



**Prince George's County  
Food Security Task Force  
Recommendations  
2021**

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November 2021

Hon. Angela D. Alsobrooks  
Prince George's County Executive  
Prince George's County Government  
1301 McCormick Drive  
Largo, Maryland 20774

Hon. Calvin S. Hawkins, II  
Council Chair  
Prince George's County Council  
1301 McCormick Drive  
Largo, Maryland 20774

Dear County Executive Alsobrooks and Chair Hawkins:

On behalf of the Prince George's County Council Food Security Task Force ("Task Force"), we submit this Final Report and Recommendations for County consideration, and to address concerns related to the supply and demand of healthy food options, food health connections, and schools.

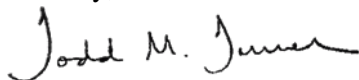
The goal of the Task Force was to identify challenges and opportunities and provide recommendations for creating a healthy, equitable, and sustainable food system that ensures every Prince Georgian has access to nutritious, affordable, sustainably grown, safe and culturally appropriate food. Such issues continue to be exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on Prince George's County. The Task Force held monthly virtual meetings since October 2020, heard presentations and discussed best practices with representatives from surrounding jurisdictions, community and governmental partners and experts in the field.

The Prince George's County Council established the Prince George's County Food Security Task Force by Council Resolution - 62-2020 and was extended by Council Resolution -70-2021. The Task Force consisted of representatives from twenty-one (21) stakeholder groups, including the governmental, not-for-profit, faith-based, university community and private sectors. The Task Force built upon the foundational work of the Food System Study initiated by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) and the Prince George's County Food Equity Council.

The Task Force is offering eleven (11) primary recommendations - four (4) Foundational and seven (7) General. The Task Force believes each of these recommendations are important and integral to both the short and long-term strategies for establishing a better system to address the County's food ecosystem.

Finally, I applaud the work done by the Task Force members, Council staff and our consultant team – the Institute for Public Health Innovation – each devoted to the task at hand. We thank you for the opportunity to address these important issues and reaffirm our commitment to the implementation of these recommendations regarding food security issues in the County.

Sincerely,



Hon. Todd M. Turner, Chair  
County Council Food Security Task Force



# Task Force Member Roster

Chair: **Hon. Todd M. Turner**, County Council District 4

**Aimee Olivo**, Chief of Staff,  
Councilmember Dannielle Glaros, District 3,  
Prince George's County Legislative Branch

**Alexandra Harris**, Community Developer  
III, Department of Homeland Security,  
Prince George's County Office of  
Emergency Management

**Bridget Warren**, Legislative Liaison for  
Health, Human Services and Education,  
Office of the County Executive

**Chris Keany**, Keany's Produce (aggregate  
supplier)

**Dr. Darlene Saunders**, Special Projects  
Manager, Prince George's County Health  
Department

**Deborah Archer**, Project Leader/Nutrition  
Educator, University of Maryland  
Extension, Maryland SNAP-Ed

**Dennis Lewis**, Manager, Program  
Development & Community Relations,  
Prince George's County Department of  
Social Services

**Elana Belon-Butler**, Director, Prince  
George's County Department of Family  
Services

**Gail Livingstone**, Deep Roots Farm  
(farmer)

**Joan Shorter**, Director of Food & Nutrition  
Services, Prince George's County Public  
Schools

**Jon Wogman**, Chief Program Officer,  
Prince George's County Food Recovery  
Network

**Kim Rush Lynch**, Urban Agriculture  
Conservation Planner, Prince George's  
County Soil Conservation District

**Leslie Jefferson**, Nutritionist, Healthy  
Living Sector, Giant Food (grocer)

**Lindsay Smith**, Regional Food Systems  
Value Chain Coordinator, Metropolitan  
Washington Council of Governments

**Maria Martin**, Master Planner, Maryland  
National Capital Park, and Planning  
Commission

**Nicole U. Hall**, Business Development  
Specialist, Prince George's County  
Economic Development Corporation

**Renee Carroll**, Director, Housing  
Counseling & Supportive Housing, United  
Communities Against Poverty (nonprofit  
which deals with direct hunger relief and/or  
antipoverty advocacy)

**Roberto Melara**, Director, MD Region,  
Capital Area Food Bank

**Stacey Little**, Vice President of Women's  
and Infants' Services and Community and  
Population Health at University of Maryland  
Medical System (hospital system  
community benefit department)

**Rev. William M. Campbell**, Senior Pastor,  
Union Bethel AME Church (faith-based  
organization)

# Acknowledgments

The Prince George's County Food Security Task Force Report was prepared in partnership with the Institute for Public Health Innovation, and its Prince George's County Food Equity Council program staff, at the request of the County Council. The report content was informed by an iterative process that included presentations from DC metropolitan region experts, an analysis of recommendations from previous County agency reports related to food systems, stakeholder interviews, surveys, and small group meetings. In addition, the Task Force members were consulted throughout the report development process, and County Council members and staff provided oversight.

We would like to acknowledge the Task Force members for their service on the Prince George's County Food Security Task Force. The Task Force thanks the County Council for the opportunity to present these recommendations and appreciates the community partners that helped inform these recommendations for a more resilient and food-secure county.

## **County Council**

Hon. Todd M. Turner – Chair, Dist. 4, 2014-present

## **Council Staff**

Aimee Olivo, Chief of Staff, Councilmember Danielle Glaros, District 3

Leroy Maddox, Jr, Legislative Officer,

Sandra Eubanks, Committee Director, Education & Workforce Development

Sharon Williams, Administrative Aide

## **Institute for Public Health Innovation Staff**

Evelyn Kelly, Program Director

Julia Groenfeldt, Prince George's County Food Equity Council Coordinator

Sydney Daigle, Senior Program Manager

## **Key Informants and Guest Presenters**

Baltimore City Food Security Planning Department

Capital Area Food Bank

District of Columbia Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency

Latin American Youth Center

Montgomery County Food Council

No Kid Hungry Maryland

Prince George's Child Resource Center, Inc.

Prince George's Community College

Prince George's County Public Schools Judy Centers

Prince George's County Council

Prince George's County Department of Family Services

Prince George's County Department of Public Schools

Prince George's County Department of Social Services

Prince George's County Health Department

Prince George's County Office of the County Executive

Prince George's County Planning Department

Prince George's County Youth Action Board

# Task Force Overview

## Authorization

In July 2020, in response to the food security challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Prince George’s County Council passed CR-62-2020, a resolution to establish a Prince George’s County Food Security Task Force to “address issues related to the demand and supply of healthy food and areas with limited access to healthy food, food-health connections, school meals, and food security in Prince George’s County.” The full resolution is provided in Appendix A.

## Purpose

CR-62-2020 formed the Prince George’s County Food Security Task Force (Task Force), a twenty-one (21) member group with representatives from specific County agencies and nonprofit food system stakeholders chaired by Hon. Todd M. Turner, County Council District 4. The resolution charged the Task Force with making policy and strategy recommendations for Prince George’s County Council, Office of the County Executive, and County agencies.

Specifically, the Task Force aimed to:

1. Develop and advance an action plan to improve the food security of residents.
2. Increase resilience in the food system; and
3. Ensure County agency and community preparedness to respond to food-security challenges due to future emergencies.

## Report

This report is not intended to be a comprehensive food security plan for Prince George’s County. Instead, this report highlights eleven timely policy recommendations and strategies to improve food security, increase resilience in the food system, and ensure county agency and community preparedness to respond to food-security challenges due to future public health, environmental, or economic emergencies. This report builds on the previous recommendations and leverages prior research, assessments, and evidence-based practices. This report should serve as a guide for County Council and County agencies responsible for supporting a healthier and more food-secure county.



# Food Security & COVID-19

## What is Food Insecurity?

As defined by the USDA, [food insecurity](#) is “a lack of consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy life.” As described in the Capital Area Food Bank’s *Hunger Report 2020: The State of Food Insecurity in Greater Washington*, [hunger](#) is a physical symptom of a lack of adequate food. It is not a quantifiable term, but rather a description of the result that reducing one’s food intake can have. Hunger and food insecurity are not synonymous, though they are closely related.

Food insecurity stems from several interrelated forces (Figure 1). For example, individuals living in communities with high unemployment, school closures, and strained food supply networks may experience food insecurity. Minor changes to household income or expenses may cause individuals to become newly food insecure. Many of these forces are due to inequity, an uneven distribution of resources or opportunities relative to need. A comprehensive list of definitions and key terms is provided in Appendix B. The list is heavily informed by the Capital Area Food Bank [Hunger Report 2021](#).

Figure 1: Forces that contribute to food insecurity

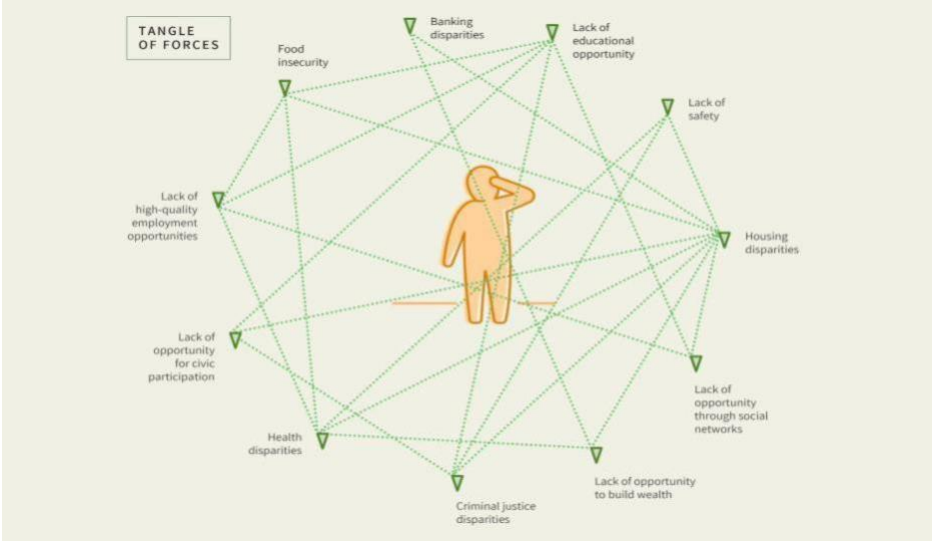
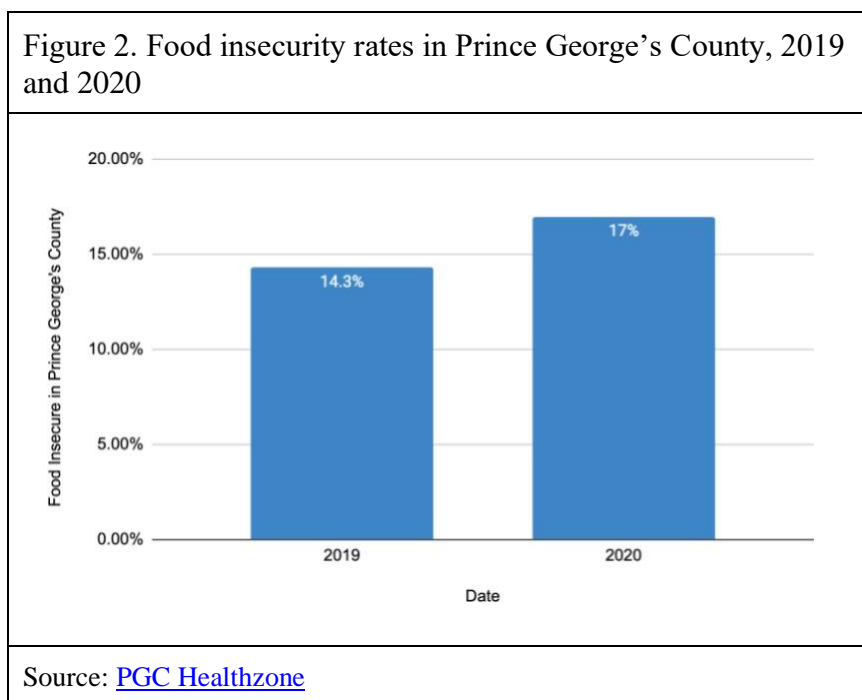


Image source: Capital Area Food Bank, Hunger Report 2021. <https://hunger-report.capitalareafoodbank.org/>

## The Impact of COVID-19 on Food Security in Prince George’s County

The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the need for a coordinated, government-led response to support a more secure and resilient food system in Prince George’s County. Prince George’s County has the highest food insecurity rate in the region, and food insecurity disproportionately impacted low-income, Black, and Latinx residents. Food insecurity rates increased from [14.3 percent](#) to over [17 percent during the pandemic \(Figure 2\)](#).

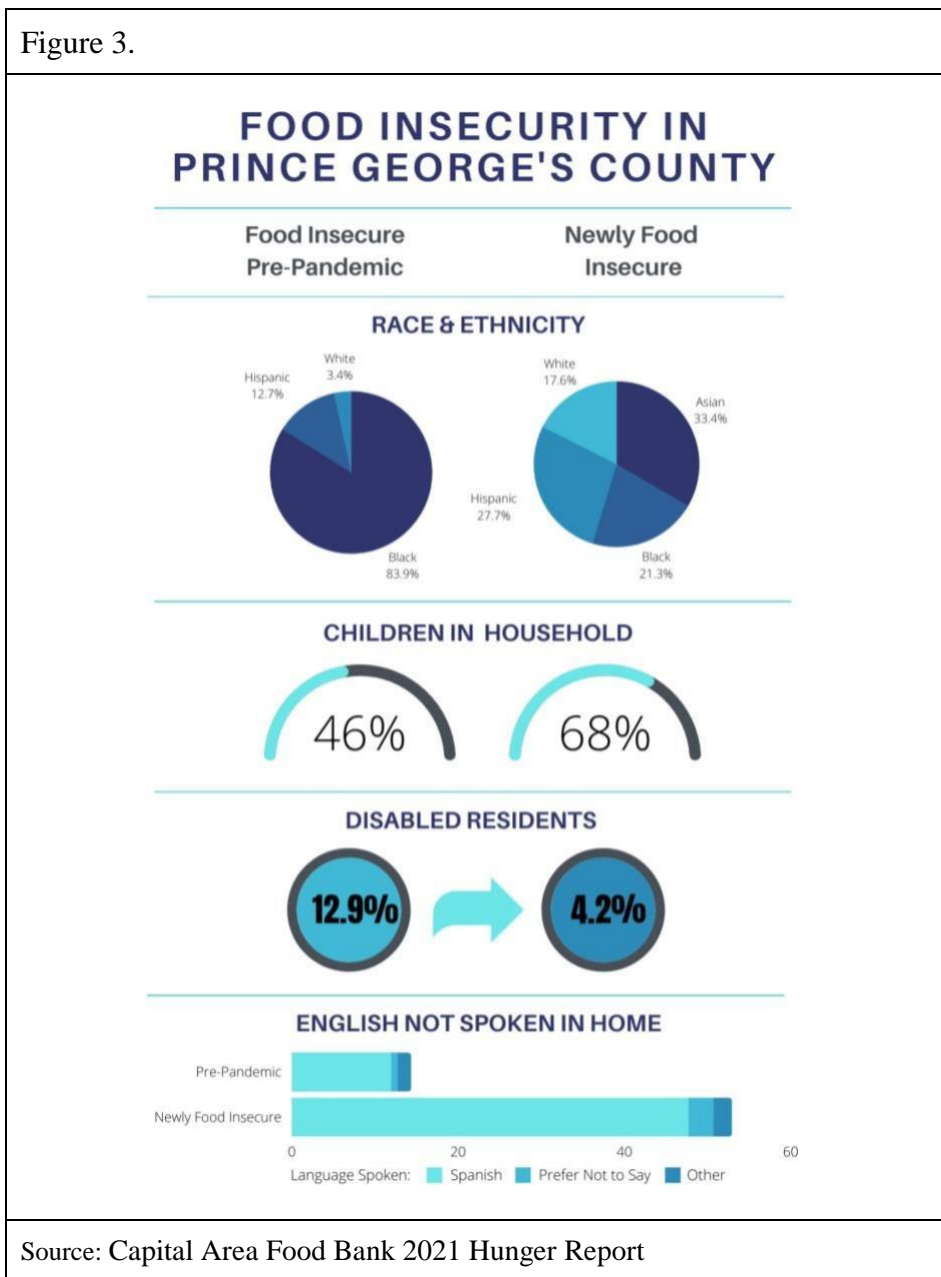


According to the [Capital Area Food Bank 2020 Hunger Report](#), COVID-19 exacerbated food insecurity among specific population segments, including older adults, children, immigrants (e.g., West Africans and newly arrived Afghans), women, single mothers, and grandfamilies or multigenerational households.

As detailed in the [Capital Area Food Bank 2021 Hunger Report](#), residents who became food insecure during the pandemic are notably different from those experiencing food insecurity before the pandemic (Figure 3). Those newer to food insecurity are more likely to be Hispanic, employed, live in larger households with more children, fall into more severe levels of food insecurity, and be facing eviction. In addition, newly food insecure people are less likely to have a fluent English speaker in the household, know of more than one place to access free food, and understand the process of applying for government benefits.

The associations between food insecurity, poor health outcomes, and chronic illness are [well documented](#). [Underlying health conditions increase the risk of more severe complications of COVID-19](#). In 2019, [71%](#) of Prince George’s County residents were overweight or obese, and these rates were disproportionately high among Black and Latinx residents. In addition, Prince George’s County, a majority Black county, has experienced the highest number of coronavirus cases in the State of Maryland, according to the [Maryland COVID-19 Data Dashboard](#). Racial and socioeconomic disparities are brought to the forefront of the ongoing public health crisis.

Figure 3.



# Prince George's County Strategies to Address Food Insecurity during COVID-19

The increased need for social services during the pandemic called for rapid response from numerous governmental agencies. The County launched emergency meal and grocery assistance programs, distributed school grab-and-go meals, and expanded meal and food delivery for seniors and people with disabilities. In addition, many nonprofit partners provided emergency food and assistance services. The pandemic spurred many innovative food security strategies and programs, several of which are highlighted below.

- The Prince George's County Office of the County Executive partnered with nonprofit partners like United Way to fund and launch the Stand Up and Deliver program in June 2020. The initiative enabled bulk purchasing from local grocers, distributors, and restaurateurs. These partners distributed 1.3 million meals to food-insecure residents through nonprofit and faith-based distribution partners over the course of a year.
- Councilmanic districts supported networks of food assistance and social support service providers to facilitate strategic deployment of resources across their service area, bulk food purchasing, and collaborative fundraising.
- The Capital Area Food Bank launched a mobile grocery truck in the county, Curbside Groceries, for residents in areas with few retail grocery options. The service will provide a complete market basket of high-quality fresh foods (e.g., produce, meat, dairy, fish), shelf-stable foods, and personal care items. The food bank is currently in the process of identifying vending locations.
- Prince George's County Food Equity Council (FEC) launched the Food Assistance Provider Network in April, 2020, to coordinate services across the county and connect providers with resources and solutions. Network members applied for grant opportunities, coordinated cold storage capacity, and developed recommendations for this report.
- Prince George's County Food Rescue, an Institute for Public Health Innovation (IPHI) initiative, uses Food Rescue US technology to connect food donors and services providers to reduce food waste and provide meals to families in need. The program launched in July and is currently in the process of building its volunteer and donor base. It has rescued 7,200 meals since launching.
- IPHI installed refrigerated trailers in three locations at food assistance provider sites across the county. The trailers provide much-needed cold storage capacity for the sites and their networks of partners. Each trailer features a custom design by a local artist.
- The Prince George's County Department of Public Works & Transportation (DPW&T) provided auxiliary services to the Prince George's County Department of Family Services' (DFS) Nutrition Program in delivering home-delivered meals to 1.6 million older adults through various transportation services from April 2020 to June 2021.

While these efforts provided many essential services to residents, County government agencies and their community partners were not prepared to meet the needs of both existing and newly food-insecure people amidst the complexities of the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., stay-at-home orders and social distancing requirements).



***In 2021 the Prince George’s County Council passed legislation (CB-28-2021) and partnered with the Capital Area Food Bank (CAFB) to bring a mobile grocery truck to the County to provide fresh and healthy food options in designated Healthy Food Areas in the County.” Picture: Curbside Groceries initiative Press Conference July 28 2021 – (L-R: IraCress, President Giant Food; DCAO Prince George’s County; Radha Muthiah, President/CEO CAFB; Dr. Arththusa Kirk, Senior Medical Director, United Healthcare Community; & Council Member Todd M. Turner, 4th District)***



# The Prince George's County Food Security Task Force

## Information Gathering and Development Process

County Council staff convened virtual Task Force meetings for two hours on the first Friday of each month from October 2020 to October 2021. The agenda for the meetings varied from month to month but typically included informal information sharing, formal presentations, and facilitated discussions.

Task Force members received formal presentations about (1) food security and food system preparedness and resilience across County agencies and in the community and (2) how neighboring jurisdictions responded to food security challenges during the pandemic. Meeting agendas and presentation topics are provided in Appendix C.

The Task Force members reviewed current food related legislation (Appendix D) and past food-related reports and recommendations from Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) Planning Department (Appendix E). These reports included:

- [Urban Agriculture: A Tool for Creating Economic Development and Healthy Communities in Prince George's County, MD](#)
- [Healthy Food for All Prince Georgians: An Assessment of Access to Healthy Food in Prince George's County](#)
- [Reduce, Recover, Recycle — Food Waste in Prince George's County, MD](#)

The Task Force audited the implementation/adoption status of all recommendations from past food system reports (Appendix F).

Task Force members also considered recommendations from relevant County reports, particularly the Climate Action Plan. As climate events increase in frequency and severity, our food system will need to build its capacity to be resilient in the face of climate change and the resulting disruptions to food supply chains.

To develop recommendations, Task Force members joined working groups based on their professional expertise and experience. The working groups met for ad-hoc sessions between Task Force meetings to synthesize information and develop draft recommendations. Each working group presented its deliberations and draft recommendations to the entire Task Force for consideration.

Task Force members completed a series of surveys to assess and prioritize draft recommendations and considered feedback from six key informant interviews with government and non-governmental partners that work closely with priority populations experiencing food insecurity as identified by the Capital Area Food Bank's 2021 Hunger Report.

The report and recommendations were drafted by Task Force consultants and members of an ad-hoc work group. Work group members met to develop action plans for each of the identified recommendations. All Task Force members reviewed and provided feedback on the draft report. The report was finalized and approved by all Task Force members at the final Task Force meeting on November 5th, 2021.

## Consideration & Implementation of Recommendations

The next section of the report contains guiding principles and recommendations for the Prince George's County Executive Council. The goals of these principles and recommendations are to improve the food security of county residents, increase resilience in the county food system, and ensure overall response preparedness to emergency food-security challenges. Please note that the recommendations are not a comprehensive implementation plan. All action steps and budget estimates are theoretical; they will require additional analysis and planning before implementation.

Through programming, coordinated resources, and public and partner investments, County agencies can take steps to build food system capacity and infrastructure. Four foundational recommendations build structural and institutional capacity to bolster food security in both the short and long term. These recommendations are intended to act as pillars for seven policy and programming recommendations. Many of the recommendations can be accomplished through existing programming, strategic cross-agency coordination, and partnership with non-government stakeholders.

The recommendations are not listed in order of importance. Task Force members encourage County agencies to design an implementation plan that builds on existing assets, takes advantage of opportunities, and identifies sustainable resources as the budget and policy-making processes allow. Each recommendation includes an actionable "strategy" that provides a brief overview of its intent and existing initiatives to consider during implementation. Case studies and resources for further reading were included where strong and relevant examples were available. Definitions for the terms listed in the Action Plan are provided in Appendix G.

## Conclusion

The Task Force advises that the Prince George's County Council and County Executive implement these recommendations to address the ongoing food security crisis in Prince George's County. The information and recommendations included in this report are an opportunity to prioritize interventions that will reduce food insecurity and increase food access for some of the county's most vulnerable residents.

# Food Security Task Force Recommendations

## At-A-Glance

### Guiding Principles

<b>Equity</b>	<b>Collaboration</b>	<b>Accountability</b>	<b>Stewardship</b>
<b>Evidence-Informed Decision-Making</b>	<b>Sustainability</b>	<b>Cultural Competence and Cultural Humility</b>	

### Foundational Recommendations

- A. Create and fund a Prince George’s County Food Security Office.
- B. Gather, analyze, and use data to inform and drive County agency food security decisions.
- C. Increase resident participation in federal nutrition assistance programs.
- D. Develop a master communication strategy for food security, resilience, and emergency preparedness.

### Food Security Policies and Programs Recommendations

- 1. Plan for future food security disruptions by developing an emergency food security plan that integrates food system experts into existing emergency management operations.
- 2. Increase access to bulk food purchasing, infrastructure, and resources for food assistance providers.
- 3. Co-locate food security and social safety net services to create closed-loop referral systems.
- 4. Improve transportation options for residents to access healthy food retailers and providers.
- 5. Leverage state and regional partners for cross-jurisdictional food systems planning, coordinated communication, and infrastructure development.
- 6. Provide land access, infrastructure, and resources to help agriculture flourish.
- 7. Continue to provide and expand market incentives to support healthy food retailers of multiple sizes in target communities.

## Guiding Principles

The Task Force identified a set of values and principles that should guide the consideration and implementation of its recommendations. These guiding principles are universally applicable to any initiative, government agency, or contributing organization.

**Equity** - Action should be just and fair. The County government should strive to raise the collective consciousness of the need to consider equity and assume responsibility for eliminating inequities. This requires an awareness that oppression is not always overt and that oppressive patterns permeate policies and practices. Equitable practices and policies are designed to accommodate differences in residents' needs—not to treat all residents the same. Practicing equity requires a continual process of learning, disaggregating data, and questioning assumptions.

**Collaboration** - No course of action should be decided without the full and direct participation of members of the groups affected by that action. This means that the County government should engage service providers and residents to serve as advisors by providing input, testing ideas, and interpreting information. These stakeholders should be involved at every step in making decisions about initiatives and other actions that directly affect their lives.

**Cultural competence and cultural humility:** Due to the shifting demographic trends in Prince George's County, the County government and all collaborating parties should ensure that the needs of multi-ethnic members are being addressed. All employees and contractors should be required to complete cultural competency and cultural humility training. Cultural and linguistic competence is a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies in a system, agency, or among professionals that enable effective work in cross-cultural situations. Linguistic competence speaks to the ability to provide readily available services and reading level assessments to limited English proficiency (LEP) members. These culturally appropriate services are provided through bilingual/bicultural staff, which includes trained interpreters and translators. Providing services to diverse residents in ways that are respectful of and receptive to different beliefs, cultural values, and practices helps improve the quality of services and reduces disparities among ethnic groups.

**Accountability** - All involved parties have mutual and shared responsibility for actions, including activities, outcomes, successes, and failures. The County government plays a vital role in assessing and measuring accountability and holding individuals and organizations accountable, which requires providing stakeholders with a clear charge to accomplish steps toward goals. The County government must ensure stakeholders have the capacity to undertake the required activities, measure their accomplishments, and provide access to tools to improve effectiveness and quality. The County government should provide precision in its language, goals, and measures.

**Sustainability** - Actions must build system resilience and sustainability. This means action should contribute to the capacity of the food system to weather change and disruption so that it can meet the present needs of the community while continuing to grow and develop to meet the future needs of the community.

**Stewardship** - Actions must reflect good stewardship of our community resources. Our community has tremendous assets, such as our residents, public servants, business owners, physical infrastructure, green spaces, services, and programs. The County government has a responsibility to leverage and allocate the natural, societal, and economic resources in its control in a manner consistent with a commitment to human dignity and the common good.

**Evidence-Informed Decision-Making** - The best available evidence should inform actions from research, practice, and experience. The County government should support decisions with theory and data while remaining flexible, innovative, and responsive.



***The Prince George's County Food Equity Council (FEC), an initiative of the Institute for PublicHealth Innovation (IPHI), and Washington Gas introduced three new cold storage trailers at non-profit food assistance organizations in Brandywine, Landover, and Lanham. Participating organizations will work together to purchase perishable foods like fruits, vegetables, and dairy that will be stored in the shared refrigerated space. The trailers provide an opportunity to distribute more fresh and healthy food items to underserved and vulnerable families.***



# Foundational Recommendations

## **Foundational Recommendation A: Create and fund a Prince George's County Food Security Office**

### **Strategy:**

Create a Prince George's County Food Security Office (FSO) tasked with coordinating County agencies, securing funding, and engaging with community organizations to design and implement food security structures that facilitate a healthy, equitable, and sustainable food system.

An FSO accountable for increasing food security and building food system resilience will prepare County agencies for future food system disruptions and enhance the County government's efforts to protect the wellbeing of its residents. Creating this office within the Prince George's County Department of Social Services (DSS) dovetails with DSS's role as administrator for SNAP and other food security programs. A critical responsibility of the FSO will be to collaboratively lead, coordinate, and communicate food security needs and resources. These should be shared internally and externally with residents, agencies, and supporting non-governmental food security partners. Some of these partners include the Capital Area Food Bank, food assistance providers, and farmers.

The FSO requires sufficient funding for a Food Security Director and supporting staff. Staff members would implement and oversee the translation of the Task Force's recommendations into action plans. This includes translating previous food system reports, such as those developed by M-NCPPC Planning Department, into action plans. In addition to providing capacity for existing food security programs, the FSO will contribute to Plan Prince George's 2035 and support recommendations for Healthy Communities and Economic Prosperity. Existing resources and programs should be realigned with this new office.

### **Case Study:**

Baltimore Food Policy Initiative (BFPI): The City of Baltimore has proactively undertaken an intergovernmental approach to collaboration on food issues. The Initiative includes a full-time Food Policy Director with two full-time staff housed in the Planning Department in addition to dedicated staff in the Health Department and Economic Development Corporation. These departments focus on food access, resilience, equity, and entrepreneurship with an advisory committee of more than 60 stakeholders. Among the BFPI's innovative solutions are: 1) a land leasing initiative that allows low-cost, mid-term leases of city-owned property for urban farms, 2) an urban agriculture tax credit (90% credit on real property tax), 3) a food procurement policy to promote health and economic development, 4) protocol for a Food Resilience Plan, and 5) a Grocery Store Incentive Area that provides a personal property tax credit to grocery stores that locate in food deserts or to existing grocery stores that renovate to effectively "prevent" food deserts. - [Maryland Food Charter, 2019](#)

**Action Plan:**

<b>Recommendation</b>	Create and fund a Prince George’s County Food Security Office
<b>Rationale/Evidence</b>	A <a href="#">food policy council</a> (FPC) is an organized group of public and private sector stakeholders that work to address food systems issues and needs at the local levels. Having a FPC is <a href="#">significantly associated</a> with municipal-level policies or practices to improve access to healthy foods. By extension, formalizing and centralizing intergovernmental coordination of agencies that contribute to food security may enhance policies and practices.
<b>Policy Pathways</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Executive/Agency Action</li> <li>✓ 2021-2022 County Budget</li> </ul>
<b>Audience/reach</b>	Systems-level Impact: 900,000+
<b>Expected cost</b>	\$250,000.00-\$300,000.00 annually
<b>Funding source</b>	General Fund/Agency Operating Budget
<b>Lead partner</b>	Department of Social Services
<b>Barriers/limitations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Budgetary constraints</li> <li>● Interagency coordination</li> </ul>
<b>Recommended steps</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Define the scope of the office, key priorities, and high-level proposal of a multi-year work plan</li> <li>● Establish office through a council resolution and budget allocation</li> <li>● Recruit and hire staff</li> <li>● Develop connections between agencies and non-governmental partners to support local farmers and small food businesses via programs and resources</li> <li>● Leverage key stakeholders as advisory board members</li> <li>● Develop evaluation metrics to advance priorities and connectivity between stakeholders</li> </ul>
<b>Key considerations for equity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How will this office ensure accountability to the community?</li> <li>● How will the office’s priorities be community informed?</li> <li>● How will data used by the office be disaggregated by race and ethnicity?</li> <li>● Who is engaged in prioritizing data?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Is health equity a key criterion for prioritizing goals, objectives, and strategies?</li> <li>● What are decision-making processes utilized?</li> <li>● Which equity issues are addressed through the proposed strategy/approach?</li> <li>● Who are the intended beneficiaries, and how will they benefit?</li> </ul>
<b>Resources for further reading</b>	Job descriptions for director and coordinator-level staff: <a href="#">Food Policy FAQs Job Descriptions for FPC Coordinators2.pdf</a>

## **Foundational Recommendation B: Gather, analyze, and use data sources and systems to inform and drive County government food security decisions**

### **Strategy:**

The FSO will track and analyze relevant demographic data to identify and address current food security challenges and emergent needs. Robust data collection is imperative to document the needs of county residents, particularly under-resourced communities and those that have been historically marginalized. Community needs must be addressed throughout local, state, and federal government planning and decision-making processes.

Led by the FSO, with support from the Office of Information Technology (OIT) and M-NCPPC Planning Department, the County government should create or partner on a platform for food insecurity metrics and maps. The FSO and partners will collaboratively develop a plan to collect, monitor, and evaluate food security data. This data will also include other social determinants of health that impact an individual's ability to access nutritious, affordable, and culturally relevant food. Existing data from the [Maryland Food System Map](#) and the [Healthy Food Priority Area Map](#) will be used to analyze food insecurity metrics further. Guided by best practices and the data, the County government can more robustly plan to improve residents' food security, as noted in Recommendation 1.

### **Case Study:**

**Montgomery County FoodStat:** Montgomery County has developed an online food insecurity database, FoodStat, to enable government agencies and community partners to understand food security needs and vulnerability better. This database was launched in 2018 by the Montgomery County Food Council, Manna Food Center, Capital Area Food Bank, and Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services. FoodStat utilizes key food insecurity metrics collected by Feeding America, the country's largest hunger-relief network, and over 60 other indicators. These indicators include household income, Free and Reduced Meals participation, language access, and senior vulnerability. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the Montgomery County Food Security Task Force's Data Collection and Analysis unit leveraged FoodStat to understand community food access, infrastructure needs, transportation barriers, and gaps in services. By increasing awareness in these areas, the Task Force assessed the growing demand for food assistance more effectively and developed targeted recommendations to address community needs. Moving forward, Montgomery County hopes to expand the existing database to create a comprehensive intake and distribution tracking platform that simultaneously collects key food security metrics while also referring residents to tailored food assistance services.

**Action Plan:**

<b>Recommendation</b>	Collect, maintain, and use data sources related to Food Security to inform decisions
<b>Rationale/Evidence</b>	The US Government Accountability Office promotes the <a href="#">use of data</a> to improve program performance.
<b>Policy Pathways</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Executive/Agency Action</li> <li>✓ 2021-2022 County Budget</li> </ul>
<b>Audience/reach</b>	Systems-level: 900,000+
<b>Expected cost</b>	Variable
<b>Funding source</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Utilize free data sources from membership groups such as Metro Washington Council of Government and Feeding America.</li> <li>● Funding to build data collection capacity should come from the County budget line item.</li> </ul>
<b>Lead partner</b>	Food Security Office with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Office of Information Technology</li> <li>● Council Grants Office</li> <li>● Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission Planning Department</li> </ul>
<b>Barriers/limitations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Limited capacity to create original data sets</li> <li>● Difficulty obtaining and sharing de-identified food security data with stakeholders due to confidentiality concerns</li> </ul>
<b>Recommended steps</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Review County agencies and partner data sources related to food security</li> <li>● Develop data sharing agreements with relevant local and regional partners</li> <li>● Document strategies for building the capacity of key partners to collect data</li> <li>● Scan for existing data platforms with key data sets on food security</li> <li>● Create an overview of design and maintenance considerations for a food security data portal</li> </ul>
<b>Key considerations for equity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Who is engaged in prioritizing data?</li> <li>● Is equity a key criterion for prioritizing goals, objectives, and</li> </ul>



	<p>strategies?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What decision-making processes are utilized?</li> <li>• How is data on the race, ethnic origin, country of origin, and language preference of clients being collected, analyzed, and disseminated?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Resources for further reading</b></p>	<p><a href="#">Food Security Playbook, Capital Area Food Bank</a></p>



***Members and partners of the Prince George's County Food Equity Council have compiled resources to help local families during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Department of Social Services' Emergency Food Assistance Program acts as a clearinghouse for the distribution of donated food. Over 30 local community pantries and shelters currently participate in the program. All food is provided to eligible individuals and families free of charge.***

## **Foundational Recommendation C:** Maximize resident participation in federal nutrition assistance programs and school meals

### **Strategy:**

The Food Security Office, the Prince George’s County Department of Social Services, and Prince George’s County Public Schools will coordinate efforts to increase enrollment in federal nutrition assistance programs and school meals. These programs are [some of the most effective strategies](#) for preventing and reducing food insecurity. The COVID-19 pandemic revealed the value of enrolling all eligible residents in food assistance programs and maximizing school meal participation.

From [2017-2020](#), an average of 76 percent of all low-income eligible students in Prince George’s County participated in free meals through the Free and Reduced-Price Meals (FARMs) program. This indicates that almost a quarter of eligible students and families were not utilizing essential food assistance resources. During the pandemic, Prince George’s County Public Schools shifted its school meals to free grab-and-go meals for all students; however, participation rates in FARMs dropped to 8.9 percent, lower than participation in neighboring jurisdictions and across the state, according to [data from the Maryland State Department of Education](#).

Maryland Meals for Achievement Program (MMA) is one program that offers free breakfast to students. Another program, Free and Reduced-Price Meal (FARMs), benefits both schools and families. Schools receive federal reimbursement for each meal selected by a FARMs student, increasing their overall budgets for their meal programs. Families enrolled in FARMs can receive additional resources such as Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) that provide funding to help purchase food during remote or out of school time. By enrolling more families in programs such as FARMs, schools can ensure that more students will receive school meals and families are getting the nutrition assistance they need.

Additionally, the County should hire a Public Benefit Programs Coordinator or designate an existing staff member within the Department of Social Services to assess current enrollment, identify gaps, and obtain the resources needed to increase participation. This individual would also coordinate with local non-profit organizations, government agencies, and higher education institutions to maximize participation in programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Women Infants and Children (WIC) program.

Finally, it is recommended that all eligible schools elect the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). This helps Prince George’s County Public Schools to decrease the paperwork for families and ensure students are receiving the early nutrition they need.

It is crucial that the County government invest in resources to maximize benefit program enrollment and help schools offer healthy free meals to students. As families continue to experience food insecurity and schools face the burden of staffing and supply chain shortages,

more resources and community engagement are needed to ensure that students have access to meals while in the classroom or learning from home.

**Action Plan:**

<b>Recommendation</b>	Maximize participation in federal nutrition assistance programs
<b>Rationale/Evidence</b>	Feeding America’s <a href="#">Food Security Evidence Review</a> (2020) rated federal nutrition assistance programs as “proven” and “promising”. Facilitating enrollment and engagement with federal nutrition assistance programs may increase reach.
<b>Policy Pathways</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Executive/Agency Action</li> <li>✓ Legislation</li> </ul>
<b>Audience/reach</b>	Variable
<b>Expected cost</b>	No-cost beyond outreach and communications efforts
<b>Funding source</b>	Existing staff
<b>Lead partner</b>	Food Security Office with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Department of Social Services</li> <li>● Prince George’s County Public Schools</li> </ul>
<b>Barriers/limitations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Public distrust and fear of government</li> <li>● Administrative, language, and cultural barriers to enrollment in programs</li> <li>● Lack of access to technology to complete online applications</li> </ul>

<p><b>Recommended steps</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Leverage new or existing staff within the Department of Social Services to assess current federal nutrition assistance program school meal participation and identify areas/populations with low enrollment, and recommend strategies for each program with sub-strategies for under-enrolled populations.</li> <li>● Identify goals and write a position description for the Public Benefit Programs Coordinator.</li> <li>● Collaborate with government and non-governmental partners to increase enrollment in federal nutrition assistance programs and school meals via training and outreach resources for teachers, school administrators, Community School Coordinators and Parent Engagement Assistants, and universities and community colleges.</li> <li>● Partner with the Office of Homeland Security to develop a plan for food assistance and meal distribution in weather related or public health emergencies.</li> <li>● Develop a plan to improve meal distribution during remote schooling or after school by reviewing best practices and examples from neighboring jurisdictions.</li> <li>● Create training materials for stakeholders that interface with the public on strategies to increase resident enrollment in benefit programs. Potential stakeholders include county agencies, public schools, universities.</li> <li>● Conduct an internal review of Prince George’s County school wellness policies.</li> <li>● Design an implementation plan that improves school wellness and participation rates by collaborating with school wellness councils, school administrators, and Prince George’s County Food and Nutrition Services.</li> <li>● Enhance public-private partnerships to help cover additional costs for schools to offer universal free meals.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key considerations for equity</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What outreach methods will be used to address barriers/limitations?</li> <li>● Who needs to be recruited or invited to join the effort to assist in developing an appropriate outreach method? Who will approach them? How? When? What will they be asked to do to get involved?</li> <li>● How will you ensure culturally and linguistically appropriate outreach methods and communication efforts?</li> <li>● Are there opportunities to collaborate or join existing efforts that have effectively worked with “hard to reach” groups?</li> </ul>



**Resources for further reading**

Strategies for increasing enrollment in specific programs:

- [Making WIC Work Better, Food Research & Action Center](#)
- [Maryland Wellness Policies and Practices Project School System Wellness Policy Report](#)
- [Maryland Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children 2019 Annual Report, Maryland Department of Health](#)
- [An update on the effect of Pandemic EBT on measures of food hardship, Brookings Institute](#)
- [Flintstone Elementary School Case Study](#)
- [Maryland Wellness Policies and Practices Project School System Wellness Policy Report](#)



***Council Member Todd M. Turner (D-District 4), participated virtually as a featured panel guest on “Feeding the DMVTown Hall,” a live, broadcast special airing on ABC 7 WJLA, on Thursday, February 18th. The discussion, hosted by ABC 7/WJLA and the Capital Area Food Bank, focused on the intersection of food insecurity and racial equity in the region, and was moderated by evening news anchors Jonathan Elias and Michelle Mars.***



## Foundational Recommendation D: Develop a master communication strategy for food security, resilience, and emergency preparedness

### Strategy:

Residents deserve consistent, credible, and centralized sources of information during a crisis. A master communication strategy would ensure county residents receive accurate, timely information to access food and social services without having to navigate the complex web of government and nonprofit resources.

The communications strategy should coordinate with elected officials, policymakers, County government, communications experts, nonprofits, and community leaders to deliver needed information and resources to residents. These culturally and linguistically appropriate materials are distributed to high-priority, food-insecure populations via trusted community messengers through tailored and geographically targeted communications channels. These resources should be shared and promoted through an ongoing community engagement strategy coordinated by the FSO to increase participation, awareness, and enrollment throughout the year.\*

An effective communications strategy will require a central food assistance benefits and social services resource. County agencies should direct residents to these resources, providing a “no wrong door” policy for food assistance and social services. OHRM should direct a Food Security and Resource Referral training to ensure accountability and knowledge building among all government staff.

### Action Plan:

<b>Recommendation</b>	Develop a master food security/resilience communication strategy that ensures accurate and timely information is available in multiple languages at varying proficiency levels across trusted platforms (e.g., app, text, phone, print, internet, social media, word-of-mouth)
<b>Rationale/Evidence</b>	<a href="#">Communications and public awareness campaigns</a> can be effective strategies to improve health outcomes. Using similar campaign principles, the <a href="#">USDA’s SNAP-ED Connection</a> program has used social marketing to communicate health messages and encourage positive behavior change.
<b>Policy Pathways</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Executive/Agency Action</li> <li>✓ 2021-2022 County Budget</li> </ul>
<b>Audience/reach</b>	Systems-level Impact: 900,000+

<b>Expected cost</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● No cost if using existing communications resources and staff within County agencies and building external partnerships where specialized expertise is required</li> <li>● Medium/high cost to hire communications staff within Food Security Office or external contract communications experts</li> </ul>
<b>Funding source</b>	County Budget
<b>Lead partner</b>	Food Security Office & DSS with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Office of Emergency Management</li> <li>● Food Security Office</li> <li>● Department of Family Services</li> <li>● Department of Social Services</li> </ul>
<b>Barriers/limitations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Community fear and distrust of federal government</li> <li>● Challenges reaching certain groups/populations due to technology, language barriers, etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Recommended steps</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Conduct scan of regional models and best practices for communication</li> <li>● Review existing communications platforms and tools used by County agencies, County Council, and the Office of the County Executive</li> <li>● Develop a communications strategy that includes both new, traditional, and community-based outlets</li> <li>● A central “voice” to communicate to the public in times of crisis</li> <li>● Map community networks and identify key influencers</li> <li>● Provide stipends and training to community influencers</li> <li>● Allocate resources appropriately to communication systems (e.g., <a href="#">211</a>)</li> </ul>
<b>Key considerations for equity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Are communication needs and norms of under-resourced communities prioritized?</li> <li>● Does the communication plan include an equity message?</li> <li>● How will the findings and messages be communicated in a way that inspires change among diverse populations and policymakers?</li> <li>● Is the County engaging diverse residents in evaluating, planning, and disseminating information in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner?</li> <li>● Do community efforts reflect the current ways communities are engaging in social media and other apps (e.g., Whatsapp?, Facebook)</li> </ul>

**Resources for further reading**

[SNAP-ED Toolkit](#)

[Request for Proposal \(RFP\) Public Awareness Campaign to Address Food Insecurity in Frederick County](#)



***Prince George's County Council Chair Todd M. Turner and David Iannucci, President/CEO of Prince George's Economic Development Corporation, joined with the Lidl store team and other US Representatives at a ribbon-cutting event on March 4, 2020, for the new Lanham area store.***

# Food Security Policies and Programs Recommendations

**Recommendation 1:** Plan for future food security disruptions by developing an emergency food security plan that integrates food system experts into existing emergency management operations

**Strategy:**

As we experience more frequent and intense extreme weather events, food systems disruptions are inevitable. The County government’s Department of Homeland Security should include food security in a comprehensive response plan. This plan should utilize a robust Incident Command System to integrate local food system experts into the emergency response, incorporate existing supply chains more effectively, and marshal resources across the food system.

In stable times, the County government’s Department of Homeland Security’s Office of Emergency Management (OEM) should coordinate with local and regional food systems experts and the FSO to develop the information necessary to understand how residents currently obtain food, which food supply chains serve the county, and where gaps exist in local food system infrastructure. The OEM and the FSO should collaborate to pursue private and public philanthropic funding opportunities to support office operations and food resilience initiatives. To respond effectively in times of crisis, OEM should conduct and participate in exercises with key personnel, including government and non-governmental partners, for various food system emergency scenarios.

**Action Plan:**

<b>Recommendation</b>	Work with stakeholders (government, community leaders, organizations, and networks) to plan for future food system disruptions, including the development of a robust Incident Command Structure
<b>Rationale/Evidence</b>	<a href="#">State funding</a> requires local public health and emergency management officials to engage in planning and exercises to enhance their jurisdiction’s ability to respond to threats and disruptions. The <a href="#">Incident Command System</a> (ICS) is a widely used structure for organizing response. Integrating food security into planning and exercise mechanisms may enhance food system resilience and support response efforts in the event of disruption.
<b>Policy Pathways</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Executive/Agency Action</li> <li>✓ 2021-2022 County Budget</li> </ul>

	✓ Legislation
<b>Audience/reach</b>	Systems-level impact: 900,000+ residents
<b>Expected cost</b>	Existing staffing and pro bono expert consultants
<b>Funding source</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Existing staff</li> <li>● Competitive state, federal, private grant funds</li> </ul>
<b>Lead partner</b>	Office of Emergency Management with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Food Security Office</li> <li>● County Executive’s Office</li> </ul>
<b>Barriers/limitations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Limited capacity of existing staff</li> <li>● Interagency coordination</li> </ul>
<b>Recommended steps</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Review best practices and model ICS food security response methods, including Washington, DC, Baltimore City, and Montgomery County</li> <li>● Identify and map how residents currently secure food</li> <li>● Integrate local food system experts, including the FSO and local food council, into the Emergency Management operational plans</li> <li>● Identify critical resources and agency staff</li> <li>● Inventory and document existing food security program criteria</li> <li>● Integrate food availability and delivery into emergency tabletop and functional exercises</li> <li>● Implement exercises on a regular schedule</li> </ul>
<b>Key considerations for equity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Does the ICS staff reflect the diversity of the county?</li> <li>● How can those most adversely affected by the issue be actively involved in solving it?</li> <li>● Are all groups that are affected by the policy, practice, or decision at the table?</li> <li>● How are public resources, investments, programs distributed geographically and to whom?</li> <li>● What is your decision-making structure?</li> <li>● Who is holding individuals/agencies accountable?</li> <li>● Do exercises consider the needs of hardly reached populations such as immigrant communities and residents with disabilities?</li> </ul>
<b>Resources for further reading</b>	<a href="#">Strategy to Improve Nutritional Security and Minimize Hunger, City of Baltimore COVID-19 Emergency Food Response</a>  <a href="#">Montgomery County COVID-19 Food Security Task Force</a>



## Recommendation 2: Increase access to bulk food purchasing, infrastructure, and resources for food assistance providers

### Strategy:

The FSO should coordinate consistent bulk food purchasing opportunities for a robust network of nonprofit and faith-based food assistance partners that serve residents experiencing food insecurity. Further, in collaboration with County agencies, the FSO should allocate grants to enhance associated infrastructure and resources needed to purchase, store, transport, and serve food.

From legislation on procurement standards to a farm-to-food pantry program, County agencies can further support food purchasing through policy or program interventions that 1) ensure more competitive prices and access to markets that may be out of reach for smaller food assistance providers and 2) support County government investment in local agriculture, including minority-owned and county-based food and farm businesses. The County government should also consider new partnerships and funding for existing programs like Prince George’s County Food Rescue that are helping reduce food waste by connecting food donors with food assistance providers and pantries in the county.

### Action Plan:

<b>Recommendation</b>	Establish partnerships with food suppliers (and local producers) to order bulk food for providers or help providers establish bulk purchasing coops
<b>Rationale/Evidence</b>	Feeding America’s <a href="#">Food Security Evidence Review</a> (2020) rated charitable food programs as “promising,” “emerging,” and “not yet evaluated.” Increasing the capacity and capabilities of charitable food programs may enhance positive outcomes.
<b>Policy Pathways</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Executive/Agency Action</li> <li>✓ 2021-2022 County Budget</li> <li>✓ Legislation</li> </ul>
<b>Audience/reach</b>	Food insecure residents: ~150,000
<b>Expected cost</b>	Variable



<b>Funding source</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Existing staffing</li> <li>● County and agency grants and contract budgets</li> </ul>
<b>Lead partner</b>	<p>Food Security Office with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Office of Central Services</li> <li>● Office of Emergency Management</li> <li>● Economic Development Corporation</li> <li>● Health and Human Services agencies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Department of Family Services</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Prince George’s County Public Schools</li> <li>● Municipalities</li> </ul>
<b>Barriers/limitations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Limited storage and distribution capacity</li> <li>● Financial constraints</li> </ul>
<b>Recommended steps</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify and address gaps in dry and cold food storage, distribution, and aggregation capacity (e.g., refrigerated trucks)</li> <li>● Map food assistance providers and service areas</li> <li>● Map supply chains for food assistance providers</li> <li>● Build stronger relationships with commercial food providers</li> <li>● Develop model food procurement contracts and streamlined processes for emergencies</li> <li>● Develop grants program for bulk purchases of foods, including culturally appropriate foods</li> <li>● Identify and address barriers to purchasing locally produced foods</li> <li>● Expand Prince George’s County Food Rescue through funding allocations and partnership building</li> </ul>
<b>Key considerations for equity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Do food purchases build capacity for small and minority-owned county businesses?</li> <li>● What training, technical assistance, and funding may be needed for effective implementation?</li> <li>● Are culturally appropriate foods prioritized?</li> <li>● How will resources be distributed geographically?</li> </ul>
<b>Resources for further reading</b>	<p><a href="#">Montgomery County COVID-19 Emergency Food Access Grants - Impact Summary 2021</a></p>

### Recommendation 3: Co-locate food security and social safety net services and create closed-loop referral systems

#### Strategy:

The County government should invest in grants, resources, and training for nonprofit partners to help residents successfully connect with and navigate the programs and resources they are eligible to receive. County-funded resource navigators should help residents enroll in federal nutrition assistance programs and access other social support services. When possible, these staff should be deployed to nonprofit provider sites. Adequately resourcing nonprofit partners to act as community connectors and resource navigators through funding and training opportunities is a critical step to increase participation in federal benefit programs.

A County government investment in a closed-loop referral system would ease access to services. Closed-loop referral systems use technology and data sharing to document individuals' needs, connect them to appropriate services, and track participation and outcomes more effectively. County agencies should leverage partners to develop a closed-loop referral system that effectively connects resources and tracks outcomes.

#### Action Plan:

<b>Recommendation</b>	Make public services more efficient to navigate and access through co-location of services and closed-loop referral systems.
<b>Rationale/Evidence</b>	<a href="#">Community care coordination systems</a> connect patients with both health and social service sectors to address comprehensive needs. Research around community care coordination is <a href="#">emergent</a> . Some studies of <a href="#">community care coordination programs</a> have demonstrated impact and successful replication. A limited number of studies have also looked at the role of technology to facilitate screenings and referrals within these programs and have found promising outcomes around accurately identifying patients' <a href="#">social service needs</a> and <a href="#">electronic referrals for youth</a> .
<b>Policy Pathways</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Executive/Agency Action</li> <li>✓ 2021-2022 County Budget</li> <li>✓ Legislation</li> </ul>
<b>Audience/reach</b>	Variable
<b>Expected cost</b>	Variable, dependent on how resource-intensive adequately equipping providers and standing up a closed-loop referral system is

<b>Funding source</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● County Executive Community Partnership Grants</li> <li>● American Rescue Plan Funding</li> <li>● State agency funding</li> </ul>
<b>Lead partner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Department of Social Services</li> <li>● Office of Information Technology</li> </ul>
<b>Barriers/limitations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Limited financial capacity</li> <li>● Staff expertise</li> </ul>
<b>Recommended steps</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Map existing organizations providing social services (identify what services are provided and where DSS service hubs are located)</li> <li>● Provide grants and training to support organizations while building capacity among new organizations located in under-resourced areas</li> <li>● Launch new closed-loop referral system like 211 or Unite Maryland/NowPow</li> <li>● Identify County agencies and staff responsible for monitoring and tracking referrals</li> <li>● Utilize referral data to identify gaps in the safety-net system and develop strategies to enhance services</li> </ul>
<b>Key considerations for equity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Are there culturally and linguistically appropriate services provided?</li> <li>● Can organizations that have existing infrastructure and relationships with communities be leveraged and compensated?</li> <li>● What outreach methods will be used to reach those with limited transportation options?</li> <li>● How will resources be distributed geographically?</li> <li>● What metrics/outcomes have been established?</li> <li>● Has equity been considered?</li> </ul>
<b>Resources for further reading</b>	<a href="#"><u>Aligning in Action: NCCARE360</u></a>

## Recommendation 4: Improve transportation options for residents to access healthy food retailers and providers

### Strategy:

Expand County government investments in reliable, accessible, and affordable transportation to healthy food retailers and food assistance providers, particularly in rural areas with limited retail and charitable food providers.

Many County agencies provide food and transportation services to residents. These agencies can leverage existing resources and initiate new transportation options to address barriers. The county government can carefully focus resources by identifying areas of high need, specifically areas where older adults and low-income residents without car access live. The County government can improve food security by connecting transportation infrastructure and resources. This could include expanding the Call-A-Bus network, expanding partnerships with rideshare services and taxis, such as the existing partnership with Lyft, and increasing food distributions in underserved areas. Community infrastructure assets are prime sites for co-locating food assistance, such as libraries where youth and underserved residents already congregate.

While more resources are necessary to stand up a direct-to-consumer food delivery, existing home-delivery options are available via Prince George’s Public Schools, Department of Family Services, Department of Public Works and Transportation, and the County Executive’s efforts as well as non-governmental providers such as Food and Friends, Meals on Wheels, and the ARC. These resources should be maximized while supplementing current subsidized food delivery options, existing faith or nonprofit delivery networks, and County agency food assistance programs.

### Action Plan:

<b>Recommendation</b>	Improve transportation options to access healthy food outlets and food assistance providers
<b>Rationale/Evidence</b>	Access to <a href="#">public transportation options</a> may reduce health disparities and promote health equity. Feeding America’s <a href="#">Food Security Evidence Review</a> (2020) rated transportation strategies as “emerging”.
<b>Policy Pathways</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Executive/Agency Action</li> <li>✓ 2021-2022 County Budget</li> </ul>
<b>Audience/reach</b>	Systems-level impact: 900,000+
<b>Expected cost</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increased budget allocations for rideshare services, Call-a-Bus, and</li> </ul>

	<p>direct-to-home deliveries for school meals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Existing resources like DPWT and school buses can be leveraged to reduce costs for home delivery of food.</li> <li>● Existing council support for nonprofit providers (ARC, Food and Friends, Meals on Wheels).</li> </ul>
<b>Funding source</b>	General fund and grants for external partners
<b>Lead partner</b>	<p>Agencies providing food and transportation to residents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Prince George’s Public Schools</li> <li>● Department of Family Services</li> <li>● Department of Public Works &amp; Transportation</li> <li>● Office Of Central Services and Food Security Office for coordinating rideshare contracts</li> </ul>
<b>Barriers/limitations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Limited budgets and staff capacity for home delivery of food</li> </ul>
<b>Recommended steps</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Work with pantries and Department of Family Services to identify areas where older adults and residents without access to a car need additional transportation to food resources</li> <li>● Fund Call-A-Bus to meet the identified need in target communities</li> <li>● Develop and promote partnerships with rideshare services and taxis to subsidize rides to grocery stores and food pantries in Healthy Food Priority Areas</li> <li>● Conduct key informant interviews with families located in high FARMs rate communities with low participation in emergency summer meal service to identify any transportation barriers to participation</li> <li>● Provide grant funding to nonprofit food providers in communities with low vehicle access to expand the number of community-based/walk-up food distributions</li> </ul>
<b>Key considerations for equity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What are the benefits and burdens that communities experience with this issue?</li> <li>● How are you considering environmental impacts as well as environmental justice?</li> <li>● How are public resources and investments distributed geographically?</li> <li>● What is your communication plan for informing the community of any changes?</li> <li>● How can diverse communities and leaders be engaged from the outset to shape the solutions and strategies?</li> </ul>
<b>Resources for further reading:</b>	<a href="#">Baltimore direct to home deliveries with Amazon</a>



[DC Grocery Taxi Ride Discount](#)

[LyftUp Grocery Access Program: Making Healthy Food Accessible in Prince George's County, Maryland](#)



***Prince George's County Council Member Dannielle M. Glaros led a collaborative effort to feed members of the community, dubbed the Greater Riverdale Cares Initiative.***



**Recommendation 5:** Leverage state and regional partners for cross-jurisdictional food systems planning, coordinated communication, and infrastructure development

**Strategy:**

The County government should enhance cross-jurisdictional food system planning and collaboration. Foodsheds and their supporting systems are not bound by jurisdictional lines; thus, cross-jurisdictional collaboration is essential to function effectively.

Currently, the county’s nonprofit food policy council sits on regional workgroups related to food and farm infrastructure and planning in which the County government does not regularly participate. The Food Security Office should work with regional collaboratives to advocate for critical food system infrastructure and improvements that need regional support. In addition, the Food Security Office should join ongoing regional efforts with the Capital Area Food Bank, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, and the Maryland Food Resiliency Council to map spatial data related to food access and security data points. This effort will identify both local and regional food security needs and priorities.

**Action Plan:**

<b>Recommendation</b>	Leverage regional partnerships for cross-jurisdictional food systems planning and infrastructure development
<b>Rationale/Evidence</b>	<a href="#">Cross-jurisdictional sharing</a> is a growing strategy that can be used at regional levels to address opportunities and challenges, such as tight budgets, limited key staff expertise, and regional planning needs. Though the evidence base is limited, <a href="#">CDC recommends this strategy</a> and has developed best practices to guide implementation.
<b>Policy Pathways</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Executive/Agency Action</li> <li>✓ 2021-2022 County Budget</li> <li>✓ Legislation</li> </ul>
<b>Audience/reach</b>	Systems-level impact
<b>Expected cost</b>	Engage existing staff
<b>Funding source</b>	County Agency Budgets
<b>Lead partner</b>	Food Security Office with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Economic Development</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Office of Information Technology</li> <li>● Health Department</li> <li>● County Executives' Office</li> </ul>
<b>Barriers/limitations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Staff capacity</li> <li>● Cross-jurisdictional collaboration</li> </ul>
<b>Recommended steps</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Survey regional collaboratives related to food and farming to identify where the county lacks representation</li> <li>● Engage in strategic planning to identify critical food system infrastructure</li> <li>● Provide resources to support regional food systems planning and collaboration</li> </ul>
<b>Key considerations for equity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What can be learned from prior efforts to solve the problem or change the system?</li> <li>● What strategies could result in systemic change and advance equitable solutions?</li> <li>● What data exists? What data is missing?</li> <li>● What indicators and methods will you use to track progress?</li> <li>● Who are you engaging in prioritizing your data?</li> <li>● Is data on the race, ethnic origin, country of origin, and language preference of clients being collected, analyzed, and disseminated?</li> </ul>
<b>Resources for further reading</b>	<p><a href="#">What Our Region Grows: To Eat and Drink. Agriculture's Past, Present, and Future in and around the Metropolitan Washington Region, Metro Washington Council of Governments, 2019</a></p> <p><a href="#">NCR GDX Regional Food Resources Initiative, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments</a></p>

## **Recommendation 6:** Provide land access, infrastructure, and resources to help agriculture flourish

### **Strategy:**

By supporting robust local food production, the County government can increase healthy food access while ensuring economic opportunities and job creation for residents. Strategically prioritizing and investing in land access, educational opportunities, and infrastructure will sustain and enhance local food production by rural and urban farms and community gardens. By growing the local food economy, the region's food system will become more resilient in the face of disruptions to the food supply as we will have increased the diversity of supply streams.

Further, investments in agriculture and community gardens can increase the supply of culturally appropriate foods for communities. This can also secure additional green space, which has health and environmental benefits.

The County government should make all suitable publicly owned lands more accessible to farmers and community gardens. This includes vacant lots, where appropriate, and suitable land from the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC). Community Garden plot locations should be expanded throughout the county. M-NCPPC should also continue to expand the total acres acquired for agriculture to meet the needs of a growing population, along with establishing an agricultural preservation program. The County government should determine appropriate available farmland to allow gardeners and urban farmers access to unused county land at a reduced rate

Greater priority for County resources should be given to Black and minority farmers that have been historically disadvantaged by federal, state, and local programs and agencies. Additional tools and educational opportunities are necessary to build a more robust local agriculture industry. The County government should ensure adequate funding and resources to support staffing and programs, like the Department of Parks and Recreation Incubator program. Hosting workshops and developing resources would help county farmers navigate complex permitting and regulatory requirements.

The County government and M-NCPPC should also continue to support larger-scale produce operations in the county that support farmers markets, grocery stores, and local small businesses. Most importantly, urban farms and community gardens need assistance with operational expenses or fee reductions for items like water service and fencing. In addition, close partnership between County government agencies and nonprofits with a focus on food access is critical.

<b>Recommendation</b>	Provide support, training, land access, tools, equipment, and infrastructure to help agriculture, urban farms, and community gardens flourish.
<b>Rationale/Evidence</b>	County Health Rankings & Roadmaps What Works for Health states that (1) experts believe <a href="#">activities that facilitate food production</a> in urban environments strengthen local and regional food systems, (2) there is some evidence that <a href="#">land banking</a> may reduce food insecurity, and (3) there is some evidence that <a href="#">community gardens</a> may increase food security.
<b>Policy Pathways</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Executive/Agency Action</li> <li>✓ 2021-2022 County Budget</li> <li>✓ Legislation</li> </ul>
<b>Audience/reach</b>	Systems-level impact: 900,000+
<b>Expected cost</b>	Additional staffing at Soil Conservation District Office, M-NCPPC Department of Parks and Recreation, and/or Food Security Office for expanded programming and support and management of existing and future community garden and farm support services
<b>Funding source</b>	Agency operating budgets and grant funding
<b>Lead partner</b>	<p>Food Security Office with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission Department of Parks and Recreation</li> <li>● Soil Conservation District Office</li> <li>● Office of Central Services</li> <li>● University of Maryland Extension</li> <li>● Economic Development Corporation</li> <li>● Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission Water</li> </ul>
<b>Barriers/limitations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Staff capacity</li> <li>● Budgetary limits</li> <li>● Fragmented network of farmers and gardeners</li> </ul>

## Action Plan

<p><b>Recommended steps</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Create a database in partnership with the Office of Central Services of farmable, vacant, County-owned parcels and buildings to provide land access to community gardeners, urban farmers, and farmers interested in controlled environment agriculture at reduced rates</li> <li>● Provide resources and training opportunities to farmers and community gardens in the form of a web portal, workshops and training, and specialized marketing and business planning support</li> <li>● Designate a trained staff navigator familiar with agriculture within regulatory agencies</li> <li>● Provide a grant program for community gardens and urban farmers to pay for water hook-ups and fencing</li> <li>● Create agreements with WSSC Water to reduce tap fees</li> <li>● Prioritize Black, Indigenous, people of color, and other historically underserved farmers for park and planning land farming leases</li> <li>● Adequately fund programs like M-NCPPC’s Urban Farm Incubator program, while exploring funding cover crop and soil fertility programs for small farmers</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key considerations for equity</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How can those most adversely affected by the issue be actively involved in solving it?</li> <li>● What equity issues are you addressing through the proposed strategy/approach? Who is intended to benefit? How? What strategies/policies support</li> <li>● How are you considering environmental impacts as well as environmental justice?</li> <li>● How are public resources and investments distributed geographically?</li> <li>● What training, technical assistance, and funding may be needed for effective implementation?</li> <li>● What institutional/community barriers support or create barriers to achieving your goals?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Resources for further reading</b></p>	<p><a href="#">As the need for healthy food grows, urban gardeners step up, Greater Greater Washington</a></p> <p><a href="#">Farmer Incubator Program, Hilltop Urban Farm</a></p> <p><a href="#">Montgomery County’s Resident and Community Food Production Gardening Grant Program, Montgomery County Food Council</a></p> <p><a href="#">Delivering More Than Food: Understanding and Operationalizing Racial Equity In Food Hubs, Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems</a></p>



**Recommendation 7:** Continue to provide and expand market incentives and support to healthy food retailers of multiple sizes in target communities

**Strategy:**

There are numerous County government policies, programs, and projects that incentivize healthy food retailers. These are located mainly in priority areas that lack healthy food retail but have a disproportionately high rate of unhealthy food options, like the Inner Beltway. While these priority areas face challenges like lower-income trade areas or small store footprints that can deter grocery store chains, the County government plays a vital role in incentivizing grocery stores and food retailers to locate in these areas.

The County government should continue to support economic development programs that attract new grocery stores while also conducting outreach and recruitment of new grocery stores in partnership with local Community Development Corporations through the Economic Development Corporation. Successful recruitment can include a range of activities, including promotional materials, assistance identifying available or vacant land or commercial space, and tax incentives to locate in certain areas or purchase products from local producers. In addition, the County government can “fast-track” or simplify permitting processes that sometimes stymie new businesses. State legislation to allow alcohol sales in grocery stores, a major source of revenue and a requirement for many grocery outlets, should again be pursued.

Explore job creation and business development opportunities, such as an apprenticeship program, in partnership with county and local culinary schools or businesses, for high-demand and well-paying culinary careers. The Innovation Station Business Incubator, the County government’s small business incubator hub, should provide small businesses with training, funding, and resources. The incubator could provide a track to accommodate the needs of food entrepreneurs and healthy food retailers. This could benefit unconventional food businesses, such as potential food truck owners who would like to sell healthy fare and access incentives through the County government’s Healthy Food Truck Program.

**Action Plan:**

<b>Recommendation</b>	Provide and market incentives and support to healthy food retailers of multiple sizes in target communities
<b>Rationale/Evidence</b>	County Health Rankings & Roadmaps What Works for Health states that there is some evidence that <a href="#">attracting new grocery stores</a> to underserved areas increases access to healthy food in these communities.

<b>Policy Pathways</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Executive/Agency Action</li> <li>✓ 2021-2022 County Budget</li> <li>✓ Legislation</li> </ul>
<b>Audience/reach</b>	Residents living in Healthy Food Priority Areas; food retailers
<b>Expected cost</b>	Moderate
<b>Funding source</b>	General fund, grants
<b>Lead partner</b>	Economic Development Corporation with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Department of Commerce</li> <li>● UMD Extension</li> </ul>
<b>Barriers/limitations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Limited funding to support incentives</li> </ul>
<b>Recommended steps</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Pursue state legislation to allow alcohol sales in grocery stores</li> <li>● Create a County program in partnership with local culinary schools and businesses to provide apprenticeships for high-demand and well-paying culinary careers</li> <li>● Provide and market tax credits and incentives for retailers who purchase a certain percentage of their produce/products from local producers</li> <li>● Create a food entrepreneur and healthy food retailer track within the existing Innovation Station Business Incubator</li> </ul>
<b>Key considerations for equity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How are public resources and investments distributed geographically?</li> <li>● How will the “quality and options of healthy food” options be ensured, given a key concern cited by previous studies?</li> <li>● How can those most adversely affected by the issue be actively involved in solving it?</li> <li>● How can those with limited transportation access healthy food retailers?</li> <li>● How will the price of produce be viewed with an equity lens?</li> <li>● What training, technical assistance, and funding may be needed for effective implementation?</li> <li>● Do the healthy food retailers reflect the diversity of the county and provide culturally appropriate foods?</li> </ul>
<b>Resources for further reading</b>	<a href="#">Seat Pleasant residents celebrate the return of fresh produce to central shopping plaza</a>

[Good Food Markets: Bringing Fresh Food to the Community While Maintaining their Bottom Line, Center for Science in the Public Interest, 2019](#)



***Good Food Markets opened a new grocery store in the Addison Plaza Shopping Center on Central Avenue in Seat Pleasant, Maryland in Prince George's County, MD. The new store is a grocery oasis in one of six areas in Prince George's County designated as "food deserts," or places without convenient food stores. The shopping area where it now stands is a perfect example of what is often the case in a food desert.***

# Appendix

The appendix is available [here](#).

- A. County Resolution-062-2020
- B. Definitions & Key Terms
- C. Food Security Task Force Meeting Agendas & Minutes
- D. Food Related Legislation Overview
- E. Food Security Reports & Resources
- F. Food Security Task Force Recommendations Audit
- G. Definitions for Terms Listed in Action Plan