

2024 MA Farm & Sea to School Conference

Conference Program Planning Committee Roles and Responsibilities

INTRODUCTION

Massachusetts Farm to School

Massachusetts Farm to School was founded in 2004 as a grassroots initiative to increase access to healthy, locally-grown food in schools and other institutions across the state. Our mission is to strengthen local farms and fisheries and promote healthy communities by increasing local food purchasing and education at schools. We believe that all students - regardless of race, place, or class - deserve access to local foods and food education in school.

Massachusetts Farm to School works in the following ways to impact local food procurement, promotion, and education in institutions across the state. 1) We provide training and technical assistance to school food service professionals, farmers and fishermen, distributors, educators, and other advocates; 2) We coordinate local food outreach and promotion through our Harvest of the Month campaign; 3) We facilitate networking of farm to school practitioners; and 4) We provide leadership to advance policies that support expanded farm to school activity.

Massachusetts Farm & Sea to School Conference

The Massachusetts Farm & Sea to School Conference was conceived as a way to bring together the diverse stakeholders within the farm and sea to school movement. Since the very first conference in 2012, farm to school practitioners have been gathering biennially to attend workshops, learn from one another, and build the farm to school community and movement in Massachusetts.

The 2024 Conference

2024 will mark the first in-person MA Farm & Sea to School Conference since 2018. With a return to in-person programming, we seek to provide a space for cross-sector learning, networking, and inspiration. The conference will offer content relevant to individuals working across school environments, with tracks focused on the classroom, cafeteria, and community settings. The conference program planning committee will identify a conference theme and key questions for conference attendees to engage with throughout the event.

The 2024 Conference will also mark the 20th anniversary of Mass. Farm to School's founding and we will celebrate this milestone at the conference.

MFTS seeks approximately 8 individuals to join the conference program planning committee to help create the 7th conference in March 2024, location TBD.

MEMBER ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Representation from the Farm to School Movement

We strive for a conference program planning committee that represents diverse perspectives from across the farm & sea to school movement in Massachusetts. We seek participation from individuals representing a range of geographies, ethnicities, races, genders, ages, job types, abilities, sectors, and more. We expect that members will have strong relationships with individuals and groups in their communities and to be in regular communication with these groups to inform their role as a decision maker in the conference program planning process.

Sessions & Activity Development

The core focus of the program planning committee is development of the conference workshops and other sessions such as networking events, experiential learning opportunities, and field trips. Committee members will contribute to the identification of a conference theme and/or guiding questions, the development of a public request for proposals and support identification of a keynote speaker, field trip sites or other activities as needed.

Estimated time commitment: 1.5 hour monthly meeting July - February 2023 plus approximately 30 min/month for meeting preparation or to review materials

Proposal Review

The program planning committee will be responsible for reviewing the submitted workshop/activity proposals and making recommendations for which sessions to include in the conference. Committee members will each review a subset of all the proposals, with a focus on those proposals most aligned with their sector or area of expertise.

Estimated time commitment: 3 hours, November-December 2023

Outreach

Conference Program Planning Committee members will be key outreach partners for the conference, supporting activities such as sharing save-the-dates, encouraging proposal submissions, promoting registration, and contributing to efforts to ensure diverse participation.

Estimated time commitment: 1.5 hours total, September 2023- February 2024

Conference

During the conference, we ask planning committee members to support a positive experience for all attendees by identifying themselves as a member of the conference planning committee, checking in with individuals throughout the event, facilitating networking sessions as needed etc.

Estimated time commitment: No additional time commitment beyond conference attendance.

BENEFITS

Program planning committee members are central to the design and execution of the MA Farm & Sea to School Conference. The event is created by and for farm & sea to school practitioners and, as such, planning committee members have the opportunity to shape the direction of the movement in MA. Participation in the planning committee can help advance members' own work and that of their peers and community. Members may also develop new or stronger connections with other planning committee members. In addition, program planning committee members receive the following:

Compensation

In recognition of their contribution to the successful planning of the conference, committee members will receive a stipend of \$400 and a complementary conference registration.

Public recognition and appreciation

Planning committee members will be listed on the conference website and, if applicable, in a printed program. Members will also be recognized at the conference.