

Sustainability

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SI Network News

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SHARE

Karen Nordstrom, Policy Program Co-Director, Food Solutions New England

UNH and the Sustainability Institute are dedicated to the public good and to growing strong, resilient food systems, both in New Hampshire and across New England. The Sustainability Institute fosters three programs in service to our food systems: [Food Solutions New England](#) (FSNE), the [NH Food Alliance](#), and [NH Farm to School](#). Each program works independently and in collaboration with one another to build the local food movement by growing and sustaining local farms, fisheries, and food businesses, securing healthy food access for all, building climate resilience, and advocating for racial equity in our communities.

Greetings from the Food Solutions New England (FSNE) Policy Program Co-Director! For those of you new to our work, FSNE is a multi-racial network made up of a wide range of people, organizations, business, and groups. While our approaches and strategies may vary, what ties us together is that we are committed to working toward a common goal of building a just, sustainable and resilient regional food system that works for everyone. FSNE’s intersectional approach to food policy networking and advocacy infuses our [four impact areas](#) - Network Expansion and Movement Weaving, Equity Leadership Development and Practice, Narrative Strategy, and Regional Policy Coordination -- into all aspects of our work, in order to build on the aspirational work of the [New England Food Vision](#).



As the FSNE Policy Program Co-Director focused on food and farming systems, I serve as a key liaison to a cross-cutting regional policy initiative that integrates and coordinates activities, insights, strategies, and tactics across the issue areas of food, farms, forests, fisheries, and communities. This work involves regular communication and collaboration with aligned projects like [New England Feeding New England](#) and partner networks like [Wildlands, Woodlands, Farmlands & Communities](#).

Together with these and many other network partners, we are responding to the region’s need to cultivate a climate- and food supply chain- resilient regional food system rooted in the intersections of human and environmental health and wellbeing.

With ongoing support from [Elmina B. Sewall Foundation Healthy People, Healthy Places Program](#), we continue to build connections and cultivate network relationships with policymakers, non government leaders, and other food system advocates working to drive change and make progress toward regional food system goals. With our expanding network, we are crafting visionary policy campaigns rooted in participatory processes that center the voices of those most impacted by regional issues. Nested within these campaigns are collaboratively produced policy updates and issue briefs, as well as convenings with food system leaders and policymakers to align around a set of public priorities for regional food system transformation. This work aligns with our network [vision](#) and [values](#), as it expands and diversifies our network membership for greater regional resilience and stronger policy solutions.

With additional support from the [Highstead Foundation](#), we are currently hiring my counterpart, whose policy program co-director role will focus on land and forest conservation. Securing these two positions has significantly strengthened our capacity to form a collaborative cross-sector alliance to advance visionary policy across the New England landscape and seascape.

The model for this integrated policy program will be distinctive in terms of its high-level perspective, geographic breadth (individual state and six-state region), vertical depth (forests, farms, fisheries, food and related social and community issues), and collaborative design.

This initiative is intended to provide information, support and capacity to those groups and efforts that are already directly involved in developing and advancing policies, legislation, and regulations. We aim to complement, enhance and support the work of many partners in forest, farm and fisheries conservation, food systems, human health and social justice through a commitment to participatory processes that will center the values of democratic empowerment, racial equity and dignity for all, trust, and sustainability. Collectively, this work is being done in service of our larger vision of a just, equitable, sustainable, and resilient food system for all!

[Stay tuned to FSNE](#) for more news and updates to come!

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