

# NOFA/MASS ANNUAL REPORT

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NORTHEAST ORGANIC FARMING ASSOCIATION, MASSACHUSETTS CHAPTER

# We are NOFA/Mass

## Growing a Healthier Future for Massachusetts

Through education and advocacy NOFA/Mass promotes organic agriculture to expand the production and availability of nutritious food from living soil for the health of individuals, communities, and the planet

## Board of Directors

Doug Cook	Viondy Merisma	Dago Driggs (advisor)
Laura Davis	Richard Robinson	Meryl LaTronica (advisor)
John Duke	Karen Spiller	
Jody Mendoza	Priscilla Williams	

## Staff

Ulum Pixan Ahtohil Suk'il	Amanda Iglesias	Kallie Robertson
Valencia Andrews	Jocelyn Langer	Renée Scott
Laura Davis	Christine Manuck	Annie Sholar
David Durstewitz	Hannah McDonald	Minata Toure
Lili Elena	Dora Miller	Randy Violette
Lisa Gilardi	Melissa Milliken	Beth Ward
Anna Gilbert-Muhammad	Rubén Parrilla	
Liz Hamm	Sara Riegler	

# Expanding our Outreach

Providing all community members with the knowledge and content to increase their production & sustainability

Centering language justice to better support non-English speaking communities.

## 300+ hours

of interpreting provided as part of Language Access and other language justice activities in 2023. We strive to have paid interpreters on-site and available for events and workshops as much as possible.

- **Over 1/3** of our staff can now effectively communicate in both Spanish and English, through new hires.
- **2 newsletters** rebranded to increase community perspectives.



*Networking event at Global Village Farm for farmers of color interested in learning more about organic certification*

# Centering Equity & Inclusion

**Welcoming, educating, and supporting underserved communities**

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**Cultivating relationships with diverse and underserved communities starts internally and resonates externally.**

**18**

Dismantling Racism meetings held

**4**

BIPOC & white caucus groups hosted at conferences

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- Participated in the 21-day Racial Equity Habit Building Challenge and the 21-day Indigenous Challenge
- Equity Director Ulum Pixan Ahtohil Suk'il led equity discussions at the regional Transition to Organic Partnership Project (TOPP) meeting, and has been representing and leading NOFA/Mass and partners in equity discussions nationally.

# Education

**Serving as a community leader on soil health, sustainable farming, and organic certification assistance**

**NOFA/Mass remains a leader in educating farmers, gardeners, and communities about soil health, microbial diversity, and natural farming.**

## 14 on-farm & 12 virtual

events hosted on soil health, agroforestry, and more to promote sustainable, regenerative farming and gardening across Massachusetts.

- Our Education Director, Rubén Parrilla, is recognized as a regional leader in soil microbial analysis, and was invited to present at the national ACRES ECO Ag Conference in 2023.
- Provided direct outreach and education to beginning farmers & provided organic certification assistance to farmers looking to certify.



*Rubén Parrilla, NOFA/Mass Education Director leading a soil health workshop*

# Administration

**Cultivating our Internal Systems to better serve our farmers, gardeners, and community as we flourish & grow**

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***Made several key upgrades to our administrative structure***

- Integrated Salesforce software for member, donor, event, and bulk order management
- Consolidated our sales platforms
- Onboarded a new bookkeeping firm
- Implemented project management software

**As we grow and expand as an organization through our activities, scope, and relationships, we are streamlining our internal support structures and processes to most effectively assist our community.**

# Food Access

**Making farming, gardening, and access to nutritious, fresh produce accessible to all individuals & communities**

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## 150 families

received free CSA shares through the FarmShare program

## 1,750 lbs

of food for the community provided by The Open Pantry in Springfield.

## 2,750 lbs

of food provided by The Tapley Garden for neighbors in the Tapley Court Apartments and surrounding area.

## 40 youth

worked with us through our garden and soil health programs, providing them with education, skills, and life experiences to support their growth and independence.

# Development

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## \$700,000+

Awarded from MDAR for the FarmShare program to provide free CSA shares to 150 families in underserved communities

- Wrapped up the first year as a core partner on multiple multi-year USDA projects, bringing significant resources to MA farmers and providing budgetary stability for NOFA/Mass.

## \$13,445

Raised in donations to the annual Climate Action Challenge

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# Policy

## Advocating for a Sustainable Future

- **Organized dozens of volunteers** to provide pollinator protection testimony to the legislature's Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, **successfully moving one of our 3 priority bills out of committee.**
- Advocated for **pesticide regulation, pollinator habitat protection, and pollinator-friendly ecological land care at schools and colleges** with MA Climate Chief Melissa Hoffer.
- **More than 40** in-person and virtual pollinator-related presentations to libraries, garden clubs, town committees, and three TV appearances.
- We were a driving force behind the passing of the **Healthy Soils Action Plan in January 2023**. Nationally the first of its kind, it promotes healthy soils practices statewide to reduce greenhouse gases and the effects of climate change.



*Renée Scott, NOFA/Mass Pollinator Network Network Coordinator tabling at our annual Winter Conference.*

# Thank you

**To our staff, board, members, donors and sponsors for your investment in growing the local organic food and farming movement and, more importantly, for your commitment to ensuring the health of food and this planet for future generations.**

In 2024 we will continue to....

- Work towards a more equitable food system
  - Provide programming that supports restoring carbon to the soil from the atmosphere through organic land management practices
  - Train the next generation of organic and regenerative farmers
  - Advocate for public policy that benefits local farmers and families at the state and national levels
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