



Centering Community in Programming and Policy Advocacy: Montgomery County Food Council's Approach

COG's Chief Equity Officers Committee

March 24, 2022



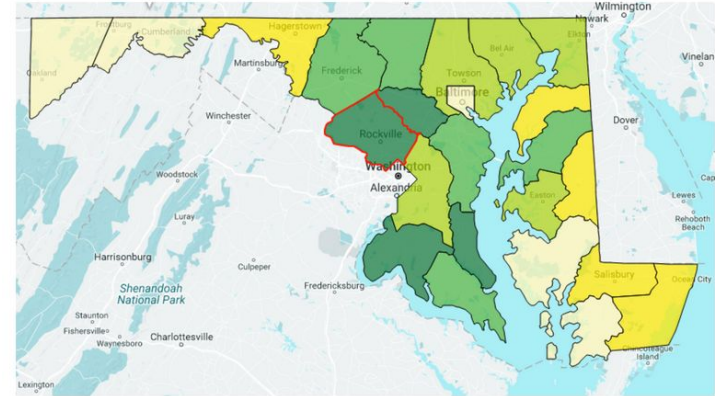
Mission & Vision

MCFC builds an equitable, resilient and sustainable local food system through collaboration, transformation, and cultivation.

MCFC envisions a vibrant and equitable food system that is healthy for our community, economy, and environment.



Our scope
County food policy, practices,
and programs within the context
of state, region, nation, and global



Our tools



policy + education +
community engagement +
advocacy + partnerships +
evaluation





Key Strategies

- Increase capacity of local programs, businesses, and organizations
- Grow and strengthen networks and partnership
- Lead advocacy and drive policy and process change
- Build knowledge and awareness of resources and issues
- Research and communicate opportunities and challenges
- Foster food system leadership locally, regionally & nationally



Grow and Strengthen Networks and Partnerships

Hosted **174** Partner Meetings & events

10,500+ Partner & community engagements

815 External events attended

1,191 Working Group participants





Policy and Advocacy Initiatives

- **Policy Overview:**

- Representatives from all four Working Groups, Board, and Food Council Alumni
- Actively considers and advocates around food system issues at the municipal, County, State, and Federal levels

- **Ongoing activities:**

- Developing and presenting testimony
- Legislator engagement
- Community partner engagement
- Research and information sharing
- Advocacy education & training

- **Policy Priority Areas for 2022:**

- Increase federal benefit access, flexibility, and eligibility
- Increase resident and farmer access to affordable land for food production
- Increase procurement of locally produced food
- Creative funding opportunities to support economic development and food justice



Racial Equity Initiatives

- **Committee Overview:**
 - Established with the purpose of acknowledging the biases and identifying areas in need of change within the organization, and implementing more inclusive, culturally competent, community-driven approaches to our leadership, communications, and policy strategies.
 - Meets on a monthly basis
- **Identified Priorities for 2022:**
 - Engage and support the expertise and leadership of the broader resident and organizational community
 - Language Guide for internal use and external sharing
 - Create spaces for learning, listening, and sharing: *Land Use for Food Production- Past, Present, and Future*
 - Create internal toolkit for facilitation and consent-based decisionmaking



Lead Advocacy & Drive Policy and Process Change

Annual State Legislator Breakfast Advocacy Trainings & Communications - Policy Priorities





Foster Community Leadership & Advocacy

Food Security Community Advisory Board





Food Security Task Force

Mission:

- Increase the volume of food in the food assistance system
- Improve access to food by building the capacity of the food assistance network to store and strategically, safely, and efficiently distribute food to residents through home delivery and community pickup sites
- Communicate information to residents on available resources and ensure residents are connected with available resources



more food

Prepared Meals

from local caterers and restaurants

Shelf-stable Foods & Pantry Items

from local suppliers

Increased Fresh Food

from local farms and wholesalers

Victory Gardening & Community Farming

Provide resident access to yard and patio gardening supplies, space, and educational materials



to more people

Increased Benefits Access

expanding SNAP Outreach
expanding Farmers Market Double Dollars

Leveraging Technology to Efficiently Scale

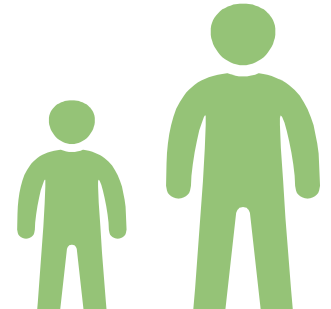
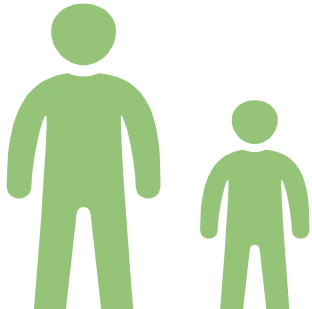
Web intake → Screening for services → Food Delivery

Getting the Word Out

Posters & Bus Advertisements
Digital Messaging, Traditional Paid & Earned Media

Community-level Engagement & Coordination

Community Food Resource Navigators
Community Food Hubs



COVID-19 Response Community Feedback



Collecting feedback from food assistance providers on what a more resilient and efficient local food system could look like.

- Responses from a survey and three listening sessions with food assistance providers will inform recommendations for the Food Security Task Force

Food Access Survey

- Gathered feedback from over 2,500 residents on food access challenges during the pandemic with the goal of repeating in future years for longitudinal study
- Offered in five languages
- Compiling results summaries to inform the work of policymakers, agencies, and community partners
- Exploring collaboration opportunities with CAFB to align future surveys



Expand the Capacity of Local Businesses

Farm to Foodbank - MoCo Made Program - Food and Beverage Guide



Beyond the County's Borders



Regional:

- MWCOG FARM Committee
- Metro DC Food Access Workgroup
- Regional Food and Water Resilience Planning: TAC Member
- Capital Area Food Bank: Regional Playbook Committee
- DC Region Urban Agriculture
- Mid-Atlantic Food Access and Resilience Coalition

State:

- MD Food System Resiliency Council (Co-Chair)
- Nutrition Assistance Program Workgroup
- Statewide COVID-19 Feeding Meeting
- Maryland Food Access and Nutrition Network



Thank you!

@mocofoodcouncil • www.mocofoodcouncil.com • info@mocofoodcouncil.com