



# MWCOG FARM Committee

*Systems Based Strategies to Build a Resilient Local Food System*

**March 2025**

# Residents at Risk of Food Insecurity

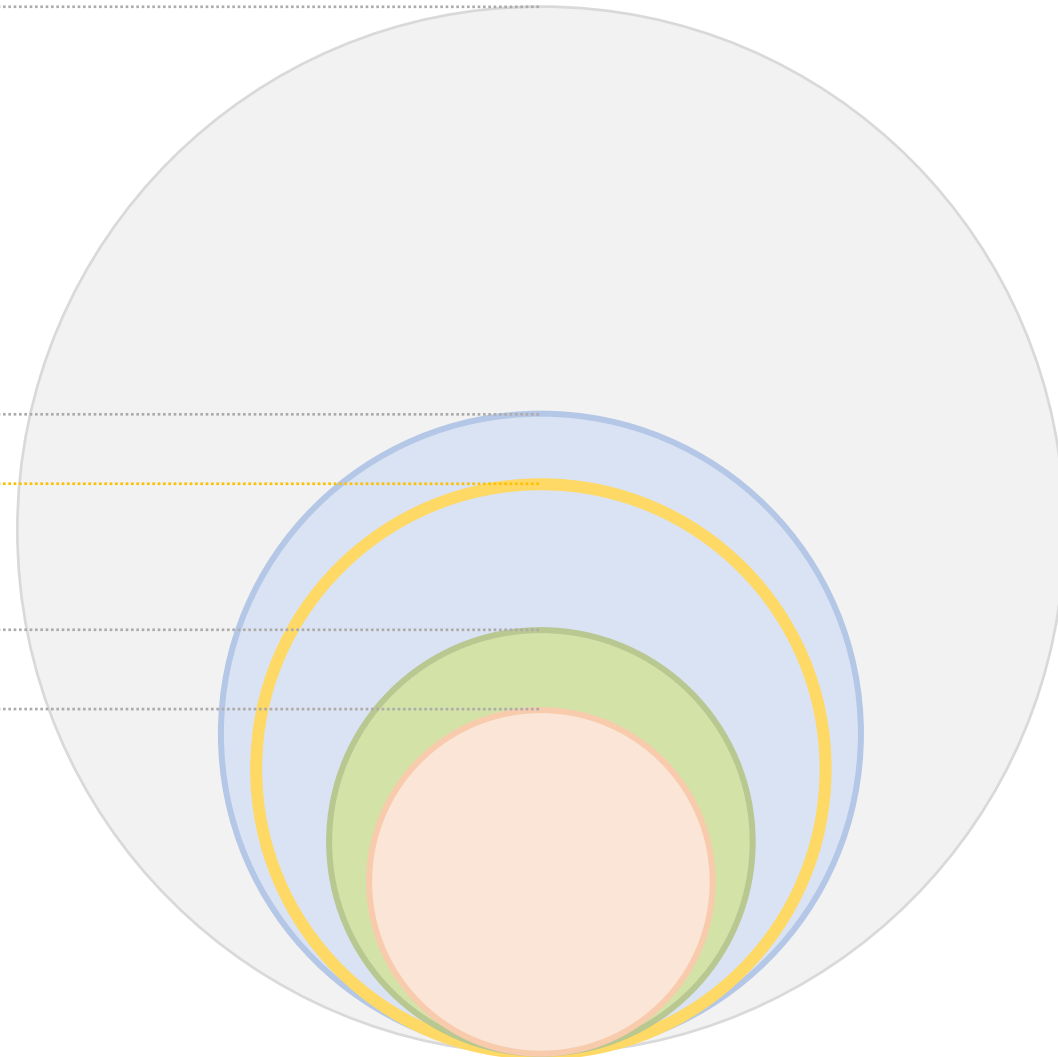
**1.05 million** people in Montgomery County

**403k** people (almost **4 in 10** individuals) live in households with incomes below 400% of the federal poverty level (FPL)

**323k** people live below the **Self Sufficiency Standard**

**169k** people (**1 in 6** indiv.) live in households with incomes below 185% of the FPL (**FARMs Threshold**)

**116k** people (**1 in 10** indiv.) live in households with incomes below 130% the FPL (**SNAP Threshold**)



# Montgomery County

## Office of Food Systems Resilience



***Mission:*** To develop and implement interagency budgetary, regulatory, and operational strategies to build a more equitable, efficient, resilient, and sustainable food system in Montgomery County.

***Resilience:*** *The capability of individuals, communities, and the County to withstand and rapidly recover from food system disruptions, stresses, and changes.*



# **Diversified Assistance Strategies and Partnerships**

# Strengthening Local Food Production

## **Farm to Foodbank Program: \$573,000 invested in FY25**

- food purchased from 31 County Farms distributed through **68+** Food Assistance Provider partners
- **Community Farm Share:** \$140,000 in purchases from local farms

## **Collaborative Funding** Partnership with Manna Food Center

- **\$133,431** awarded to 10 Montgomery County-based farms for equipment and infrastructure investments, as loans that are "repaid" with food contributed to the County food assistance network

## **Resident & Community Gardening Grant Program:** \$200,000 to 7 organizations in FY24

## **MCPS REACH Hub:** Supports K-12 agriculture and education (operated by CKC Farming)



MCPS REACH Hub



*Afrithrive  
and Red  
Wiggler  
Farm  
Tours*



# Food as Medicine Grant Program

## Overview

- Supports **innovative programs** that **increase access to culturally diverse, medically-relevant, nutritious, & locally produced food** for families facing food insecurity
- Grantees are **qualified healthcare provider organizations** that offer pediatric primary care services to underserved populations in Montgomery County

**First launched April 2024, 9-month grant period**

## Award Summary:

- Collaborative partnerships between pediatric primary care services and food assistance providers- 10 sites supported by 5 grantees
  - 2 Hospital Systems, 1 Healthcare Clinic
  - 2 Food Assistance Providers
  - 4 School-Based Health Centers
- Total awarded: \$449,337
- 98% of food purchased sourced locally

# School-Based Food Assistance Grants

## **FY25 Award Summary:**

- Total dollars awarded: \$1,250,244
- Number of partners funded: 11
- Awardees were matched with 1 to 16 school partners
- Services at 61 schools
- 44% of food purchases from local sources
- 3 grantees working directly with farms



*Photo source: Stephen Knolls School Site Visit*

# Maximizing External Resources

## **SNAP Outreach Grants: \$201,300 to 5 organizations**

- Supports SNAP outreach expansion and enrollment through Community Based Organizations (CBOs)
- Families use benefits for **greater healthy food access** at grocery stores, farmers markets, and other SNAP-eligible retail locations
- State-designated SNAP CBOs leverage dollar for dollar Federal Matching Funds
- Projected \$1.5M+ in new benefits to 1,000+ households and \$2.5M+ invested in local economy

## **Maryland Market Money:** 7 farmers market partners in MoCo with MD Dept of Agriculture

- 6,156 SNAP, WIC & FMNP transactions matched
- \$140,000+ in additional local product purchases

## **Cold Storage Infrastructure Grants:** in partnership with Manna Food Center

- 14 organizations awarded \$352,000 for food recovery & local food distribution
- \$122,568 funded in partnership with the Morningstar Foundation



# Retail Partnerships



- \$1.82M investment through Special Appropriation and \$1.8M budgeted in FY25
- The MC Groceries Program aims to help families access fresh and shelf-stable food items. Families can place their orders online and have groceries delivered or picked up through a partnership with **Instacart Fresh Funds**.
- Eligible households may receive **\$100 in benefits per month for each child 0-18 years old**, up to \$400.
- Created and launched in Summer 2024

**492**

Montgomery  
County Families

**984**

Montgomery  
County Children

**94%**

Employed  
(full-time, part-  
time) or actively  
looking for jobs

**20**

Retail Banners

**80+**

Stores

**Fresh Fruits  
& Vegetables**

Top-2 food  
purchase choices  
by participants

# Community Food Assistance Grant Program

## FY25 Launch:

- Funds the procurement and distribution of shelf-stable, fresh food, and/or prepared meals via direct purchasing and Staples credits, and up to 15% operational costs
- Grantees are active food assistance providers that have provided regularly scheduled monthly services to Montgomery County residents at County sites for at least two years
- Designed to support continuity of existing operations to maintain a solid foundation of support to residents
- Grantees connected to technical assistance and resources for local sourcing, waste audit participation, choice model
- Tiered data collection and reporting requirements tied to award amount

## Awards

- **\$3,500,000** allocated to **49 organizations** in October 2024 for a one year grant period
  - \$100,000 for voucher program partnership with local grocer to increase access to culturally specific groceries

# Data Collection and Reporting



## Food Assistance Provider Monthly Report



Please report for **each distribution location** where your organization provides food assistance.

### Select Your Organization\*

-Please select-

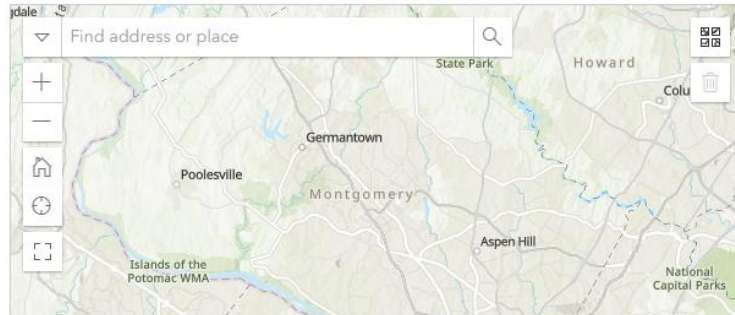
### Select the month for this report\*

What **month** are you reporting?

-Please select-

### Select the location of your distribution site

Use the address bar above.



### Food Assistance Distribution ▼

Please provide information by food distribution format

#### Family Market

How many **pounds** of food did you distribute through all **family markets** this month?

#### Choice Pantry

How many **pounds** of food did you distribute through all **choice pantries** this month?

#### Pre-Packaged Box/Bags

How many **boxes/bags** did you distribute across all **distributions** this month?

#### Gift Cards

What was the **total value (USD)** of all gift cards distributed this month?

#### Other

What was the total output and metric (e.g. lbs, tons, etc.) for this type of distribution

### Households per Zip Code

Select the City and report the (duplicate) number of households for each Zip Code.

*Reminder: This program requires reporting distribution numbers by zip code. Your reporting and data collection efforts are greatly appreciated.*

Ashton & Aspen Hill - 20861, 20906, 20916 ▶

Barnersville & Beallsville - 20839, 20838 ▶

Bethesda - 20813, 20814, 20815, 20816, 20817, 20824, 20825, 20827 ▶

Boyd's & Brinklow - 20841, 20862 ▶

Burtonsville & Cabin John - 20866, 20818 ▶

Chevy Chase & Clarksburg - 20815, 20825, 20871 ▶

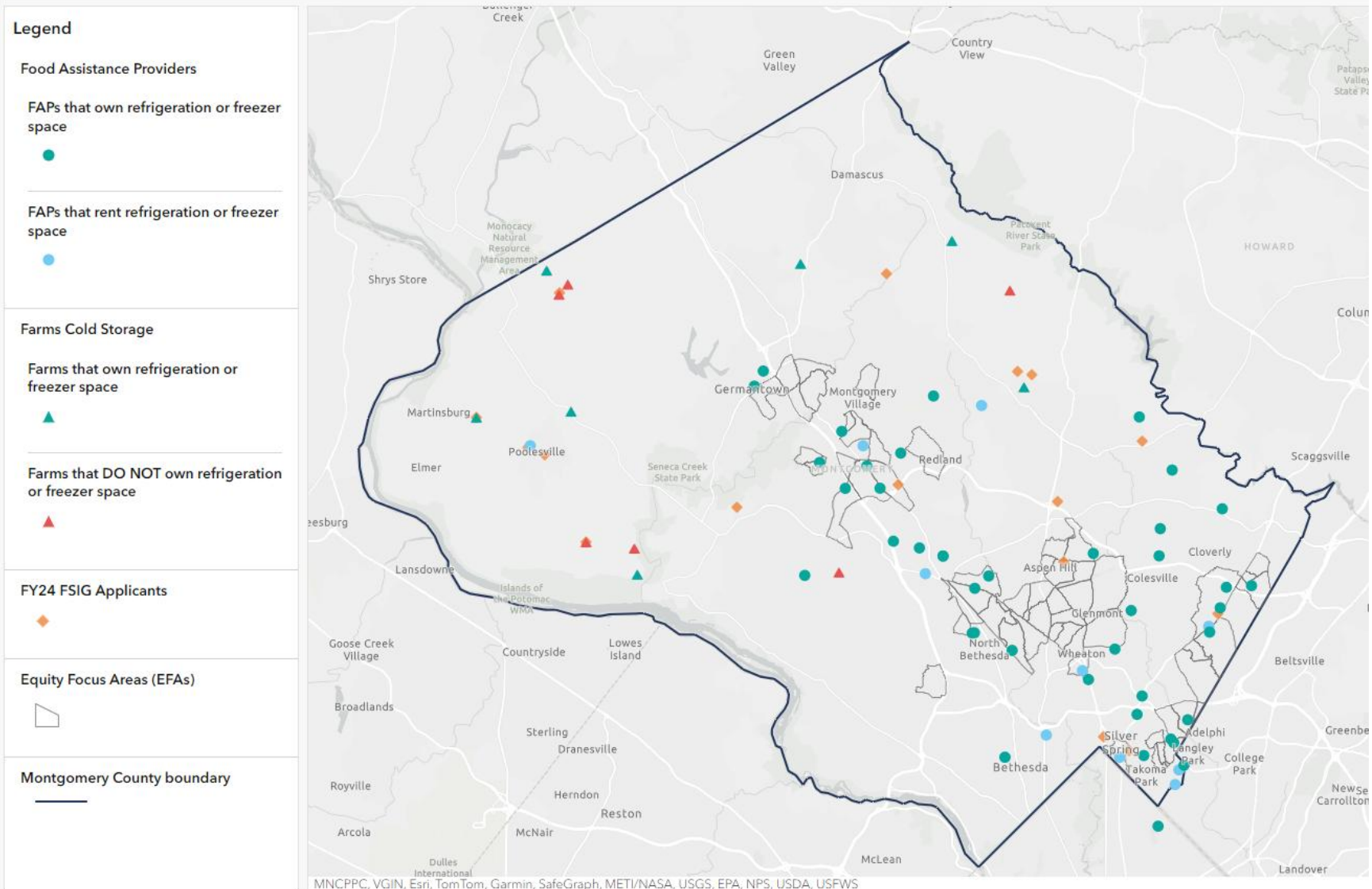
Colesville & Damascus - 20904, 20905, 20914, 20872 ▶

Darnestown, Derwood & Dickerson - 20874, 20878, 20855, 20842 ▶

Gaithersburg - 20877, 20878, 20879, 20882, 20883, 20884, 20885, 20886, 20888 ▶

# Geographic Analysis

FY24 Cold Storage Map





# **Coordination & Collaboration**

# Regional, State, and National Collaboration

- MD Food System Resiliency Council
- MWCOG FARM Committee
- Emergency Assistance Coalition
- Metro DC Food Policy Directors
- DMV Food Council Collaborative
- DC Cold Storage Working Group
- Maryland State School Health Council
- Healthy School Meals for All
- Climate Ambassadors
- Service Design in Government
- Mid-Atlantic StatNet



# Collaboration Across Agencies



*Photo source: Interagency Launch Meeting, November 2023*

Food Service Systems Analysis via the Good Food Purchasing Program (GFPP)

- Collaborating with **Departments of Corrections & Rehabilitation** and **Environmental Protection**

Breaking down silos and connecting with community

- Bi-monthly Interagency Group connects **95 representatives** of **34 MCG agencies**
- Monthly meetings with the **Office of Community Partnerships, Office of Agriculture, DEP, DHHS, and MCPS**
- Co-hosting Koshur/Halal Food Access event with **USDA Office of Neighborhood Partnerships**
- Commercial kitchen space in houses of worship data analysis with Faith Community

# Strengthening Our Food System Network



## **Engaging Community Partners**

- OFSR Community Connections
- Food Security Community Calls & Peer Learning Circles with MCFC
- FAP Survey
  - Annual food assistance census
  - 73 organizations participated in 2024
- Partnership and Network Building
  - Listening Sessions
  - Community Lunches
  - Farmer Forums
- Monthly site visits





