

Ag Task Force Update

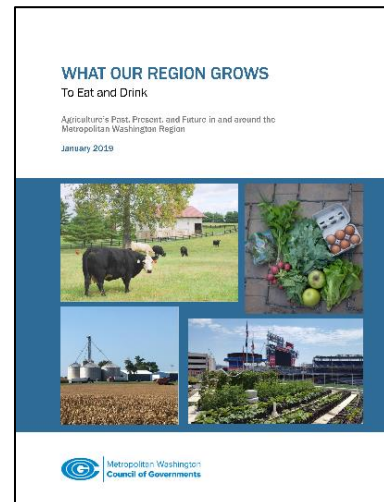
- Regional Food Systems Program during COVID-19
- How Local Jurisdictions Are Responding: Montgomery County's Experience
- Checking-in on COG's Ag Task Force and proposed Regional Food and Agriculture Economy Commission
 - Ag Task Force and Member Discussion



Social distancing at the Arlington County Farmers Market in early May. Lindsay Smith/COG

Regional Food Systems Program in COVID-19

- Weekly regional calls with local leaders to share food security and food assistance issues, needs
- Monitoring food supply chain with partners
- Working with member jurisdictions as requested
- Disseminating new [communications on food](#)



Above: Sample graphic available to COG members from "Food Resources Available During COVID-19."

Left: Staff is assessing the feasibility of releasing a [What Our Region Grows](#) 3.0 Preview with Ag Work Group members

How Can Local Leaders Help?

- Use an equity lens
- Support food banks, food pantries, and other food providers with financial contributions, volunteer services.
 - Remember providers serving especially vulnerable populations (i.e. Latinx immigrants)
 - Make other connections to the regional food economy when possible (i.e. farmers, food hubs, restaurants)
- Support advocates for stronger safety net programs (i.e. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – SNAP) and local food policy changes
 - Examples: DC, MD, and VA Hunger Solutions, local food policy councils
- Invest in coordination of food assistance, technical assistance and other services to farmers, food entrepreneurs, etc.

Montgomery County's Experience

- Created new Food Security Task Force to coordinate response
 - Operationalizing *COVID-19 Pandemic Food Security Response Strategy*
- Made new funding available to emergency food assistance providers and others
- Engaged in on-going collaborations between public, private, and nonprofit stakeholders to support food and nutrition needs of residents



COVID-19 Pandemic Food Security
Response Strategy

Version 1

May 1, 2020

Ag Task Force Check-in

- Ag Task Force been working for one year to develop plan to create a home for regional food and agriculture planning
- Importance of vision for Food and Agricultural Economy Commission and planning for greater regional resilience affirmed at March 2020 CBPC meeting



Montgomery County's Agricultural History Farm Park where many of the county's essential farm service agencies are located. Lindsay Smith/COG

Next Steps and Discussion

Support need to:

- Continue to coordinate and support immediate needs for food and recovery efforts around the region
- Work to ensure supply chain integrity by proactively engaging stakeholders to facilitate food production and access
- Realize vision for the Commission

Discussion: Potential ways to advance the Ag Task Force's goals



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More Information

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