RHODE ISLAND Hunger Elimination Task Force

As part of implementing Relish Rhody, the State’s Food Strategy, the Inter-Agency Food and Nutrition Policy Council convened the Hunger Elimination Task Force. The Task Force is comprised of leaders from across State and municipal government, non-profits, and industry, as well as community members from across the state.

GOAL: to reduce food insecurity from 12.8% to 10%

Definition of Food Security: Access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. Food security at a minimum includes the ready availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods, and an assured ability to acquire those foods without relying on the emergency food system.

INTEGRATED FOCUS AREAS:

- Sustain & Create Markets for Rhode Island Food, Beverage Products
- Preserve & Grow Agriculture, Fisheries Industries in Rhode Island
- Ensure Food Security for All Rhode Islanders
- Minimize Food Waste & Divert it from the Waste Stream
- Enhance the Climate for Food & Beverage Businesses

Environment & Resiliency
Economic Development
Health & Access

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The Task Force recognized that poverty is a root cause of food insecurity. Further, food insecurity does not occur in a vacuum. For this reason, the Task Force chose to look at hunger in terms of its social determinants, and the recommendations are based on topics that address the root causes of food insecurity.

**Economic Development**
- Continue to create new jobs & targeted job training programs, with a particular focus on connecting opportunities to the needs of our most vulnerable
- Continue to ensure that jobs created and supported using State-funded economic development tools provide workers with fair and livable wages
- Use the Opportunity Zones and other targeted investment areas to draw investment into under-served communities
- Partner with business support organizations to ensure access to technical assistance for small businesses in all communities

**Expand Food Purchasing Power:**
- Expand SNAP Incentive Programs into grocery & retail stores
- Support community-scale gardens and agriculture
- Create a statewide baseline scan of all state and municipal properties that could be potential garden/farm sites

**Streamline & Maximize Participation in Existing Programs:**
- Require alternative breakfast programs in schools with high free/reduced eligibility
- Encourage community eligibility for meals in all eligible schools
- Increase opportunities for SNAP utilization on college campuses
- Increase utilization of WIC through explicit inter-agency partnerships & best practice sharing

**Address Transit & Transportation Challenges**
- Include the Health Equity Zone in the Transit Coordinating Council to reflect community needs of Rhode Islanders
- Hold targeted community input meetings on the Rhode Island Transit Master Plan within each Health Equity Zone
- Ensure that RIPTA connects Rhode Islanders in need to necessary food-related services (meal sites, summer meals, WIC offices)

**Ground in Data:**
- Better leverage data through cross-agency partnerships to ensure no Rhode Islander is falling through the cracks

**Fully Support the Safety Net**
- Increase funding for the Rhode Island Community Food Bank & their member agencies
- Support efforts by Hope’s Harvest & other statewide gleaning efforts to connect surplus harvest with the emergency food system
- Expand the participation of RIDOH’s Rhode to End Hunger Partnership with MEANS, connecting surplus prepared foods to Rhode Islanders in need

**To learn more**
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