



HUMAN SERVICES POLICY COMMITTEE (HSPC) AND FOOD AND AGRICULTURE REGIONAL MEMBER POLICY COMMITTEE (FARM) JOINT MEETING

Friday, September 12, 2025
12:00 P.M. to 2 P.M.

VIRTUAL MEETING SUMMARY

The meeting agenda, slides, and handouts can be found at:

<https://www.mwcog.org/events/2025/9/12/human-services-policy-committee-september-2025/>

On Friday, July 12th, 89 HSPC, FARM and FARM Workgroup members, along with other stakeholders participated in a joint, online meeting to examine food insecurity and regional collaboration during Hunger Awareness Month. There was significant discussion among speakers and committee members, however, there was not time for the last agenda item - an update on homeless encampment sweeps in the District of Columbia.

The meeting was called to order at 12:04 pm and adjourned it at 2:02 pm.

ACTIONS

FARM Chair Andrew Friedson provided information on the Local Food Procurement Challenge for local governments that he will issue at FARM's December meeting. He invited HSPC members to participate also. FARM members were asked to:

- Respond to an information request from COG staff, should they receive one, to ensure the challenge provides opportunities for all jurisdictions to participate.
- To vote on FARM's *2025 to 2026 Strategic Framework* via electronic ballot.

COG staff will send resources and information to all committee members related to homeless encampment sweeps, regional impacts, and national advocacy efforts.

Capital Area Food Bank (CAFB) will present its [2025 Hunger Report](#) to the [COG Board on Wednesday, October 8th](#). Meetings are open to the public and livestreamed.

KEY TAKEAWAYS AND STRATEGIES

Panel featuring Radha Muthiah (CAFB), Anne Wallerstedt (MD Food Bank), Jennifer Montgomery (Loudoun Hunger Relief), and moderator Eddie Oliver (VA Federation of Food Banks)

1. Panelists were asked to share “Calls to Action.” They identified needs for:

- Tracking both food assistance and Medicaid issues as they serve the same populations.
- Partnerships with local Departments of Social Service (DSS) offices to bring down SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) error rates.
 - Investments in technology, training, and personnel to improve accuracy in case determinations.
- Coordination and dialogue to ensure that other policy changes benefit food-insecure families against the backdrop of cuts to essential federal programs.
- Not creating any legislative barriers to accessing food assistance.
- Coordination and flexibility in funding streams so that food banks can pivot dynamically as situations unfold.
 - It’s essential to think about providing support to reduce food insecurity in a multi-year horizon.
- Increased collaboration across jurisdictions and sectors.
- This is an important time to meet new partners and have conversations with elected officials, government agencies, nonprofit communities, and funders.

2. HR 1 made sweeping changes to the SNAP program, some of which will begin taking effect immediately.

- Item 3 slides are available [at this link](#) and provide a summary of major changes to SNAP, including impacts to DC, MD, VA, and most of the COG region.

3. CAFB has calculated that tens of thousands of participating families in the DMV will see a monthly reduction in their average monthly benefits as changes to SNAP policy are implemented.

- Panelists noted that this coincides with an affordability crisis and significant reductions in the federal workforce.

4. Beginning in FY27, states will be required to share a greater share of administrative costs and for the first time starting in FY28, to pay a share of SNAP benefits themselves.

- DC, MD, and VA must reduce error rates in SNAP payments to reduce future shortfalls in the millions and hundred millions of federal dollars they have received to pay SNAP benefits.

5. Food insecurity remains elevated post-pandemic. There is rising need and demand for food assistance. Panelists, committee members, and meeting participants discussed:

- Rising fear in low-income immigrant communities to access emergency food assistance.
- During discussion it was also noted that:
 - USDA removed information from its website on how mixed-status households can access SNAP. This is needed to ensure anyone who is eligible can access benefits.

- State-level policymakers should be asked to oppose sharing personally identifiable SNAP data that can be used to locate and target immigrants.
 - One committee member shared that they were called to help a client who had been detained during the meeting.
 - Food insecurity in seniors and strategies to address this.
 - Barriers to receiving food assistance related to stigma and lack of awareness, including among residents who have never accessed these services before.
 - Working with schools to do outreach was identified as one important strategy to raise awareness.
6. Food banks in the region have responded during government shutdowns in the past, are monitoring the current situation, and preparing for one should it occur. When they do:
- Federal benefit programs like SNAP and WIC typically continue running for a month or two.
 - For federal workers, need for emergency food assistance typically starts at the end of the last paycheck that they receive.

Legislative perspectives on food security with Fairfax County Supervisor and COG Board Chair, Rodney Lusk, Maryland State Delegate Lorig Charkoudian, and Virginia Senator Danica Roem.

7. The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors recently recognized September as Hunger Action Awareness month. The county realizes that it needs to transition back to a more traditional procurement model, from a competitive model, to ensure that it has sufficient funds to support the needs for food assistance that it is seeing.
- Supervisor Lusk also provided remarks on work that he's doing in the Franconia District with CAFB.
8. There is a need for state-level solutions to mitigate the impact of federal policy changes.
9. Delegate Lorig Charkoudian discussed several past and upcoming legislative efforts in MD, including bills related to local food procurement, on-farm composting, and food forests.
- There are challenges in implementing some of the bills and there's need for continued advocacy and collaboration to do so.
10. Senator Danica Roem emphasized the importance of passing universal free school meals in VA, highlighting the success of the expansion of the federal Community Eligibility Program (CEP) there.
- Growing participation in CEP by schools has significantly increased enrollment in free breakfast and lunch programs, and reduced school meal debt and administrative burdens.
 - Cuts to programs like SNAP and Medicaid will negatively impact CEP enrollment and access to free school meals.
 - Another priority that Sen. Roem spoke about was her advocacy on implementing the SNAP Restaurant Meals in Virginia, including on-going efforts to get more restaurants into the program by identifying barriers that keep some from joining.
11. Speakers mentioned the importance of supporting food pantries and ensuring that food banks can initiate SNAP and WIC enrollment processes for eligible customers.

- Collaboration with local organizations to address food insecurity effectively is needed.

ATTENDANCE

FARM AND HSPC MEMBERS

Anita Bonds, HSPC Chair, District of Columbia
 Andrew Friedson, FARM Chair, Montgomery County Council
 Laura TeKrony, FARM Vice Chair, Loudoun County
 Andrea Bailey, Prince William County
 Tanisha Briley, City of Gaithersburg
 Kenny Boddy, Prince William County
 Llatetra Brown Esters, City of College Park
 Maureen Coffey, Arlington County
 Reuben B. Collins, II, Charles County
 Marybeth Connelly, City of Falls Church
 Kalisha Dixon, Town of Bladensburg
 Letty Hardi, City of Falls Church
 Jessica Landsman, City of Takoma Park
 Danielle McKinney, City of Greenbelt
 JD Spain, Sr, Arlington County
 Yesy Amaya, City of Manassas Park
 Heather Bruskin, Montgomery County Office of Food System Resilience
 Caron Gremont, FRESHFARM (Alternate)
 Julia Gross, MD Hunger Solutions
 Sara Hoverter, Georgetown University Law, O'Neill Institute for National and Global Health Law
 Caroline Howe, DC Office of Planning/DC Food Policy Council
 Meredith Ledlie Johnson, Virginia Cooperative Extension
 Joe Liu, Capital Area Food Bank (Alternate)
 Jon Stehle (emeritus member)

SPEAKERS

Eddie Oliver, Executive Director, Federation of Virginia Food Banks
 Radha Muthiah, President & CEO, Capital Area Food Bank
 Anne Wallerstedt, Vice President of Government Relations, Maryland Food Bank
 Jennifer Montgomery, President & CEO, Loudoun Hunger Relief
 Fairfax County Supervisor Rodney Lusk, Chair, COG Board
 Maryland State Delegate Lorig Charkoudian
 Virginia Senator Danica Roem

PARTICIPANTS

Akanksha Sinha	Catherine Nardi
Alisa Brooks	Cindy Gibson
Alison C Coleman	Craig Rice
Allison Schnitzer	Dalila Boclin
Annika La Fave	Elisa Solomon
Annmarie Hart-Bookbinder	Elizabeth Teuwen
Ayesha Holmes	Emily Lacey
Bethany Krupicka	Erika Huddleston
Brittany Cook	Gillian Kimura
Carmen Angel	Jesse Pearlmuter

Jessie Lupo
Jocelyn Tidwell
John McCarthy
Julia Raymond
Kathy L. Johnson
Kim Rush Lynch
LaMonika Jones
Lawrence Schaefer
Lesa Gilbert
Linda Jones
Lorien MacAuley
Lynda Ramirez-Blust
Marcy Thompson
Mary Charlton
Matt Mulder

COG STAFF

Steve Bieber
Jazmin Burroughs
Hilary Chapman
Greg Goodwin
Sushanth Gupta
Christine Howard
Sam Kenney
Lindsay Smith
Michelle Chandler, Extern

Melissa Jensen
Michelle Caruso
Morgan Standley
Nancy K Nunn
Nelson Boxwell
Piper Phillips Caswell
Regina C Coyle
Robin McClave
Samuel Wilson
Stephanie Hopkins
Sydney Garner
Warren Hansen
Willie Woode
Chesapeake Ag Innovation Center Value Chain
Coordinator