

ANNUAL REPORT 2020



Sustainable Business Network of Massachusetts

Building Local, Green, and Fair Economies



ABOUT SBN

SBN was founded in 1988 as **the nation's first business trade association** with a mission of making business a vehicle for social, environmental, and economic change. Since then, SBN and our allies have raised the bar for what's expected from the business community.

By building a movement of small and mid-sized businesses and allies who share our mission to grow an economy that is **local, green, and fair**, we're creating a vibrant, caring community and a sustainable future for **all people and all living things**.

LETTER FROM OUR DIRECTOR



lauri hammel

FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

This past year has been an unbelievably difficult time to be owning or working at a small business. Even during the best of times, most local businesses struggle to make ends meet. In 2020, small business owners, along with the rest of the our nation, have simultaneously encountered a pandemic, economic shutdowns, racial reckoning, climate change, and political polarization. Despite the immense

hardship so many have experienced, this year has also taught us that within every adversity, there lies opportunities that can be leveraged for the benefit of all.

SBN is a leader in the national local economy movement. For over 32 years, our organization has been at the forefront in demonstrating the positive role that business can play in strengthening communities and creating a sustainable economy in New England and beyond. Our programs and projects endeavor to bring like-minded organizations and leaders together to amplify our impact through, collaborating, connecting, convening, and community-building. This past year has pushed our organization even further to uncover ways to lift up and support local businesses.

As we move forward, we will continue cultivating a diverse and strong local business ecosystem that works for racial justice and equity; builds the local economy; and supports mitigation and adaptation of the climate crisis. We invite you to join with us in changing our world for the better in 2021.

INITIATIVES AND PROGRAMS

SBN's Strategic Plan for 2019-2021 Includes Four Strategic Initiatives that Integrate Local, Green, and Fair:

1. Ally with SBN Partners to Build a Fair and Equitable economy
2. Support Local Food Entrepreneurs and Strengthen the Local Food System
3. Preserve and Expand the Local Business Ecosystem
4. Grow the Green Economy

These strategic initiatives are exemplified through our educational workshops, mobilization events, trade events, conferences, campaigns, and programs.



FAIR INITIATIVES

Strategic Initiative #1: Ally with partners to build a fair, diverse, equitable, and inclusive local economy



Fairness and justice have always been as a key components of SBN's mission, but it was not until the approval of our 2019-2021 organizational strategic plan that staff and board formally agreed to place racial equity at the center of our work. SBN's 30th Annual Conference in May of 2019 inspired our team and our board even more to make racial equity a major priority. The conference featured several leaders who shared how together we can create a more diverse, inclusive, and racially equitable economy. In the summer of 2020, as Black Lives Matter protests swept the nation and world, SBN collectively took time to reflect on how much work there is to do, and how much further we have to go to continually demand racial equity and work towards dismantling systematic racism.



21 Day Racial Equity Habit-Building Challenge

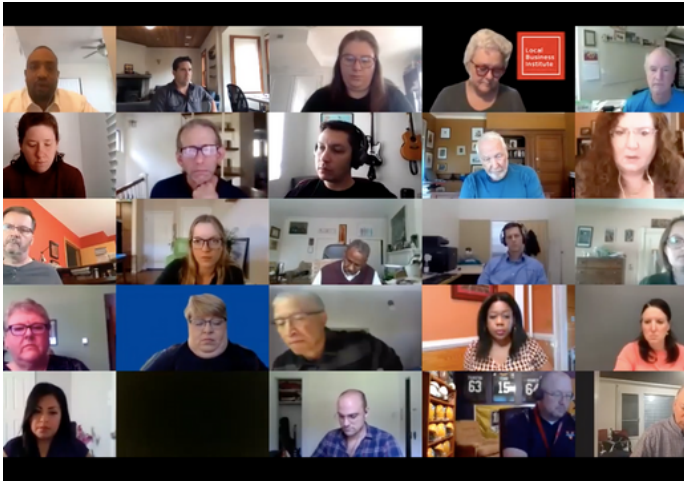
SBN Board member Karen Spiller of KAS Consulting co-leads the 21-Day Racial Equity Habit-Building Challenge of Food Solutions New England, which in 2020, SBN staff and interns participated. Every year, thousands of people commit to deepening their understanding of, and willingness to confront, racism for 21 days. The Challenge goes beyond interpersonal racism by helping to demystify structural and institutional racism and white supremacist patterns.

Sharing Our Pain and Dismantling Racism in MA and Beyond



Following the murders of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and Ahmaud Arbery, SBN partnered with Karen Spiller of KAS Consulting to host an open virtual discussion. The conversation centered on police murders of Black people and the multi-racial protests to stop police brutality and to dismantle racism. Through this conversation, we deepened our collective understanding of how SBN and business owners can work towards dismantling systemic racism in our society.





AMIBA Conference: "How Local Business Can Survive and Thrive, Building Equity in the Local Economy Movement"

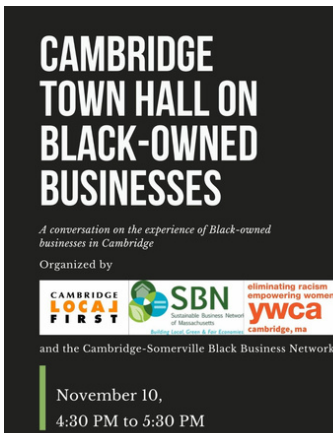


SBN was a lead organizer for AMIBA's 2020 virtual conference, where equity was the focus topic. At the conference, attendees heard from visionary leaders including Derek Peebles, Karen Spiller, Ed Dugger, Mary Ann Howland, Peter Block, and more.

Cambridge-Somerville Black Business Network (CSBBN)



In partnership with Cambridge Local First, SBN launched the Cambridge-Somerville Black Business Network this year. Facilitated by Nicola Williams of The Williams Agency, the network brings together Black entrepreneurs and identifies specific programs that can be developed or adopted that will help ensure these businesses survive the pandemic and thrive moving forward. This new initiative convenes and works with Black-owned businesses based in Cambridge and Somerville that are in at least one of these phases: 1) Start-Up 2) Expansion 3) Recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic.



CSBBN held a town hall on the experience of Black-owned businesses in Cambridge.



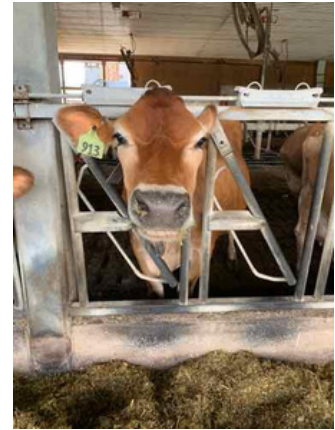
Nicola Williams led a free CSBBN free workshop entitled, "Building Banking Relationships that Stick."



Newest CSBBN member Keisha Greaves runs the organization Girls Chronically Rock

BOSTON LOCAL FOOD PROGRAM

Strategic Initiative #2: Support Local Food Entrepreneurs and Strengthen the Local Food System



This program strives to create a vibrant local food system, ensuring accessibility of healthy food for people of all demographics and economic backgrounds by:

- supporting the development of a network of local food producers, farmers, crafter brewers, restaurants, and retailers through events and workshops;
- educating the general public about the local food system and the benefits of supporting local agriculture and local fisheries.

We are proud to say that the Boston Local Food Program is entering its second decade of work. This program would not be possible without the support of the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources, and the USDA.

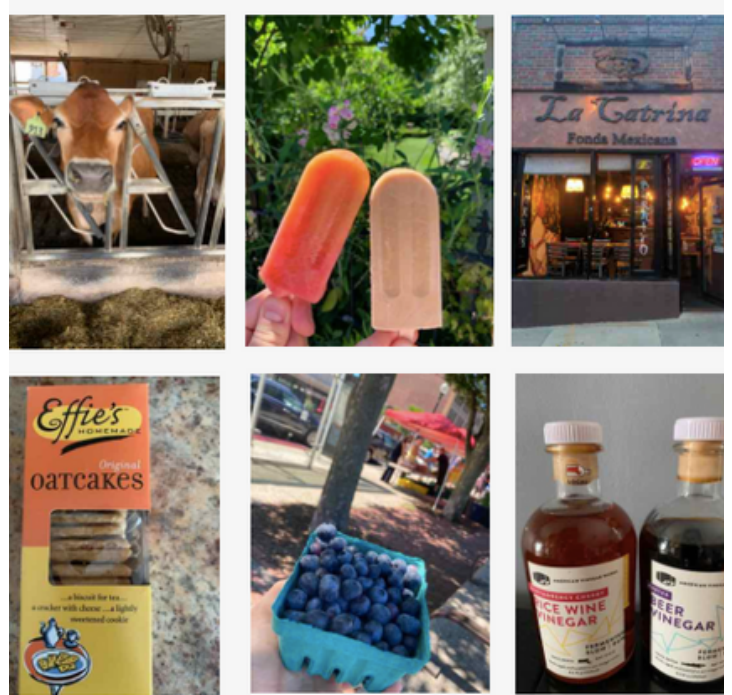
SBN is a member of the Massachusetts Coalition for Local Food and Farms (MCLFF). MCLFF is an alliance of regionally-based nonprofit 'Buy Local' organizations that together serve all communities in the state. Our statewide network provides critical support to Massachusetts farmers and fishermen, strengthening the local economy, preserving active working lands and waters, and making fresh, local food more available to all members of our communities.



EAT LOCAL MA MOBILE APP

Late summer is prime season for local agriculture and food production in Massachusetts. With our annual Local Food Festival cancelled due to the pandemic, SBN quickly switched gears, launching an Eat Local MA mobile app to raise awareness of the value of sourcing ingredients and food products locally. Several Buy Local groups partnered with SBN on this pilot mobile app campaign, including Berkshire Grown, Central Mass Grown, Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture, Northeast Harvest, and Southeastern Massachusetts Agricultural Partnership.

Consumers used the iOS and Android compatible app to find local food near them, submit receipts of their local food purchases, and win local food prizes. 650 farms, restaurants, and farmers markets were included on the app's map and searchable list. During August and September, 600 people actively used the mobile app to find local food, and 23 local food prizes were claimed. SBN plans to make this mobile app campaign yearly in order to increase consumer knowledge and interest in local food.



Local food "receipts" submitted by consumers through the Eat Local MA App.



Eat Local MA Golden Apple winner Jacob with his Cabot Cheesebox prize



Poster distributed to farmers markets throughout greater Boston, as well as across Massachusetts

EAT LOCAL MA VIRTUAL EVENTS



SBN hosted a virtual film screening Q&A with director Peter Nelson and Mark Congdon of Saltbox Farm



Chef Ricardo Monroy and Chef Annabel Rabiya faced off on a virtual, live seafood throwdown



Richard Caines led a virtual tour of City Fresh Foods as part of Eat Local MA



In partnership with Aeronaut Brewing, SBN hosted a Local Food Trivia Night. Over 200 consumers tested their local food knowledge.



SBN co-hosted a Green Crab virtual cooking demo and Q&A with Mary Parks of GreenCrab.org and Jamie Bassett of Green Crab Nation.



LOCAL FOOD AND SPECIALTY CROP TRADE SHOW

The Local Food & Specialty Crop trade show provided New England based farmers and food producers with dozens of wholesale buyers from grocery stores, restaurants, institutions, distributors, and more. In addition to providing the opportunity for invaluable networking and relationship-building, the event also included technical assistance programming, with a workshops on marketing and food safety and opportunities for 1:1 consultations on legal, financial, marketing, and sales issues.



"Not only did I learn from the small panel speaking upstairs, but meeting all the others, and we have already gotten a couple of new accounts with orders! Loved the Event!!" -Vendor



FOOD BUYER SEAFOOD TOURS

SBN worked with Chatham Harvesters Cooperative, Red's Best, and Martha's Vineyard Fishermen's Preservation Trust to create virtual seafood tour videos. These videos were individually sent to food buyers to encourage the institutional purchasing of more local seafood. SBN will also be featuring these videos at the 2021 virtual Local Food & Specialty Crop Trade Show.



LOCAL INITIATIVES

Strategic Initiative #3: Preserving and Expanding the Local Business Ecosystem

SBN was the first organization of businesses in the U.S. committed to a sustainable economy focusing on the sustainable bottom line of community, environment, and justice. SBN continues to bring together local businesses and allied nonprofits who are committed to creating vibrant communities and promoting local economies throughout MA, New England, and the nation.



Save our Economy Now Campaign

SBN, in partnership with the American Sustainable Business Council (ASBC), American Independent Business Alliance (AMIBA), Cambridge Local First (CLF), Black Economic Council of MA (BECMA), and the Foundation for Business Equity collectively urged Congress to get funding into the hands of local businesses impacted by the COVID-19 crisis.

2020 Sustainable Business of the Year Awards Virtual Celebration

On January 28th, 2021 SBN will host the Fifth Annual Awards Celebration in partnership with WBUR's Award-winning Host Robin Young. Due to the pandemic, SBN postponed our in-person awards celebration and transformed it into a virtual event. We encourage you to join us to learn more about sustainable business in our state and network. During the virtual event, you will hear stories and lessons learned from these incredible business leaders. How they faced the challenges of the COVID-19 health crisis, what advice they have for fellow business owners, and how we all can better support local businesses and commit ourselves to becoming a more fair, equitable and inclusive business community.

Meet 3 of our 11 awardees!



*City Feed and Supply
Keep the Legacy Alive Business Award*



*World Farmers
Sustainable Farm of Central MA*



*Haley House Bakery Cafe
Resilient Sustainable Business Award*

CAMBRIDGE LOCAL FIRST



AMERICAN SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS COUNCIL



Local First and National Partnerships

SBN has always partnered with Local First Networks in MA including CLF, Waltham Local First, and JP Local First. This year, however, SBN took its local partnerships as well as national partnerships with ASBC, and AMIBA further by co-hosting a joint internship program titled the Resilient Economy Internship Program.

PPP and EIDL Education

In addition to consolidating information about PPP, EDIL, grants, and other forms of financial relief for our network, our Executive Director, Laury Hammel, also offered and gave free 1:1 consultations to small businesses struggling to survive the pandemic.



Massachusetts Local Business Owner Roundtables 'Finding Business Solutions'



Finding Solutions to the Needs and Challenges of Local Retail Businesses

Small Business Virtual Roundtables

In order to help businesses continue to make connections and learn from each other during the coronavirus pandemic, SBN hosted two Local Business Owner Roundtables: A Local Retail Business roundtable and a Local Farm and Food Business roundtable.

Shop Indie Local Campaign

Facilitated AMIBA's Shop Indie Local Campaign that celebrates locally owned businesses and works to increase spending at these businesses.




Small Business Promotion


When the pandemic arrived, SBN worked to promote small businesses through a directory listing and email marketing promotion.

GREEN INITIATIVES

Strategic Initiative #4: Growing the Green Economy

Sustainable Business Leader Program

 This program is the most comprehensive Small Business Green Certification Program in the US. In addition to certification, the program provides technical assistance and supports locally owned and independent businesses in greening their operations and practices, reducing their carbon footprint, and saving money.

 Eastern Bank, one of SBN's members, is the Green Banking Leader. All of its corporate headquarters and 24 of their branches have been certified as SB Leaders.



 This year, we'd like to highlight Gentle Giant-Somerville, who agreed upon 4 recommendations:

1. Increase driver use of recycling containers
2. Experiment with compostable plates and/or utensils
3. Use Branded/Unbranded Permeant ware and make available to people in the office and the drivers/movers. Bring them out to see if drivers/movers would be interested in them.
4. Use green/post-consumer waste (PCW) recycled paper used in the business.



Highlight: Larry O'Toole's Green Conversation with Members



Members of SBN and Cambridge Local First came together for a virtual wine and cheese tasting in November. After the tasting, members broke out into 3 small group discussions: Local, Green, and Fair. Larry O'Toole led the Green discussion and dove into the rewards and challenges associated with integrating sustainability into his company, Gentle Giant.



Quick Guide to Sustainability



With the help of our Resilient Economy Interns, SBN was able to produce a Quick Guide to Sustainability and share it with our business network.

JULY 23, 2020

Why be Green

Sustainable Business Network of Massachusetts



Quick Guide to Sustainability

INSIDE THE ISSUE:

Less Carbon, More Profit - 2

Make it Circular - 3

Putting People First - 3

Why Now - 4

Resources - 4

The Sustainable Business Network of Massachusetts has been a leader in the movement towards sustainable business for over 30 years. As a member of SBN, you know better than anyone that sustainability in business is multidimensional. It's not just about creating environmentally friendly business practices, though that is certainly a part of it. Business sustainability is also about building strong relationships with people and communities that are mutually beneficial. Lastly, and importantly, business sustainability is about making sure that your business is around for a long, long time.

As customers, employees, and investors increasingly prioritize sustainability as they look for businesses to support, it is becoming an increasingly competitive advantage for businesses to jump on board. According to Kearney, a business consultancy, the number of consumers who say that they consider sustainability in purchase decisions is 83% (as of April 10, 2020), up from 71% a year before.

30TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE



We Thank Our Speakers



Nicola Williams

Founder and Owner,
The Williams Agency
*"Why is an Ownership Economy
Essential for Sustainable
Communities?"*



Glynn Lloyd

Executive Director,
Foundation for Business Equity
*"Three `Must Do's` for Economic
Inclusion to Have Traction in
Greater Boston and MA"*



Derek Peebles

Executive Director, American
Independent Business Alliance
*"Shifting the Economic Narrative;
Becoming a Beloved Community."*



Segun Idowu

Executive Director, Black Economic
Council of Massachusetts, Inc.
*"Can't We Do Better Than 1%?
Achieving True Equity in City of
Boston Contracting"*



Kristin Kelleher

Programs Director, Climate Action
Business Association *"Pricing
Carbon: the Cutting Edge Approach to
Climate Action"*



Karen Spiller

Principal, KAS Consulting
*"Racial Equity and
Sustainability in Action: What
Does Food Have to Do with it?"*

Because of the pandemic, SBN was not able to host a 2020 conference. In light of this, we wanted to reflect on our 2019 30th Annual Conference conference where over 60 business and community leaders convened at the Natixis headquarters in Boston and discussed issues of equality for local businesses in New England. The attendees were fully engaged in the theme of the Conference to build a strong economy that is *Local, Green, and Fair* and committed to making that happen now!

Here are a few of the highlights of the ideas that took hold:

- Create a coalition of business and nonprofit leaders to advocate for and build a diverse, inclusive, equitable, and fair economy.
- Work with BECMA to increase the number and percentage of contracts the City of Boston makes with entrepreneurs of color. Identify and increase the capital available to diverse entrepreneurs and emerging businesses.
- Develop a clearinghouse and expand the technical assistance available to all local entrepreneurs.
- Spread the word and make every effort to have local businesses add ESG options (Equitable, Social, Governance) to their 401K plans.
- Encourage everyone to invest their money in a way that matches our values of local, green, and fair.
- Do more business with women and diverse entrepreneurs.

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Teresa Dillon, Borrego Solar Systems
Edward Dugger III, Reinventure Capital
Laury Hammel, The Longfellow Clubs
Robert Keener, Keener Solutions
Karen Spiller, KAS Consulting
Nicola Williams, The Williams Agency



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KAS Consulting
Massachusetts Dairy
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