Eastie Farm

FOUNDED: 2016

CURRENT ORGANIZATION BUDGET: $2M

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Eastie Farm (EF) took root in 2015 when neighbors transformed an overgrown, long-abandoned lot on Sumner Street in East Boston into a thriving space to reimagine urban land use through growing food, building relationships, sharing skills, and celebrating cultures.

East Boston is a vibrant, majority-immigrant, coastal Environmental Justice community of 60,000 residents on the frontlines of climate change. With only one grocery store and disproportionate exposure to air and noise pollution, residents face both chronic and acute health challenges, made evident by the tremendous toll of the COVID pandemic.

EF, incorporated as a 501(c)(3) in 2016, has grown into a model for nourishing people and the planet. Building on East Boston's rich history of community advocacy, EF models ground-up climate resilience with the region's first zero emissions greenhouse, an all-access produce share system that supports regional farmers, and an earn-to-learn green jobs program.

Two-Year Goals

- CSA subscriptions: 400 to 1,000
- Staff: 7 to 13 FTE's
- Number of youth engaged/year: 500 to 1,000
- Capital campaign to design and build a Community Climate Resilience Hub
- Triple pounds of produce distributed: 88,000 to 220,000
- Double number of community-based events
- Increase the number of youth trained in green jobs from 10 to 25

Investment Opportunity

Eastie Farm is seeking an investment of $5.5 million over the next two years to amplify its impact by expanding the number of income-generating CSA shares from 400 to 1,000, increasing the number of youth engaged in hands-on education from 500 to 1,000, and deepening its impact in the community by launching a capital campaign to build a Community Climate Resilience Hub. This will be achieved by investing in staff, expanding the Living Lands and Student Stewards programs, and deepening EF's partnerships with the city and state to ensure that the community benefits from government programs like composting, community choice electricity, and energy audits.

Ways to Invest

- $100,000: Program manager yearly salary
- $75,000: Refrigerated EV truck
- $20,000: Climate Corps yearly stipend
- $1,200: One family's annual Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) share
- $500: Neighborhood tour setting the cultural, historic, and climate context of Eastie Farm's work

Eastie Farm's Model

Grow food. Build community. Preserve life.

COMMUNITY: In a climate-destabilized world where natural disasters are happening more frequently, neighbors need to rely on each other. EF builds space and programming intentionally so neighbors can build trust.

FARMING/Living Lands: EF believes land use should be community-centered and climate-positive. The Living Lands program demonstrates this by creating interactive physical spaces across East Boston that boast a **zero-emissions greenhouse** (using renewable energy), landscapes rich in native and perennial plants, stormwater management, groundwater recharge, and coastal resilience measures. As the bedrock of all EF programming, the sites and their design leads to engagement with thousands of community members each year.

FOOD/Produce for the People: EF's regional, equitable, regenerative food system lets consumers appreciate the humans who grow their food. Small farmers of the region offer nutritional diversity and ecological support yet have no market in the city. Those in urban communities like East Boston face food insecurity and the stigma around receiving aid. Fresh, local produce is a luxury. Good neighbors with disposable income don't have ways to support their food insecure neighbors. EF addresses all these issues together via its integrated CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) offering, which aggregates produce from over **50 small New England farmers** and offers weekly subscriptions to people of all economic abilities, redirecting dollars into the local economy and reducing food miles/carbon emissions.

EDUCATION/Student Stewards: Creating and safeguarding a thriving environment is long-haul work, which is why EF engages youth from elementary school through young adulthood, supporting them in positively impacting the lives of their own neighbors while acquiring green job skills. The **earn-to-learn Climate Corps fellowship** is a flagship feature of Student Stewards. Youth are financially incentivized to learn a wide variety of green job skills ranging from green infrastructure to coastal resilience, all while making tangible positive differences in their own community by mitigating flooding, making fresh produce available to those in need, and helping people learn what climate solutions are possible now such as EF's own zero emissions greenhouse. EF consistently receives 10 times the applications for positions available.

"Eastie Farm models community-powered climate work in action. Their nature-based programs help reduce food insecurity, expand economic opportunities, and create more sustainable, equitable food systems."

— Lee Pelton, *President, The Boston Foundation*

Leadership & Governance

Eastie Farm's Co-Founder and Executive Director Kannan Thiruvengadam, comes from a multigenerational farming family in India. He is a dedicated climate and community activist, long-term East Boston resident, practical visionary, and advocate for permaculture design. Authentic representation and power-sharing is critical to EF's mission. The seven-member board of directors, a majority of whom are **local neighborhood residents**, are committed land stewards actively caring for the people of Eastie.

Financial Stability

Eastie Farm is committed to long-term sustainability. Since its founding, foundations and government have been its unequivocal supporters, representing 75% of the overall budget. Since 2022, Eastie Farm has been increasing its earned income through the sliding scale and profitable CSA shares, educational tours, plant/seedling sales, space rentals, and sustainability workshop facilitation. EF is deepening its **financial resilience** by increasing earned income as well as expanding its individual gifts program.

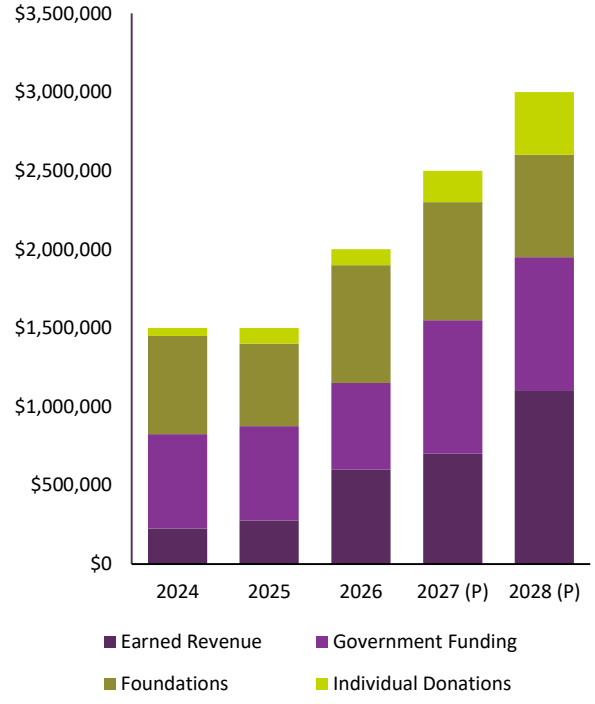
KEY INVESTORS

- The Boston Foundation
- East Boston Foundation
- Liberty Mutual Foundation
- MA Clean Energy Center
- MA Dept. of Agricultural Resources
- MA Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
- Mass General Brigham
- National Science Foundation
- USDA

KEY PARTNERS

- Boston Medical Center
- Boston Public Schools
- City of Boston
- East Boston Senior Center
- The Emerald Tutu
- Mayor's Office of Housing/GrowBoston
- MIT's Urban Risk Lab
- Office of Food Justice
- Patagonia
- Tree Eastie
- YMCA of Greater Boston

Revenue by Source



Success Story

JOSE MANUEL ZAPATA

Jose Manuel Zapata was born in Barbosa, Colombia and moved to East Boston with his parents when he was 17. Given his lack of English skills, jobs were further limited. In March 2024, Jose saw a flier in Spanish looking for applicants for Eastie Farm's 6-month Climate Corps program, which trains youth for green jobs. Jose applied, was accepted, and learned about climate action at the community level. He is now a full-time employee at Eastie Farm in the Living Lands Program.

"I wanted to join the program because it was interesting, different, and it paid. I've stayed as an employee because of the community, the staff, and my commitment to climate action. I grow leafy greens and mushrooms in repurposed shipping containers. I manage the ins and outs of hydroponic systems. And I'm now fluent in English. I have a whole new career path in front of me that I never knew existed.

EF has invested in me and I am not alone. EF opens up new worlds for other people like me through the Climate Corps program."

Program Performance and Organizational Health

Below is a summary of the key measures Eastie Farm tracks to demonstrate progress, create internal accountability, capture lessons learned, and adjust strategy as necessary.

	FY 2026	FY 2027 (P)	FY 2028 (P)
Program Performance			
Pounds of produce distributed	88,000	130,000	220,000
# of youth trained in green jobs	10	15	25
# of community events held/ # of people who attend	14 events 630 people	20 events 750 People	30 Events 950 People
Volunteer hours	4,500	6,000	7,000
Organizational Health/Capacity-Building			
Full-time staff members	7	10	13
Board members	7	8	9
Developing systems for financial diversification	Developing	Implementing	Evaluating
Total Revenue	$2,000,000	$2,500,000	$3,000,000

Social Impact

Eastie Farm (EF) envisions a world where local community members work passionately, creatively, and closely with all residents to ensure they have access to locally grown and nutritious food and are actively involved in creating a regenerative and equitable food system, to encourage environmental stewardship to sustain a healthy planet, and to promote economic stability and development through job creation in the green economy. Below is a summary of the social impact that Eastie Farm aspires to have in the next two years.

Indicator	2026	2027 (P)	2028 (P)
Estimated carbon emissions reduction through clean energy sources, green electricity and carbon sequestration (planting trees and growing perennials).	55 metric tons (equivalent of 55 acres of forests per year)	75 metric tons (equivalent of 75 acres of forests per year)	115 metric tons (equivalent of 115 acres of forests per year)
Number of CSA's available on a sliding scale	400	600	1,000
Amount of money moved into the local food system & community attributable to EF. Includes wages for jobs created through Climate Corps and produce bought from 50 local farms.	$700,000	$850,000	$1,000,000