

Farm and Market Report Extras

- **EPA: Local Foods, Local Places Technical Assistance**
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EPA: Local Foods, Local Places Technical Assistance

Supporting local food production can improve economic opportunities for local farmers and businesses and give residents better access to healthy, fresh food. It can also spur revitalization of a main street, downtown, or neighborhood by bringing new activity. Communities interested in these benefits are invited to apply for technical assistance from the [Local Foods, Local Places Program](#). The application deadline is **September 15, 2015, at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time**.

Local Foods, Local Places will provide direct technical support to selected communities. A team of experts will help community members develop action plans that use local foods to support healthy families and communities and to drive downtown and neighborhood revitalization. The assistance process features a community workshop that brings people together to develop shared goals and steps to achieve them.

Representatives of communities (including neighborhoods or main street districts) anywhere in the United States are eligible to apply. We encourage applications from communities that are economically challenged and in the early phases of their efforts to promote local foods and community revitalization. Special consideration will be given to communities in federally designated Promise Zones or USDA StrikeForce counties.

Local Foods, Local Places is supported by the [U.S. Department of Agriculture](#), the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#), the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), the [U.S. Department of Transportation](#), the [Appalachian Regional Commission](#), the [Delta Regional Authority](#), and the [White House Rural Council](#).

For more information and a link to the application, visit www2.epa.gov/smart-growth/local-foods-local-places.

First-ever Massachusetts Soil Conference slated for September 17th

USDA – NRCS: Understanding soils is critical to conservation and land use planning that supports sustainable agriculture, forestry and greener urban, suburban and rural communities. A first-ever conference designed to help Bay State natural resource management and environmental protection professionals; agricultural commission and conservation commission members; farmers and other land owners and managers understand and use soil data will be held on **Thursday, Sept. 17th, 9:00 am – 4:00 pm at Heifer Farm in Rutland, MA.**

Titled “Know the Soil, Know the Land,” this one-day conference will focus on soil information resources available through the United States Department of Agriculture’s Soil Survey. Soil experts will provide updates on recent changes to the data and train attendees on how to use it. The day will include classroom workshops and field demonstrations.

“If you know your soils, you know and can better manage your land,” said Al Averill, State Soil Scientist for the USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

This training has been approved for up to seven training contact hours (TCH) for Soil Evaluator (SE) renewal under the Mass. Title 5 program or up to 5.5 credits, Category 1, for purposes of Mass. Forester licensing. A certificate of completion will be provided to all participants. The conference is sponsored by NRCS, the Massachusetts Association of Conservation Districts and the Worcester County Conservation District (WCCD).

Registration is \$99 until Sept. 13th; pre-registration is required. To register on-line, go to <http://knowthesoilknowtheland.eventzilla.net/web/event?eventid=2139067766>. A draft agenda is available on the WCCD website at www.worcesterconservation.org. For more information, contact Lisa Trotto, Worcester County Conservation District, 508-829-0168, ext. 5, or Lisa.Trotto@ma.usda.gov.

FINI Community Stakeholder and Funder Meetings

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA) recently awarded the [Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance \(DTA\)](#) a \$3.4 million grant through the [Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive \(FINI\) Grant Program](#). DTA is honored to have received this grant, and is proud of the acknowledgment that Massachusetts is seen as a national leader in the work on healthy incentives and nutritious food choices.

Through an interdepartmental effort with the Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR) and the Department of Public Health (DPH), DTA has garnered the support of a broad, diverse coalition of statewide community partners. Under FINI, the [Healthy Incentives Program \(HIP\)](#) will provide a 100 percent incentive- a dollar-for-dollar match -for each SNAP dollar spent on targeted fruits and vegetables purchased at farmers markets, farm stands, mobile markets, and CSAs statewide. The goals of this public-private partnership are to create a sustainable and unprecedented statewide incentive program, as well as to assess the impact of this new project on SNAP clients' purchase of fruits and vegetables. The HIP project seeks to promote healthy food access for SNAP clients by reducing access barriers, and increasing the availability of locally grown fruits and vegetables for SNAP clients. The project grant cycle operates from April 1, 2015 – March 31, 2020. The new HIP benefit will be available to SNAP client beginning in [April 2017](#), for three years.

In an effort to provide a full update to our FINI stakeholders, DTA will convene five regional Community Stakeholder Meetings across the state. The meetings will include details on the project design, the implementation timeframe, status on the planning and systems development phases, and the roles of individual stakeholders. Please see below list of locations, dates and times. A conference line/webinar feature will also be provided to enable folks to participate remotely.

Each of the Community Stakeholder Meetings will be followed by a separate session for Funders to discuss the FINI Trust, a public-private partnership which will enable DTA to engage statewide community partners and private funders to accept financial commitments to support the HIP implementation and increase the state matching funds on the federal award. Funders are encouraged to attend both sessions for a complete understanding of the project design.

Please RSVP by clicking on the Doodle link below and entering your name. Details for the meeting, including an agenda are forthcoming. If you are unable to attend one of these meetings, DTA will send the meeting slide deck and next steps following the meetings.

FINI Community Stakeholder & Funder Meetings

1. **Monday, September 21:** Boston, The Boston Foundation—10:00 – 12:30 (*FINI Stakeholders: 10:00 – 11:30; Funders 11:30 – 12:30*) ([Directions](#)) ([Doodle RSVP](#))
2. **Thursday, September 24:** Worcester, Central MA Regional Planning Commission—2:30 – 5:00 (*FINI Stakeholders: 2:30 – 4:00; Funders 4:00 – 5:00*) ([Directions](#)) ([Doodle RSVP](#))
3. **Friday, September 25:** Lawrence, Northern Essex Community College—2:30 – 5:00 (*FINI Stakeholders: 2:30 – 4:00; Funders 4:00 – 5:00*) ([Directions](#)) ([Doodle RSVP](#))
4. **Monday, September 28:** Cape Cod, Barnstable County Complex—11:00 – 1:30 (*FINI Stakeholders: 11:00 – 12:30; Funders 12:30 – 1:30*) ([Directions](#)) ([Doodle RSVP](#))

5. **Tuesday, September 29:** Holyoke, MA Green High Performance Computing Center— 10:00 – 12:30 (*FINI Stakeholders: 10:00 – 11:30; Funders 11:30 – 12:30*) ([Directions](#)) ([Doodle RSVP](#))
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Eastern States Exposition (THE BIG E) Looking for Farmer Volunteers

[Eastern States Exposition \(THE BIG E!\)](#), September 18 – October 4, is looking for farmers or retired farmers to answer questions about production agriculture or dairy farming in the Farm-A-Rama building. Volunteers will receive a free ticket and parking pass for a 4 hour shift commitment. Please contact Donna Woolman, Director of Agriculture & Education at 413-205-5011 or dwoolam@thebige.com if you are interested.



MDAR's mission is to ensure the long-term viability of agriculture in Massachusetts. Through its four divisions – Agricultural Conservation & Technical Assistance, Agricultural Markets, Animal Health, and Crop and Pest Services – MDAR strives to support, regulate and enhance the rich diversity of the Commonwealth's agricultural community to promote economically and environmentally sound food safety and animal health measures, and fulfill agriculture's role in energy conservation and production. For more information, visit MDAR's website at mass.gov/agr, and/or follow at twitter.com/MDARCommish.