

COASTAL FOODSHED

New Bedford

Coastal Foodshed is located in New Bedford, Massachusetts, a coastal town halfway between Cape Cod and Providence, Rhode Island. Coastal Foodshed's mission is to make it easier for growers to sell, and consumers to buy, healthy and affordable local foods.

New Bedford has a rich history and vibrant arts and culture scene. As the most valuable commercial fishing port in the nation, New Bedford has attracted diverse residents who immigrated from Portugal, Cape Verde, Scandinavia, and Central America. The influence of these cultures can be found in local shops, restaurants, museums, and public art throughout the city.

Anti-Poverty Focus

Coastal Foodshed's core work is to increase the amount of local food sold by farmers and purchased by residents throughout the Southcoast, with a strong focus on equitable access for marginalized community members and underserved community members who are experiencing food insecurity.

A large part of Coastal Foodshed's work is reaching out to residents who use SNAP benefits to purchase a significant amount of their food each month. SNAP users can use their SNAP benefits to purchase food from Coastal Foodshed at ALL of our points of sale. In Massachusetts, SNAP users are also automatically eligible for the Healthy Incentives Program (HIP) which provides SNAP users with an incentive to purchase locally grown fruits and vegetables. For every SNAP dollar used to purchase locally grown fruits and vegetables from approved vendors like Coastal Foodshed, SNAP users earn back a dollar (between \$40-\$80 additional per month based on household size) that can be used at any retailer that accepts SNAP benefits.

The HIP program has played an extremely important role in supporting food security for Massachusetts' residents - while also supporting local farmers. Coastal Foodshed is the ONLY HIP-eligible vendor in New Bedford that is open year-round, however, only 3% of SNAP users in New Bedford are buying food from Coastal Foodshed, and only 2% of SNAP users in Bristol County are using HIP! Access to sufficient healthy foods is foundational to the physical, emotional, and economic health and wellness of families.

Engagement Coordinator VISTA

As the Local Food Access VISTA, you will play a critical role in educating residents about the SNAP and HIP programs, while spreading the word about Coastal Foodshed, and where and

how SNAP users can purchase local foods to ultimately increase the number of SNAP customers purchasing food from Coastal Foodshed and accessing additional HIP benefits.

The ideal Local Food Access VISTA will speak English and Spanish, understand the diverse communities they are working in, and be friendly, self-motivated, and a strong communicator.

The Local Food Access VISTA's primary responsibilities will include:

- Developing educational materials about SNAP and HIP
- Identifying and meeting with community partners who also serve SNAP clients to educate them about Coastal Foodshed
- Gathering feedback from customers and partnering organizations to improve messaging and outreach
- Collecting and analyzing various data and make recommendations to staff improve SNAP outreach and customer interactions

Benefits

- ALL STANDARD BENEFITS; see listing for full list
- Weekly box of local food produce
- Opportunity to network with dozens of community activists and leaders

Through this VISTA position, you will have an important impact on New Bedford and its surrounding communities, helping marginalized residents access healthy, locally grown foods while also improving food security for many families and children living in poverty. You will also gain knowledge about local food systems and food hub operations and how they support local farmers and food justice!

To apply, please visit the link here:

<https://my.americorps.gov/mp/listing/viewListing.do?fromSearch=true&id=116074>