





By providing free legal assistance and education to New England's farmers and local food businesses, we support a sustainable, resilient, and just regional food system.

The Problem

Running a farm or food business is tough, and industryspecific legal assistance can be expensive and difficult
to find. Businesses often must choose between remaining
exposed to unknown legal risks and paying more for
legal help than they can afford.

Our Solution

The Legal Food Hub connects eligible New England farmers, food entrepreneurs, and the organizations that support them with free legal assistance and education. Expert volunteer attorneys in our network provide high-quality legal services and create accessible legal guides, webinars, and trainings for our participants.

OUR YEAR IN REVIEW

Since its founding, the Legal Food Hub has focused on increasing access to legal services for the small farmers, food entrepreneurs, and food organizations building a better New England food system. We recognize how important a strong legal foundation can be to a farm, business, or nonprofit's success. When farmers confront crop losses caused by frosts, floods, and droughts, and when food professionals innovate to make the most of new opportunities, a lawyer's assistance can make all the difference. That's why we continue to build a Hub that equitably serves New England.

Last year, our most important investment was in language. New England's food system is incredibly diverse. Attendees of the Legal Food Hub's 2024 Winter Webinar Series spoke 10 different languages at home, including Spanish, Cape Verdean, and Filipino. Our participants contact us with high-stakes challenges. And as they navigate an already complex legal system, participants should have the option to do so in their preferred language.

Today, participants can work with the Legal Food Hub in almost any language. If one of our staff doesn't speak a participant's preferred language, we can immediately involve an interpreter who does. In addition, participants can review the Hub's eligibility requirements in seven languages commonly spoken in New England's food system, including French, Somali, and Hmong. We also continue to expand our library of Spanish-language legal guides.

Improvements like these are critical as the Hub serves more farmers, food professionals, and food nonprofits. Last year, we connected 53% more participants to much-needed legal help than we did the year before, and we presented our best-attended winter webinar series yet. We're more determined than ever to remove barriers that limit access to the legal system. And we look forward to another year of securing legal services and resources for the people who make New England's food system possible.

2023 HIGHLIGHTS

587

Thousand dollars saved on legal fees

(129)

Cases placed

4

Webinars offered

134

Law firms in our network $\left(7\right)$

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Legal guides translated into Spanish

PARTICIPANT HIGHLIGHT



Broken Spokes Farm

In 2021, Justin and Jennifer Doades were ready for career transitions. The couple had always grown food in gardens – sometimes hundreds of pots at a time. As they witnessed the supply chain issues and recalls caused by COVID-19, they decided to start farming food for themselves and their community.

That summer, after 11 years in the Coast Guard and a career in financial administration and nursing respectively, Justin and Jennifer made the leap to purchase a 35-acre farm along the Sheepscot River in Windsor, Maine. In the woods on their new property, they came across an old broken wagon wheel and decided to name their new business Broken Spokes Farm. The following spring, Justin and Jennifer started their chicken flock. Heading into 2023 with 40 laying hens and 60 broilers on the way, the Doades still needed to form a legal entity for their business that would support their plans to grow the farm. So, they reached out to the Legal Food Hub.

In March 2023, the Hub matched the Doades with attorney Cecilia Guecia of Bopp and Guecia to identify and form the right kind of entity for their farm. Guecia provides a wide array of legal services for individuals, families, and small businesses in her community as founder and partner of a boutique law firm in Yarmouth, Maine. After discussing the Doades' goals for their farm, the size of their assets, and their capacity for financial management, Guercia helped them incorporate Broken Spokes Farm as an LLC. Then, in late 2023, Broken Spokes Farm LLC made its first sale!

Now well on their way to their dream farm business, the Doades hope to establish pasture fencing and bring in a small belted Galloway cattle herd in 2025. They also plan to expand the availability of their pork and chicken meat products, start producing maple syrup and honey, and, hopefully, establish solar panels on the farm.

FARMERS AND LOCAL FOOD BUSINESSES

These are just a few of the hundreds of farmers and food businesses the Legal Food Hub has helped across New England.





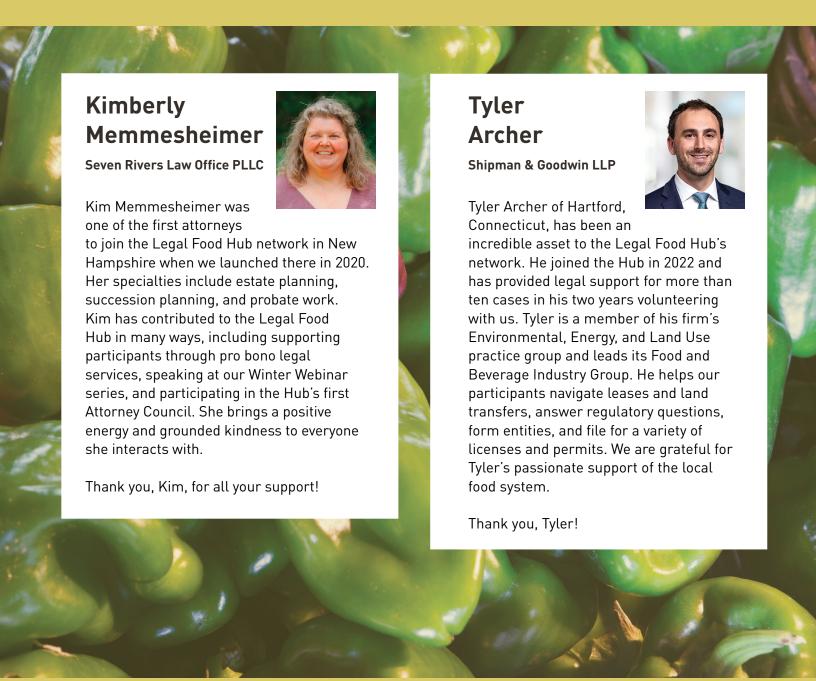








DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARDS



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OUR ATTORNEY COUNCIL

Thank you to our first ever Attorney Council. We appreciate your valuable input as we create bridges between the legal system and our food and farm businesses.



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