

RHODY FEEDING RHODY

Rhody Feeding Rhody Alliance Member Meeting

SUMMARY & NOTES:

Monday, February 12, 2024 • 12:00 - 1:00 pm

Theme: Reflections and updates from Year-1

- [Meeting Recording](#)
 - [Slide Presentation](#)
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OBJECTIVES

- *Share Alliance success stories*
- *Learn about getting involved*
- *Discuss how we can help this market grow*

SUMMARY

This is the start of the second year of a 3-year grant. Core partners have been very active in moving the food on the ground and building a strong market.

Successes in 2023: Rhody Feeding Rhody Alliance members showcased significant growth and expansion in their initiatives to support local producers while enhancing community access to fresh, culturally-appropriate food.

Farm Fresh RI facilitated a substantial increase in financial support to local farmers, channeling \$574,000 through various programs, a remarkable scale-up from four years prior. This included \$197,000 from the Farm to Food Pantry Program for hunger relief agencies, \$168,000 through the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program, and \$162,000 for purchasing 151,000 pounds of surplus produce from growers.



The Commercial Fisheries Center of Rhode Island's (CFCRI) "Seafood for All" program distributed over 158,000 pounds of fresh local seafood, reflecting a growing network of partners within the Rhody Feeding Rhody Alliance aimed at addressing the rising need for healthy proteins. The initiative, in collaboration with Eating with the Ecosystem, also successfully introduced local seafood into K-12 schools, with monkfish sliders being a hit among students at Gallagher Middle School. CFCRI plans to expand its "Seafood for All" program, seeking new partners and funding sources to support infrastructure needs and regular distributions. The focus on connecting local seafood to schools is also a priority, building on the successful introduction of seafood into school menus.

The Southside Community Land Trust (SCLT) significantly contributed by offering upfront payments to 12 farmers for crop production, developing eight new partnerships, and adding five new farmers to their program. They also increased their produce distribution efforts, including 14 produce giveaways and nearly doubling their sales to over \$190,000 through their aggregation program. These collective efforts underscore the organization's commitment to strengthening the local food system, expanding its network of partnerships, and increasing the availability of fresh, nutritious food within the community. SCLT is focused on sustaining and growing its impactful programming. They aim to fortify their partnerships with new buyers, including new tenants in their building who plan to incorporate locally grown produce into their restaurant menus and a West African superstore stocking and lightly processing greens. Efforts to build a more sustainable volunteer base and improve data management systems for better tracking and support of farmer business expansion through value-added products are also key goals.

Looking forward to 2024: The Rhody Feeding Rhody Alliance shares a common goal of growing the market in terms of who's selling into it and who's buying from it, enhancing programs local produce and seafood businesses are already operating, and building a resilient, sustainable food system that benefits for producers, consumers, and the community alike. The necessity of continuing the momentum generated by the [USDA-LFPA](#) funding is critical.

With the LFPA's transformative impact on food hubs, hunger relief, and producers nationwide, the introduction of a Marker Bill by Senator Jack Reed to make the LFPA program a permanent fixture in the Farm Bill signifies a critical step forward. Collecting and sharing impactful stories from growers and agencies will be essential in demonstrating the value and success of these initiatives.



Next steps: Alliance members are encouraged to share the www.rhodyfeedingrhody.org website widely and encourage others with aligned missions to join. To become an Alliance member, simply fill out the form on the site and you will be added to our communications, including invitations to quarterly meetings.

Next meeting: Monday, May 13 @ 12pm

PARTICIPANTS

Allison Montagnon

Ally Jennings

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Dana Siles

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Donna Matthews

Ella Zalewsky

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Jeanette Nessett

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