



Annual Report 2025



Real Food CT is

A non-profit organization that brings locally grown, healthy food to people who need it.

Vision

We believe everyone deserves access to healthy food.

Mission

Real Food CT addresses food insecurity by connecting our regional farm network—including our own community farms—with the people who need fresh, healthy food the most. Through our gleaning program, young farmer internships, and expanding food hub partnerships, we ensure that surplus produce reaches pantries, schools, and institutions. Committed to long-term impact, we champion local food infrastructure and advocate for resilient systems that support both farmers and food access organizations.

We Value

Sustainability: Nurturing our farmland with Regenerative Farming practices, reducing the need for chemical inputs, and increasing the nutrient density of the food we eat.

Food Justice: Building supply chains that ensure fair distribution and access to healthy food for everyone.

Local Farms: Promoting and supporting a vibrant local food economy

Education: Training young farmers and promoting the value of a strong local food system

Health: Preventing disease and promoting prosperity with healthy and delicious food choices

Diversity: Appreciating the value of diversity in food culture, and lifestyle



2025

by the numbers

2

Real Food CT Small Farms

7

Young Farmer Interns trained on
Agricultural Skills

275

Volunteers helping feed neighbors
in need

25

Farm + Market Surplus Partners

32

Recipient Organizations

158,000

Pounds of Locally-grown Produce
Donated

Donation Recipients

Boys & Girls Club - Ansonia, CT
 The Salvation Army, Ansonia
 Julia Day Preschool, Ansonia
 Valley YMCA Childcare, Ansonia
 Walnut Hill Community Church, Bethel
 Bridgeport Rescue Mission, Bridgeport, CT
 Fridgeport, Bridgeport, CT
 Pantry at 219, Bridgeport, CT
 PT Partners, Bridgeport, CT
 Thomas Merton Center, Bridgeport, CT
 Trumbull Gardens, Bridgeport, CT
 Community Food Rescue, Danbury, CT
 Food Farmacy, Danbury, CT
 Daily Bread, Danbury, CT
 St. Vincent DePaul of the Valley
 Food Bank, Derby, CT
 Jewish Family Services, Fairfield, CT
 Middlebury Food Bank, Middlebury, CT
 Milford Food Bank, Milford, CT
 Monroe Food Pantry, Monroe, CT
 Valley Community Gardens,
 Lower Naugatuck Valley, CT
 Haven's Harvest, New Haven, CT
 The Ronald McDonald House,
 New Haven, CT
 Camilla's Cupboard, New Milford, CT
 FAITH Food Pantry, Newtown, CT
 Newtown Congregational Church,
 Newtown, CT
 Newtown Senior Center, Newtown, CT
 Rescue Church New England, Newtown, CT
 Keystone House, Norwalk, CT
 Person2Person, Norwalk, CT
 Oxford Neighbor to Neighbor, Oxford, CT
 Little Free Pantry on Skokorat, Seymour, CT
 Seymour Oxford Food Bank, Seymour, CT
 Spooner House, Shelton, CT
 Calvary Church, Southbury, CT
 Southbury Food Pantry, Southbury, CT
 Sterling House Community Center, Stratford, CT
 Wilton Commons, Wilton, CT
 Wilton Food Pantry, Wilton, CT

Donation Partners

Hard Rain Farm - Burlington
 Clover Nook Farm - Bethany
 Community Food Rescue - Danbury
 Sport Hill Farm - Easton
 U.S. Food Rescue - Fairfield
 Waterview Farm - Monroe
 Hungry Reaper Farm - Morristown
 Sunset Farm - Naugatuck
 Fort Hill Farm - New Milford
 Moss Creek Farm - Newtown
 Newtown High School - Newtown

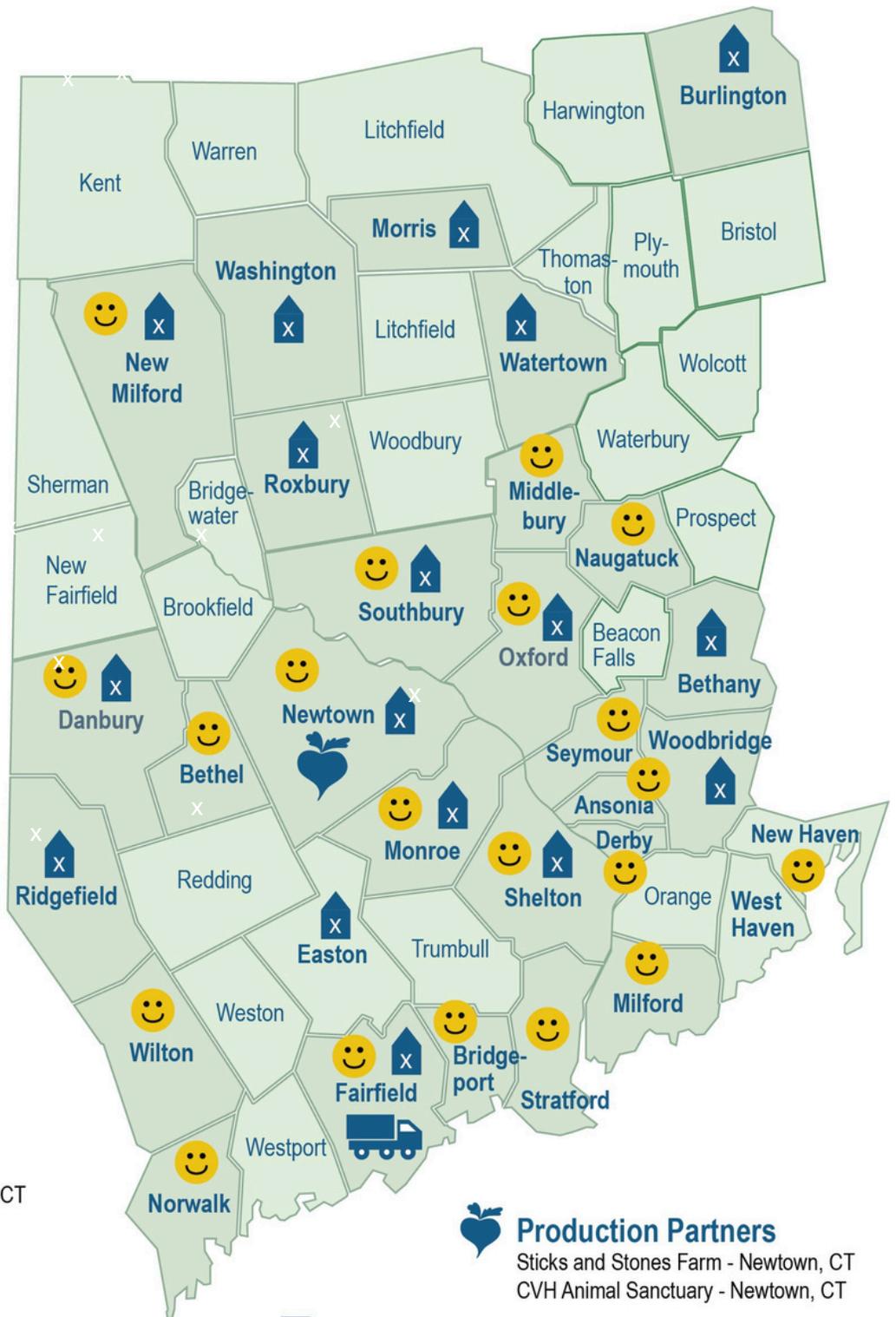
Short's Farm - Newtown
 The Victory Garden - Newtown
 Gazy Brothers Farm - Oxford
 The Hickories - Ridgefield
 Maple Bank Farm - Roxbury
 Riverbank Farm - Roxbury
 Laurel Glen Farm - Shelton
 Daffodil Hill - Southbury
 Hidden Gem Orchard - Southbury
 Waldingfield Farm - Washington
 DeSantis Farm - Watertown
 Massaro Community Farm, Inc. - Woodbridge

Production Partners

Sticks and Stones Farm - Newtown, CT
 CVH Animal Sanctuary - Newtown, CT

Distribution Partner

U.S. Food Rescue - Fairfield, CT
 CVH Animal Sanctuary - Newtown, CT



How the Work Happens

All of Real Food CT's work centers on connecting nutritious, locally grown food with neighbors that need it most. Our programs work together to grow, recover, and distribute fresh food while training the next generation of farmers and engaging the community in building a more resilient food system.

Community Farm Production

We grow fruits and vegetables on our community farms specifically for donation to local food pantries and shelters. These farms provide a reliable source of fresh, locally grown food while serving as hands-on learning environments for volunteers and young farmers.

Farm Surplus Recovery & Distribution

Our Farm Surplus Delivery Program partners with local farms and farmers markets to recover excess produce that might otherwise go to waste. By coordinating harvest support, aggregation, and delivery to hunger relief organizations, we turn surplus into consistent access to healthy food while supporting farm viability.

Young Farmer Internship Training

The Young Farmer Internship Program provides individuals ages 16 to 25 with hands-on training in farming, food production, and distribution. Interns contribute directly to community food access while gaining practical skills and experience in agriculture and food system work.

Regenerative Growing Practices

Across our farms, we use regenerative growing methods that build soil health, improve productivity on small plots, and produce nutrient dense food for the community.

Education & Community Engagement

Real Food CT engages the community through volunteer experiences, farm workdays, and partnerships with regional food access and farm-to-school networks, helping build stronger connections between local farms and the communities they serve.



2025 Growth & Impact: A Year of Scale & Momentum

- FOOD ACCESS AT SCALE. Real Food CT recovered and distributed approximately 158,000 pounds of locally grown food, working with 25 farm partners and 35 hunger relief organizations across the region. This represents the organization's largest year of food recovery and distribution to date.

- STRENGTHENING THE FARM NETWORK. Partnerships with local farms continued to grow as our surplus recovery and aggregation efforts expanded. Farmers across the region relied on Real Food CT to help harvest, coordinate, and move excess produce to food access partners efficiently and reliably.

- OPERATIONAL STABILITY. With staff, delivery capacity, and infrastructure in place, Real Food CT operated its farm to pantry distribution model consistently throughout the growing season, improving coordination between farms and food pantry partners.

- STRATEGIC PLANNING & FUTURE INFRASTRUCTURE. Through strategic planning collaborations with Sacred Heart University and the University of Connecticut, Real Food CT explored long term opportunities for commercial farm development, shared agricultural infrastructure, and diversified revenue models to support sustainable growth.

- COMMUNITY & SPONSOR MOMENTUM. Real Food CT welcomed new sponsors and community supporters while continuing to grow volunteer engagement. The annual Seed to Plate fundraiser was held at Sticks and Stones Farm for the first time, bringing supporters directly into the heart of our work.

- GLEANNING PROGRAM EXPANSION. Gleaning and surplus recovery efforts continued to grow as more farms participated and volunteer capacity increased, allowing more fresh produce to reach local hunger relief organizations throughout the season.



FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Real Food CT, Inc.

For the Year Ended December 31, 2025

Operating Revenue

| | |
|---------------------|---------|
| Family Foundations | 140,000 |
| Campaigns | 27,000 |
| Grants | 35,700 |
| General Donations | 17,436 |
| Season Sponsorships | 18,500 |
| Events | 19,000 |
| Other Revenue | 800 |

| | |
|---------------------|----------------|
| Total Income | 258,436 |
|---------------------|----------------|

Expenses

| | |
|----------------|---------|
| Programs | 18,444 |
| Staffing | 123,327 |
| Administration | 41,854 |
| Infrastructure | 4,400 |

| | |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| Total Expenses | 183,470 |
|-----------------------|----------------|

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| Operating Result | 74,966 |
|-------------------------|---------------|

Looking Ahead to 2026

Deepening Farm to Pantry Infrastructure

Building on a year of record food recovery and distribution, Real Food CT will continue strengthening aggregation, cold chain, and delivery coordination across our regional farm network. These improvements will help ensure that fresh, locally grown food reaches food access partners consistently and efficiently.

Advancing Strategic Planning & Organizational Growth

After completing the first phase of strategic planning in 2025 with support from Sacred Heart University partners, Real Food CT is entering the next stage of organizational development. A strategic planning committee, expanded Board leadership, and engagement with consultant partners will help guide implementation planning and the exploration of a major infrastructure project.

Expanding Farm Partnerships & Food Access

Real Food CT will continue growing relationships with farms and hunger relief organizations across Connecticut, increasing opportunities for surplus recovery, coordinated distribution, and reliable access to fresh produce for communities in need.

Strengthening Community Engagement & Volunteer Leadership

Volunteers remain central to Real Food CT's work. In the coming year, we will continue expanding group service opportunities, farm workdays, and community events that connect people directly to local agriculture and food access.

Building Financial Sustainability

As Real Food CT grows, we will continue developing diversified funding streams through partnerships with foundations, sponsors, community supporters, and emerging agricultural service revenue opportunities.



“Real Food CT has been an invaluable partner in ensuring access to fresh, local, nutrient dense produce not just at our pantry, but throughout our region.

Real Food CT: Who We Are

Board of Directors

Chip Parrish, President
Keric Kenny, Vice President
Kim Roberts, Secretary
Mary Jascha, Treasurer
Indy Hayes

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Executive Director

Sean Fitzpatrick

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Operations Director

Kim Cosar

•

Facilities Manager

Dave Haze

•

Head Farmer and Educator

Nancy Zyckek

•

Administrative & Communications Director

Jessi Ruotolo

•

Food Hub Delivery Driver

Will Kneen

Interns

Freddy Hubbard
Carter Bisson
Ariana Sebourne
Rafe D'Agostino

•

Trumbull Ag School Interns

Max Durden
Rose Mottolese
Sophia Deluke

•

Core Volunteers

Carol Walsh - Gardens
Terry Tortorra - Gardens
Pat Naylor - Gardens
Deb Gudz - Gardens
Mary Weiner-Gardens

•

Core Sponsors

The Community Foundation for
Greater New Haven
CT Department of Agriculture
NRCS / USDA
Newtown Savings Bank
M+T Bank
Ion Bank
Regency Centers
United Way of Coastal and Western CT
Union Savings Bank
Eversource
Fairfield County Community Foundation



A Message from the Executive Director:

2025 was a defining year for Real Food CT. We moved a meaningful amount of fresh, locally grown food from farms to neighbors across our region, and we did it through real relationships and real operations. Together with 25 farm partners and 35 food access organizations, we recovered and distributed approximately 158,000 pounds of Connecticut grown food. At the same time, many households in our communities continue to face uncertainty around food access and public benefit programs, making reliable partnerships between farms and hunger relief organizations more important than ever.



This year also marked a shift in how we think about the future. We completed the first phase of a strategic planning process with support from Sacred Heart University, and we are now moving into the next stage with expanded Board leadership and a new strategic planning committee. We are beginning to align with consultant partners as we take the next steps toward a major infrastructure project and long term organizational sustainability.

I am deeply grateful to the farmers who trust us, the volunteers who show up, the pantry partners who do the hard work of serving families week after week, and the donors and sponsors who make it all possible. Thank you for believing that healthy food should not be a privilege, and for helping build a local food system that works for everyone.

*Sean Fitzpatrick
Executive Director
Real Food CT*



Everyone deserves access to healthy food.