

# Debbie Friedman

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## Professional Summary

A systems thinker, strategist, and coalition builder with extensive training and experience in law, media, policy, and advocacy. I bring a unique and broad understanding of food and agriculture policy, with subject matter expertise in the organic and regenerative sector. My work is characterized by a proven track record of catalyzing long-term systems change by uniting diverse stakeholders to create impactful collaborations, networks, and frameworks for a healthier and more equitable food system.

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## Experience

**Director of Policy + Strategy | Food Insight Group | Sept. 2022 – Present**

- Policy Lead and Project Co-lead for California's Farm to School Incubator Grant Program Evaluation, in partnership with University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources, UC Berkeley, the Berkeley Food Institute, and the USDA.
  - Develop and implement strategy for engagement with state legislature, state agencies, state administration and key external partners
  - Lead development and implementation of approach for policy recommendations from research findings; integrate those elements with evaluation team at key intervals in evaluation process
  - Draft and present policy briefs and legislative updates
  - Oversee Advisory Committee engagement
  - Client relationship management
- California policy lead for the Chef Ann Foundation's Healthy School Food Pathway Program.
  - Develop and oversee policy strategy for first-in-the-nation statewide registered apprenticeship program for school food operators in California including overall strategy and implementation plan for increasing compensation for school food operators in California
  - Identify and develop frameworks to address research gaps; develop policy

- proposals; coalition building; legislative advocacy
- Build and maintain relationships with state legislators, agencies, administration and key external partners
- Build and maintain relationship with labor partners (classified worker unions)
- Identify and manage external consultants
- Conceptualized and coauthored first of its kind study to determine vacancy and turnover rates among California school food operators

**Founder | Food | Climate | Strategies | Feb. 2020 – Sept. 2022**

- Launched and led a strategy, policy, and advocacy consulting firm serving NGOs, businesses, philanthropists, and government agencies.
  - Instigated and co-authored a statewide study with UC Berkeley that surveyed California school food service directors on scratch-cooking capabilities. The results contributed to a state investment of over \$700 million in school kitchen infrastructure and training.
  - Appointed by California's First Partner Jennifer Siebel Newsom and CDFA Secretary Karen Ross to the Health, Systems and Data subcommittee of the California Farm to School Working Group.
  - Successfully advocated for the inclusion of a holistic evaluation for California's Farm to School Incubator Grant Program in the state budget. Recruited and co-developed an interdisciplinary team, the Advisory Committee, and an overall approach for evaluation.
  - Co-led the design, launch, and registration of California's first registered apprenticeship program for school food service workers, supporting advocacy efforts that secured \$45 million in the 2022-23 state budget.

**Program Director | Conscious Kitchen | Aug. 2016 – Feb. 2020**

- Led strategic policy and research initiatives, including serving as a key member of a public policy coalition that helped inspire an \$80 million allocation for school food programs in Governor Newsom's 2020 budget proposal.
- Initiated and managed partnerships with school districts, NGOs, community stakeholders, and academic institutions, including UCSF and UC Berkeley.
- Oversaw all administrative functions, including fundraising, board relations, human resources, and staff management.

**Co-Founder & Co-Director | Moms Advocating Sustainability | May 2008 – Jan. 2016**

- Leader and organizer of successful coordinated campaigns involving cities, NGOs and citizens to prevent state government aerial pesticide spray to combat the Light Brown Apple Moth.
- Co-led organization of statewide coalition that successfully ended state sanctioned approval of unrestrained pesticide spraying by California's Department of Food & Agriculture through a legal decision.
- Built relationships with state legislators and their staff, organized coalition meetings with legislators and agency officials, prepared related educational and communications material.
- Was the lead organizer and negotiator with County Government Officials in a 2009 successful campaign to revise Marin County's IPM regulations to substantially reduce the use of pesticides on County property. The award winning County laws are now some of the most innovative health-oriented laws in the nation.
- Co-created and presented "Detox Your Shopping List" presentation for schools, businesses, and community gatherings.
- Led local and national PR and media efforts.
- Selected in 2011 as a Marin Hero for Children, by Marin Advocates for Children.

**Sustainability Communications Consultant | GreenWave Strategies | Jan. 2007 – Jan. 2010**

- Developed strategic partnerships, managed website development, wrote content, and led eco-events for clients including the Fairmont Hotels and Sustainable Conservation.

**Director of Programming & Operations | EcoTalk | Apr. 2005 – Jan. 2007**

- Managed all aspects of a groundbreaking national environmental radio show, including booking high-profile guests, developing content, and daily operations.
- Successfully negotiated to expand the program from a weekly to a daily broadcast on a premier national radio network.
- Initiated and maintained partnerships with national environmental groups, academic

institutions and commercial sponsors, and worked on developing primary revenue streams.

**Attorney | Goldberg, Stinnett, Meyers & Davis | Sept. 1991 - Aug. 1996**

- Practiced as a corporate attorney specializing in Chapter 11 reorganizations, representing debtors, creditors, trustees, and liquidation agents.
  - Counseled individual and corporate clients, including Fortune 100 companies, on general business and bankruptcy-related matters.
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## **Education**

**University of California, Hastings College of the Law | San Francisco, CA**

- Juris Doctor (JD)

**University of California at Santa Barbara | Santa Barbara, CA**

- Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Economics & Sociology
- *Graduated with Highest Honors*