



LEGAL FOOD HUB
A project of Conservation Law Foundation



LEGAL FOOD HUB 2023 YEAR IN REVIEW





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 industry-specific 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.

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2023 HIGHLIGHTS

587

Thousand
dollars saved
on legal fees

129

Cases
placed

4

Webinars
offered

134

Law firms
in our
network

7

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 Guercia of Bopp and Guercia to identify and form the right kind of entity for their farm. Guercia 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.



Kearsage Food Hub

NEW HAMPSHIRE



Black Kettle Farm

MAINE



Calf & Clover Creamery

CONNECTICUT



All Farmers

MASSACHUSETTS



Refri PVD

RHODE ISLAND



Viva El Sabor

VERMONT

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARDS

Kimberly Memmesheimer

Seven Rivers Law Office PLLC



Kim Memmesheimer was one of the first attorneys to join the Legal Food Hub network in New Hampshire when we launched there in 2020. Her specialties include estate planning, succession planning, and probate work. Kim has contributed to the Legal Food Hub in many ways, including supporting participants through pro bono legal services, speaking at our Winter Webinar series, and participating in the Hub's first Attorney Council. She brings a positive energy and grounded kindness to everyone she interacts with.

Thank you, Kim, for all your support!

Tyler Archer

Shipman & Goodwin LLP



Tyler Archer of Hartford, Connecticut, has been an incredible asset to the Legal Food Hub's network. He joined the Hub in 2022 and has provided legal support for more than ten cases in his two years volunteering with us. Tyler is a member of his firm's Environmental, Energy, and Land Use practice group and leads its Food and Beverage Industry Group. He helps our participants navigate leases and land transfers, answer regulatory questions, form entities, and file for a variety of licenses and permits. We are grateful for Tyler's passionate support of the local food system.

Thank you, Tyler!

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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.



KIM MEMMESHEIMER

Seven Rivers Law Office, PLLC



DEB FOPPERT

Archer & Foppert LLP



ANDREW J. KRAUS

Opticliff Law



PETER KNIGHT

Robinson & Cole LLP



ANDREW MARCHEV

Three Rivers Law, PLLC



ALLISON POIRIER

Kahan Kerensky
Capossela, LLP



IVRIA FRIED

Harrington Heep LLP



MARK KNIGHTS

Nixon Peabody



RYAN BARRY

Bulkley Richardson



EMILY COOKE

Pierce Atwood



PARISH W. LENTZ

Barton Gilman



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