Massachusetts
FOOD TRUST PROGRAM
Good for Jobs, Good for Communities, Good for Health

The Problem
Too many Massachusetts communities have poor access to healthy food and lack strong local job opportunities.

The Solution
Flexible financing to meet community needs. The Massachusetts Food Trust Program would provide loans, grants, and technical assistance to support new and expanded healthy food retailers and local food enterprises in low and moderate income communities.

Better access to healthy food = more jobs. Increased access to food retail options can drive economic growth. For example, the PA Fresh Food Financing Initiative has supported 5,000 jobs.

Public financing has leveraged significant private investment. Other states, including NY and PA, have leveraged between $9-15 dollars in private and federal funds for every $1 of state funding.

Moving to Impact
In 2014, the Massachusetts Legislature established the Massachusetts Food Trust Program as part of the Environmental Bond Bill, and authorized funding to implement the program. Now it is up to state leaders to launch the program and dedicate funds in order to realize the impact in communities across the Commonwealth.

Modeled on a proven national strategy, the Massachusetts Food Trust would use public seed funds to spur significant private investment, drive economic growth, and create strong local job opportunities.

The Grocery Access Task Force, a group of public and private sector leaders who met for two years to tackle this problem, identified large swaths of urban and rural Massachusetts that suffer from lack of access to grocery stores. Many of these same communities are struggling economically and lack good job opportunities for local residents.

For more information contact:

Massachusetts Food Trust Program Potential Impact

In Lowell, Mill City Grows’ mobile market sells fresh produce at health centers, senior facilities, parks and other locations where residents are limited by low income and low food access —but they are confined to a limited reach. With the assistance of the Massachusetts Food Trust Program, they would be able to buy more trucks and develop more market locations to make locally grown, fresh produce more available and affordable to Lowell residents.

In the Boston neighborhood of Dorchester, the Dorchester Community Food Co-op has been working to create a community and worker owned grocery store that would employ 15 people in year one and sell fresh produce, bulk grains, and a variety of other groceries. As a grassroots organization, the Co-op is in the challenging process of raising the money to open the store. With assistance from the Massachusetts Food Trust, the Co-op would have financial help to create jobs and make better food available to the local community.

The food desert in Springfield’s Mason Square neighborhood could be filled with assistance from the Massachusetts Food Trust. Community organizations, residents, and advocates have been working for more than a decade to bring a grocery store to the neighborhood. Residents often have to take multiple buses to reach a full line grocery store, travelling outside their neighborhood, and sometimes outside of the city in order to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables. The financial incentive of the Massachusetts Food Trust could be the key to leveraging much needed private investment for a grocery store in Mason Square.

“Too many neighborhoods in Lowell struggle economically, too many residents lack access to healthy food—The Food Trust will tackle both challenges at once, it will transform communities.”

– Francey Slater,
Co-Founder & Co-Director,
Mill City Grows

Franklin County is home to the Western Massachusetts Food Processing Center, the only one of its kind in Massachusetts. The Food Processing Center, operated by the Franklin County Community Development Corporation, is a host site for entrepreneurs looking to venture into the local food business. Many stable food businesses have grown up and out of the Center and they have hired employees, paid taxes, bought from local farms and contributed to the regional economy. With assistance from the Massachusetts Food Trust Program, this model could be replicated in other parts of the state in need of these resources, providing local projects with the support they need as they increase their capacity and outgrow incubator spaces.