

Project Showcase 2016

Rhode Island
Local Agriculture
& Seafood Act
Grant Program



RI Food
Policy Council



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Dear Reader,

I am pleased to present the 2016 showcase for projects funded under the Rhode Island Local Agriculture and Seafood Act (LASA) grant program. The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, in partnership with the Rhode Island Food Policy Council (RIFPC), are proud to offer these grants which support the growth of our local food and agriculture economies.

Rhode Island's local food sector is often cited as an area of economic strength ripe for growth, as consumers continue to seek a stronger connection to their food source. As part of continued efforts to grow Rhode Island's green economy, Governor Gina M. Raimondo continues to chart a bold course to move the state forward and to develop a robust and vibrant local food system.

The local food sector already supports more than 60,000 jobs and continues to inspire the imagination of entrepreneurs and innovators. The efforts featured in this showcase reflect the excitement and energy in the local food space and contribute significantly to the accessibility and diversity of locally produced and harvested food in our State.

LASA would not be possible without strong partnerships. We extend our sincere appreciation to the van Beuren Charitable Foundation, the Henry P. Kendall Foundation, and the Rhode Island Foundation for their continued support. And we extend grateful appreciation to the members of the LASA Grants Advisory Committee for lending their expertise and time - as well as the RIFPC for its continued partnership in the design and implementation of this program.

I congratulate the latest round of inspiring projects from our 2016 grantees. We are pleased and proud to showcase and support your vision and determination in growing your businesses and strengthening Rhode Island's local food system. Thank you!

Janet Coit

*Director, Rhode Island Department
of Environmental Management*





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Rhode Island Local Agriculture & Seafood Act Grants Program 2016

Overview

The Local Agriculture and Seafood Act Grants Program was established by the Local Agriculture and Seafood Act (LASA) of 2012, with the explicit goal of supporting the growth, development, and marketing of local food and seafood in Rhode Island. Launched in 2014, the LASA Grants Program is co-administered in partnership between the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management's Division of Agriculture and the Rhode Island Food Policy Council, through an application process open to farmers, fishermen/women, nonprofit organizations, and producer groups based in Rhode Island. This unprecedented public-private partnership was made possible by \$100,000 in funding from the State of Rhode Island, and an additional \$130,000 in private funds from the van Beuren Charitable Foundation, the Henry P. Kendall Foundation, and the Rhode Island Foundation.

RI Department of Environmental Management Director Janet Coit assembled a diverse LASA Grants Program Advisory Committee, with representation across the food system, including agriculture, aquaculture, and seafood. The 2016 LASA Grants Program received 71 applications, with grant requests totaling \$1,141,596.22. The strong response underscores the need for a sustainable funding stream that will continue to support and strengthen the growing and vibrant local food system in Rhode Island.

Members of the 2016 LASA Grants Program Advisory Committee:

Ken Ayars

*Committee Chair
RI Department of Environmental Management
Division of Agriculture*

David Dadekian

*Eat Drink RI
Rhode Island Food Policy Council*

Jules Opton-Himmel

Walrus and Carpenter Oysters LLC

Kenneth F. Payne

*Rhode Island Agricultural Partnership
Rhode Island Food Policy Council*

Max Greene

*Conservation Law Foundation
Rhode Island Food Policy Council*

Mike McGiveney

Rhode Island Shellfishermen's Association

Nessa Richman

Brightseed Strategies

Pat McNiff

Pat's Pastured

Phil Larson

Jamestown Aquaculture Movement

Sheila Brush

Grow Smart Rhode Island (retired)



Brandon Family Farm

West Kingston

Awarded: \$2,874



“Strawberries are in high demand throughout the year and fruits are imported when local is not available. Rhode Island grocers have expressed interest in obtaining local fruits and this project hopes to provide organic, day neutral varieties with better flavor and superior shelf life, throughout the summer months and into the fall.”

— Albert Brandon, Owner

“Day neutral” strawberries

Brandon Family Farm is a certified organic three-acre farm in West Kingston that grows vegetables and strawberries. Farm founder Albert Brandon applied for LASA funding to purchase retractable low tunnels and expand the season of his local strawberry crop in a sustainable, environmentally friendly manner.

In Rhode Island, nearly all of the current strawberry production focuses on “short day” plants that set flower buds under short days and produce fruit for about six weeks in June and July. LASA funding allows Brandon Family Farm to establish low tunnels over “day neutral” strawberry plants, protecting the flower buds from temperature swings and potentially damaging rains. This system gives Brandon Family Farm the potential to produce fruit from early May through late November, significantly increasing the availability of organic, locally grown strawberries for local markets.

As a result of his season extension project, Albert Brandon will work with URI Extension agents to present data about his project to other farmers as part of the Research Farm’s Twilight Gathering Series. A series of blog posts detailing the construction and function of the tunnels throughout the 2016 growing season will give other local farmers access to his experience online.

Foggy Notion Farm

Providence

Awarded: \$7,405



High tunnels and root cellar

Foggy Notion Farm is a four-acre, chemical-free farm located in historic Snake Den State Park. Since 2015, the Foggy Notion team has leased land from the Northern RI Conservation District and worked to re-cultivate overgrown land back into food production. After five years of experience building urban, micro-scale farms from vacant city lots, farmers Nathaniel Wood and Adam Graffunder worked with renewable materials architect Jenna Yu to apply for LASA funding to expand Foggy Notion's infrastructure, increase crop production and extend into year-round sales.

Foggy Notion is using their LASA funding to build a 500 square foot high tunnel to germinate seeds and transplant seedlings for 80 varieties of vegetables. The use of a high tunnel transitions the farm from using indoor grow lights to relying on the more sustainable and energy-friendly sun-powered greenhouse production. Construction of a companion root cellar allows Foggy Notion Farm to store their crops year-round, keeping freshly harvested vegetables from wilting in the summer heat and root vegetables from freezing in the field during the winter, again, without using external energy sources.

"We've previously grown on vacant city lots no bigger than 1/6th of an acre. LASA funding allows us to transition from micro-scale urban agriculture to a multi-acre scale while returning historic farmland to full commercial production. Our two projects will allow us to produce and store more food for more of the growing season."

— Nathaniel Wood, Co-Owner

The increase in food production and storage enables Foggy Notion Farm to run a year-round CSA program, increasing local food access for their members and providing new products for Rhode Islanders at winter markets. As Snake Den tenants, the team at Foggy Notion is well positioned to share insights and accomplishments with other farms as they increase food production and improve their agricultural efficiencies.

Legend's Creek Farm

Foster

Awarded: \$2,811



Expansion of beehives and honey production

Legend's Creek Farm (LCF) in Foster, RI is fifty-two acres and owners Jon and Aden Restivo raise dairy goats, grow fruits and vegetables and produce honey, maple syrup and artisanal cheeses. LCF also works with local partner organizations to restore their former grazing land and plant native pollinator habitats or develop forestry plans for their non-agricultural acres.

LCF is using LASA funding to support the purchase of four additional beehives, beehive stands, feeders, a honey extractor and additional bees for the farm. These investments greatly expand the amount of honey, pollen and beeswax produced at the farm. The increase of beeswax, in particular, allows LCF to expand their production of cosmetic goods, including goat milk soaps, lip balms and skin creams using bees wax as a base. The increase of a healthy, thriving bee population in the area will have beneficial effects beyond the Restivo property and into the community in terms of agricultural production, since bees are critical to the process of growing fruits and vegetables.

The farmers are working with local libraries and the Northwest RI Supporters of Open Space organization to host instructional demonstrations on raising bees and extracting honey learned as a result of their experience.

“Presently, there are four hives located at the farm, including two that were able to produce sufficient surplus honey in order to sell it commercially in the past year. An increased number of hives and bees on the farm will benefit the fruit trees and vegetables that we are growing and give us the opportunity to expand our market into new areas.”

— Aden Restivo, Co-Owner

Little State Flower Company

West Kingston & Portsmouth

Awarded: \$15,349



“Little State Flower Company has built a wonderful customer base of community-minded florists and event industry people who are interested in supporting a local grower who caters to their creative and business needs. Florists and clients have begun to recognize the benefits of buying from a trusted, local grower which mirrors the local food movement in many ways.”

— Anna Jane Kocon, Owner

Expansion and staffing

According to the USDA, 80 percent of flowers sold in the U.S. are imported. The emergence of the sustainable-flower industry, focused on organic farming practices and the local distribution of product, has made flowers a part of the national dialogue about agriculture. The Little State Flower Company (LSFCo), started in 2015 by Anna Jane Kocon on properties in West Kingston and Portsmouth, RI is producing locally grown, premium cut flowers and plants with an intense focus on soil health and organic growing practices.

LSFCo is using LASA funding to expand production at LSFCo and increase efficiencies, including the hire of an employee to help harvest, plant and sell product at farmers markets. LASA funding is providing a trailer to make shuttling equipment between the two growing areas easier. It also allows Kocon to purchase a mower with dump cart to maintain her leased properties but also to provide space for mobile shaded water buckets so that stems can be harvested quickly and stored properly during warm summer months.

With the investment in staffing and equipment, LSFCo hopes to double its production capacity as the first and biggest local and organic cut flower wholesale supplier in Rhode Island. LSFCo works closely with its floral and event design customers to help build an understanding on why local purchasing of cut flowers is the best option for the health of the soil and the long-term health of the agricultural community.

Mapleville Farm

Burrillville

Awarded: \$8,300



Expand aquaponics greenhouse

Mapleville Farm in Burrillville is run by the Ryan family and includes dairy goats and sheep, a fruit orchard, a flock of laying hens, an on-site bake shop that produces and sells many products made with seasonal farm goods and an aquaponic greenhouse that produces a year-round supply of fresh herbs, greens, vegetables and flowers. Aquaponics is a symbiotic, organic, closed-loop growing system that efficiently uses space by combining aquaculture with hydroponics (cultivating plants in water) to produce crops. As an agricultural method, greenhouse aquaponics conserves water and neutralizes any pollutive side effects while optimizing a climate for year-round growth.

Mapleville Farm received LASA funds to expand their aquaponics greenhouse by 40 feet. This substantially increases their production of four-season produce. The Ryan family will develop an educational outreach program for those interested in starting aquaponics operations, increasing awareness of the potential applications (particularly in urban settings) of aquaponics' vertical growing and bio filtration principles.

The additional space not only increases the amount of food produced at the farm, but it also provides an on-farm venue for conducting educational workshops, consultations and tours. It also provides much needed additional space for the ever-expanding (and essential!) koi collection.

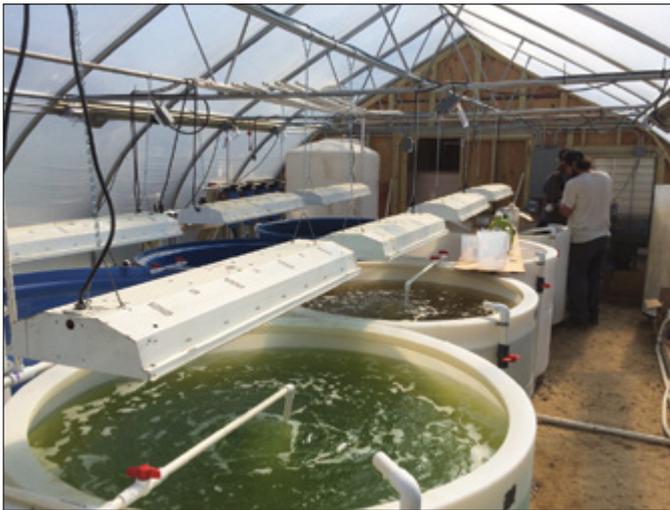
“After several years of hands-on aquaponic growing experience, we are ready to put that experience to work. Expansion of our greenhouse will allow us to increase our production eight-fold and continue to expand our local market for fresh, four-season specialty herbs and greens.”

— **Casey Ryan, Co-Owner**

Ocean State Oyster Hatchery

Charlestown

Awarded: \$10,000



Ninigret Pond-specific line of oyster seed

Ocean State Oyster Hatchery (OSOH) is a new oyster hatchery located in Charlestown, RI. It is operated by owner Christian Durfee, a Rhode Islander with over a decade of experience in hatching shellfish. OSOH joins the list of just six other oyster hatcheries on the entire eastern seaboard and is the only commercial oyster hatchery in RI. Due to the considerable lack of supply of oyster seed, and the complete lack of a truly local seed stock from RI, OSOH will provide oyster farmers with a Ninigret Pond-specific line of oyster seed, produced and sold within the state to local aquaculture farmers.

OSOH is using LASA funding to help defray operational costs for the hatchery. OSOH predicts that the hatchery will produce and sell 2-5 million viable seed during the first year of operation. The second year it estimates that 10-15 million seed will be sold, effectively addressing the enormous gap in local seed availability for RI aquaculture farms and helping to support beginning farmers within the industry.

Advance purchasing commitments from four local oyster farms demonstrate the pressing need for a local product. The collaboration from community partners to support this operation illustrates the industry-wide desire for a RI hatchery that provides a local seed stock that reduces transportation costs and fulfills seed demand for oyster growers across the state.

“Oyster seed is in high demand, as some oyster farmers have reported not having their seed orders fulfilled, and in some cases, even receiving refunds on their deposits due to lack of supply. There is a well defined market with ample need for local seed and the project supports RI aquaculture sustainability.”

— **Christian Durfee, Owner**

Pat's Pastured

East Greenwich

Awarded: \$15,000



Equipment updates and purchase

Pat's Pastured is a well-established Rhode Island farm known for producing premier pasture-raised meats. For over six years all of the chicken raised on the farm was processed in the state's first and only Health-Department approved Mobile Poultry Processing Unit (MPPU).

Pat's Pastured received LASA funding to update the MPPU and purchase additional equipment, increasing the quality of products and improving farm efficiency. The funding allows Pat's Pastured to expand the types of poultry offered to customers, including ducks, quail and additional turkey for the holiday season. The new equipment purchases also help maintain high food safety standards and provide the farm with a way to market some of the less desired poultry cuts for pet food at local markets, decreasing waste and increasing the overall profitability of each product line.

Pat's Pastured owner Patrick McNiff, a recognized leader in the RI agricultural system, will present at conferences and workshops, sharing information about pasture poultry farming with other RI farmers, including any knowledge he and his team gain as a result of new processing techniques and increased product marketing.

"The market for pastured poultry has expanded greatly in the last few years. At Pat's Pastured we have been working to provide the highest quality products to our customers in RI. This funding will allow us to bring a greater variety of products to market, increase our efficiency and quality and allow us to use our resources to share learning with other farmers and consumers."

— Patrick McNiff, Owner



Pickin' Rock Produce

Little Compton

Awarded: \$16,091



“My family has been organic farming in RI for over thirty years and this new technology has shown an amazing ability to steadily improve organic matter in almost all cropping situations, while at the same time solving a number of environmental run off problems ... We are up for the challenge!”

— **Silas Peckham-Paul, Owner**

No-till farming

Silas Peckham Paul has been farming full time with his family at Wishing Stone Farm since he graduated high school in 2007. Inspired by the breadth of organic farming methods that his father taught him over the past decade, Peckham Paul grows a variety of his own organic vegetables at Pickin Rock Produce, with acreage across several Little Compton farm properties.

Pickin Rock Produce is using LASA funds to purchase equipment and conduct research in applying no-till farming methods to his vegetable production. No-till farming (also called zero tillage) is a way of growing crops from year to year without disturbing the soil through tillage (digging, stirring and overturning). No-till farming increases the amount of water that infiltrates the soil and increases the retention of nutrients in the soil, making soil more resilient and fertile. Studies have found that no-till farming can be more efficient and that the crop residue prevents excess evaporation of rainfall, a concern of all farmers dealing with recent droughts in the region. The LASA funding allows Peckham Paul to purchase the highly specialized equipment he needs to practice no-till methods on his acres and fully assess the approach's merits.

No-till machines are not available at average tractor supply stores and no farm in RI has put this technology to use on this scale, so Silas plans to give workshops and demonstrations sharing information about his experience for interested farmers in RI and neighboring states.

Rhode Island Land Trust Council

Providence

Awarded: \$19,757



Farmland access and transfer initiatives

Land trust leaders formed the Rhode Island Land Trust Council (RILTC) in 1999 to network and promote land conservation in RI. RILTC's track record of promoting RI agriculture includes advocating for farmland conservation bonds, producing a report and video on "Agriculture in RI" and organizing workshops focused on protecting the state's remaining farmland.

RILTC applied for LASA funding to support initiatives that improve farmland access and succession transfer in RI. LASA funding enables RILTC to work directly with Land for Good, a New England nonprofit organization that specializes in land access and transfer. LASA funding will allow RILTC to deliver workshops, connect farmers with landowners and provide technical assistance to farm seekers and farmland owners with the ultimate goal of helping make more land available and affordable for new farmers in RI.

Recent studies found that farmers 65 and older own or manage 30% of RI farms and most do not have transfer plans or identified successors. One of the challenges faced by all beginning farmers in RI is access to affordable land. By providing outreach to commercial and private landowners on the benefits of leasing to beginning farmers, by offering coaching sessions for established farm families without succession plans and by delivering direct assistance to beginning farmers to identify and assess RI properties available for farming, RILTC will help more RI beginning farmers achieve land security and contribute to RI's agricultural economy.

"Beginning farmers must connect with those who hold the land – established farmers and non-farming landowners – to successfully start or scale up their operations. More effort must be put into making land available, affordable and secure for farmers in order to meaningfully contribute to a sustainable food system for Rhode Island."

— Rupert Friday, Executive Director

RI Seafood Marketing Collaborative

Providence

Awarded: \$20,000



Quahog Week partners included Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, Discover Newport, Narragansett Bay Lobsters, Rhode Island Shellfishermen's Association, Edible Rhody, Save The Bay, Ocean State Oyster Festival, Rhode Island Sea Grant, University of Rhode Island Coastal Resource Center, University of Rhode Island Coastal Institute, Rhode Island Commerce Corporation, and the Narragansett Indian Tribe.

Promotion of RI Seafood

Rhode Island is known for its food and diverse food cultures. The state's booming local food sector supports over 60,000 jobs and continues to attract and inspire the imagination of entrepreneurs and innovators. The local fishing industry is a vital part of this equation. Last year, more than 100 million pounds of seafood arrived to a local port – with an export value over \$1 billion.

To support continued industry growth, the State, along with its partners, developed the RI Seafood brand to uniquely identify local products in the marketplace and to raise consumer awareness of the diversity and bounty of Rhode Island seafood.

As part of this effort, Rhode Island debuted the 1st Annual Quahog Week in 2016 – to shine a light on the importance of the state's wild shellfish harvest to its history, culture and economy. More than 28 million quahogs (off-the-boat value of \$5.5 million) were harvested from Narragansett Bay and local coastal waters last year. As part of the inaugural Quahog Week, participating restaurants and markets featured quahog-inspired menu items and deals, and organizers held special events, including a kick-off party at Save The Bay with Governor Gina Raimondo, U.S. Senator Jack Reed, and First Gentleman Andy Moffit.

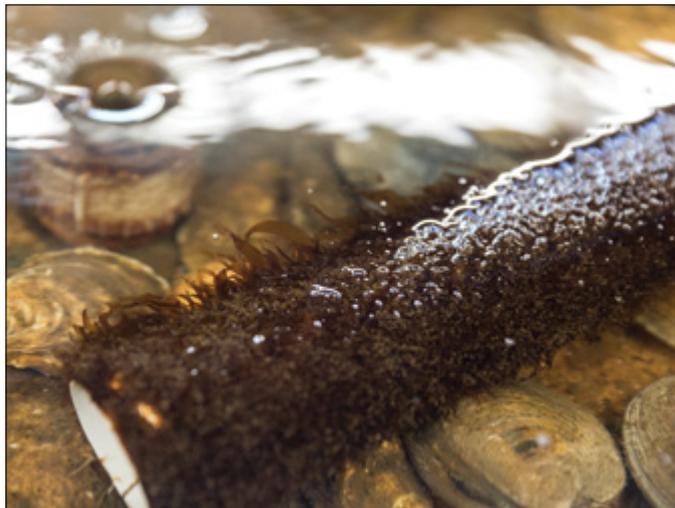
The RI Seafood brand was also featured as part of Narragansett's Calamari Cook-Off, New England Quahog Festival, Ocean State Oyster Festival, and the Newport Oyster Festival, among others.

Roger Williams University

Center for Economic & Environmental Development (CEED)

Bristol

Awarded: \$19,204



Photos: David Dadekian / Eat Drink RI

“While kelp is becoming more acceptable within haute cuisine circles, it is also being touted as having an extractive environmental footprint in coastal waters. Our work will help answer the question – Is it feasible to farm kelp throughout Narragansett Bay, and, if so, where is best?”

— **Matthew Griffin, Principal Investigator**

Experimental kelp farms

RWU’s CEED was established to promote the development of marine industries compatible with healthy environments. CEED laboratories are focal points for RI aquaculture research and future plans include the establishment of a 2-acre commercial shellfish farm in Mt. Hope Bay, adjacent to campus.

National media have posed the question “Is kelp the new kale?” referencing the potential for this seaweed to enter the ranks of a nutritional super-food. In addition to having a high vitamin, mineral, antioxidant and omega-three fatty acid content, kelp has a positive environmental footprint, soaking up excess nitrogen from coastal waters as it grows. The favorable economic and environmental potential of kelp farming as a new marine industry in RI led CEED researchers Matthew Griffin and Dale Leavitt to apply for LASA funding to study the feasibility of local sugar kelp farming in Narragansett Bay. Because kelp grows rapidly in cold, winter conditions, kelp farming might provide an attractive companion crop for RI oyster farmers since the bulk of their effort occurs during the summer growing season.

LASA funding allows CEED researchers to place four experimental kelp farms in Narragansett/Mt. Hope Bay, tracking growth and product quality from each and providing much-needed data on the best location for RI kelp farms from market and environmental perspectives. With the support of LASA funds, researchers will hold a “farm day” for interested parties to see and work with the kelp. Knowledge and information gained from the research will be a part of an Applied Shellfish Farming aquaculture course that runs every spring.

SecondsFirst

Providence

Awarded: \$19,706



Wholesale food products for insecure populations

SecondsFirst founder Erika Lamb has worked to increase food access through several initiatives, including acting as a local food broker for the On The Move mobile market. SecondsFirst was founded to address Rhode Island’s alarming prevalence of food insecurity by purchasing over-abundant local foods and processing them into targeted products for food insecure populations.

SecondsFirst is using LASA funds to scale up their food processing operations and distribute two new products to sites serving food insecure populations. The funding allows SecondsFirst to purchase 100 pounds of imperfect carrots and 800 pounds of under-utilized fish from local sources. SecondsFirst processes both products and then stores them in freezer space at Hope & Main, providing a supply of frozen, peeled, diced carrots and frozen fish cakes for food insecure sites. As market demand increases, additional vegetables and fish can be purchased from local farms and fishermen, increasing variety and quantity of product.

SecondsFirst addresses RI’s substantial rate of food insecurity while providing new sources of revenue to RI farmers and fish processors. As a new wholesale food processing company, SecondsFirst will develop partnerships and collaborations to increase sales for local food products that might not otherwise have made it into the marketplace. By reducing food waste in our state and making the RI local food economy a little more profitable, SecondsFirst will also help keep quality RI foods more accessible to the most food at-risk populations.

“Institutional chefs serving food insecure populations experience challenges sourcing local vegetables year round and accessing a ready source of fish protein as a center-of-the-plate item at affordable prices. Our local food products – frozen local vegetables and fish cakes – address these needs and increase access for the food insecure.”

— Erika Lamb, CEO and Founder

Sol Chariots Pedicab Cooperative Harvest Cycle Program

Providence

Awarded: \$9,847



Bike taxi produce and compost delivery service

Founded in 2012 as a bike taxi service, Sol Chariots Pedicab Cooperative is a worker-owned cooperative that provides eco-friendly, pedal-powered transportation and delivery services for people, parcels and produce in Providence.

Sol Chariots is using their LASA funding to purchase equipment, engage personnel and create promotional materials to expand delivery of local produce to urban customers and to increase residential composting in the city of Providence. By delivering locally grown community-supported agriculture shares (CSAs) directly to urban customers, Sol Chariots provides a time saving service to city residents who sometimes can't commit to weekly CSA pick-ups. By offering food scrap pick-up services to city residents, Sol Chariots addresses the transportation challenges that many urban residents face making it difficult to bring 5-gallon food scrap buckets to compost piles in community gardens on a regular basis. By returning those food scraps back to local farms, Sol Chariots completes the Harvest Cycle and helps renew soils for future local food production.

Using fossil-fuel free delivery and transportation services, LASA funding ultimately helps Sol Chariots connect more urban farmers and their products directly with urban residents, helping to sustain the productive cycle of our local urban agriculture system.

“Several New England bike delivery companies have already begun and successfully scaled up food scrap pick-up and CSA delivery programs. These companies have proven that city-dwellers are willing to pay for a delivery service that connects them with the cycle of urban agriculture.”

— Irene Beauregard, Delivery Coordinator

Southside Community Land Trust / RI Urban Farmers Network

Providence & Cranston

Awarded: \$19,462



Enhance facilities at Urban Edge Farm

For the past four years, the Rhode Island Urban Farmers Network (the Network) has provided technical assistance and peer learning for small-scale farmers in RI's urban areas. By increasing access to affordable land, developing marketing strategies for urban sales and providing occasions for farmers to learn directly from one another, the Network strengthens urban agriculture in RI, providing fresh, affordable and locally grown food in high density population neighborhoods.

As a member of the Network, Southside Community Land Trust (SCLT) applied for LASA funding to enhance facilities at Urban Edge Farm in western Cranston. Urban Edge is a collaborative, incubator farm purchased and preserved by the RI Dept. of Environmental Management and leased by SCLT for the past 14 years. With LASA funding, SCLT can increase tillable acreage at the farm and provide additional infrastructure supports for 4-6 new small-scale farmer businesses. Specific improvements include field preparation, expansion of cold storage and the construction of a second wash station to help prepare product for market.

The collaborative culture at Urban Edge provides unique support to small and beginning farmers, creating the opportunity for several farms to interact and operate their businesses in a shared space. Expanding the number of farms and increasing the production of locally grown crops at Urban Edge supports new sales channels, particularly in urban farmers markets where the demand for affordable and culturally diverse foods is high.

“All of the farmers in the Network – including SCLT – are small and/or beginning farmers without access to the typical mechanisms that allow successful small businesses to obtain investment or loan capital needed to expand. Through this project, several new urban farmers will collaborate with each other on issues that directly impact the growth of their businesses.”

— **Laura Bozzi, Farm, Food, & Youth Programs Director**

Sun Farm Oysters & Block Island Oyster Company

Block Island

Awarded: \$9,754



Ice maker & related equipment

Sun Farm Oysters leases 3 acres to harvest shellfish using a floating culture. Block Island Oyster Company leases 1.5 acres using a bottom culture method.

Although they each use different methods to harvest their aquaculture product from Block Island waters, both farms share a key financial concern. The local Block Island restaurant market has a very short season (16 weeks a year during the summer). Market expansion to the mainland presents several logistically challenging issues, including efficient access to ice from a certified water source to quickly cool harvested shellfish for transport.

Vibrio bacteria thrive in warmer waters and live in shellfish. State regulations require harvesting, storing and transporting oysters in cold-temperature protected environments. Sun Farm Oysters applied for LASA funding to invest in ice making equipment, insulated containers and a ramp to move heavy, ice-packed oyster containers on and off the ferry. Both aquaculture farms can share the ice-making equipment, fostering a collaboration that will help each of them expand their market share and increase sales to the mainland.

As a result of LASA funding, Block Island harvested shellfish are expected to appear in more mainland restaurants and wholesale markets. Both farms expect to hire more workers, purchase more oyster seed and see their sales triple over the course of a full year.

“This equipment allows us to make ice, store it on our boats in insulated containers, use the ice to keep our product at the recommended and required temperatures and then transport product in the proper environment in an efficient manner. Easier access to ice will give our farms the ability to expand our markets more efficiently and at a lower cost than is currently possible.”

— Christopher Warfel, Owner

Young Farmer Network

Providence

Awarded: \$19,938



Expand programming and community building

The Young Farmer Network (YFN)'s mission is to support farmers as they develop socially, ecologically and economically sustainable farm businesses. They do this by cultivating relationships between farmers of all ages and backgrounds in southeastern New England so that members can exchange ideas and support one another through peer learning workshops and networking events. The YFN partners with a variety of agriculturally based organizations and groups to help build and maintain a viable local farming culture in the region.

The YFN is using LASA funding to expand their programming and organize more events with a specific focus on land transfer and intergenerational, interracial community building, including some anti-racism trainings. Their work with established growers, agricultural organizations and elected representatives continues to build a more cohesive and just network of food production in the state. As a result of LASA funding, the YFN will expand its reach to strengthen the social network within many sectors of the local agricultural community and will encourage additional collaboration with farmers from other generations and cultures.

The YFN has a reputation as an accessible and proactive organization that seeks to serve farmers, food producers, communities and consumers in RI. Their effective and grassroots outreach builds stronger farmer constituencies in the region and their programming brings practical and economical education and networking opportunities to a broad and growing coalition of people who support RI farms.

“A culture of equity and inclusivity are crucial to our work. We believe that the diversity of New England agriculture will support land conservation efforts and a more sustainable and resilient regional food system where agrarian values may deepen and take root in both urban and rural areas.”

— **Tess Brown-Lavoie, Coordinator**

Zephyr Farm

Cranston

Awarded: \$14,500



Mobile food freezing and processing unit

Zephyr Farm started in 2008 on Urban Edge Farm and three years later moved to its own 6-acre parcel in Cranston where owner Michelle Kozloski raises free-range, non-GMO grain fed chickens and grows a variety of fruits and vegetables without synthetic pesticides or herbicides. Zephyr Farm products are sold directly to customers at two farmers markets and are delivered to local restaurants through Farm Fresh Rhode Island's Market Mobile service.

Zephyr Farm applied for LASA funds to purchase and build a mobile food freezing and processing unit to be housed on site at the farm. The unit, a first of its kind in the state, allows Zephyr Farm to efficiently expand its product line by offering unsold or excess fruits and vegetables in a new format, such as chopped vegetables or frozen fruits. Kozloski wants the processing unit to reduce waste created from unsold food and increase year-round accessibility and sales of local product.

The LASA-funded processing and freezing unit allows Zephyr Farm to reach out and connect with other local farms to purchase their excess vegetables or fruit for processing. This collaboration has the potential to greatly increase the sales season for RI-grown produce. Zephyr Farm could also rent the unit to other local growers, helping to reduce food waste around the state and contribute to greater food security and a greater variety of products year-round.

"I want to offer customers more products, including ones that are more user-friendly. If a butternut squash has a nick in it, we can't sell it. But if we could peel it and cut it into chunks, it becomes a new product. I'd like to plan ahead and freeze out-of-season vegetables and fruit to supplement sales of storage crops during the harsh winter months."

— Michele Kozloski, Owner





LASA 2016 Applicants

The LASA Grants Advisory Committee reviewed an impressive pool of applicants, with 71 grant proposals submitted for the 2016 LASA Grants Program. The Committee would like to recognize all applicants for their time, energy and engagement in this process.

Coggeshall Farm Museum

Bristol

Develop a garden program around sustainable methods of gardening as a source of food and income

Aaron C. Gewirtz

(DBA Nancy Beth Fisheries, LLC.)

Wakefield

Retrofit and upgrade a fishing vessel

Adams Farm, LLC

Cumberland

Food truck/trailer food service station on farm

African Alliance of RI

Providence

Support efforts of small urban agricultural community comprised of immigrant and refugee farmers

Agcore Technologies LLC

Cranston

Equipment to produce, package, and label proprietary fish feed

Andrew R White

Exeter

Provide Rhode Island community with a new oyster farm in the salt pond

Ayers Foundation

Westerly

Support staff time and purchase equipment and promotional materials to deliver compost to partner farms and gardens

Candace Clavin

Barrington

Lavendar test crop, seaweed mulching

Charles R. Chase

Coventry

Experiment planting high density sugar bush for tapping within ten years

The City of Central Falls

Central Falls

Transfer an underutilized community park with edible, productive landscaping and a community garden

Coastal Growers Farmers Market, Inc.

Saunderstown

Construct a fully climate controlled greenhouse at Historic Casey Farm

Cory Lynn Brown

Portsmouth

Grow a local, sustainable, organic, farm-to-table business

David A Zoglio / Classical High school

Providence

Greenhouse/urban farm project for students and community

Dawn Brooks-Rapp & Mark Rapp

Little Compton

Develop a self sustaining greenhouse system using an insulated solar design that incorporates an ecological compost heater

Eating with the Ecosystem

Warren

Project to raise profile of plentiful but underappreciated Rhode Island seafood species

Greenvale Vineyards

Portsmouth

Develop new website to enhance and expand visibility and marketability as one of Aquidneck Island's unique agricultural destinations

Harry F. Whilden, dba Whilden

Unlimited, dba Whilden Oyster Farm

North Kingston

Construct and install floating dock equipped with ice-eater pump

Hillandale Food Hub

Westerly

Vehicle to transport perishable farm produce, meats, and value-added products

Hocus Pocus Farm

Glocester

Invest in infrastructure and create a stipend apprenticeship

Hope & Main

Warren

Develop and deliver year-long "Community Lunch Pail" evolution of CSA

Hope Street Farmers'

Market Association

Providence

Funding to support Rhode Island Farm Crawl event

House of Hope Community

Development Corporation

Warwick

Establish a community kitchen garden next to Harrington Hall homeless shelter

Jeffrey T. Powell

Warwick

Purchase of a refrigerated delivery vehicle

Jennifer Brown

Providence

Grow organic vegetables at Mowry Commons, offering CSA and restaurant produce

John Janda & Donna Canale

Providence

Equipment and materials to create aquaponics farm

Jonathan Island Oyster Company

Killingworth, CT

Purchase a double supply of oyster bags

Joseph Cirello

Bristol

Locally cultivated honey, walnuts, and beehive rentals for local businesses and farmers in RI, donate a portion of the harvest to local food pantries

Joseph J Rovinski and Leslie R Dacier Exeter

Build a sustainable farm to grow “simulated wild ginseng”

Joseph Schultz

Johnston

Implement drip irrigation system to increase vegetable production and yields

Mesa Fresca

Providence

Develop production and distribution of Mesa Fresca Chimichurri sauce in partnership with local farmers

New England Grass Fed LLC

Hopkinton

Build processing facility, expand breeding stock and cage system, support for intern

Northern RI Conservation District – Snake Den Farm

Johnston

Funding to support staff time in developing strategic plan, marketing effort, and new signage

Ocean State Shellfish Cooperative, LLC

Narragansett

Expand harvest service to participating coop oyster farms

OysterRI, LLC

Warwick

Expand Ocean State Oyster Festival and promotional efforts

Patriot Farm

Exeter

Building upgrades and technological improvement

Peter Dellasanta

Little Compton

Chemical free, high efficiency hydroponic greenhouse and farm

Red Planet Vegetable Farm #1

Providence

Convert existing space to four season packing shed and CSA customer pickup area

Red Planet Vegetable Farm #2

Providence

Build a “bike stop” near farm entrance with shelter, water fountain, and picnic table

Revive the Roots

Smithfield

Implement infrastructure upgrades and facilitate community gardener and work-share programs

Rhode Island Community Food Bank

Providence

Pilot project to connect with local farmers to increase donations of unmarketable produce

Rhode Island Farm Bureau Federation

West Greenwich

Miniseries on RI farming and fishing industry to be aired on public television network

Richard and Suzanne Enser

South Kingstown

Rehabilitate brushland and establish a hopyard

Robert Botelho

Bristol

Farming-related education and therapy programs

Rocky Rhode Oyster Co., LLC

Wakefield

Support farm to become economically sustainable while developing children’s educational programming

Save The Bay, Inc.

Providence

Support for Taste of the Bay including expansion to collaborate with more local and sustainable food purveyors

Sheri O’Connor, Steven O’Connor

Foster

Equipment and training to produce brandy

Shoreside Organics LLC

Narragansett

Grow sales of liquid squid fertilizer

Sidewalk Ends Farm

Providence

One week farm camp for girls

Stephen N. Crandall /**Winnapaug Selects**

Westerly

Establish an optimally productive open water oyster farm in Winnapaug Pond

Sue Ann Millikin

Block Island

Pick-your-own blueberries experience

The James L. Maher Center;**Sustainable Ag & Fish**

Middletown

Support partial salary for instructor of program to provide individuals with disabilities skills in agricultural fishing and aquaculture fields

The Local Catch, Inc.

Charlestown

Expand into underserved farmer’s markets with low price-point products and launch RI-landed promotional campaign

University of Rhode Island

Kingston

Project to provide new information on production methods of vegetable Amaranth

Venus Oysters LLC

Wakefield

Create new prepared oyster product

West Elmwood Housing Development Corporation

Providence

Three-part project for healthy food access and grass roots marketing strategy in low-access neighborhoods



The **Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management** is committed to preserving the quality of Rhode Island's environment, maintaining the health and safety of its residents, and protecting the natural systems upon which life depends. Together with many partners, we offer assistance to individuals, business and municipalities, conduct research, find solutions, and enforce laws created to protect the environment.

www.dem.ri.gov

The **Rhode Island Food Policy Council** envisions a day when Rhode Island will be a national model because of the strength of its local food system and its success at achieving community food security and optimal public health. We envision a Rhode Island where safe, nutritious and culturally appropriate food is accessible and affordable in every Rhode Island community and in which an increasing proportion of the state's food supply is raised, caught, and processed locally.

www.rifoodcouncil.org