THE carrot PROJECT

# 2026 ANNUAL REPORT



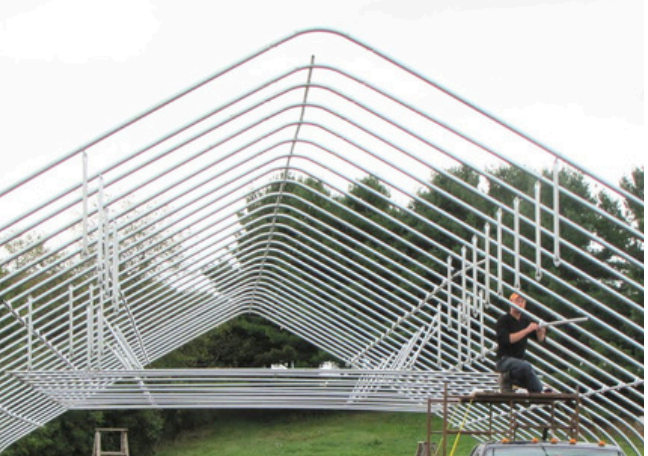












# A NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In a challenging year, there is no place more inspiring than alongside New England's farmers. Whether meeting in the greenhouse, across the kitchen table, or simply on a phone call, I am always uplifted by their enduring commitment to keep going – no matter the headwinds.

In 2025, farmers battled a turbulent economy, labor uncertainty, soaring costs, and escalating climate disruption. In response, The Carrot Project worked one-on-one with 111 farmers, building economic viability into their businesses for the long haul.

Our clients experienced an average annual increase in net farm income of 200%, retaining 248 jobs and 1,675 acres in agriculture. They beat the odds to strengthen their communities, and we are honored to be a part of their stories.

This year demonstrated that our approach of building risk management scenarios into a farm's financial plans lays the foundation for farm survival. Through in-depth advising and programs focused on pricing strategy and climate risk analysis, we helped farmers find financial stability and prepare for hurdles on the road ahead.

At the sector level, our Agricultural Viability Alliance united network participants to collectively propel our work. We defended funding for the programs our organizations rely on, and we prepared business advisors to assist farmers navigating an inhospitable landscape.

Farmers defined 2025 with their refusal to quit when times got tougher. This report celebrates their work enlivening local food and stewarding the land for all of us. Our commitment to ensuring their survival is just as resolute.

I am deeply thankful to our clients, partners, funders, and community supporters for uniting to meet farmers' needs this year. Your care and effort make resilient farm and food systems possible. In 2026, Carrot will deepen our efforts to help more agricultural businesses secure sustainable futures. We are grateful to have you with us.

With gratitude,

Benneth, with the Carrot & AVA Teams





# PROGRAMS OVERVIEW: UPLIFTING ENTREPRENEURS

## STRENGTHENING FARM FUTURES

The Carrot Project bolsters the viability of New England agriculture by providing farmers with strong financial standing to build lasting businesses. We deliver services focused on the business of farming and food in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island.

We work side-by-side with clients to position them for profitability, achieve their business goals, and thrive long-term. Individualized, in-depth business advising is customized to each farm's business needs and provided by advisors with expertise in agriculture and food enterprises.

## WHO WE SERVE

Our work centers on farmers and food entrepreneurs pushing through critical challenges to build lasting success. Our farm viability programs serve the following audiences:

- Start-up, early-stage, scaling, and established farm and food businesses;
- Farmers and fishers who use sustainable methods and sell some or all of their products locally or regionally;
- Food businesses who source and sell some or all of their goods locally or regionally.

"It's a big advantage for a small farm to have an ally like The Carrot Project."

-McDonagh Scanlon | High Road Farm, Newbury, MA

# RESPONDING TO FARMERS' REAL-TIME NEEDS WITH SKILLS-BASED TRAININGS



## Setting Prices to Focus on Growth, Profitability & Sustainability

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In response to a surge in requests for guidance on navigating economic volatility and rising food prices, we delivered a training titled, "Setting Prices to Focus on Growth, Profitability & Sustainability." In a two part series, participants first gained practical price-setting skills for immediate application to their businesses. We then zoomed out to teach general pricing strategy, scenario planning, and viability assessment skills that prepare farmers to respond to future market fluctuations. Training participants had the opportunity to work with a Carrot advisor for follow-up support as they began applying new skills to their businesses.

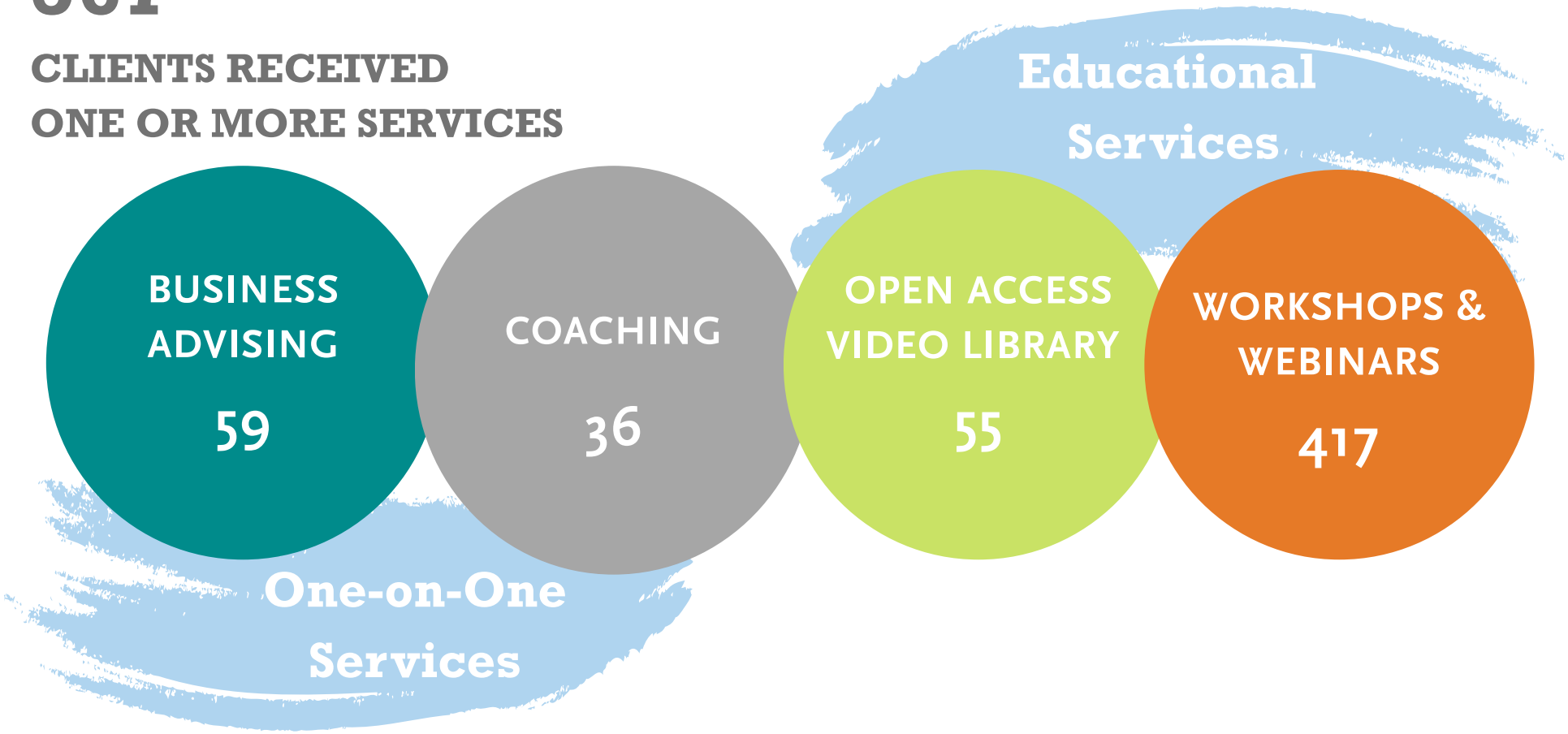



2025 PROGRAM FOCUS

# 2025 IMPACT AT A GLANCE

**567**

**CLIENTS RECEIVED ONE OR MORE SERVICES**




## SCALING FARM VIABILITY

In 2025, we enhanced farm viability for 567 farm and food entrepreneurs through one-on-one and educational services that empowered them to make strategic decisions for thriving businesses.

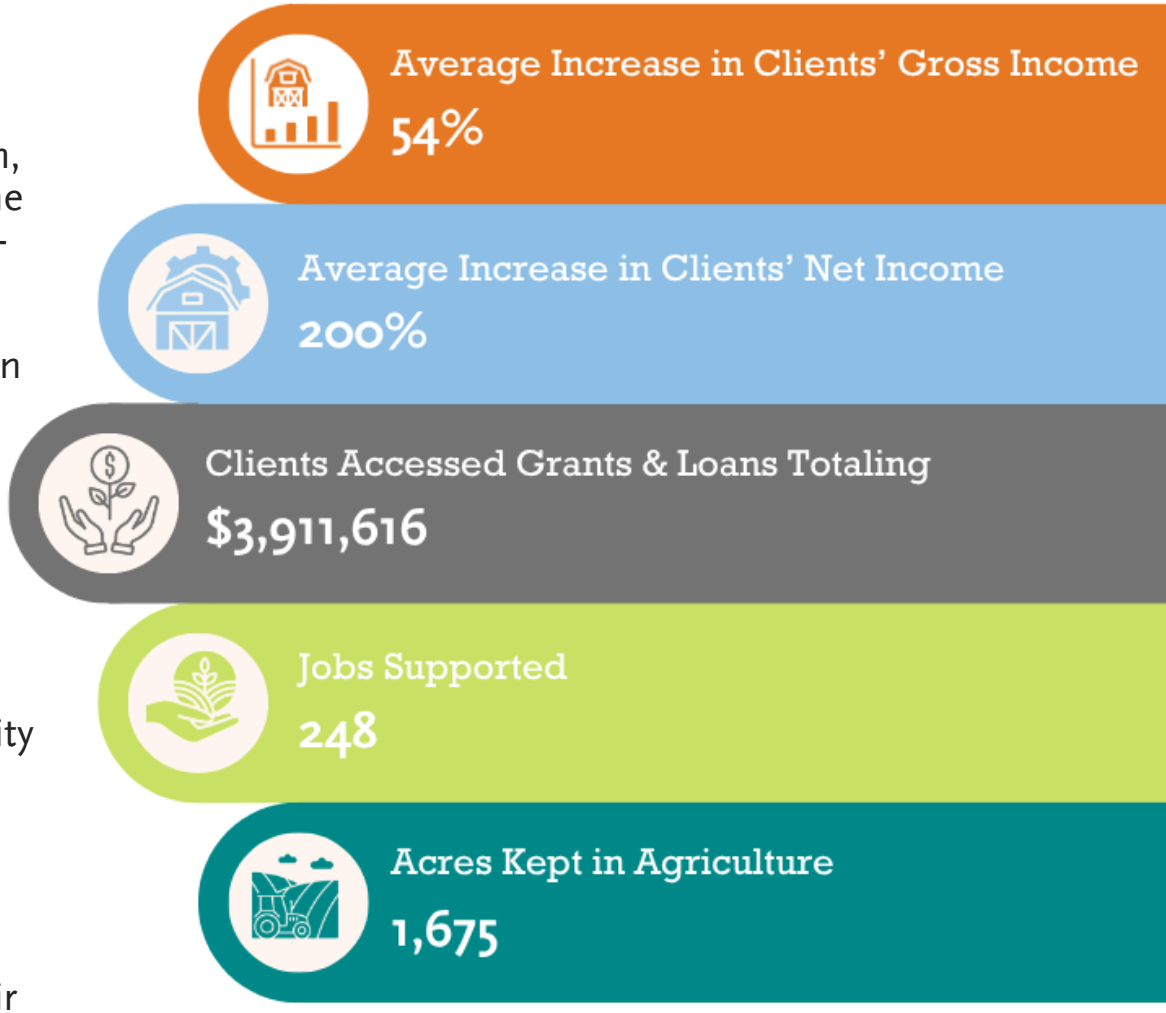
# 2025 IMPACT AT A GLANCE

## GROWING FARM PROFITABILITY

In 2025, 64% of Carrot's clients receiving in-depth, individualized services came from very-low income households. Twenty-eight percent came from low-income houses, and 4% from moderate-income houses. These entrepreneurs are building more than businesses – they are building their livings on the land and vibrant futures for their families.

## BUILDING SUPPORT FOR LONG-TERM SUCCESS

There is no "case closed" moment for farm viability work. Farm businesses, and the environment in which they operate, shift and evolve over time. Carrot adapts our services and works closely with partners to build a network of support that can bolster our clients through the obstacles, growth, and transformations they will navigate across their business lifecycles.




These outcomes represent clients who received one-on-one services in 2025.

# FARM SNAPSHOT: FULL WELL FARM






> **Access to food is a right – not a privilege. Making our vegetables accessible is deeply important to us.**
>
> - Megan Bantle & Laura Tupper, Full Well Farm| Adams, MA

It is clearer than ever that farm viability is community food security. Many growers like Megan Bantle and Laura Tupper at Full Well Farm chose their profession as an act of service to our communities and the land that provides for us.

Pursuing this calling while fighting to stay financially viable is a monumental challenge. Laura and Megan first worked with Carrot in 2020 to conduct a viability assessment and access capital for a greenhouse to extend their season and grow their business. They returned in 2025 to fine tune their financial management and run scenarios for infrastructure improvements to increase their climate resilience.

The Carrot Project is privileged to work every day uplifting the vitality of the local farmers that make abundant, nutritious food in the Northeast a reality.



# FARM SNAPSHOT: SAGE FARM




> My approach to getting started in farming was to get to work and build roots in the community. Being in community and knowing the people made my business possible.
>
> - Tyler Sage, Sage Farm | Bernardston, MA

For Tyler Sage of Sage Farm, knowledgeable support at The Carrot Project was a springboard to farm ownership. In 2015, Tyler was raising pigs on a lease. To craft a self-sustaining business, he worked with a Carrot advisor to set prices for profitability, establish financial systems, and secure early capital.

Tyler implemented his plan with farmerly resolve. He reached out to his Carrot team around major decisions and milestones on the winding path to farm ownership. After years of hard work, Tyler leveraged his financial foundation and community relationships to purchase a farm in 2019.

Even after this monumental accomplishment, Tyler's work is just beginning, and so is ours. Sage Farm is growing, and Tyler is making decisions for a new property in a moment when economic instability and rising prices threaten farmers.



Agricultural Viability Alliance

*Cultivating Farm & Food Entrepreneurship*

# UPLIFTING THE SECTOR

## ADVISING FOR RESILIENT BUSINESSES

When farm, fishery, and food businesses receive quality business advising, farms and farm families, communities, working landscapes, and rural economies all thrive. Agricultural Viability Alliance advisors work with entrepreneurs to build resilient businesses, access markets and farmland, execute business transitions, and achieve other goals. They support critical community outcomes along the way.

## NATIONAL FARM VIABILITY CONFERENCE

AVA also hosts the premier US professional meeting for farm business advisors and related professionals, the National Farm Viability Conference!

## ADVOCATING FOR LONG-TERM SECTOR SUPPORT

Nationally, AVA brings advisors together to advance policy that ensures consistent funding for business assistance — so the groundbreaking work our network members have spearheaded for decades will be built into the sector long-term. Regionally, in New England and the Hudson Valley, we offer a community for professional development and mentorship, so they can do their best work.

AVA is hosted by The Carrot Project. Together, we work toward a resilient farm and food system, guided by our shared commitment to an inclusive sector.



# BOARD & STAFF

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CLAIRE MORENON | Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture
MAHAM RIZVI | DAISA Enterprises
DOROTHY SUPUT| DSuput Consulting, The Carrot Project Founder & Former Executive Director

## PROGRAMS TEAM

BENNETH PHELPS | Executive Director
JULIA GRIGG | Deputy Director
JEFF COLE | Client Services Specialist
CIAN DALZELL | Senior Business Advisor & Financial Education Specialist
LAURIE FREYER | Development Specialist
MARINA ORTEGA | Relationships & Sector Development Fellow
SHERLENE RODRIGUEZ | Farm & Food Business Advisor
RICH SCHWARTZ | Conference Programming Coordinator

Meet the rest of our Farm and Food Business Advising and Back Office Teams here.



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