

PH 04292024 PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY PROPOSED FY 2025 OPERATING BUDGET, SIX-YEAR CAPITAL PROGRAM (INCLUDING THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT BUDGET) AND THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION PORTION OF THE COUNTY FY 2025 OPERATING BUDGET, PROPOSED BUDGET OF THE REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY AND REVENUE AUTHORITY OF PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, AND THE CONSTANT YIELD TAX RATE

Ryan Washington

AOBA Statement on FY 2025 Budget

Support

Attachment

04-28-2024 07:42 am

PH 04292024 PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY PROPOSED FY 2025 OPERATING BUDGET, SIX-YEAR CAPITAL PROGRAM (INCLUDING THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT BUDGET) AND THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION PORTION OF THE COUNTY FY 2025 OPERATING BUDGET, PROPOSED BUDGET OF THE REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY AND REVENUE AUTHORITY OF PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, AND THE CONSTANT YIELD TAX RATE

Laura BECKER

PG County Board To whom it may concern,

Please request an audit and allocate immediate additional funding to the functioning of PG animal shelter.

It is of utmost importance, specifically for the following: - Immediate increase of kennel space (SEVERELY deficient currently, killing healthy animals weekly due to this) - Staffing for additional caretaking positions, training positions and community outreach. (Education desperately needed) - Spay and neuter program for the community to reduce number of litters immediately.

As a canine behavior consultant that has collaborated with the shelter intensively, it is painfully clear that they do not count with the necessary resources.

Please request a thorough AUDIT to ensure you understand its current needs, and allocate funding to ensure its needs are met in the budget cycle.

Thank you, Laura Becker, CBCC-KA Canine Behavior Consultant

04-28-2024 01:10 am

PH 04292024 PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY PROPOSED FY 2025 OPERATING BUDGET, SIX-YEAR CAPITAL PROGRAM (INCLUDING THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT BUDGET) AND THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION PORTION OF THE COUNTY FY 2025 OPERATING BUDGET, PROPOSED BUDGET OF THE REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY AND REVENUE AUTHORITY OF PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, AND THE CONSTANT YIELD TAX RATE

Christina Carrion

More funds should be allocated to animal services. Oppose

04-27-2024 01:28 pm

Agenda Item	Name	Comment	Position	Attachments	Submitted At
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PH 04292024 PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY PROPOSED FY 2025 OPERATING BUDGET, SIX-YEAR CAPITAL PROGRAM (INCLUDING THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT BUDGET) AND THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION PORTION OF THE COUNTY FY 2025 OPERATING BUDGET, PROPOSED BUDGET OF THE REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY AND REVENUE AUTHORITY OF PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, AND THE CONSTANT YIELD TAX RATE				Taylor Phillips	
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Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments. Please comments on behalf of HAND attached.

Support	Attachment	04-28-2024 02:42 pm
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Apartment and Office Building Association of Metropolitan Washington Position Statement on FY 2025 Operating Budget

April 29, 2024

The Apartment and Office Building Association of Metropolitan Washington (AOBA) is a non-profit trade association representing the owners and managers of more than 133,000 apartment units and over 23 million square feet of office space in Prince George's and Montgomery Counties. In Prince George's County, AOBA members, who are responsible for 20% of all housing in the county, play a crucial role in providing safe and affordable housing to the community. They own and manage over 66,000 of the County's 127,000 rental units across 220 professionally managed apartment communities.¹

Under CB-66-2023, the Office of Management and Budget must administer appropriate funds to provide housing providers with a one-time \$5,000 rebate for installing security cameras on their properties. This funding is crucial as it directly supports our housing providers, who are the backbone of our community, in enhancing the safety and security of their properties. Below are some of the cost projections for camera installations in different garden-style communities.

Camera Installation for a 400-unit Apartment Community

- This community would need to install 72 new cameras, which would cost \$33,000. The labor cost for installation is an additional \$53,000.
- This property would need to spend \$106,898 upfront and \$75,411 annually on Wi-Fi connection, data storage, and upkeep.

Camera Installation for a 300-unit Apartment Community

- This community would need to install 57 new cameras, which would cost \$33,700, and an additional \$53,050 for labor, totaling \$86,750 for the entire project.

Moreover, camera installation takes 4 to 6 weeks on average but can take double that depending on contractor availability and project size. The process involves contacting a licensed installer and setting up a site visit (2 days to 1 week), developing a preliminary estimate/proposal of the work (1 to 2 weeks), approving the budget with the client, scheduling the installation (1 to 2 weeks), and completing the installation (1 to 3 days). Considering that all

¹ U.S. Census Bureau Quick Facts for Prince George's Co.

<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/princegeorgescountymaryland/PST120218>

of Prince George's County's larger multi-family establishments must comply with this ordinance, we expect the current licensed pool of installers will be strained by service requests, leading to backlogs and extended installation timeframes. This situation calls for immediate attention and action, as our members cannot adequately finance such expensive and extensive projects within the period provided by CB-66-2023, and there is no dedicated funding assistance source, something that should be addressed as soon as possible.

AOBA strongly supports funding directed to helping law enforcement, specifically with the Office of the Sheriff. With additional resources, the office can update its 2012 staffing report, which reported that the department needed 250 sworn deputies and 15 civilian employees to accommodate the growing population. Since 2012, the County's population has seen significant growth, and it's crucial to update the staffing report to ensure the department can effectively maintain public safety and meet the County's needs.

AOBA looks forward to continuing our productive partnership with the Council on the County's housing issues. We are grateful for the Council's past support and are confident that together we can make significant strides in addressing these crucial issues. If members of the Council have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact Ryan Washington by emailing rwashington@aoba-metro.org or calling (202) 770-7713.

Butler, Tina T.

From: Brittney Drakeford <britt.drake@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, April 26, 2024 5:07 PM
To: Clerk of the Council
Subject: Submitting Comments on FY 25 Budget
Attachments: DRAKEFORD NDC Letter of Support 2024.docx.pdf

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

CAUTION: This email originated from an external email domain which carries the additional risk that it may be a phishing email and/or contain malware.

Good afternoon,

Please find attached my comments on the budget for FY 25.

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Brittney Drakeford
Master of Arts in Management 2011
Wake Forest University
301.412.1987
britt.drake@gmail.com
brittneythenerd.com

Brittney Drakeford
4008 Cottage Terrace
Cottage City, MD 20722

April 23, 2024

Jolene Ivey
Chair
Prince George's County Council
Wayne K. Curry Administration Building
1301 McCormick Drive
Largo, MD 20774

Dear Chair Ivey,

I am writing today in ardent support of funding for the Neighborhood Design Center's Community Development Block Grant funding. We believe it is necessary to fund them at the full requested amount in order to provide a necessary service to the residents of Prince George's County.

The services provided by the Neighborhood Design Center (NDC) are unique. They offer architectural, landscape design, and planning technical assistance as well as thought partnership, a vast professional network of volunteers, and valuable understanding of regulatory and government processes. By using a participatory process that involves a broad and representative stakeholder group, NDC builds community self-determination, capacity and resilience. When we work with NDC, we feel valued and heard.

NDC's design work brings investment to the places and spaces that are most in need. Their volunteers are professionals from across the region working in the nation's top firms. With their design plans in hand, we are well-positioned to seek out funding and additional support for our projects. We understand the process to undertake and we feel more equipped to navigate it. Once a project ends, NDC is always available to answer questions, provide letters of support, or make needed connections to further our projects.

Without NDC, there is no one to support grassroots design efforts in Prince George's County. Outdoor classrooms at our schools will go unbuilt and facade improvement programs meant to enhance the look of our streets and drive customers to local businesses will be put on hold. Community gardens to support local healthy food initiatives will not have landscape design support. This is not good for us as residents or for the County as a whole. We stand behind the assertion that NDC brings an invaluable skill set to our neighborhoods and needs to be funded at a sufficient amount to support their work.

Sincerely,



Brittney Drakeford
Prince George's County Resident

April 29, 2024

Hon. Jolene Ivey
Chair, Prince George's County Council
1301 McCormick Drive
Wayne K. Curry Administration Building
Largo, MD 20774

Subject: FY25 Prince George's County Budget Comments: Housing Investment Trust Fund

Dear Chair Ivey and Members of the Prince George's County Council,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Prince George's County FY25 Budget. HAND is a membership collective of over 450 institutions working across the private, public and social sectors to collaborate in the production and preservation of affordable housing in the Capital Region. With a strong commitment to racial equity in all aspects of our work, HAND envisions a future where Black and brown communities share equitably in the knowledge, wealth and resources uniquely represented in our region.

A key part of our work is HAND's [Housing Indicator Tool](#), a platform that tracks local jurisdictions' housing production and preservation in the Capital Region. The Greater DC area targets in the tool call for a production of 374,000 net new housing units between 2015 and 2030 to adequately address the region's affordable housing crisis. These targets are benchmarked to locally produced household growth forecasts, generated as part of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Government's 2019 regional housing targets. Prince George's County has adopted these COG targets, in a commitment to meeting the region's unmet housing needs.

I am writing to extend our support for the proposed augmentation of the Housing Investment Trust Fund in the FY 25 budget. The increase of \$12,452,400, representing a substantial 79.5% rise, underscores a crucial step towards meeting the burgeoning housing needs in Prince George's County.

As a regional nonprofit dedicated to advancing affordable housing solutions, HAND recognizes the indispensable role that housing trust funds play in fostering vibrant, inclusive communities. The Housing Investment Trust Fund serves as a tool for catalyzing development efforts and leveraging public and private resources to expand access to safe, affordable housing options for all residents.

While we commend the proposed increase, we urge the Prince George's County Council to consider further elevating the allocation to the Housing Investment Trust Fund to ensure that needs are being met across the income spectrum. The data unequivocally illustrates the acute

demand for deeply affordable housing options in our region. In 2023, Prince George's County produced 49% of their annual new unit goal, with 30% of those units affordable to households with incomes at 80% of the area median income and below. While that share of affordable units is among the highest in the region, only 2% of units built were affordable to households with incomes less than 30% of the area median income. For any thriving community, there needs to be housing at all levels of affordability. We cannot have successful schools, hospitals, and businesses without housing that everyone from teachers to janitors to childcare workers can afford.

By bolstering support for deeply affordable housing initiatives, we can make significant strides in addressing the housing affordability crisis and advancing equity in our communities. Such investments yield long-term dividends by fostering stability, improving health outcomes, and enhancing overall quality of life for our residents.

HAND encourages the Prince George's County Council to not only amplify funding for the Housing Investment Trust Fund but also ensure that deeply affordable housing remains a central tenet in our budgetary deliberations.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments , and we eagerly anticipate working alongside you to realize our shared vision of a more equitable and inclusive region.

Warm regards,

Taylor Phillips
HAND, Director of Public Policy

Butler, Tina T.

From: Mayor Sarah Franklin <sfranklin@uppermarlboromd.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, April 17, 2024 3:01 PM
To: Clerk of the Council
Subject: Public Testimony for 4/18/24 Meeting
Attachments: Public Comment - Redevelopment Authroity Budget.pdf

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

CAUTION: This email originated from an external email domain which carries the additional risk that it may be a phishing email and/or contain malware.

Hello,

I have been unable to access the portal for submitting testimony for tomorrow morning's 10:00 AM meeting. Would you be able to submit this for me, please?

Thank you,

Sarah Franklin

Mayor/President
Board of Commissioners
240-303-2108



Town of Upper Marlboro

14211 School Lane
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772
Office: 301-627-6905

<https://www.uppermarlboromd.gov/>
<https://www.facebook.com/TownUpperMarlboro>

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Mayor

Sarah Franklin

Commissioners

Derrick Brooks

Charles Colbert

Karen Lott

Alma Prevatte



April 17, 2024

Chair and Members of the Planning, Housing and Economic Development Committee,

As you know, untaxed, government-owned property makes up sixty-four percent of Upper Marlboro's land area. While this provides a daytime population to support a vibrant downtown, it also reduces the tax base needed to build investment in making that vital downtown a reality. To make downtown Upper Marlboro a great place for County employees to work, Town residents to live, and folks from all over to visit, the Town and County both need to invest and work together to create a Greater Upper Marlboro.

The Town of Upper Marlboro has undergone a Vision Planning process for downtown redevelopment. We are requesting a shift in the timeline of economic development funding for downtown Upper Marlboro so that we can partner in investment in the economic development of Upper Marlboro. This funding, which has been in the County Redevelopment Authority's CIP budget since 2017 but has never been allocated, is necessary to attract investment in Upper Marlboro.

I am asking you to move the timeline on CIP Project 8.90.006: Town of Upper Marlboro to start with \$500,000 of funding in FY25.

The relevant line item can be found here on page nine of the FY24 budget:

https://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/sites/default/files/media-document/Redevelopment%20Authority_2.pdf

I would be happy to discuss this further with you and look forward to working together on the revitalization and productive contributions of downtown Upper Marlboro.

Thank you for your consideration,



Sarah Franklin
Mayor

Town of Upper Marlboro

14211 School Lane

Upper Marlboro, MD 20772

(301) 627 6905

info@uppermarlboromd.gov

Butler, Tina T.

From: NICOLE GENTILE <nicole.gentile13@comcast.net>
Sent: Saturday, April 27, 2024 11:35 AM
To: Clerk of the Council
Subject: PG County Budget Hearings

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

CAUTION: This email originated from an external email domain which carries the additional risk that it may be a phishing email and/or contain malware.

To Whom It May Concern:

The animals at the PG County Shelter aren't receiving the proper care they need. The strep zoo outbreak is causing many animals to languish on the shelter floor. It has also led to new policies in place that make it harder for rescues to pull animals from the shelter and for owners to adopt.

An increased shelter budget means the shelter animals can finally receive the care and support they need and deserve, will improve their quality of life and will increase the shelter's live release rates!

The County needs to increase the shelter's budget for next year so that it can:

1. Hire more staff and bring on other much-needed resources to provide proper and better care the shelter animals deserve.
2. Establish better medical protocols so that they can get a handle on the strep zoo virus that has closed the shelter multiple times now and has led to animals languishing and dying on the shelter floor.
3. Work on areas of improvement that the shelter's dedicated rescue partners have been requesting for several years now.
4. Work on keeping owner surrenders out of the shelter through a partnership with local community outreach organizations and shelter rescue partners.

Thank you for the consideration,

Nicole Gentile

Butler, Tina T.

From: Becky LoBosco <beklobo@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, April 27, 2024 1:59 PM
To: Clerk of the Council
Subject: PG County Shelter

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

CAUTION: This email originated from an external email domain which carries the additional risk that it may be a phishing email and/or contain malware.

The animals of PG County are not receiving the care they need. The ban on bully breeds is wrong and inhumane. Absolutely disgusting that sweet animals are being euthanized because the county can't support a shelter with the funding needed to support humane practices. They need increased staff, space, and to establish better medical protocols.

Please do something about this PG County. Do better.

Becky LoBosco
240-449-0804
Sent from my iPhone

Butler, Tina T.

From: Maeve Gonder <maevegonder@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, April 27, 2024 2:41 PM
To: Clerk of the Council
Subject: The animals of PG County need your help!

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

CAUTION: This email originated from an external email domain which carries the additional risk that it may be a phishing email and/or contain malware.

To whom it may concern,

I write to you as an animal lover and a mom to an incredible rescue dog that was saved from euthanasia by a Maryland rescue.

Let me begin by saying, I feel incredibly lucky to live in the progressive state of Maryland. Our local politicians do a great job at building a rapport with the community that allows us to weigh in on the choices that are made that impact us all.

That being said, local animal welfare organizations have been screaming from the rooftops about PG county continuously deprioritizing the well-being of its homeless animal population. These are animals that have suffered through cruelty and neglect at the hands of horrible owners.

PG has one of the strictest breed bans in the country and simultaneously an animal shelter that is perpetually overcrowded and underfunded. These animals deserve better. They're suffering illnesses in cramped, unhygienic living quarters, awaiting their inevitable death for simply existing.

Animal shelters should be a sanctuary from the hell that these pets have narrowly managed to escape. Instead they're trading one form of hell at the hands of their owners, for another.

I have a responsibility as a Maryland citizen and "bully-breed" advocate to speak for those that cannot speak for themselves. Please allot more funding for these shelters. The lives these dogs live in your shelter system truly keeps me up at night. We need to do better. We need to give these animals a chance.

Thank you for your time,
Maeve E. Gonder
443.204.4821

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Maeve Gonder

Owner & Art Director | *MAEKR STUDIO*

[WEBSITE](#) | [INSTAGRAM](#) | [DRIBBBLE](#)

Butler, Tina T.

From: James Sterner <jms2204@comcast.net>
Sent: Saturday, April 27, 2024 4:50 PM
To: Clerk of the Council
Subject: PG County Animal Shelter - Funding / Urgent

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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To the council,

Please make additional funding for the PG Animal Shelter a priority. This funding is desperately needed to not only make the much needed shelter conditions, but also to *save lives*.

This funding would do nothing but good.

Thank you for providing this crucial funding.

Karen Sterner

Butler, Tina T.

From: Ally Christie <allyodo13@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, April 27, 2024 5:35 PM
To: Clerk of the Council
Subject: PG County Budget Hearing Testimony

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

CAUTION: This email originated from an external email domain which carries the additional risk that it may be a phishing email and/or contain malware.

Good afternoon,

I'm writing to strongly advocate for increased funding for the Prince George Animal Shelter. Thousands of animals are surrendered there each year and due to the horrific breed ban, many of them do not make it out. The shelter needs additional resources to save as many of these innocent lives as possible. I'm an animal shelter foster and volunteer and see how desperately help is needed for the welfare of the animals.

Best,
Allison Christie

Butler, Tina T.

From: Joanna Rossignol <joannadrossignol@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, April 28, 2024 9:04 AM
To: Clerk of the Council
Subject: PG County Animal Shelter

CAUTION: This email originated from an external email domain which carries the additional risk that it may be a phishing email and/or contain malware.

Hello,

I'm a volunteer for the PGSPCA. The animal shelter has been underresourced since I have been involved in animal welfare. PG has the most demand and the highest kill rate of any shelter in Maryland.

There is more that can be done to decrease the suffering of animals in PG County. By budgeting more funding for animal welfare, we assist the people as well. Increased resources for the animal shelter can also increase adoption rates and decrease disease spread in the shelter, which can be dangerous for volunteers' pets as well.

Thank you for reading my letter and please help the animals of PG County.
Joanna Rossignol

Butler, Tina T.

From: B H <bhelmick7@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, April 28, 2024 3:48 PM
To: Clerk of the Council
Subject: Budget Hearing Testimony

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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CAUTION: This email originated from an external email domain which carries the additional risk that it may be a phishing email and/or contain malware.

Prince George's County Council,

As a volunteer and a foster for dogs coming from the PG county animal shelter, I have witnessed firsthand the deplorable state of health many of the dogs are in when they leave this shelter. While some of them only come out with kennel cough, many come out with serious illnesses like pneumonia or, as I have witnessed, don't make it out because the care is so subpar in the shelter that they are never given the chance to survive. The procedures within the shelter to prevent illness are also subpar. Countless efforts from shelter volunteers to improve these conditions have largely gone ignored. As a result, increasing budget funds for the animal shelter is the only way to make the impact needed to correct inhumane policies and provide the resources necessary to care for the animals in PG's care. This must include much improved medical care, more staff and better trained staff, more kennel space, more funding for spay/neuter and much improved communication to the community and shelter supporters.

In a county of residents that overwhelmingly despise the breed ban you continue to enforce with no credible justification for doing so, we implore you to AT LEAST treat the animals you detain humanely by allocating all funds necessary to do so this fiscal year.

Sincerely,

Brittany Helmick

Butler, Tina T.

From: Evelyn Kelly <ekelly@institutephi.org>
Sent: Monday, April 29, 2024 12:26 PM
To: Clerk of the Council
Cc: Chloe Waterman
Subject: Written Testimony on behalf of the Prince Georges County Food Equity Council
Attachments: Food Equity Council Written Testimony for FY 2025 Budget Hearing.pdf

CAUTION: This email originated from an external email domain which carries the additional risk that it may be a phishing email and/or contain malware.

Good afternoon,

I just called the County Council office and was informed I was able to submit written testimony for this evening's budget hearing.

On behalf of the co-chair of the Prince Georges Food Equity Council, Chloe Waterman, please find our written testimony.

Thank you, Evelyn
Interim Director, Prince George's Food Equity Council



Evelyn B. Kelly, MPH (she, her, *ella*)
Program Director
Institute for Public Health Innovation
P. 202.407.7086
E. ekelly@institutephi.org
institutephi.org | *Inform. Involve. Inspire.*



The Honorable Jolene Ivey
Prince George's County Council
County Administration Building
14741 Governor Oden Bowie Drive
2nd Floor
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772

April 25th, 2024

Dear Council Chair Ivey:

On behalf of the Prince George's County Food Equity Council (FEC), I would like to respectfully request support in the Fiscal Year 2025 budget for the following food and farm priorities. We are grateful for your leadership in advancing a healthier food system throughout Prince George's County, including your ongoing support for programs like Maryland Market Money, innovative food waste initiatives like curbside composting, and staffing support through the Department of Social Services' Office of Food Security (OFS).

This year, the FEC is requesting funding for the following:

- **Funding for Prince George's County Food Equity Council:** \$130,000
- **Financial and infrastructure support for food assistance providers:** Variable costs
- **Continued funding for the County's Maryland Market Money Program:** \$150,000
- **Funding for a Food Systems Planner:** \$150,000
- **Funding for Maryland Hunger Solutions:** \$30,000

Since 2013, our food policy council has been a voice for residents at the policymaking table. We've worked with leaders like you to find solutions to improve our food system. We focus on systematic and sustainable changes to Prince George's County's public health challenges (i.e., hunger, diet-related chronic disease, and food deserts that lack healthy food options) by advocating for policies that create a more equitable local food system.

Since the FEC was founded in 2013, we have made impressive strides in advancing our mission to help residents grow, sell, and choose healthy food. Our work convening partners and County agencies has led to significant policy accomplishments and recognition of Prince George's County as a regional leader in progressive and fair food, farm, and health policy. Our food policy work has been highlighted in state-level, regional, and nationally-facing conferences, webinars, and publications.

We hope to ensure continued progress and progressive policy and program accomplishments this next fiscal year. We have outlined the requests listed above in greater detail below.

Funding for Prince George's County Food Equity Council: \$130,000

FEC's partnerships and policy work has changed the landscape of this County; where vacant lots used to sit, food truck hubs and urban farms are now growing. Our work has impacted the entire County, from the Inner Beltway to the rural farmlands. We have leveraged diverse partners to address issues like local food and agriculture business development, school meals, successfully completing the pilot program for PG Fresh, the county's only food-is-medicine initiative, maintaining food assistance resources for the entire county and improved standards and permitting processes for farmers markets that positively affect all residents of Prince George's County.

However, we have found it challenging to fund our work, especially as the FEC moves from advocating to assisting in implementing policies and programs. We respectfully request you consider funding the Food Equity Councils work to ensure the food and farm progress we have made is built upon and advanced.

Food system issues are often complex and require coordination both inside government and with multiple external sectors. For this reason, cities and counties like DC, Baltimore, and Howard County have invested in the advancement of their local food system by funding their respective local food policy council.

In Prince George's County we envision that the FEC will:

- address the persistent diet-related health disparities communities in our County face and the increasing rates of diet-related chronic disease;
- attract food-related businesses and tourism to the county and building pathways for residents to start their own businesses enterprises;
- Work with county agencies and partners to minimize duplication and accelerate progress towards shared food policy goals;
- ensure the county protects and preserves its rich agricultural heritage and wealth of open space and environmentally sensitive areas, helping our farms stay viable and our environment stay clean for current and future generations;
- be an advocate for marginalized farmers and growers in the County; and
- advance food policies and programming so that more people are able to access fresh, healthy, and affordable food.

Financial and infrastructure support for food assistance providers: Variable costs

County-based food assistance providers require additional financial and infrastructure support. Since the beginning of the pandemic, many food pantries have operated entirely with volunteer coordination to collect food donations (often using personal vehicles) and distribute food. Without core staffing or basic

equipment, we are concerned about the sustainability of these operations that are providing essential services to food-insecure neighbors.

We respectfully request direct grants to support the following:

- Core capacity needs, including staffing costs for drivers and food distribution staff.
- Refrigerated trucks and vans to pick up and deliver food.
- Bulk food purchasing for locally grown produce and culturally relevant foods.
- Cold storage capacity, including commercial refrigerators and freezers.

We suggest distributing funds through a grant program for food assistance providers. Grants could be distributed through the Office of Food Security (OFS). Both the FEC and OFS have collected data on these resource needs that could inform equitable financial resource distribution throughout the county.

Funding for Maryland Market Money Program: \$150,000

We respectfully request the County preserve funding in the Department of Social Services' proposed operating budget for the Maryland Market Money (MMM) program at county farmers markets.

MMM doubles the value of purchases made with federal nutrition benefits, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP), and Women Infants and Children (WIC), at participating farmers' markets. MMM increases access to healthy foods for those who need them most. During the pandemic, food insecurity skyrocketed and has since remained higher than neighboring jurisdictions in the DC Metro area – the 2023 Hunger Report from the Capital Area Food Bank noted that 45% of Prince George's County residents experienced food insecurity last year.

MMM encourages SNAP, FMNP, and WIC participants to purchase local, healthy food at farmers' markets and farm stands, which are often financially out of reach for many residents. Further, MMM supports farmers' bottom lines. Many farmers struggle to stay profitable; however, farmers accepting MMM reported they diversified their products, added hoop houses or greenhouses to their farms, and increased overall production.

The need for this program is more important than ever as residents continue to face financial challenges due to the end of the pandemic-era SNAP emergency allotment last year. Further, high grocery prices coupled with reduced benefit programs have heightened the need for programs that help residents keep healthy food on the table. County funding to support MMM in past fiscal years has yielded impressive outcomes. Farmers' markets participating in the program have increased from six to eight markets and are incorporating a new pilot program for farm stands, on-farm markets, and pop-up markets.

We applaud the County's dedication to addressing food insecurity and prioritizing health and equity. We hope you will continue supporting this important program and provide full funding for MMM this upcoming fiscal year.

Funding for a Food Systems Planner: \$150,000

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) Planning Department's Food Systems Planner has served an indispensable role in shaping and fortifying food systems planning. Their responsibilities encompassed designing critical plans and reports that provided essential insights into the state of Prince George's County's food system. Through their leadership, the Planning Department developed three pivotal reports: Urban Agriculture: A Tool for Creating Economic Development and Healthy Communities in Prince George's County, MD (2012), Healthy Food for All Prince Georgians: An Assessment of Access to Healthy Food in Prince George's County (2015), and Reduce, Recover, Recycle — Food Waste in Prince George's County, MD (2019). These reports have been important contributions to better understanding the state of the food resources and opportunities to create a more secure and resilient food system. These reports were critical to the research and 11 recommendations were developed by the County Council's Food Security Task Force in 2022.

Unfortunately, the Food Systems Planner retired in 2019, and the position has not been refilled. This has resulted in critical gaps in developing plans and research around our food system. The recommendations from the Food Security Task Force Report are essential to ensuring the County addresses health and food systems inequities and is better prepared when facing future public health, economic, or climate emergencies. While we are grateful that the County has introduced the OFS to implement these recommendations, this work requires coordination and capacity from the Food Systems Planner. By reintroducing this role, we can rekindle the County's commitment to effective long-term food systems planning, fostering a comprehensive approach to food security, sustainability, and resilience. The return of this position signifies an investment in our food future and reinforces our dedication to nurturing a thriving and resilient local food system.

Funding for Maryland Hunger Solutions: \$30,000

We request funding for Maryland Hunger Solutions to continue their work leading intensive outreach, training, technical assistance, and advocacy efforts to ensure that residents with low incomes have access to critical nutrition and income support provided by SNAP and other federal nutrition programs.

Food insecurity remains a critical concern in Prince George's County. Federal nutrition programs are essential tools to ensure that residents can keep food on the table. We must continue to invest in organizations like Maryland Hunger Solutions that are making a tangible difference in the lives of our residents through advocacy and outreach efforts that help eligible residents access these programs. We strongly urge you to consider allocating funding to enable Maryland Hunger Solutions to expand its outreach and support efforts, ultimately creating a more food-secure and thriving community for all.

We greatly appreciate the ongoing support of your administration and the willingness of public agencies to work closely with our members. We would like to continue to help our community and residents

grow, sell, and choose healthy food. We hope you will continue to fund our work and the priorities outlined above. Please consider the significant value the FEC has brought to food, farm, and health policies, programs, and initiatives and the impact we can make as we continue to work together to accomplish these shared priorities.

We appreciate your consideration of our requests. Please do not hesitate to reach out to the Interim Food Equity Council Director, Evelyn Kelly at ekelly@instittuephi.org for additional information.

Sincerely,

Chloe Waterman

Chloe Waterman, Prince George's County Food Equity Council Co-Chair

Accomplishments to Date

Our food council works to help Prince George's County residents grow, sell, and choose healthier foods. Since 2013, our council has been a voice for residents at the policymaking table. We've worked with leaders like you to find permanent solutions to improve our food system. We focus on systematic and sustainable changes to Prince George's County's public health challenges (i.e., hunger, diet-related chronic disease, and food deserts that lack healthy food options) by advocating for policy that creates a more equitable local food system.

Our work with partners and the County has led to significant policy accomplishments and recognition of Prince George's County as a leader in progressive and fair food, farm, and health policy. FEC's policy work has changed the landscape of this county, where vacant lots used to sit, now food truck hubs and urban farms are growing. Our work has impacted the entire county, from the Inner Beltway to the rural farmlands. We have leveraged diverse partners to address issues like local food and agriculture business development, school meals, improved standards and permitting processes for farmers markets, and ensured healthier standards for food and beverages served on kids' meals at county restaurants.

A full list of our accomplishments is available [here](#).