

Mandy Fischer, Burlington. Vermont Food Security Roadmap Coalition Rep.
Written testimony – joint appropriations hearing
2-13-25

Hi, my name is Mandy Fischer, and I live in Burlington. I am here today as a representative of the Vermont Food Security Roadmap Coalition. In my capacity as Director of Programs at the Intervale Center, I worked with a group of other food security leaders in our state over two years to develop a radically inclusive planning process and then synthesize the data and research gathered from over 600 Vermonters to craft the Vermont Food Security Roadmap to 2035, a bold action plan that shows us how to ensure everyone in Vermont has the food we need.

Food security can and should be achieved for everyone who lives in Vermont. This year, some of the priorities that we are highlighting from the Roadmap involve state funding. These priorities work together to move us down the road to food security - none is more important than the others – and are designed to support emergency food assistance and farm viability while addressing systemic injustices.

These priorities are to:

- Fund the Vermont Foodbank’s appropriations request for \$5 million
- Continue funding the Land Access and Opportunity Board so that it can perform its statutory powers and duties for improving land and housing access among historically marginalized and disadvantaged communities
- Appropriate \$20M for the Farm Security Fund to support emergency farm recovery from adverse weather events
- Convert \$323,000 in one-time funding for Vermont 211 to base funding and
- Increase the public investment in Crop Cash Plus and Farm Share to \$500,000 in base funding

Ending hunger means never again being surprised to learn that our neighbors, family members, or friends don’t have the food they need. Food security, which depends on a viable agricultural sector, is a policy choice. We are already on the road to food security in Vermont, and by funding our Coalition’s priorities, you will move us further toward food security for everyone.