

Request for Proposals (RFP) & Scope of Work (SOW)

RI Farm & Sea to School Network Strategic/Action Plan Refinement and Refresh Facilitator

Organization: Rhode Island Farm and Sea to School Network (F+S2S Network)

Timeline: Summer/Fall 2026. Work must be completed by September 30, 2026.

1. Project Overview & Context

The Rhode Island Farm and Sea to School Network, established in 2019, unifies advocacy, funding, and organizational capacity to strengthen farm-to-school efforts across Rhode Island. Supported by core partners—including RIDE, RIDEM, RI Commerce, RI Healthy Schools Coalition, and Farm Fresh Rhode Island—our Network connects local agriculture and seafood to healthy eating habits in schools and early childhood education programs.

In January 2024, our Leadership Council approved a comprehensive **Strategic Action Plan (July 2024 – June 2027)** built around three core pillars:

- **Build:** Activate a diverse Farm and Sea to School Network.
- **Amplify:** Increase awareness and understanding of Farm and Sea to School in RI.
- **Sustain:** Create lasting impact and maintain regional momentum.

The Network is seeking an experienced, equity-centered strategic planning facilitator to guide our Leadership Council and key Network partners through a refinement, refresh, and extension of our current Action plan to carry us into the next phase of impact. A primary objective of this refresh is to thoughtfully integrate 5 newly emerging priorities (1. student-led initiatives, 2. food security in schools, 3. increasing food producer engagement, 4. developing food system leaders through the RI Farm & Sea to School Institute, and 5. Strengthening Farm to Early Childhood Education (ECE) Network Activities). As much as possible, our Network would like to better understand how we can align these priorities with the work of appropriate local partner institutions so we can move forward with more impact together. We require a facilitator to design and lead this process with input from our RI Farm & Sea to School Leadership Council, facilitate a strategic planning session at our November Network Gathering in Rhode Island, and develop a strategic plan refresh inclusive of new steps, responsibilities, metrics, and timelines.

2. Scope of Work & Key Deliverables

Phase 1: Discovery & Performance Review (Virtual)

- **Document Review:** Analyze the current Action Plan, existing data tracking systems, and current progress toward the current Action Plan's metrics (2024 - 2027).

Phase 2: Facilitation & Strategy Refinement (Virtual and In Person)

- **Leadership Council Workshops:**
 - Plan and facilitate one virtual, 2 hr strategic planning session with the F+S2S Leadership Council in September.
 - With support from the Leadership Council and Network Co-Chair, plan and facilitate a strategic planning session during a larger stakeholder gathering (approx 30-50 ppl) that will take place in person in Providence, RI on November 19th, 2026. The facilitator will work with the event planning committee to design the event, organize breakout sessions, and lead the strategic planning initiatives at the event.
- **Priority Optimization:** Guide the team in strategically integrating newly identified priorities to the Action Plan, nested in one of the three core focus areas of the original Action Plan:
 - *Build:* Enhancing network on-ramps and deepening Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion integration.
 - *Amplify:* Evaluating communication strategies, advocacy impact, and state-level policy alignments.
 - *Sustain:* Reviewing curriculum integration, food hub procurement systems, and organizational funding/staffing structures.

Phase 3: Plan Finalization (Virtual)

- **Updated Action Plan Draft:** Synthesize workshop outputs into a refined Strategic Action Plan document, including updated milestones and timelines.
- **Metric Realignment:** Establish clear, updated quantitative and qualitative success metrics stretching past the current Action Plan's 2027 benchmarks.

3. Desired Qualifications

We are looking for a facilitator or consulting team with:

- Demonstrated experience in strategic planning, network coordination, or collective impact models.
- A strong baseline understanding of food systems, food justice, or farm-to-school frameworks.
- Deep experience integrating Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion principles into organizational goals and community engagement strategies.
- Excellent facilitation skills capable of managing diverse multi-stakeholder coalitions.

5. Submission Guidelines

Interested facilitators should submit a brief proposal (not to exceed 4 pages) including:

1. **Approach & Methodology:** A summary of how you will approach this refresh and facilitate consensus among the stakeholders. Please indicate how you will support our Network in understanding how we could use our efforts to invest in a more resilient local food system in our state, considering both traditional (school food procurement) and informal (food hubs, community kitchens, food pantries).

2. **Timeline:** A proposed schedule to complete the work between August 2026 and September 30 2026.
3. **Cost Proposal:** An all-inclusive fee or hourly rate structure for the deliverables outlined.
4. **Relevant Experience:** Short bios/resumes and examples of similar strategic planning projects.

How to Apply: Please send your proposal to **Caitlin Mandel** (caitlin.mandel@ride.ri.gov), **RI Farm & Sea to School Network Co-chair** by **August 26, 2026**. Thank you for your consideration!

Visual Representation of our Current Action/Strategic Plan

