



Food System Planning in Plymouth County
Steering Committee Meeting, September 24, 2025

Attendees

Kerrie Lirosi, Resident
Molly Vollmer, County Extension
Liz Miller, Spoonfuls
Bill Napolitano, OCPC
Hampton Watkins, Resident
Charlie Brandon, Boys and Girls Club of Metro South
Marisol Torres, BAMSI
Joanne Zygmunt, OCPC
Rita Higgins, Marion Institute
Kevin Cogan, Town of Abington
Rob May, City of Brockton
Jon Van Kuiken, Brockton Farmers Market
Nikki Galibois, South Shore Community Action Council
Frank Basler, Plymouth County
John Fay, City of Brockton
Judith Henze, Food Systems Consultant
Meghan Riley, County Extension
Karen Barry, Plymouth County Sheriff's Office
Mary Waldron, OCPC
Liz Wiley, Marion Institute
Liz Shea, Town of Abington

Summary

Plymouth County Food Action Plan Introduction

Joanne Zygmunt facilitated the meeting, introducing key team members and partners. Participants discussed their roles and interests in the project, which aims to enhance food access and resilience in Plymouth County. The conversation ended with an overview of the project's progress and upcoming activities, including community advisory board meetings and continued collaboration among the diverse group of stakeholders.

FRP and CARAT Assessment

The steering committee received an update on the Community Advisory Board's progress in conducting a CARAT assessment for Plymouth County. Joanne explained the RFP process for additional consulting services to support the development of a food action plan, with proposals due on the 29th. The committee discussed plans for stakeholder engagement, including focus groups, interviews, and a region-wide public survey, which will be implemented with the new consultants.

Engaging Diverse Stakeholders in Food Systems

The group discussed strategies for engaging a variety of stakeholders in their food system project. Joanne highlighted the importance of reaching out to food pantry coordinators, entrepreneurs, farmers, and fisheries/aquaculture workers. Liz and Rita shared insights from their work in Barnstable County, noting the need to adapt the CARAT tool to better include fisheries and aquaculture perspectives. Kevin suggested involving shop owners and pastors in the project and discussed plans for community gardens at local churches to engage residents. The group acknowledged the challenges of engaging some groups, such as young people and non-English speakers, and discussed strategies for overcoming these barriers.

Food Insecurity Data Tracking Initiative

The group discussed tracking food insecurity data. Joanne explained that consultants will review regional food systems data and community plans to understand what information is currently available, while Liz Wiley highlighted the importance of the CARAT tool for ongoing data collection between formal food system assessments. Karen announced the creation of a Ministry Corps initiative to bring together clergy members across Plymouth County for training and collaboration on various issues, including potential involvement in this food project.

Brockton Food Access Initiatives

The group discussed community fridges and food access in Brockton, with Marisol sharing her experience about a previous unsuccessful launch and BAMSI's plans for a drop-in center with weekly food deliveries. Joanne explained that consultants will explore both traditional and innovative food infrastructure solutions, including community fridges. Nikki highlighted upcoming community needs assessments by local agencies and Beth Israel's

health needs assessment, which will provide valuable local data on food insecurity, while Jon mentioned the Brockton Area Hunger Network's data tracking system for food pantry users.

Community Engagement Outreach Strategies

The group discussed outreach strategies for engaging various groups, including younger families, schools, and Indigenous communities. Joanne mentioned plans to reach out to the Charity Guild and tabling at farmers market for engagement. The team agreed to continue thinking about engagement strategies, with Joanne planning to write up a stakeholder list and introduce the new consultants at the next meeting. They also discussed the importance of working with the Herring Pond Tribe and the South Coast Food Policy Council, noting the need to respect their limited capacity and timing. The next steering committee meeting was scheduled for October 29th.

Next steps

- Marion Institute, Plymouth County, and OCPC: Review RFP proposals and select a consultant by the end of October, to be introduced at next Steering Committee meeting
- Rita: Adapt the CARAT tool language to better include fisheries and aquaculture perspectives for Plymouth County
- Joanne and Rita: Make the CARAT assessment accessible to all participants for comment between meetings
- Frank: Share the RFP with any committee members who request it

AI Disclaimer

These meeting minutes were generated with the assistance of an AI tool. While efforts have been made to ensure accuracy, the content may contain errors, inaccuracies, or omissions. For an accurate account of the meeting, please review the video recording available at <https://oldcolonyplanning.org/foodresiliency/>.