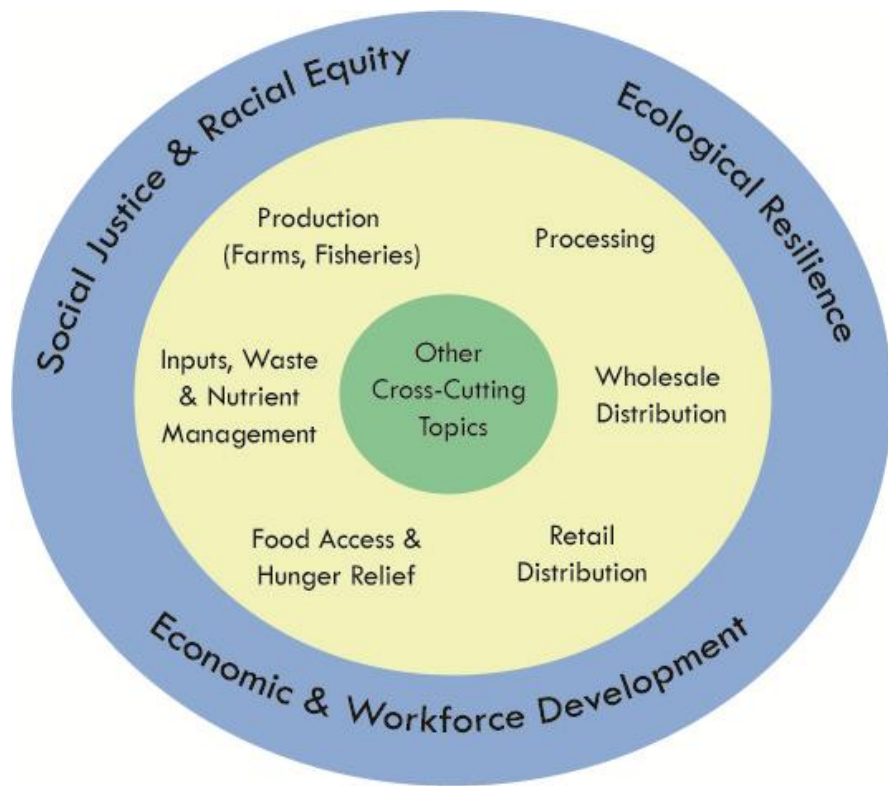


Massachusetts Food System Plan - Working Group Structure

The Massachusetts Food System Plan team is establishing Working Groups who will provide real-world expertise for the development of the Massachusetts Food System Plan. Working Groups will be asked to generate analysis and recommendations on: 1) a specific food system sector and related topics, and 2) a broader view of that sector within the context of the food system of Massachusetts and New England. Throughout the planning process, each Working Group will meet approximately two to four times. The goal is for each Working Group to produce a concise report that summarizes and prioritizes approximately ten policy and action recommendations and also identifies topics for future research and policy development.



The diagram at left depicts the general sectors of the food system in the light middle ring. Cross-cutting focus areas are in the outer blue ring. Other focus areas that may be defined during the planning process are in the dark green center.

The Working Groups are proposed to be organized primarily by the sectors of the food system. The people invited to be members of the Working Groups will be drawn from these sectors and will include experts, workers in relevant and related fields, interested individuals, and other stakeholders. Working Group members will be asked to evaluate the characteristics, trends, needs and opportunities for food system development within the sector, as well as relationships with other sectors.

The Project Team also proposes that a liaison from the Project Team staff be assigned to each Working Group to help promote consideration of cross-cutting focus and topics areas (outer blue ring and dark green center). Additionally, each Working Group will be assigned a lead member to assist with meeting facilitation and other tasks.

Proposed Working Group Focus Areas

The Project Team will establish and convene the Working Groups after receiving input on their composition from the Project Advisors, Massachusetts Food Policy Council, and MDAR staff. All meetings will be open to the public. Introductory materials for Working Group members will include a description of the purpose of their work and a request to respond to an initial survey to obtain their input on further defining each group to determine if any adjustments in membership are needed.

Proposed Working Groups:

Following are the proposed focus areas and descriptions of the Working Groups, based on food system diagram on the previous page. The Working Groups will meet to identify the major trends and opportunities within the particular food system sector and in relation to the food system as a whole.

1. **Production:** *Agricultural and fisheries goods and services; comprised of the following four sub Groups (below). These sub-groups will each have their own leads and will meet independently to discuss the specific production issues per sub-sector (described in brief below). These four groups will be brought together by the Project Team at 2 workshops to discuss the cross-sectoral issues within the realm of production, and develop recommendations for positive change that will create more coordination and synergy between production sub-sectors.*
 - a. **Urban Agriculture:** *Land access and tenure, site remediation, innovations in production, production best practices, regulatory challenges and models, workforce training, business planning and marketing, community and back-yard food gardens (Lead: Ruth Goldman)*
 - b. **Fisheries:** *Fresh and salt water fish and shellfish production, land-based aquaculture, industry needs, regulations and, conservation.*
 - c. **Land (Access and Management):** *Land availability and land management practices such as the use of preservation restrictions, zoning/regulations, land access and transfer, etc.*
 - d. **Farming/Ranching:** *Land-based agricultural production that includes fruits, vegetables, meats, and dairy.*
2. **Processing:** *Food processing, animal slaughter, bottling, and packing facilities and services, as well as commercial kitchens, food business incubators, and food hubs.*
3. **Wholesale and Retail Distribution:** *Industries and activities that support the movement of food products at both the wholesale and retail levels, including transportation, warehousing, and aggregation and distribution, as well as the distribution to and through grocery stores, restaurants, farmers markets, CSA programs and online food purchasing platforms. It may also focus on wholesale and consumer demand for MA-produced food products*
4. **Food Access and Consumption / Hunger Relief and Public Health:** *Public health, and food accessibility and affordability for individuals and families, , hunger relief, transportation, demand for culturally appropriate food and the need for increased food preparation and preserving skills at the individual consumer level.*
5. **Inputs, Waste, and Nutrient Management:** *Agricultural inputs including land, water, soil, agricultural supplies (seeds and feeds) and on-farm equipment, machinery and other infrastructure, residential and municipal organic waste production and opportunities for organics waste recycling and renewable energy production.*

Cross-Cutting Focus Areas (Led by Project Team):

A liaison will be assigned from the Project Team to lead and convene each of the following cross-cutting topics. The liaisons will help guide discussion in Working Groups to include and consider the cross-cutting areas. A liaison for representing each of the cross-cutting topics will attend at least one meeting of each of the Working Groups.

1. **Economic / Workforce Development (*Mass Workforce Development*):** *Strategies to increase production, sales and consumption of Massachusetts-grown goods and the skills and education the state's workers need to fill food system jobs, as well as the necessary training programs and supports needed for a high quality food system workforce.*
2. **Social Justice and Racial Equity (*Boston Food & Fitness/Fertile Ground*):** *Includes core issues that are interwoven throughout all other food system issues, including social justice topics such as living wage jobs, poverty, education and others. This focus area would also address racial equity issues, such as deep-rooted food system inequities, lack of racial diversity in all areas of the food system, tokenism, and others to be defined by the Working Group.*
3. **Ecological Resilience (*MAPC*):** *Includes the consideration of possible food system responses and adaptation to land development pressures on agricultural land and related issues. This group would also be responsible for addressing the effects of climate change adaptation, water rights, water quality, wetlands regulations, and other environmental topics.*

Working Group Function

Objectives: Through a series of approximately 4 meetings, Working Groups will closely examine particular food system sectors within the context of the larger food system. Working Group discussion will contribute to the following:

- Frame current conditions
- Identify the most pressing needs
- Identify the most promising opportunities
- Offer input on potential policies to advance the sector.

Process:

- Meeting Agendas will be developed collaboratively by the Working Groups, with guidance from the Project Team where appropriate.
- Working Groups will discuss food system sector conditions, informed by its members' experience and existing research and literature. The Project Team will work with Working Groups to identify and gather resources that help to advance Working Group discussions.

Deliverables:

- Working Groups will present quarterly updates to the Project Team that synthesizes their discussions. The Project Team will communicate with groups to determine an appropriate reporting schedule.
- Working Groups will present their analysis of the existing conditions, gaps, opportunities and policy recommendations as they are discussed and identified throughout the planning process.

Working Group Member Roles

Working Group Lead:

- Facilitate meetings in a way that encourages inclusive and balanced discussion.
- Communicate with the Project Team staff to organize and identify material and logistical needs for Working Group meetings.
- Work with the Project Team staff to coordinate note taking and effective summary of discussion.
- Coordinate development and delivery of quarterly report to the Project Team.
- The Working Group Lead can expect to devote approximately 20 hours in this role throughout the planning process.
- Communicate findings to fellow Advisors at dedicated Advisor meetings.

Working Group Member s:

- Attend all group meetings. (approximately 4)
- Provide information and share expertise, creativity and connections.
- Think strategically to identify present and future challenges and opportunities.
- Respond to data and research findings.
- Shape and review policy recommendations that capitalize on opportunities and respond to challenges.
- Consider the Working Group's focus area with respect to the three cross-cutting considerations
 - Economic and workforce development
 - Social justice and racial equity
 - Ecological resilience)
- Apply both highly focused and broad perspectives in analysis
- Assist with group facilitation, note-taking and follow-up on a rotating basis

Cross-Cutting Topic Liaison:

- Work with the Working Group Leads to facilitate inclusion in the discussion of the three cross-cutting topic areas: Economic Development and Workforce Development; Social Justice and Racial Equity; and Ecological Resilience
- Work with the Working Group Leads to gather information, identify issues and goals related to the cross-cutting topics
- Serve as the regular point of contact with the Working Group lead to provide project resources for meetings.
- Cross-cutting liaisons can expect to devote approximately 20 hours to this effort.

Anticipated Working Group Timeline:

Working Group members should expect to devote approximately 20 hours to this effort. This work will be spread over a period ranging from eight months to a year. More significant involvement is possible and welcomed, but the team believes that 20 hours allows for significant collective and individual consideration. The chart below presents a proposed timeline for the Working Group engagement period. The chart also shows the anticipated timeline for Project Advisor meetings and other activities of the planning process.

		Timeline								
	Working Groups	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
1	Production		x		x		x		x	
1a.	Urban Agriculture		x		x		x		x	
1b.	Fisheries		x		x		x		x	
1c.	Land Management		x		x		x		x	
1d.	Farming/Ranching		x		x		x		x	
2	Food Access / Public Health		x		x		x		x	
3	Processing		x		x		x		x	
4	Wholesale distribution / Retail distribution		x		x		x		x	
5	Inputs, Waste and Nutrient Management		x		x		x		x	
	Cross Cutting: Ecological Resilience			x		x		x		
	Cross Cutting: Economic/Workforce Development			x		x		x		
	Cross Cutting: Social Equity			x		x		x		