, Wright's Dairy Farm

Diane Calvin, Foodscape RI

Eliza Cohen

Elyna (Nellie) de Goguel, City of Providence

Gerald Texieria, Brown University

Jamie Samons, Narragansett Bay Commission

Jayne Merner Senecal, Earth Care Farm

Jazandra Barros, Southside Community Land Trust

Jumoke Akinrimisi, African Alliance of RI

Joshua Daly, RI Small Business Development Center

Kevin DiLibero, Newport Restaurant Group

Michael Hallock, RI Mushroom Company

Margaret Read

Nicole Richard, University of Rhode Island

Sakinah Abdur-Rasheed, Neighborhood Health Plan of RI

Steven Arthurs, RI Food Dealers Association

Tarshire Battle, Restoration Urban Farm of New England



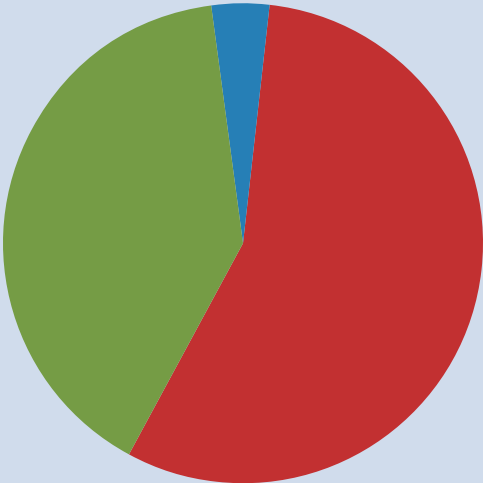
# FINANCIALS FY2018: 1/1/2018 – 12/31/2018

- RIFPC ended the year in a strong financial position
- The total revenue and expenses for the year both came in at 104% of budgeted amounts. Revenue came mostly from foundations (56%) and government (40%) with a smaller amount from contributions (4%).
- The balance sheet shows \$239,406 in total net assets from a variety of sources.
- RIFPC had 5 months of available cash to cover expenses (based on a 6 month trailing average)

## FY REVENUE COMPOSITION

- Contributions  
\$14,191
- Non-Gov (Foundation) Revenue  
\$215,270
- Government Revenue  
\$155,907

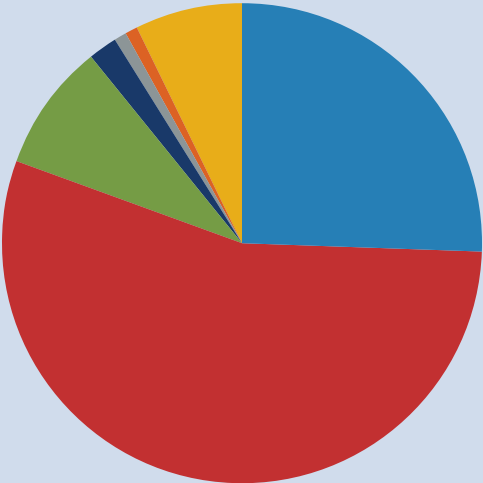
Total \$385,668



## FY EXPENSES COMPOSITION

- Personnel  
\$99,426
- Grants  
\$213,097
- Contract  
\$33,450
- Program  
\$7,320
- Office  
\$3,444
- Travel  
\$2,993
- FS Fees  
\$27,532

Total \$387,262







## Advocating for Good Food Policy

RIFPC members offer their expertise on various aspects of the food system — from agricultural land use zoning, to food safety, to school food quality, to food business regulation — to any member of the Rhode Island State Legislature upon request.

In 2018 we went to the State House to advocate for full funding the Local Agriculture & Seafood Act Grant Program, fought for a technical assistance fund for commercial food waste generators subject to state food waste laws, and testified on behalf of the Rhode Island Food Donation Act, which gives individuals, schools, grocers, restaurants, hotels, caterers, farmers, hospitals, and food-makers immunity from criminal and civil liability when donating to emergency food providers. We also provided a platform for stakeholders to work on policy initiatives in the areas of increasing the purchasing of local food by our schools and other anchor institutions, and decreasing consumption of sugar sweetened beverages.



## OUR FUNDERS



Read more about our work in 2018 through our digital Annual Report: [rifoodcouncil.org](http://rifoodcouncil.org)