

**METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
777 NORTH CAPITOL STREET, NE
WASHINGTON, DC 20002**

**RESOLUTION ENDORSING FEDERAL AND STATE ACTIONS TO REDUCE FOOD INSECURITY AND TO
HARMONIZE AND STREAMLINE STATE ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS FOR KEY PROGRAMS**

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) is comprised of the 24 jurisdictions of the National Capital Region's local governments and their governing officials, plus area members of the Maryland and Virginia legislatures and the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, and COG provides a focus for action on issues of regional concern; and

WHEREAS, COG has recognized the importance of food security and the numerous benefits of having locally and regionally produced food including, healthy food access, diverse sources of supply and distribution, food system resilience, protection of our agricultural lands, and employment opportunities; and

WHEREAS, in 2021 the COG Board of Directors affirmed the need to create a forum for cross-sector, systems based learning, collaboration, and action to increase food security, food system resilience, equity, and the capacity of the region to provide for more of its food needs by establishing the Food and Agriculture Regional Member Policy Committee (FARM); and

WHEREAS, FARM and the Board have urged state and federal action to increase resources for healthy school meals, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the federal Child Tax Credit, and more, since FARM's creation; and

WHEREAS, the Board, in addition to the FARM and Human Services Policy Committee (HSPC), have been briefed by Capital Area Food Bank and other local and regional partners on factors driving persistent, high levels of food insecurity in the region, including growing rates amongst middle class families; and

WHEREAS, the Board and its policy committees are committed to increasing collaboration at COG and with regional partners to support bringing more resources to addressing food insecurity and its root causes like poverty, economic insecurity, and inequality; and

WHEREAS, addressing persistent food insecurity requires concerted and bold local, state, regional, and federal action with evidence-based approaches, innovation, and collaboration; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 era programs and funding were demonstrably effective in reducing poverty, facilitating the lowest level of food insecurity for households with children recorded, and building new partnerships between the region's farmers, schools, and food assistance providers; and

WHEREAS, local and state governments and regional organizations must continue to build upon gains made during the pandemic despite a dramatic retraction of federal funds for basic human needs.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS THAT:

The Board supports immediate multi-pronged action at the local, state, and federal levels to improve deployment of existing resources and advocates for greater investment in policies, programs, and practices which reduce food insecurity.

The Board directs FARM and HSPC to work with the Executive Director, or his designee, to:

1. Provide the Board with a plan for state and federal outreach on U.S. Farm Bill priorities, SNAP benefits, Healthy School Meals for All, an expanded federal Child Tax Credit, and programs that enable food assistance providers and institutions to source local and regional food by mid-January 2025.
2. FARM shall also work with Capital Area Food Bank, Maryland, Virginia, the District of Columbia, and other partners to develop and implement recommendations that will harmonize and simplify requirements for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) for seniors and The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), resulting in fewer administrative costs and more money for the food provided through these programs.
3. The Board directs the Executive Director, or his designee, to share this resolution and recommendations from items 1 and 2 above with Congressional leadership, the members of the metropolitan Washington regional Congressional delegation, and elected leaders in the Maryland and Virginia General Assemblies, as well as the Council of the District of Columbia.
4. Finally, the board requests that FARM and HSPC report back in one year's time on progress made on the board's charge.

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT Resolution R29 - 2024 was approved by the COG Board of Directors on October 9, 2024.

Amanda Lau

COG Communications Specialist