A Food Secure Montgomery

What we know now and what we can do

A 5-Year Strategic Plan

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January 2017

Dear Friends:

One of the many strengths of Montgomery County is the compassion of its residents. I have seen this firsthand in the good work our community performs to help those in need. We are a community that protects one another, works to create affordable housing and ensures people have the food they need. It is because of this that I have repeatedly said that we are one of the world's most welcoming communities.

Sometimes compassion needs a plan. For this reason I'm honored to present this Food Security Plan to the County Council and the community. This is not meant to be a plan that tells others what to do, but rather empowers them to do what needs to be done. In this case, we must address the food security needs of a changing county. Every one of our residents should have access to safe, sufficient, and nutritious food in a manner that treats them with respect and dignity.

This does not occur without great effort. Those that struggle with hunger often live in plain sight. Whether it is the child who is too embarrassed to take food assistance home from school or the single parent working two jobs and just scraping by, reaching those in need is a complex challenge. In some cases the hungry are invisible. They are the immigrant who stays anonymous because of their documentation status or the senior living alone, in isolation. My hope is that this Plan helps us reach those people in a compassionate and intelligent manner.

This Plan did not come together without significant community input. There is still more work to be done and this Plan will be refined over time, but I want to thank all of the nonprofits, businesses, and agency partners that invested significant time and effort to ensure we can get this Plan's recommendations underway in 2017 to address these important issues. My staff and I are working diligently every day to make sure no County resident goes hungry, and we welcome your partnership and support in this effort.

Ike Leggett, County Executive

Executive Summary

Montgomery County's vision of food security is a community in which all people at all times have access to safe, sufficient, nutritious food, with dignity. Food security encompasses several dimensions, among them are:

- Availability in sufficient quantity of food of an appropriate nature and quality,
- Access to acquire food needed for a nutritionally adequate diet, and
- Consumption of food uninhibited by health or hygiene problems (safe drinking water, sanitation or medical services, etc.).

Also included is stability of access to food i.e. the assurance of access by people to food even in the face of natural or economic shocks.

For an individual to be food secure, these conditions must be respected simultaneously.[1] Barriers to attaining food security include insufficient income, transportation, cultural preferences, language, food literacy, and access to culturally appropriate food.

Lack of access to healthy, nourishing food undermines the health and well-being of children and families. In Montgomery County, 7% of the County's population is estimated to be food insecure (77,780). Children are especially vulnerable to families' economic status. Nearly 13.9% of the County's children are estimated to be food insecure, representing 33,000 children. This number of food insecure children is higher than any other County in the state.[2]

In response to changing trends and needs in the food system, the County Council passed and the County Executive signed Bill 19-16, which requires the County Executive to develop a plan to address food security and update it annually. This is not only a first for the County, but it is also one of the few initiatives of its type in the country. Combined with the ongoing work of the Montgomery County Food Council to develop a holistic Food Action Plan for the County, this Plan is part of a comprehensive approach to continuously improving the County's food system.

This Plan is also not developed in isolation. It builds upon and incorporates the work of previous efforts. Beyond the data collection and analysis efforts of CountyStat to the Food Council's Food Access report of 2015, there has been a wealth of information to build upon. Also helpful has been the insights that have been drawn from the various strategic planning efforts of Manna Food Center and the Capital Area Food Bank. All of those assets are cited throughout this Plan. This is not to say that all the data found in this Plan was readily available or even existed. The team responsible for developing this Plan encountered significant difficulties in identifying and collecting essential data and information. This experience prompted the creation of some recommendations that will be outlined on page 86.

APPROACH AND BACKGROUND

In the approximately four months from Bill passage to Plan submission, the County undertook an extensive review of existing programs outside the region, and conducted multiple stakeholder meetings, listening sessions and online surveys to gather data. Over 300 residents from across the county participated in the process. The Plan addresses who is at risk, where they are, and what their barriers are to food security. Due to the short time line, this draft is intentionally more descriptive than prescriptive, and is intended to be an evolving document as more detailed information is gathered over time.

To understand the dynamics of what would cause some to encounter a barrier to food access in the County, it is important to describe the environment in which it occurs. This Plan looks to paint a picture for

policymakers and food assistance providers. In the Background section of this document we paint that picture through data and statements of fact. Many of the trends have been known to County leaders for quite some time, but the intent in this Plan is to provide context by putting all of the demographic and socioeconomic trends related to food security in one place. The primary points of which the reader should be aware of to better understand our findings are:

- There is a growing body of research that connects public health and food insecurity. The connection with food insecurity and health issues is directly related to stress from inadequate income and poor diets.
- The County has a strong network of food assistance providers, but the population of the County is becoming more diverse and the needs of their clients are changing.
- The County is becoming older and the isolation of seniors aging in place creates additional challenges.
- The Montgomery County Collaboration Council for Children, Youth and Families The Children's Agenda 2015 Data Book reports concern that "Childhood obesity has been on the rise. Low income families face food insecurity, limited access to good nutrition, and a lack of opportunities for active lifestyles."
- It costs about $91,252 for a four-person family to afford the basic necessities in Montgomery County, much higher than the $24,300 Federal Poverty level. Families living in this gap face a unique set of challenges, and those are explored more in the Findings section of the Food Security Plan.

Designated a "majority minority" county, Montgomery also has one of the largest growing minority populations in the state, second only to Baltimore. Montgomery County's food insecure communities are diverse and vibrant much like the rest of the County. Residents in these communities have extensive skills and resources to enhance food security, assets that should be considered when identifying opportunities and strategies for improving food access in the County.

Although specific populations face specific issues, one issue was relevant more broadly: self-sufficiency. To control the scope of this, it was decided to focus on the food system and issues within that system that limit food access. The Plan intentionally does not dive into other areas that are related to food security, but exist in their own domain. Broader issues such as minimum wage, affordable housing, the cost of utilities and childcare all play a role in determining the food security status of a person. However, in an attempt to avoid "boiling the ocean," this Plan focuses on the specific challenges a person or family would face when trying to access food. What this Plan does examine is the end result that higher housing costs or lower wages may cause. The result is a significant gap between eligibility for many state/Federal food assistance programs and economic self-sufficiency in Montgomery County.

FINDINGS

The Findings section of the Plan is where additional data analysis and input from the community is applied to our background material in order to produce a series of specific, actionable findings. Whereas the Background section provides context and straightforward data, the Findings section provides more details and adds a critical element: the specific barrier to food access. Every finding identifies a specific population within the County, where they are located or concentrated, and what their particular barrier is to accessing safe, sufficient, nutritious food. Only in this way can the actionable steps be taken to address food insecurity. In most cases, the Plan strives to provide a location that is as granular as possible. For example, in some cases census data allowed us to identify hotspots down to the census tract level and in others we were able to obtain local data that allowed us to point out specific zip codes.

The findings are grouped into five general population categories in order to better organize the results. Those categories are:

- Seniors: This population is specifically called out in Bill 19-16. Although there is no set age range, as certain programs have different eligibility criteria, it most always refers to residents past the age of 60.

- Children: This category is also called out in the bill and refers to anyone under the age of 18. Persons 18 or older that still live with parents are considered individuals.
- People with disabilities: This refers to an individual with either a physical or developmental disability. Although many senior issues stem from a disability, this category is not based on age.
- People living below the Self-Sufficiency Standard: As referenced earlier, the County has a large gap between the Self-Sufficiency Standard and federal poverty levels. This category includes individuals anywhere below the Self-Sufficiency Standard. A family of four with an income of less than $91,252 is below the Self-Sufficiency Standard.
- Foreign born residents: this category refers to any resident born outside of the United States of any immigration or naturalization status.

Within these population categories the Plan identifies more specific groups, their primary locations and the barriers to accessing food. In all there are 20 primary findings that should be addressed in order to make the County a more food secure environment. Those findings are:

Children

- Children living with a single or unmarried parent have a greater risk of food insecurity than children living with married parents in Montgomery County, as evidenced by the number of households with children receiving Federal food assistance. Fourteen priority census tracts have been identified.
- Children relying on school breakfast and lunch are especially vulnerable when school is not in session over the weekends. Weekend bag programs provide nutritious, easy-to-prepare food for chronically food insecure children to take home on Fridays. In this finding, the issue is not with the program itself, but participation levels.
- Summer meal programs seek to fill the gap when children are outside of school. The MCPS Division of Food and Nutrition Services serves about 9,500 children at approximately 120 locations each day during the summer months, but there are approximately 55,818 students eligible. This leaves a large number of children potentially hungry during the months when there is no school. Similar to weekend programs, the issue stems from low participation.

Seniors

- Many seniors pay medical bills for short term and chronic issues out of pocket, resulting in limited funds for healthy food. A study conducted by Manna Food Center identified budget as one of the "two most frequently mentioned barriers to acquiring the quantity and types of food needed". Vulnerable seniors such as these are concentrated in several pockets in the County.
- Seniors aging in place in Montgomery County may experience difficulty learning about and connecting to food assistance programs. Many of these seniors are isolated, especially those who do not drive, and may not interact with people who are knowledgeable about programs. Additionally, low technology literacy and access can prevent connecting to services independently.
- Limited English Proficiency (LEP) can be a barrier for many foreign born seniors across the County-- especially for seniors of East Asian descent. Five high priority zips codes have been identified where this may be found to be most common.

Foreign Born

- Food insecure foreign born people can experience difficulty accessing culturally appropriate foods via food assistance programs. Food assistance services of all sizes are striving to increase supplies of culturally appropriate food for a growing foreign born population. Current resources, however, do not meet current demand.
- Foreign born residents that seek food literacy education such as nutrition counseling or food preparation skills training to improve their health and lives are typically presented with recommendations to consume foods that are unfamiliar to them. Seven priority zip codes and several census tracts have been identified.

• Some of the strongest programs available to help alleviate food insecurity in the County (e.g., SNAP, TANF) are not available to people of undocumented immigration status. Additionally, misconceptions of nutrition benefit program eligibility and fears of deportation can discourage eligible people from applying to or even inquiring about any food assistance programs.

• Limited English Proficiency (LEP) is a barrier for many foreign born residents in Montgomery County—especially those that do not live in communities where their native language is commonly spoken. Although food stores that cater to individuals who speak different languages are accessible in some parts of the County, lacking access to one of these stores when you have limited English proficiency creates a barrier. Six priority census tracts have been identified.

• Language and culture barriers can lead to misinterpretation and misunderstanding of rules for different food access programs. This can create distrust of institutions or government programs that provide assistance. Though the County invests in outreach to overcome this barrier, current efforts do not adequately address challenges unique to the needs of African and Asian foreign born residents. Seven priority zip codes have been identified.

People with Disabilities

• People with disabilities can face significant challenges accessing food due to limited mobility. Transportation access, mobility in retailers, food preparation ability, and communication skills are among the potential challenges that can limit mobility of people with disabilities to being more food secure.

• People with disabilities without case management services can experience food insecurity. Residents with developmental disabilities in particular can struggle to connect to appropriate food assistance services without case management support.

Residents below the Self-Sufficiency Standard

• Residents in areas with limited transit options have difficulty getting to grocery stores, food pantries, or other food resources without a vehicle. Though Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) and RideOn provide transit options in the census tracts where more households than average do not have vehicles, stakeholders and residents have voiced that options are limited, especially on evenings and weekends, to connect residents to critical food resources.

• Lack of access to food preparation or storage of any kind makes food security especially challenging for homeless individuals and families in shelters and some temporary housing. Any food support provided must be readily consumed without preparation. Additionally, this population needs to receive services daily, as they have no means to store food for later use.

• Residents who are working two or more jobs may lack the time to get to county food assistance providers, and/or the time to prepare healthy meals. In many situations, when an individual or family is working multiple jobs their schedules are shifts that conflict with the hours of many food assistance organizations.

• Residents with severe income restrictions also struggle to acquire food that meets the requirements of their faith. Some pre-packed food assistance resources do not have available accommodations for faith-based dietary restrictions and food assistance resources may be available only during periods of fasting. In some cases individuals must make difficult choices between accessing sufficient food and their faith.

• Current MCPS policy/process prevents The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) distribution in conjunction with Family Markets at schools due to concerns over student privacy.

• The Federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides eligible food insecure residents valuable additional funds for purchasing food. However, there is a significant percentage of residents eligible to receive these benefits who have not enrolled in the program, resulting in reduced access to healthy foods for low-income residents, as well as lost funds to be invested in local economies. In the United States, 83% of those eligible are enrolled in SNAP. In 2016, in Maryland 64.3% of those eligible are enrolled while in contrast, in Montgomery County, just 46% of those eligible are enrolled.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This first iteration of the Plan was developed in approximately four months. The team worked to obtain as much data and insight as they could to describe the current food security landscape of Montgomery County. Even this proved to be a challenge due to the disparate sources and in many cases complete lack of consistent data. For that reason the "Year One" iteration of this Plan is intentionally meant to be more descriptive rather than prescriptive. It does not proclaim to have all the answers, but rather the intent is for this Plan to be a guide to our solution providers and grant makers. By identifying gaps, areas of need and new data we hope that for the first time our food assistance community and the funders that make their work possible will begin to "play from the same sheet of music". For that reason and the fact that Bill 19-16 requires an annual update to the Plan, our Year One recommendations focus on improved outreach, analytical capacity building and a strong mechanism for listening to the health of our food system in Montgomery County. There are some Year One recommendations for specific populations as required by the bill, but in some cases it would be premature to recommend specific solutions without further analysis or input from our food assistance community. The following list provides an overview of the recommendations for Year One, Years Two-Three, and Years Four-Five:

- Year One: Implement mechanisms to gather more and better data; Establish policies that will bring food assistance programs into better alignment by collecting consistent data; Deploy near-term tactical solutions to increase participation of existing programs such as SNAP and summer meal programs; Increase the availability of culturally appropriate food assistance; Expand the senior nutrition program to serve meals five days per week and strengthen the food assistance network through enhanced communication and outreach.
- Years Two-Three: Build capacity of smaller food assistance organizations in high-need "zones" through strategic investments in infrastructure; Deploy new programs via partnerships with retailers and the healthcare system; Reduce transportation related barriers to food access.
- Years Four-Five: Transition the system from one that simply feeds people to one that empowers them through food literacy, workforce and economic development programs and develop plans for a food system that is resilient.

The success and progress of the Plan will be monitored via the FoodStat initiative against a variety of measures. Feeding America, a national non-profit, currently estimates food security at the County level and is the only measurement of its type. Although this Plan has relied on more detailed data at the zip code or census tract level, it remains a Countywide plan. For that reason the Plan targets a decrease in the food insecurity level across the County. Feeding America calculates the food insecurity rate for Montgomery County to be 7% (or approximately 70,000 residents). This statistic is derived using some direct surveys but also from examining the County demographics and using correlations to arrive at their food insecurity rate. Due to this, any strategies that address need among specific demographics may not impact the Feeding America estimate because their correlation is based on global indicators for certain populations. Although it is considered to be an accurate benchmark at this point in the County, a new way of measuring food insecurity should be developed for FoodStat. The recommended performance measures for FoodStat are:

- A target reduction in the overall food insecurity rate for Montgomery County from 7.0% to 6.5% in Year Two of the plan and 5.5% in Year Three. This would represent an approximate 22% increase in food security in the County by year three of the plan (from over 70,000 residents to approximately 55,000). Given the role that larger macroeconomic factors play in food security, FoodStat should set targets for Years Four-Five once the impact of minimum wage increases, affordable housing programs, and childcare initiatives have begun to take effect. It is also worth noting that FoodStat should replace this Feeding America estimate with one of its own during Year One that is based more on direct measurement than correlation of certain demographic trends.
- Reach 20% of FARMS-eligible students with the weekend bags program by Year Two.

- Add additional summer meal sites to reach an additional 2,000 children in year one, 3,000 in Year Two, and 5,000 in Year Three. Targets should be reevaluated in Year Three by FoodStat for Years Four-Five.
- Increase the participation rate for SNAP from 46% Countywide to 50% in year two, 55% in Year Three, with the intent of meeting the state average of 64% by the end of the five year period.
- Reduce average cost and duration of transit between food stores and priority zip census tracts using public transportation.
- Implementation of Year One monitoring and analytical strategies as outlined in the Recommendations.

An issue like food security is complex because it is both a symptom and a root cause. Larger environmental factors can lead people to be food insecure, while a lack of safe, sufficient, healthy food can lead to negative public health outcomes. Too often it is easy to frame this issue as one of simply poverty and need. It is more complex than this and in Montgomery County we respect that a strong food system serves us on multiple fronts. The County Executive has eight priority areas and a food system that serves its residents well touches six of them. The recommendations in this Plan speak directly to these priorities where children are prepared to live and learn, our desire for a healthy and sustainable community, meeting the needs of a diverse community, transportation that enhances day-to-day life, vital living for all residents, and a strong and vibrant economy. That final priority is worth noting. As we slowly emerge from the Great Recession, food security should be seen as more than charity. The recommendations in this Plan help create a more literate, healthy, mobile, and diverse workforce through food security.

Introduction

Food security is a fundamental need of all human beings, yet many struggle to have sufficient food in the right quantity and right quality to live healthy lives. Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.[1]

Montgomery County enjoys the distinction of being one of the wealthiest counties in the United States. Bordered by Washington, DC and Prince George's County, it has one of the biggest employer bases in the state. However, despite the County's extensive assets and strengths, significant barriers to food access, including poverty, culture, age, transportation and literacy, exist in the County, resulting in an estimated 77,780 food insecure County residents.[2]

In July 2016, Montgomery County passed legislation (Bill 19-16) to assure each and every one of its citizens has access to healthy food with dignity, which addresses the quantity and quality of available food, as well as respect for every person and culture. This Food Security Plan is a result of that action. The data and recommendations contained herein are the summary of stakeholder meetings, listening sessions and meetings with county offices and organizations conducted from late August through early November. This document is intended to be a first draft that will be revised and updated annually to reflect the progress made toward achieving these goals for at least the next five years.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Montgomery County is taking steps to ensure that the County remains relatively food secure compared to other parts of the country. To that end, the vision of Montgomery County's Food Security Plan is:

Vision:
Our community is a place where all people at all times have access to safe, sufficient, nutritious food in order to lead fulfilling lives and contribute to making Montgomery County, Maryland a place where all live in dignity.

Through dozens of stakeholder meetings and listening sessions, we built on the efforts of numerous organizations working throughout the county on food issues, but many are working in isolation from one another without the advantage of a Countywide perspective. Many could achieve their goals more efficiently by working together.

The desired system is a comprehensive, coordinated approach fostering strategic partnerships between all levels of government, communities, non-profit organizations, businesses, and encourages all community members to invest and be active in the wellbeing of the community.[3]

The timeline from when Bill 19-16 became effective to Plan submission was only a few months. In this time, the team developing the Plan undertook an extensive review of existing programs inside and outside the region, collected County, State, and Federal data on programs and demographics, conducted stakeholder meetings, listening sessions and online surveys. The Plan is a result of the input of over 300 residents, government and nonprofit agency staff, and business and community leaders from across the county. Rather than prescribe specific actions, this first iteration of the plan aims to understand food insecurity in the County by describing who is at risk, where they are located, and what their barriers are to food security. It is intended to be an evolving document as more detailed information is gathered over time and the Plan is updated annually, per the instructions of the Bill.

NATIONAL TRENDS

In 2011, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) released an updated version of its Dietary Guidelines for Americans advising that a healthy diet should typically consist of about 50% fruits and vegetables, yet the average American eats far less of these healthy foods.

This is especially true for low-income Americans, who may be faced with the choice between cheap, available, and/or convenient food providing essential calories, or more expensive foods providing better nutrition. The cost of healthy food, the time it takes to prepare healthy meals, and access to fresh food are barriers to eating a health sustaining diet. Families sometimes even have to make the choice between medicine or food. As a result, millions of Americans, especially in low-income communities and communities of color, suffer from debilitating diet-related chronic diseases such as early onset diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, obesity and stroke. These illnesses not only mean shorter, less fulfilling, and less productive lives; they also add enormously to our national healthcare bill.

Seniors, children and the disabled are likewise vulnerable, as access to healthy foods and lack of exercise have led to the dire prediction that children born in the 2000's have a shorter life expectancy than their parents.
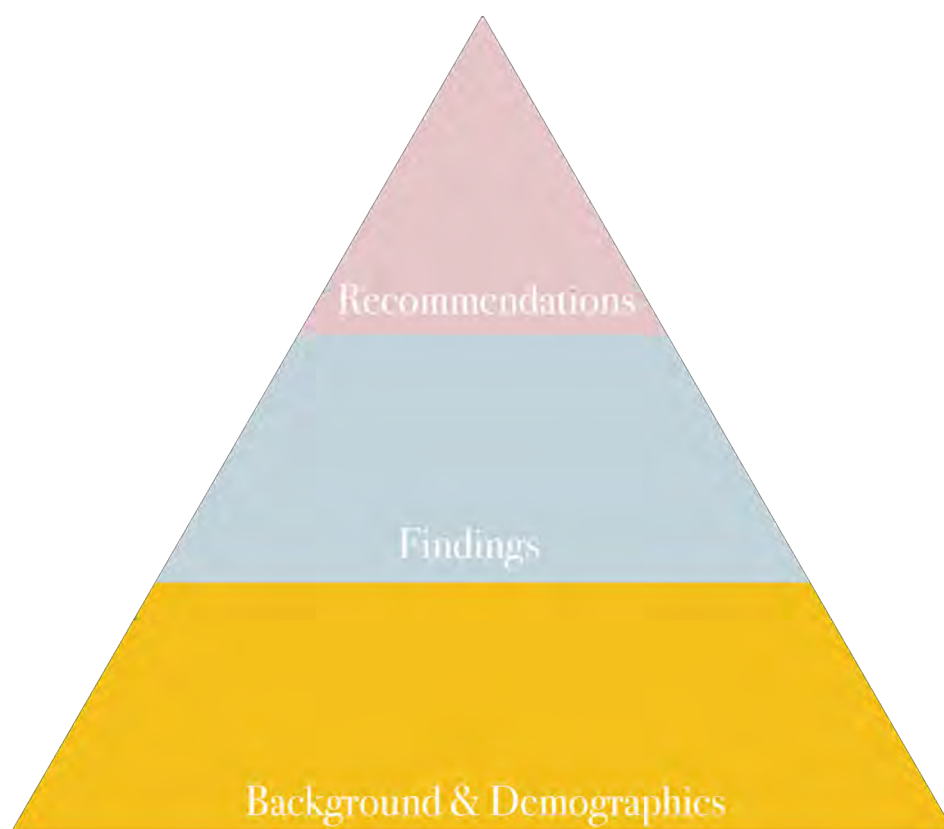
In this section of the Food Security Plan, we lay the groundwork for our understanding and analysis of the food security landscape in Montgomery County. This section begins with a definition of food security, a description of the current state of food insecurity in the County, and an analysis of the public health implications of food insecurity. Following is an examination of the changing demographics in the County, the prevalence of food insecurity among vulnerable groups, and the root causes of food insecurity. Finally, this section outlines the variety of food assistance and food literacy programming available to Montgomery County residents at the Federal, State and County levels.

Food Security Environment in Montgomery County

Montgomery County's vision of food security is a community in which all people at all times have access to safe, sufficient, nutritious food, with dignity. Food security encompasses several dimensions, including:

- Availability in sufficient quantity of food of an appropriate nature and quality;
- Access to acquire food needed for a nutritionally adequate diet, including the ability to afford nutritious food;
- Consumption of food uninhibited by health or hygiene problems (safe drinking water, sanitation or medical services, etc.); and
- Stability of access to food, i.e. the assurance of access by people to food even in the face of natural or economic shocks.

For an individual to be food secure, these conditions must be respected simultaneously.[1] Barriers to attaining food security include economic access, transportation, time, cultural preferences, language, food literacy, and access to culturally appropriate food. For the purposes of this Plan, food insecurity parameters further considered are economic status and ability to prepare food.

Food insecurity is the state of being without consistent, reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food. Lack of access to healthy nourishing food undermines the health and wellbeing of children and families. In Montgomery County, 7% of the County's population is estimated to be food insecure (77,780). Children are especially vulnerable to families' economic status. Nearly 13.9% of the County's children are estimated to be food insecure, representing 33,000 children. The total number of food insecure children is higher than any other County in the state.[2]

Though people experiencing food insecurity are spread throughout the County, the Estimated Food Insecurity Rate helps identify census tracts in which people experiencing food insecurity are most likely to live. The Food Insecurity Rate at the census tract level in Montgomery County was calculated by the Capital Area Food Bank using a methodology developed by Feeding America.[3]

This map indicates that food insecurity is likely most prominent in certain census tracts in East County, Silver Spring, Aspen Hill, Wheaton, Gaithersburg, and Germantown.[4]
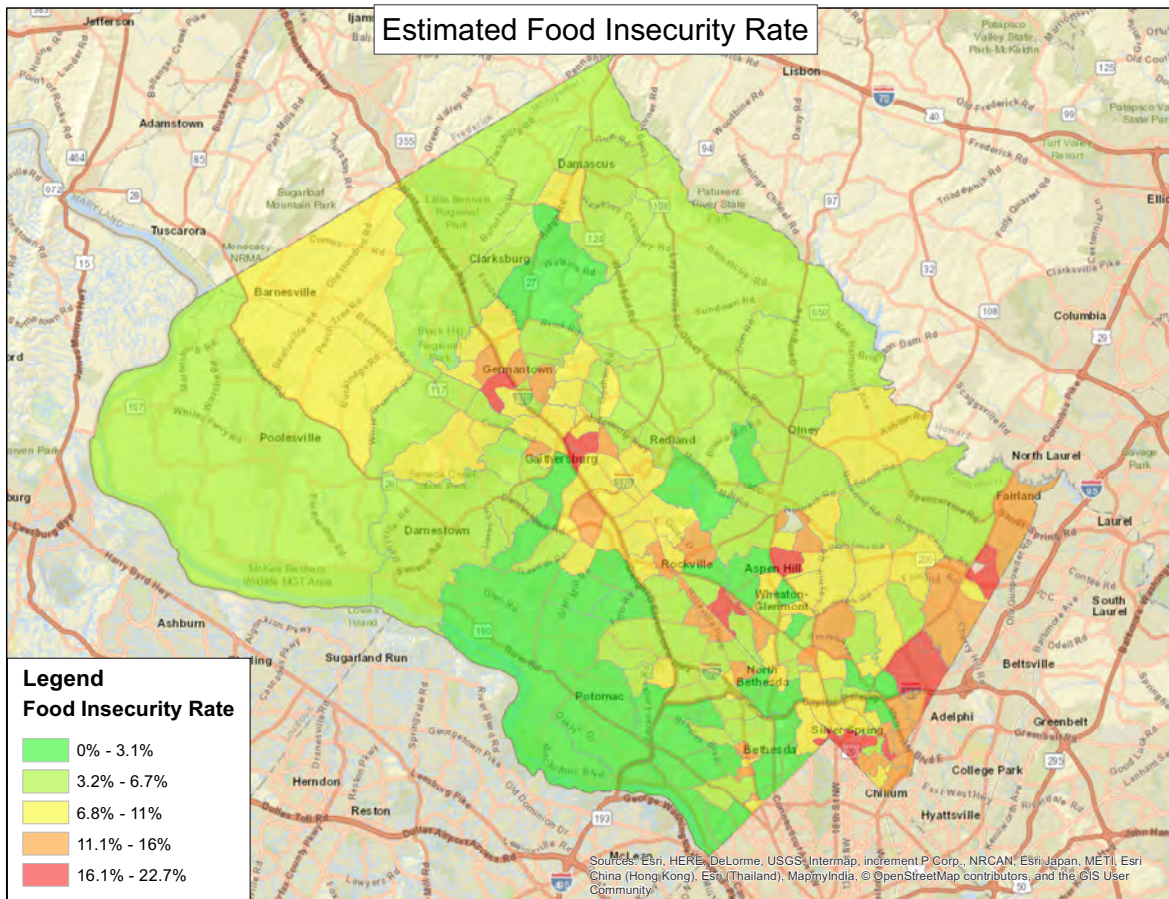
Capital Area Food Bank Hunger Heat Map

Public Health and Food Insecurity

Food insecurity increases when food prices rise and as a result, people turn to "nutrient-poor but calorie-rich foods and/or they endure hunger, with consequences ranging from micronutrient malnutrition to obesity." The connection between hunger and obesity in people across the U.S. is a major public health problem that cannot be addressed simply.[5]

The American Public Health Association (APHA) has written a position statement to guide public health advocates toward a healthy sustainable food system. In their statement public health issues such as hunger, obesity, and rising antibiotic resistance are among the factors related to the food we eat and how it is produced. While the U.S. food system provides plenty of food, current national farm policies provide few incentives to promote the production of healthy crops such as fruits and vegetables, but provides "strong incentives" for the production and consumption of more unhealthy foods high in sugar and fat. As a result, the unhealthy foods are less expensive and more widely available to consumers. To help address this issue, the APHA strongly advocates for more accurate food labeling including labels that list country of origin for all foods and labelling genetically modified foods. The more consumers know about what they are eating, the more likely they are to choose healthier options when provided the opportunity. "APHA recognizes the urgency of transforming our food system to promote environmental sustainability, improve nutritional health, and ensure social justice." [6]

From a public health perspective, the strongest connection to food insecurity is with nutrition and access to healthy foods. There is a growing body of research that connects public health and food insecurity but most of it uses cross-sectional data that links food insecurity to nutritional indicators such as obesity. In order to

encourage healthier diets for food insecure individuals and families and to decrease food insecurity overall, much more research needs to be done. But most of the existing research agrees that diets are changing and increased consumption of sugars, salt and fats in the form of processed foods and lack of exercise is leading to alarming rates of obesity and chronic diseases. The connection with food insecurity and these health issues is directly related to stress from inadequate income and poor diets. In the absence of effective strategies to address poverty, it is important for policy makers to fund and subsidize strategies that lower the cost of healthy foods and provides support for culturally-sensitive nutrition education at all ages that encourages healthier eating, but also educates consumers on how to prepare these foods to ensure continued use of these foods.[7]
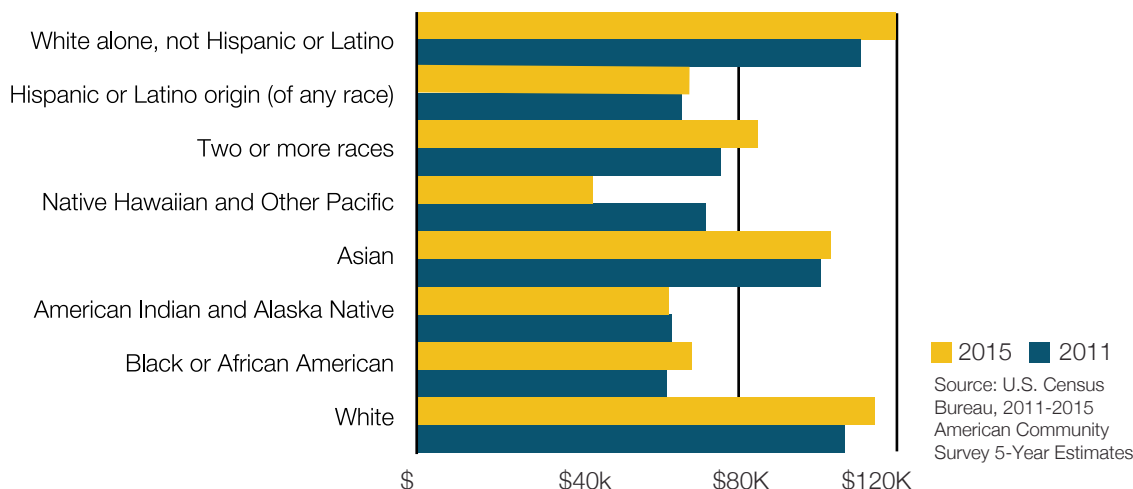
Background and Demographics: Background, root causes, historical trends, current county data

CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS

Montgomery County embraces an ever-growing population of diverse cultures, some American born, many not. In 2015, an estimated 1,040,115 people lived in the County, up by 7% from 2010. The diversity of its population gives it the classification of "majority minority." Fifty-five percent of residents are minority populations. African Americans are the largest minority group, making up 19.1% of the population, nearly matched by a rapidly growing Hispanic American population at 19% and Asian Americans at 15.4%. Hispanic or Latino appear to be the fastest growing segment, up by 3% since 2010.[8]

The below graph shows the comparisons between 2010 and 2014.

Race and Ethnicity by Percent of Population in Montgomery County

Legend: ■ 2015 ■ 2011

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Categories (top to bottom): White alone, not Hispanic or Latino; Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race); Two or more races; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific; Asian; American Indian and Alaska Native; Black or African American; White

Axis: $, $40k, $80K, $120K

In 2015, 32.4% of the county's residents were foreign born. This percentage, compared to 26.7% in 2000, is significantly higher than the US percent of 13.1%.[9]

LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

Montgomery County's rich cultural diversity comes from across the world. The largest ethnic groups are from El Salvador, mainland China, India, and Ethiopia. The County has more immigrants from Ethiopia than any other county in the United States.

The number of County residents aged five and up who speak a language other than English at home reached 39.3% in 2014, up from 32% in 2000 [5,9]. According to the Census Bureau, in 2014, 14.6% of the population reported speaking English "less than very well." Students in the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) system speak 138 different languages and represent 157 countries (2014- 2015 school year). Nearly 14% participate in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). [10]

Montgomery County's food insecure communities are diverse and vibrant much like the rest of the County. Residents in these communities have extensive skills and resources to enhance food security including commitment to volunteerism, knowledge of food-related cultural traditions, appreciation for farmers and fresh healthy products, entrepreneurial spirit among emerging food and agriculture businesses, and food production and processing skills. These assets should be considered when identifying opportunities and strategies for improving food access in the County. Fostering emerging food businesses in these communities can play a significant role in enhancing food security. There are numerous local places, such as Crossroads Farmers Market in Takoma Park, where consumers can find culturally appropriate and highly sought-after foods such as chipilín, hierba mora, and Central American squash at affordable prices, and the potential for more places like this is vast. Extensive opportunities to increase food security by engaging the talents of community residents exist throughout the County.

The following graphics show the number of foreign born County residents from the top 10 countries of immigration and where in the County languages other than English are spoken at home:
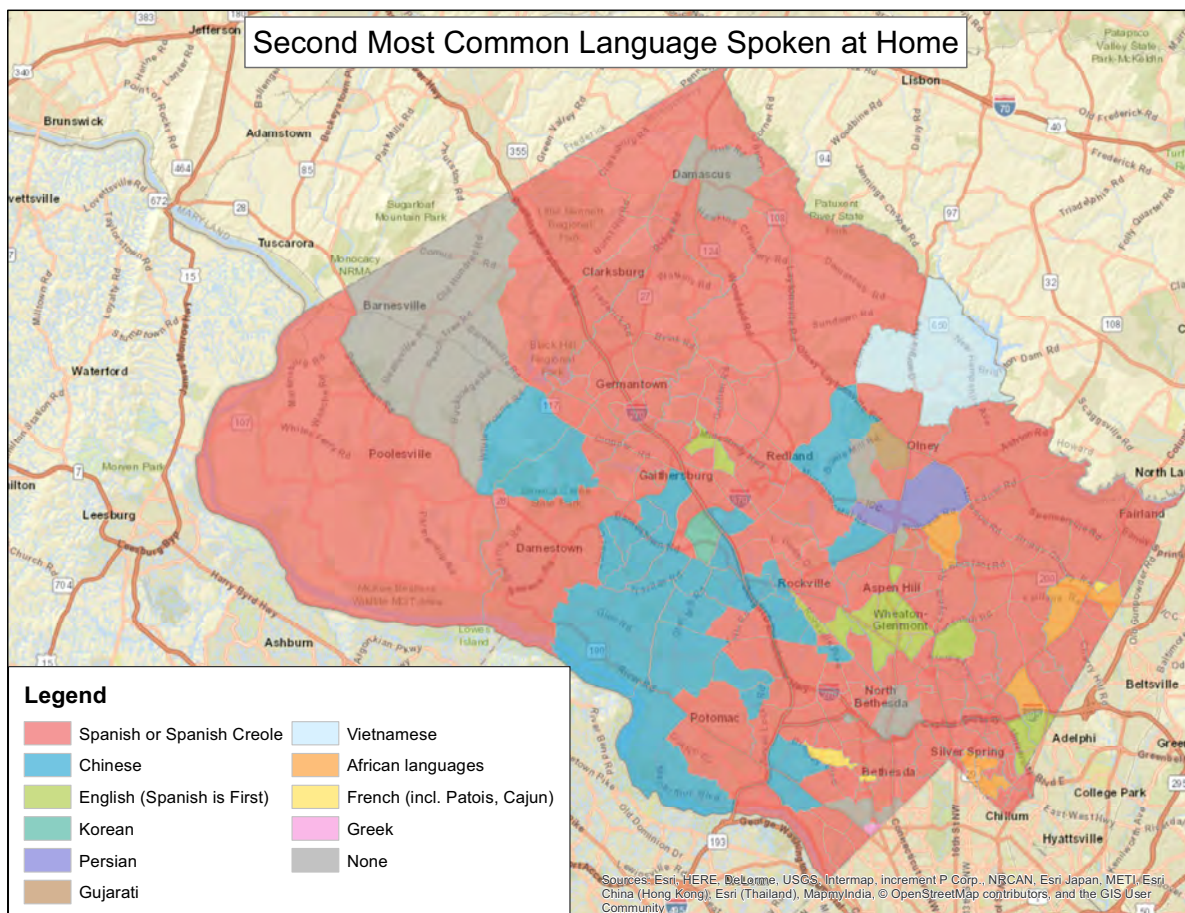
US Census American Community Survey 2010-2014, 5 Year Estimates and CountyStat calculations.

Foreign Born Country of Origin (Top 10 Countries) in Montgomery County

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 and 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
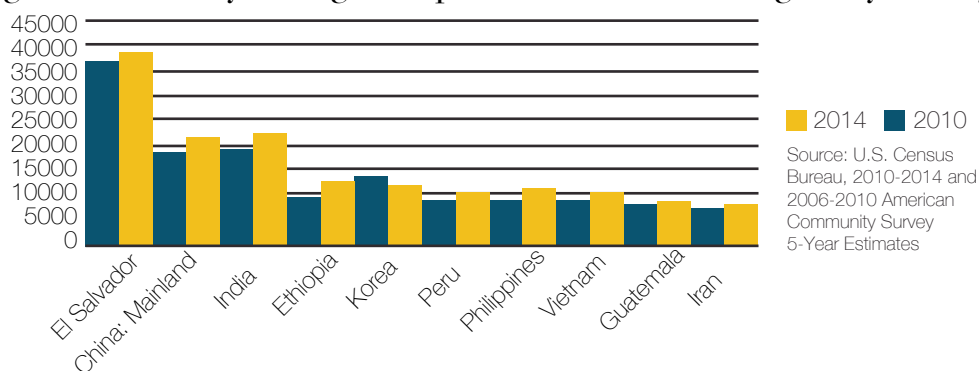
SENIORS

Montgomery County's population is steadily aging. A 2015 Montgomery County Summit on Aging Report reveals the following statistics:

"The number of residents age 65 or older in the County is projected to more than double between 2010 and 2040, from 120,000 to 244,000. This will raise senior residents' share of the population from 9% in 1990 to 12% in 2010 to 20% by 2040. The number of residents aged 85 and older is expected to grow the fastest, to 42,900 by 2040.

Already, approximately 50 of the County's 215 neighborhoods (i.e. "census tracts") have more seniors than school-aged children.

Many of the County's seniors are "aging in place." In fact, over half of households headed by senior residents have lived in their home since before 1990.

Twenty-eight percent of residents age 65 or older have a disability—a rate that rises to 37% among senior residents living in poverty. Moreover, the number of seniors with dementia is expected to nearly double between 2000 and 2030, rising from 14,000 in 2010 to 22,600 in 2030.

The share of minority residents among the age 65 or older population is expected to increase from 34% in 2010 to 57% by 2040. Today, Asian residents make up the largest minority group among County residents age 65 or older, accounting for 14%, with Black residents accounting for 12% and Hispanic residents (of any race) accounting for 8%. Today, 43,600 residents who are age 65 and older (or 31% of the total) speak a language other than English at home, with 25,400 residents age 65 or older speaking English less than very well (or 18% of all seniors). Six and a half percent of the County's seniors live in poverty, with an additional 5.4% of seniors living between 100 and 150% of the poverty line.

Percent of Population 65 Years of Age or Older

Legend
Percent of Population 65 or Older
- 8.70% or Less
- 8.71 to 13.70%
- 13.71 to 19.20%
- 19.21 to 32.50%
- 32.51 to 87.20%
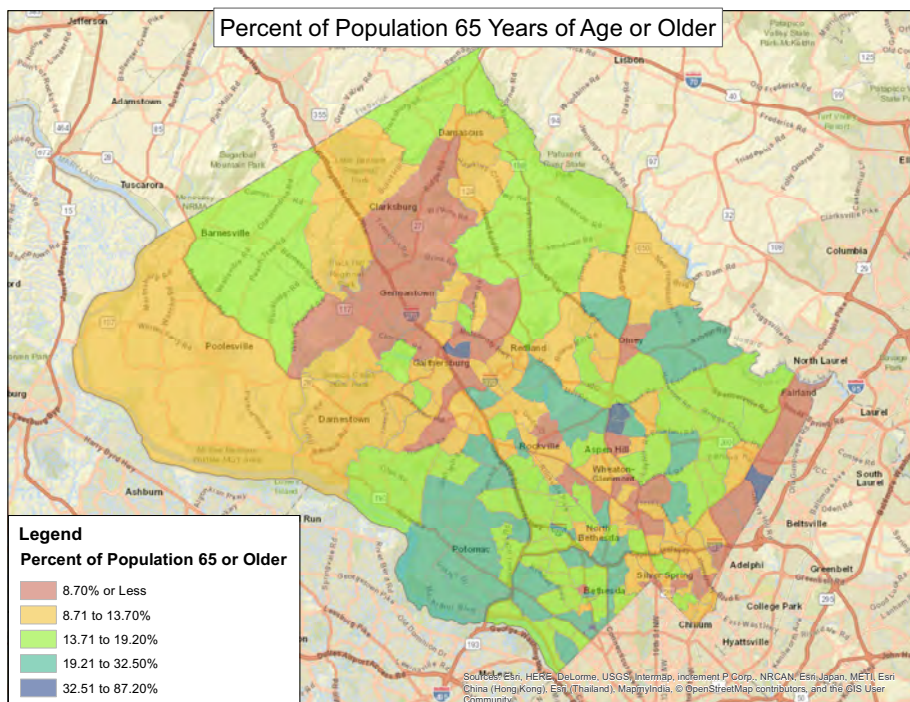
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

While these rates are low relative to the Maryland and national averages, the County is nevertheless home to almost 9,000 residents age 65+ who live in poverty. Rates also differ significantly by race and ethnicity, with 4.9% of White Non-Hispanic residents living in poverty versus 17.4% of Hispanic seniors, 13.1% of Asian seniors, and 9.9% of Black seniors." [11]

The report concludes that the overall increase in the number of older adults with self-care limitations (despite the projected decrease in the disability rate), the strong preference of the majority of older adults wishing to "age in place/home," and the reduced availability of unpaid family caregivers—make it imperative that the County focus on the accessibility, availability, affordability and acceptability of long-term home and community support services.

Seniors (65+) as a % of Population
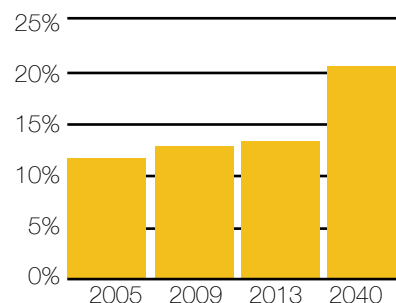
Source: Montgomery County, Maryland 2015 Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

According to the Montgomery County Commission on People with Disabilities, approximately 82,497 people in the county had some form of disability in 2015. Of the population 65 years and older, nearly 48% had a disability.[11] People with disabilities include mobility impaired individuals, persons with psychiatric and developmental disabilities, and those with visual or hearing impairments.

People with Disabilities, resident number by age and category in Montgomery County

Source: Montgomery
County Commission on
People with Disabilities
Annual Report 2016

Legend: hearing difficulty, vision difficulty, cognitive difficulty, ambulatory difficulty, self-care difficulty, independent living difficulty
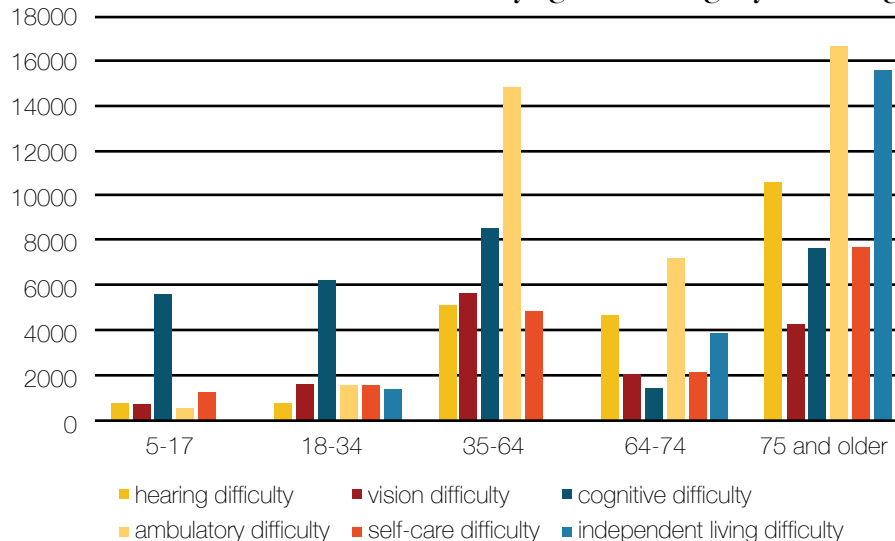
Families with a disabled member are nearly 2 to 3 times more likely to be food insecure than those without a disabled member. Working-aged adults with disabilities are twice as likely to live below the poverty line, and the rate of poverty among women with disabilities is even higher than that of their male counterparts.[12] Furthermore, people with disabilities may have higher demands on their income, due to the need for specialized equipment, diet, medication and/or service, thus compromising available funds for healthy food.[13]

Areas not readily served by food stores pose an extra challenge for people with disabilities, especially for those with limited transportation or mobility. Regular transportation can be cumbersome, even if ADA compliance is met. Stores can be difficult to navigate. This makes food shopping an arduous process, and may cause people to shop infrequently, further compounding the challenge of transporting groceries, especially perishable foods. Store are required to accommodate individuals with disabilities per Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Some residents, especially seniors who have not had lifelong disabilities, may not be aware of these required accommodations.

For the deaf and hard of hearing, communication is a significant barrier in obtaining appropriate nutrition and accessing food options and delivery services. This is also true for those who are non-verbal or mute.

Research indicates that unhealthy diets are risk factors for mental disorders, particularly depression and dementia, and among seniors, research indicates a high correlation between diet on dementia and cognitive decline.[14]

The County provides a wide array of significant options and services for people with disabilities to enjoy a high quality of life, however some residents may be unaware of them or unaware that they qualify; others may be reluctant to ask for help. For people with cognitive and physical disabilities, depression, isolation and anxiety may impede their ability to provide for themselves and thus their ability to avail themselves of helpful resources.

CHILDREN

In 2015, the Montgomery County Collaboration Council for Children, Youth and Families reported the following:

"There are over 120,000 households with children in Montgomery County; 33.4% of all households. Three out of every four families with children are married couple families. Based on 2009-2013 estimates, about 178,000 children live in married-couple families and 56,000 in single-parent families (24%).

African-American and Hispanic children are more likely to live in single-parent families. In 2013, 28% of all births were to unmarried women (3,636); 43% of all African American births and 51% of all Hispanic births were delivered by unmarried women.

Three out of every four children (approximately 171,000 children) in Montgomery County live in households where both parents work.

In Montgomery County, foreign-born children make up only 9.4% of the total child population (2009-2013) but 52% of all children live with a foreign-born parent.

While most children in the county start life with a healthy beginning compared to other area jurisdictions, almost 20,000 children live below the federal poverty level and 30,000 more live in low income families. That means one in five children are more likely to have difficulty in school, poor health, face risky behaviors, and struggle to reach economic stability as adults." [15]

Among other highlights, the report raises the concern that "Childhood obesity has been on the rise. Low income families face food insecurity, limited access to good nutrition, and a lack of opportunities for active lifestyles."

Child Population in Montgomery County, Maryland

Child Population	% of pop. 2010	% of pop. 2014	2010 population	2014 population	% change in population
Under 5 years	6.7%	6.5%	60,837	65,331	7%
5 to 17 years	17.6%	17.2%	146,532	172,875	18%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 and 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Percent of Population Under 18 Years of Age

Legend
Percent of Population under 18
- 10.80% or Less
- 10.81 to 18.60%
- 18.61 to 24.30%
- 24.31 to 29.00%
- 29.01 to 35.50%
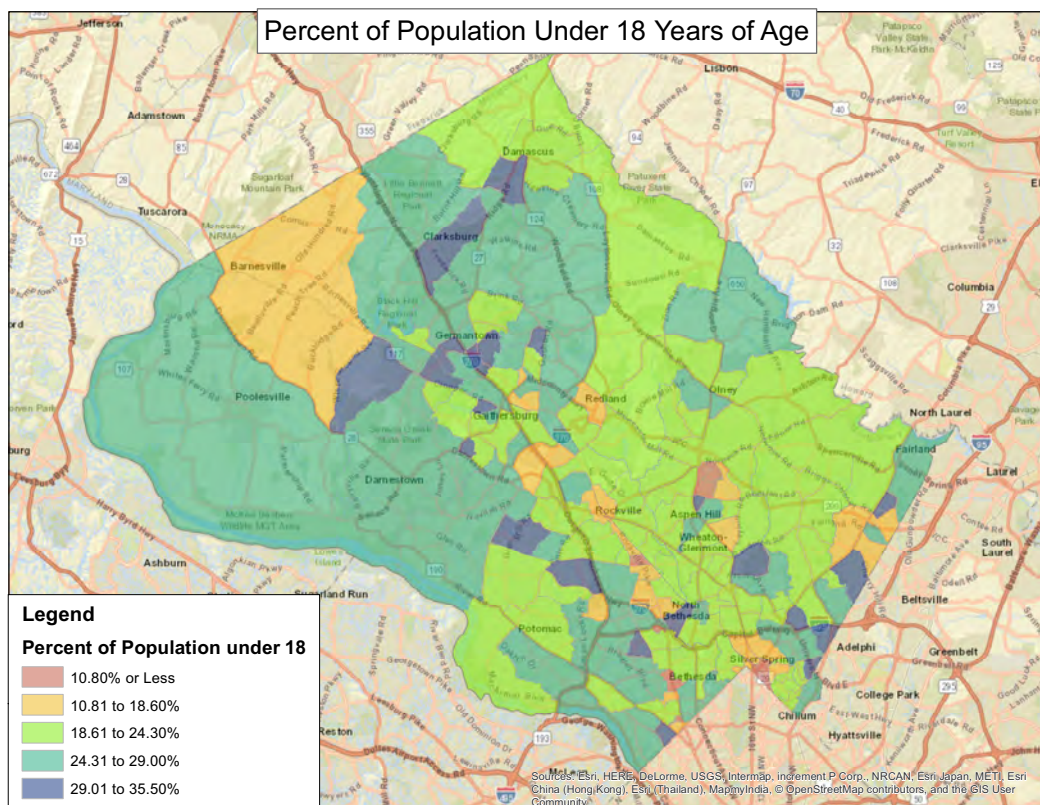
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Root Causes of Food Insecurity

POVERTY

The poverty threshold (level) is nationally determined by the U.S. Census Bureau annually each year, and is the same figure for all contiguous 48 states. In 2016, the poverty threshold is $24,300 for a family of four.[16]

In Montgomery County, 73,213 people, 7.2% of the population, were living below the federal poverty level, an increase from 6.7% in 2009. The poverty rate for children under the age of 18 in the County was 8.9% (21,427 children)[17] and 6.7% of Seniors aged 65 and above.[18]

The below map shows Poverty by Census Tract in Montgomery County. It should also be noted that pockets of poverty and food insecurity may be masked by census level data. This is especially true for Montgomery County, where a significant number of people earning high incomes are averaged across the tract which may hide smaller segments of lower income populations. It does, however, help identify neighborhoods with high potential for limited access to healthy food.

Poverty Rate

Legend
Poverty Rate
- 2.80% or Less
- 2.81 to 5.60%
- 5.61 to 9.90%
- 9.91 to 14.90%
- 14.91 to 25.38%
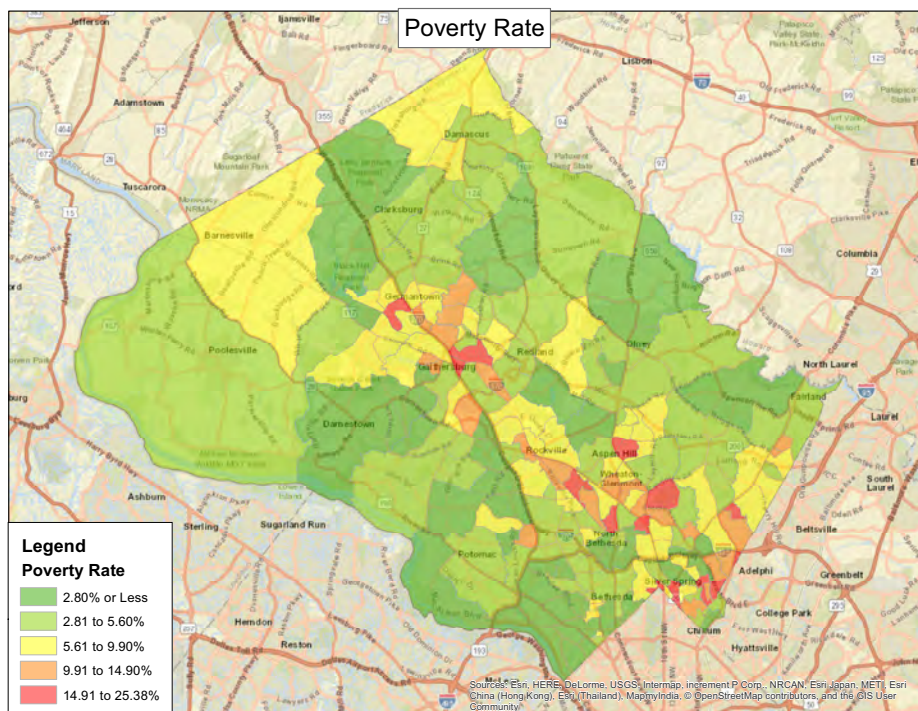
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

SELF-SUFFICIENCY STANDARD / INCOME

It costs about $91,252 for a four-person family to afford the basic necessities in Montgomery County, much higher than the $24,300 Federal Poverty level. This "Self-Sufficiency Standard" is based on the cost of living in a specific area[19], whereas the Federal Poverty Level is the same for all 48 contiguous states.
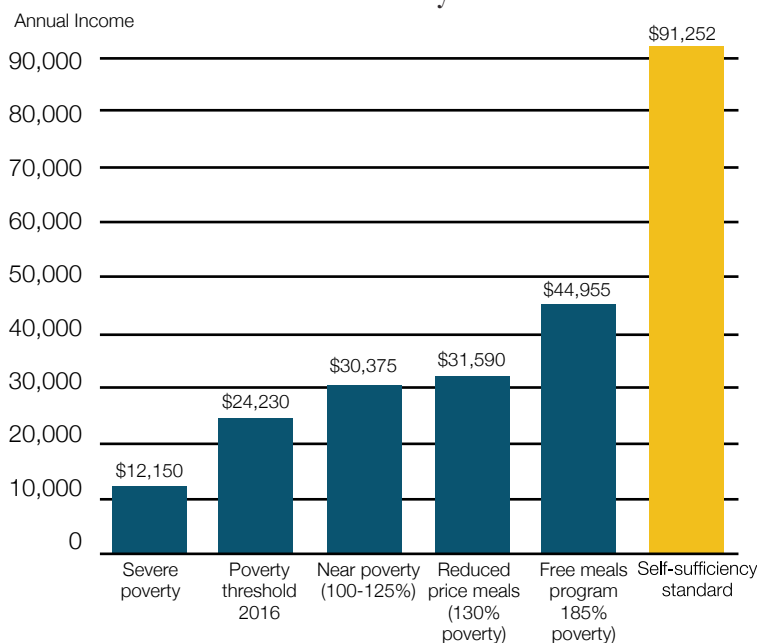
Federal benefits which provide supplemental assistance for food or meals to children in schools, are largely determined by household income. Supplemental food assistance programs are available to households living at or below 185% of the Poverty threshold (WIC $44,995) and 130% of the poverty threshold (SNAP $31,590).

There are many who live above the level to receive federal assistance, but below the Self-Sufficiency Standard, who fall into a gap not receiving federal food assistance. In some cases, households or individuals need assistance for a short duration of time. Sometimes a person has a disability temporarily due to convalence or surgery recuperation.

The table to the right shows the disparity between the income level needed to live comfortably in Montgomery County versus levels at which many in the county experience.[20]

The map below shows a breakdown by Census Tract of median household income in 2014, beginning with income just above the poverty threshold. Areas of deepest color indicate income below the County Self-Sufficiency Standard or $91,252.

Montgomery County Self-Sufficiency Standard versus Poverty Invome Levels 2016

Annual Income

Category	Value
Severe poverty	$12,150
Poverty threshold 2016	$24,230
Near poverty (100-125%)	$30,375
Reduced price meals (130% poverty)	$31,590
Free meals program 185% poverty)	$44,955
Self-sufficiency standard	$91,252

Adapted from The Children's Agenda.
http://www.collaborationcouncil.org/2015children'sagendadatabookfinal.pdf
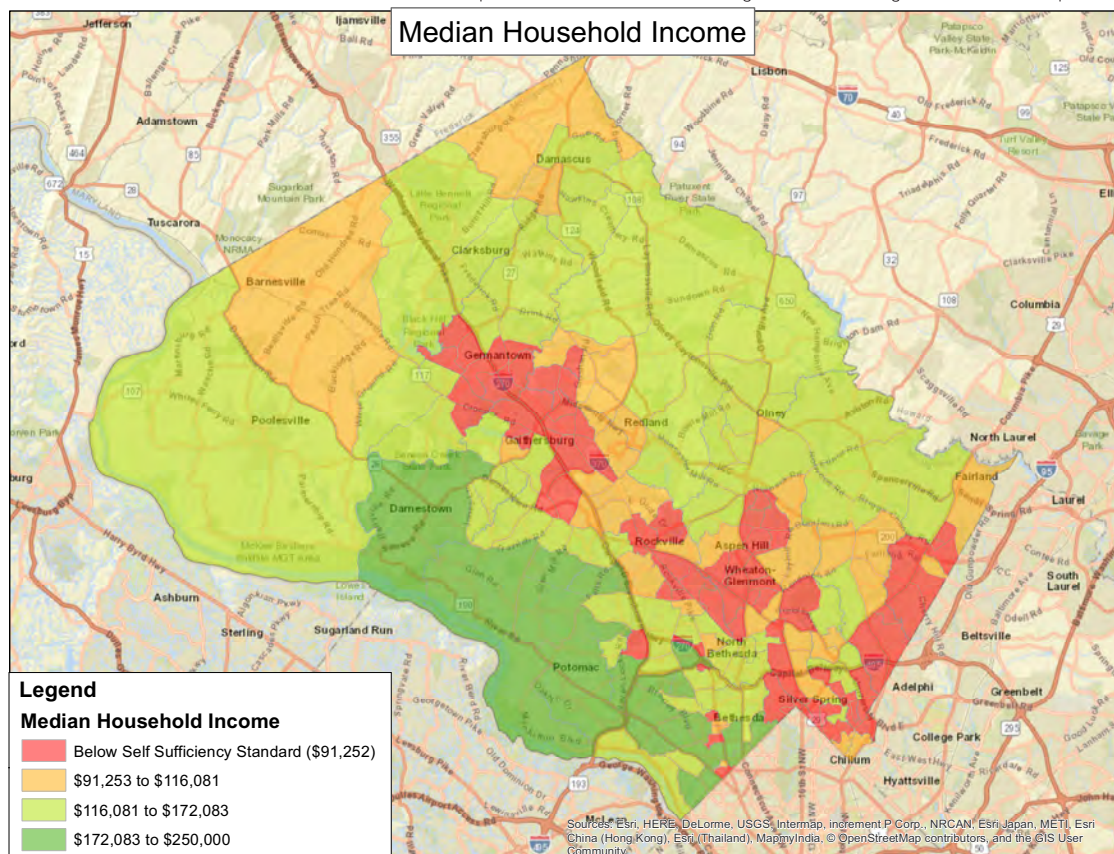
Legend
Median Household Income
- Below Self Sufficiency Standard ($91,252)
- $91,253 to $116,081
- $116,081 to $172,083
- $172,083 to $250,000

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Foreign born and minority residents tend to be disproportionately represented in the lower income grouping in Montgomery County, as represented in the graphics below.

Median Income by Race in Montgomery County

White alone, not Hispanic or Latino
Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)
Two or more races
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific
Asian
American Indian and Alaska Native
Black or African American
White

Legend: 2014, 2010

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

X-axis: $0, $40k, $80K, $120K

Poverty Status 2015 in the past 12 months in Montgomery County

At or below 200% of the Poverty Level
100%-200% of the Poverty Level
Below 100% of the Poverty Level

Legend:
Foreign born, Not a US citizen
Foreign born, Naturalized
Native
Total

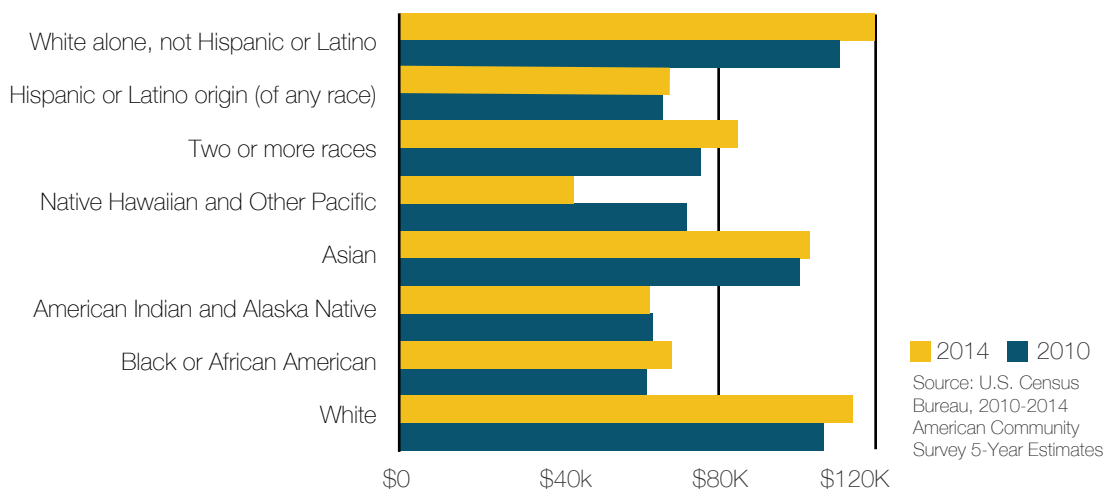Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

X-axis: 0, 0.1, 0.2, 0.3, 0.4, 0.5, 0.6, 0.7, 0.8, 0.9
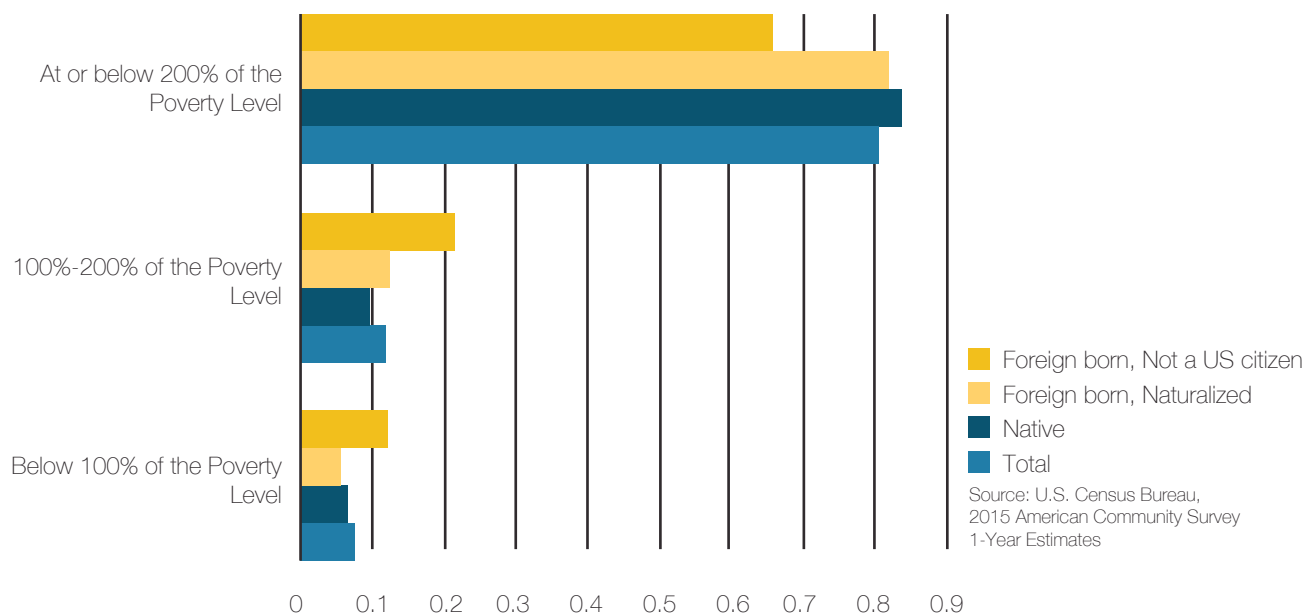
Unemployment in Montgomery County was 3.2% in September 2016, lower than unemployment in Maryland (4.2 %) and the nation (5%). [21] This figure does include people who are working part-time but would be working full-time if possible, and people who are not working in jobs that are commensurate with their training or financial needs. Underemployment is neither measured by the US Census nor the US Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The following maps show the unemployment rates by census tract, and by comparison, the percent of those employed who are living in poverty. The US Bureau of Labor Statistics does not produce unemployment data at the census tract level. The most up-to-date data on unemployment at the census tract level available is from the US Census for 2015.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
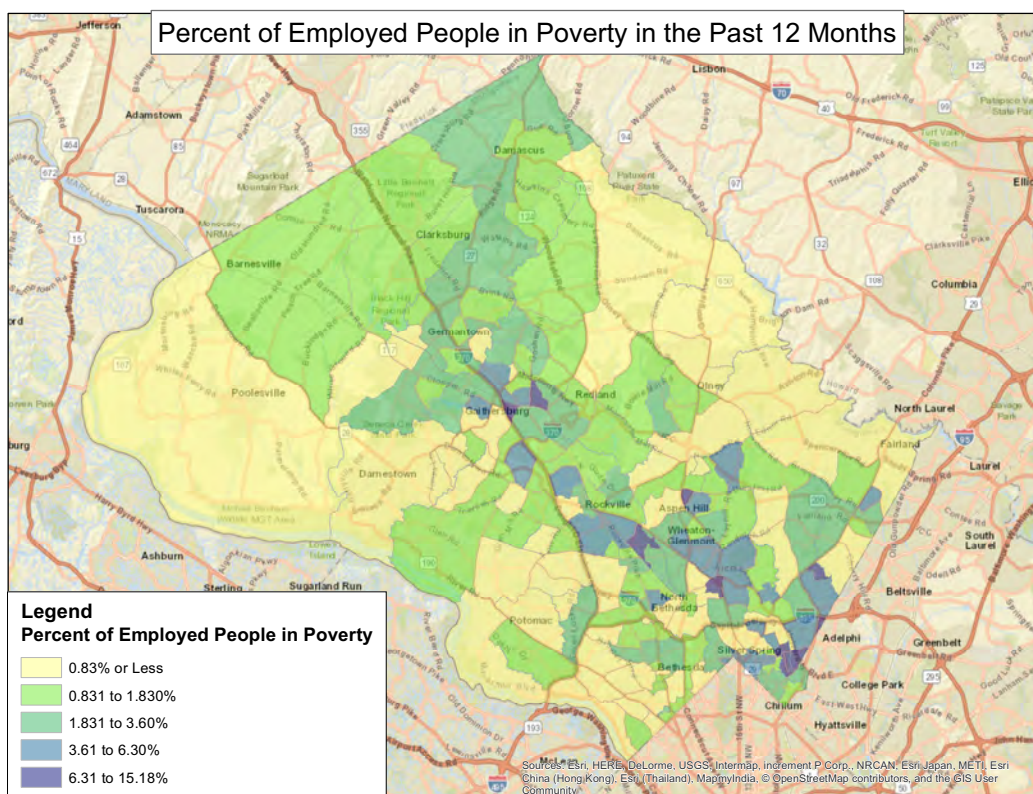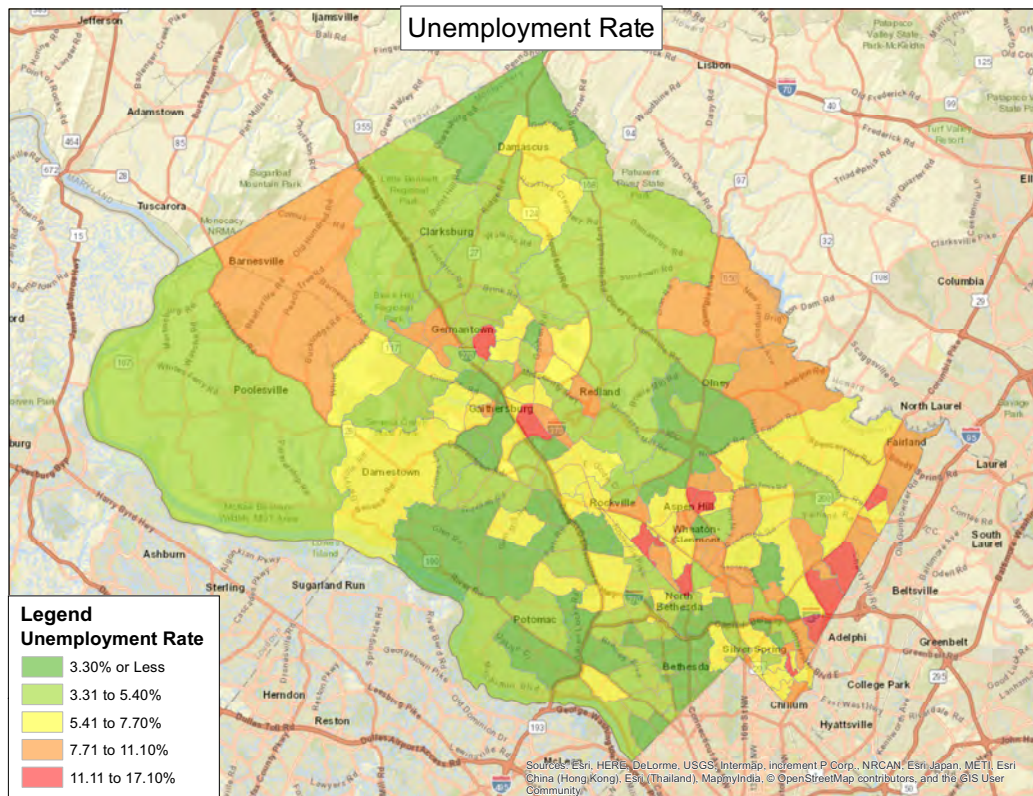
Even when employed, there are people that still have incomes below the poverty line. The previous map--Percent of Employed People in Poverty in the Past 12 Months--displays the percent of employed people in each census tract that are living below the poverty line. Some census tracts near Silver Spring, Aspen Hill, and Gaithersburg have more than 10% of employed people living below the poverty line.

TRANSPORTATION

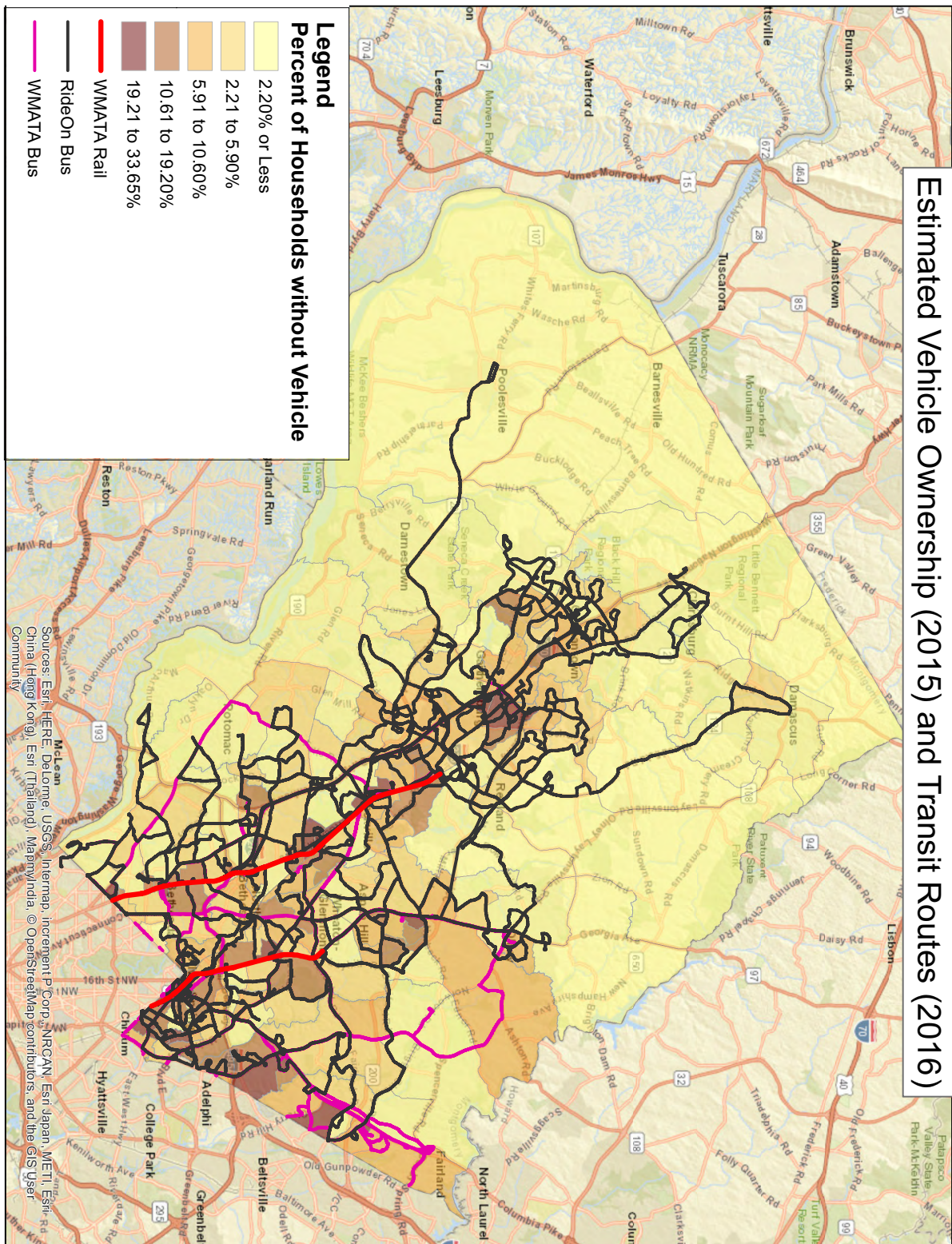Access to nutritious, affordable food is one of the most important factors in determining whether a family is food secure. Low income and rural neighborhoods may not have full service grocery stores or farmers' markets, and residents without reliable transportation may be limited to convenience stores, where nutritious food may be in short supply. Studies have shown a high correlation between access to grocery stores and healthy diets. Fresh, nutrient-dense, perishable foods tend to be heavy, and vehicle access allows families to choose their store or market of preference, and transport the quantity and quality of desired groceries efficiently. [22]

This is equally as important for individuals and families accessing food from food service providers (providers of free or low cost food, such food banks, pantries, soup kitchens), who may face the additional challenges of distance and limited hours of operation. Mobile food drops have even more limited open hours at each site.

Approximately 7.7% of households in 2015 did not have a vehicle available.[22] For these households and individuals unable to drive, Montgomery County has a variety of transit options. Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) operates 12 heavy rail metro stations and a few dozen bus routes in the County, providing 20 million and 40 million rides respectively. Additionally, the County's Department of Transportation operates RideOn buses. RideOn has over 100 routes and provides nearly 30 million trips per year.[23] On the next page is a map of these transit options and percent of households without vehicles.

Estimated Vehicle Ownership (2015) and Transit Routes (2016)

Legend
Percent of Households without Vehicle

- 2.20% or Less
- 2.21 to 5.90%
- 5.91 to 10.60%
- 10.61 to 19.20%
- 19.21 to 33.65%

— WMATA Rail
— RideOn Bus
— WMATA Bus

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; Montgomery County Department of Technology Services GIS Team

Both WMATA and RideOn offer reduced fare options for seniors and people with disabilities. For seniors and people with disabilities who need more direct service, WMATA's MetroAccess service provides door to door transit service. Additionally, the County's partnership with the Jewish Council for Aging provides free transportation options to low income seniors of all faiths and backgrounds.

Food Assistance Programs and Services

The following section describes the food assistance programs currently available to Montgomery County residents at the Federal, State, and County level. These programs provide food assistance to children, families, adults, and seniors in the County experiencing ongoing or temporary food insecurity.
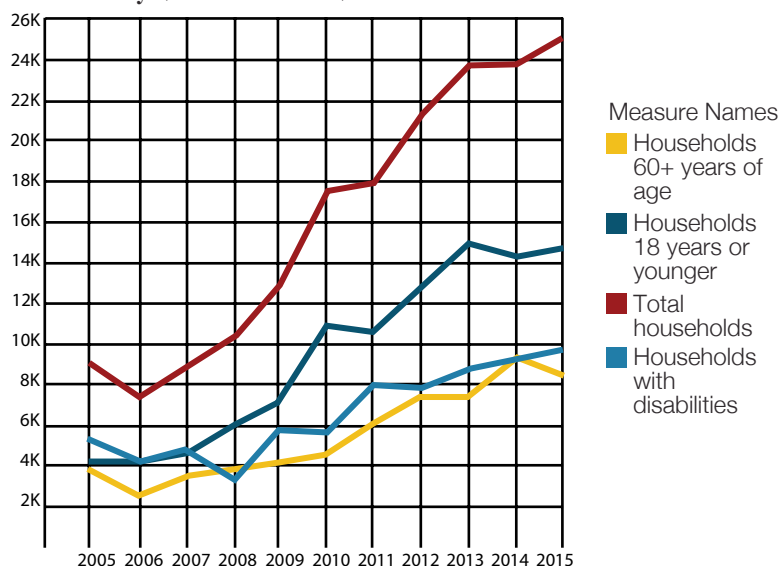
GENERAL FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

The Federal Government provides food and nutrition assistance through a number of programs such as those described below.

SNAP

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), known as the Food Supplement Program (FSP) in Maryland, provides Federal assistance to supplement low income families' ability to buy food. A household's monthly income must be at or below 130% of the poverty threshold ($31,590 in 2016) to be eligible. Some people are not eligible for SNAP, such as individuals on strike and unauthorized immigrants. Most legal immigrants who have lived in the country for five years and/or receive disability-related assistance or benefits are SNAP-eligible. Children under the age of 18 who were born in US are eligible, even if their parents are not.[24]

SNAP / Foodstamp Households in Montgomery County (2005-2015)

Measure Names
- Households 60+ years of age
- Households 18 years or younger
- Total households
- Households with disabilities

The number of households receiving SNAP benefits grew from 8,990 in 2005 to 25,009 in 2015. The highest number of households receiving SNAP are those with children under 18 years. In 2015, this represented 14,680 households, followed by households with people with disabilities (9,678) and households with members over 60 years (8,528).[25] The average number of Food Supplement Program participants in Montgomery County in FY17 is 67,183, fourth highest in the state after Baltimore City and Prince George's and Baltimore Counties.

The number of households that fall between the Self-Sufficiency Standard and eligibility for Federal assistance is not currently available, however the County is beginning to investigate this important gap in food security.

The rules for the Food Supplement Program/SNAP changed on January 1, 2016, limiting the maximum benefits of "able-bodied adults without dependents" (ABAWDs) to 3 months in a 3 year period, unless the individual meets criteria for an exemption, which includes pregnancy, homelessness, enrollment in school or vocational training, participation in combination of volunteering, work search activities, employment, and/or schooling for a total of at least 20 hours per week, and participating in an approved work activity. It is

estimated that over 1,500 Montgomery County residents are impacted by this change.[27] Additional recent changes to the SNAP benefits in Maryland include an increased minimum benefit for seniors from $16 - $30 a month, and the new Elderly Simplified Application Project (ESAP) which provides eligible seniors with a streamlined application and certification process.

WIC

The Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program provides assistance for supplemental foods and other related health services to women who are pregnant or have recently given birth, and infants and children under the age of 5 years old. In contrast to SNAP, immigration documentation status is not a factor in determining eligibility. To be eligible for WIC, the gross income must be at or below 185% of the US poverty threshold ($44,955 in 2016).[27]

WIC Enrollment by Race in Montgomery County (July 2016)

Source: Maryland WIC Program
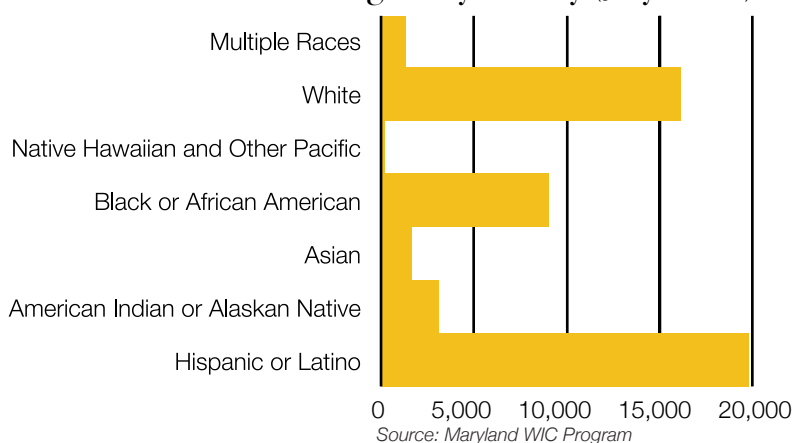
In July 2016, total WIC participation in Montgomery County was 31,304: 7,704 women, 6,884 infants, and 16,716 children. WIC is administered by Community Clinic, Inc at five centers in Montgomery County: Gaithersburg, Germantown, Langley/Takoma Park, Rockville, and Wheaton and at three hospitals: Holy Cross, Shady Grove, and Washington Adventist. The Greenbelt WIC clinic location in Prince George's County also serves many Montgomery County residents, 89 total in July 2016. [28]

Number of WIC Enrollees per Zip Code in October 2016

Legend
Number of WIC Enrollees

- 98 or Fewer
- 99 to 288
- 289 to 763
- 764 to 1,568
- 1,569 to 2,969

Blank areas are either federal facilities without residents or had no WIC Enrollees in Oct 2016
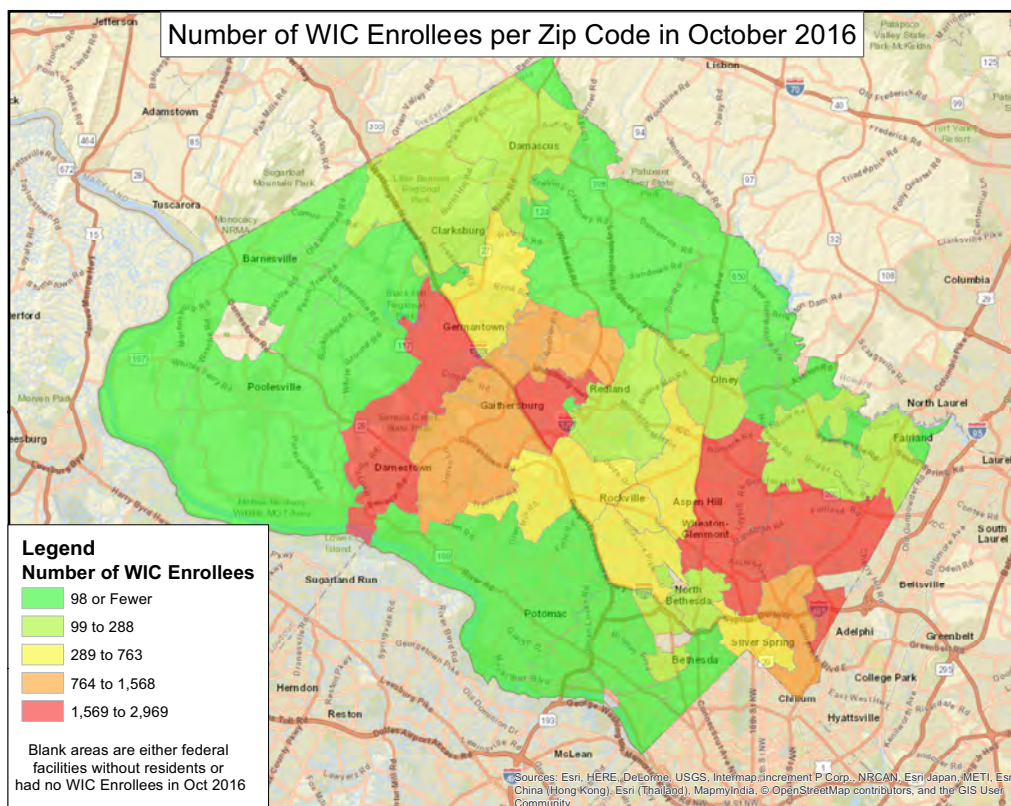
Source: Maryland WIC Program

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

CACFP provides aid to child and adult care institutions and family or group day care homes for the provision of nutritious foods that contribute to the wellness, healthy growth, and development of young children, and the health and wellness of older adults and chronically impaired disabled persons. Eligible providers include home-based centers, adult and child day care centers, afterschool care programs, and emergency shelters. CACFP is a federally-funded program administered by States.[29] Montgomery County Public School monitors the participation of 264 family day care providers, representing 1,762 children, in CACFP.[30]

Farmers' Market Nutrition Program

The Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) enables Seniors and Women, Infants & Children (WIC) recipients to purchase fruits, vegetables and cut herbs throughout the growing season. Nationally, the benefits may be used at Farmers Markets, roadside stands and community supported agriculture programs (CSAs). Maryland permits checks to be redeemed only with farmers who sell at farmers' markets. In general, roadside stands can only accept the checks if the farmer is also involved in an active and regular farmers market.

Eligibility is based on income; applicants must be no more than 185% of the federal poverty threshold and must have proof of residency in Maryland, although some states accept proof through another mechanism.[31] States may supplement the Federal benefits with State, local or private funds. Recipients also receive nutrition education and program information, and in Maryland they receive $20 per market season (June – November). WIC recipients are also eligible for the Fruit and Vegetable Check Program (FVC). Recipients must be pregnant or have children up to 5 years of age. They can receive up to $17/month from WIC FVC.[32]

Senior FMNP (SFMNP) is available for seniors 60 years or older who meet the 185% of poverty criteria. Proof of residency and age is required. In Maryland, seniors receive $30 per market season (June – November).

In 2016, of the 24 farmers' markets in Montgomery County, nineteen farmers' markets accepted FMNP.[33] Redemption rates show increased usage over time, as seen in the Table below:

Farmer's Market Nutrition Program Redemption Rates

	2007	2011	2012	2013	2015
SFMNP	$4,353	$18,270	$19,635	$18,520	$20,765
WIC-FMNP	$71,076	$52,470	$60,000		

Source: Montgomery County Office of Agriculture, Jeremy Criss

Many organizations throughout Maryland work to supplement the FMNP funds. Initiatives like the Maryland Farmers Market Association's "Maryland Market Money" or Crossroads Community Food Network's "Fresh Checks" are initiatives designed to match federal funds to be used at farmers' markets. The programs are funded by donations from foundations, private citizens and companies. In 2015, $87,000 in Federal benefits funds were matched with incentive dollars at eight Montgomery County Farmers Markets (Burtonsville, Crossroads, Potomac Village, Rockville, Shady Grove, Silver Spring FRESHFARM, Takoma Park and Wheaton).[34]

SNAP benefits may also be redeemed at Farmers' Markets. Enrolled participants receive a monthly benefit on an electronic benefit transfer card (EBT) called the "Independence Card" in Maryland to purchase eligible foods with authorized SNAP retailers. Eligible foods include anything that is not hot or intended to be eaten on site, and SNAP may not be used to purchase alcohol or tobacco. When SNAP transitioned from paper vouchers to an electronic benefit in the early 90's, many farmers' markets were not able to afford obtaining the machines to continue to accept the benefit, so there was a steep decline in the acceptance of SNAP

at farmers' markets. Over the years a number of efforts and programs have come to fruition to close this technology gap and reduce the challenges to accept SNAP, and now increasing numbers of farmers' markets – and in some cases farmers themselves – are able to accept SNAP. In Maryland the growth has been pronounced; in 2007 only 2 markets accepted SNAP while in the 2015 season 61 markets (41%) accepted SNAP. There is still an enormous potential for growth in SNAP redemption via farmers' markets; less than 0.2% of the $86 billion program is redeemed at farmers' markets annually.[35]

Of the almost 800,000 Marylanders who receive SNAP benefits,[36] fewer than 4% redeem those benefits at farmers markets.[37]

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)

TEFAP is a Federal program that provides low-income Americans, including seniors, with emergency food and nutrition assistance at no cost. Through TEFAP, the USDA purchases USDA Foods, including processing and packaging, and makes it available to State Distributing Agencies. States provide the food to local agencies, usually food banks, which in turn distribute the food to local organizations, such as soup kitchens and food pantries that directly serve the public. The amount of food each state receives out of the total amount of food provided is based on the number of unemployed persons and the number of people with incomes below the poverty level in the state.[38] The Capital Area Food Bank executes the TEFAP program for ¼ of the MD population which consists of Montgomery & Prince George's Counties. The types of foods USDA purchases for TEFAP vary depending on the preferences of the states and on agricultural market conditions. Nearly 90 nutritious, high-quality products are available for 2016, including canned and fresh fruits and vegetables, fresh and dried eggs, meat, poultry, fish, milk and cheese, pasta products, and cereal.[39]

County-Based Food Assistance Programs

In January 2016, the Montgomery County Office of Management and Budget (OMB) identified 13 programs addressing hunger within the Department of Health and Human Services supported by $6.2 million in County, State, and Federal funds. The OMB memo detailing this information is located in Appendix A.

While there is no comprehensive data source or contact directory for all food assistance programs in Montgomery County, the Montgomery County Food Council has identified over 100 unique non-government County-based organizations providing food assistance to residents through its current effort to collect detailed information on existing food assistance programs. These organizations range from large-scale, well-established non-profit organizations to smaller community and faith-based programs staffed by volunteers. Many organizations also provide assistance with safety-net services and access to basic necessities such as clothing and medicines. These organizations serve as trusted community-based sources of support, and for some, federal eligibility is not required, allowing them to fill a much needed gap. They are essential to connecting food insecure residents with the food assistance resources available at the local, County, State, and Federal level.

In FY16, $645,330 of Montgomery County Council and Office of the Executive funds were awarded in 23 grants to 15 nonprofit organizations to support food assistance and food recovery efforts. Private foundations also continue to contribute significant direct funding in support of these organizations and related initiatives, though the total amount of this funding is unknown.

The types of food assistance programs vary significantly in format, and include choice pantry, hot meals, pre-packed pantry items, discount grocery, and mobile market. Special features of some programs include fresh produce, delivery, multilingual support, Federal Benefit application assistance, referral to additional support services, dietary restriction accommodation, and nutritional counseling. Programs may require

appointments, documentation, or a cost for service; others are provided on a walk-in basis. Some programs are open to the general public, while others serve only a specific population (seniors, children, homeless individuals, or residents of a specific housing community). Hours of operation range from open a few hours a week to daily services.
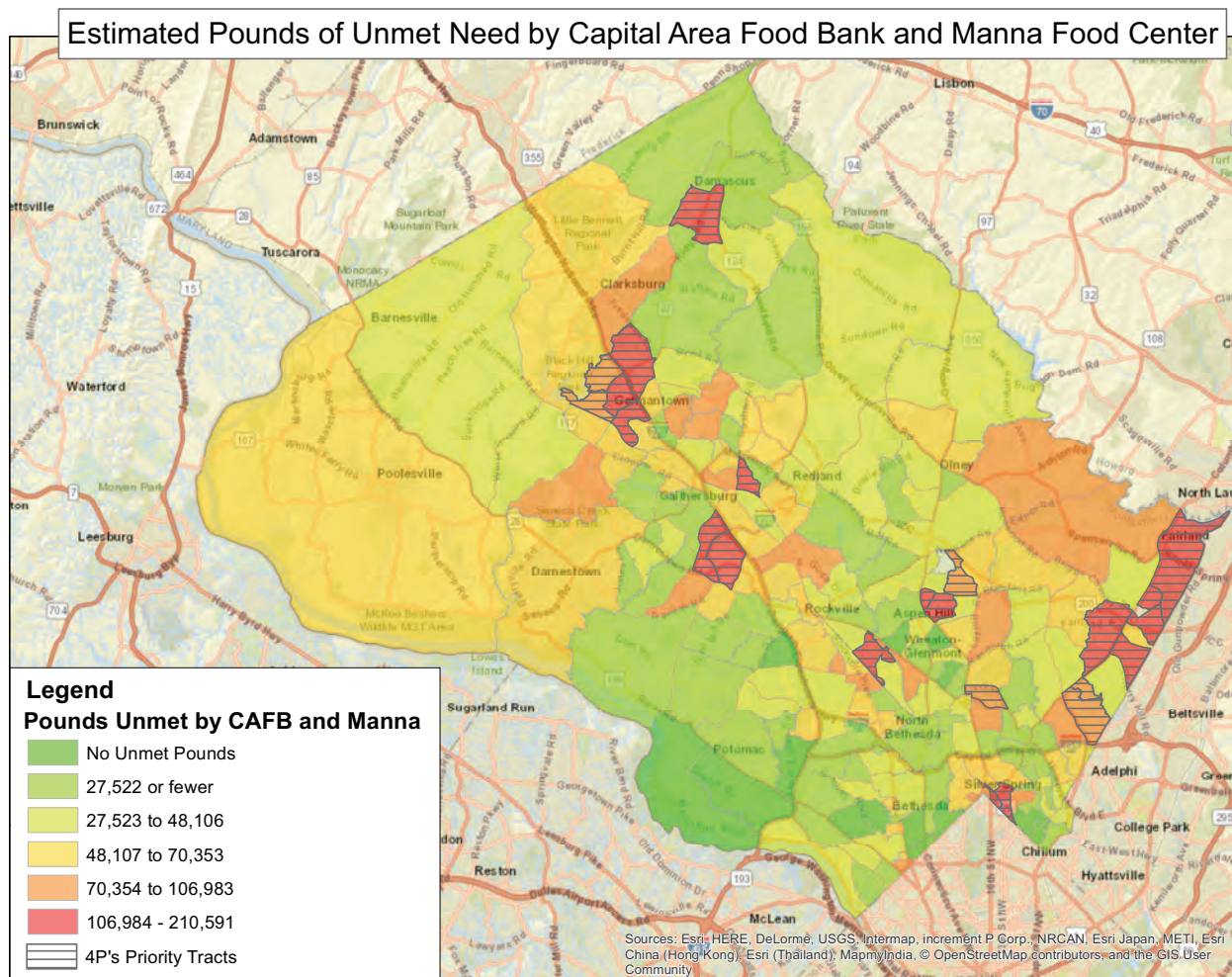
Many of these organizations already operate in partnership and sharing resources. Capital Area Food Bank (CAFB) and Manna Food Center, as the two largest-scale organizations in Montgomery County addressing food insecurity, play a central role in distributing food to the County's social service organizations, as well as directly to County residents.

CAFB is the largest organization addressing food insecurity in the Washington Metro Region. In fiscal year 2016, it distributed nearly 48 million pounds of food through 444 partner locations throughout the metro region. In Montgomery County the CAFB works with 40 partners and distributed 6.6 million pounds of food in the County, of that 1,895,837 pounds were fresh produce. In 2015, CAFB released their Hunger Heat Map,[41] an interactive digital map of the CAFB's entire service area, including Montgomery County, illustrating food insecurity rates and the food assistance efforts of CAFB and their partners by census tract, providing an opportunity for gap analysis.[42]

Manna Food Center was created out of a coalition of service providers to end hunger through food distribution, education, and advocacy. In Fiscal Year 2016, Manna Food Center provided food to an average of 3,760 families each month and throughout the year distributed 2.7 million pounds of food donated, recovered or purchased. Through their programs and outreach, 849 individuals received nutrition education and approximately $40,000 in SNAP benefits were acquired by residents. These services were made possible by a network of more than 200 partner agencies, dozens of civic, faith, and business groups and almost 73,000 hours of volunteer service. Manna's 2017-2020 Strategic Plan has identified participant-centered and data-driven program design and delivery in priority neighborhoods, as well as community-leadership and advocacy, as core priorities to achieve the vision of a hunger free Montgomery County.[43]

The CAFB has worked in partnership with Manna Food Center to illustrate the need in the county by sharing the CAFB's Hunger Heat Map. The map on the next page is a provisional estimate of the pounds of food needed to address food insecurity that have not already been addressed by Capital Area Food Bank and Manna Food Center. At this time, there is no dataset that shows how many pounds of food are distributed through all food assistance channels in the County. Without this information, a map cannot be created to do a comprehensive estimate of unmet need throughout the County across all food assistance sources.

The map on the next page also indicates Manna's twenty Priority Census Tracts identified in their 4P's Report: An Assessment of the People, Partners, Product, and Places of Manna's 'Food for Families' Program. These census tracts were identified through a weighting system of several qualitative and quantitative variables. The 4P's Report suggested the following census tracts as Manna's Priorities for future programming in partnership with other food assistance agencies: 7003.04, 7003.08, 7003.09, 7003.10, 7008.18 (Germantown); 7002.07 (Damascus); 7007.19, 7008.16, 7008.17 (Gaithersburg); 7012.19 (Viers Mill Road); 7032.13, 7032.14, 7032.20 (Aspen Hill); 7032.09 (Wheaton); 7025, 7026.01 (downtown Silver Spring); 7015.08, 7015.09, 7014.10, 7014.14, 7014.17, 7014.20, 7014.23 (East County).[44]

Estimated Pounds of Unmet Need by Capital Area Food Bank and Manna Food Center

Legend
Pounds Unmet by CAFB and Manna
- No Unmet Pounds
- 27,522 or fewer
- 27,523 to 48,106
- 48,107 to 70,353
- 70,354 to 106,983
- 106,984 - 210,591
- 4P's Priority Tracts

Source: The 4Ps: An Assessment of the People, Partners, Product, and Places of Manna Food Center's 'Food for Families' Program, Manna Food Center internal document, September 2016

COMMUNITY FOOD RESCUE

The Community Food Rescue (CFR) network, a program of Manna Food Center, was inspired by the Montgomery County Council who sought to create a collaborative, comprehensive food recovery program throughout the county in order to redirect a portion of the 146,000 tons (22.8%) of the County's solid waste that is food to food insecure residents. CFR provides auto-matching between food donor businesses and food assistance organizations, and volunteer food runners. Members of the network are offered training and technical assistance regarding food safety protocols, annual capacity building grants, and a third-party donor verification recognition program in partnership with Food Recovery Network.

Community Food Rescue launched operationally in September 2015. As of October 28, 2016, the growing network has 103 food donor businesses, 29 food assistance organizations, and 55 volunteer food runners. To date those using CFR's matching tool have redirected 605,773 pounds of food to people experiencing food insecurity.[45]

NEIGHBORHOOD OPPORTUNITIES NETWORK

The Neighborhood Opportunities Network (NON) is a program coordinated by Montgomery County DHHS in partnership with sites in Silver Spring (TESS Center), Wheaton (Catholic Charities), and Gaithersburg (Family Services). Clients at these sites are provided support with all public assistance programs (Maryland Children's Health Program/Care for Kids (limited access), Food Stamps/SNAP, Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) and Temporary Disability Assistance Program (TDAP), Child Care Subsidy, Maryland Energy Assistance Program or (MEAP), and Emergency Assistance for eviction, rental assistance and utility cut-off assistance. The NON Community Connectors also refer clients to resources including food, furniture, and clothing in the area and have access to interpreters who speak over 200 languages to assist clients.

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE COALITION

The Emergency Assistance Coalition (EAC) is a network of providers, coordinated by Interfaith Works, that deliver emergency assistance to low-income residents of the County. EAC members are public agencies, congregations, grassroots local assistance groups and other human service provider groups who are familiar to serving those in crisis. The EAC meets monthly, working collaboratively to facilitate a comprehensive approach to the delivery of emergency assistance in the County. Emergency Assistance Coalition member organizations range from small pantries in churches and specific neighborhoods to larger organizations.[46]

COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY

The Community Action Agency, in partnership with the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services and Maryland Hunger Solutions, recruits and trains Hunger Resource Navigator volunteers to link their Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program customers and other groups of seniors with SNAP, as well as with local resources, such as Manna and emergency and faith-based food banks, while they access free tax help

Senior Programs

SENIOR BROWN BAG PROGRAMS

The Senior Brown Bag program, operated by the Capital Area Food Bank, provides income-qualified seniors with supplemental bags of food and nutrition education materials on a monthly basis. Currently there are 13 Senior Brown Bag sites that serve approximately 570 seniors per month.[47]

SENIOR NUTRITION PROGRAM

The largest program operated by DHHS is the Senior Nutrition Program, which provides nutritious meals to residents over 60 and their spouses of any age, as well as to adults with disabilities in a variety of locations throughout the County. The program is administered by DHHS and facilitated by recreation department staff, community, non-profit and housing facility staff, as well as volunteers.

- **Congregate Meals Program:** Lunch is served five days a week at 37 locations, including 16 County Recreation Centers, 5 Adult Care Centers, and ethnic meals at 11 community partner sites (Kosher, Korean, Vietnamese, and Chinese). In FY16, more than 4,000 seniors participated in the congregate program, serving about 235,000 meals.
- **Home Delivered Meals/Meals on Wheels:** Lunch and dinner are delivered daily to the County's frailest seniors who are unable to obtain groceries or prepare their own meals and have no one to assist them. In FY16, approximately 1,200 individuals were served a total of about 155,000 meals.
- **Cold Box Meals:** Lunch is served three times a week over a four-month Winter term at 16 low-income Senior housing sites. 800 people were served in FY16 at low income apartment buildings.

• **Emergency Shelf Meals:** Nonperishable boxes of food containing 3 meals that meet the Maryland Department on Aging's nutrition guidelines are distributed once annually to low income senior buildings as well as home delivered meal clients. These boxes are designed to provide shelf stable food in case of emergencies, when seniors cannot leave home due to weather, health, etc. In Fall 2016, this program will deliver 1,800 boxes to 33 locations.

The Older Americans Act program also provides nutrition education, screening, and counseling on location and via their weekly Senior Nutrition Hotline.[48]

Programs for Children

The United States Department of Agriculture provides funding for several school based meal programs that provide healthy food to children. These programs are administered by the Montgomery County Public Schools Division of Food and Nutrition Services, offering a wide variety of programs to eligible children. Each of these programs helps fight hunger and obesity by reimbursing organizations such as schools, child care centers, and after-school programs for providing healthy meals to children. Some programs are supplemented with state and/or local funds.

SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAMS

Free and Reduced-price Meals (FARMS)

Families with incomes at or below 130% of the poverty level are eligible for free meals (income of $31,590 for a family of four). Those with incomes between 130% and 185% of the poverty level are eligible for reduced-price meals ($44,955 for a family of four).

With an enrollment of 159,480 students, MCPS is the largest school system in Maryland (17th largest in the US). Approximately 35% of the students are eligible for free or reduced meals.[53] In 2015, 83% of FARMS students recieved free meals, instead of reduced meals. In FY15, MCPS reported $40.5 million in Federal Reimbursement for the FARMs Program.

Since 2006, high schools with the largest increase in FARM usage are Clarksburg (29%), Northwood (25%), Watkins Mill (24%) and James Hubert (23%). High Schools with FARMs recipients over 45% in 2015 are Watkins Mill, Northwood, John F Kennedy and Wheaton.

MCPS Free and Reduced-price Meals System (FARMS) in Montgomery County
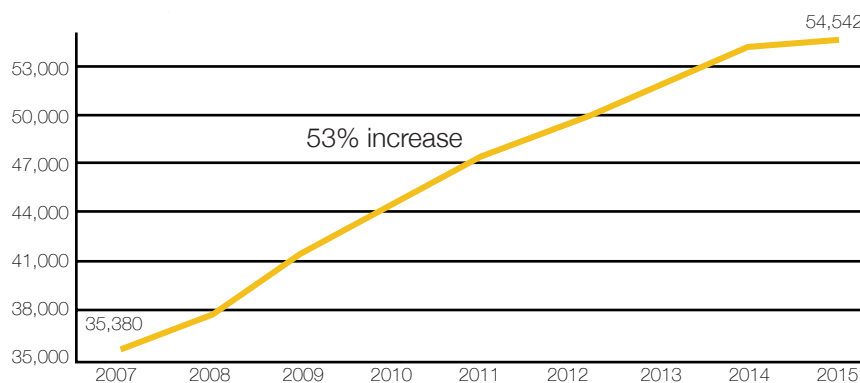
(Montgomery County Public Schools, 2015 http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/planning/demographics.aspx)

Percent Change in FARMs Enrollment from 2005 to 2015

Legend
Percent of Students Enrolled in FARMs in 2015
- 0.8 to 15.0%
- 15.1 to 30.0%
- 30.1 to 50.0%
- 50.1 to 75.0%
- 75.1 to 94.6%

School Growth Rate from 2005 to 2015

Legend
Growth Rate from 2005 to 2015
- Enrollment Decline
- Schools not Present in 2005
- 50% or less increase
- 51% to 100% increase
- 101% to 200% increase
- 201% to 433% increase

Source: Montgomery County Public Schools, Division of Long-Range Planning

National School Lunch Program

The National School Lunch Program is a federally assisted meal program that provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free lunches to children each school day.

School Breakfast Program

Children from families with incomes under 130% of the federal poverty level receive free meals and children from families between 130-185% pay 30 cents or less. In Montgomery County, 67% of low income students who participated in school lunch also participated in school breakfast. This is a notable increase from 2013, which is credited to an increase in the number of schools offering breakfast in the classrooms. The County also serves hot breakfast foods in the cafeteria.[53]

The Maryland Meals for Achievement Program offers a "universal breakfast" meal to all students in eligible participating schools free of charge, thus removing the stigma for low-income children. The meal is offered in the classroom as school starts in the morning, rather than in the cafeteria before school starts, making it easier for children to participate. During the 2015-16 school year, MCPS served about 5,700,000 breakfasts in the Universal Breakfast Schools.

Increase in low-income student participation in school lunch programs in Montgomery County 2013-2014
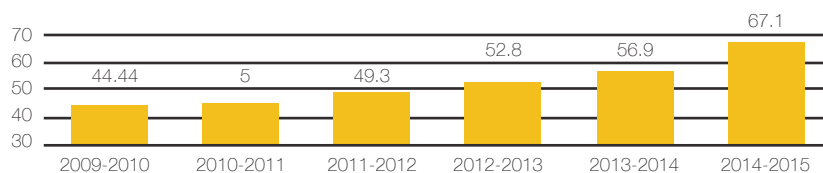
(Source: Maryland Hunger Solutions 2014-15 "Reducing Childhood Hunger with the School Breakfast Program: Maryland's Report Card" p. 25)

After School Snack and At-Risk Supper Program

Schools that have a FARMs population of 50% or more or have a feeder school with 50% or more FARMs-eligible students offer after school snacks and/or suppers. MCPS began offering suppers in 2010, serving 46,050 meals that year and 299,860 in 2015.

Summer Food Service Program

Children 18 years or younger can receive a free healthy and nutritious lunch during the summer. The MCPS Division of Food and Nutrition Services is the summer food service sponsor in Montgomery County and about 9,500 children are served at approximately 120 locations each day.[56] MCPS served 257,718 summer lunches in 2015, up from 127,297 in 2005 and 159,765 breakfasts in 2015, up from 80,043 in 2005.

The program must be located in a school or at a location close to a school where 50% of the students enrolled are eligible for free or reduced price meals. If the school is a middle or high school, the closest elementary school must have the 50% free/reduced student enrollment. If the program is not located in a school where the 50% free/reduced student enrollment exists, the program may still qualify based on the actual list of enrollees.The program needs to be supervised by a person responsible for ordering meals and ensuring that food safety standards are met.[54] No appointment is necessary, but the lunch must be eaten at the location.

SCHOOL-BASED FOOD ASSISTANCE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS

Family Markets

Family Markets are monthly nutritious food distributions at schools for families and children, which typically serve over 100 families in the school community. Markets are set up in a client choice format where families are encouraged to choose the foods they want for their families. Food distributions can be complemented

by school outreach initiatives for families and nutrition education programming including cooking demos and pairing healthy foods with recipe cards. Currently the Capital Area Food Bank facilitates eight Family Markets in Montgomery County.[57]

Weekend Bags

Children relying on school breakfast and lunch are especially vulnerable when school is not in session over the weekends. These supplemental food programs help fight food insecurity so the students can return to school on Monday ready to learn.

MCPS Weekend Bag Program: Each Friday of the 2015-2016 school year, through the coordinated efforts of Kids In Need Distributors (KIND), Manna Food Center, and Women Who Care Ministries (WWCM), approximately 4,624 low-income elementary students received a bag of food for the weekend. In 2016, the County Council authorized a special, one-time investment of $150,000 to increase the number of children served by almost 20%, or 1,000 additional students for the 2016-2017 school year.[58]

Capital Area Food Bank Weekend Bag Program: This program is part of Feeding America's national BackPack Program and began in 2002. The program provides weekly bags of groceries for children ages 5-18. Some food orders are delivered by the food bank while other sites come to the food bank to pick up their orders. CAFB partners with programs working in community centers, schools, churches, Boys & Girls Clubs, and Parks & Recreation locations that are serving communities where at least 50% of the children in local schools are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. In Montgomery County they serve three sites (two in Gaithersburg and one in Rockville) and serve approximately 60 children per week.[59]

ADDITIONAL CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS

Child Nutrition Commodity Programs

USDA provides donated commodities such as canned and fresh fruits, frozen and canned vegetables, ground beef and turkey, peanut butter, eggs, cornmeal, and flour. Donated commodities vary from year to year. These commodities contribute to lunch meals. Over the last several years, donated commodities have contributed $.15 - $.17 per meal to MCPS.[1]

Community Eligibility Program (CEP)

The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) is a meal service option for schools and school districts in low-income areas. CEP allows the nation's highest poverty schools and districts to serve breakfast and lunch at no cost to all enrolled students without the burden of collecting household applications. Instead, schools that adopt CEP maximize federal funding for school breakfast programs, and are reimbursed using a formula based on the percentage of students participating in other specific means-tested programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).[64] New in the 2016-17 school year, two MCPS elementary schools participated in this program.

The Federal Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP)

FFVP provides fresh produce to students in participating schools. Elementary schools with at least 50% of their students eligible for FARMS can apply to participate. Four schools in Montgomery County participated in 2016.[65]

Maryland Meals for Achievement (MMFA)

This classroom breakfast program offers a healthy start to the school day by serving breakfast foods in the classroom. Started as a pilot research program with Harvard, studies have shown that the classroom breakfast has a positive impact on test scores and grades. States can supplement this federally funded program. In Maryland, schools are selected annually by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) based on the availability of State funds. In 2015, MSDE awarded $6.9 million in state funds to 471 schools.[66] MCPS reported $165,850 in State funding for this program in FY15.[67] During the 2015-16 school year, Montgomery County offered this program in 79 schools, (consisting of most elementary and middle schools, and three high schools).

Food Literacy

Montgomery County's Food Council's definition of food literacy includes healthy food choices, cooking skills, food safety, food marketing, and participating in the local, sustainable food system.

A healthy diet and regular physical activity are keys to good health. The lack of consumption of nutritious food, whether it be due to access, affordability or personal choice, has had a huge impact on our nation's health. Obesity and other diet-related disorders have been steadily rising, and it has been predicted, that for the first time in history, children may have shorter lifespans than their parents, largely due to diet and lack of physical exercise.

Obesity among food insecure people, as well as low-income people, occurs in part because they are subject to the same often challenging cultural changes as other Americans (e.g., more sedentary lifestyles, increased portion sizes), and because they face unique challenges in adopting and maintaining healthful behaviors.[57]

In Montgomery County, 56% of residents are overweight or obese. This is a 10% increase since 2007.[58] 20% of high school students were overweight or obese in the County in 2013 and Hispanic and African American students were more likely to be obese than white or Asian students[1].

Households with a better understanding of the role that food plays in maintaining good health and energy to live a fulfilling life are more likely to make healthier food choices. This could involve reprioritizing food purchases, growing food in community gardens or even on porches or balconies, and preparing food in a tasty, palatable manner. Households with greater financial and food-management skills (i.g., managing bills, making a budget, stretching groceries, preparing meals) are less likely to be food insecure.[59]

A number of educational programs exist, from national to state to local, that focus on food nutrition, budgets and preparation and are available to Montgomery County residents. For communities at risk, the challenge is to apply these programs in a time and place that is also culturally relevant.

EAT WELL BE ACTIVE PARTNERSHIP

Healthy Montgomery is a community-based effort to improve the health and well-being of Montgomery County residents. Its Steering Committee includes planners, policy makers, health and social service providers and community members. Obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease are among the initiative's top-ranked priority areas. The "Eat Well Be Active Partnership", was launched in 2014 to create and implement a coordinated strategy to decrease obesity in Montgomery County[60]

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND EXTENSION PROGRAMS

Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)

EFNEP's community nutrition educators provide free basic nutrition and physical activity education classes to limited-income parents and youth. Classes are taught in a series in English and Spanish. Weekly sessions lasting 1 – 2 hours run for 4 – 6 weeks and include food demonstrations, physical activities and lessons. Topics range from the major food groups, food resource management and food safety to label reading and making healthy choices. EFNEP works with many partners in the community who recruit participants with a goal of helping people change their behaviors for a healthier lifestyle. Over 300 adults and nearly 1,000 youth complete the series of EFNEP lessons each year. Over 90% of program participants show improvement in at least one aspect of food resource management and one nutrition practice.[61]

Family and Consumer Sciences Education Program (FCS)

Family and Consumer Sciences offer educational programs for consumers, community, church groups, child care providers, business audiences, and more in the areas of food safety, MyPlate, obesity/MyPyramid, healthy snacks for kids, "Smart Choices" food shopping, and emergency preparedness. In Montgomery County direct programming is primarily provided to adults with disabilities and teachers/childcare providers, many of whom receive CACFP funds to provide healthy meals for the children in their care. FCS provides instruction on planning healthy meals and snacks and how to incorporate nutrition education and gardening into their programs.[62,63]

Maryland's Food Supplement Nutrition Education (FSNE)

FSNE offers nutrition education to those eligible for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). FSNE programs are provided at no cost to support the work of community agencies, such as literacy centers, local food banks, soup kitchens, WIC offices, senior centers, community centers, neighborhood groups, and homeless shelters. Many materials are available in both English and Spanish. In Montgomery County, FSNE has nutrition education programs in several elementary schools with FARMS rates of 50% or more, and both Judith P. Hoyer Early Child Care and Family Education Centers ("Judy Centers"), which provide comprehensive early childhood services for children birth through age five. FSNE also works with Manna Food Center to help deliver nutrition education materials to their participants, including the Smart Sacks program that serves approximately 8,000 youth in the county. During the market season, FSNE visits area farmers markets that serve low-income communities to provide nutrition education and food samples to market customers. FSNE actively strives to integrate "farm to table" concepts through the use of local produce in food tastings. It also supports school gardens and integrates nutrition into gardening programs. While County-specific data is not available, in FY15, Maryland SNAP-Ed reached more than 22,000 adults and youth through direct education, teacher trainings, and grocery store tours.

Adult participants in FSNE's Smart Shopping Strategies program have reported they plan to significantly increase the use of food resource management skills, including comparing prices while grocery shopping, buying store brands, and using coupons. [64,65,66]

Master Gardeners Program

The University of Maryland Extension Master Gardener Program began in 1978 as a means of extending the horticultural and pest management expertise of University of Maryland Extension to the general public. This program is designed to train volunteer horticultural educators for the University of Maryland Extension who share their research-based knowledge and skills with their communities. Through the Grow It, Eat It program, Master Gardeners teach sustainable food gardening practices to children and adults. Participants learn how

to grow their own food and improve their health and save money by growing fresh vegetables, fruits, and herbs using sustainable practices.[67] The Master Gardeners also have a program at Manna Food bank where they teach people how to grow food in limited spaces, such as container gardens.[68] The Master Gardeners Grow It, Give It program facilitates the donation of home gardeners' extra produce to local soup kitchens and food pantries. Currently Extension is developing a research and curriculum development program, Food Safety for Master Gardeners, to make sure donated food is as safe as possible.[69]

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAM (OEEP)

OEEP serves 24,000 students in providing outdoor learning experiences through the MCPS curriculum that increase students' content and process knowledge; nurturing awareness, appreciation, and stewardship for the natural environment; and building the capacity of MCPS educators to teach environmental education using the outdoors as a classroom. Their mission is to ensure that MCPS has a K-12 comprehensive environmental education curriculum in place that culminates in students being environmentally literate. Environmental literacy includes knowledge of ecological principles, the interaction of humans with the environment in regard to natural resources and health, and sustainability. Food and the science and business of agriculture are an integral part of environmental education. Their responsibilities include:

- School Gardens: At the last count in 2013, 21% of schools reported having edible gardens that are being used for instruction. However, garden counts vary constantly due to the creation of new gardens and the loss of others. OEEP maintains the MCPS School Gardens website pages with step by step directions and local resources for creating perennial and edible gardens, and guides schools in initiating garden plans and programs.
- Mobile Science Lab: OEEP manages the Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation's visit of their mobile science lab to all MCPS elementary schools over a period of five years. One of the goals of this partnership with Montgomery County Government is to highlight the role of the farmer as a food producer and increase student awareness of the County's hundreds of working farms and agricultural reserve.
- Educational gardens: OEEP models a Tower Garden, an aeroponic vertical edible garden at Smith Center, and active salad garden tables at Smith and Kingsley, the environmental education centers of MCPS.
- Programs of Study: OEEP collaborates with the Science, Technology and Engineering Department on the Certified Professional Horticulturalist Program at several MCPS high schools and provides Global Ecology Program students a hands-on experience in conservation landscaping.[70]

MONTGOMERY COUNTY COMMUNITY GARDENS PROGRAM

The first Montgomery Parks Community Garden opened in Takoma Park in 2009 and the program has seen a steady growth in the number of gardens and a sharp increase in the number of people interested in obtaining a garden plot. There are currently 11 community garden locations across the county. The gardens provide a range of options including accessible gardening tables to in-ground plots ranging in size from 200 square feet to 625 square feet with fees ranging from $35 to $85 per year. The smallest garden has 10 plots, while the largest provides 118 plots. Montgomery Parks provides deer fencing, water meters, woodchips to keep weeds down, and compost when available to every location. These community gardens not only offer a place for Montgomery County residents to connect with their food, but also offer a space that bolsters communities by encouraging families and friends to spend time together outdoors and in their neighborhoods. There are waitlists for each of the 11 gardens currently open in the County.[71]

Introduction

The Findings section of the Plan provides data analysis and applies the input we received from the community to the material discussed in the Background and Approach section to identify the specific food insecure populations within the County, where they are located or concentrated, and what their particular barrier is to accessing safe, sufficient, nutritious food. The findings are organized into five sections by population – children, seniors, foreign-born residents, people with disabilities, and people living below the Self-Sufficiency Standard. The Plan also identifies locations or hotspots for food insecure populations on as granular a level as possible, often by census tract or zip code. In total, we identify 20 specific, actionable findings that must be addressed to make the Country a more food secure environment.
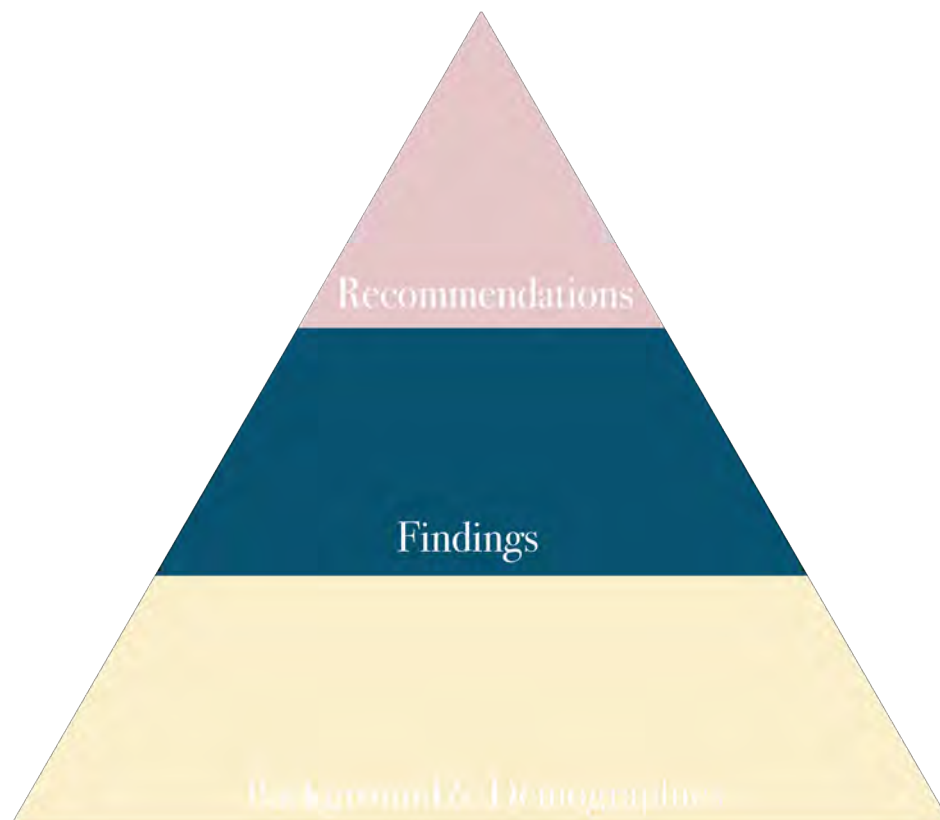
Children

Children who are food insecure are at greater risk for long-term poor health consequences, behavioral and social difficulties, and poor school performance. Children whose families have long-term food insecurity are more likely to be absent or be late for school, progress more slowly in mathematics and reading,[77] and have higher Body Mass Indexes than children whose families are food-secure. Additionally, children of color are more likely to experience food insecurity that their white counterparts.[78]

Food insecurity has been associated with 14% higher odds of mental disorders in children —including mood, anxiety, behavior and substance disorders.[79] Some findings have concluded that "the lack of access to reliable and sufficient amounts of food is associated with increased risk for adolescent mental disorders over and above the effects of poverty."[80]

Children of single parent households are more likely to experience food insecurity than other households. For low-income households who are struggling to make ends meet, burdens associated with the cost of childcare can mean the difference between eating less expensive, highly processed foods and more whole, nutritious options. Maternal diet during pregnancy, as well as dietary patterns during the first years of life, are associated with an increased risk for mental health problems in very young children.[81] Because there is such a close association between nutrition and healthy physical, cognitive and social-emotional development, poor nutrition and food insecurity can deeply affect well-being and development in ways that endure for a lifetime.[78]

School breakfast and lunch programs offer meals to eligible children during school hours, and summer and weekend interventions seek to fill the gap outside of school. Barriers to reaching needy children outside of school include a lack of access to meal sites, insufficient program awareness, and limited resources when schools are closed.[82]

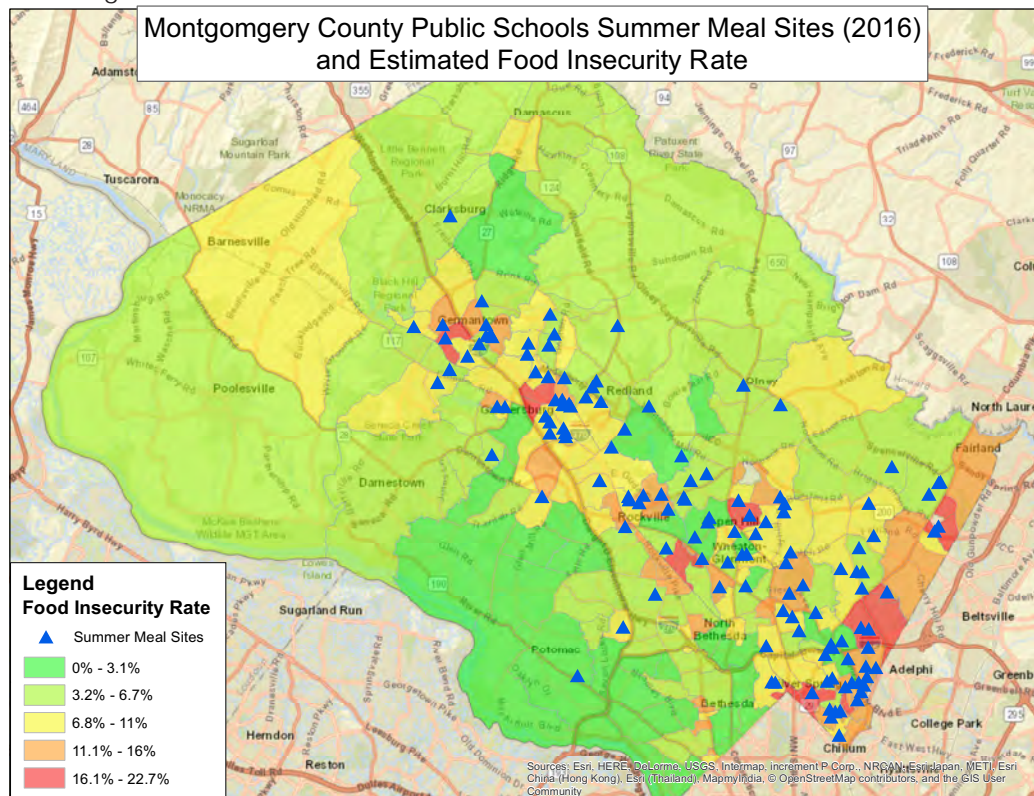## FINDING 1: INSUFFICIENT FOOD DURING THE SUMMER

Population:
Children eligible for free and reduced meals during the summer

Location:
In Summer 2015, meals were offered at 120 sites, including seven walk-in locations

Narrative:
Montgomery County Public Schools' Summer Meals Program, sponsored by the Division of Food and Nutrition Services (DFNS) is designed to provide nutritious meals at no cost to children 18 years of age and younger. About 9,500 children are served at approximately 120 locations each day during the summer months, out of the approximately 55,818 students eligible for Free and Reduced Meals throughout the school system (35% of 159,480 students are eligible for FARMs).[83] This program is designed to bridge the "nutrition gap" when school is out.

Summer meal sites must be located in a school or at a location close to a school where 50% of the students enrolled are eligible for free or reduced price meals. If the school is a middle or high school, the closest elementary school must have the 50% free/reduced student enrollment. If the program is not located in a school where the 50% free/reduced student enrollment exists, the program may still qualify based on the actual list of enrollees. The program needs to be supervised by a person responsible for ordering meals and ensuring that food safety standards are met.[84]

Montgomgery County Public Schools Summer Meal Sites (2016) and Estimated Food Insecurity Rate

Legend
Food Insecurity Rate
▲ Summer Meal Sites
0% - 3.1%
3.2% - 6.7%
6.8% - 11%
11.1% - 16%
16.1% - 22.7%

Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap, increment P Corp., NRCAN, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri (Thailand), Mapmyindia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

Summer Meal Sites Source: Montgomery County Public Schools Division of Food and Nutrition Services
Food Insecurity Rate Source: Capital Area Food Bank Hunger Heat Map

Order of Magnitude:
46,300-55,818

Barriers:
The children who depend on meals provided at school during the academic year, are more difficult for the school system to reach during summer vacation. Eligible children 18 years or younger can receive a free healthy and nutritious lunch during the summer to "bridge the nutrition gap" when school is out of session. No appointment is necessary, but the lunch must be eaten on site. Barriers to student participation include a lack of access to meal sites and insufficient program awareness.

DFNS works collaboratively with Montgomery County Recreation (MCR) to serve meals and snacks to young people during out-of-school time, meeting the USDA National Standards for food and nutrition. MCR helps to serve over 250,000 meals (breakfast, snacks, supper) after-school and during the summer months. MCR serves meals at 33 summer program locations and 21 after-school locations. Additionally, over the course of the summer, 156 hours of nutrition and fitness education were provided to nearly 3,000 young people.

Six of the MCR summer sites are part of their mobile recreation program called Fun, Food, Fitness. Mobile Recreation (Fun, Food, Fitness) is a drop-in summer program for young people 18 & under which combines access to nutrition with physical activity. This program serves as a critical safety net during summer months to reach young people who are not registered in traditional summer programs. The program is designed to reach young people in underserved communities and works to address issues such as food insecurity, social isolation, and physical and psychological well-being. In FY 16, 735 participants signed up for the drop-in program and 26,442 meals (breakfast and lunch) were served. DFNS and MCR work collectively on outreach strategies to reach young people who are geographically isolated, live in underserved communities, or in located in hard to reach communities such as the Middlebrook mobile home park in Germantown and the Greencastle community in Silver Spring.

The program helps to relieve financial stress and strain providing an immediate economic impact for families. Family food budgets stretch further when MCR is operating out-of-school time programs. Families taking full advantage of meals served during summer months alone can expect an economic benefit of $210 per child for a six week summer program serving breakfast and lunch. Families taking full advantage of after-school and summer programming can estimate an economic benefit of at least $600 per child, per year, for out-of-school time meals alone.[85]

The Mobile Recreation program is supported by TeenWorks participants. TeenWorks is MCR's year-round workforce development initiative which provides high school students with experiential learning experience and employability skills, while performing meaningful work and earning a paycheck. Many of these students are helping to alleviate financial strain on their families. TeenWorks participants are also able to eat meals, increasing their access to nutritious food, promoting savings and reducing the likelihood of spending their money on fast food.

"This program is good for my little brother. We live right behind the school. It's a good way for him to get out of the house and stay active. I can eat here and save some food at home. I've been trying to teach him how to work out, eat straight...but this program is going to help him learn too."[86]
Earl, Age 17, Food, Fun & Fitness Participant

Photo Courtesy of Montgomery County Recreation Department

Home and community gardens are another valuable source of fruits and vegetables for families during the summer. However, there are limited gardening opportunities for children outside of their home. The Master Gardeners Youth Garden Program has created a vibrant and thriving children's garden at the White Oak Community Recreation Center where 164 children in the summer camp programs plant, grow and harvest fruits, vegetables and herbs. By participating in the full planting cycle in the White Oak garden, children connect with the origins of their food, gain exposure to new fruits and vegetables, and learn about the nutritional value of fresh produce. All of the food grown in the White Oak garden is donated either to the families of the children working in the garden or to other community residents, bringing nearly 300 pounds of fresh, nutritious, locally produced food to the White Oak community.[87]

FINDING 2: INSUFFICIENT FOOD ON WEEKENDS

Population:
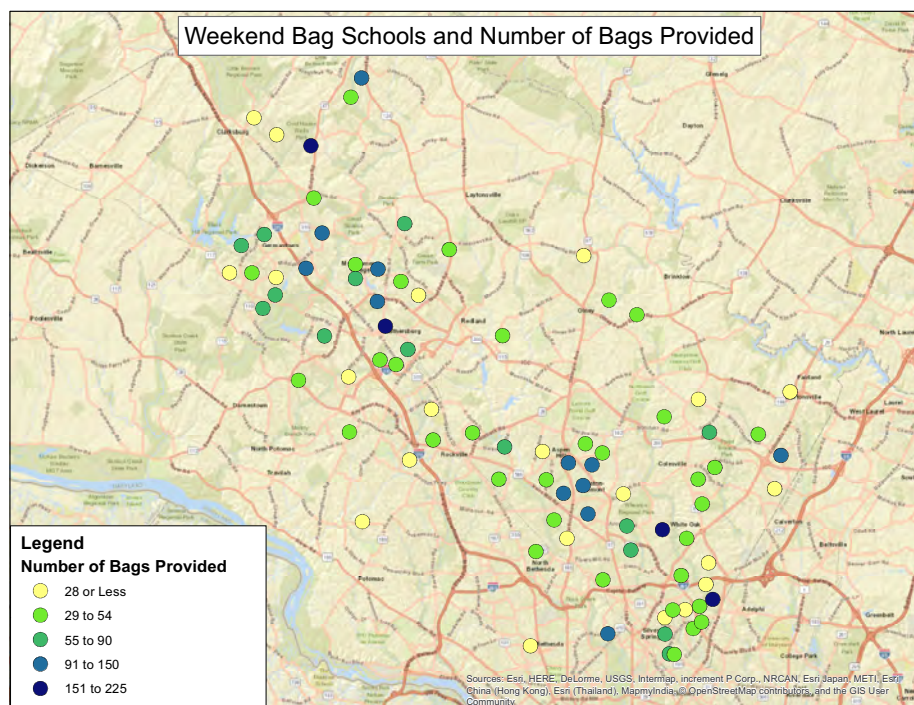Children receiving FARMS who are eligible for weekend food programs

Location:
Schools with more than 50% FARMS enrollment

Narrative:
Food insecurity for school-aged children who depend on school-provided breakfast, lunch and/or snacks each day is amplified on weekends, holidays, and unscheduled school closures for weather emergencies when this food source is not available. Montgomery County estimates that 20-30% of FARMS eligible children have insufficient food on days when schools are closed and need week-end food assistance. Weekend bag programs provide nutritious food for chronically food insecure children to take home on Fridays.

Weekend Bag Schools and Number of Bags Provided

Legend
Number of Bags Provided
- 28 or Less
- 29 to 54
- 55 to 90
- 91 to 150
- 151 to 225

Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap, increment P Corp., NRCAN, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri (Thailand), MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community.

Manna Food Center

Order of Magnitude:
13,750-16,500

Barriers:
More than 55,000 students (as of 16-17 SY) in Montgomery County Public Schools (over 30,500 elementary; over 11,300 middle; over 13,000 high school; and 250 special and alternative) are part of households that qualify for Free and Reduced Meals (FARMS). According to the most recent Feeding America Map the Meal Gap study (2014), there are an estimated 33,000 children in Montgomery County who experience food insecurity. These children rely on school-provided meals during the week and may have difficulty meeting food needs on weekends when school is not in session.

Quotes from school staff members who administer Smart Sacks:

"I wasn't aware of how much families depended on the Smart Sacks until I had a student absent on a Friday and the parent called to asked if she could come pick up his food (she had to take a bus to get here!)."

"A single mother of one child who is employed yet continues to struggle financially finds the food received through the Smart Sacks program very helpful in providing nutritious snacks for her daughter."

"A student described that they only ate cereal at home. With Smart Sacks he and his family were able to eat more balanced meals."

"The children are so excited every week. I have some children who linger after the others in case there is extra. They like to feel responsible in helping their families with groceries."[90]

Manna Food Center (Manna), Kids In Need Distributors (KIND), Women Who Care Ministries (WWCM), in partnership with the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services and Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) and other partners use county funds, private donations and volunteers to serve these children. The vast majority of the schools that host weekend bag programs are elementary schools, with some services provided to students in middle school grades. Currently, none of the three major weekend bag providers work with MCPS high schools. This lack of service is often attributed to the fact that there may be a stigma associated with the program at the higher grades.

Weekend bag programs are run somewhat differently by each organization but, in general, each non-profit entity acquires the food through in-kind donations and food purchases and, in most cases, coordinates the packing of that food into bags and weekly delivery of the bags to the school in partnership with community groups such as businesses and congregations. The identification of and distribution to families is managed by some combination of the Linkages to the Learning staff, MCPS Parent Community Coordinators, and the school counselor.

Photo Courtesy of Manna Food Center

Over the past four years the number of students eligible for FARMS has risen from 51,842 to 55,116. Funding for weekend bag programs has not increased at the same rate leaving organizations without sufficient staffing to coordinate the logistics of food purchase, packaging and transport. Additionally, there is a burden to school staff, which was described in a recent survey administered by MCPS[88]: "distribution of the bags is time consuming as is dealing with absent students...All of our staff members are tasked with MANY responsibilities... while we would like to serve more students, we simply do not have time."

FARMs information is not available to all school staff and so that is not always an available tool for identification and prioritization of students in need of weekend food assistance. Obtaining signed parent permission slips, which alert families to this service and request authorization to sign their child up as a recipient, can be challenging and an additional barrier for participation.

These barriers can result in lack of student and family access to this resource in some high-need schools. For instance, in their April 2016 memo, Montgomery County Council noted that "at New Hampshire Estates Elementary School, there are 459 FARMS eligible children. Serving 30% would mean serving 138. Currently, weekend food bags are provided to 30. At Roscoe Nix Elementary School, there are 404 FARMS eligible children. Serving 30% would be 121. Currently, weekend food bags are provided to eight." The County's goal is to increase the number of children reached to 25%.[89]

In response to these findings, the County Council earmarked an additional $150,000 for weekend bag programs to increase the number of elementary school students served by approximately 960 or 20% to a total of 5,580. Despite this increase, the current scope of this program is still far short of serving the nearly 14,000 FARMS eligible students that are estimated to be in need of supplemental weekend food. Further, innovations related to expanding into the high school settings and evolving the weekend bag approach are needed.

FINDING 3: LIVING IN SINGLE PARENT HOUSEHOLDS

Population:
Children of single parents below the Self-Sufficiency Standard

Location:
Notably in Census Tracts 7008.20, 2008.22, 7007.24 (Gaithersburg); 7008.18 (Germantown); 7032.14, 7032.13, 7032.15 (Aspen Hill); 7032.07 (Wheaton); 7015.08, 7016.01, 7014.22, 7014.17 (East County); 7017.02, 7023.01 (Silver Spring/Takoma Park)
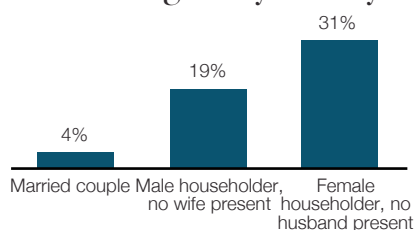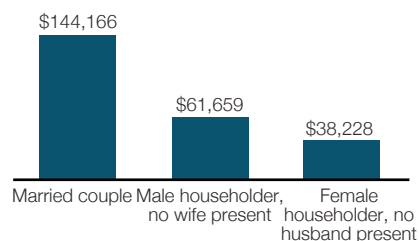
Order of Magnitude:
50,000 to 75,000

Barriers:
Children living with a single or unmarried parent in Montgomery County have a greater risk of food insecurity than children living with married parents, as evidenced by the number of households with children receiving Federal food assistance.[91]

Households with own children living in poverty in Montgomery County

- Married couple: 4%
- Male householder, no wife present: 19%
- Female householder, no husband present: 31%

Median income for households with own children in Montgomery County

- Married couple: $144,166
- Male householder, no wife present: $61,659
- Female householder, no husband present: $38,228

U.S. Census American Community Survey 2015 1-Year

Percent of households with own children in poverty by race/ethnicity

- White Alone
- Black of African American
- Asian
- Hispanic

Married couple: 1%, 6%, 3%, 6%
No spouse present: 6%, 22%, 27%, 29%
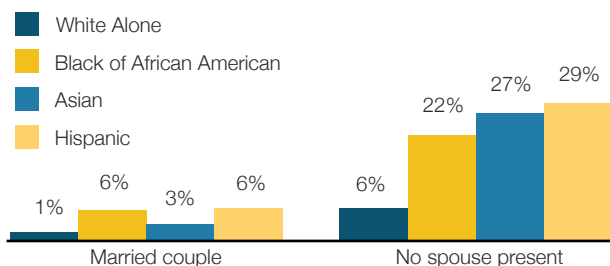
U.S. Census American Community Survey 2015 1-Year

Narrative:
National studies indicate that, in addition to poverty, the marital status and mental and physical status of the head of household play a central role in a child's food security. Among households with own children living in poverty, the majority are headed by females with no husband present (31%). This compares with 19% of male headed households with no wife, and 4% of households headed by married couples in Montgomery County (see graph on the left).

The median income for households with children significantly declines from married couples ($144,000) to single heads of households ($61,659) for male household with no wife, and $38,228 for female head of household with no husband present.

Of the households with children receiving Federal food assistance (SNAP), 30% are headed by females with no husband present, 13% are headed by males with no wife present, and 6% are headed by married couples.

Single parent households living in poverty also vary by race and ethnicity. Within each population assessed, the percentages living in poverty is significantly higher than their married counterparts. When no spouse is present, the percent of African American, Asian and Hispanic households with children living in poverty is disproportionately higher than their white counterparts (see graph above).

In Montgomery County, 52% of children in single-parent households live with a parent who is foreign born.[92] The Children's Health Watch study found that children of foreign-born mothers were three times as likely to experience food insecurity than children of U.S. born mothers.[93] This underscores that efforts to reduce food insecurity among children may need to take a broader perspective than addressing income alone.[94]

Single caregivers likely have less time available to prepare food and procure food. A single mother in a Silver Spring listening session discussed how with five children, and as the sole wage earner for her family, it is challenging even to access food assistance resources as that requires a significant time investment. She spoke of how it takes time to figure out which sites have food and when they are open, and once there you need to wait for a long time, sometimes hours for a pantry pickup.

Montgomery County is 8th in the state for percentage of income spent on child care. Families with two children making the median income in Montgomery County pay 20.7% of their income for childcare per year, on average.[95] The average percentage of income allocated to child care costs would be significantly higher for single caregiver households, further decreasing available income for other living expenses including food.

Maryvale Elementary School in Rockville and Nourish Now have partnered for over three years to provide carry-out style prepared meals for 40 students and their families, which are picked up by parents on a weekly basis. Maryvale has reported that these meals help alleviate different barriers for at-risk students and their family members. Funds are being saved from having to purchase several food items to make a well-balanced meal. Also with parents who are significantly time limited due to being a single parent, or working multiple jobs, these meals donated by Nourish Now save parents time from preparing dinner.

Photo Courtesy of Nourish Now

Single Parent Households with Children under 18 under the Self Sufficiency Standard

Legend

▨ Below Self Sufficiency Standard

Percent of Households that are Single Parent with Children

- 6.40% or Less
- 6.41 to 11.50%
- 11.51 to 18.60%
- 18.61 to 28.90%
- 28.91 to 47.68%
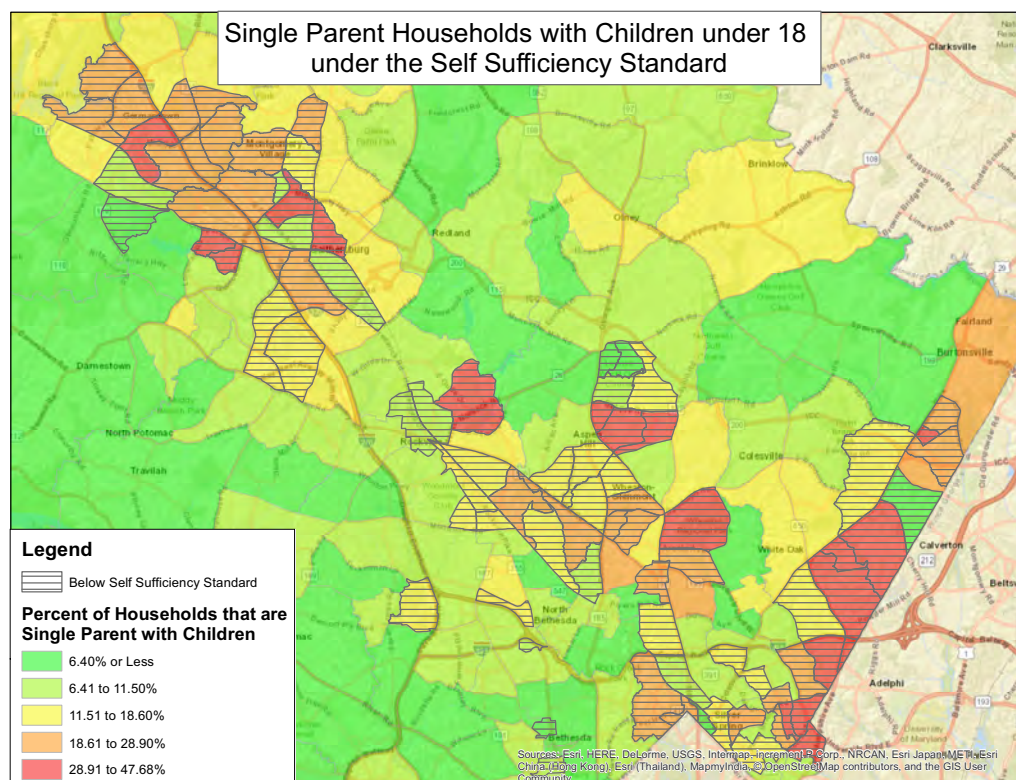
U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate

Seniors

Seniors are among the most vulnerable populations for food insecurity. Nationwide, between 2001 and 2011, the number of food insecure seniors more than doubled. This is particularly concerning as an estimated 10,000 baby boomers will turn 65 every day until 2030.[96] "Many of the baby boomers who have food security problems do not want to be labelled as Seniors," potentially delaying them from connecting to available services until these residents have increased in age, when food insecurity is likely more acute and services are more difficult to access due to mobility and isolation.

Food insecurity is associated with multiple poor health conditions such as diabetes and high blood pressure among seniors. Food insecure seniors are 60% more likely than their food secure counterparts to suffer from depression, 53% more likely to have a heart attack, and 40% more likely to be diagnosed with congestive heart failure.

Race, ethnicity, dietary restrictions, isolation, transportation and access to services are some of the factors that are associated with food insecurity.

Inconsistencies in defining "Senior" among service providers (50+, 55+, 60+, 65+, etc.) can be confusing for seniors.[96]

Photo Courtesy of Meals on Wheels Takoma Park

"Ms. Green, 85 years old and a widow, lives alone in her home of over 50 years. She has several wonderful neighbors who help look out for her, but no family in the area. She uses a walker and finds standing--to cook and clean--very difficult. Her eyesight is diminished by glaucoma, which also makes it difficult to prepare meals. She no longer drives and relies on neighbors to take her to the store. The cost of taking a taxi or having groceries delivered is prohibitive on her limited income. During the week, she receives two meals each day from Meals on Wheels. She enjoys the tasty hot food and the quick friendly visit from the volunteer."
Jill Feasley, Director, Meals on Wheels Takoma Park.
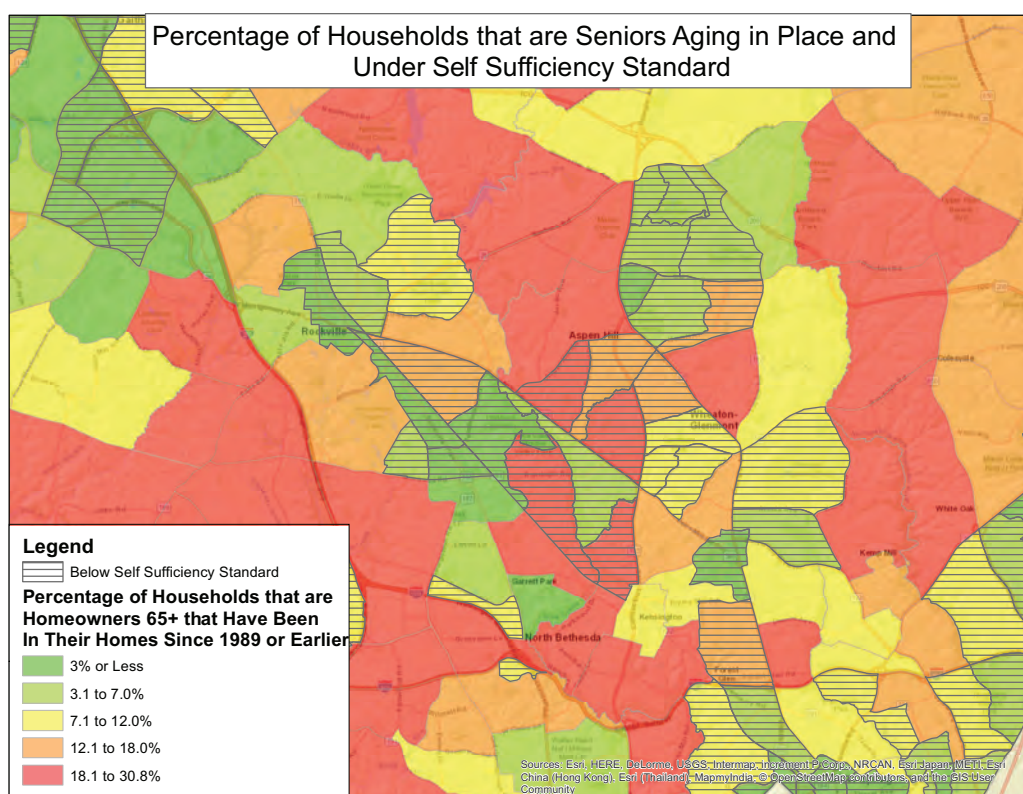
FINDING 4: AGING IN PLACE

Population:
Low-income seniors aging in place

Location:
Most notably in Census Tracts 7032.15, 7033.01, 7033.02, 7034.01, 7034.02, 7035.02 (Aspen Hill/ Viers Mill/Holiday Park); 7011.02, 7012.01 (Rockville); 7040 (Silver Spring)

Narrative:
Approximately 6% of seniors aged 60 and above (8,528 seniors) participated in SNAP programs in 2015, yet 16% of seniors are reported to live below 200% of the poverty line. Although the number of seniors participating in SNAP has more than doubled since 2005[97], clearly there are more seniors in need than are receiving food assistance.

Percentage of Households that are Seniors Aging in Place and Under Self Sufficiency Standard

Legend

Below Self Sufficiency Standard

Percentage of Households that are Homeowners 65+ that Have Been In Their Homes Since 1989 or Earlier

- 3% or Less
- 3.1 to 7.0%
- 7.1 to 12.0%
- 12.1 to 18.0%
- 18.1 to 30.8%

U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate

With 25% of seniors living alone and in isolation in the County, and 14% without a vehicle[98], seniors aging in place may not have regular contact with people knowledgeable about food assistance and other resources available to them. Many seniors are not technologically adept, which limits their ability to apply for, or even gather information on, food assistance programs and resources. According to a Pew Research national study, 23% of seniors 65+ are more likely to have physical or health conditions that make the use of technology challenging. Although the number of seniors accessing the internet has increased over time, 41% still do not, and the number of seniors online drops off significantly around age 75. Income is a determining factor too, as 61% of seniors in the income bracket below $30,000 do not use the internet. And, while seniors may have cell phones, many of them do not have smart phones, further limiting accessibility to services.

Order of Magnitude:
20,000 to 30,000 seniors aging in place below self-sufficiency

Barriers:
Seniors aging in place in Montgomery County may experience difficulty learning about and connecting to food assistance programs. Many of these seniors are isolated, especially those who do not drive, and may not interact with people who are knowledgeable about programs. Additionally, low technology literacy and access can prevent these seniors from connecting to services independently.

There are many programs and services available to seniors, but for many seniors, there is a stigma associated with asking for help, which may make them reluctant to ask for and/or receive food assistance. This becomes a broader outreach issue, necessitating communication and better connectivity between service providers and seniors aging in place.

Internet usage for older adults
% of those 60 and older who use the internet or email

Total for all 65+ (n=1,526)		59%
Gender		
a	Male (n=612)	65[b]
b	Female (n=914)	55
Age		
a	65-69 (n=531)	74[cd]
b	70-74 (n=410)	68[cd]
c	75-79 (n=244)	47[d]
d	80+ (n=305)	37
Education		
a	High school grad of less (n=598)	40
b	Some college (n=381)	69[a]
c	College graducation (n=537)	87[ab]
Household income		
a	<$30,000 (n=467)	39
b	$30,000-$49,999 (n=282)	63[a]
c	$50,000-$74,999 (n=192)	86[ab]
d	$75,000+ (n=274)	90[ab]
Community Type		
a	Urban (n=413)	60[c]
b	Suburban (n=758)	63[c]
c	Rural (n=355)	50

Note: Columns marked with a superscript letter indicate a statistically significant difference between that rown and the row designated by the superscript letter. Statistical significance is determined inside the specific section covering each demographic trait.

Pew Research Center's Internet Project July 18-September 30, 2013 tracking survey

Among seniors, Internet and broadband use drop off around age 75

% within each age group who...

■ Go online
■ Broadband at home

65-69	70-74	75-79	80+
74 / 65	68 / 55	47 / 34	37 / 21
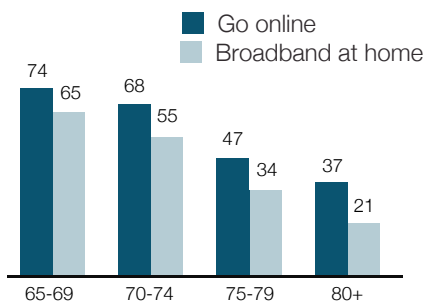
Pew Research Center's Internet Project July 18-September 30, 2013 tracking survey

Internet adoption over time, seniors vs. all adults
% of seniors, all adults who go online, 2000-2013

Adults 18+   86

50   59

14   65+

2000 2002 2004 2006 2008 2010 2012

PEW Research Center
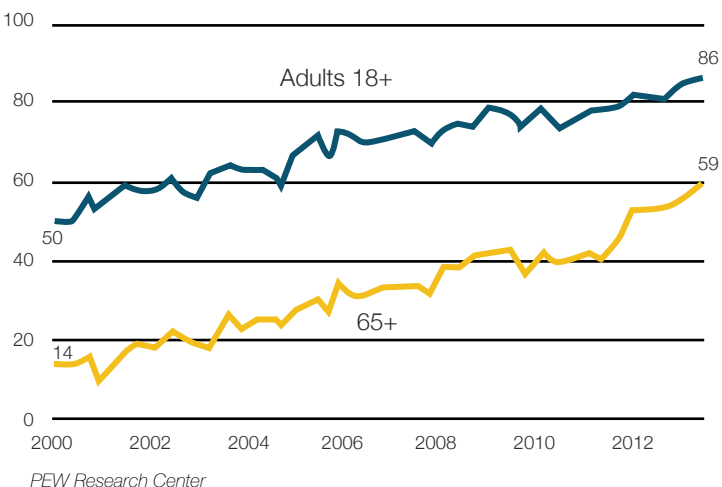
As the population of senior citizens in the County continues to grow, we see increasing numbers of seniors in need of services. Though our community has many services, some seniors lack the technology expertise to do internet searches much less know what search terms to use to find needed services. For this reason, low tech means of communication, such as printed materials and lists of phone numbers, are still needed in some cases. Not everyone has internet access or a smartphone; this is especially true of seniors.
--David Robert Lambert, Board of Directors, Graceful Growing Together

FINDING 5: LIMITED ACCESS TO TRANSPORTATION

Population:
Low-income seniors and people with disabilities without a vehicle or unable to drive

Location:
East County and Upcounty, outside the fixed public transportation routes

Order of Magnitude:
20,000 to 30,000

Barriers:
Seniors, particularly those aging in place, and people with disabilities in Montgomery County may experience difficulty accessing food and food assistance programs due to transportation challenges. Many of these individuals are isolated and/or living in their homes, and may not drive or have access to a vehicle. Likewise, those in independent living housing or group homes may also face transportation barriers, although these residents in general have more options than their counterparts aging in place. The County provides many transportation options, but Upcounty is particularly challenged regarding transportation, since there are significantly fewer fixed routes and limited access to MetroAccess (MetroAccess will only serve areas that are within ¾ of a mile from a fixed-route bus stop). In addition, taxis are less inclined to serve less populated regions.

Narrative:
Retail access to nutritious, affordable food is one of the most important factors in determining whether an individual or family is food secure. Fresh, nutrient-dense, perishable foods tend to be heavy, and access to a vehicle or alternate reliable, convenient, and affordable transportation allows families to shop at their stores of preference, and purchase the quantity and quality of desired groceries. Manna's study of Seniors identified transportation as one of the "two most frequently mentioned barriers" to acquiring the quantity and types of food needed.[99] Twenty-three percent of seniors surveyed in Montgomery County found shopping and groceries stores to be less than conveniently located. Ten percent of seniors do not drive themselves, and 14% of senior households in Montgomery County do not have a vehicle.[100]

For seniors that do not have local adult children or others to assist them, transportation is a common concern. Public transportation may pose a challenge. Seniors must be able to get to the vehicle without assistance, which can be a barrier to using the service and for purchasing more than just a few items while on a shopping trip. The bus routes may be long and inconvenient. Additionally, seniors noted that the senior buses may not go to the stores with more affordable or culturally appropriate options.

This is equally as important for individuals and families accessing food from food assistance providers (organizations that offer free or low cost food, such food banks, pantries, and soup kitchens), who may face the additional challenges of a traveling longer distances to access available services, which often have limited hours of operation. The food obtained at food pantries is often in large quantities, heavy boxes of food intended to last for multiple days.

The county offers many transportation options for seniors and people with disabilities. The following paragraphs describe some of the transportation options available for seniors. [102]

People over 65 and people with disabilities can ride RideOn buses and some Metro Buses in Montgomery County for free Monday through Saturday from 9:30 am-3:00 pm and half-fare at all other times.

The Montgomery County Area Agency on Aging pays the Department of Transportation to take older people living in 13 primarily low-income apartment communities to grocery stores free of charge using RideOn buses. The size of the buses, along with the limitations of the parking environment, can make dropping residents directly in front of grocery stores difficult. Also, the trips have to take place within a narrow window of time, so the buses are not able to drive far from the apartment buildings. Residents of one of the buildings, Arcola Tower, are provided transportation to a Korean grocery store (H mart) every other week because the building is close to the store, and the parking lot can accommodate the RideOn bus. Ability to shop at other ethnic grocery stores is limited due to time constraints and drop-off limitations of the RideOn buses as described above.

The Montgomery County Call-n-Ride Program (CNR) provides subsidized taxi trips for low-income persons with disabilities and seniors to transport participants to medical and/or personal appointments. The County subsidizes 50-90% of the cost of the rides, depending on the household income of each individual. Individuals may use this transportation resource for any purpose, including grocery shopping, and is available to residents who do not have a fixed route, however, the cabs are not always available. This program is designed as a supplement to Montgomery County's local transportation service.[103]

At the Fall 2016 listening session at Silver Spring Reformed Church, seniors living in a nearby Housing Opportunities Commision building have used the vouchers available for Barwood Taxi or Uber, but they have experienced challenges with drivers who don't want to accept the vouchers as they are difficult to redeem for payment. These seniors also were aware that free bus tokens are available for some seniors, but many did not use this resource as it requires an application, and if you don't use the tokens you lose eligibility.

For individuals needing assistance provided by an escort, adults with disabilities making less than $40,000/year can use the Escorted Transportation program funded by the County and managed by the Jewish Council for the Aging (JCA). Clients can take up to 4 trips per month for any purpose, including grocery shopping.

The County contracts with nonprofit organizations to provide grocery shopping and/or food delivery services to those who qualify. Sample programs are run by Food and Friends and The Senior Connection.

Photo courtesy of Capital Area Food Bank

Volunteers affiliated with aging-in-place villages often provide free transportation for any purpose to their neighbors. While not all County residents have access to a village, and some villages charge membership fees, this is an option for a growing number of County residents. Other non-profit organizations such as Gaithersburg HELP and Damascus HELP offer transportation to low-income residents.

The County provides free transportation to its senior centers, as do the cities of Gaithersburg and Rockville, as well as to four community centers. All five senior centers and three community centers offer lunch for a voluntary donation toward the cost of the meal.

MetroAccess offers some beneficial services to assist seniors, however, MetroAccess requires the trips last no less than 1 hour, making short trips to the grocery store challenging.

At the Silver Spring Christian Reformed Church food pantry, several of our participants live in an Housing Opportunity Commission (HOC) apartment building for seniors. Participants come once a month and are able to choose their food and are particularly happy to be able to get fresh produce. Usually, they leave with at least 30 lbs. of food, which is difficult for seniors to carry, particularly on public transportation. The senior building is close to a mile away. We have a few people who walk to the pantry, but then they need a ride home with the food.

"When we first began operating the food pantry three years ago, the facility was able to provide van transportation to help residents attend the food pantry. Van support is no longer available because of changes to HOC's transportation policies. We have begun to offer rides to residents, but are limited in how much transportation we can provide due to volunteer availability.

Those who continue to come have an established relationship with our volunteers and the food pantry. We have had fewer new participants from the HOC facility since van support ended. We now get about 14 participants per month from the senior building; when we had regular van support, we had between 20 - 30 people per month."
Jennifer Renkema, Food Pantry Director, Silver Christian Reformed Church

The County has long funded JCA's Connect-a-Ride program which offers information and referral and outreach pertaining to transportation resources, as well as training on how to use the fixed-route system. The Commission on People with Disabilities maintains a comprehensive Transportation Network as well as training on how to use the fixed-route system.

The Commission on People with Disabilities maintains a comprehensive Transportation Network Directory (online and print) which includes a section on Grocery Shopping. JCA and the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services are using federal grants partly to increase awareness, through targeted outreach activities, including to people living Upcounty and speakers of Spanish and Chinese.

Senior Households without Vehicles and Under Self Sufficiency Standard

Legend
Percent of Households that are Seniors without Vehicles

- 0.45% or Less
- 0.451 to 1.40%
- 1.41 to 2.70%
- 2.71 to 5.30%
- 5.31 to 9.94%
- Below Self Sufficiency Standard

Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap, increment P Corp., NRCAN, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri (Thailand), MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community
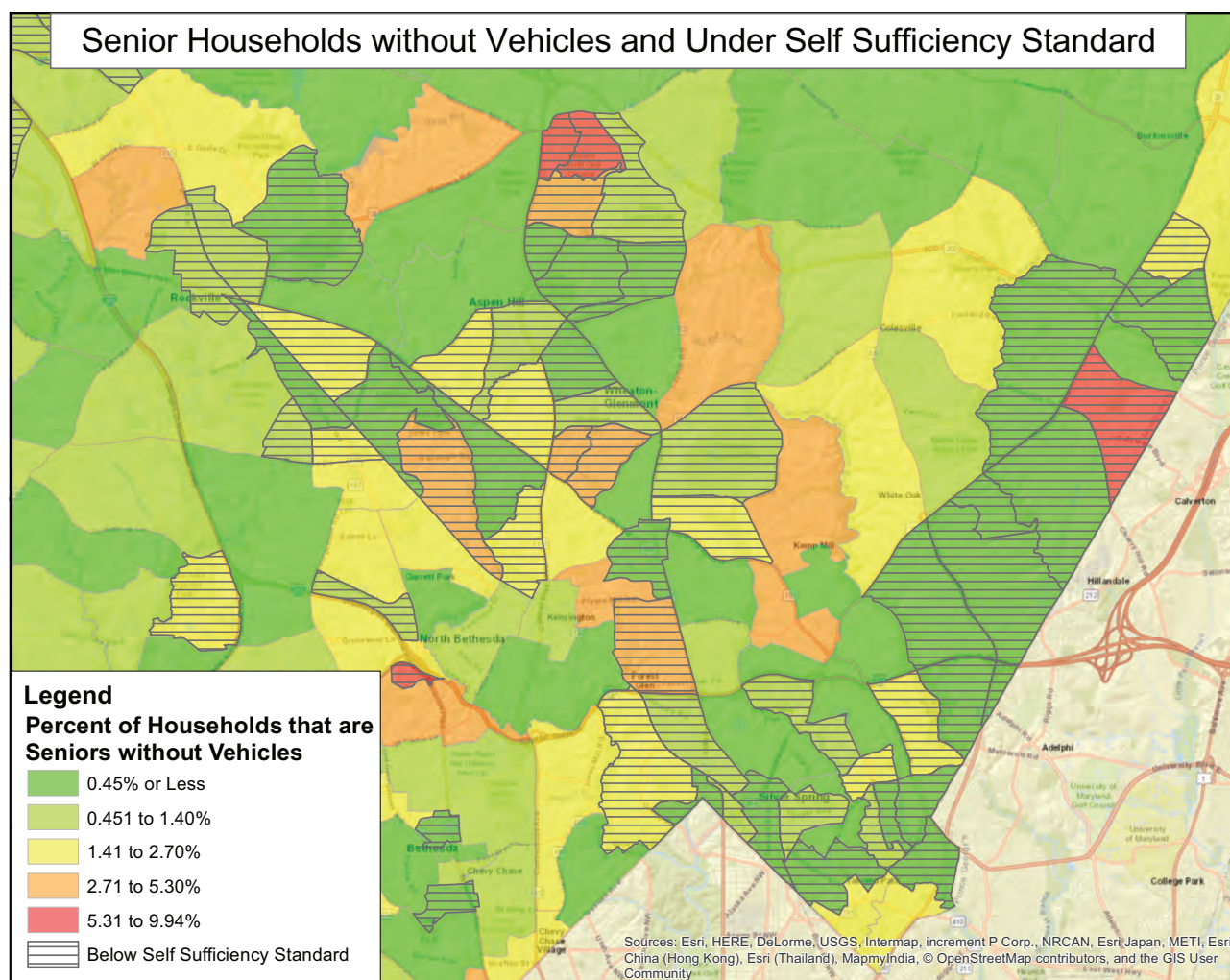
U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate

FINDING 6: LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

Population:
Foreign Born Seniors with Limited English Proficiency

Location:
Various portions of the County, especially in large portions of zip codes 20906, 20902, 20877, 20878, and 20852. Red and orange census tracts in the map are listed in a footnote

Order of Magnitude:
10,000 - 15,000

Barriers:
Limited English Proficiency (LEP) can be a barrier for many foreign born seniors across the County, particularly for seniors of East Asian descent.

Narrative:
Approximately 10% of seniors in Montgomery County were estimated to have LEP in 2014 by the US Census American Community Survey 2014. Though thousands of Montgomery County residents of all ages have Limited English Proficiency (LEP), seniors with LEP face unique challenges compared to the general population with LEP. Children with LEP have a variety of resources available through Montgomery County Public Schools at no cost to receive English as a Second Language coursework. Working age adults can take advantage of programs available at the Gilchrist Center and Montgomery College. Additionally, regular social interaction outside of the home or with children learning English can help working adults learn some basic English to help function outside of the home. Though these programs and social interactions are also available to seniors, seniors face many challenges related to transportation, mobility, technology literacy, and physical health that can make these resources to improve English proficiency less accessible. Additionally, the landscape of languages spoken by seniors with LEP in the County is different than that of the general population with LEP.

Forty one percent of seniors with LEP in Montgomery County speak Asian and Pacific Island Languages and 29% speak Spanish. This stands in strong contrast to the general population in which 55% of people with LEP speak Spanish and 27% speak Asian and Pacific Island languages. As a result, local infrastructure to support residents with LEP, including food retail options and food assistance services, is more robust for Spanish languages than Asian and Pacific Island languages. This gap in services leaves many seniors with LEP that speak Asian and Pacific Island Languages with fewer resources to access food.

Languages Spoken by Seniors with Limited English Proficiency (2014)

- Speak Spanish
- Speak Asian and Pacific Island languages
- Speak other Indo-European languages
- Speak other languages
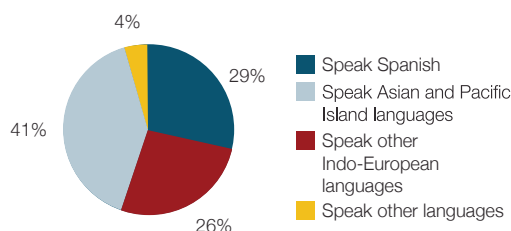
Languages Spoken by All People with Limited English Proficiency (2014)

- Speak Spanish
- Speak Asian and Pacific Island languages
- Speak other Indo-European languages
- Speak other languages
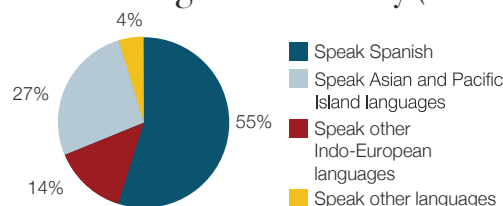
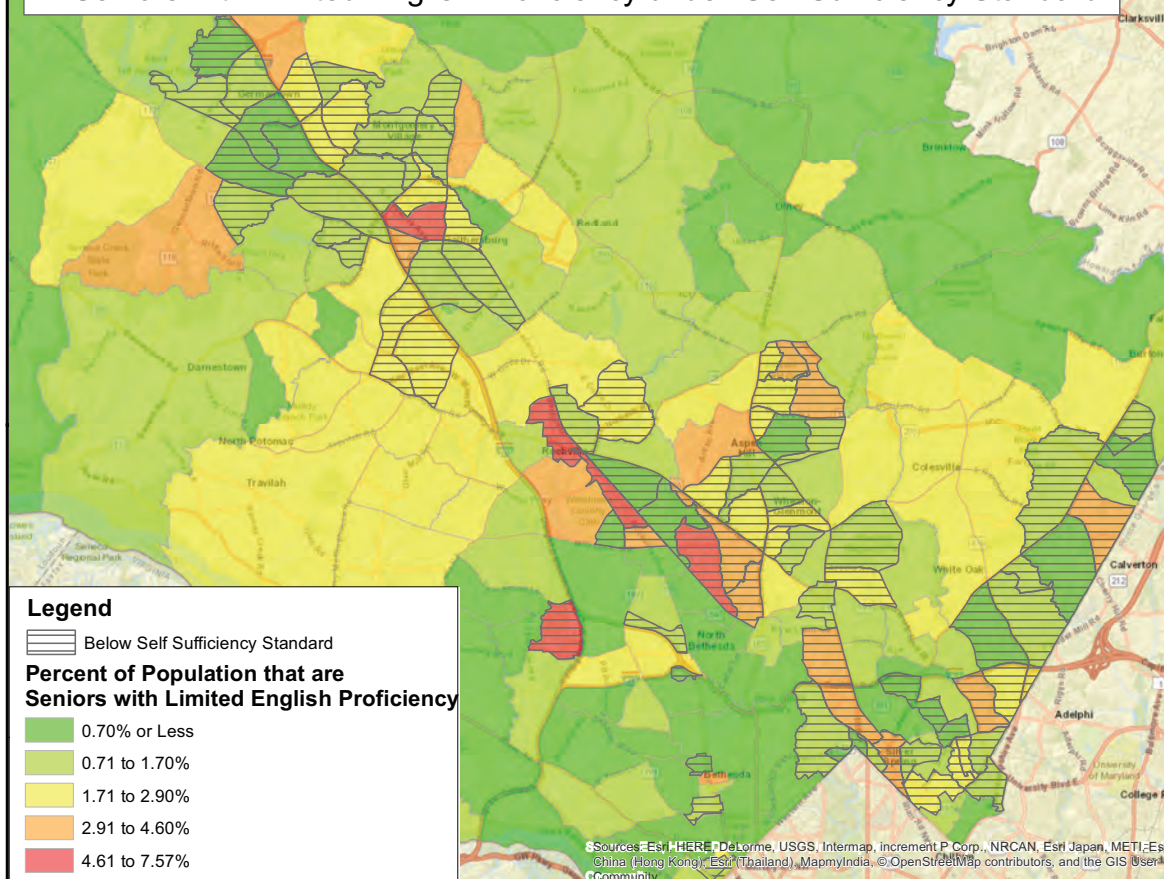*U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate*

Some senior programs in the County government address the needs of seniors with LEP of Asian and Pacific Island descent, including the Department of Health and Human Service's Senior Nutrition Program. In the community, there are some faith and community based organizations that serve the needs of Asian seniors, especially Chinese and Korean seniors. Representatives of the County's Asian American Advisory Group and other community members noted, however, that existing resources are not robust enough to meet the demand for services.

Recognizing the unique challenges seniors face with respect to Limited English Proficiency (LEP), the Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy (MCAEL) supports some English language classes that are offered at several senior centers and the Chinese Culture and Community Service Center. These classes take place alongside other senior programs to meet these adult learners where they are, so they do not need to arrange other transportation. With these efforts, over the last 4 years, MCAEL providers have served just over 1,000 adults over the age of 65. There is still a large unmet need among this population – there are about 25,000 seniors in Montgomery County that self-identify as needing help with their English. Attention to helping these residents with their English proficiency will play a large role in increasing food security.

--Kathy Stevens, Executive Director, MCAEL

Seniors with Limited English Proficiency under Self Sufficiency Standard

Legend

▨ Below Self Sufficiency Standard

Percent of Population that are Seniors with Limited English Proficiency

- 0.70% or Less
- 0.71 to 1.70%
- 1.71 to 2.90%
- 2.91 to 4.60%
- 4.61 to 7.57%

U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate

FINDING 7: MEDICAL DIETARY RESTRICTIONS

Population:
Low-income seniors with dietary restrictions

Location:
See map below

Order of Magnitude:
15,000 to 25,000 seniors below 150% of poverty, unknown how many with dietary issues

Barriers:
Low-income seniors throughout the County face barriers related to budgeting for food. Seniors may not qualify for sufficient federal benefits and may have health issues or drug-nutrient interactions necessitating dietary restrictions that could dissuade them from participating in food assistance programs. Those requiring prepared meals may live off the route for delivered meals and/or may not have access to daily meals.

Narrative:
Many Seniors live on limited budgets and have extensive medical bills for short term and chronic issues, resulting in limited funds for healthy food. Sometimes they shop multiple times a week to find all the items needed at the best prices, and stores with best prices/options can be difficult to access without a vehicle, as outlined in the "Seniors: Limited Access to Transportation" finding (p. 49). A Manna Food Center study of seniors identified budget as one of the "two most frequently mentioned barriers to acquiring the quantity and types of food needed".[104]

Senior Vulnerability Index

Legend

■ High Vulnerability, High Density
■ High Vulnerability, Medium Density
■ High Vulnerability, Low Density
■ Medium Vulnerability, High Density
■ Medium Vulnerability, Medium Density
■ Medium Vulnerability, Low Density
■ Low Vulnerability, High Density
■ Low Vulnerability, Medium Density
■ Low Vulnerability, Low Density

Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap, increment P Corp., NRCAN, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri (Thailand), MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

Montgomery County CountyStat

Seniors often have special food needs, due to adverse physiological and perceptual changes, as well as overall age-related conditions. Loss of taste or smell may impact the acceptance of a meal and result in the lack of interest in cooking, or eating. Inability to prepare food, and/or chew/digest foods can also become an impediment. Lack of mobility within the home and living alone can reduce interest in eating in general and, specifically, desire to prepare one's own food. And, drug-nutrient interactions may necessitate a modified diet.

Many independent living centers serve as drop-off sites for food assistance providers such as Manna Food Center, but dietary restrictions can make participation in food assistance programs challenging. Seniors who do accept assistance in the county have said they want to see more fresh foods, better quality produce and more fish (canned or fresh). Smaller portion packaging would also be appreciated. They would like more information on the nutritional content of foods and package dates to help make better dietary choices and smarter purchases when shopping for groceries, and breakfast is an important meal.[105]

When help to prepare foods at home is not feasible, prepared and home delivered meal programs are available to those eligible. However, meals delivered to the more rural areas of the county such as Dickerson currently require a contract with a special delivery service, which brings the cost to $25.00 per delivery plus the cost of the meal, $5.63. There is limited capacity to service new households on established delivery routes, which means some Seniors meals are delivered at an additional cost. The growing number of disabled individuals under the age of 60 in need of similar services is also outpacing available resources.

Finally, culture and country of origin contribute significantly to the food choices of Montgomery County seniors. Asian residents make up the largest minority group among County residents age 65 or older, accounting for 14%, with Black residents accounting for 12% and Hispanic residents (of any race) accounting for 8%. Eighteen percent of all seniors speak a language other than English at home.[106] In the relatively small sample size of 100 senior residents surveyed in Manna's senior report, 24 countries were represented, each with its own dietary practices. Seniors may be less assimilated to the standard American diet than their younger counterparts and have less interest in or knowledge of foods provided by food assistance programs. There are specialized programs that offer cooked meals for Seniors in different ethnic groups around the county, but are offered only on certain days during the week, and not on weekends.

Franklin Apartments Container Garden

Early in the Community Garden program, Montgomery Parks partnered with the City of Takoma Park and MOMI, which operates the Franklin Apartments, a 185-unit apartment building serving the elderly and disabled, to open a container garden in the parking lot of the building. Initially, 16 of the 28 containers were set-aside for rental by Franklin Apartment residents and the remainder were offered to Montgomery County residents. By 2016, the interest in the container gardens had increased among the Franklin Apartment residents so much that 24 of the containers were actively gardened by the apartment residents. As a result, these residents have had the opportunity to spend time outdoors, enjoy the gardening hobby, interact with others who shared their passion, and have more fresh food.
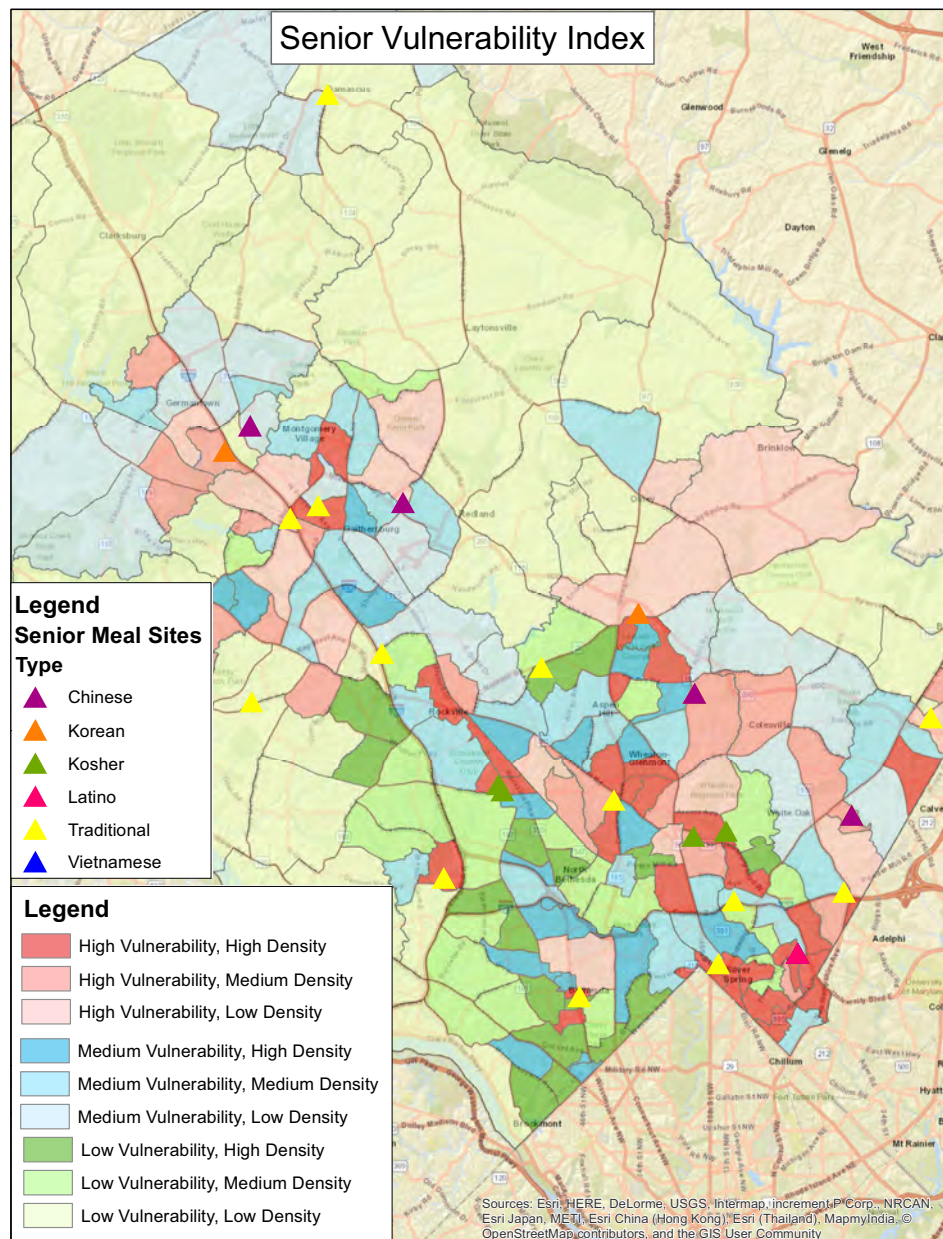-- *Pat Lynch, Community Garden Coordinator, M-NCPPC, Montgomery Parks*

Senior Congregate Lunch Site in Montgomery County.
Photo Courtesy of Melanie Polk, Senior Nutrition Program, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services

Senior Food Assistance Sites:

The map below shows the Senior Meal Sites sponsored by the Department of Health and Human Services. Additional data collection and mapping is required to adequately analyze the full extent of food assistance resources available specifically for Seniors, including Meals on Wheels services (which cover most of the County), Manna Food Center Senior housing drop sites, and Capital Area Food Bank Senior Brown Bag sites.[3]

Senior Vulnerability Index

Legend
Senior Meal Sites
Type
- ▲ Chinese
- ▲ Korean
- ▲ Kosher
- ▲ Latino
- ▲ Traditional
- ▲ Vietnamese

Legend
- High Vulnerability, High Density
- High Vulnerability, Medium Density
- High Vulnerability, Low Density
- Medium Vulnerability, High Density
- Medium Vulnerability, Medium Density
- Medium Vulnerability, Low Density
- Low Vulnerability, High Density
- Low Vulnerability, Medium Density
- Low Vulnerability, Low Density

Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap, increment P Corp., NRCAN, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri (Thailand), MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

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Foreign Born Residents

The County Executive has established a vision for Montgomery County to be the most welcoming community in America. This sentiment stems from the rapid growth in our foreign born population. Between 1990 and 2000, the Country's foreign born population grew by 73%, and between 2000 and 2009, the foreign born population grew by more than 128%.[107] National estimates put the rates of food insecurity for this population between 30 and 60%.[108]

A wide variety of factors influence food security among the foreign born, including immigration status, English proficiency, education, income, and cultural food requirements. Often, foreign born people are not eligible for public assistance during the first five years in the U.S. and they may not have the financial resources, English language skills, or familiarity with the food or food environment to protect themselves and their families from food insecurity. By 2014, over 60,000 Montgomery County residents (approximately 6% of the County's population) were estimated to have low English proficiency.[108] In general, studies show that as immigrants stay longer in the U.S., they become more food secure, but the quality of their diet may decrease, contributing to diet-related health disorders. Many families may be reluctant to apply for benefit programs or use food assistance resources, due to pride, language barriers, or fear it could negatively affect their immigration status.[109]

Photo Courtesy of Manna Food Center

FINDING 8: CULTURAL BARRIERS TO ACCESSING SERVICES

Population:
Foreign born people, especially of African and Asian descent

Location:
Most notably in Census tracts 7015.08, 7015.09, 7016.01, 7016.02 (East County); 702.01, 7017.02, 7019, 7020, 7023.01, (Silver Spring/Takoma Park); 7032.07, 7034.04, 7038 (Wheaton/Glenmont); 7032.13, 7032.14 (Aspen Hill); 7012.19 (Rockville); 7007.19, 7007.24 (Gaithersburg)

Order of Magnitude:
50,000 to 60,000 foreign born residents at or below 150% of poverty

Barriers:
Language and cultural barriers can lead to misinterpretation and misunderstanding of the rules for different food access programs. This can create distrust of institutions or government programs that provide assistance. Though the County invests in outreach to overcome this barrier, current efforts do not adequately address challenges unique to the needs of African and Asian foreign born residents.

> Though the organizations I am affiliated with do not directly work on food security issues, I have witnessed how challenging it can be to connect our community members to resources. Many of them are African immigrant women experiencing severe health problems and are not able to feed themselves or their families. Even in such dire circumstances, many women are reluctant to tell us about their food needs. As we struggle to identify need in our own community, we know there must be hundreds or even thousands of immigrants that the County is unable to reach because of cultural barriers.
> - *Soffie Ceesay, African Immigrant Caucus*
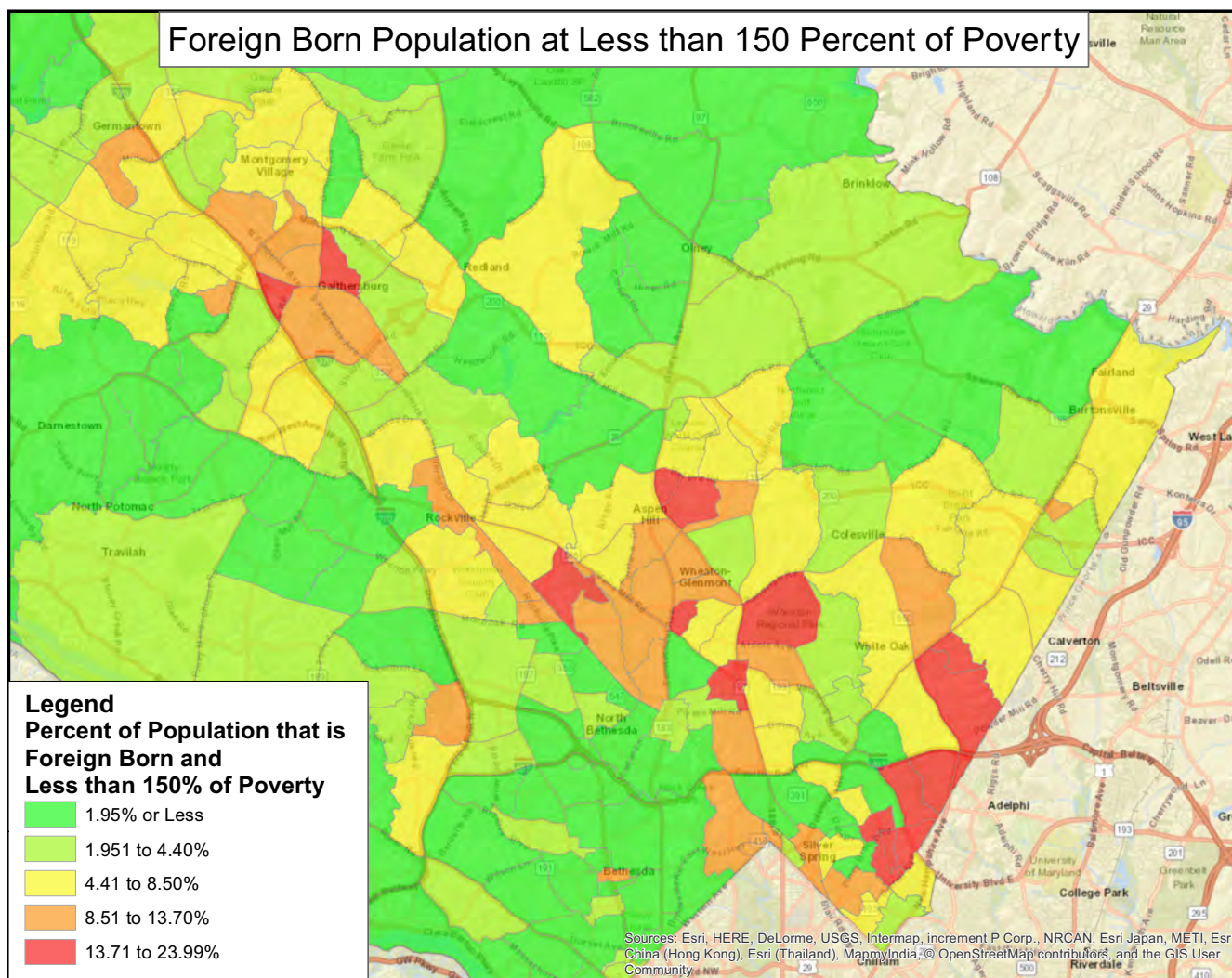
Narrative:
The Asian American Advisory Group (AsAAG) and African Affairs Advisory Group (AfAAG) noted that understanding food security needs within their respective communities can be challenging due to a variety of cultural barriers. The AsAAG noted that there was strong resistance to seeking services due to cultural stigma associated with needing assistance. AfAAG members noted that cultural norms around privacy and lived experience of government corruption in home countries deterred many people in need from seeking services. Though these specific barriers are qualitative and as diverse as the cultural backgrounds of County residents, they are all similar in deterring community members from seeking resources they need to be food secure. "The critical challenge for agencies and nonprofit organizations is to work to remove these barriers for foreign born residents of the County in accessing services," Diane Vu from the County's Office of Community Partnerships explains. "However, even if service providers are able to be effective in their outreach and building enough trust in the community so that residents are comfortable to access services, finding resources that are culturally and linguistically appropriate is still a huge challenge."

People seek support in the places in which they are most comfortable. In the case of foreign born residents, these places are nonprofits, communities of faith, and other institutions where people speak their language and are familiar with their culture. Conversations with diverse faith-based institutions highlighted that they are often the first places foreign born people turn to for support. Simultaneously, these institutions mostly rely on volunteer labor that may not be knowledgeable about additional resources in the County that could help people be more food secure.

Foreign born people of African and Asian descent—especially from Southeast Asia and West Africa—have fewer resources available to them than some other groups of foreign born residents. The organizations that do cater to these communities often refer people in need to food resources in the County and Federal benefit programs (if they are eligible). Though the AsAAG and AfAAG agreed that people were grateful for these services, they simultaneously pointed out that these resources lacked culturally appropriate food options, especially for non-Hispanic foreign born populations. "Food is a unique communication tool between peoples of diverse culture and race," Daniel Koroma from the County's Office of Community Partnerships notes.

"Our County government, in partnership with our nonprofits, needs to continue to bring people together and build a comprehensive service delivery network to serve all residents of all backgrounds."

Even if an individual is eligible for SNAP benefits—which allows individuals to buy food of their choice—many smaller ethnic grocery stores that sell culturally appropriate food for Asian and African immigrant populations are not authorized to accept SNAP benefits.[2] These barriers make it difficult to access culturally appropriate food even for foreign born residents that overcome their cultural barriers and follow-up on referrals from institutions that serve their communities.

Foreign Born Population at Less than 150 Percent of Poverty

Legend
Percent of Population that is Foreign Born and Less than 150% of Poverty

- 1.95% or Less
- 1.951 to 4.40%
- 4.41 to 8.50%
- 8.51 to 13.70%
- 13.71 to 23.99%

Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap, increment P Corp., NRCAN, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri (Thailand), MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate

FINDING 9: CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE FOOD ASSISTANCE SERVICES

Population:
Low income foreign born people

Location:
Most notably in Census tracts 7015.08, 7015.09, 7016.01, 7016.02 (East County); 702.01, 7017.02, 7019, 7020, 7023.01, (Silver Spring/Takoma Park); 7032.07, 7034.04, 7038 (Wheaton/ Glenmont); 7032.13, 7032.14 (Aspen Hill); 7012.19 (Rockville); 7007.19, 7007.24 (Gaithersburg)

Order of Magnitude:
50,000 to 60,000 foreign born residents at or below 150% of poverty.

Barriers:
Food insecure foreign born people can experience difficulty accessing culturally appropriate foods via food assistance programs. Food assistance services of all sizes are striving to increase supplies of culturally appropriate food for a growing foreign born population. Current resources, however, do not meet current demand.

Photo Courtesy of Manna Food Center

Manna Food Center offers low-income grocery shoppers free onsite education on unit price comparison and nutrition label reading to stretch tight budgets when purchasing healthy food. They offer workshops, cooking demos, and store tours in multiple languages.

When at a Senior Nutrition Program's Vietnamese Senior Congregate Meal, I learned some seniors traveled over two hours one way with multiple bus transfers from Germantown for this weekly free lunch in Long Branch. This was important to them, as it was the only food assistance program they knew of that had familiar foods along with socialization with other Vietnamese seniors. There are hundreds of other isolated Vietnamese seniors that either did not know about the program or could not make the trip to Long Branch. We need to find a way to serve them too through the expansion of programs targeted to Asian-Pacific American seniors.
--Diane Vu, Montgomery County Office of Community Partnerships

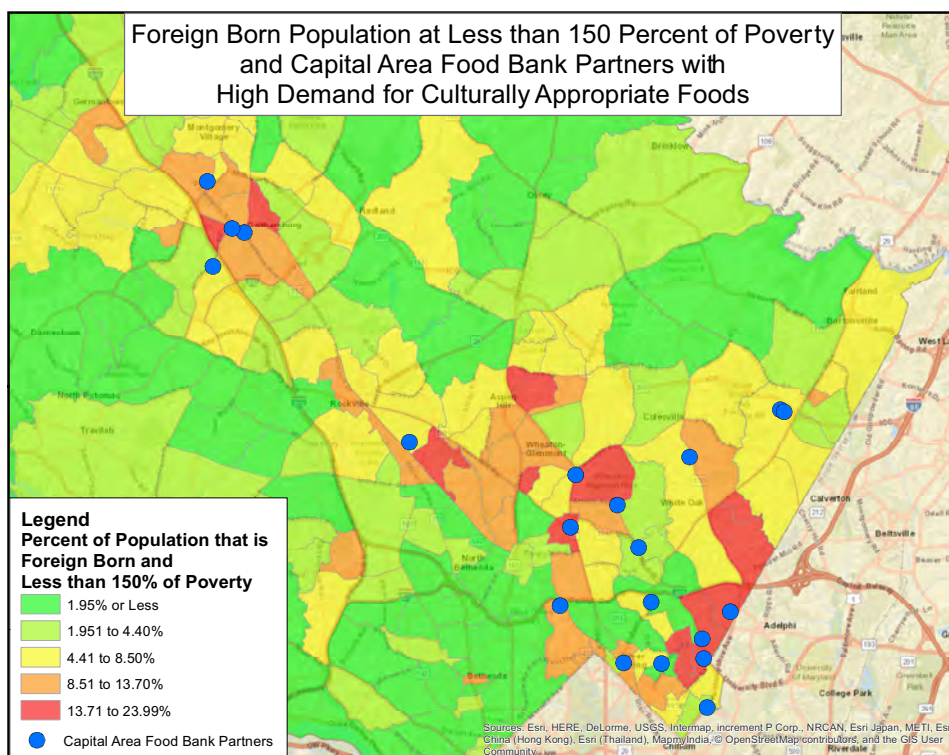*Photo Courtesy of Montgomery County Senior Nutrition Program*

Narrative:

The foreign born population in Montgomery County in 2014 was 325,927 people, an 11% increase from 2010. In this same time period, the number of foreign born people living below 200% of the poverty line increased by 23% to 81,978 people in 2014. As the population of low income foreign born people continues to increase, some food assistance resources have focused on expanding their resources of culturally appropriate food.

Manna Food Center and Capital Area Food Bank, two of the largest food assistance providers in the County, have set aside budget resources to purchase culturally appropriate foods for a growing low income Latino population (e.g., rice, beans, masa). The County's Senior Nutrition Program has formed partnerships with a variety of organizations to provide congregate meals that have culturally appropriate foods for Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese seniors. Additionally, some small food pantries in the County (e.g., Saint Camillus Church, Takoma Park Spanish Seventh Day Adventist) have begun to focus on serving culturally appropriate foods. Despite these efforts, foreign born residents across all listening sessions for this Plan noted that no food assistance organization had enough culturally appropriate food to meet the growing demand. Local production of diverse agricultural products is increasing through programs such as Crossroads Community Food Network and the Montgomery County New Farmer Project, which provide support to prospective farmers seeking to grow crops desired by County residents but in limited availability such as chipilín and hierba mora.

In multiple listening sessions, food assistance provider clients noted that in their home countries, the consumption of canned food is extremely uncommon, and fresh produce is the norm. However, in Montgomery County, and throughout the United States, standard food pantries and prepacked boxes primarily provide canned goods, which are unfamiliar to many clients, particularly immigrants newer to the United States.

This is not only a food security issue but also a dignity issue. When people are unable to access food that they know how to prepare, they can be deterred from seeking food assistance that they need. Alternatives are often unhealthy. Seventy percent of households surveyed by the Capital Area Food Bank report purchasing "inexpensive, unhealthy food" as a common coping strategy to hunger.[111]

Foreign Born Population at Less than 150 Percent of Poverty and Capital Area Food Bank Partners with High Demand for Culturally Appropriate Foods

Legend
Percent of Population that is Foreign Born and Less than 150% of Poverty
- 1.95% or Less
- 1.951 to 4.40%
- 4.41 to 8.50%
- 8.51 to 13.70%
- 13.71 to 23.99%
- ● Capital Area Food Bank Partners

Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap, increment P Corp., NRCAN, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri (Thailand), MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

Percent of Population: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate
Capital Area: Capital Area Food Bank

FINDING 10: CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE FOOD LITERACY: FOOD PREPARATION AND NUTRITION EDUCATION

Population:
Low income foreign born individuals

Location:
Most notably in Census tracts 7015.08, 7015.09, 7016.01, 7016.02 (East County); 702.01, 7017.02, 7019, 7020, 7023.01, (Silver Spring/Takoma Park); 7032.07, 7034.04, 7038 (Wheaton/Glenmont); 7032.13, 7032.14 (Aspen Hill); 7012.19 (Rockville); 7007.19, 7007.24 (Gaithersburg)

Order of Magnitude:
50,000 to 60,000 foreign born residents at or below 150% of poverty.

Barriers:
Foreign born residents that seek food literacy skills, education on topics such as food preparation and nutrition, to improve their health are typically presented with resources and recommendations to consume foods that are unfamiliar to them. Presenting unknown foods makes it challenging to adhere to food literacy recommendations, as lack of knowledge of where to buy these foods and how to prepare them can make the otherwise healthy recommendations and options unrealistic.

Narrative:
Over one third of Montgomery County residents are foreign born, representing over 150 countries of origin. The dietary habits of County residents are as diverse as the Countries from which they came. Food literacy resources—specifically education about how to access healthy and nutritious food—do not sufficiently reflect this rich diversity of food traditions, however. Readily available local food literacy resources provide health and nutrition recommendations based on a traditional American diet. A Senior listening session participant illustrated this challenge with the example of a nutrition educator at his doctor's office who provided instructions on measuring daily pasta intake- but his diet is rice-based, and he has never eaten pasta. While the underlying concepts of food literacy can be applied to other food traditions, doing so is challenging due to the language and cultural barriers that many foreign born County residents experience.

"At Liberty Grove United Methodist Church, we offer a food pantry on the nights of our Community Supper. We partner with the Rainbow Community Center and several times a onth, we are called to Rainbow to pick up produce for our clients. It has been a wonderful experience to receive items that those who run the food pantry are unfamiliar with but which our Haitian clients are able to teach us about their uses and they have expressed how grateful they are to receive such items. In particular, we have learned about green bananas which can be boiled and used like mashed potatoes and are nothing like the bananas many of us are familiar with. Sugar cane was another delight for the Haitians as they explained how to eat it (it is a very sweet treat!). The mingling of culture and food has made our food pantry a great experience for both the pantry workers and the recipients."
Susan Burgess, Food Ministries Coordinator, Liberty Grove United Methodist Church in Burtonsville

Listening sessions with foreign born residents confirmed that food literacy resources targeting the needs of foreign born residents are sparse despite critical need. Children receive some degree of food literacy education in public schools. However, parents often lack knowledge of how to purchase and prepare the American foods discussed in schools due to lack of personal familiarity with the products and recipes. The agricultural products available in American grocery stores and farmers markets often differ significantly from those commonly available in other countries, creating a barrier for home-cooking traditional, often nutritious, traditional dishes. A variety of ethnic groceries are located in our area, but the transit time required, as well as availability and convenience of transportation limits access to regularly shopping at these stores.

At the East County Listening session, one resident shared how her children ask her to prepare meals for them similar to what they eat in the school cafeteria; she wants to provide her family with the foods they desire, yet it is challenging for her as the ingredients, recipes, and and cooking style is different from those in her West African culture. At another listening session in Silver Spring, a mother from El Salvador spoke of how she prepares traditional dishes for her children but they do not want to eat them. On the other hand, food assistance providers note that their staff members and volunteers often lack familiarity with the culturally diverse foods desired by their clients, which are increasingly available to their programs through food recovery and donation.

Red Wiggler Farm has been growing and delivering fresh produce to the Montgomery County community, including those challenged by economics or disabilities for 21 years. One of the lessons learned along the way is that food security and food accessibility can't stop with the delivery at the doorstep. In the words of Woody Woodroof, the Founder and Executive Director of Red Wiggler, "It is about recognizing who the recipient or caregiver is, what their foodways are, and what their food culture involves." It entails knowing whether the food is culturally appropriate, and does the recipient want it, know how to cook it, and have the means to prepare it.

Photo Courtesy of Red Wiggler Farm

Red Wiggler discovered that many caregivers in the group homes he was servicing were unfamiliar with American produce; in one agency a large percentage of the staff working in the group home were from a specific region. As Red Wiggler worked more with the staff, they were able to deliver food that was more familiar and easier to prepare, such as sweet potato greens. "If we can provide food that gets the support staff really excited, then we can go from sweet potato greens to kale, collards, beet greens and all these things are healthy and nutritious," says Woody.

FINDING 11: LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

Population:
Foreign born residents with limited English proficiency

Location:
Most notably in census tracts 7007.13, 7007.24 (Gaithersburg); 7009.04 (Rockville); 7035.01 (Viers Mill Road); 7016.02, 7020 (Long Branch/University Blvd)

Order of Magnitude:
40,000 - 50,000

Barriers:
Limited English Proficiency (LEP) is a barrier to food access for many foreign born residents in Montgomery County—especially those that do not live in communities where their native language is commonly spoken. Although food stores that cater to individuals who speak different languages are accessible in some parts of the County, most residents with limited English proficiency lack convenient access to one of these stores.
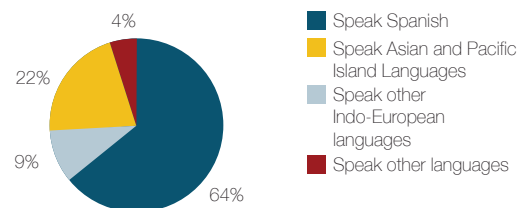
Everyday we serve hundreds of foreign born County residents with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) across all of our programs. Though many people may think of Spanish speaking people in Long Branch/Takoma Park when they think of our work in the County, we serve many residents with LEP beyond that group. Our Rockville Welcome Center helps connect dozens of adults daily to temporary work and permanent jobs. Most of these individuals are from Germantown and Gaithersburg; many are of West African origin and speak French. Because this community has a shorter history than Spanish-speaking people in Long Branch/Takoma Park, there are comparatively fewer local resources to serve their needs. The County's international population is growing in diversity and becoming more geographically diffuse. Our community's resources need to reflect this changing landscape. *Lindolfo Carballo, Director of Workforce Development, Education, and Employment, CASA de Maryland*

Narrative:
Over 60,000 Montgomery County residents—approximately 6% of the County's population[112] — are estimated to have LEP. Of these residents, over 70% (43,737 people) were between the ages of 18 and 64—working age adults—in 2014.
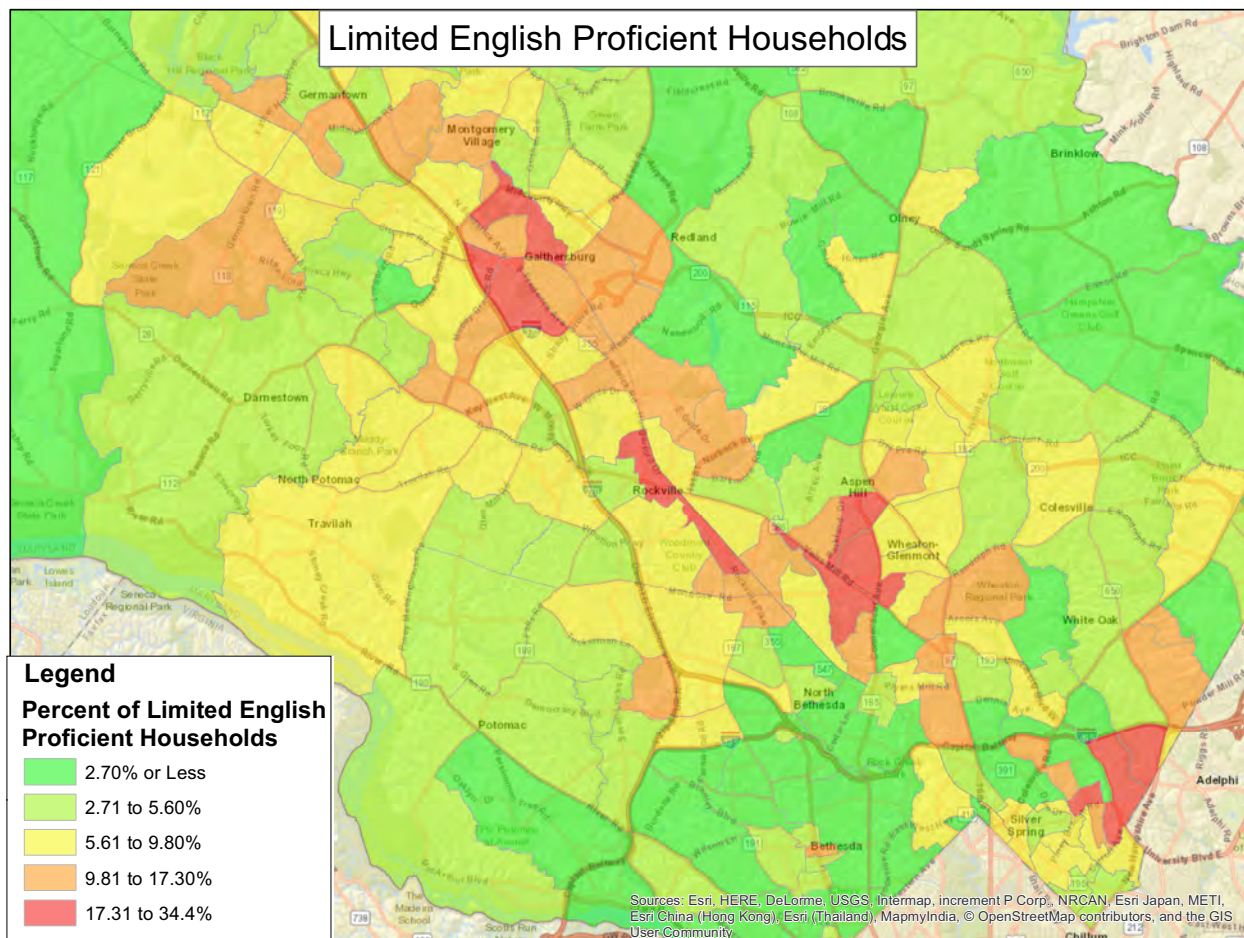
Though Limited English Proficiency is a clear barrier to food security, listening sessions held to support the development of the Food Security Plan offered valuable insight on how this barrier varies in Montgomery County by region. In a Spanish-language listening session for parents with LEP at Rolling Terrace Elementary School, no parent indicated that language was a barrier to accessing food. At a similar listening session at Montgomery Knolls Elementary School, less than half of the parents indicated that language was a barrier. These schools are located in Takoma Park and Long Branch, both of which have large Spanish-speaking populations. Most food retailers and food assistance providers in the area have Spanish-speaking staff and volunteers, enabling Spanish-speakers with LEP to utilize these resources in their native language with greater ease.

By contrast, adults with LEP in other parts of the County and/or from other language groups reported that language was a greater barrier to accessing food. This was especially true among foreign born residents who have more recently arrived in Montgomery County and have fewer institutions addressing their needs in their native languages (e.g., Southeast Asian, West African). The County's Asian American Advisory Group and the County's African Affairs Advisory Group both noted the linguistic diversity and diffuse geographic distribution of these immigrant groups made them more complex to serve than

Working Age Adults with LEP (2014)

- 4%
- 22%
- 9%
- 64%
- Speak Spanish
- Speak Asian and Pacific Island Languages
- Speak other Indo-European languages
- Speak other languages

U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate

Hispanic populations that share a common language and in many cases are more clustered geographically within the County.

Limited English Proficient Households

Legend

Percent of Limited English Proficient Households

- 2.70% or Less
- 2.71 to 5.60%
- 5.61 to 9.80%
- 9.81 to 17.30%
- 17.31 to 34.4%

Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap, increment P Corp., NRCAN, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri (Thailand), MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate

FINDING 12: MIXED DOCUMENTATION STATUS

Population:
People with undocumented immigration statuses in the County

Location:
Estimated 87,000 people throughout the County, likely located in high poverty areas (e.g., East County, Long Branch, Gaithersburg, Germantown)

Order of Magnitude:
80,000 - 90,000 undocumented; 30,000 to 40,000 under 200% poverty, unknown how many below self-sufficiency.

Barriers:
Some of the strongest programs available to help alleviate food insecurity in the County, such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), are not available to people of undocumented immigration status. Additionally, misconceptions of food assistance benefit program eligibility and fears of deportation can discourage eligible people from applying to or even inquiring about any food assistance programs, particularly if they have family members who are of undocumented status.

Narrative:
An estimated 87,000 people of undocumented immigration status lived in Montgomery County as of 2014.[113] SNAP, TANF, and some other prominent Federally funded food security-oriented programs are not available to people of undocumented immigration status as well as some documented immigrants holding certain types of visas. Eligible household members are able to receive SNAP benefits, even if there are other members of the household that are not eligible. For example, a child born in the United States is eligible for these benefits as a United States citizen, regardless of the immigration status of the parents. However, fear of drawing attention to the immigration status of other family members often deters those eligible from applying. Historically, the SNAP participation rate for citizen children living with non-citizen adults is significantly lower than the average participation for all eligible children.[114]

In Montgomery County, 91% of children under the age of 6 living with immigrant parents are American-born citizens (a rate that drops only to 73% for children aged 6-17).[115]
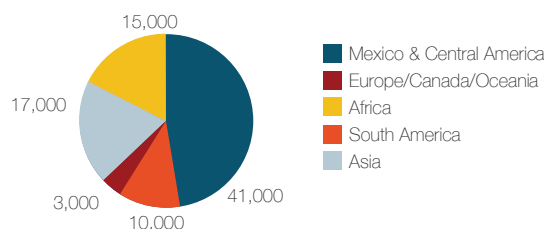
Without access to these significant sources of support, immigrants of undocumented status must rely more heavily on food banks, pantries, and other food assistance resources in the County. There are a few Federally funded food assistance resources that do not consider immigration status in their applications—most notably WIC and FARMs. These programs, however, specifically target households with children. These programs do not assist the estimated 54,000 immigrants of undocumented status that are neither children nor live with children. Though there are a variety of non-Federally funded programs and services available in Montgomery County for immigrants of undocumented status, many immigrants are reluctant to inquire about accessing these programs.

Food assistance programs, CASA de Maryland, the Gilchrist Center, and many other organizations in the County have identified and worked toward addressing the issue of miscommunication about immigration status and eligibility for food assistance programs.

Despite these efforts, misperceptions still remain for families of mixed documentation status. Especially amidst the national dialogue around immigration, immigrant communities fear inquiring about food assistance programs out of fear of deportation.

Organizations that work with these populations have noted that these fears could be worsened by the results of the 2016 presidential election. The uncertainty around future direction of Federal policies

Undocumented Immigrants' Country of Origin

- Mexico & Central America — 41,000
- Europe/Canada/Oceania — 3,000
- Africa — 15,000
- South America — 10,000
- Asia — 17,000

Migration Policy, Profile of Unauthorized Population, Montgomery County, Maryland (2014)

with respect to food security of people with mixed documentation status could present challenges to serving and engaging this community that were not known when this Plan was written.

"Since mid-July 2016, Mid-county United Ministries in Wheaton has been taking its choice pantry into the community in its Mobile MUM pantry. Every Sunday afternoon, a rental truck brings the same food options offered at the Mid County Regional Service Building into four or five locations where the majority of our clients live. This project was prompted by the realization that most of our clients come to us by way of public transportation and encounter difficulty managing what they receive as they return home.

Five months into this project we have discovered that 75% of the clients are new to MUM. So far the most frequented location is right in Wheaton about 1 mile from our pantry and in sight of apartments heavily populated with Latino families. As we continue in 2017 with this pilot program, we are anticipating touching the hunger needs of people who have either been unaware of the resource we provide or leery of seeking it in a government facility."
Larry White, Director, Mid-county United Ministries

Photo Courtesy of Mid-county United Ministries

People with Disabilities

Increasing access to nutritious foods for people with disabilities is complex, involving the type of disability, limitations on income and mobility, and transportation and community infrastructure options available.

Areas not readily served by food stores pose an extra challenge for people with disabilities, especially for those with limited transportation or mobility. Regular transportation can be cumbersome, even if Americans with Disabilities Act compliance is met. The County provides a wide array of transportation options, but some regions have limited options. Grocery stores can be a challenge to get into and navigate around. The stores may be vast, difficult to navigate, and the shelves difficult to reach. By law, stores provide services to accommodate peoplewith disabilities. Some residents may be unaware of these services or unaware that they qualify; others may be reluctant to ask for help. For those with mental disabilities, depression, isolation and anxiety may impede their ability to provide for themselves and thus their ability to avail themselves of helpful resources. Those who live in group homes or in circumstances that rely on caregivers may depend on the caregiver's capability and knowledge to prepare healthy meals.

FINDING 13: MOBILITY RESTRICTED

Population:
People with Disabilities living beneath the Self-Sufficiency Standard

Location:
Notably in census tracts highlighted in red or orange with horizontal lines across them. These include the following census tracts with a median income below self-sufficiency standard and more than 20% of residents have a disability: 7032.16, 7032.18, 7032.19 (Leisure World) and 7007.32 (Gaithersburg)
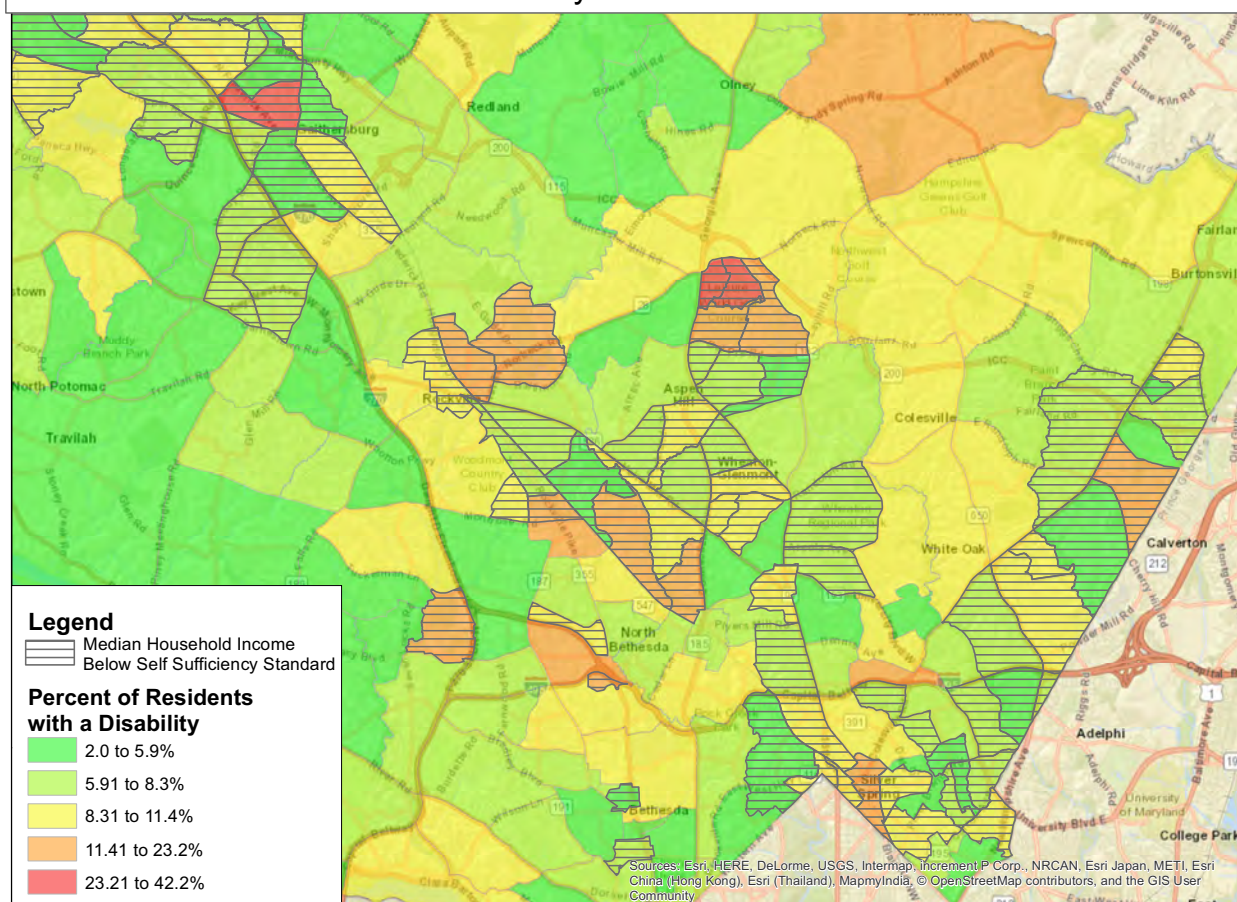
Order of Magnitude:
20,000 to 30,000

Barriers:
Even once transportation barriers have been overcome, for some people with disabilities navigating into and around grocery stores can be a challenge. This can make food shopping an arduous process, and may cause people to shop less frequently, further compounding the difficulty of transporting groceries, especially perishable foods. Communication may also act as a significant barrier, especially for those who are unable to fully communicate and/or comprehend written English, and for those who are deaf, non-verbal, or hard of hearing.

Percent of Residents with Disabilities by Census Tract and Median Household Income

Legend

Median Household Income Below Self Sufficiency Standard

Percent of Residents with a Disability
- 2.0 to 5.9%
- 5.91 to 8.3%
- 8.31 to 11.4%
- 11.41 to 23.2%
- 23.21 to 42.2%

Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap, increment P Corp., NRCAN, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri (Thailand), MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate

Narrative:

Many grocery stores are big and items on shelves can be hard to reach. The Americans with Disabilities Act, under Title III, obliges grocery stores to assist people with disabilities to access store goods. Many stores post signs encouraging customers to ask for assistance when needed, but not all people are aware of this service.

Disabilities tend to increase substantially with age. In 2015, of those 65 and over, approximately 29% had an ambulatory disability, and 23% had independent living difficulties, according to the Montgomery Commission of People with Disabilities.[116] Seniors who need assistance may be unaware of the service or they do not consider themselves as having a disability. In some cases, the social stigma of asking for assistance may limit participation. Seniors sometimes felt there was not enough time to get through the store.[117]

This finding may apply to seniors in general that may not have an identified disability, though there is not sufficient data to support a separate finding.

The Americans with Disabilities Act requires stores, restaurants other public accommodations to assist people with disabilities to access all goods and services. This means that grocery and other stores must make "reasonable modifications" to their policies, procedures and practices. This may mean assisting a person who is unable to retrieve items that they cannot reach or assisting someone who is blind or has low vision to maneuver through the store and find their purchases. Many adults 60+ that have a vision, hearing or mobility disability are not aware of this right to ask for assistance because they have only recently had an onset of a disability, do not think that their disability is severe enough to ask for assistance or do not identify as having a disability at all.   As our adult 60+ population grows in the County, we could see more people who have a vision, hearing or mobility disability be unaware of their right to ask for assistance at the customer service desk in grocery stores.
Betsy Luecking, Community Outreach Manager, Montgomery County Commission on People with Disabilities.

FINDING 14: WAITING FOR CASE MANAGEMENT

Population:
People with Developmental Disabilities without access to Case Managers

Location:
Largest number of people on waitlist are in zip codes 20878 (Gaithersburg); 20874 (Germantown); 20850 (Rockville); 20902, 20904, 20906 (Silver Spring)

Order of Magnitude:
Approximately 1,000

Barriers:
A segment of the residents with disabilities population are ineligible for county, state or Federal food assistance benefits and programs. Among them are people with developmental disabilities who are relatively high functioning; they are able to cook, clean, and work, and are not processing impaired, which makes them ineligible for case management services. Similarly, some live independently, but may have a cognitive or substance abuse disorder. Sometimes these individuals are initially living on their own but wind up in shelters or are homeless.

> "People with developmental disabilities who do not receive any case management services are at risk of having food accessibility issues. For a variety of reasons, these people can become food insecure and struggle to connect to food assistance prior to having a case manager."
> *Kim Mayo, Administrator, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services Disability Services*

Narrative:
An example of a group of higher functioning individuals that may be underserved are those on the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) Waiting List, categorized by the DDA as "Supports Only" (SO). SO are individuals who are determined to have a disability that qualifies them for individual support services (ISS) only. These services are designed to increase or maintain an individual's ability to live alone or in a family setting. Last fiscal year, DDA terminated case management services for SO individuals that are on the DDA Waiting List.
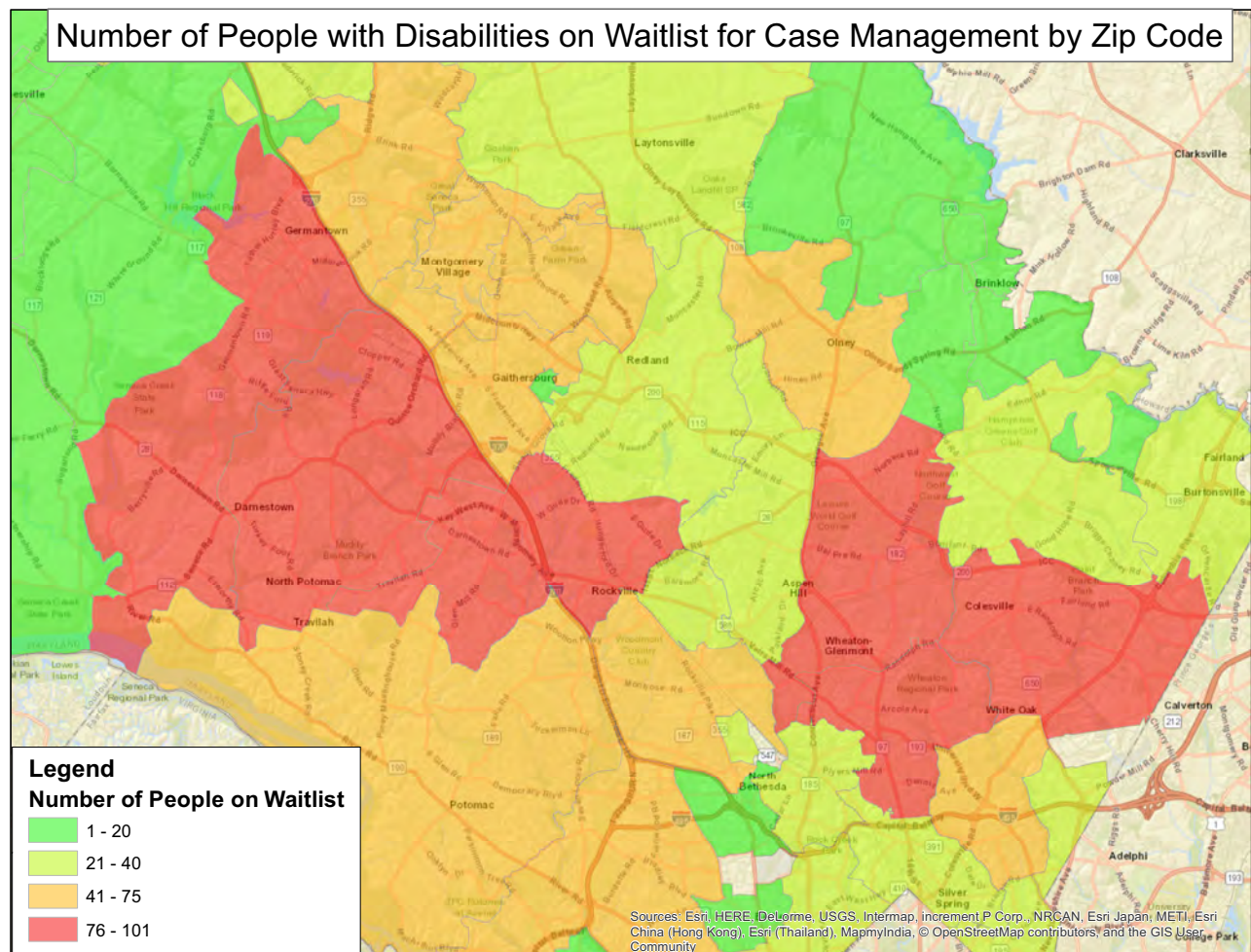
The DDA follows regulations to determine eligibility and priority category and placement on the Waiting List. The Waiting List is prioritized so that people with the greatest need are helped first. In addition, people who apply to DDA for support such as residential, supported employment, and day services but are determined to not be in need of services within the next three years, are placed on the Future Needs Registry, and do not receive any case management services. For the Future Needs category and the SO on the Waiting List, the lack of case management and monitoring could result in future food accessibility issues going unaddressed.

Another group of individuals who could potentially be overlooked are those Transitioning Youth (TY) who may be eligible to receive DDA services and case management when transitioning from high school to adult services, but opt not to accept assistance. They must follow the TY process as defined by the State or they jeopardize losing the opportunity to get DDA funded services. The individuals and/or families who decide not to participate in the process become disconnected from the DDA and case management supports.

Montgomery County Public Schools, DDA and local case management services have developed strategies through the Coordination of Community Services program to educate individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities and their families about the resources available that provide "person-centered," appropriate services to achieve comprehensive outcomes oriented toward the goal of full integration into their community.

Number of People with Disabilities on Waitlist for Case Management by Zip Code

Legend
Number of People on Waitlist
- 1 - 20
- 21 - 40
- 41 - 75
- 76 - 101

Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap, increment P Corp., NRCAN, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri (Thailand), MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

Maryland Department of Health & Mental Hygiene's Developmental Disabilities Administration's Southern Maryland Regional Office (2016)

Waiting list*
(source: Maryland DDA, SMRO, 2016)
Total 1,010
DDA services eligible on waiting List for Montgomery County = 787 (do receive case management services)
Supports Only eligible on waiting List for Montgomery County = 223 (SO clients do not receive case management services)

(*Note: the number of individuals on the waitlist changes daily)

Future Needs Registry
(do not receive any case management services)
Total 350
DDA eligible on registry for Montgomery County = 269
Supports Only eligible on registry for Montgomery County = 81

Other Residents Below Self-Sufficiency Standard

The Self-Sufficiency Standard is an estimate of the cost of living in a particular area. It is a useful measure in that it illustrates the gap between eligibility for Federal food assistance and what it actually currently costs to live in Montgomery County: $44,995[118] versus $91,252 [119] for a family of four. This means that Montgomery County families earning between $44,995 and $91,252 may not be able to afford basic necessities, but are not eligible for food assistance benefit programs, thus posing a risk for household food security. Those who fall into the gap of not receiving Federal food assistance include the "working poor," those who may have a single or double income, but cannot afford basic living requirements. In some cases, households or individuals need assistance for a short duration of time such as when experiencing a temporary disability due to convalescence or surgery recuperation. Many of these individuals and families rely significantly on local food assistance services, such as those provided by pantries. However, this population may also be the least connected to available resources as they are not in the federal benefits program pipeline and may not receive information on food assistance services.

Individuals and households living below the Self-Sufficiency Standard at risk for food insecurity include the following: those that are without vehicles, are eligible for assistance but not enrolled, are homeless, have faith-based diets, and/or work two or more jobs.

This section also discusses existing barriers to connecting residents eligible for The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), to this resource, a Federal program that provides low-income Americans, including seniors, with emergency food and nutrition assistance at no cost.

Supplemental food assistance programs are available to households living at or below 185% of the Poverty threshold (WIC $44,995) and 130% of the poverty threshold (SNAP $31,590).[118]

FINDING 15: LIMITED ACCESS TO TRANSPORTATION

Population:
Residents below the Self-Sufficiency Standard without cars

Location:
Residential areas more than a quarter mile from transit - Mostly in Census Tracts 7014.20, 7015.09, 7015.08, 7014.14 (East County); 7032.19 (Leisure World); 7021.01 (University Boulevard/Montgomery Knolls)

Order of Magnitude:
50,000 to 60,000, unknown how many in "limited transit" without further study.

Barriers:
Residents in areas with limited transit options have difficulty getting to grocery stores, food pantries, or other food resources without a vehicle. Though WMATA and RideOn provide transit options in the census tracts where more households than average do not have vehicles, stakeholders and residents have voiced that options are limited, especially on evenings and weekends, to connect residents to critical food resources.
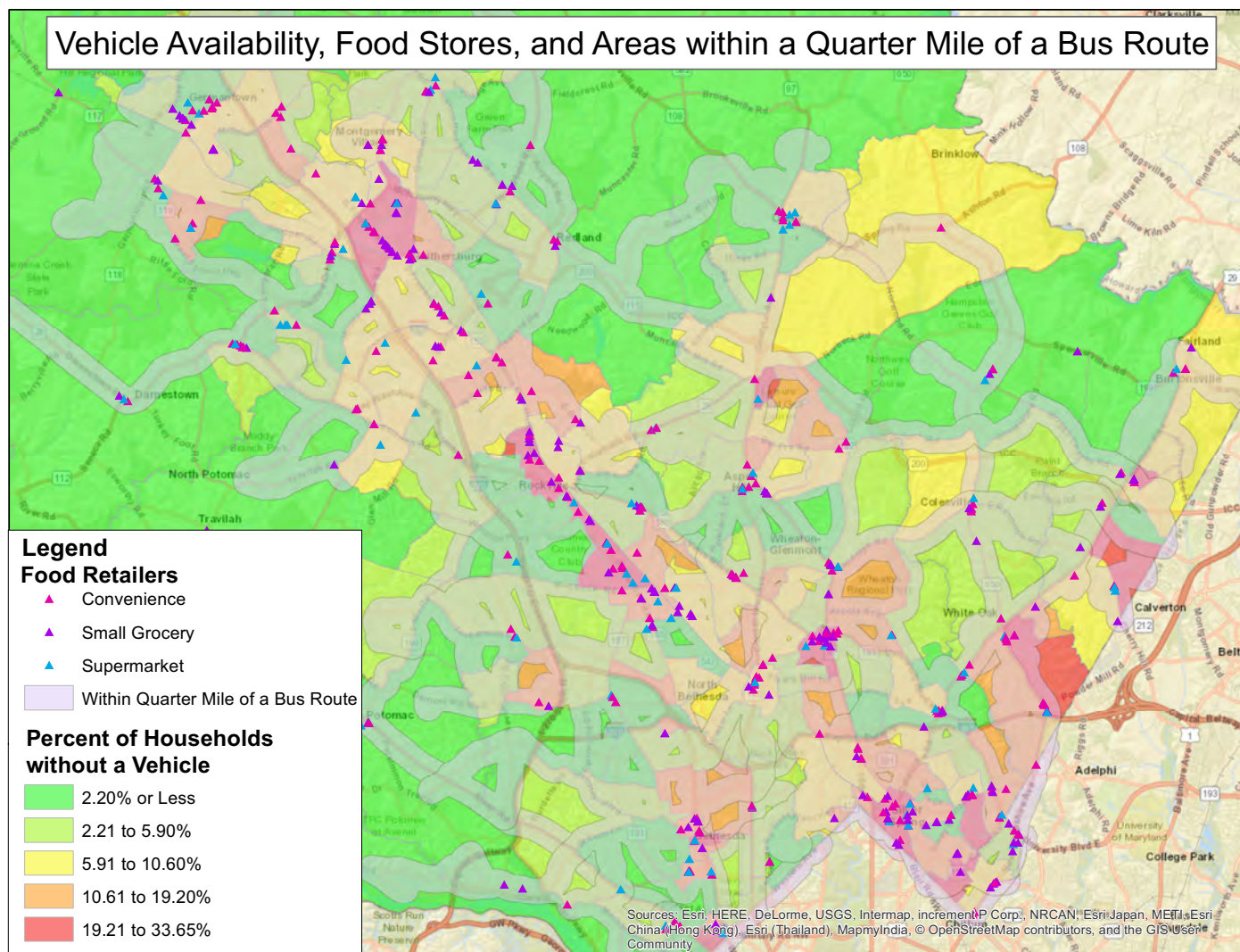
Narrative:
In 2014 in Montgomery County, an estimated 7.5% of households did not have access to a vehicle. Across the County, however, vehicle availability varies widely. In twenty six census tracts, at least one in five households did not have access to a vehicle. Of these census tracts, eighteen had an average household income below the County's Self-Sufficiency Standard. These tracts are concentrated near White Oak, Briggs Chaney, Long Branch, Aspen Hill, and Gaithersburg. These lower income census tracts with lower vehicle availability tend to be more auto-centric and traditionally suburban in design than higher income census tracts with comparable vehicle availability (e.g., downtown Bethesda).

Currently, WMATA and RideOn offer some bus service in these areas and much of these areas are within a quarter mile of a bus route, with some exceptions mainly in Census Tracts 7014.20, 7015.09, 7015.08, 7014.14 (East County); 7032.19 (Leisure World); 7021.01 (University Boulevard/ Montgomery Knolls). These census tracts are also located in Communities of Low Food Access as identified by the Montgomery County Food Council's Community Food Access Assessment (2013-15).

County residents and food security stakeholders consistently noted that existing services were not adequate to connect residents to food resources. Several bus routes have limited or no service outside of peak weekday commuting hours. In the case of Briggs Chaney (next to East County Services Center), the nearest grocery store is four miles away and there is no direct bus route to connect residents to that grocery store in Cloverly. Though most neighborhoods in Montgomery County are located more closely to grocery stores than Briggs Chaney, limited route hours, low bus frequency, and lack of walking infrastructure were common factors identified across the County that limit the ability of households without vehicles to access the food they need in these.

> Our church, Liberty Grove United Methodist, serves community suppers twice a month. Residents of nearby Castle Boulevard struggle to access us without a vehicle. Bus service is only available during certain times of day via WMATA. Even when service is available, it can involve transfers or crossing US 29 on foot. For a family of four, the three mile trip from Castle Boulevard for a free meal could cost $14 bus fares and take nearly an hour in transit.
> --*Susan Burgess, Food Ministries Coordinator, Liberty Grove United Methodist Church*

Vehicle Availability, Food Stores, and Areas within a Quarter Mile of a Bus Route

Legend
Food Retailers
▲ Convenience
▲ Small Grocery
▲ Supermarket
☐ Within Quarter Mile of a Bus Route

Percent of Households without a Vehicle
- 2.20% or Less
- 2.21 to 5.90%
- 5.91 to 10.60%
- 10.61 to 19.20%
- 19.21 to 33.65%

Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap, increment P Corp., NRCAN, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri (Thailand), MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

Within quarter mile of bus route: RideOn Bus Routes (2016)
Food Retailers: Johns Hopkins' Center for a Livable Future
Percent of Households: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate

FINDING 16: ELIGIBLE BUT NOT ENROLLED IN ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Population:
Persons eligible for assistance programs but not enrolled

Location:
See income map on page 19

Barriers:
Although there is no conclusive data that indicates a specific barrier, anecdotal information from interviews and listening sessions indicates issues such as assumed ineligibility and perception of a stigma associated with government assistance.

When Crossroads Community Food Network (CCFN) conducted a senior food security survey at their Farmers Market in 2015, they heard from some seniors that despite being eligible for SNAP, they "didn't want to take it from someone who really needed it." There was a perception that if they accepted the benefit, it would prevent someone else from doing so. To help educate their shoppers, and facilitate their enrollment in benefit programs, they developed partnerships with Maryland Hunger Solutions (MHS) and Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to offer SNAP outreach at the market in 2016. CCFN provided staff and volunteer training in order to provide this new resource, but the key was the partnerships with MHS and MoCo DHHS. The service was advertised mainly via word-of-mouth at market and in our community outreach. As a result, 300 potentially eligible shoppers learned more about the various benefit programs and 34 ended up enrolling.

Photo credit: Crossroads Community Food Network, Molly M. Peterson, Photographer

Narrative:
The Federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides eligible food insecure residents valuable additional funds for purchasing food. However, there is a significant percentage of residents eligible to receive these benefits who have not enrolled in the program, resulting in reduced access to healthy foods for low-income residents, as well as lost funds to be invested in local economies. In the United States, 83% of those eligible are enrolled in SNAP. National trends indicate participation is higher for those eligible for larger benefit amounts, those near the poverty line, and households with children. Least likely to take advantage of benefits are seniors, families with mixed immigration status, and those above the poverty line but still eligible for benefits.

While participation data among subpopulations is unavailable at a County level, national level participation trends are still valuable tools for understanding which populations are less likely to enroll to utilize available benefits. According to USDA FY10-FY14 data, participation rates are lower for households above the poverty line but still SNAP eligible (38%) and approximately 55% of eligible noncitizens are enrolled.

Nationwide, 42% of SNAP eligible seniors are enrolled. Approximately 6% of seniors aged 60 and above (8,528 seniors) participated in SNAP programs in 2015, yet 16% of seniors are reported to live below 200% of the poverty line. The participation rate for elderly individuals living alone (56%) was more than double that for those living with others (23%).

During the Food Security Planning initiative's Fall 2016 listening sessions, Montgomery County residents receiving emergency food resources shared their personal reasons, as well as reasons they have heard from others, for not enrolling in benefits programs, including: pride preventing admission of a need for assistance; resistance to accepting government assistance; societal stigma associated with program participation; benefits too low to warrant the time investment and inconvenience of applying; assumed ineligibility; concerns for raising visibility of immigrant families; and onerous application process with significant and difficult paperwork requirements.

In all listening sessions, participants consistently asserted that word of mouth is the most common method for sharing information about resources. However, this is also the communication method most susceptible to misinformation. Residents may assume they are ineligible when in fact they do qualify. For example, Nourish Now, a food recovery and food assistance nonprofit, shared that many first-time clients incorrectly believe that they are only allowed to use food assistance from one provider. With improved reliable information sharing strategies, many of these "myths" can be avoided.

Perhaps the greatest challenge in addressing the SNAP enrollment gap is inconsistent available means for measuring the total number of residents on a County level eligible to participate in these benefit programs. Typically, this number is calculated based on the number of residents living below 130% of the poverty line, the income level which is the primary eligibility criteria. However, the 130% number is likely to inflate the true count of eligible residents, since (1) it includes undocumented residents as well as the documented immigrants with less than 5 years of residency, who are not children, and are not eligible; (2) resource limits (i.e. maximum savings) typically disqualify 20% of residents who meet the income criteria; and (3) able bodied adults without dependents have to also meet a work requirement, which may also potentially lead to disqualification.

Additional barriers to calculating a precise number of residents eligible for benefits include:
- While the State releases enrollment numbers with only a two month delay, the Census data is often two years out of date (i.e. we have FY17 enrollment data but only 2015 Census data).
- Census only reports on SNAP "households," whereas the state reports on individual "participants." Census also does not report on 130% poverty, and so estimates have to be created from either 125% poverty or 150% poverty.
- Accounting for the eligibility requirements beyond the income criteria is very challenging and requires significant rough approximations using national averages.
- It is possible that during the year SNAP benefits last, household income can change and rise above the eligibility requirements. It is also possible that recipients would report different income numbers to Census (where there is no incentive to minimize reported income) versus the State (where there is notable incentive to minimize reported income).

In developing this Plan, a number of different approaches and methodologies for this calculation used by various nonprofits and other local governments were researched. One commonly referenced metric is from the Maryland Poverty Report, which establishes a 46% enrollment of those eligible in Montgomery County. According to this metric, Montgomery County is second lowest county in the state for enrollment. However, this percentage is unusually low by national standards and uses a methodology that is not sufficiently transparent and therefore not verifiable.

One alternate simple approach, used by the State of Colorado's GapMap, simply divides enrollment figures by the Census reported statistic on the number of residents who live below 125% of the poverty line. Using this approach, Montgomery County's rate would be 76%, which would be more in line with national benchmarks.

A more sophisticated approach promoted by the Food Research and Action Center is a multi-step methodology for calculating what they call their "Local Access Index," which attempts to account for ineligible immigrants and for those with excessive resources.[120] This methodology produced a high rate of 98% for Montgomery County, which seems unrealistic, based on the extensive research conducted in connection to this Food Security Plan, as well as relying on an oversimplification of the "resource ineligible" calculation, as well as other Census Data proxies that seem to call this 98% number into question, such as the reported share of households that are in poverty but that do not receive SNAP.
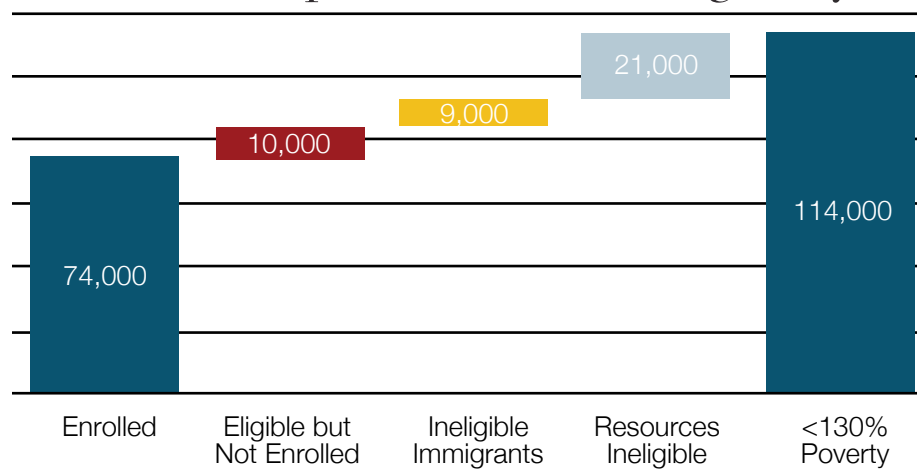
Finally, the Montgomery County Statistician's office ran a calculation using the maximum value in the margin of error range reported by Census, the average SNAP enrollment for FY15 and 1 year estimates from the 2015 ACS in order for these numbers to be roughly in line with one another. Using these higher numbers, which are still within the margin of error, CountyStat calculated an 88% enrollment rate, suggesting a range between 88% and 100% using Census' full data range within the margin of error.

In essence, this leaves us with four vastly different rates, and without a method to determine which is likely to be the most realistic and accurate. However, all metrics, as well as the qualitative and quantitative research conducted in conjunction with this Plan, indicate that there are likely thousands, possibly tens of thousands, of residents who are eligible to receive food assistance benefits but do not currently use these resources for a variety of reasons.

SNAP Gap: Enrollment vs Eligibility

Enrolled	Eligible but Not Enrolled	Ineligible Immigrants	Resources Ineligible	<130% Poverty
74,000	10,000	9,000	21,000	114,000

Source: Montgomery County Commission on People with Disabilities Annual Report 2016

FINDING 17: EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Population:
Homeless individuals and families

Location:
Although homeless individuals are located throughout the County, shelters are primarily located in and around Rockville. There are also three shelters downcounty and one upcounty

Barriers:
Lack of access to food preparation or storage of any kind makes food security especially challenging for homeless individuals and families. Any food support provided must be readily consumed without preparation. Additionally, this population needs to receive services daily, as they have no means to store food for later use.

Order of Magnitude:

1,000-2,000

Narrative:
Montgomery County had an estimated 1,100 homeless residents in 2015,[125] a 24% increase from 891 in 2014.[126] Most of this increase was of people in homeless families, up 74% from 288 people in 2014 to 502 people in 2015. In 2014, 181 people were chronically homeless[127] and 35 were veterans.

Although Montgomery County achieved a "functional zero" level of veteran homelessness in December 2015 as as a result of the Zero: 2016 initiative,[128] homelessness persists for many other individuals and families and continues to be a significant barrier to food access for these residents. Despite their unique challenges with respect to employment and shelter, all 1,100 people facing homelessness in the County have comparable challenges to food security due to their lack of space for food preparation and storage. Families behind on utility bills and those at risk of homelessness experience similar barriers around food storage. Though SNAP and food bank programs are available to homeless people, few of these program offerings have sufficient prepared, readily consumable food selections that adequately serve the needs of homeless people.

Montgomery County has a variety of resources available currently to homeless people, as well as people at risk of homelessness. There are eleven homeless shelters as well as several organizations that offer meals and support to secure permanent housing. The shelters typically provide at least two meals a day to homeless people staying there. Some shelters do charge a lodging fee which can be a barrier for some—particularly for the chronically homeless. However, not everyone goes to shelter; many survive on the streets or in campgrounds. There are organizations that provide meals for anyone that is homeless. Transportation to these sites, however, can be challenging for homeless individuals, as shelter, employment support services, and meals might be located far apart from each other.

> Homeless people do not have anywhere to store or prepare food, which means they must seek food assistance at sites with prepared food when they want to eat. Transportation can make this issue more complicated, as traveling between shelters, meal sites, and other services can be complex, costly and time consuming. We serve lunch in the Bethesda area, know other organizations serve dinner in Silver Spring, and shelters are scattered around the County.
> --*Susan Kirk, Executive Director, Bethesda Cares*

Photo Courtesy of Bethesda Cares

FINDING 18: FAITH-BASED DIETARY RESTRICTIONS

Population:
Food Insecure Individuals with faith-based dietary restrictions

Location:
See income map on page 19. Additional research on geographic locations with greater demand for food assistance resources that accommodate faith-based diet restrictions would be valuable

Barriers:
Some food assistance resources do not have accommodations available for faith-based dietary restrictions, especially with animal-based proteins (e.g., meats, dairy, eggs). Additionally, food assistance resources may be available only during periods of fasting.

For the last several years, in celebration of the holiday Eid-Ul-Adha, the Montgomery County Muslim Foundation (MCMF) has collected donations for the purchase of cows and distribution of the beef among the low-income and food insecure families of all faiths, ethnicity and race. Last year about 4,500 lbs. of raw cow meat was distributed to about 700 families and individuals living in Takoma Park and Silver Spring. In 2016 MCMF collected donations to purchase 8 cows and distributed the meat to a wide range of Montgomery County community and faith-based food assistance organizations that serve individuals and families, including children, seniors, the homeless.The meat is Halal and USDA processed and comes in mixed packs of 5lbs. each.

The food pantry at the Muslim Community Center (MCC) in Colesville, Maryland provides food assistance to all food insecure residents in their community, regardless of faith affiliation; they currently serve over 100 families. However, as a majority of their clients are Muslim, they routinely distribute food items appropriate for those individuals and families observing Muslim dietary restrictions, such as Halal Meat. The food they serve is mostly in the raw state, such as rice, sugar and oil, instead of canned and processed foods, enabling clients to personally prepare fresh, nutritious food in accordance with their dietary needs. In addition, the food is typically discretely bagged in advance by MCC volunteers.

Narrative:
Many Montgomery County residents observe faith-based dietary practices with restrictions on the types of food that can be consumed, particularly related to animal proteins and food preparation practices. Periods of fasting are also common to many religions. These restrictions can further limit food access for these residents if food assistance organizations are unable to accommodate these needs due to administrative and procedural challenges or lack of familiarity with these dietary restrictions. Some food assistance providers, particularly those with frequent and larger scale distribution, strive to accommodate food requests of a medical nature, e.g. food allergies, celiac disease (gluten-free), high cholesterol, high blood pressure and a religious nature, e.g. halal or kosher. However, it is logistically very difficult for these organizations to serve individual food preferences and the ability to meet requests is dependent on available inventory.

Manna Food Center notes that their most common faith-based diet client request is food assistance that does not include pork or pork products. For these requests they prepare packages of frozen meat that do not contain pork. Additionally, in instances where any meat consumed must be prepared according to certain religious laws (e.g., kosher or halal) they exclude these items from the food package and, as inventory allows, replace them with items that meet specifications.

While select food assistance organizations are actively implementing strategies to accommodate faith-based diet restrictions, most organizations are not equipped structurally or inventory-wise to do so. Pre-packed boxes may include meat that the residents cannot eat, or limited pickup windows may be scheduled during periods of fasting or religious observance.

Kosher Congregate Senior Nutrition Program Meal
Photo Courtesy of the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services Senior Nutrition Program

FINDING 19: TEFAP ELIGIBLE

Population:
Montgomery County Public School Students and their families

Location:
Eight Elementary, Middle, and High schools that currently serve as Capital Area Food Bank Family Market sites with potential for expansion to additional schools

Order of Magnitude:
1,000 - 2,000

Barriers:
Current MCPS policy/process prevents The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) distribution in conjunction with Family Markets at schools due to concerns over student privacy.

Narrative:
TEFAP is a Federal program that provides low-income Americans, including seniors, with emergency food and nutrition assistance at no cost. Through TEFAP, the USDA purchases USDA Foods (products grown in the United States and branded under the USDA), processes and packages the food, and makes it a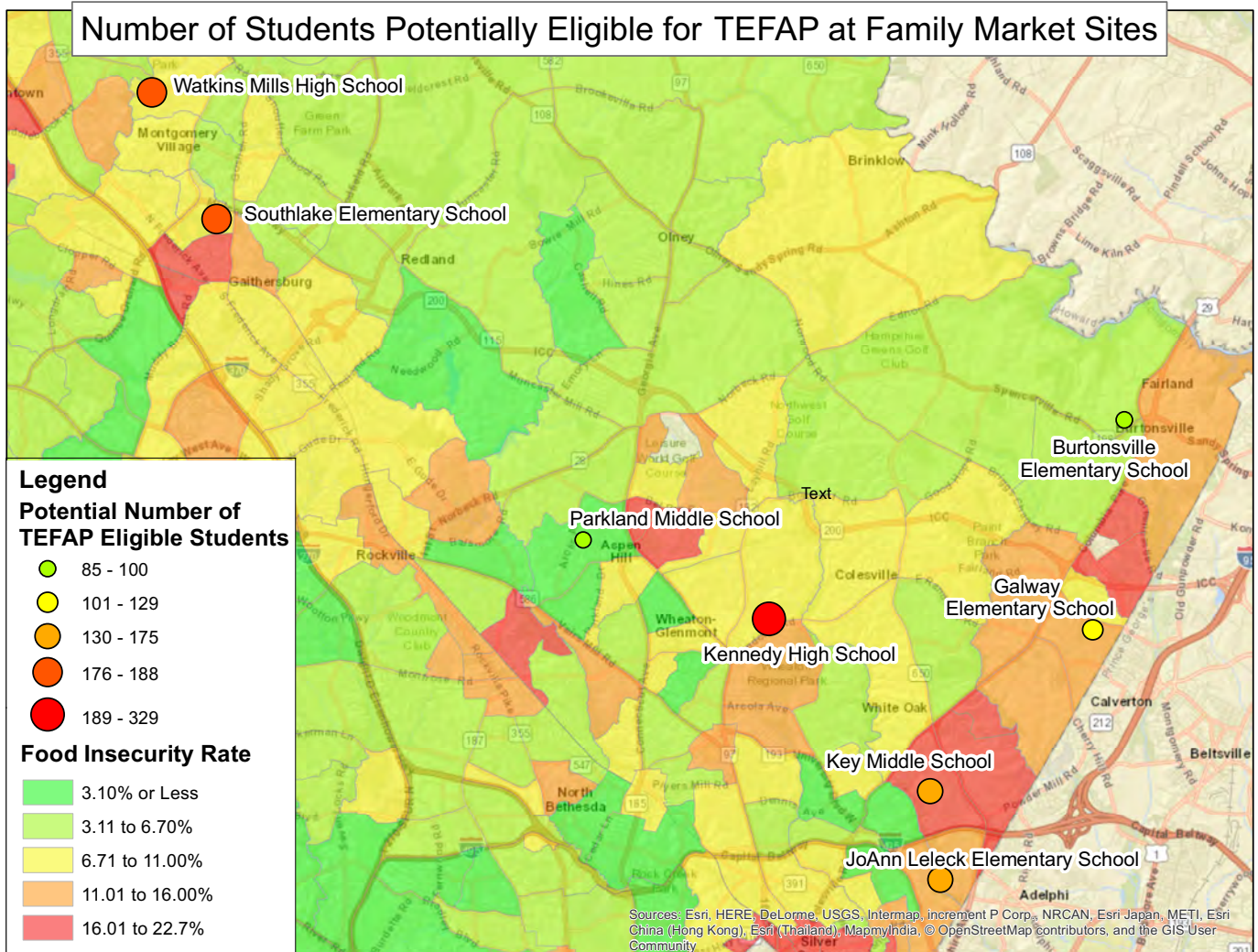vailable to State Distributing Agencies. States provide the food to local agencies, usually food banks, which in turn distribute the food to local organizations, such as soup kitchens and food pantries that directly serve the public. The amount of food each state receives out of the total amount of food provided is based on the number of unemployed persons and the number of people with incomes below the poverty level in the State. The types of foods USDA purchases for TEFAP vary depending on the preferences of States and on agricultural market conditions.

The Capital Area Food Bank executes the TEFAP program for a significant portion of Maryland and all of the District of Columbia. Outside of Montgomery County, schools that serve as distribution sites for CAFB's Family Markets program double as TEFAP distribution sites. However, in Montgomery County, currently there is no TEFAP distribution in conjunction with Family Markets at schools. This is due to the additional paperwork required from residents in order to receive TEFAP, beyond what is necessary for family market participation. MCPS procedure has deemed the additional required data collection for TEFAP to be problematic for student privacy. Unfortunately that results in lost access for local food insecure residents to nearly 90 nutritious, high-quality products, including canned and fresh fruits, vegetables, proteins, dairy, and grains.

Number of Students Potentially Eligible for TEFAP at Family Market sites

School Name	Address	Avg. # of Participants (2015/16 School Year)
Burtonsville ES	15516 Old Columbia Pike, Burtonsville, MD 20866	100
Galway ES	12612 Galway Drive, Silver Spring, MD 20904	129
JoAnn Leleck ES	710 Beacon Road, Silver Spring, MD, 20903	175
Kennedy High School	1901 Randolph Road, Silver Spring, MD 20902	329
Key Middle School	910 Schindler Drive, Silver Spring, MD, 20903	164
Parkland Middle School	4610 West Frankfort Drive, Rockville, MD, 20853	85
Southlake ES	18201 Contour Road, Gaithersburg, MD 20877	188
Watkins Mills High School	10301 Apple Ridge Road, Gaithersburg, MD 20877	182

Number of Students Potentially Eligible for TEFAP at Family Market Sites

Legend
Potential Number of TEFAP Eligible Students
- ● 85 - 100
- ● 101 - 129
- ● 130 - 175
- ● 176 - 188
- ● 189 - 329

Food Insecurity Rate
- 3.10% or Less
- 3.11 to 6.70%
- 6.71 to 11.00%
- 11.01 to 16.00%
- 16.01 to 22.7%

Schools labeled on map: Watkins Mills High School, Southlake Elementary School, Burtonsville Elementary School, Parkland Middle School, Galway Elementary School, Kennedy High School, Key Middle School, JoAnn Leleck Elementary School

Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap, increment P Corp., NRCAN, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri (Thailand), MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

Potential Number of TEFAP Eligible Students: Capital Area Food Bank
Food Insecurity Rate Source: Capital Area Food Bank Hunger Heat Map

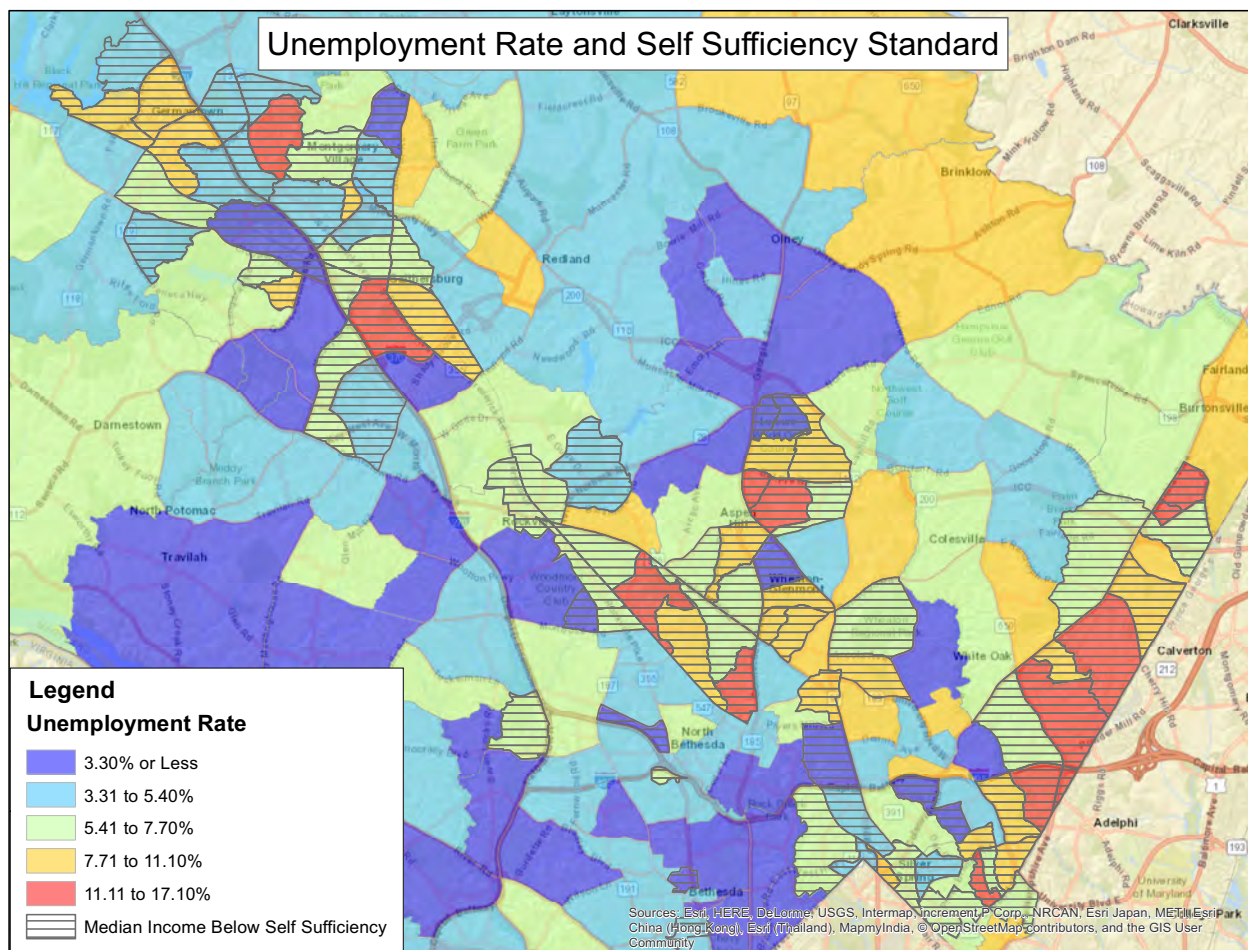## FINDING 20: WORKING TWO OR MORE JOBS

Population:
Residents living below the Self-Sufficiency Standard and working two or more jobs

Location:
Notably in census tracts highlighted in purple or blue with horizontal lines across them. These include the following census tracts with a median income below self-sufficiency standard yet have less than 3% unemployment rate: 7009.05 (Rockville), 7008.11 (Montgomery Village), 7032.18 (Leisure World), 7007.06 (Gaithersburg), 7012.15 (North Bethesda), 7048.06 (Bethesda), 7034.02 (Aspen Hill)

Barriers:
Residents working two or more jobs whose incomes are below the Self-Sufficiency Standard of $91,252[129], but often above the eligibility levels for Federal food assistance (at or below 130% - 185% of the poverty line[130]), may lack the time to get to county food assistance providers and/or the time to prepare healthy meals.

Unemployment Rate and Self Sufficiency Standard

Legend
Unemployment Rate
- 3.30% or Less
- 3.31 to 5.40%
- 5.41 to 7.70%
- 7.71 to 11.10%
- 11.11 to 17.10%
- Median Income Below Self Sufficiency

U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate

Narrative:

Residents in single, double or even triple income households may still have incomes that fall below the Self-Sufficiency Standard and experience food insecurity. While county food assistance providers can offer some relief, residents working multiple jobs may not have the ability or time to get to these sites when food is provided. At many sites, food assistance is available only on a limited schedule, often on only one day a month. Picking up emergency food from an agency can be also time intensive, often requiring an hour or more of waiting, particularly in choice pantries. These factors cause even greater challenges for residents who have extremely limited availability due to multiple, often inflexible, work schedules. Additional common barriers for employed residents experiencing food insecurity are lengthy commutes and a lack of familiarity with resources available near worksites, which may be a significant distance from a resident's home community.

Additionally, these households may lack time to prepare healthy meals and may be more inclined to consume quick and easy, prepared foods that can provide caloric needs, but be of low nutritive quality.

Manna Food Center participant, Laila (name changed) reported working for the past 13 years throughout the county as a certified nurse's assistant in various hospitals, nursing homes and private homes, but it hasn't provided a steady flow of income. In order to better her circumstances, she began working towards getting her Bachelor's Degree in Nursing to achieve a Registered Nursing degree, but the high cost of tuition combined with trying to cover her son's tuition as he works towards his own Bachelor's degree caused her to put her degree on hold with only a semester left of study. Although she, her husband, and her son all work with a combination of full-time minimum wage and part-time low-wage positions, supporting the seven people in her household remains difficult.

In its first iteration, this Plan intends to be a plan of description rather than prescription. The same holds true for the recommendations in Year One. Building on our Findings in the prior section, this Plan now outlines strategies and solutions that will address the Findings. In the tables starting on page 88, the recommendations are organized into three groups: Year One, Years Two-Three, and Years Four-Five. The recommendations in Year One are more detailed and meant to prepare for those in Years Two through Five. Given the changing nature of larger macro-issues at the federal (e.g. Presidential immigration policies and entitlement programs), state (e.g. state funded assistance programs) and the local level (e.g. minimum wage, changes in political leadership and affordable housing developments) this Plan does not claim to have enough foresight to deliver detailed recommendations for 2020-2021. Its aim is to establish a solid foundation in the first year for informed, data-driven decision-making as the Plan evolves over time. With that in mind, the recommendations in this Plan are summarized below:

- Year One: Implement mechanisms to gather more and better data; Establish policies that will bring existing food assistance programs into better alignment; Deploy near-term tactical solutions to increase participation of existing programs; Strengthen the food assistance network through enhanced communication.
- Year Two-Three: Build capacity in high-need areas through strategic investments in infrastructure; Deploy new programs via partnerships with retailers and the healthcare system; Reduce transportation related barriers to food access.
- Year Four-Five: Transition the system from one that simply feeds people to one that empowers them through food literacy, workforce and economic development programs; Develop plans for a food system that is more resilient.

Recommendations in the table starting on page 88 are grouped into strategies and every recommendation can be traced back to one or more Findings. Where possible, an owner or lead agency has been identified and for Year One recommendations a rough cost estimate is also provided. Significant work remains ahead, and this Plan is not meant to dictate how providers will do their job. Rather, the recommendations are meant to offer suggestions and guidance on how to improve performance in respect to certain metrics.

Metrics for Success

Feeding America, a national non-profit, currently measures food insecurity at the County level and is the only measurement of its type. Although this Plan has relied on more detailed data at the zip code or census tract level, it remains a Countywide plan. For that reason, the Plan targets a decrease in the food insecurity level across the County. Feeding America calculates the food insecurity rate for Montgomery County to be 7% (or approximately 70,000 residents). This statistic is derived using data collected through direct surveys of food insecure households in combination with state and county level U.S. Census variables such as poverty, homeownership, and employment. Due to inherent limitations of this metric, strategies that address need among specific demographic, or communities, may not impact the Feeding America food insecurity percentage as it is based on broader demographic and economic indicators. Although it is considered to be an accurate baseline from which to start, a new way of measuring food insecurity should be developed through FoodStat (See Recommendation 1.2 for more on FoodStat). The recommended performance measures to be monitored through FoodStat are:

- Reduction in the overall food insecurity rate for Montgomery County from 7.0% to 6.5% in Year Two of the plan and 5.5% in Year Three. This would represent an approximate 22% decrease in food security in the County by Year Three of the plan (from over 70,000 residents to approximately 55,000). Given the role that larger macroeconomic factors play in food security, FoodStat should set targets for Years Four and Five once the impact of minimum wage increases, affordable housing programs, and childcare initiatives have begun to take effect. It should also be recognized that the Feeding America estimate lags by two years. So it is recommended that FoodStat should replace this Feeding America estimate with an original Montgomery County specific measurement tool during Year One that is based more on direct measurement than correlation of certain demographic trends. Targets may need to be re-baselined after this occurs.

- Increase weekend bags program participation by reaching 20% of FARMS-eligible students by Year Two-Three and work with food assistance agencies to explore new strategies for working with MCPS across age levels.
- Increase summer meal program participation to reach an additional 2,000 children in Year One, 3,000 in Year Two, and 5,000 in Year Three. Targets should be reevaluated in Year Three by FoodStat for Years Four and Five.
- Increase the Countywide SNAP participation rate from 46% to 50% in Year Two, 55% in Year Three, with the intent of meeting the state average of 64% by the end of the five year period. Current percentages based on Maryland Hunger Solutions estimates
- Reduce average time and trip cost from priority zip census tracts to food stores via public transportation. FoodStat will determine an appropriate metric during Year One.
- Successful implementation/progress of Year One monitoring and analytical strategies as outlined in the Recommendations

It is assumed that in order to meet these targets that financial resources from the appropriate sources in government and philanthropy will be made available.
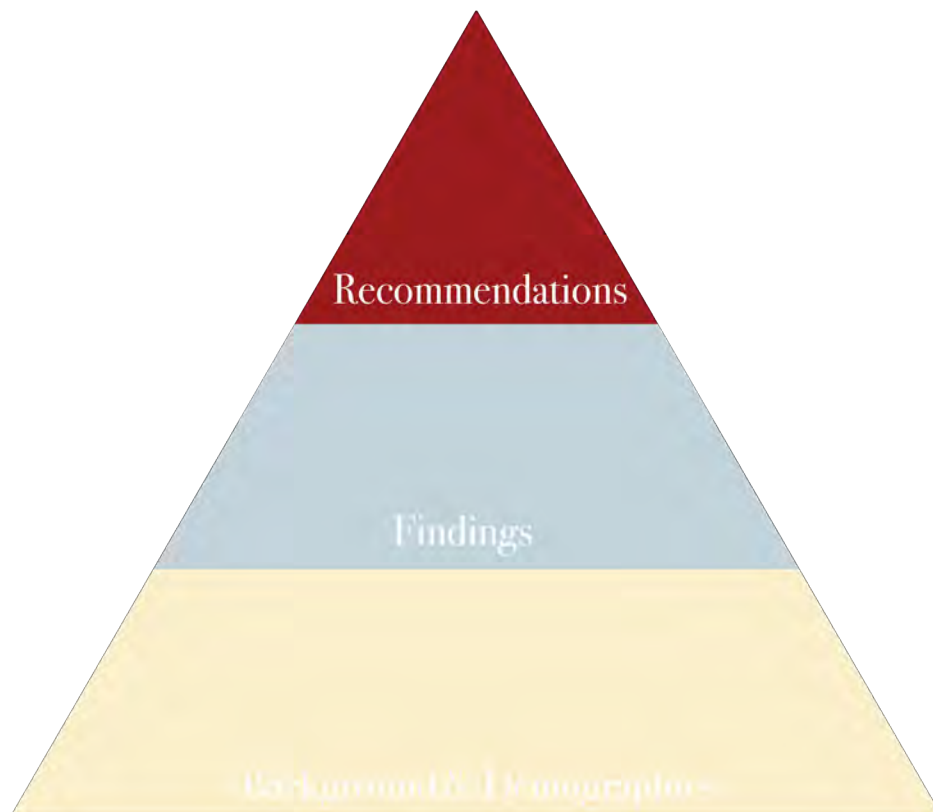
Year 1	Related Findings	Lead Agency(ies)	Cost Estimate

ESTABLISH A COMPREHENSIVE UNDERSTANDING OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY FOOD

Strategy 1.0: Continue, Expand & Standardize Food Data Collection

	Related Findings	Lead Agency(ies)	Cost Estimate
Recommendation 1.1: Standardize Food Assistance Provider collection of data on clients and services provided	All	HHS	Process change

One of the primary challenges faced during the development of this Plan was the lack of consistent, quality data at a local level. Although census data and the unique data gathered from a wide variety of stakeholders allowed us to develop the Plan, it will be difficult to update and refine the Plan in future years without a significant level of effort.

• For organizations receiving $25,000 or more from the County to provide direct food assistance, a standard set of reporting requirements should be required. A suggested set of those data points is available in Appendix D. In the report available in Appendix D, a list of suggested datasets is provided. This recommendation is not to say that the datasets listed in this report should be taken as-is. Further input from the food assistance community, including organizations implementing innovative approaches to food access issues thorough CSAs and farmers markets, should be obtained to develop a consensus "required dataset." This data should be collected digitally and combined with other data sources (e.g. census, etc.).

• The organizations applying for funds through the Community Grant process should cite the data they intend to collect on the reporting frequency that best fits their type of operation.

• Food security related questions should also be added to the High School Senior Risk Survey.

	Related Findings	Lead Agency(ies)	Cost Estimate
Recommendation 1.2: Create County FoodStat for data collection and annual updating	All	CEX	.15 FTE

CountyStat will host an annual FoodStat session to track the implementation of the Food Security Strategy, discuss tactics to overcome obstacles to progress, and identify annual priorities for collective action across County government and its community partners. FoodStat will be modeled on CountyStat's other cross-functional "Stat" sessions—e.g., Pedestrian Safety, Sustainability, the Senior Agenda, and Positive Youth Development—by utilizing the principles and practices of Collective Impact promoted by the White House Council for Community Solutions. Each year, CountyStat will prepare for FoodStat by updating the County's fact-based understanding on the state of food security in Montgomery County. This analysis will include a review of the progress made towards

achieving the targets and objectives set in the Food Security Strategic Plan and incorporate new sources of data as they become available. After compiling this CountyStat will convene all key internal and external stakeholders at a joint FoodStat session in the CountyStat conference room. The goal of this data-driven discussion will be to:

- • Collaboratively examine notable trends, community hotspots, and potential service delivery gaps;
- • Capture shared lessons learned (e.g., what is working and what is not); and
- • Update strategies, tactics, and priorities to overcome roadblocks to progress and drive collective impact.

CountyStat will document the action items assigned to participants during the meeting and track their implementation throughout the year. All the analysis and presentations developed for FoodStat will be shared with the public on the CountyStat website.

Recommendation 1.3: Conduct Analysis of RideOn Service on Weekends in Target Areas	2, 5, 15	DOT, Innovation Program	.1 FTE
Using existing data from Montgomery County Department of Transportation and other sources, identify gaps in current transportation system as it relates to connecting vulnerable populations to food stores. Develop recommendations for transit enhancements to close the gaps.			
Recommendation 1.4: Complete Montgomery County Food Assistance Directory	7, 8, 9, 12, 16, 17, 18	HHS	$10K-20K (Contractor)
Currently there is work underway to create a Montgomery County Food Assistance Directory. This directory, once complete, would allow the County to perform a more thorough gap analysis on services, hours of operation, capacity, and transportation resources. It would also make it easier for residents to identify and access the services for which they are eligible. The directory should be online searchable.			
Recommendation 1.5: Analyze food security data by census tract in context of specific relevant datasets and identify zones for Year Two Deployment	All	HHS/ CEX	$30K-50K (Contractor)
In the timeframe this Plan was developed, significant outreach and data collection occured. However, there is much more work to be done. Analysis should continue on several specific areas in preparation for FoodStat and the 2017 update to the Plan. In several of the findings, there are gaps that have been called out where more data or information was necessary in order to more definitively state the need. One area that should be called out is the need to analyze trends in FARMS rates at individual schools, particularly the			

significant increases in downcounty schools, to identify communities that currently have limited levels of food insecurity but may have increasing need and insufficient community resources. This may also include the establishment of new data collection mechanisms to better understand benefit program participation in specific populations. Using this information, planning should begin to identify the zones of high need, and prepare to deploy resources and establish these zones in Year Two. These zones are similar to the Hunger Free Zone concept previously introduced in Kensington. However, the new zones should be the areas of high need identified in this Plan. Zones should also not be planned as "one size fits all" tool. Near term opportunities exist by building on the work of the East County Opportunity Zone project currently in development. The findings in this Plan provide insights as to the specific barriers facing each zone. Consideration should also be given to build upon the strategic planning work of Manna's 4P's initiative and the CAFB Hunger Heat Map project.			
Recommendation 1.6: Continued Research on Populations Experiencing Food Insecurity	All	HHS	$10K-20K (Contractor)
Continue efforts to more narrowly define food insecurity issues in specific subpopulations requiring additional research, including: children under the age of 5, college students, and individuals with mental health disabilities.			

INCREASE CONNECTIVITY, COLLABORATION, AND INFORMATION SHARING

Strategy 2.0: Build a Comprehensive Referral Network for Food Security Resources

Recommendation 2.1: Implement a Comprehensive Communication Network for the Food Security Community of Providers	1, 4, 8, 9, 12, 16, 19	HHS	$25K (Contractor)
Building on the Food Security Plan stakeholder list, effort should be made to create a more formal mechanism for collaboration among food security providers. Currently this is done in an ad hoc manner by a variety of organizations, but only a limited number of organizations actively participate. The intent is not to create additional meetings for providers, but rather a network that can be contacted when needs arise. It can include: • A contact directory (program coordination and data collection) for all programs outlined in FSP Background • Points of contact for relevant stakeholders on neighborhood, school, community, County, and regional levels who handle food security issues.			

• Open communication with relevant existing County-based initiatives, including Healthy Montgomery, East County initiative, and Thriving Communities			
Recommendation 2.2: Create Training and Information Resources for Food Security Organizations	4, 8, 9, 10, 12, 16	HHS	$50-100K for contractor to develop
Although some larger food assistance organization may have the means and capacity to create training, outreach and other informational materials, most do not. This Plan proposes developing materials such as: • Training modules for relevant stakeholder groups on their role in implementing the food security plan; • Resource guides on benefits program information, including eligbility and available application assistance; • Materials that update organizations on new and changing benefits for seniors and youth; and • Develop "Train the Trainer" programs with leading organizations on faith-based and culturally appropriate diets, food literacy and nutrition, and cultural and language barriers to food access.			
Recommendation 2.3: Strengthen existing information sharing structures	1, 4, 8, 9, 12, 16	HHS/PIO	.2 FTE (existing staff time to develop new MC311 knowledge articles)
The Directory described in recommendation 1.3 could potentially be part of or integrated with infoMontgomery. Regardless, infoMontgomery could be better leveraged in providing information on food assistance programs to residents. Also, given the County's investment in MC311, it is recommended that additional knowledge articles be added to connect residents to services, such as food assistance or benefits enrollment counseling. Currently residents can call MC311 to get information about food assistance resources available from Manna Food Center. Beyond technology resources, knowledge of food security resources should be a core competency for co-located, immigrant outreach, and wrap-around service agencies.			

LEVERAGING EXISTING PROGRAMS

Strategy 3.0: Maximize Participation in Benefit Programs

Recommendation 3.1: Increase Education and Outreach Mechanisms	1, 4, 8, 9, 12, 14, 16	HHS/PIO/ Private Sector	.5 FTE or contractor
• Increase availability of benefits counseling and informational resources (e.g., brochures) at food assistance locations, farmers markets, libraries and other public facilities. Increase multilingual outreach capabilities where possible. • Conduct quarterly focus groups with food assistance providers and their clients to better understand barriers to enrollment • Explore expanded or adjusted open hours for application assistance at Health and Human Services Regional Offices and Neighborhood Service Centers • Create and execute general information campaign on positive effects of benefit programs on County's communities and local economy. http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/bc_facts.pdf • Build new partnerships and information sharing networks among a wide range of community partners ito increase awareness of food assistance resources, and use of these services. Potential partners include residential property management companies, immigrant support organizations, job training and employment placement programs, and wrap-around services organizations. An example inititive would be a partnership with Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy and the Gilchrist Immigrant Resource Center to expand food assistance information available in ESOL teacher trainings and the Quick Start Guide for Immigrants. In particular, increase awareness and understanding of changing eligibility requirements for programs such as SNAP and for particularly vulnerable individuals, such as ABAWDs (able-bodied adults without dependents).			
Recommendation 3.2: Expand access to benefit programs: Seniors	4, 5, 6, 7	HHS	
Outreach and engagement to Seniors on new opportunities for increased enrollment available starting January 2017: • Increased minimum Food Supplement Program (FSP) benefit from $16 - $30 a month, ensuring that no low-income seniors receive less than $30 a month, Elderly simplified application project (ESAP) provides eligible seniors with a streamlined application and certification process. • Increased funding for programs operated by the Senior Nutrition Program of Montgomery County's Department of Health and Human Services, in particular the Cold Box Meals Project, serving lunch three times a week over a four-month Winter term. Currently this program is offered at 16 low-income Senior housing sites. This progam can be expanded initially to 5 days a week at current locations, with ultimate expansion to 5 days a week, 12 months a year. The program is also			$30K for contract support in Year One $333,318 for expansion to 5 days a week;

experiencing increased demand for food assistance from residents under 60, who are in need of temporary or long-term meal delivery due to disability or illness, though currently the program does not receive any funding to serve this population.

Recommendation 3.3: Expand access to benefit programs: Children	1, 2, 3	MCPS/ REC	
• Create more opportunities to feed children eligible for FARMS through expansion of the Summer Food Service Program, adding new sites and increasing enrollment at existing sites through additional program outreach. The Fun, Food and Fitness program operated by the Department of Recreation can be expanded to provide coverage in underserved areas as well. • Identify strategies for increased capacity of Weekend Bags program, including increased, baseline budget funding as well as identification and communication of best practices for school-side program administration, on challenges including storage, staffing for collection, identification of children in need of the bags, administrative paperwork management, and distribution of bags. • Partner MCPS and Capital Area Food Bank (CAFB) to develop data collection process that enables access to TEFAP food for families currently participating in Family Market program at 8 Montgomery County Schools. CAFB has existing data collection and record-keeping procedures used for TEFAP distribution at Prince George's and District of Columbia schools that could be replicated in Montgomery County. School principals would identify the individual, likely a staff member, who collects the necessary information from families via MD Self-Disclosure Form 2016 at each Family Market and ensures it is stored securely or sent to the CAFB for secure storage. Potential solutions to student and family data security include: family representative must sign a Self-Disclosure form once a year at a CAFB Family Market saying that they are within the financial guidelines. These forms can be sent to the CAFB to be stored if the school does not want to store this information. The Maryland Self-Disclosure Form does not require a person to show proof of income nor write down their specific income on the form. Additionally, a person is automatically eligible for TEFAP if an individual participates in one of the other listed programs such as SNAP, Energy Assistance, TANF and Electric Universal Service Program (EUSP) to name a few. To enforce the TEFAP requirement that persons/families who receive TEFAP only receive it once a month, each month the adult can sign their name to check-in as required already for Family Markets, then they initial a box beside it to say they are receiving TEFAP. Alternatively, some TEFAP distribution programs use key fob devices that allow families to sign up once and then simply swipe the fob each additional month to capture their presence and show eligibility for TEFAP. • Build food security resources at the individual school, cluster, and administrative levels. In addition to connecting students and families with FARMS applications where appropriate, also provide information on benefits programs (e.g., SNAP, WIC). Currently, school counselors and other staff refer students and families to FARMs, but typically not other		MCPS/ CAFB MCPS/ HHS	Under Analysis

benefits programs or food assistance resources. MCPS Wellness Coordinators and Nutrition Services can coordinate and provide relevant education and outreach for schools.			
Recommendation 3.4: Increase availability of culturally appropriate food assistance	9, 10	HHS/ OCP/ Contractor	$25-50,000
• Provide education on culturally diverse and faith-based diets to food assistance providers and nutrition educators. Develop resources to educate donors on the importance of culturally appropriate and nutritious foods. • Increase diverse products available through food assistance providers through increased donations and food recovery from farmers and ethnic and international grocery stores.			

STABILIZED AND ENHANCED FUNDING FOR FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Strategy 4.0: Align Existing Community Grants and Leverage Private Donors

Recommendation 4.1: Strengthen grantmaking processes: County and Private Foundations	All		
• For food assistance programs that have been funded for five years or more through the Community Grants process, consider multi-year funding through a procurement action in the base budget. This would save time for the food assistance providers as well as County staff and volunteers charged with reviewing grants. Securing the funding in the base also increases the stability of funding for food assistance providers.		HHS	Process change
• Require any funding request from an organization providing food assistance to cite a Finding(s) in the Food Security Plan and address as part of their strategy how they will overcome the associated barrier(s). All requests through the Community Grant process must be evaluated by individuals familiar with the intent and substance of the Food Security Plan.		HHS	Process change
• Create shared standards for application and reporting requirements and processes as well as information sharing for County and municipality food assistance grants to build efficiency, create interconnected funding strategies and goals, more effectively measure progress, increase collaboration, and enhance impact of investment.		Multiple	.1 FTE (Existing staff time)
• Partner with private foundations (e.g., Community Foundation, Healthcare Initiative, etc) and the business community to amplify County funding of food programs. The Food Security Plan is the first time a countywide, comprehensive look at food security will exist. This will facilitate collaboration between the private and public sector in addressing difficult food security issues. With recent successes in collective impact efforts, such as Montgomery Moving Forward, and through the leadership of groups such as Washington Regional Association of Grantmakers, our community has a timely opportunity to secure the necessary financial resources to execute an ambitious Food Security agenda.		HHS	.2 FTE (Existing staff time)

Years 2-3

BUILD ON YEAR ONE MOMENTUM, LESSONS AND ANALYSIS

Strategy 5.0: Build Capacity in Existing Organizations

Recommendation 5.1: Strengthen Food Assistance Infrastructure

• Strategically invest in additional transportation, refrigeration/freezer, general storage, and related capacity for food assistance providers. The Food Security Plan hopes to influence the location of food assistance programs by identifyng hotspots of need and gaps in service. In years two and three, organizations working in these high priority areas should be eligible for additional infrastructure support.
• Create guides and tools to help organizations efficiently share access to available licensed kitchens and transportation. These resources are expensive to purchase and maintain and are often only needed a portion of the time. It is also unclear what activities potentially violate the licenses of these kitchens when they are shared. Infrastructure, such as licensed kitchens, can be used for food literacy purposes through business partnerships, incentives, and donations.

Recommendation 5.2: Strategically build program and functional capacity of smaller organizations

• Create "Best Practices" resources based on guidance from leading providers, as well provide training and mentoring support for smaller food assistance organizations. CAFB already offers extensive support resources for its partner organizations. This is particularly important for faith-based organizations who either rely entirely on volunteers or provide services only intermittently.
• Connect organizations with training opportunities on topics including staffing strategies, recruiting volunteers, advocacy, and fundraising. Extensive resources exist in Montogmery County, such as Nonprofit Montgomery and the Nonprofit Village, to support nonprofit organizations with valuable information to increase the efficiency and efficacy of smaller food assistance organizations.

Recommendation 5.3: Health in all Policies for Food Assistance

• Food Assistance organizations receiving more than $25,000 in funds from the County must reference, in their grant application, a recognized nutrition standard for the food they distribute.
• Identify a metric for evaulating the nutritional value of food distributed through food assistance providers and encourage organizations to report on this metric. Give consideration to using the metric currently used by CAFB.

Recommendation 5.4: Support and Expand Food Recovery

• Facilitate educational partnerships between food rescue, business development and support organizations, and food businesses in order to: Educate potential donors on food safety liability protection through the Good Samaritan Act; Educate businesses about the business advantages of food donation, including enhanced tax deductions, liability protection, environmental stewardship, and

public recognition; Encourage businesses to donate unsold food through food recovery programs, especially grocery stores serving immigrant customers such as Mega Mart
- PTAs and School staff coordinate with food recovery programs to donate unused food from school share tables and incorporate as an educational opportunity regarding food insecurity in their community.

Strategy 6.0: Establish New Programs in Areas of Greatest Need

Recommendation 6.1: Pilot Neighborhood Level Programs in Specific Zones

- Following up on Year One Recommendation 1.5, implement neighborhood level strategies similar to those currently being developed by the East County Opportunity Zone initiative. Building on the data gathering in this iteration of the Plan and during year one, implement pilot programs that target pockets of food insecurity through strategically located new food assistance sites. Also implement pilots such a "One Stop" centers for co-located services such as food assistance and food literacy resources and benefits program education, increased transportation availbility and efficiency, and comprehensive, multistakeholder community outreach.
- MCPS partners with parent groups, non-profits, Linkages to Learning and other stakeholders to explore the school-based pantry model as an emerging tool for increasing food security in concert with school-based feeding programs.

Recommendation 6.2: Consider expanding Senior Nutrition Program to provide service all year

- Expand programs operated by the Senior Nutrition Program of Montgomery County's Department of Health and Human Services to 5 days a week, 12 months a year. This builds on Year One Recommednation 3.2.

Strategy 7.0 Engage Community Partners and the Private Sector

Recommendation 7.1: Better Connect Health Care Community to Food Security

- Expand training and information resources for healthcare providers on culturally appropriate nutrition counseling and identifying signs of food insecurity in patients, and ultimately building internal structures for providing referrals for food assistance resources, including SNAP, WIC and other benefit programs. Initial educational components should focus on the impact of food security and SNAP participation on health, directly relating the impact of food security on the specific specialty of trainees (e.g., obstetrics, nephrology). Training programs in Baltimore for Chase Brexton Clinics and Jai provided in-person and via webinar by UMD School of Nursing students could be a valuable model. In Baltimore City it was found that low income clinics already had sufficient relevant resources; programs can reach a wider range by using hospitals and general clinics, and partnering with an internal contact at the health care facility to support the program.

• Pilot hospital-based initiatives to address food insecurity modeled after an initiative an Colorado partnering Kaiser Permanente and Hunger Free Colorado. Add two screening questions to emergency room/OB departments electronic intake forms: "In the past 12 months were you worried food ran out without money to buy more?" and "In the past 12 months did your food run out and you didn't have money to buy more?" Based on patient responses, if the patient is flagged as food insecure, a referral form is automatically generated by the computer and the hospital refers the patient to an agency partner who contacts patient by phone and helps connect them to food assistance resources and facilitates their SNAP registration. This is a HIPPA compliant process.

Recommendation 7.2: Retail Food Businesses

• Establish an "Express" section at the front of their store, conveniently locating staple items for easier access by Seniors and mobility-limited shoppers.
• Increase availability and visibility of multi-lingual staff through hiring practices, signage and nametags, employee trainings, and directories with easy access to lists of employees with language fluency.
• Support Benefit Programs: Register as a SNAP/WIC vendor to accept these benefits. Increase signage to indicate which items are acceptable under benefits programs. Focus outreach on increasing the number of ethnic grocery stores that accept SNAP/WIC.
• Increase awareness of shopping support for disabled and mobility impaired customers.
• Offer delivery and widely communicate availability of this service to Seniors and other mobility-impaired communities.
• Incentivize food retailers to offer online ordering with pickup at convenient community locations for no fees. Baltimarket in Baltimore's Virtual Supermarket is run by the City Health Department and serves as a valuable model; local residents can order groceries online and pick them up at set locations with no registration or delivery fees. This provides residents, particularly those living in neighborhoods with limited retail options, access to healthy foods at supermarket prices. Support staff is available for technical support with focused resources at designated public housing, low-income senior housing, or library sites. SNAP is an accepted form of payment and $10 in additional benefits are offered throughout the year for the purchase of healthy food.

Recommendation 7.3: Farmers Markets and Farmer Participation

• Increase public and private funding for incentives to match federal nutrition benefits spent at farmers markets. While matching funds are already provided by Montgomery County for SNAP recipients through the Maryland Market Money (MMM) Program, managed by the Maryland Farmers Market Association (MDFMA), this meets only a portion of the need. Additional funding could be expanded to match funds spent by Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) for WIC and Seniors.
• Donate excess product through the Farm to Food Bank or food recovery programs.

Recommendation 7.4: Engage All Businesses

• Promote volunteering among employees, not just in one-time team-building intiatives, but opportunities to contribute professional expertise to food assistance efforts through sponsored probono work, particularly related to technical specialty skills such as graphic design or other technology. Expansion of existing efforts to conduct food drives and company-wide fundraising initiatives, as well as direct corporate philantropy funds to food assistance programs.

- Participate as Community Food Rescue donors and runners. Select caterers who participate in food recovery.
- Sponsor an employee garden on premises that can donate excess produce to food assistance providers.

Strategy 8.0: Communications

Recommendation 8.1: Centralize Data Sharing and Collection

- Convert the Food Security Plan to a web portal to serve as a central information source for all food related assistance programs and annual statistics. Consider including a private user component for connecting Food Assistance Providers, data collection, etc.

Recommendation 8.2: Enhanced Communication Strategies for Connecting with Food Insecure Residents & Support Providers

- Keep programming names positive and accessible. Consider creative renaming to avoid stigma of using food assistance services and resources.
- Update materials and focus communications strategies on clarifying that the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is known as the Food Supplement Program (FSP) in Maryland, and was formerly known as Food Stamps. The nomenclature keeps changing, and understandably, eligible recipients are confused.
- Develop strategies to effectively connect with food insecure individuals through a wide variety of communications barriers, including language and technology access.

Recommendation 8.3: Innovative Resource Sharing Strategies for Food Assistance Providers

- Implement new strategies, such as webinars, for sharing best practices and other technical assistance to food assistance providers, who often have inconsistent or unpredictable schedules.

Strategy 9.0: Increase Retail Food Access

Recommendation 9.1: Increase nutrious food retail options available

- Identify communities with limited retail options, such as East County and Poolesville, and explore opportunities to attract new retailers to these areas, as well as existing barriers.The Fall 2016 opening of the Aldi store in Silver Spring illustrates how zoning amendments can eliminate barriers in attracting affordable, conveniently located food retailers to an area. The closure of the Safeway in the Briggs Chaney area in Spring 2016 in particular created a food access issue for local residents who live primarily in the community's numerous densely populated apartment complexes, as it eliminated the primary retail food source within walking distance.

- Incentivize or mandate community and corner stores to stock healthy items, as modeled in the Baltimore Healthy Corner Stores program. This will ensure that residents living in communities of low food access will have access to basic nutritious staples close to their homes.

Strategy 10: Adjust and Increase Transportation Resources

Recommendation 10.1: Pilot Programs

- Implement pilot programs or system changes based on gap analysis of RideOn and Metro Access systems to reduce transit time between communities with high levels of food insecurity and nearby food retail and emergency food providers.
- Based on transporation usage analysis and senior community listening session in Year One, pilot new transportation options for seniors, including shuttles at senior living communities, and increased support for existing community based programs, such as the volunteer "Villages" Montgomery County.

Recommendation 10.2: Invest in new transportation resources and access programs

- Based on outcomes of Food Assistance Provider (FAP) infrastructure analysis in Year One, strategically invest in transportation resources for FAPs, such as trucks and vans. Potentially, a shared resource system could be most effective and cost-efficient. Evaluation of Community Food Rescue "runs" will also provide valuable information to inform the common distribution routes for rescued food, and possibly donated food as well, assuming expansion of the technology platform to capture and analyze such data.
- Provide financial incentives to transportation providers to increase their services Upcounty and East County, including private providers and non-profit organizations that offer volunteer transportation and/or subsidized taxi service.
- Analyze effectiveness of transportation voucher programs, and partner with vendors to ensure reliable and courteous service. Conduct listening sessions with residents who use these services to identify opportunities for program improvement to increase use and efficiency of this resource.

Strategy 11: Maximize Participation in Benefit Programs

Recommendation 11.1: Increase SNAP and WIC authorized locations

- Follow efforts to allow mobile/online vendors to accept SNAP benefits. Support Montgomery County online retailer participation in future USDA pilot programs.
- Partner with the Maryland Department of Agriculture to explore expansion of the Farmers Market Nutrition Program to allow on-farm markets that do not participate in farmers markets to accept FMNP and, subsequently, WIC checks. Alternatively, request exemption for large-scale on-farm markets in communities of low food access, such as specific areas Upcounty with few retail food locations and farmers markets.

- Explore restructured lodging fees at homeless shelters to allow the homeless to use their SNAP benefits to pay for meals. Currently no homeless shelter in Montgomery County accepts SNAP benefits for payment. County shelters and local restaurants can explore becoming authorized by Federal Food/Nutrition Services to accept SNAP to allow the homeless to pay for meals from soup kitchens, shelters, and restaurants with SNAP.[131,132]

Recommendation 11.2: Increase Outreach Network & Capacity

- Community Clinics Inc., Maryland Hunger Solutions, the Community Action Agency, and other benefits programs resource experts to offer benefits counseling training sessions, to increase the number of volunteers or agency staff sufficiently knowledgeable to provide education and resources on benefit programs.
- Connect Food Assistance Providers with print materials and trained volunteers to offer benefits counseling to clients while they wait for food assistance.
- Increase co-located services by building relationships with the potential partner agencies identified in Year One, to offer benefits counseling to clients while they wait for legal services, employment assistance, etc.
- Partner with the health care community to identify more food insecure seniors and connect them to benefits and resources.

Strategy 12: Expand Food Production Opportunities

Recommendation 12.1: Increased home and community gardening opportunities

- Expand access to Montgomery Parks Community Gardens coordinated through M-NCPPC through added sites or expansion of existing sites. Community Gardens staff should continue to partner with Montgomery Housing Partnership (MHP), municipalities, residential property managers, and other community groups to identify potential sites for full-scale or container gardens. Building on the model of the successful Montgomery Parks programs at Franklin Apartments on Maple Ave. (in partnership with the City of Takoma Park and MOMIDC) and at the Long Branch Community Garden (in partnership with MHP), and the additional resources provided through the new full-time Community Gardens Manager on staff at Montgomery Parks, provide a valuable platform for future collaborative projects providing local residents the opportunity to cultivate their own food.
- Replicate successful Master Gardeners Youth Recreational Garden at White Oak in other Communities of Low Food Access, potentially in partnership with MCPS Summer Meals and Summer Recreational Department Programs.
- Encourage private organizations (such as faith based groups and community agencies) as well as local insitutions (correctional facilities, colleges, and residential facilities) to dedicate space on their properties for gardens. Ideally all, or a portion, of food produced will be donated to local food assistance organizations, or directly donated to employees if appropriate.

Recommendation 12.2: Increase availability of locally produced fruits, vegetables, and meats

- Support Montgomery County farmers' dedicated to production of tablecrops for donation
- Provide outreach and recruitment as well additional technical assistance and financial support to prospective urban gardeners
- Encourage donations of excess product by farmers and food producers to Community Food Rescue. Clarify existing and provide new incentives for donation.

Recommendation 12.3: Increased production of culturally diverse crops

- Encourage local production of culturally appropriate staples by cultivating produce in home gardens, container gardens, and in community gardens. Also, recruit immigrants with agricultural background to participate in the County's New Farmer Project.
- Provide technical and land procurement support for local emerging farmers and offer incentives to grow crops to meet diverse cultural demands.

Considerations for Years 4-5

Expand Food Literacy Capacity

Promote Food Preservation as tool for increasing access to local, nutritious food:

Canning and freezing are excellent options for efficiently preserving produce "seconds" that are typically wasted or donated to emergency food supply. This also increases availability of local, nutritious food products year round.

- Engage agricultural community in creation of food preservation skills training module
- Provide preservation training to food assistance providers
- Provide access to licensed kitchens and necessary equipment following training participation

Increase available nutrition and culinary skills educational programs in communities

- Train and recruit new culinary skills instructors. Implement train-the-trainer programs to build capacity in Department of Recreation, after school program providers, and faith-based organization staff.
- Increase offerings of Grocery Store Tours for seniors,incuding expansion of current programming. Explore the possibility of AARP grocery store guides program to be offered locally.
- Offer scholarships for Recreation Department cooking classes to include the materials fee for residents who receive FARMS

Incorporate Food Literacy More Extensively in the K-12 Curriculum, particularly in schools with high FARMS and food insecurity rates

- Expansion of Farm to School Week to include education
- Increased after school food literacy programming, such as those offered by Excel Beyond the Bell
- Add culinary skills and advanced nutrition education to curriculum
- Replicate successful food literacy programs at Sherwood High School and Stedwick Elementary School

Increased Garden Capacity

- Increase school gardens capacity through technical assistance, facilitation, and clarified processes
- Partner with Master Gardeners to replicate White Oak Youth Garden model in other communities of low food access
- Explore MNCPPC replication of successful container garden program in Takoma Park in another community of low food access
- Develop training and incentive program for large-scale residential communities to dedicate land and staff resources to a garden for residents, such as the garden at Leisure World.

Long-term Planning

Disaster/Emergency Preparedness Plan: Food Security

• Develop distribution and communications strategy for food access in the event of an unexepected event.
• Identify and secure Montgomery County and adjacent county temporary refrigerated warehouse space for emergency food storage in the event of power outages or in the event of tractor trailer donations.
• Emergency Support Function (ESF) 11 is focused on food security

Workforce and Economic Development

• The Economic Development Corporation and Worksource Montgomery can establish a "Start Up Grocer" program that combines economic incentives and workforce development opportunities for entrepreneurs looking to open small neighborhood-focused food stores in underserved areas. Using successful ethnic markets as models in other diverse, low income neighborhoods, this program can advise smaller grocers on how to maintain freshness of produce/meat and use signage and labels written in the dominant language of the neighborhood. Workforce development programs can incorporate grocer career pathways in curriculum.
• Explore pilot program to provide SNAP-eligible residents with jobs training. A prorgam in Vermont funded through Federal grants may serve as a valuable model: http://vtdigger.org/2015/03/23/leahy-ver-mont-nets-9m-for-innovative-pilot-program-pairing-snap-with-jobs-training/

Creating this Plan

The Food Security Plan resulted from the passage of Bill 19-16, The Strategic Plan to Achieve Food Security, which was introduced in the Montgomery County Council by Council Vice President Roger Berliner in April 2016. Sixteen hunger relief and food system organizations testified in support of this legislation at a public hearing on June 14th. The bill was passed unanimously by the County Council on July 11th and the Office of the County Executive was tasked with creating a Food Security Plan by January 2016.

In the four months that ensued from bill passage to plan submission, the County undertook an extensive review of existing programs inside and outside the region, and conducted multiple stakeholder meetings, listening sessions and an online survey to gather data. Every organization or stakeholder group named in the bill has contributed to this Plan, through interviews, stakeholder meetings and/or listening sessions.

A number of activities were scheduled to help inform the Plan. This includes the following:

Stakeholder Community Engagement Meetings: Six meetings were held between August and November 2016 to engage stakeholders, food security professionals and residents in the creation of the Food Security Plan. The objective of these monthly meetings was to gather and incorporate valuable perspectives from a wide range of strategic partners.

- Bethesda Chevy Chase Regional Services Center
- Rockville Red Brick Courthouse (4 meetings)
- Silver Spring Civic Building

Listening sessions: In order to solicit direct feedback from as many residents and communities as possible, County nonprofits, government agencies, and other partners were invited to host listening sessions with their clients and within their communities. The Food Council, The Innovation Program, and their partners hosted 8 listening sessions in Fall 2016 engaging more than 100 community residents, most of whom are current clients of County food assistance providers.

- Circle of Rights (7 attendees)
- East County Regional Services Center (10 attendees)
- Montgomery County's Office of Community Partnerships' Asian American Advisory Group (8 attendees)
- Montgomery Knolls Elementary School, hosted by CHEER & Linkages to Learning (12 attendees)
- Rolling Terrace Elementary School, hosted by Community CHEER (2 sessions, 16 attendees)
- Silver Spring Christian Reformed Church (8 attendees)
- Silver Spring United Methodist Church, hosted by Manna Food Center & Crossroads Community Food Network
  - English discussion group (11 attendees)
  - French discussion group (12 attendees)
  - Spanish discussion group (15 attendees)
- Town Center Apartments, hosted by Community Ministries of Rockville (15 attendees)

Key Informant Interviews were conducted in order to gain perspective from County stakeholders representing government agencies, nonprofits, and businesses in a wide variety of fields including food security, education, public health, food production, and nutrition.

An ad-hoc advisory committee was convened bi-weekly to oversee the strategic planning and writing processes, in order to equitably represent all sectors of the food system across the County.

An online survey was administered to collect input from additional stakeholder groups who could not participate in Community Engagement Meetings or host a listening session. The survey was open for September and October 2016 and collected 16 responses. See Appendices for summarized survey responses.

Montgomery County Food Council Internal Council and Working Group meetings: Throughout Fall 2016, the Food Security Plan was discussed in depth at the bi-monthly meetings of the Food Council and monthly meetings of its Food Literacy and Food Recovery and Access Working Groups, to solicit input and feedback from the subject matter experts convened.

Several students teams from University of Maryland Communications Program at the Universities at Shady Grove also assisted with research on several topics. We would like to thank Evann Flinchum, Katherine Webber, Sarah Ayemonche, Susan Muchemi, Peace Kish, Haddy Mbow, Ellen Arantes, Juan Villanueva, Yan Qiao, Thy Le and Fifi Soumah.

Regular updates on the progress on the Plan development, as well as invitations and reminders of upcoming engagement opportunities, were sent in an e-Newsletter to a list of over 300 subscribers.

In all, over 300 residents from across the county participated in the process.

This Plan builds upon and incorporates the work of previous efforts. Beyond the data collection and analysis efforts of CountyStat to the Food Council's Food Access report of 2015, there has been a wealth of information to build upon. Also helpful has been the insights that have been drawn from the various strategic planning efforts of Manna Food Center and the Capital Area Food Bank. All of those assets are cited throughout this Plan. The Plan is intended to be an evolving document as more detailed information is gathered over time.

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Glossary

TERM	DEFINITION
Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs)	An ABAWD is a person between the ages of 18 and 49 who has no dependents and is not disabled.
Aeroponic Vertical Edible Garden	Aeroponics is the process of growing plants in an air or mist environment without the use of soil or an aggregate medium. Vertical farming as a component of urban agriculture is the practice of cultivating plant life within a skyscraper greenhouse or on vertically inclined surfaces.
Aging in Place	The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines aging in place as "the ability to live in one's own home and community safely, independently, and comfortably, regardless of age, income, or ability level"
Age In Place Villages	Villages are a local, volunteer-led, grassroots organizations that support community members who choose to age-in-place by fostering social connections through activities and events and coordinating volunteer help at home using neighbor helping neighbor model.
Ambulatory Disability	A disability typically defined as have serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs.
Americans with Disabilities Act	Legislation passed in 1990 that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities.
Bill 19-16	A bill introduced concerning health and sanitation in Montgomery County enacted on July 19, 2016 for a strategic plan to achieve food security.
Body Mass Index	A weight-to-height ratio, calculated by dividing one's weight in kilograms by the square of one's height in meters and used as an indicator of obesity and underweight.
Case Management	A collaborative process of assessment, planning, facilitation, care coordination, evaluation, and advocacy for options and services to meet an individual's and family's comprehensive health needs through communication and available resources to promote quality, cost-effective outcomes.
Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)	Provides aid to child and adult care institutions and family or group day care homes for the provision of nutritious foods that contribute to the wellness, healthy growth, and development of young children, and the health and wellness of older adults and chronically impaired disabled persons.
Child Care Subsidy	The Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services assists eligible families by contributing to the cost of childcare through the County funded Working Parents Assistance Program.

Child Nutrition Commodity Program	USDA's Schools/Child Nutrition Programs support American agricultural producers by providing cash reimbursements for meals served in schools.
Community Food Rescue (CFR)	A Manna Food Center program inspired by the Montgomery County Council which sought to create a collaborative, comprehensive food recovery program throughout the county in order to direct a portion of the County's wasted food to food insecure residents.
Community Supported Agriculture Programs (CSAs)	A community of individuals who pledge support to a farm operation so that the farmland becomes, either legally or spiritually, the community's farm, with the growers and consumers providing mutual support and sharing the risks and benefits of food production. (USDA Definition)
CountyStat	CountyStat is the performance management and data analytics team within the Offices of the County Executive of Montgomery County, Maryland.
Dietary Guidelines	A series of dietary recommendations from the Nutrition Committee of the American Heart Association (and other bodies) intended to improve cardiovascular health.
Elderly Simplified Application Project (ESAP)	A demonstration project that seeks to increase participation among the elderly low income population by streamlining the application and certification process. ESAPs are limited to elderly households with no earned income, although some projects also include disabled households with no earned income.
Electric Universal Service Program	A program administered by the Department of Human Resources, Office of Home Energy Programs, designed to assist low-income electric customers with paying their electric bills, cover past and current electric bills and includes monies for weatherization.
Electronic Benefit Transfer Card (EBT)	Called the "Independence Card", Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) is an electronic system that allows a recipient to authorize transfer of their government benefits from a Federal account to a retailer account to pay for products received. EBT is used in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and Guam. EBT has been implemented in all States since June of 2004.
Estimated Food Insecurity Rate	Helps identify census tracts in which people experiencing food insecurity are most likely to live.
Family Markets	Monthly nutritious food distributions at schools for families and children. Markets are set up in a client choice format where families are encouraged to choose the foods they want.
Farm to Table	The various processes in the food chain from agricultural production to consumption.
Farmers Market	A food market at which local farmers and food producers sell food and beverage products directly to consumers.

FARMS	Free And Reduced Meals for Students is a federal program offering assistance to students whose families meet the definition of being a low-income family. Student eligibility for eating school meals for free or at a reduced cost is defined by the National School Lunch Act.
Feeder School	An elementary or middle school from which most of the children go to a particular secondary school in the same area.
Food Banks	A nonprofit, charitable organization that distributes food to those who have difficulty purchasing enough food to avoid hunger.
Food Insecurity	The state of being without reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food; can be more narrowly defined as Low Food Security or Very Low Food Security.
Food Literacy	Understanding the impact of your food choices on your health, the environment, and the economy. The Montgomery County Food Council includes healthy food choices, cooking skills, food safety, food marketing, and participating in the local, sustainable food system in its definition.
Food Pantry	A nonprofit organization (typically small in size), such as faith-based organizations or community agencies, that receives donated food items and distributes them to food insecure people for preparation at home. A food pantry will often receive its supply of food from a food bank.
Food Security	Access to safe, sufficient, nutritious food, with dignity. Food Security encompasses several dimensions, among them are: (1) availability in sufficient quantity of food of an appropriate nature and quality, (2) access to acquire food needed for a nutritionally adequate diet, (3) consumption of food uninhibited by health or hygiene problems (safe drinking water, sanitation or medical services, etc.) For most reporting purposes, USDA describes households with high or marginal food security as food secure and those with low or very low food security as food insecure. Placement on this continuum is determined by the household's responses to a series of questions about behaviors and experiences associated with difficulty in meeting food needs. The questions cover a wide range of severity of food insecurity. USDA's food security statistics are based on a national food security survey conducted as an annual supplement to the monthly Current Population Survey (CPS). The CPS is a nationally representative survey conducted by the Census Bureau for the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The CPS provides data for the Nation's monthly unemployment statistics and annual income and poverty statistics.
Food System	A collaborative network that integrates sustainable food production, processing, distribution, consumption and waste management in order to enhance the environmental, economic and social health of a particular place.
Fruit and Vegetable Check Program (FVC)	A program administered and managed by the Maryland Department of Health & Mental Hygiene (DHMH) as part of the Women, Infants & Children (WIC) program. Pregnant women, new mothers, and infants under the age of 5 (or their guardians) who are eligible based on certain qualifications are issued checks to spend at grocery stores on items such as formula, cereal, and other healthy supplemental foods along with nutritional counseling.

Good Samaritan Act	A law that exempts from legal liability a person who attempts to give reasonable aid to another person who is injured, ill, or otherwise imperiled.
Grow it, Eat It Program	A Maryland program to help people improve human and ecological health by growing their own food using sustainable gardening practices.
Horticulture	The art or practice of garden cultivation and management.
Hunger Heat Map	A Capital Area Food Bank tool that visually represents their food distribution efforts across their service area, in combination with data related to poverty and food insecurity.
Limited English Proficiency (LEP)	Individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English can be limited English proficient.
Literacy Centers	A physical area (or station) designated for specific learning purposes, designed to provide appropriate materials to help students work independently or collaboratively (with partners or in small groups) to meet literacy goals.
Majority Minority	A term used in the United States to refer to a jurisdiction in which one or more racial and/or ethnic minorities (relative to the whole country's population) make up a majority of the local population.
Maryland Energy Assistance Program (MEAP)	Nationally known as the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), a federally-funded program that helps low-income households with their home energy bills.
Maryland Meals for Achievement Program	A classroom breakfast program that offers a healthy start to the school day by serving breakfast foods in the classroom.
MC311	311 is Montgomery County's phone number for non-emergency government information and services.
Mobile Food Drops	Program in which a truckload of food is distributed to clients in pre-packed boxes or through a farmers market-style distribution where clients choose to take what they need.
Montgomery County Call-n-Ride Program	Provides subsidized taxi trips for low-income persons with disabilities and seniors to transport participants to medical and/or personal appointments.
MyPlate	Current nutrition guide published by the United States Department of Agriculture, depicting a place setting with a plate and glass divided into five food groups. It replaced the USDA's MyPyramid guide in 2011, ending 19 years of USDA food pyramid diagrams.
MyPyramid	Released by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) on April 19, 2005, an update on the earlier American food guide pyramid. It was used until 2011, when it was replaced by the USDA's MyPlate. The icon stresses activity and moderation along with a proper mix of food groups in one's diet.

Nutrition Education Programs	Any combination of educational strategies, accompanied by environmental supports, designed to facilitate voluntary adoption of food choices and other food- and nutrition-related behaviors conducive to health and well-being.
Obesity	An abnormal accumulation of body fat that my result in health impairments. Obesity is generally defined by the National Institutes of Health as having body weight that is more than 20% above the high range for ideal body weight. An obese person can experience malnutrition if obesity has resulted from dealing with food insecurity by relying on less expensive, less nutritious, high calorie foods to stave off the sensation of hunger.
Poverty Measurements	The US Census Bureau provides data using ratios that compare the income levels of people or families with their poverty threshold: • A household income above 100% of their poverty threshold is considered "above the poverty level." • Income above 100% but below 125% of poverty is considered "near poverty." • Households with incomes at or below 100% are considered "in poverty." Household incomes below 50% of their poverty threshold are considered to be in "severe" or "deep poverty."
RideOn	Montgomery County's transit system.
Self-Sufficiency Standard	The amount needed to meet each basic need at a minimally adequate level, without public or private assistance. The assumptions and data components that go into the calculations are: costs of housing, food, health care, child care, transportation, taxes and tax credits, emergency savings, and miscellaneous expenses. In Montgomery County, the Self-Sufficiency Standard for a family of four (2 adults, 1 preschool aged child, 1 school-aged child) is $91,252. Calculated by the Center for Women's Welfare at the University of Washington.
Senior FMNP (SFMNP)	Awards grants to local governments to provide low-income seniors with coupons that can be exchanged for eligible foods (fruits, vegetables, honey, and fresh-cut herbs) at farmers' markets, roadside stands, and community-supported agriculture programs.
Senior Nutrition Program	The Senior Nutrition Program is a federal and state funded nutrition program, administered by the Executive Office of Elder Affairs, which allows local senior service agencies to provide nutritious meals to senior citizens. Operated by the DHHS, it provides nutritious meals to residents over the age of 60 and their spouses of any age, as well as adults with disabilities in a variety of locations throughout the County.
Smart Sacks Program	A program started in 2005 through a partnership between Manna Food Center, Sodexo, Whole Foods Market and Montgomery County Public Schools, bridging the gap between school meals over the weekend by providing nutritious foods for children and their families who might not have another meal until after the weekend.

Soup Kitchen	A food assistance resource serving prepared free food, often hot meals, to food insecure individuals.
Summer Food Service Program	Montgomery County Public School Program that ensures low-income children continue to receive nutritious meals when school is not in session.
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)	Known as the Food Supplement Program (FSP), it is the largest nutrition assistance program administered by the USDA, serving more than 46 million low-income Americans per year, at a cost of more than $75 billion. The goals of SNAP are to improve participants' food security and their access to a healthy diet by providing federal assistance to supplement low income families' ability to buy food.
Technology Literacy	Ability of an individual, working independently and with others, to responsibly, appropriately and effectively use technology tools to access, manage, integrate, evaluate, create and communicate information.
Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA)	Known as the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program Federally, a program designed to help low-income families achieve self-sufficiency. States receive grants to design and operate programs.
Temporary Disability Assistance Program (TDAP)	A program funded through the State of Maryland to help low-income, disabled Marylanders through a period of short-term disability or while they are awaiting approval of Federal disability support.
The Community Eligibility Provision	A meal service option for schools in low-income areas to serve breakfast and lunch at no cost to all enrolled students without the burden of collecting household applications.
The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)	A federal program that provides low-income Americans, including seniors, with emergency food and nutrition assistance at no cost.
The Older Americans Act Program	Originally enacted in 1965, supports a range of home and community-based services, such as meals-on-wheels and other nutrition programs, in-home services, transportation, legal services, elder abuse prevention and caregivers support.
The Senior Brown Bag Program	Operated by the Capital Area Food Bank, provides income-qualified seniors with supplemental bags and nutrition education material on a monthly basis.
University of Maryland Extension Programs	A statewide, non-formal education system within the college of Agriculture and Natural Resources and the University of Maryland Eastern Shore offering educational programs and problem-solving assistance to residents based on the research and experience of land grant universities such as the University of Maryland, College Park.
Weekend bag program	Capital Area Food Bank started the Weekend Bag program in 2002 as a way to address the growing needs of the youth in the metro area. CAFB's Weekend Bag program distributed over 54,000 bags in 2011 to 2,000 children. Bags are packed by volunteers, mostly at the food bank but also at Capital One in McLean, VA.

WIC (The Women, Infants and Children Program)

A special nutrition program providing Federal grants to States for supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children up to age five who are found to be at nutritional risk.

WMATA

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, commonly referred to as Metro, is a tri-jurisdictional government agency that operates transit service in the Washington Metropolitan Area.

Working Poor

Working people whose incomes fall below a given poverty line.

Citations

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Note on References and Citations:

In the approximately four months this first iteration of the Plan was developed, the team worked diligently to obtain as much data and insight as they could in order to describe the current food security landscape of Montgomery County. Even this proved to be a challenge due to the disparate sources and in many cases complete lack of consistent data.

This Food Security Plan draws data from multiple sources, such as Montgomery County reports, Commission reports, and memos, state reports, hunger organizations and websites, and Census data. Existing food security plans from other jurisdictions around the United States, including from San Francisco, Nevada, Cook County Illinois and Pioneer Valley Massachusetts, were also valuable guiding resources. Every effort has been taken to source recent, verifiable data, but the authors note that variation in methods among surveys and censuses (including sampling, question wording, response categories and period of data collection) can lead to variation and differences in results.

Data obtained from surveys, such as the Census Bureau, depends on people responding to the survey. Data from the United States Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) are estimates. ACS collects data from a sample of the population in the United States and Puerto Rico rather than from the whole population. The Census Bureau assumes a margin of error for every ACS estimate, which is an indicator of the reliability of ACS estimates. It provides an upper limit and lower limit of the range where the true value of the estimate most likely actually falls.

(Source: United States Census Bureau American Community Survey. 2016. http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/guidance/comparing-acs-data.html)

Appendices

A: Bill 19-16 Introduction Packet (April 2016) and Office of Management and Budget Memo: Inventory of Hunger Relief Programs and Initiatives in Montgomery County (January 2016)

B: Capital Area Food Bank 5 Year Outlook for Montgomery County (January 2017)

C: Community Food Rescue Distribution Map (September 2015 - December 2016)

D: Data Standardization of Client Intake Process Across Hunger-Relief Agencies in Montgomery County Report from Manna Food Center and Food Works Group (November 2016)

E: East County Food Summit Takeaways (April 2016)

F: Food Security Plan Listening Session Demographic Survey Summaries

G: Food Security Plan Online Survey Summaries

H: Maryland Farmers Market Association Memo: Matching Programs

I: Montgomery County Community Food Access Report, Montgomery County Food Council (October 2016)

APPENDIX A

Bill 19-16 Introduction Packet (April 2016) and Office of Management and Budget Memo: Inventory of Hunger Relief Programs and Initiatives in Montgomery County (January 2016)

MEMORANDUM

April 15, 2016

TO: County Council

FROM: Amanda Mihill, Legislative Attorney *Mihill*

SUBJECT: **Introduction:** Bill 19-16, Health and Sanitation – Strategic Plan to End Food Insecurity

Bill 19-16, Health and Sanitation – Strategic Plan to End Food Insecurity, sponsored by Lead Sponsor Council Vice President Berliner and Co-Sponsor Councilmember Leventhal, is scheduled to be introduced on April 19, 2016. A public hearing is tentatively scheduled for June 14 at 1:30 p.m.

Bill 19-16 would require the Chief Innovation Officer to propose and update a Strategic Plan to End Food Insecurity in Montgomery County. In developing the Strategic Plan, the CIO would be required to consult with many organizations inside and outside of County government. The Strategic Plan would include relevant demographic and geographic information on poverty and food insecurity and would also include a 5-year Plan that strives to reduce food insecurity by at least 10% each year. A memorandum from the Lead Sponsor begins on ©5.

This packet contains:	Circle #
Bill 19-16	1
Legislative Request Report	4
Sponsor memorandum	5

F:\LAW\BILLS\1619 Food Insecurity Plan\Intro Memo.Docx

COUNTY COUNCIL
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

Lead Sponsor: Vice President Berliner
Co-Sponsor: Councilmembers Leventhal and Rice

AN ACT to:
  (1)   require the Chief Innovation Officer to propose and update a Strategic Plan to End
        Food Insecurity in Montgomery County;
  (2)   generally amend County laws related to Health and Sanitation.

By adding
        Montgomery County Code
        Chapter 24, Health and Sanitation
        Section 24-8B

Boldface	*Heading or defined term.*
Underlining	*Added to existing law by original bill.*
[Single boldface brackets]	*Deleted from existing law by original bill.*
Double underlining	*Added by amendment.*
[[Double boldface brackets]]	*Deleted from existing law or the bill by amendment.*
* * *	*Existing law unaffected by bill.*

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland approves the following Act:

1   **Sec. 1. Section 24-8B is added as follows:**

2   **24-8B. Strategic Plan to End Food Insecurity in Montgomery County.**

3   (a)   The Chief Innovation Officer must develop a Strategic Plan to End

4   Food Insecurity in Montgomery County by December 1, 2016. The

5   Strategic Plan must at least include:

6   (1)   demographic and geographic information on poverty in

7   Montgomery County;

8   (2)   demographic and geographic information on participation in

9   Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP);

10   (3)   demographic and geographic information on participation in

11   Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) food supplement program;

12   (4)   participation in free and reduced meals by school;

13   (5)   participation in other school based food programs;

14   (6)   demographic estimates regarding food insecurity;

15   (7)   information on the relationship between access to transportation

16   and access to food;

17   (8)   information on how food literacy impacts food insecurity; and

18   (9)   A 5-year Plan, with recommended actions, that strives to reduce

19   food insecurity by at least 10% each year. The Plan must include:

20   (A)   recommendations to reduce food insecurity for seniors and

21   children in the first year of the Plan; and

22   (B)   cost estimates to implement the Plan.

23   (b)   In developing the Strategic Plan, the Chief Innovation Officer must

24   consult with:

25   (1)   the County Department of Health and Human Services;

26   (2)   the County Department of Transportation;

27   (3)   the County Office of Agriculture;

28		(4)	the Regional Service Center Directors;
29		(5)	Montgomery County Public Schools;
30		(6)	the County Planning Department;
31		(7)	The Office of Community Partnerships;
32		(8)	The Montgomery County Food Council
33		(9)	Manna Food Center;
34		(10)	The Capital Area Food Bank;

35   (11)   organizations that are geographically located throughout that
36   County that provide emergency or sustained food assistance; and

37   (12)   organizations that are geographically located throughout the
38   County whose mission is to reduce and eliminate poverty in the
39   County.

40 (c) By December 1 each year, the Chief Innovation Officer must submit a
41   report to the County Executive and County Council. The annual report
42   must:

43   (1)   update the information required in Section 24-8B(a);

44   (2)   include activities, accomplishments, plans, and objectives to
45   implement the Strategic Plan;

46   (3)   include cost estimates for the following fiscal year necessary to
47   implement the Strategic Plan.

48

LEGISLATIVE REQUEST REPORT

Bill 19-16
Health and Sanitation – Strategic Plan to End Food Insecurity

DESCRIPTION: Bill 19-16 would require the Chief Innovation Officer to propose and update a Strategic Plan to End Food Insecurity in Montgomery County.

PROBLEM: The County has an array of programming to address food insecurity, administered by various government departments and nonprofit organizations, but there is no strategic plan for our county to follow as we seek to address and ultimately eliminate food insecurity in the County.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES: To develop a strategic plan to reduce and eliminate food insecurity in the County.

COORDINATION: Chief Innovative Officer

FISCAL IMPACT: To be requested

ECONOMIC IMPACT: To be requested

EVALUATION: To be researched.

EXPERIENCE ELSEWHERE: To be researched.

SOURCE OF INFORMATION: Amanda Mihill, Legislative Attorney, 240-777-7815

APPLICATION WITHIN MUNICIPALITIES: N/A

PENALTIES: N/A

④

ROGER BERLINER
COUNCILMEMBER
DISTRICT 1

CHAIRMAN
TRANSPORTATION, INFRASTRUCTURE
ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

MEMORANDUM

April 14, 2016

TO: Council President Nancy Floreen
        Council Colleagues

FROM: Council Vice President Roger Berliner
        Councilmember George Leventhal
        Councilmember Craig Rice

RE: Legislation to Create A Strategic Plan to Address Food Insecurity

Colleagues, we are writing to ask you to join us in co-sponsoring legislation that we plan on introducing next week. The goal of the bill is straight forward and one that we are confident all of us have a strong interest in achieving. Currently, 77,780 individuals in our county are food insecure, meaning that at any given point in time, they do not know where their next meal will come from. In a county as wealthy as ours, that is simply unacceptable.

Several months ago, in preparation for our FY17 operating budget deliberations, Council Vice President Berliner asked our Office of Management and Budget to put together an inventory showing all of the programs that receive government funding to address food insecurity in the county. The results of that inventory are attached.

What the inventory makes abundantly clear is that while our county has an array of programming to address food insecurity, administered by various government departments and nonprofit organizations, what we are lacking – to the detriment of those 77,780 individuals – is a strategic plan for our county to follow as we seek to address and ultimately eliminate food insecurity in our county.

Our County needs a plan, a plan we own. We believe that plan should, at a minimum, strive to reduce food insecurity by at least 10% a year. We will need data. And we will need our community partners to work together. That is why we are introducing this legislation, which would mandate the creation of a strategic plan for addressing food insecurity.

The plan will be developed by the Montgomery County Food Council and other key community stakeholders. As you are probably aware, the Food Council has already devoted significant time and resources to studying food insecurity in the county. Their participation, as well as the input from other public and private organizations listed in the bill, will ensure that the plan has the level of depth and analysis we need as policymakers to address the complexities surrounding food insecurity.

To make this plan a reality, we will be requesting as part of our FY17 operating budget deliberations that the Council appropriate $75,000 to the Chief Innovation Officer to develop the plan. Food has become a significant aspect of the Chief Innovation Officer's responsibility, including spearheading the study on food hubs, working on kitchen incubators, and serving as co-chair of the Food Council itself.

We would be grateful for your co-sponsorship on this legislation, which we believe is long overdue and would greatly assist in consolidating the existing efforts in our county to address the critical issue of food insecurity. Thank you for your consideration.

###

Isiah Leggett
County Executive

Jennifer A. Hughes
Director

MEMORANDUM

January 21, 2016

TO: Roger Berliner, Vice President, County Council

FROM: Jennifer A. Hughes, Director, Office of Management and Budget

SUBJECT: Request for Inventory of Hunger Relief Programs and Initiatives in Montgomery County

In response to your request for an inventory of hunger relief programs and initiatives in Montgomery County, I have attached a list of programs and initiatives supported by our County through department budgets, the Executive and Council Grants process, County contracts with community organizations, Federal and State funded programs that serve County residents, and programs administered by Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) that seek to reduce hunger. The Office of Management and Budget has identified 13 programs in FY16 within the Department of Health and Human Services with a hunger component totaling $6.2 million in County, State and Federal support. In FY16, Executive and Council grants provided $645,330 in general funds supporting 23 grants to 15 non-profit organizations to address hunger. MCPS reports FY15 Federal reimbursement supporting the Free and Reduced Priced Meals Program totaling $30.5 million, and FY15 State funding for the Maryland Meals for Achievement Program totaling $165,850.

In addition, under separate cover, please find correspondence from the Montgomery County Food Council detailing their efforts to identify funding trends and areas of interest for private funders in the region.

I hope you find this information useful. We look forward to working with the Health and Human Services Committee and the County Council during FY17 budget discussions to ensure that our scarce taxpayer resources continue to be used as efficiently and effectively as possible to fight hunger in our community.

JAH:rs

cc: Tim L. Firestine, Chief Administrative Officer
      Council President Nancy Floreen
      Councilmember George Leventhal
      Councilmember Craig Rice
      Uma S. Ahluwalia, Director, Department of Health and Human Services
      Larry Bowers, Interim Superintendent, Montgomery County Public Schools
      Daniel Hoffman, Co-Chair, Montgomery County Food Council

DHHS Programs Addressing Hunger

Program/Grant Recipient	Service Area	Contract?	FY16 $	Funding Source	Food Budget	Comments
Bethesda Cares	SNH	Yes	$169,263	HHS General Funding	$37,664	
IW Wilkins Ave. Women's Assessment Center	SNH	Yes	$732,418	HHS General & State ETHS Funding	$0	Do not charge us for food.
MCCH Men's Emergency Contract	SNH	Yes	$864,421	HHS, DHCA, & State ETHS Funding	$40,000	
Mt. Calvary Baptist Church Helping Hands	SNH	Yes	$280,947	HHS, State ETHS and Homeless Women Grants	$13,000	
NCCF Greentree Shelter	SNH	Yes	$825,913	HHS General & State ETHS Funding	$60,920	
Shepherd's Table	SNH	Yes	$134,722	HHS General & State ETHS Funding	$0	Does not cover food. Staffing only.
Stepping Stones Shelter	SNH	Yes	$265,138	HHS General & State ETHS Funding	$0	No breakdown for Food
Capitol Area Food Bank	CYF	Yes	$97,920	county dollars	$0	
Maryland Farmers Market Association	CYF	Yes	$26,092	county dollars	$0	
SNAP	CYF	No		Federal funding	$0	
Senior Nutrition Program	ADS	Most service delivered by contract	$778,341	general funds	$0	
Senior Nutrition Program	ADS	Most service delivered by contract	$1,844,405	Federal Older Americans Act Title III, State Grant, and Federal Dept. of Agriculture Nutrition Services Incentive Program(NSIP))	$0	
Food Recovery Program/ Manna Food Center, Inc	PHS	Yes	$160,000	HHS General Funding	0	The contract provides a food coordinator for the County's Food Recovery Program
		Total	$6,179,580			

FY16 Council Approved Food Grants

Organization	Description	Total	Grant Type
Bethesda Help	Provides for the Emergency Food Program	$2,000	CE Grant
Community Ministries of Rockville	Provides emergency assistance for eviction prevention, utilities, prescriptions, and referrals for dental/vision services and clothing/food	$23,000	CC Grant
Crossroads Community Food Network Inc.	Provides for a farmers market nutrition incentive program and complementary healthy eating education program	$60,920	CC Grant
EduCare Support Services, Inc	To deliver monthly allotment of perishable and non-perishable food to senior citizens and individuals with disabilities (Housebound Clients).	$40,000	CE Grant
First African Methodist Episcopal Church of Gaithersburg, Inc.	Provides for the SHARE food program for low-income families	$6,410	CE Grant
Gaithersburg HELP, Inc.	Provide the basic needs of food, diapers, and formula for low-income residents in Gaithersburg/Montgomery Village.	$25,000	CE Grant
Gaithersburg HELP, Inc.	Provides for food, diapers, and formula for low-income residents in Gaithersburg/Montgomery Village	$5,000	CC Grant
growingSOUL Inc.	Provides for support to local farmers to introduce fresh locally grown produce into the food safety net system	$9,750	CC Grant
growingSOUL, Inc.	Provides money to local farmers and introduces fresh locally grown produce into the food safetynet system	$20,000	CE Grant
Kids In Need Distributors, Inc.	Provides support to purchase food to be distributed to children	$30,000	CC Grant
Manna Food Center, Inc.	Provides for bringing locally grown produce to County residents experiencing hunger and to recover produce from local farmers markets	$20,000	CE Grant
Manna Food Center, Inc.	Provides for the Smart Sacks program for elementary school students	$32,500	CE Grant

9

Manna Food Center, Inc.	Provides healthy foods for weekend meals to at least 2,440 elementary school students experiencing hunger and food insecurity	$17,500	CC Grant
Manna Food Center, Inc.	Provides support to bring fresh produce to people experiencing hunger and rescue produce from farmers markets that may otherwise be composted or discarded	$15,000	CC Grant
Mid-Atlantic Gleaning Network	Montgomery County Gleaning Network, provides emergency food relief by harvesting fresh fruits and vegetables and distributing to needy County residents.	$20,000	CE Grant
MONTGOMERY COUNTY MUSLIM FOUNDATION, Inc	Our Program assists all who need help in the Montgomery County Irrespective of race, religion, ethnic back ground or nationality.	$90,000	CE Grant
Nourish Now Foundation, Inc.	Provides for operating support for the food recovery program	$10,000	CE Grant
Nourish Now Foundation, Inc.	Provides for operating support for food recovery program	$10,000	CC Grant
St. Camillus Catholic Church	This funding request is to purchase nutritionally adequate, culturally appropriate food to be distributed to needy families.	$17,000	CE Grant
The Community Foundation for Montgomery County, an affiliate of the Community Foundation for the National Capital Region	Contract salary for Coordinator to support and expand the Food Council activities in fostering a healthy and sustainable food system.	$25,000	CE Grant
The Community Foundation for Montgomery County, an affiliate of the Community Foundation for the National Capital Region	Provides for a Fiscal Impact Study on creating a Food Hub	$25,000	CC Grant
Women Who Care Ministries	Provides for the childrens' weekend backpack program and Montgomery Village Food Center	$130,000	CE Grant
Women Who Care Ministries	Provides for operating support for food programs	$11,250	CC Grant
	Total	$645,330	

FY 15 MCPS Division of Food and Nutrition Services Revenue

Month	Free	Reduced	MMFA (state)
Breakfast	5,833,147	932,202	0
Breakfast Severe Need	1,079,331	212,661	0
MMFA (state)	-	0	165,850
Lunch	17,300,922	2,794,851	-
After School Snacks	174,105	23	0
After School Suppers	967,798	0	0
Summer	1,207,269	0	0
Total	26,562,572	3,939,738	165,850

MONTGOMERY COUNTY
FOOD COUNCIL

January 4, 2016

Ms. Rachel Silberman
Montgomery County Office of Management and Budget
101 Monroe Street, 14th Floor
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear Ms. Silberman,

Thank you for your response to County Councilmember Roger Berliner's November 2015 letter requesting the county government's assistance in creating a comprehensive list of Montgomery County hunger relief programs and initiatives. The Montgomery County Food Council echoes the Councilmember's assertion that this assessment is essential in order to develop a better understanding of current efforts, identify existing gaps and overlaps, and maximize the impact of the funding invested in food system work. A list of the initiatives receiving direct county funding would be an incomplete picture of the breadth and depth of food system work conducted in our County, and so the Food Council will assist as much as possible within the given timeframe to identify funding trends and areas of interest for private funders in the region. In the near term it would be difficult to provide detailed data on specific private funding and programs, but this is something we can look into in the future. For the time being we hope to provide some private sector context to the data you are gathering on County funding.

One of the greatest challenges of a decentralized funding system for hunger and other food system programs is the difficulty in creating a single strategic vision for the County. It is also very labor intensive to provide a complete picture of existing initiatives. As an independent non-profit with the mission of connecting the wide range of stakeholders in the entire Montgomery County food system, the Food Council maintains a unique position in the County. The Food Council has the most comprehensive understanding of the full food cycle in Montgomery County from table crop farmers to craft food producers, to restaurants and retail, and most importantly, to resident food consumers. The Food Council has over 100 Council and Working Group members, volunteers representing private foundations, non-profits, State and Federal government, and local businesses. These partners can help us gather information that may not be captured in County government records. In addition, we feel it is important to consider food system work as a whole, including not only hunger relief efforts but also agricultural programs and services, as well as economic and workforce development initiatives.

In 2016, the Food Council will undertake the significant task of creating a Food Charter for Montgomery County, conducting a thorough assessment of the current state of food system work and establishing a long-term strategy for addressing existing issues and gaps in effort. However, below are some resources and information that should be of value in your immediate effort.
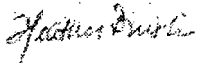
- We are aware of over 90 organizations providing emergency food services in our area, many of which are small, community-based organizations that likely do not receive County funding.
- Some examples of recent food system projects receiving funding from non-government sources:
  - Our Food Access Working Group received a project support grant in 2015 from Kaiser Permanente to conduct a Community Food Access assessment and Healthy Food Availability Index study.
  - The Community Food Rescue project received private funding to customize the online platform for their food recovery system to better meet the specific needs of Montgomery County.
  - Compass, a Washington, D.C.- based organization that provides pro bono business consulting to non-profits, donated $130,000 in-kind hours to help combat the hunger problem in Montgomery County.
- The Abell Foundation, Town Creek Foundation, Mead Family Foundation, TD Charitable Foundation, and Wolpoff Family Foundation, among others, all contribute over $25,000 annually to food system efforts in Montgomery County.
- The largest food security organization in Montgomery County, Manna Food Center, receives its funding from a diversity of sources, with the majority coming from individuals and workplace campaigns (51%), private foundations (13%), and corporate donors (5%). Smaller organizations likely receive funding from fewer sources, however.
- The Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future (JHCLF) works with students, educators, researchers, policymakers, advocacy organizations, and communities to build a healthier, more equitable, and resilient food system. JHCLF is actively connected to the Food Council, supporting our Food Access Working Group efforts and the development of our policy campaign. Their mapping project provides valuable Montgomery County-specific information including farms, processors, distributors, retail outlets, and purchasing institutions: http://www.jhsph.edu/research/centers-and-institutes/johns-hopkins-center-for-a-livable-future/index.html
- Washington Regional Food Funders was established to develop a deeper understanding of how philanthropic investments in healthy, affordable food are made in the Greater Washington Region. https://www.washingtongrantmakers.org/food-systems
- The Wallace Center is part of the Enterprise and Agriculture Group of Winrock International and supports communities in developing a modern food system that is healthier for people, the environment, and the economy. A representative of this organization will join our Food Economy Working Group's efforts to explore the feasibility of a food hub in Montgomery County. http://www.wallacecenter.org/
- The Farming at the Metro's Edge Report summarizes the perspectives of a variety of Montgomery County stakeholders on the current state of local agriculture and the obstacles and opportunities that exist for sustainable agricultural productivity: http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/agservices/resources/files/famefinalreport.pdf

We will continue to research this topic and share information as it comes available. Montgomery County is uniquely positioned to be a regional and national leader in alleviating hunger and creating a truly sustainable local food system. By reducing redundancies and maximizing collaboration across funding

sources, we can move forward with a more efficient, strategic plan to address these environmental, nutritional, social, and economic issues affecting our residents. If the Food Council can assist you further in any way, please let us know. We would welcome a conversation around creating a more comprehensive, strategic vision for food system funding in the County. Our belief is that the current mechanisms are too fragmented, making requests, such as Councilmember Berliner's request, difficult to respond to without great effort.

Thank you for your ongoing support and commitment to this shared goal. We look forward to continuing to work together in 2016.

Best Regards,

Heather Bruskin, Food Council Manager

APPENDIX B

Capital Area Food Bank 5 Year Outlook for Montgomery County
(January 2017)

Capital Area Food Bank
5 Year Outlook
For Montgomery County

The Capital Area Food Bank is taking hunger off the map.

The Capital Area Food Bank is the largest organization in the Washington metro area working to solve hunger and its companion problems, chronic undernutrition, diabetes, and obesity. By partnering with 444 community organizations in DC, MD, and VA, as well as delivering food directly into hard to reach areas of the community, the food bank is helping 540,000 people each year get access to good, healthy food. That's 12% of our region's mothers, fathers, sons, daughters, sisters, brothers, and grandparents.
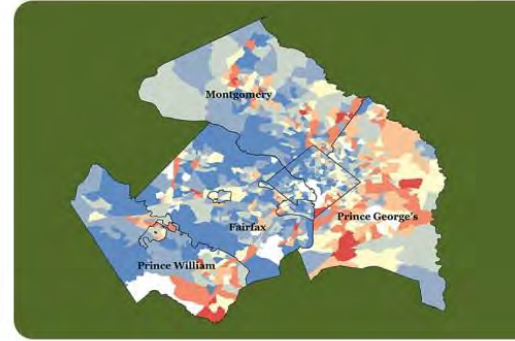
HOW WE WORK

6.6 million pounds of fruits, vegetables, and groceries were distributed in Montgomery County, MD through **Food Assistance Partners** and **Direct Distribution Programs** in fiscal year 2016.

FOOD ASSISTANCE PARTNERS

Faith based organizations, food pantries, soup kitchens, emergency shelters, senior programs, and daycare centers work on the ground to get food from the CAFB to neighbors in need.

40 Food Assistance Partners in MD including Manna Food Center, Allen Chapel, AME, and Saint Camillus Church.

DIRECT FOOD DISTRIBUTION PROGRAMS

FOR KIDS

3 Weekend Bag Sites
We provide weekly, kid-friendly bags of groceries for children to ensure they have enough to eat when not at school.

3 Kids Summer Feeding Programs
We provide healthy meals and snacks in the summer at sites that include faith-based organizations, camps, and recreation centers.

2 Kids After School Feeding Programs
We provide free, healthy meals and snacks to students attending after school enrichment programs.

FOR SENIORS

15 Senior Brown Bag Sites
We provide income-qualified seniors with a bag of groceries each month, along with recipes and nutrition education materials.

FOR FAMILIES

6 Family Market Sites
We provide families with fresh fruits, vegetables and non-perishable, healthy groceries each month in their children's schools. Food is offered market-style, and parents can choose the items they want, along with recipes to put ingredients to use.

FOR EVERYONE

9 Mobile Market Sites
We provide fruits, vegetables, bread and more at no cost to any resident living in a high-need neighborhood, by delivering to safe, public places for pick-up.

Nutrition Education
Our nutrition education courses teach CAFB food assistance partners and the neighbors they serve about healthy food selection, budgeting, cooking, and food growing.

Food Near You
The CAFB offers two ways for those in need of services to find the provider closest to them:
1.) Call the Hunger Lifeline for personalized recommendations on community food resources over the phone: **202-644-9807 (Monday-Friday 9 AM – 5 PM).**
2.) Enter a zip code at **capitalareafoodbank.org/get-help** for services such as housing, job training, and employment.

*All data as of June 30, 2016

Overview: Capital Area Food Bank

The Capital Area Food Bank (CAFB), founded in 1980, is a $68 million organization dedicated to hunger relief. The Capital Area Food Bank service area includes: Washington, D.C., Montgomery & Prince Georges' County, MD, and Northern Virginia. The food bank is the largest organization in the Washington metro area working to solve hunger and its companion problems: chronic undernutrition, heart disease, and obesity. By partnering with 444 community organizations, as well as delivering food directly into hard to reach areas, the CAFB is helping 540,000 people each year get access to good, healthy food. That's 12% of our region's mothers, fathers, sons, daughters, sisters, brothers, and grandparents.

CAFB Service to Montgomery County:

In FY 2016, the Capital Area Food Bank distributed 6.6 million pounds of food – including produce, bread, meat, and dairy – into Montgomery County through a network of 40 partners such as Manna Food Center, Adventist Community Services, and Allen Chapel AME. Of those 6.6 million pounds, 1,895,837 million pounds were fresh produce.

In addition to working with its partner network, the food bank has used a variety of direct distribution programs to reduce food insecurity in Montgomery County. These include Mobile Markets (community food distributions in which the food bank delivers food directly via one of its trucks); Senior Brown Bags (monthly bags of supplemental groceries for seniors); and Family Markets (free markets located in schools that allow families to choose groceries and produce together at a child's school). Family Markets are one of the food bank's most effective programs; data has shown a correlation between the existence of a market in a community and the reduction of food insecurity in that same area. Over the last three years, the food bank has expanded its Family Market program in the County.

CAFB's Hunger Heat Map:

Because resources are limited, making decisions based on data is essential to the food bank's programming. The Capital Area Food Bank spent two years developing a tool called the Hunger Heat Map to visualize hunger needs, along with the impact of our work and that of our partners. The Hunger Heat Map focuses on four metrics: Food insecurity Rate, Food distribution, Pounds Per Food Insecure Person, and Unmet Pounds. Below is a snapshot of the most current version of our Hunger Heat Map:
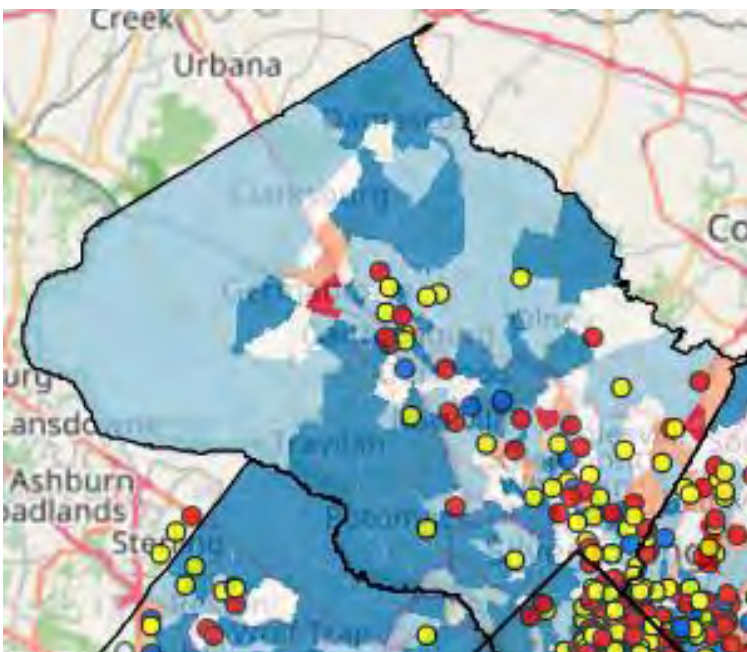
2016 Hunger Heat Map
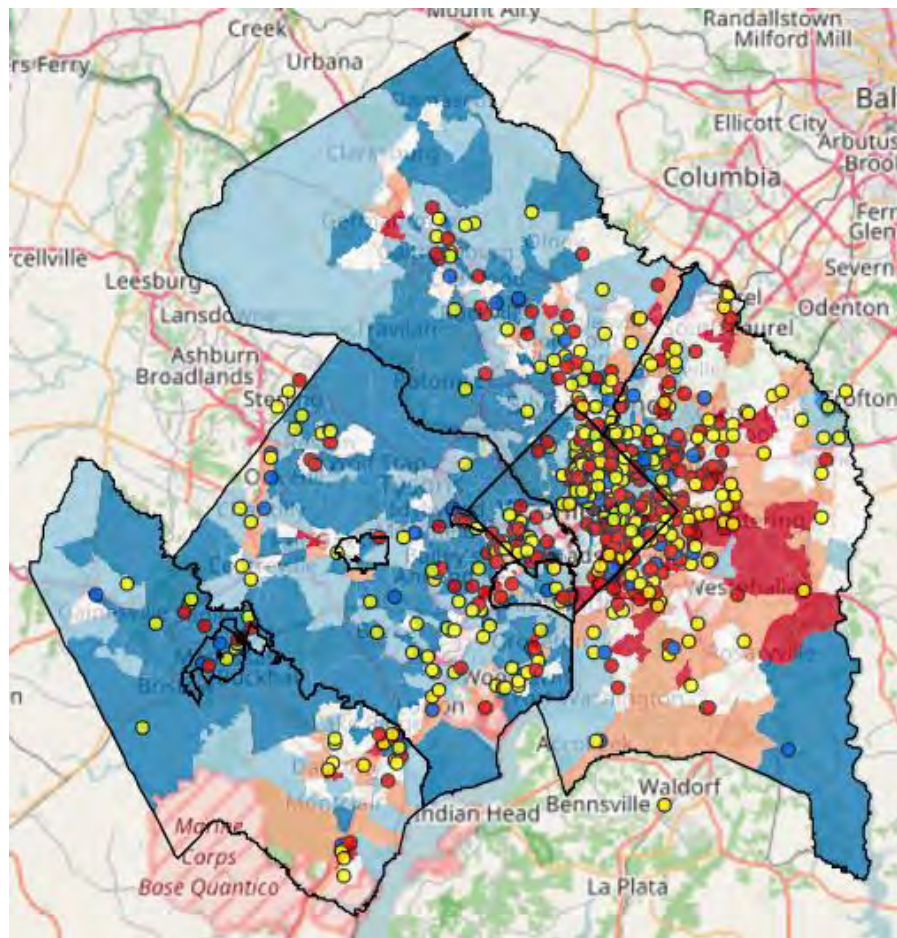
Legend		
Unmet Pounds		
🟥		> 155,870 to 299830
🟧		> 101,846 to 155,869
🟨		> 58,956 to 101,845
🟦		> 25,435 to 58,956
🟦		> 0 to 25,453

The Hunger Heat Map helps the CAFB focus and redesign its work around high concentrations of need, or Hunger Hot Spots, with the help of all its partners in the community, ensuring that resources are strategically placed.

Montgomery County Heat Map FY 2016

Below is a snapshot of the most current edition of our Hunger Heat Map for Montgomery County:

Legend		
Unmet Pounds		
🟥		> 155,870 to 299830
🟧		> 101,846 to 155,869
🟨		> 58,956 to 101,845
🟦		> 25,435 to 58,956
🟦		> 0 to 25,453

Compared with the same map from two years prior, food insecurity can be seen to have reduced in Montgomery County. There are several drivers of this change. As noted above, strong food bank programming for children and seniors has proven to be effective in reducing pockets of unmet need.

Another contributing factor is that the CAFB took on the administration of The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) in Montgomery County five years ago. Beginning in FY'14 to FY'16 the CAFB has increased the distribution of food commodities from 539,465 lbs. to 1,167,680 lbs. in the county, a more than 115% increase. The USDA/TEFAP program provides a good example of the types of partnerships that help to reduce food insecurity in the county. The CAFB will continue to seek out and leverage more such partnerships, from a variety of sectors, in the future.

5 Year Budget Outlook for Montgomery County

Over the next five years, the food bank will target its work towards specific populations that are the most at-risk for hunger, and will focus on providing increasingly nutritious foods. An important part of this effort will be the procurement and distribution of more fresh produce for communities that don't have ready access. This will require a significant investment of resources on the part of the food bank. For example, with fresh produce being such a great need in Montgomery County, the CAFB is forecasting that to meet the growing need over the next 5 years, it will invest over $10.6 Million for produce. Even with this investment, however, meeting the county's food needs – especially related to produce –is not something the food bank can do on its own. Therefore, we will engage the different sectors of the larger community to help fund these efforts.

For example, starting in FY'18, the CAFB will look to introduce a federal program known as the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) in Montgomery County. CSFP, which provides supplemental groceries for seniors, is not currently running in the county. It is our hope that we can bring this important resource to bear in the area. The federal reimbursement for this program is currently $67.08 per senior, and based on CAFB experience with the program in the District of Columbia, an additional match of $67.08 per senior will be required in order for this program to run effectively.

The CAFB also knows that hunger is ever-changing in our region and with that change the CAFB needs to be poised to respond with innovative programs that bring services to diverse communities. For instance, we are making our menu of food options more culturally appropriate for some of the people that we serve, including a growing Hispanic population. We are also launching a client data tracking software that will allow us to see shifts in service demographics in real time and respond to them more quickly.

Finally, we will expanding our Family Market program to cover all the schools in the county with FARMS (Free and Reduced Price Meals) rates of 50% or above. We will do this either by having schools host a Family Market, or by having families attend a market at a school in their cluster, giving kids and their families more access to receive the groceries that they need.

CAFB Expense Outlook for Montgomery County FY'18-22	
Children (Family Market)	$ 2,689,009.50
Seniors (CSFP + Senior Brown Bag)	$ 2,436,999.73
Families (Partners Fresh Produce)	$ 6,325,896.03
Fresh Produce (Mobile Markets)	$ 4,329,930.43
Culturally Appropriate Foods	$ 93,613.00
Innovation (Client Data Tracking)	$ 72,260.00
TOTAL:	$ 15,947,708.69

Children
Program Overview: Family Market

Access is a challenge that is faced by many families in our region. Often there simply isn't time available for a food insecure family to get to the food that they need. Recognizing this challenge, the CAFB launched its Family Market program four years ago with the idea of running free farmers market-style distributions located in elementary schools. The vision was simple: instead of trying to bring the community to the much-needed food, we brought the food to the community. Schools love Family Markets because they can pair them with Back to School Nights, parent teacher conferences, and other school activities to increase attendance. The school community not only gets the food that they need but also valuable auxiliary services.

Family Markets are located in neighborhoods with some of the highest poverty and food insecurity rates in Montgomery County, a primary consideration for market placement. Additionally, markets are placed in school districts with the highest federally subsidized breakfast and lunch quotients. This criteria, paired with census and other data from our Hunger Heat Map, has allowed us to select schools that are highly invested in the program, providing space for the market and many community volunteers to help run it. In addition to food, nutrition education and additional support resources offered on site at each distribution provide enhancements that make Family Markets a once-a-month event. Families are provided with access to community assistance in many forms, including health screenings and job skill referrals.

Family Markets is a program with a proven track record of excellent management and evaluation. In partnership with County schools, markets are highly efficient in delivering nutritious food in a familiar setting. The program is efficient, gathering many people in one place at one time for a large number of services, including recipe card distribution and cooking demonstrations that allow them to use the food they receive well.

The markets also provide a strong model for joint funding. The market at Southlake Elementary School in Rockville, MD, for example, is supported financially through both the Montgomery County Government and CSNI, a Rockville based company. CSNI also provides volunteer support for the markets it sponsors. This merger of support from the food bank, government and business sector helps Southlake have a vibrant market that supports its school community.

Program Metrics:

In FY'17, the CAFB has 6 markets in Montgomery County: Burtonsville Elementary School, Parkland Middle School, Francis Scott Key Middle School, Watkins Mill High School, John F. Kennedy High School, and Southlake Elementary School.

In FY'16, we were able to serve over 5,500 duplicated households with over 300,000 pounds of groceries at four of our established Family Markets. The CAFB will also be establishing Family Market at John Leleck at Broad Acres and Galway Elementary School in FY'17, bringing the total of schools hosting Family Markets to 8 in the county. (Other 2 schools not on-boarded until FY'17).

Total Pounds distributed:

FY'16 Combined Yearly - Totals			
	Participants	**Households**	**Pounds**
Kennedy High School	14978	3286	187,096
Watkin Mills High School	2064	727	63600
Southlake Elementary School	5475	1315	53739
Parkland Middle School	1483	338	27119
TOTAL:	24000	5666	331,554

Produce pounds distributed:

CAFB Family Markets Produce	
Program Partner	**Pounds**
Kennedy Cluster	94,259.00
Watkins Mill High School	19,309.00
Southlake Elementary	16,030.00
Parkland Middle School	6,735.00

Feedback we have received from patrons at Montgomery County Family Markets:

- 100% of clients report saving money by attending the markets; 92.5% clients report saving more than $20.
- 83% of clients report being satisfied or very satisfied by the markets.
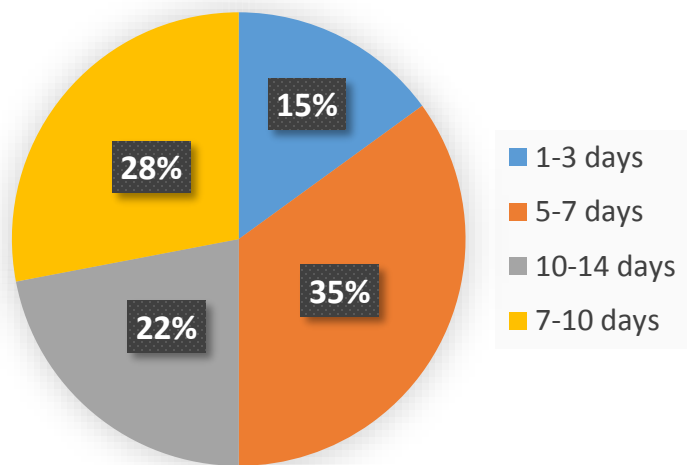- 85% report that food from the Family Market lasts 5-14 days

How Much Money was Estimated to be Saved by Clients Attending Family Market FY'16

Legend:
- $0-$20 — 8%
- $21-$40 — 32%
- $41-$60 — 37%
- $61+ — 23%
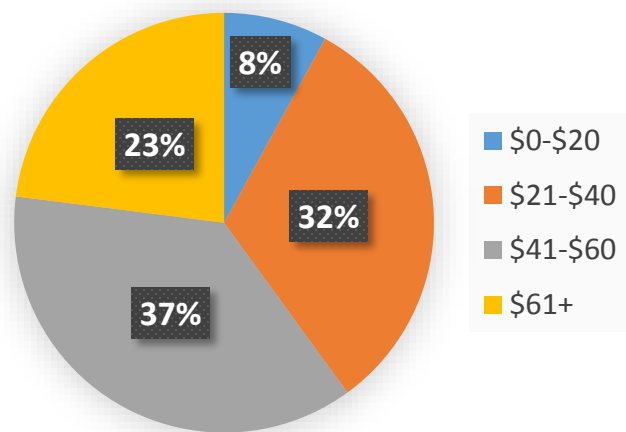
Levels of Satisfaction Among Clients of the Food Products Offered FY'16

Legend:
- Completely unsatisfied — 8%
- Unsatisfied at times — 3%
- Neutral — 20%
- Satisfied — 32%
- Very Satisfied — 37%
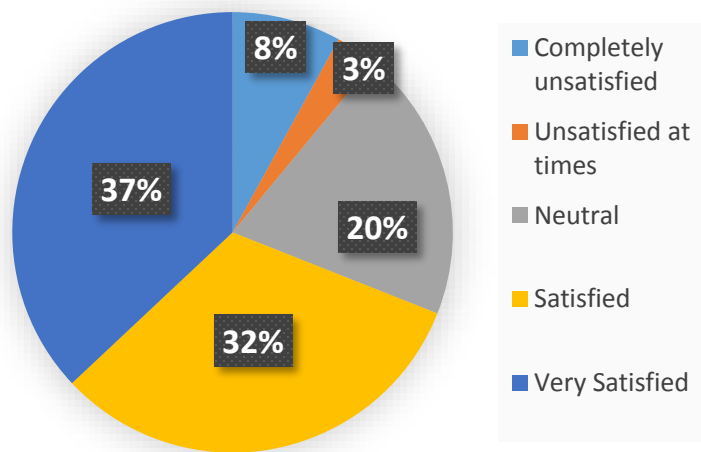
Estimated Quantity of Days Food Package Last Clients FY'16

Legend:
- 1-3 days — 15%
- 5-7 days — 35%
- 10-14 days — 22%
- 7-10 days — 28%

Program Outlook:

Between FY'18 through FY'22, the food bank hopes to increase schools hosting Family Markets by two schools per year or ten schools in a five year period, bringing the total of schools served to 18. While there are more than 10 schools above 50% free and reduced meals rate, the CAFB will target schools with higher capacity to host larger markets and act as a hub and spoke in their cluster areas. Currently, John F. Kennedy High School runs a strong program, which serves families from schools highlighted in **Orange** below. The schools highlighted in **Green** denote the schools already hosting Family Markets at their locations:

Capital Area Food Bank Family Markets			
School Name	**FARM Rates**	**School Name**	**FARM Rates**
BROAD ACRES ELEMENTARY	94.62%	BURNT MILLS ELEMENTARY	66.54%
NEW HAMPSHIRE ESTATES ELEM	92.54%	TWINBROOK ELEMENTARY	66.11%
HARMONY HILLS ELEMENTARY	87.47%	GLENALLAN ELEMENTARY	65.97%
SOUTH LAKE ELEMENTARY	85.45%	MONTGOMERY VILLAGE MIDDLE	65.97%
GAITHERSBURG ELEMENTARY	83.74%	COL E BROOKE LEE MIDDLE	65.58%
WHEATON WOODS ELEMENTARY	82.71%	GREENCASTLE ELEMENTARY	64.65%
SUMMIT HALL ELEMENTARY	81.67%	FLOWER HILL ELEMENTARY	64.13%
R SARGENT SHRIVER ELEMENTARY	81.23%	MONTGOMERY KNOLLS ELEMENTARY	63.86%
OAK VIEW ELEMENTARY	79.85%	A MARIO LOIEDERMAN MIDDLE	62.34%
HIGHLAND ELEMENTARY	79.39%	GLEN HAVEN ELEMENTARY	61.91%
GEORGIAN FOREST ELEMENTARY	77.78%	WHITE OAK MIDDLE	61.39%
JACKSON ROAD ELEMENTARY	77.54%	STRATHMORE ELEMENTARY	61.06%
KEMP MILL ELEMENTARY	76.59%	STEDWICK ELEMENTARY	60.66%
CRESTHAVEN ELEMENTARY	76.31%	WHETSTONE ELEMENTARY	60.15%
WELLER ROAD ELEMENTARY	75.56%	GALWAY ELEMENTARY	60.05%
WATKINS MILL ELEMENTARY	75.18%	ROSEMONT ELEMENTARY	59.56%
ROSCOE E NIX ELEMENTARY	74.40%	EAST SILVER SPRING ELEMENTARY	58.51%
FOUNDATION SCHOOL OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY	74.29%	ARGYLE MIDDLE	58.32%
ARCOLA ELEMENTARY	74.04%	FAIRLAND ELEMENTARY	57.10%
WASHINGTON GROVE ELEMENTARY	73.01%	JUDITH A RESNIK ELEMENTARY	56.70%
ROLLING TERRACE ELEMENTARY	71.89%	EAST SILVER SPRING ELEMENTARY	55.90%
CAPT JAMES E DALY ELEMENTARY	71.31%	LAKE SENECA ELEMENTARY	54.81%
BEL PRE ELEMENTARY	71.18%	SEQUOYAH ELEMENTARY	54.29%
FRANCIS SCOTT KEY MIDDLE	70.25%	FOX CHAPEL ELEMENTARY	53.48%
BLAIR G EWING CENTER	69.42%	MEADOW HALL ELEMENTARY	53.35%
BROWN STATION ELEMENTARY	68.46%	WATERS LANDING ELEMENTARY	52.64%
BROOKHAVEN ELEMENTARY	67.48%	BENJAMIN BANNEKER MIDDLE	50.87%
CLOPPER MILL ELEMENTARY	67.47%	WATKINS MILL HIGH	50.81%
CANNON ROAD ELEMENTARY	67.37%	WM TYLER PAGE ELEMENTARY	50.59%
NEELSVILLE MIDDLE	66.99%	NORTHWOOD HIGH	50.13%
VIERS MILL ELEMENTARY	66.57%	JOHN F KENNEDY HIGH	48.62%
BURNT MILLS ELEMENTARY	66.54%	PARKLAND MIDDLE	48.24%
TWINBROOK ELEMENTARY	66.11%	BURTONSVILLE ELEMENTARY	47.46%

The cost associated with the expansion and the current administration of the Family Market program is below:

YEAR 1 17-18	YEAR 2 18-19	YEAR 3 19-20	YEAR 4 20-21	YEAR 5 21-22		5 Year Total
$ 419,952.82	$ 476,756.62	$ 533,704.53	$ 590,800.88	$ 648,050.12	$ 2,669,264.96	

Seniors

Program Overview: Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)/ My Groceries To Go + Senior Brown Bag

Senior food insecurity has risen as a result of the recession. The number of seniors at risk of hunger in 2011 was 50% higher than in 2007.

Trends in US census data show that the number of older adults in the country is projected to increase over the next decade, and to continue to rise in the following decade. By 2040, there will be 80 million older adults, more than twice the number in 2000. This trend is playing out in our own beloved county. **The senior population in our county makes up nearly 20 percent of total population or about 194,000 people.**

According to 2010 Census reports, those 60 and older will comprise 25 percent of the County population by 2030. Those same census numbers reveal that Montgomery County has the third highest percentage of low-income minority adults in the state of Maryland, at 13 percent.

Seniors often have unique health, social, and nutrition challenges. These include decreased shopping and cooking ability due to reduced mobility, which can make food access difficult and lead to food insecurity**. Food insecure seniors are 60% more likely than their food secure counterparts to suffer from depression; 53% more likely to have a heart attack; and 40% more likely to be diagnosed with congestive heart failure.** It is imperative that we address senior hunger, and Montgomery County can and should be a regional leader in this critical area.

The food bank's programs for seniors provide food to those in need at or near their homes.

The Senior Brown Bag (SBB) Program: Provides income-qualified seniors with supplemental bags of food and nutrition education materials on a monthly basis. The food bank currently operates 75 Senior Brown Bag locations serving over 4,178 seniors.

Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)/My Groceries to Go: Works to improve the health of low-income elderly persons at least 60 years of age by supplementing their diets with nutritious USDA Foods.

Program qualifications:

	SBB	**CSFP**
Income	185% Federal Poverty Level	130% Federal Poverty Level
Age	55	60

Program Metrics:

In FY'16, the CAFB served an average of 659 seniors/15 sites with 87,987 pounds of food. Included in that poundage is 18,066 pounds of fresh produce. See tables below for locations and breakdown of pounds:

Senior Brown Bag Montgomery County Sites	
Program Partner Name	**Non-Produce Pounds**
Bauer Park Apartments	5,479.51
Friends House	106.46
Heritage House	8,950.91
Inwood House Development Corporation	5,431.60
Lakeview Apartment Homes	8,332.70
Londonderry Towers	4,730.35
Rock Creek Terrace Apartments	4,851.20
Senior Brown Bag Montgomery County Sites	6,454.85
Shady Grove Apartments	3,689.51
The Charter House	1,184.77
The Willows Apartments	1,896.22
Town Center	498.64
Victory Forest	5,100.06
Victory Oaks	3,492.06
Victory Tower	9,722.35
TOTAL:	**69,921.18**

Senior Brown Bag Montgomery County Sites	
Program Partner Name	**Produce Pounds**
Bauer Park Apartments	1,600.00
Friends House	50.00
Heritage House	2,365.00
Inwood House Development Corporation	1,797.00
Lakeview Apartment Homes	1,875.00
Londonderry Towers	1,402.00
Rock Creek Terrace Apartments	1,448.00
Shady Grove Apartments	870.00
The Charter House	380.00
The Willows Apartments	1,002.00
Town Center	150.00
Victory Forest	1,571.00
Victory Oaks	1,064.00
Victory Tower	2,492.00
TOTAL:	**18,066.00**

Program Outlook:

The CAFB will use both the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)/My Groceries to Go and Senior Brown Bag (SBB) programs to reduce senior food insecurity in Montgomery County. The SBB program will act as a safety net for those senior who don't qualify for the CSFP program because of the higher restrictions on age and income.

The cost associated with the expansion and the current administration of the Senior Brown Bag program is below:

YEAR 1 17-18	YEAR 2 18-19	YEAR 3 19-20	YEAR 4 20-21	YEAR 5 21-22		5 Year Total
$ 79,975.30	$ 82,374.56	$ 84,845.80	$ 87,391.17	$ 90,012.90	$ 424,599.73	

FY'16 was the first year that the CSFP/My Groceries to Go program was introduced in Maryland. This program was started in Baltimore, MD and the vision of the Maryland Department of Aging is to expand this program to one of the Washington suburbs. The reimbursement rate per senior to administer this program is: $74.53, the CAFB will receive $67.08 per senior. To effectively run this program, the CAFB will need to match the reimbursement rate. This means that it will cost the CAFB $134.16 per senior. Initially, starting in FY '17, the CAFB will on-board 1,000 seniors into the program and will ask for an increase of 1000 seniors per year for the next four years, reaching a caseload of 5,000.

YEAR 1 17-18	YEAR 2 18-19	YEAR 3 19-20	YEAR 4 20-21	YEAR 5 21-22		5 Year Total
$ 134,160.00	$ 268,320.00	$ 402,480.00	$ 536,640.00	$ 670,800.00	$ 2,012,400.00	

Families

Program Overview: Food Assistance Partner's Fresh Produce + The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)

The food bank's Food Assistance Partners are critical for the CAFB to reach its mission of reducing food insecurity in Montgomery County. The 40 partners we have in the county are backbone of the hunger safety net. Partners are the boots on the ground, have a direct link to the community, and understand the needs of their community the best. Furthermore, Food Assistance Partners have transitioned from being just emergency pantries to being the main source of nourishment for many in their surrounding community. In other words, partners are feeding their neighbors on a consistent basis. This responsibility is significant: partners are regularly and directly responsible for what many families in their areas put into their bodies. Partners take this responsibility very seriously, and in conjunction with the CAFB, advocate on behalf of their patrons for healthier, nutrient rich food. To help meet this challenge, the CAFB is committed to providing the nourishing fresh produce that partners need to feed their communities.

Throughout CAFB programming, produce is separately categorized, measured and tracked because of its importance to food insecure communities. While those we serve can often access enough calories to sustain themselves, they are often in the form of cheap, processed foods. While affordable, a diet full of them can lead to diet-related diseases like hypertension and diabetes. The CAFB believes that dignity is central to our mission and that we demonstrate this dignity by providing foods that nourish the families and children we serve.

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) is a Federal program that helps supplement the diets of low-income Americans, including elderly people, by providing them with emergency food assistance at no cost. Through TEFAP, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) purchases a variety of nutritious, high-quality USDA Foods, and makes those foods available to State Distributing Agencies.

Program Metrics:

In FY'16, the CAFB distributed 872,688 pounds of fresh produce into Montgomery County through our Food Assistance Partners at no charge to our partners.

Montgomery County Food Assistance Partners			
Food Assistance Partner Name	Produce Pounds	Food Assistance Partner Name	Produce Pounds
Adventist Community Services of Greater Washington	2,000	New Hampshire Spanish SDA	172,200
Alfred House Eldercare Inc	9,703	Nourish Now	3,727
Allen Chapel AME Church Outreach Ministry	2,963	Our House	2,687
Apple Blossoms	739	Pastoral Support Services	1,095
Bethesda Cares	4,064	Rainbow Community Development Center	4,553
Calvary Pentecostal Ministries	3,540	Rainbow Outreach Ministries	116
EduCare Support Services	22,731	Rockville Spanish SDA Church	1,069
First Baptist Church Ken-Gar	954	Saint Camillus Catholic Church	13,629
Gaithersburg Community Soup Kitchen	200	Shepherd's Table	360
Interfaith Works	778	Silver Spring Christian Reformed Church	11,100
Luther Rice Neighborhood Center	500	The Lord's Chosen Food Pantry	22,141
Manna Food Center	452,243	The Yehuda Mond Foundation of Ahavas Torah	2,130
McCarrick Family Center	10,606	There's Hope Christian Church	2,420
Montgomery County Muslim Foundation	1,008	Washington Spanish Church	15,971
Mount Jezreel Baptist Church	7,420	Wells Robertson House	40
Muslim Community Center	2,426	YMCA Youth and Family Services	60
Nations United Baptist Church	97,516	TOTAL:	872,688

Program Outlook:

YEAR 1 17-18	YEAR 2 18-19	YEAR 3 19-20	YEAR 4 20-21	YEAR 5 21-22		5 Year Total
$ 1,088,409.56	$ 1,169,200.61	$ 1,257,229.26	$ 1,353,194.04	$ 1,457,862.56	$ 6,325,896.03	

Fresh Produce
Program Overview: Mobile Markets

Through the Mobile Market program, the food bank delivers fresh produce monthly to high-needs neighborhoods throughout the Washington metropolitan area. As of January 2015, the CAFB operates 88 Mobile Market locations in partnership with community organizations.

The goal of this program is to inject underserved communities with the fresh produce that they need. The CAFB places these programs in communities that have no other programs or food assistance partners in their community.

Program Metrics:

Mobile Market Montgomery County Sites	
Program Partner Name	**Produce Pounds**
McCarrick Family Center	105,095.38
Clifton Park Baptist Church	80,063.00
Faith Community Baptist Church	351,751.40
Hughes Neighborhood Housing Inc.	105,312.63
Inwood House	63,695.25
Londonderry Towers Apartment	66,603.75
Mobile Pantry Montgomery County	12,586.00
New Creation Church	77,542.12
Silver Spring UMC	104,143.00
There's Hope Christian Church	98,404.13
TOTAL:	**1,065,196.65**

Program Outlook:

YEAR 1 17-18	YEAR 2 18-19	YEAR 3 19-20	YEAR 4 20-21	YEAR 5 21-22		5 Year Total
$ 758,629.02	$ 807,970.26	$ 861,449.98	$ 919,458.15	$ 982,423.03	$ 4,329,930	

Culturally Appropriate Foods
Program Overview: Sourcing culturally appropriate foods

Montgomery County is a tremendously diverse county and therefore the food needs of the county are also diverse. From 2010 to 2014, the foreign born population has increased by 11% or 325,927 people. During the same time period, those who are foreign born and living below 200% of the poverty line

increased by 23%. Food assistance organizations want to respond to the needs of a diverse client base; however, there are limited supplies of these foods in the donation stream.

Because it is a significant source of food for 40 partners in Montgomery County, the food bank is uniquely poised to connect partners with culturally diverse foods. It has two primary models for doing so:

- Using its bulk purchasing capacity to buy culturally appropriate foods, which saves transport/delivery costs for food assistance partners.
- Connecting grocery stores directly to our partners through our Partner Direct program, so that donations reach a family in need as quickly as possible. The CAFB has 60 Partner Direct sites in the county. We would like to start reaching out to more stores in the area who may be able to donate directly to our partners in their proximity.

Program Metrics:

Two years ago, the CAFB launched a new initiative to better serve the diverse communities of the Washington metro area. As a pilot, the CAFB began to source foods that helped our partners to better serve the Hispanic community. The five selected products below were compiled by internal food bank staff based upon feedback from organizations that are either Hispanic-run or serve a predominately Hispanic population. In the future, the CAFB will look to source food for other culturally/ethnically diverse communities.

Hispanic Food Distribution (Montgomery County) FY'14 - FY'15		
Product Name	Year 1 FY'15	Year 2 FY'16
Black Beans, Dried	1,464	5,304
Flour, Masa (Harina De Maiz)		264
Pinto Beans, Dried	1,848	288
Rice, White	10,848	8,280
Vegetable Oil	828	9,612
Totals:	14,988	23,748

Program Outlook:

YEAR 1 17-18	YEAR 2 18-19	YEAR 3 19-20	YEAR 4 20-21	YEAR 5 21-22		
						5 Year Total
$ 19,678.19	$ 30,304	$ 46,668.78	$ 71,869.91	$ 110,679.7	$ 279,200.9	

Innovation

Program Overview: Hunger Heat Map and Client Data Tracking

For the last three years, the CAFB has been on a strategic path to make data driven decisions when it comes to best placing its finite resources. The goal of innovating CAFB tracking systems is to pair to highest incidences of food insecurity with the best program to fit the need. Therefore, when compiling and analyzing data for our regional "Hunger Heat Map" in 2015, CAFB was able to identify unmet hunger needs throughout the region, recruit and build partnerships, and add distribution sites where needs are significant but resources few. This mapping is informing the CAFB's current work, and guiding its future work as well.

The second step of this strategic path is Client Data Tracking. Data on clients who utilize CAFB food and educational resources will inform our planning and allocation of resources so that we better meet cultural, health, and other needs. This data will also provide valuable insight as to where clients live versus where they access our services.

If the purpose of the Hunger Heat Map is to track the efficiency of partner, program, and resource placement then the purpose of our Client Data Tracking system is to measure the effectiveness and reach of our resources. Client Data Tracking will provide the CAFB with a valuable insight into our community and allow us to retool strategy and programs to improve both efficiency and effectiveness.

After extensive research, the Capital Area Food Bank selected Link2Feed, Inc. as its vendor for Client Data Tracking.

Link2Feed Overview:

Link2Feed believes food is a catalyst to a better life and that food banks and their agencies play a vital role in long-term poverty reduction. So they've developed technology that does more than simply streamline operations and provide basic counts; it enables organizations to understand exactly how emergency food and other services change their clients' lives – what they call *feeding change*.

The Link2Feed software tracks data that ultimately allows food banks and agencies to quantify their value to donors, agencies, and their community; increase their level of accountability; and get access to funding and other resources.

The core Link2Feed platform is a sophisticated data management software that streamlines and standardizes what can often be a complex intake process and allows organizations to report on client demographics and usage levels.

Link2Feed is used by over 2,300 organizations across North America and has helped to touch over a million lives.

Program Metrics:

The pilot phase of CAFB's client data collection will begin on 1/28/17.

The live CAFB Hunger Heat Map can be located at: www.capitalareafoodbank.org.

Program Outlook:

YEAR 1 17-18	YEAR 2 18-19	YEAR 3 19-20	YEAR 4 20-21	YEAR 5 21-22		5 Year Total
$ 14,452	$ 14,452	$ 14,452	$ 14,452	$ 14,452	$ 72,260	

Conclusion

The Capital Area Food Bank is committed to both reducing food insecurity and increasing the health and wellness of all communities residing in Montgomery County, MD. In conjunction with its partners, the CAFB is the safety net for all the food insecure communities in the county, and as such, the food bank is committed to putting nutritious, healthy calories into the county. This will be done by working with all the stakeholders in the county – including but not limited to businesses, government, and non-profit partners – to find new solutions to old challenges. By working together, every senior in the county can have groceries to keep them healthy and vibrant; every child can have access to the fruits and vegetables that will help them grow up strong and give them the energy they need to learn; and every family can enjoy a meal together and at the same time prevent diet-related diseases. The food bank believes that food equality can and will happen in Montgomery County and that everyone working together in such an amazing county will lead to real solutions.

APPENDIX C

Community Food Rescue Deliveries Map

September 2015 - December 2016
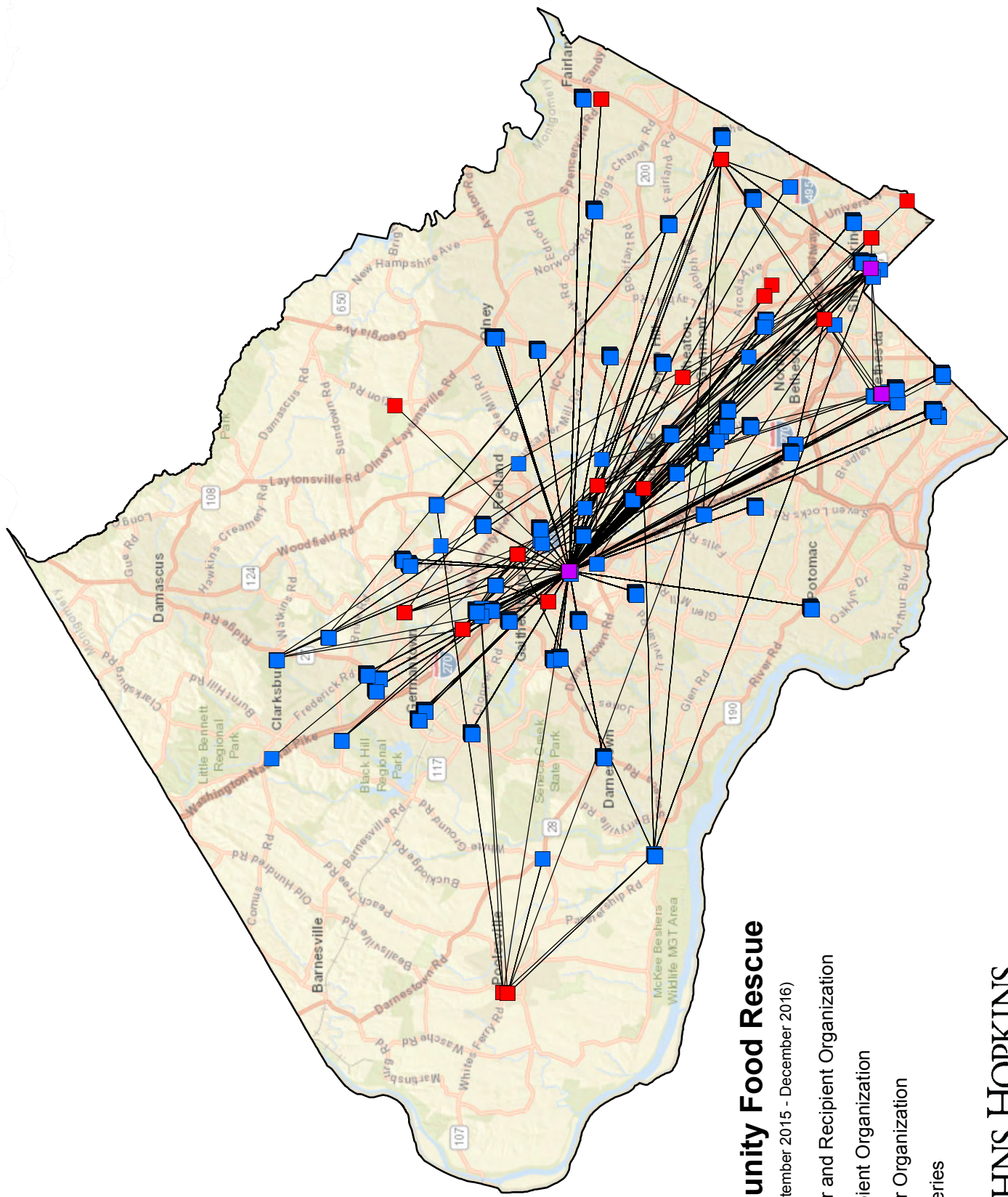
Community Food Rescue

(September 2015 - December 2016)

- ■ Donor and Recipient Organization
- ■ Recipient Organization
- ■ Donor Organization
- — Deliveries

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APPENDIX D

Data Standardization of Client Intake Process Across Hunger-Relief
Agencies in Montgomery County Report from Manna Food Center and
Food Works Group (November 2016)

Report to Montgomery County Food Council regarding
Data Standardization of Client Intake Process Across Hunger-relief Agencies
in Montgomery County, Maryland
As of November 1, 2016

Summary: Manna Food Center collaborated with Food Works Group to formulate recommendations for the Montgomery County Food Council as part of the Food Security Plan development process. Our intent is to contribute to an accurate assessment of who experiences food insecurity in the county compared to who is being served by hunger-relief agencies with regard to race, ethnicity, age, poverty indicators, household information, and other variables. If accepted and implemented, the suggested data variables and recommendations will also enable critical variables to be studied in depth and in new ways, in particular as the county implements its Five Year Strategic Plan to Achieve Food Security. They also will help with organizational capacity building, program creation and evaluation, and accountability. Because technology is key to useful data collection, analysis, and utilization, we additionally have explored the most effective software for agencies to record and manage such data collection efforts; this investigation was conducted in the context of current technological advancement by major stakeholders such as the Department of Health and Human Services.

I.   **Methodology**
   A. Received information from five hunger-relief agencies in the county about the client intake data they collect and might additionally need; the technology used; and their capacity for and need for updated systems. Requested information (with multiple attempts) from 13 additional agencies that represented a cross-section of resources, communities served, and type of services.
   B. Collected similar information via interview with two multi-site food security organizations outside Montgomery County that lead the field with best practices:
      1. Bread for the City, which operates the District of Columbia's largest food pantry, feeding more than 8,000 households a month. BFC is a leader in public health, racial equity work, and tackling hunger by comprehensively addressing other root causes of poverty. The agency also was at the forefront in making data analysis a core component of their program evaluations and more.
      2. Access of West Michigan, an umbrella organization to more than 300 hunger-relief partners in Kent County, Michigan. Access does not serve as a food bank but rather as a connector for the purpose of maximizing

resources and efficiencies, and elevating the collective hunger-relief effort in the county to a more systems-based approach.

C. Reviewed printed resources and best practices on client intake and program evaluation from food security organizations across the country and in Canada. These included small to mid-size food banks and food pantries of varying capacity, such as Richmond, Virginia's Feedmore Food Bank, the Washington (state) Food Coalition, and Canada's Community Food Centres of Canada, among others.

D. Interviewed Mark Hodge, senior administrator of Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, with regard to the new department-wide, integrated case management system. The new system is expected to launch in January 2017 and brings into one technology platform all internal HHS department programs and initiatives. The possibility exists that this system could be further built out to integrate external organizations such as the county's many emergency food and community food security providers. Deeper investigation into this is recommended, to include conversation with Mark, as well as Shane Rock of Interfaith Works, which is piloting relevant software with the county, and any other critical external stakeholders and county staff.

E. Interviewed Dario Muralles, the Capital Area Food Bank's Maryland regional director, about the food bank's work with Feeding America to pilot software that can standardize partner agency intake. Dario is spearheading this initiative at the CAFB level; the software system has already been chosen, and which partner agencies to pilot with is still being discussed; continued conversation is warranted.

F. Formulated recommendations to include sets of standardized variables (and the formats that ensure consistency with the U.S. Census Bureau), software to consider adopting county-wide, and additional implementation guidance for collection of such data across the county.

II.   Recommendations Related to Standardized Data Sets

A standardized, robust, and statistically relevant set of data points needs to be collected across hunger-relief agencies in Montgomery County to improve future analysis of the emergency food system and inform the implementation of the strategic plan. Our recommended set of variables (Appendix I) has been categorized as "A (required)," "B (recommended, optional)," and "C (additional optional)" to indicate the possible spectrum of uses by the county, as well as individual agencies.

Not all agencies can meet the requests and/or needs that are listed as options for some of the questions, for example, around physical accessibility and special diets; however, asking these questions and analyzing the responses is a critical step toward understanding how to support the broader community of low-income residents in Montgomery County.

We have endeavored to suggest data points for race and ethnicity consistent with the US Census Bureau's to allow for data standardization throughout the system. We note that the Capital Area Food Bank's list of data points for the system they are configuring currently is different. As part the Steering Committee's determination of which, if any data management system should be adopted, it is worth revisiting the topic with CAFB, whose list might have changed, to determine if there are additional data points to consider adding.

III. **Software-related Recommendations**

    A. A relational database management system will require interoperability with the systems adopted by key stakeholders, meaning that the systems used by Montgomery County's Department of Health of Human Services, Capital Area Food Bank/Feeding America, and Manna Food Center need to be able to communicate, exchange data, and use the exchanged data in conjunction with this system.

    B. Employing a laboratory model and incorporating a collective impact framework from the outset can support the goal of a user-friendly product that meets most everyone's needs — with minimal updates and re-trainings, and reduced cost and confusion.

    C. While in the course of customizing the software, a range of requirements and specifications will need to be created. One of those requirements should be for a confidentiality statement to automatically appear when a new client/household is created in the system. This would explicitly state that the information is being entered into a shared database, how the data might be used, and that the organization prioritizes data security. That statement would be read to the new client.

    D. All participating agencies will need Internet access and dedicated computers during the hours of client intake and food distribution. Based on budgetary considerations and the learnings from the laboratory process, it should be determined if additionally there is an advised minimum threshold of client service required for the county to invest in training, technical assistance, and technology licensing.

    E. To optimize data quality, the system's visual display will need to be tailored to reflect the great variance of technological, human, and financial resources of hunger-relief agencies across the county. Drop-down menus can help enforce data standardization. And for all agencies, but especially lesser-resourced organizations, the interface needs to be streamlined, with unused questions made clear that they are inactive.

    F. Systems to evaluate:

        1. Siebel CRM by Oracle, possibly interfacing with AWARDS by Foothold Technology or ServicePoint by Bowman Systems/Mediware; Siebel is what the new HHS system is built off of, and Interfaith Works is using AWARDS to interface with it. AWARDS is purportedly better priced than

Service Point; further investigation on price is needed for this and the other recommendations that follow.

2. Salesforce: Bread for the City utilizes this system at both of its locations; Salesforce offers both non-profit and government solutions, which could potentially bring down price.

3. Link 2 Feed: the system that the Capital Area Food Bank chose for its pilot; Feeding America offered three options to the five food banks that are piloting intake/data standardization efforts among their partner agencies. Preliminary conversations with CAFB indicate the food bank possibly absorbing fees for much of the service.

4. ETO/Apricot by Social Solutions: Was brought up repeatedly by agencies as a cost effective, sound system.

IV. **Other Implementation Recommendations related to Data Tracking and Adoption of Best Practices**

   A. Because of diverse capacity levels among the community-based hunger-relief organizations in the county, various kinds of infrastructure and technical assistance will be required to move agencies forward in their work to end hunger. Based on the experiences of the Community Food Rescue Network, it is important to both incentivize and require participation in technology change management efforts. We recommended that the county offer county-funded capacity-building grant opportunities open only to those organizations that participate in the new system. There also could be receipt of additional points in the evaluation of county grant applications from agencies that utilize the system. And no matter the number of clients served, there ought to be opportunities for public recognition for agencies with high data quality. Additionally, it is recommended that this work include a defined number of additional technical assistance hours for data analysis and running reports that is reserved for agencies that in their first two years of implementation also collect optional, key variables such as race, ethnicity, veteran status, employment status, and income information.

   B. Assess the county's capacity to absorb the cost or offer cost-sharing for additional data collection beyond the required variables.

   C. Collaborate with Manna Food Center, or another agency with direct service operations in the county, to implement a "Train the Trainer" program that offers technical assistance and change management guidance to food assistance organizations receiving county support to implement the 5 Year Strategic Plan. As the largest hunger-relief agency based in the county with a core value of partnership, Manna believes we could lead coordination among county government and community organizations working toward a food secure Montgomery County by embracing recommended systems for data gathering, analysis, and knowledge transfer. In partnership with agencies such as Countystat and the Capital Area Food Bank, Manna could build off of the

organization's depth of experience in implementing volunteer training programs for similar technology systems, as well as our commitment to strong pedagogy and curriculum creation in other facets of their work.

D. Keep prior data entries regarding current living situation/home address for up to 10 years. The more recent entries could assist with reaching a client, and the historic data can help assess trends around location shifts of low-income residents of the county.

E. The August 2016 fire at the Flower Branch Apartments on Piney Branch Road, in Silver Spring, has brought new awareness to the amount of co-habitation in the county. This raises questions about the implications of overcrowding, including the quality and amount of food in each household. The frequency of shared housing needs to be further explored by policymakers; this could inform the definition of "household" and how data is collected in a county-wide hunger-relief agency software system.

F. At each visit to a food distribution site, it is recommended that clients present identification and confirm a phone number and best mode of contact. Additionally, it is recommended that annually, each agency updates their client intake to ensure accuracy of records, the ability to analyze data over time, and that client needs are being met and/or any change in needs is noted. This will help organizations professionalize practices, which translates to building capacity and ensuring that the work of the county's community-based agencies is effective and evidence based. Strengthening data intake practices and technology adoption commits agencies to programmatic infrastructure that will further the collective effort to offer high-quality services to clients and simultaneous accountability to policy makers, volunteers, and donors.

Appendix I: Recommended intake variables

A. <u>Required variables</u>

1. Full legal name
   a. First name
   b. middle or second name(s)
   c. family name(s)
2. Preferred name (if different from legal name)
3. Birthdate
4. Food pickup location (if multi-site agency)
5. Proof of eligibility (Check all that apply.)
   a. Photo ID
   b. Proof of address
   c. Intake / counseling process
   d. Other: _____
6. Gender
   a. Female
   b. Male

c. Transgender
d. Other
e. Decline to answer
7. Contact information
    a. Primary phone
    b. Alternate phone
    c. Email address
    d. What is the best way to reach you?
    e. Is it okay to text you?
    f. Is it okay to leave a message?
8. Current living situation / home address
    a. Rent
    b. Own
    c. Temporary living situation with friends/relatives
    d. Non-housing/homeless (street/park/car, etc.)
    e. Transitional housing for homeless person
    f. Emergency shelter
    g. Other
9. Primary / preferred language
10. Emergency contact
    a. Name
    b. Phone
    c. Alternate phone
    d. Address
11. Accessibility needs
    a. Wheelchair-accessible buildings
    b. Braille
    c. Sign language interpretation
    d. Assistive listening
    e. Information in large print
    f. Other special needs _____
    g. None
12. Household members
    a. Name and date of birth of household members other than self
    b. Total number of household members, including self (Note: Ideally software would total number of people living in household and sub-categorize children and seniors.)
    c. Names of other members who might pick up food
13. Dietary needs or restrictions for household members
    a. None
    b. Dairy
    c. Egg
    d. Lactose
    e. Gluten / wheat

  f. Peanut
  g. Pork
  h. Red meat
  i. Shellfish
  j. Sodium
  k. Soy
  l. Tree nuts
  m. Vegan
  n. Vegetarian
  o. Kosher
  p. Halal
  q. Other

B. <u>Recommended, optional variables</u>

This cluster of questions is recommended for inclusion in the standard intake process, but it would not be required. The variables will help agencies and the county define with more depth who is food insecure, what are the factors that are contributing to insecurity, how to reach individuals in their communities, what are individuals' accessibility and dietary needs, which benefits and services are clients already accessing, and what more might be needed.

1. Referral source
   a. County HHS/311
   b. Social services agencies
   c. Schools
   d. Health care provider/clinic/hospital
   e. Place of worship
   f. Neighbor/friend
   g. Constituent Service Representative (local political office)
   h. Self
2. Relationship status
   a. Single
   b. Married
   c. Widowed
   d. Divorced
   e. Significant partner
3. Income (Note: Software would ideally generate a total income figure.):
   a. Employment income
   b. Other income
      i. Pension
      ii. Child support
      iii. SSI
      iv. SSDI
      v. Veteran Affairs (VA)

      vi.   TANF

      vii.   Individual development account

      viii.   Civil service

      ix.   Social security retirement

      x.   Spousal income / support / alimony

   c. No income

4. Other income support
   a. Housing subsidy
   b. SNAP
   c. WIC
5. Rent/mortgage fee
   a. $1 to $499
   b. $500 to $999
   c. $1,000 to $1,499
   d. $1,500 to $1,999
   e. $2,000 to $2,499
   f. $2,500 or more
   g. No cash rent
6. Mode of transportation to pick up food
   a. Foot
   b. Public transit
   c. Own car
   d. Ride from a family member or friend
7. Military / veteran status of any household member
   a. Active duty Uniformed Services
   b. Active duty National Guard
   c. Reserves
   d. Veteran
8. Which describes you with regard to ethnicity?
   a. Hispanic or Latino of any race
      i. Mexican
      ii. Puerto Rican
      iii. Cuban
      iv. Other
         ● Guatemalan
         ● Salvadoran
         ● Other Hispanic or Latino of any race
   b. Non-Hispanic or Latino
9. Race
   a. White
   b. Black and/or African
      i. African American
      ii. Ethiopian / Eritrean
      iii. Other East African

   iv. West African

   v. North African

   vi. Central / Sub-Saharan African

   vii. Caribbean

  c. American Indian / Alaska Native

  d. Asian and other Pacific Islander

   i. Indian (Asian, not Native American)

   ii. Chinese

   iii. Filipino

   iv. Japanese

   v. Korean

   vi. Vietnamese

   vii. Other Asian, or 2 or more categories of the above Asian

   viii. Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander

  e. Two or more races

  f. Other / not indicated

10. Do you identify as LGBTQ+? (For intake person to read to client: "We ask this question because hunger rates are reported to be higher among LGBTQ+ individuals nationally, and we want to help ensure we are reaching all residents in need.")

  ○ No

  ○ Yes

  ○ Unsure

  ○ Decline to answer

11. Do you need help accessing the following community resources? Check all that apply.

  a. No

  b. Yes

   i. Social services [e.g., homeless services, temporary disability assistance, and signing up for SNAP (formerly called food stamps)]

   ii. Medical care

   iii. Housing support

   iv. Legal services

   v. Workforce readiness / job development

   vi. Other _____

12. For college / higher education food pantries only: Are you a:

  a. Freshman

  b. Sophomore

  c. Junior

  d. Senior (Year 4 or 5)

  e. Graduate student

  f. Pursuing a certificate

C. <u>Additional optional variables</u>

Agencies also should consider including the following cluster of questions to the intake process; this would be in addition to Sections A and B above. Questions 1 through 6 delve more deeply into the variables that contribute to poverty; analysis of these variables on the agency and county levels could help guide programmatic decisions, plus track progress toward the agencies' and county's goals. It also will aid organizations' understanding of the realities of poverty and food insecurity in their clients' lives, and this nuanced, more refined awareness could help with responsiveness to emerging needs and trends. Question 7 offers an opportunity for agencies to further support clients' investment in and engagement with their communities and the county at large.

1. Which of the following best describes your employment status?
    a. Employed, working 1-14 hours per week
    b. Employed, working 15-34 hours per week
    c. Employed, working 35-40 hours per week
    d. Employed, working 41 or more hours per week
    e. Not employed; looking for work
    f. Not employed; not looking for work
    g. Retired
    h. Disabled, not able to work
2. What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have earned?
    a. Less than high school degree
    b. High school graduate
    c. Some college, no degree
    d. Associate's degree
    e. Occupational associate's degree, academic
    f. Bachelor's degree
    g. Master's degree
    h. Professional degree
    i. Doctoral degree
3. Are you currently a student?
    a. Yes
        i. Full-time
        ii. Part-time
    b. No
4. If client indicates enrollment as student in postsecondary school, how is school paid for?
    a. Loans
    b. Grants
    c. Financial support from family

        d. Working part-time
        e. Working full-time
        f. Savings
5. Special population
    a. Yes
        i. Fleeing violence
        ii. Unaccompanied youth
        iii. Displaced by natural disaster
        iv. Other (Ideally can be customized by software to reflect an emerging crisis.)
    b. No
6. If client says the household has children below the age of 5, where and with whom are the children during the day?
    a. With parent or guardian
    b. With other family member (no cost)
    c. With paid child care provider / pre-school
7. Are you registered to vote?
    a. No or not sure
        i. Would you like me to give you information about where you can register to vote or check on registration status?
            1. Yes
            2. No
    b. Yes

Appendix II. Annual updates
1. Eligibility confirmation
2. Any name changes
3. Phone number verification
4. Email verification
5. Any changes in your living situation or home address?
6. Emergency contact verification
7. Household update
    a. New members of household to add, including dates of birth
    b. Individuals who are no longer members of household to delete?
    c. Ideally software would update the total number of people living in household and sub-categorize children and seniors.
8. Changes in employment since last visit
9. Changes in income or assets since last visit
10. Do you need help accessing community resources?
11. Mode of transit
12. If previously indicated being a student, ask again about highest level of education completed.
13. If previously indicated affiliation with the military, ask again about military/veteran status.

14. Has your diet stayed or changed since you started as a client here?
    a. Yes
        i. How?
        ii. Why?
    b. No
        i. Is there anything more you could share about that?
15. Do you take any nutrition or cooking classes / workshops that are offered here or elsewhere in the community?
    a. What are the topics? (Check all that apply.)
        i. Cooking / nutrition on a budget
        ii. Diabetes
        iii. High blood pressure / heart health
        iv. Cooking / nutrition for the family
        v. Cooking for 1 person
        vi. Grocery shopping on a budget / for health
        vii. Other: _____
    b. Where is the class held?
        i. On-site at this organization
        ii. Other organization: _____
16. Has this organization helped you in any way other than with providing emergency food? (Multiple answers allowed.)
    a. SNAP enrollment
    b. Cooking or nutrition education
    c. Referrals for additional services either here or at another organization
        i. Social services [e.g., homeless services, temporary disability assistance, and signing up for SNAP (formerly called food stamps)]
        ii. Medical care
        iii. Housing support
        iv. Legal services
        v. Workforce readiness / job development
        vi. Other: _____
    d. Self-advocacy
        i. Serving on a Board of Directors or local commission
        ii. Communicating with Elected Officials
        iii. Receiving on training public speaking
        iv. Other: _____
    e. Community building
        i. Participated in a focus group to share your opinions
        ii. Joined a network or support group
        iii. Volunteered
        iv. Other: _____
    f. Other: _____

APPENDIX E

East County Food Summit Takeaways (April 2016)

East County Food Summit Takeaways (April 2016)
From: Jewru Bandeh, Director, East County Regional Services Center

Ideas from the Faith Community:
- Community Gardens
- Use of Commercial Kitchen for workforce development for neighbors
- How to leverage underutilized physical plan at Faith organizations
- Increase access to social services

Profile of Immigrants:
- Largely Refugee populations
- Language barrier
- Access Barriers
- Larger family size
- Dietary preference and faith based food restrictions
- Build greater relationships with ethnic food stores and issue vouchers so families can go there and shop
- Need for greater refrigeration and transportation resources
- Facilitate collaboration meetings among providers and build a framework to share programs and capacities
- Build a database of resources

Ideas and Available Resources from the Providers:
- MANNA (Jackie DeCarlo); Rainbow Community (Pat Drumming); Nourish Now (Brett Meyers); and Capital Area Food Bank (Dario Muralles) all have a presence in East County
- How to create more neighborhood spaces for food distribution and to build neighbor to neighbor connections
- Fresh produce Distribution
- Community Food Rescue
- Eager to Partner
- Transportation and Refrigeration capacity gaps were identified
- Community could engage to be a donor, a food runner, a collaborator, a recipient organization or a neighbor needing assistance
- Many faith organizations are already partnering with these organizations and all were encouraged to do so.
- In Montgomery County 50% of the 1 million pounds of TFAB food is being used. We have a lot of work ahead of us to get the food out.
- Contact Jeo Paz at 2027695614 if a community or faith organization is interested in partnering with Capital Area Food Bank
- There was a lot of conversation about food rescue and the website that is user friendly to collect and distribute food
- Or contact - www.manna.org or www.nourishnow.org
- Also CAFB also previewed a video call Ask Aunt Bertha
- There was considerable interest in continuing to build networks to support organizations interested in collaborating around food.
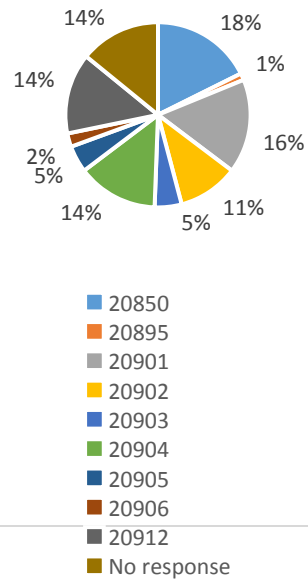
APPENDIX F

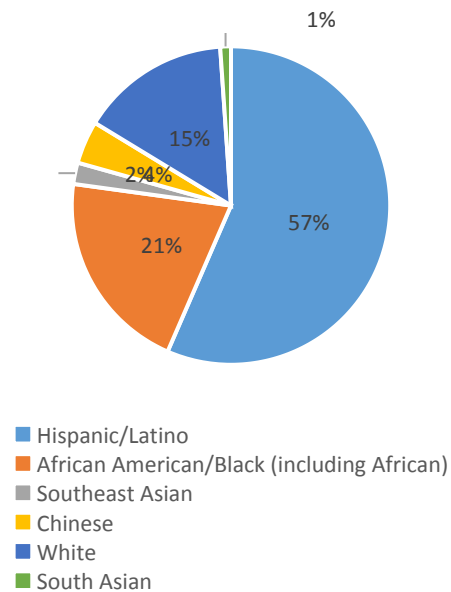Food Security Plan Listening Session Demographic Survey Summaries
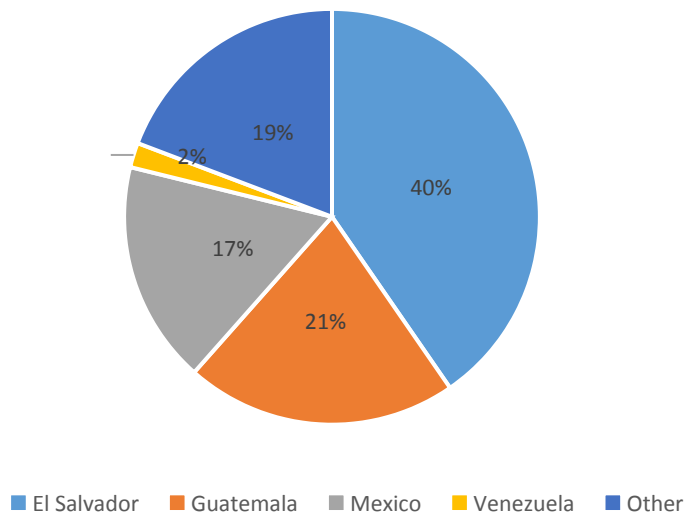
Age Range of Participants

2%
7%
27%
33%
11%
20%

■ 18-20 ■ 21-29 ■ 30-39 ■ 40-49 ■ 50-59 ■ 60+

Participant Zip Codes

14%
14%
18%
1%
16%
2%
5%
11%
14%
5%

■ 20850
■ 20895
■ 20901
■ 20902
■ 20903
■ 20904
■ 20905
■ 20906
■ 20912
■ No response
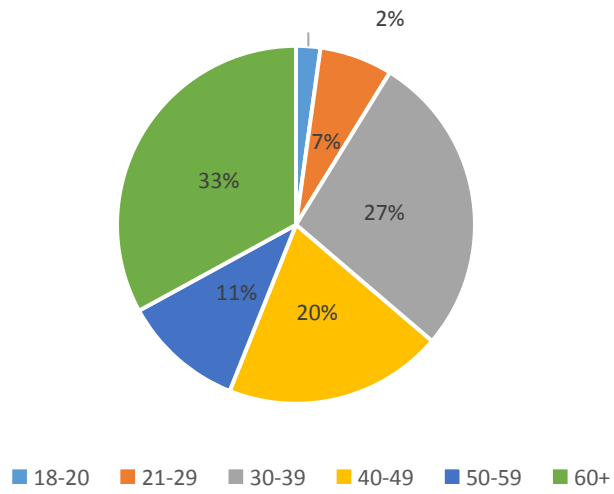
Participants by Race

- Hispanic/Latino — 57%
- African American/Black (including African) — 21%
- Southeast Asian — 2%
- Chinese — 4%
- White — 15%
- South Asian — 1%

Hispanic Participants by Country of Origin

- El Salvador — 40%
- Guatemala — 21%
- Mexico — 17%
- Venezuela — 2%
- Other — 19%

Listening Session Survey Highlights

- Nearly all listening sessions participants were female
- About one sixth of participants had language barriers to obtaining food. Participants that expressed language as a barrier either were typically proficient in neither English nor Spanish. Only one quarter of Spanish-language proficient participants viewed language as a barrier to accessing food. They mostly lived outside areas with large Spanish-speaking populations.
- Over eighty percent of participants rented rather than owned their own homes.

- Most participants lived in households with either two or three adults and two to four children. The notable exception would be the listening session at Town Center Apartments, which was primarily seniors who lived alone.
- Few participants had completed education beyond high school or a GED, though a few did have undergraduate or even graduate degrees. In listening sessions that were predominantly foreign born residents not proficient in English—especially from Central America—several participants had only completed an education equivalent to elementary school.
- Employment status of participants varied greatly. Most seniors were retired or working part-time. At listening sessions in elementary schools, many participants were stay-at home moms that were caring for younger children not yet eligible for school enrollment. Participants at other listening sessions were at least part-time employed and in many cases full-time employed.
- Nearly all participants had a household income lower than $50,000/year, which is significantly lower than the self-sufficiency standard for a family of four in the County, which is $91,252.
- Monthly food expenses varied though it was less than $575 for more than half of households.
- Participants received food from a variety of sources other than stores. Over two thirds received food from a food bank or pantry program, including Manna Smart Sacks and church pantries. Almost all households with school aged children were enrolled in FARMS and almost all households with infants or toddlers were enrolled in WIC. SNAP enrollment varied greatly across different sessions. Many seniors did not think that the available benefits justified the level of effort and many other participants were not clear on whether or not their households were eligible for a variety of reasons, including household income and immigration status.

APPENDIX G

Food Security Plan Online Survey Summaries

Food Assistance Organization Online Survey Summaries
16 Total Responses

Q1) Please describe the community that your organization serves (Example: geographic or ethnic based services)

Most respondents of the survey said their organizations serve all ethnic groups and people who identify as part of the working poor or of low socioeconomic status in need of food. The ethnic groups being served are mainly minority groups such as African Americans, Hispanic/latinos, and Asian Americans. The majority of the people the organizations serve come from Montgomery County, Silver Spring, Takoma Park, Hyattsville and one in NW Washington DC. About five organizations responded that they serve specific ethnic minority groups: French speaking immigrants (mainly Haitian Americans), the immigrant community in Northwest DC, and the Asian community, including Korean youth and Vietnamese Americans residing in Montgomery County.

Q2) What percentage of your clients use public food assistance programs (e.g., SNAP, WIC) and which program do they use?

Although most organizations (with the exception of two) report that most of their clients receive food assistance from SNAP and WIC, the numbers are speculative due to lack of data. Three organizations claim a high percentage of child recipients participating in FARMs, in addition to WIC and SNAP. Most respondents noted they do not collect this data at all.

Q3) Where do most of your clients buy their food? From what other sources do your clients obtain food?

The majority of clients get their food from grocery stores close to their residence, food markets, food banks/pantries, and Manna Food Center.

Q4) What mode of transportation do your clients use to get to the grocery store? What is their average distance and travel time?

The majority of clients rely on public transportation although some drive. The average reported distance is around 10 miles with an average travel time of 20 minutes.

Q5) What challenges does this community face in purchasing healthy food?

The two biggest barriers reported were insufficient income and a lack of nutrition training/knowledge. Healthier foods are considered too expensive and there is limited financial support for low income residents to obtain healthier groceries.

Q6) What challenges does this community face in preparing healthy food?

The biggest challenge reportedly comes from the lack of access to healthy ingredients/food due to insufficient income. The second and less frequent challenge is lack of knowledge on nutrition particularly with home cooked cultural cuisines/foods.

Q7) What changes could be made in this community to make it easier for people to obtain healthy food?

The majority of the responses would like to see any kind of initiative that reduces prices of healthy foods or makes them more accessible, as well as an educational outreach program regarding healthy options.

Q8) What changes could be made in this community to make it easier for people to prepare healthy food?

Two organizations have suggested shopping shuttles to transport and teach clients about healthy food options. Recommended changes included teaching kitchens, food preparation demonstrations, recipe cards translated into multiple languages, and more funding for access to healthy foods.

Q9) What resources or programs are currently available in this community for individuals who cannot obtain healthy food?

The majority of resources are the local food pantries, Manna Food Center, SNAP and WIC benefit programs, and food markets.

Q10) Which of the resources and programs listed above are the most successful in improving the community's access to healthy food? Why?

Food pantries and WIC are cited consistently as the two most successful resources for improving the communities' access to healthy foods. This is due to direct client access, ease of use and convenient availability.

Q11) What other information can you provide about this community's access to food?

Communities need the most help during Fall and Winter months. There is also a stigma in some communities associated with using food assistance resources; some respondents specifically suggested this be addressed.

APPENDIX H

Maryland Farmer Market Association Memo: Matching Programs

Summary of Montgomery County Funding for Farmers Market Matching Programs and Potential for Future Investment

Despite being the wealthiest state in the nation with a median income of over $72,000 for a household of four, food insecurity in Maryland runs rampant. One in eight Marylanders are without reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food. To address this shortcoming, increasing numbers of Maryland farmers markets accept federal nutrition benefits, including SNAP. However, of the almost 800,000 Marylanders who receive SNAP benefits[1], fewer than 4% redeem those benefits at farmers markets[2]. These data underscore the tremendous room for growth in SNAP usage at farmers markets and an enormous opportunity for increasing food access for low-income Marylanders while also generating additional revenue for local farmers. Matching (also known as 'incentive') programs at farmers markets help increase the redemption of federal nutrition benefits programs at farmers markets, by providing additional funding for low-income shoppers to purchase more food while simultaneously increasing farmers' sales revenue.

Montgomery County has a history of such matching programs - Crossroads Farmers Market was one of the first matching programs in the country, launched in 2007. Since then Montgomery County has supported such efforts with funding provided to match SNAP at all county markets that accept this federal benefit. Since 2013, this funding has helped meet the surging demand for matching programs throughout the county, and has directly supported the work of the Maryland Farmers Market Association (MDFMA) in providing matching in Montgomery County as part of the statewide program.

MDFMA manages the statewide Maryland Market Money Program (MMM), which streamlines matching programs and enables coordinated fundraising to leverage the efforts of the 21 participating markets in 5 jurisdictions. For the past several seasons, MDFMA has raised more than $100,000 each year to provide more food to low-income families, encourage healthy eating, and provide additional sales to farmers via the farmers market.

However, demand for the program continues to grow, and MDFMA is seeking public *and* private partnerships to combat food insecurity. In Montgomery County, the demand for matching in 2016 was almost $100,000 for all of the federal nutrition benefits programs. While matching is already provided for SNAP through Montgomery County, ***this is only a portion of the need***.

Farmers Market Matching Montgomery County 2016

■ SNAP Matching ■ FMNP-WIC
■ WIC FVC ■ FMNP-Seniors

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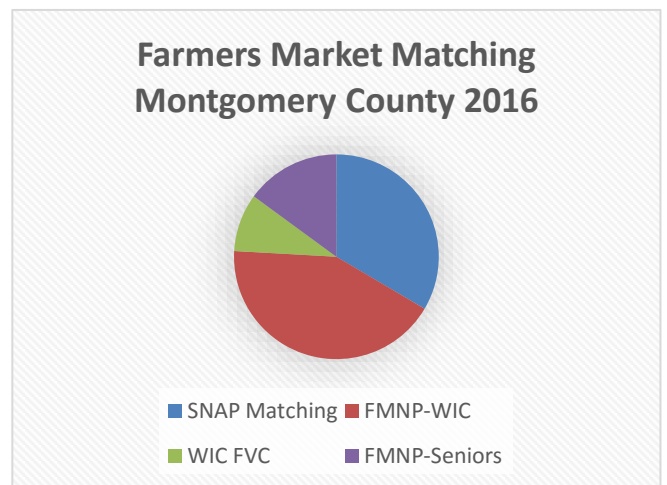
[1] Maryland Hunger Solutions. (2015). *The Federal Nutrition Programs in Maryland*. Retrieved from http://www.mdhungersolutions.org/pdf/countydata/maryland_jul14.pdf

[2] MDFMA calculation based on sales reported by member markets for 2014 season (2015)

The *other* federal nutrition programs – which focus on Women, Infants and Children ("WIC") and Seniors specifically – make up 66% of the demand in the County. These programs provide less to participants than SNAP ($20 per season and $30 per season respectively for WIC and Seniors Farmers Market Nutrition Program) and furthermore provide benefits for the purchase of fruits and vegetables only.

This is where opportunity for further investment by Montgomery County lies – in expanding its funding support for the farmers market matching program Maryland Market Money beyond SNAP. MDFMA can assist the County Council by playing a role in reducing food insecurity in Montgomery County – in keeping with the Strategic Plan to End Food Insecurity – through an existing contract vehicle.

An increase in such support could help thousands of Montgomery County citizens as demonstrated in the below chart:

	Support Provided	No. of Montgomery County Citizens Assisted (or Potentially Assisted):
SNAP Funding (2016)	$16,000	3200
Expansion to include funding for:		
- WIC (FMNP + FVC)	$38,000	7600
- Seniors (FMNP)	$11,000	2200
Percent increase with additional funds:		306%

MDFMA would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further and hope that we can assist the Montgomery County Council to continue their work to eliminate food insecurity.

For more information, visit our website at www.marylandfma.org.

APPENDIX I

Montgomery County Community Food Access Report, Montgomery County Food Council (October 2016)

Community Food Access Assessment

MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

2013 - 2015

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY FOOD COUNCIL
FOOD ACCESS WORKING GROUP**

The Montgomery County Food Council (MCFC) was launched in 2012, and is an independent council formed and led by professionals, private businesses, government officials, individual members, community organizations, and educational institutions that broadly represent the food system both substantively and geographically. The MCFC is made up of 15 selected volunteer members who represent a broad range of stakeholders, and supported by a part time coordinator. The work of the MCFC is accomplished via administrative committees (Development, Communication, Monitoring and Evaluation and a Steering Committee), and working groups (Food Literacy, Food Economy, Food Access, and Environmental Impact).

The mission of the Montgomery County Food Council (MCFC) is to bring together a diverse representation of stakeholders in a public and private partnership to improve the environmental, economic, social and nutritional health of Montgomery County, Maryland through the creation of a robust, local, sustainable food system. The goals of the MCFC are:

Food Economy - To develop and sustain an economically viable local food system in Montgomery County that supports producers,

Food Access - To increase access to locally produced, healthy food among Montgomery County residents, especially communities with limited access.

Food Literacy - To increase Montgomery County residents' understanding of the importance of local, healthy food through education opportunities that lead to healthier food choices by residents.

Environmental Impact - To improve agricultural soils and reduce the environmental impacts of local land and water use and the environmental footprint from non-local food in Montgomery County.

Food Recovery - To advise the development and implementation of, as well as to facilitate partner participation in, Community Food Rescue, a collaborative system in Montgomery County to increase the recovery and appropriate distribution of surplus food from local farmers, local businesses, and local organizations.

Food Access Working Group (FAWG)

The goal of the Montgomery County Food Council's Food Access Working Group (FAWG) is to increase access to locally produced, healthy food among county residents, especially in communities with limited access. The working group began its work with a community food access assessment that was conducted in two phases. This report describes the methods and findings of the community food access assessment.

Phase I of the Community Food Access Assessment – Mapping the County

In 2013, the FAWG partnered with Amanda (Behrens) Buczynski and her colleagues at the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future (CLF) to explore and map healthy food access, specifically food deserts, within Montgomery County to understand where access issues exist and which communities are affected. Food deserts are defined by the USDA as "…urban neighborhoods and rural towns without ready access to fresh, healthy, and affordable food" [1]. CLF first examined the USDA map of food deserts for Montgomery County, which identifies only a very small area of the county as food deserts, specifically portions of Gaithersburg, Aspen Hill and Colesville. CLF has conducted their own analysis of food deserts in Baltimore City and found that there are significant limitations with the USDA definition. Additionally, FAWG members, who work with communities facing limited access to healthy foods, confirmed that the true size of the problem is larger than the USDA had defined. Since CLF does not have their own food desert measure for counties with both urban and rural areas, they proposed to analyze healthy food access in Montgomery County through a series of maps to visualize indicators that impact access, specifically income, access to vehicles, food store locations and emergency food resources.

Household income is a key indicator of an individual or family's ability to access healthy food, as it impacts the ability to afford healthy food, but also the ability to physically get to food stores if transportation is required. Household income was mapped in gradients, to identify the lowest income neighborhoods and towns (Figure 1). The FAWG chose to use the Maryland Self-Sufficiency Standard [2] to identify "low income," which is a study by the Center for Women's
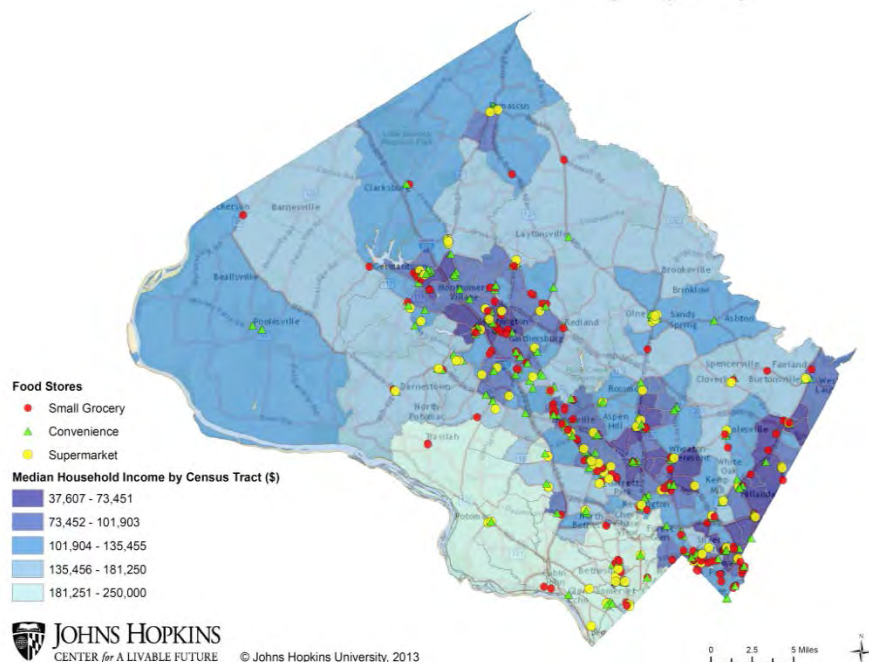

Figure 1. Food stores and median household income, Montgomery County

Welfare that "defines the amount of income necessary to meet basic needs… without public subsidies… and without private/informal assistance." For Montgomery County, the Self-Sufficiency Standard is $73,451, and any census tracts with household income at or below this level were considered low income.

Personal transportation also affects an individual or family's ability to access healthy food, as a recent study found that most Americans use their own vehicle to get to a grocery store, specifically 95% of non-SNAP households use their own vehicle. The study was examining the importance of personal transportation for SNAP households in accessing groceries, and they found that even a large percentage of SNAP households use their own vehicles, 65% [3]. But for those households without vehicles, getting to a grocery store may involve walking long distances, navigating public transportation or paying for a taxi. In order to understand whether specific communities in Montgomery County had access to vehicles, data from the American Community Survey was mapped by census tract (*maps provided in the Appendices*). On average, 8% of households in Montgomery County do not have access to a vehicle [4].

Both of these indicators were mapped in conjunction with food store locations. These maps were then analyzed to identify the communities most at risk for limited access to healthy food – where there were households with low income, a significant percentage of the population did not have access to vehicles, *and* there were limited food stores. The communities identified were: portions of Wheaton, Silver Spring, Aspen Hill/Bel Pre and parts of Gaithersburg, all of which FAWG labeled as "**Communities of Low Access**" (**COLAs**).

These COLAs were then mapped individually to better understand access to healthy food on a community level (*maps provided in the Appendices*). Again, the maps were analyzed to visually identify those areas of the most limited access to healthy food, or "areas of identified need." These specific neighborhoods were then chosen for community food access assessments, as described in Phase II.

Phase II of the Community Food Access Assessment – Collecting data from the community

The second step of the community food access assessment was to collect data directly from residents and food retail establishments in the COLAs of Montgomery County. The FAWG used two well-defined and widely utilized approaches to evaluating community food access issues, listening sessions and the Healthy Food Availability Index (HFAI) scoring. The specific methods used are described below.

Listening sessions. Listening sessions are meetings that were open to the general public where facilitators prompt a discussion around various aspects of an issue in order to better understand the community's resources and needs. The FAWG held eight listening sessions between September 2014 and May 2015 in areas identified as having low access to food according to our mapping efforts. These sessions were held in public meeting spaces that were easily accessible to the communities identified as having low access to food (Table 1). Members of the working group received training from Anne Palmer (Program Director at CLF) to facilitate the sessions. Six of the eight listening sessions were facilitated by Ivonne Rivera, MPH and/or her employees at Rivera Group, Inc. in order to accommodate the Spanish-language needs of the majority of listening session participants. To incentivize attendance at the listening sessions, participants were given $10 Target gift cards at the end of the listening session. Complimentary

childcare and refreshments were also provided at each session.

The FAWG developed a set of questions relating to food access that were posed to each of the listening groups (*session script provided in the Appendices*). The sessions were recorded (with participants' permission), and then transcribed by the Rivera Group or by FAWG members. Common themes and issues were identified from the transcribed discussions, and will serve as potential action items for the FAWG's future plan of work.

Table 1. Listening session dates, locations, number of participants

Date	Location	Participants	Language
9/23/14	Long Branch Community Center 8700 Piney Branch Rd, Silver Spring, MD 20912	10	Spanish
10/2/14	Mid-County Regional Services Center 2424 Reedie Drive, Wheaton, MD 20902	6	Spanish
10/10/14	CASA de Maryland 734 University Blvd. E, Silver Spring, MD 20902	14	Spanish
10/15/14	Casey Community Center 810 S Frederick Ave, Gaithersburg, MD 20877	21	Spanish and English
10/23/14	Clifton Park Baptist Church 8818 Piney Branch Rd, Silver Spring, MD 20903	10	Spanish
10/23/14	Liberty Grove United Methodist Church 15225 Old Columbia Pike, Burtonsville, MD 20866	2	English
1/27/15	Caribbean Help Center 10140 Sutherland Rd, Silver Spring, MD 20901	6	Haitian Creole
5/21/15	Mid-County Community Recreation Center 2004 Queensguard Rd, Silver Spring, MD 20906	11	English

Web survey. Although communities of low food access were our primary concern for the listening sessions, we were also interested in hearing about healthy food access issues that any Montgomery County resident (regardless of income or area of residence) may be encountering. In order to broaden the reach of our listening sessions, we also created a web survey version of the listening session script using FluidSurveys Online Survey Software. The survey link was emailed to the FAWG's member organization networks and to the Food Council's contact list. Additionally the link was tweeted via Manna Food Center and the Food Council's twitter account.

Healthy Food Availability Index scoring. The Healthy Food Availability Index (HFAI) was developed by researchers at Johns Hopkins University, an adaptation of the Nutrition Environment Measurement Survey (NEMS). The HFAI evaluates the presence (i.e. availability) and cost of healthy foods in eight food groups (milk, fruits, vegetables, meat, frozen foods, low sodium canned goods, bread, and breakfast cereals) in individual stores, and allows for comparison within and between store types. The resulting data is converted to a numeric score, which ranges from 0 to 27 points, with a higher score indicating a greater availability of healthy foods. The HFAI data collection form is provided in the Appendices.

Two food stores in each of the COLAs (specifically in areas within 2 miles of each of the listening sessions) were selected at random for HFAI surveying. Additionally, 12 food stores in areas of the county that were determined to have the highest average incomes (Bethesda, Potomac and portions of Gaithersburg) were selected as controls. In some communities, there were no or only one store of a given type, which limited our ability to choose stores at random. Otherwise, stores were chosen at random using an online random number generator. A map showing the HFAI scores by location is provided in the Appendices.

On April 11, 2015, 17 volunteers (FAWG members, MCFC members, students from the Milken Institute School of Public Health at George Washington University, and several community volunteers) received a half-hour instruction by Amanda Buczynski on how to complete the HFAI

store surveys. Following the training session, the volunteers went to a nearby Safeway grocery store, where each volunteer completed the HFAI survey. The group then reconvened to discuss their experiences and discuss any questions that they surveyors encountered over lunch. Volunteers then received their assignments of 3 -6 stores, and went out in groups of two to conduct their independent assessment.

RESULTS

Listening sessions

A total of 80 Montgomery County residents participated in the eight listening sessions. The majority of participants were: Hispanic (68%), reported a household income of less than $25,000 (71%), and reported spending $575 or less on groceries on a monthly basis (90%). The demographic characteristics of the listening session participants are described in Table 2.

Table 2. Demographics of listening session participants

Characteristic	N (%)	Characteristic	N (%)
Hispanic/Latino		Household composition	
Yes	54 (68%)	Adults, *average (range)*	2.7 (1-6)
No/No answer	26 (32%)	Children, *average (range)*	1.2 (0-5)
Country of origin		Annual income	
United States	10 (14%)	< $25,000	51 (71%)
El Salvador	24 (32%)	$25,000 - $50,000	17 (24%)
Mexico	7 (9%)	$50,000 - $90,000	2 (2.5%)
Haiti	6 (8%)	> $90,000	2 (2.5%)
Columbia	5 (7%)	Monthly food spending	
Guatemala	4 (5%)	<$300	28 (37%)
Honduras	4 (5%)	$300 - $575	40 (53%)
Peru	4 (5%)	$576 - $725	6 (8%)
Bolivia	2 (3%)	$726 - $900	1 (1%)
Panama	2 (3%)	> $900	0
Dominican Republic	1 (1%)	Use of food assistance programs	
Ecuador	1 (1%)	SNAP	11
Nicaragua	1 (1%)	WIC	4
Nigeria	1 (1%)	School Breakfast Program	11
Puerto Rico	1 (1%)	National School Lunch Program	4
Somalia	1 (1%)	Summer Nutrition Program	2
Use a smart phone		Child and Adult Food Care Program	1
Yes	36 (50%)	Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program	3
No	36 (50%)	Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program	1
Have internet access			
Yes	43 (58%)		
No	31 (42%)		

In an effort to promote the utilization of a common conceptual model for the analysis of healthy food access, the factors identified in this community food assessment were categorized by the five domains and associated dimensions described by Freedman *et al* [5] : (1) Economic Access includes the financial resources of a household available for food purchase; the perceived costs of nutritious foods; coupon or other incentives available at food stores and the perception of whether foods available in a store are worth the price. (2) Service Delivery is related to the

quality and variety of items sold, the customer service provided by store staff, and the overall presentation of the store's products. (3) Spatial-temporal access includes the geographic boundaries of the local food environment, the balance of the food access sites in an area between the various store types, the time needed to travel to stores and the availability of reliable transportation, as well as the time a household has for food procurement and preparation. (4) Social access includes familial, racial and/or ethnic food ways and food-related traditions that influence food access as well as the differential access often correlated with socioeconomic composition of a community. Also an aspect of social access is the importance of personal relationships with growers, providers, and other customers as influential to food access. (5) Personal access refers to the effects of individual health status, food and nutrition knowledge, and food related identities and preferences on food access. The listening session findings by domains are summarized below.

Economic access: Lack of affordability is a main obstacle to accessing healthy food. The high cost of living in Montgomery County and low work wages places a strain on community members to choose between paying rent and buying food. Among listening session participants, price is the strongest determinant of where people shop and what they buy. They described being constantly challenged by the cost of fresh perishables compared to that of processed foods with longer shelf lives and the need to make food last across several meals. The average grocery spending per week reported by listening session participants ($250-$350) is on the higher end of the USDA Food Plans.

Service Delivery: There's a desire for store staff, signs, and nutrition labels to be in languages other than English to encourage consumer rights, educated choices and request for specific products. Participants expressed a strong preference for products that are fresh and of high quality but also indicated a lack of these items at affordable prices. In particular, there is a perception that Latino grocery stores sell lower quality products than major chains, especially in the meat and produce departments. There is an appreciation and understanding of the correlation between freshness and nutrition. The observed limited availability of healthy options extended to emergency food providers, i.e. pantries and hot meal programs.

Spatial/Temporal access: Transportation is crucial. The form of transportation (and cost) to a location with healthy food available determines if fruits and vegetables are worth the trip and if so, how many will be purchased. Participants without vehicle access described shopping at convenience stores where nutritious food is not sold. Burtonsville was highlighted as a location in which it is difficult to reach a grocery store without access to a vehicle. Time (to shop and cook) and the availability of kitchen utilities are other main obstacles to accessing healthy food. Due to the high cost of rent, participants stated they live in spaces with no access to kitchen or are not allowed to cook because they live in someone else's home. Holding multiple jobs or jobs that require long hours contributed to a lack of time available to prepare food.

Social access: Foods must reflect the diet (and palate) of the household. There was a clear preference among listening session participants for stores that sold and pantries that provided foods from Latin America. Participants described produce quality as lower in their communities compared to more affluent neighborhoods. Many stated that they often travel outside of their communities to find supermarkets and farmer's markets with good quality produce.

Personal access: Community meeting attendees admitted suffering from various health problems such as gastritis, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and diabetes.

Web survey

A total of 51 Montgomery County residents completed the survey in May 2015. The majority of respondents to the web survey reported being white (76%), with 5% reporting being Black, 5% being Asian and 14% of "other" ethnicity. Just over half of the web survey participants reported an annual household income of $90,000 or more, and only 5% reported an annual household income of less than $25,000. Forty two percent of web survey participants reported spending between $300 and $575 per month on groceries, and 5% reported spending more than $900 per month.

A majority (68%) of survey respondents indicated they had no barriers to getting the food they want or need. The 32% that did have barriers cited the lack of a nearby food store (spatial-temporal), transportation issues (spatial-temporal), and a lack of availability of the types of foods (service delivery) they want to buy as the three main barriers to access. Twenty four percent said they have run out of food by the end of the month. Suggested changes to overcome these barriers included building a local store in Poolesville and having more money. The primary reason survey respondents shopped at the stores they did was related to spatial-temporal access (proximity/convenience), followed by service delivery (quality and types of food), and lastly, economic access (price of food).

Similarly, the vast majority of web survey respondents (86%) indicated they do not have barriers to *preparing* the food they want. The small percentage of participants who reported having barriers to preparing food cited time (spatial-temporal) as the main barrier, followed by cost (economic). When asked for additional comments about food access in the community, the most frequent comment was related to the lack of a grocery store in the most rural parts of the county, in particular, Poolesville. Additional comments included a mention of the value of increased education on how to prepare healthy and affordable meals (personal), a desire for increased frequency of food assistance pickup, increased advertisement of healthier food and decreased promotion of unhealthy foods, more local produce and a desire for a farmers market near home address. Selected comments from the web survey included:

"We are fortunate to have resources to allow ample food access. For people with limited incomes or lack of transportation, food access must be a challenge."

"We are both over 70 and can foresee the lack of a grocery store in town will cause problems as our mobility decreases."

"We need a grocery store in Poolesville."

"Limited option in our town (Poolesville). There is no one stop shopping for groceries."

Healthy Food Availability Index (HFAI)

Data was collected from 43 stores in COLA communities, specifically in those neighborhoods within a 2 mile radius of each listening session, as well as data from 12 control stores in the county's highest income areas. HFAI scores by general store type and community type are presented in Table 3. Stores were categorized according to CLF's food store standards. The definitions and sub-categories are outlined in the text box. As expected based on reports from other parts of the country [6-9], supermarkets were found to be more likely to carry the full

selection of healthy food items (have higher HFAI scores) compared to small groceries and convenience stores. Our survey found no statistically significant differences between HFAI scores for food retail outlets in COLAs compared to control (high income areas) when stratified by store type, with the exception of pharmacies. Pharmacies in COLAs had significantly *higher* HFAI scores compared to pharmacies in the control areas.

Food prices were also evaluated to determine whether differences existed between COLAs and the highest income areas of the county. Prices were collected for certain healthy food items (low fat milk, bananas, carrots, dried black beans, chicken legs, fresh tilapia, ground beef and whole wheat bread) when available at each store. The average price of each good by general store type in COLAs is presented in Table 4. Overall, supermarkets offered healthy food items at cheaper prices than did convenience stores and small groceries for the items that were sold by all three store types. Most strikingly, bananas were sold at convenience stores for $1 more a pound than they were sold in supermarkets. Bananas tend to be sold individually in convenience stores as a snack food item, whereas they are sold in bunches by the pound in supermarkets. Similarly, low fat milk was $0.0106 more per ounce in convenience stores than in supermarkets, which translates to $1.36 more a gallon.

> **Supermarkets** are defined as large-format grocery stores with all food departments present, including produce, meats, seafood, canned goods and packaged goods. These stores have annual sales of $2 million or more and have 3 or more cash registers. This category includes: traditional supermarkets such as Giant, limited assortment supermarkets such as Aldi, supercenters such as Target, and international supermarkets.
>
> **Small Grocery** stores are small-format grocery stores that are typically independently owned and operated. They have annual sales of less than $2 million and have limited food departments. This category includes: "mom and pop" grocery stores, sometimes referred to as "corner stores" in urban areas, and international small food stores.
>
> **Convenience** stores include a variety of stores that sell food products, but food is not their main business. They are typically chain operated. This category includes: chain convenience stores such as 7-11, pharmacies and discount stores such as Family Dollar.

Table 3. Summary of HFAI scores by store type

Store type	Communities of low food access		Highest income areas		p-value
	n	Mean HFAI score *(range)*	n	Mean HFAI score *(range)*	
Supermarket	**17**	**25.3 (16.5-27.5)**	**3**	**26.8 (25.5-27.5)**	0.38
Traditional	7	27.4 (26.5-27.5)	3	26.8 (25.5-27.5)	0.29
Supercenter	2	26.0 (25.5-26.5)	-	-	-
International	7	23.2 (16.5-25.5)	-	-	-
Limited assortment	1	24.5	-	-	-
Small Grocery	**10**	**10.0 (2.5-19.5)**	**3**	**5.7 (4.0-7.5)**	0.24
International small grocery	4	7.2 (2.5-11.5)	3	5.7 (4.0-7.5)	0.59
"Corner store"	6	11.8 (4.0-19.5)	-	-	-
Convenience Store	**16**	**9.2 (4.0-11.5)**	**6**	**8.8 (6.5-11.5)**	0.66
Chain convenience store	7	9.1 (4.0-11.5)	2	9.0 (8.5-9.5)	0.94
Pharmacy	6	9.9 (9.0-11.0)	3	7.7 (6.5-8.5)	**0.007**
Discount convenience store	3	7.7 (6.5-10.0)	1	11.5	0.24

Table 4. Average Prices by Store Type in Communities of Low Food Access

Store type	Low fat milk		Bananas		Carrots		Black beans (dried)	
	n	ave. price per oz	n	ave. price per lb	n	ave. price per lb	n	ave. price per lb
Supermarket	16	0.0308	17	0.66	17	0.86	13	1.47
Convenience Store	12	0.0414*	7	1.66***	0	.	0	.
Small Grocery	1	0.0327	3	1.06***	1	0.89	3	1.70

Store type	Chicken legs		Tilapia (fresh)		Ground beef		Whole wheat bread	
	n	ave. price per lb	n	ave. price per lb	n	ave. price per lb	n	ave. price per loaf
Supermarket	16	1.39	4	4.14	15	4.79	16	2.51
Convenience Store	0	.	0	.	0	.	7	2.88
Small Grocery	1	2.72	0	.	0	.	1	3.59

Note: *, ** and *** indicate that a given store type has an average price that is significantly different from the average supermarket price at the 10, 5 and 1 percent level. Statistical significance cannot be calculated if the number of obeservations for a given store type is less than 2.

Table 5 presents prices stratified by store type subcategories. The data indicate that convenience store chains, such as 7-11, consistently charge more than traditional supermarkets for the food products they stock ($0.05/ounce vs. $0.03/ounce for low fat milk, $1.66/pound vs. $0.54/pound for bananas and $3.56/loaf vs. $2.05/loaf for whole wheat bread). Supercenters, such as Target, charge more than traditional supermarkets for the sampled produce ($0.87/pound vs. $0.54/pound for bananas and $1.45/pound vs. $0.82/pound for carrots), but offer low fat milk at a comparable price to traditional supermarkets. Finally, international supermarkets sold low fat milk, bananas and whole wheat bread at higher prices than did traditional supermarkets but sold meats for considerably lower prices than traditional supermarkets ($1.05/pound vs. $1.55/pound for chicken and $3.09/pound vs. $5.70/pound for beef).

Table 5. Average Prices by Store Subcategory in Communities of Low Food Access

Store type	Low fat milk		Bananas		Carrots		Black beans (dried)	
	n	ave. price per oz	n	ave. price per lb	n	ave. price per lb	n	ave. price per lb
Supermarket: Traditional	7	0.0275	7	0.54	7	0.82	4	1.47
Supermarket: International	6	0.0358***	7	0.70**	7	0.75	7	1.50
Supermarket: Supercenter	2	0.0269	2	0.87***	2	1.45**	1	1.59
Supermarket: Limited Assortment	1	0.0311	1	0.69	1	0.64	1	1.15
Grocery: "Corner Store"	1	0.0327	3	1.06***	1	0.89	2	1.36
Grocery: International	0	.	0	.	0	.	1	2.39
Convenience: Chain	6	0.0515*	7	1.66***	0	.	0	.
Convenience: Pharmacy	6	0.0313	0	.	0	.	0	.

Store type	Chicken legs		Tilapia (fresh)		Ground beef		Whole wheat bread	
	n	ave. price per lb	n	ave. price per lb	n	ave. price per lb	n	ave. price per loaf
Supermarket: Traditional	7	1.55	1	7.99	7	5.70	7	2.05
Supermarket: International	6	1.05***	3	2.86	5	3.09***	6	3.27***
Supermarket: Supercenter	2	1.99**	0	.	2	5.74	2	2.39
Supermarket: Limited Assortment	1	1.19	0	.	1	4.99	1	1.39
Grocery: "Corner Store"	1	2.72	0	.	0	.	1	3.59
Grocery: International	0	.	0	.	0	.	0	.
Convenience: Chain	0	.	0	.	0	.	3	3.56***
Convenience: Pharmacy	0	.	0	.	0	.	2	2.74
Convenience: Discount	0	.	0	.	0	.	2	2.00

Note: *, ** and *** indicate that a given store subcategory has an average price that is significantly different from the average supermarket price at the 10, 5 and 1 percent level. Statistical significance cannot be calculated if the number of obeservations for a given store subcategory is less than 2.

As shown in Table 6, traditional supermarkets in COLAs tend to offer similar prices as their high-income area counterparts.   The only clear exception to this was ground beef, which was sold for $0.88 per pound more in traditional supermarkets in COLAs than in traditional supermarkets in high income areas.   Also there are signs that fresh tilapia is more expensive in traditional supermarkets in COLAs than in their high-income counterparts (although only two sampled traditional supermarkets carried fresh tilapia). As noted above, despite some meats being offered at higher prices in traditional supermarkets, COLA residents can still find lower meat prices at the international supermarkets in their area.

Table 6. Average prices in traditional supermarkets by food access area

Product	Communities of low food access		Highest income areas		
	n	average price	n	average price	difference
Low fat milk: price per oz	7	0.0275	3	0.0272	0.0003
Bananas: price per lb	7	0.54	3	0.49	0.05
Carrots: price per lb	7	0.82	3	0.98	-0.16
Black beans (dried): price per lb	4	1.47	3	1.18	0.29
Ground beef: price per lb	7	5.70	3	4.82	0.88**
Chicken legs: price per lb	7	1.55	3	1.66	-0.11
Tilapia (fresh): price per lb	1	7.99	1	5.99	2.00
Whole wheat bread: price per loaf	7	2.05	3	2.16	-0.11

Note: *, ** and *** indicate that the difference between the average price offered for a given product in traditional supermarkets in COLAs and in high income areas is significantly different at the 10, 5 and 1 percent level. Statistical significance cannot be calculated if the number of observations for either geographic location for a given product is less than 2.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this community food assessment indicates that while there are communities struggling with food insecurity in the County, in most cases, this is not due to a lack of physical access to healthy food as indicated by information provided by the listening session and web survey participants, and by the HFAI scores. The cost of food, transportation issues, and limited availability of culturally relevant foods were highlighted as key concerns in the listening sessions and the web survey.

With regard to the mapping efforts completed in Phase I of the community food access assessment, it is important to consider income and vehicle availability, but at the census tract level, pockets of poverty or limited resources are often missed. This is especially true in a county like Montgomery County, where there are a significant number of people earning high incomes which may mask areas of poverty when incomes are averaged across a census tract. These maps, however, helped the workgroup narrow our focus on the neighborhoods with the potential for the largest number of residents with limited economic resources to access healthy food, and are simply a means to identify areas where further study is warranted.

Data from the listening sessions and web survey indicate that the economic access is the primary issue when it comes to accessing healthy food. Listening session participants, the majority of whom reported annual household incomes of less than $25,000, stated that price was the strongest determinant of where they shopped and highlighted the lack of high quality food items at affordable prices. Conversely, the majority of web survey participants, of whom only 5% reported annual household income of less than $25,000, indicated that they had no barriers to food access. Both groups did, however, mention transportation to food retail outlets as potential barriers.

As has been reported elsewhere across the country [6-9], data from the Montgomery County HFAI

surveys indicate that supermarkets are still the best source for the most variety of healthy foods, even among COLAs. No statistically significant differences in HFAI scores were observed between supermarkets or small groceries within COLAs compared with higher income areas. Small groceries and convenience stores had substantially lower HFAI scores compared to supermarkets, with the lowest scores found in international small groceries.

Pharmacies were one food retail category in which statistically significant differences were observed between COLAs and areas of higher income. Statistically significantly higher HFAI scores among COLA pharmacies compared to non-COLA pharmacies suggests that pharmacies (especially chains such as Rite-Aid and CVS that were surveyed in the Montgomery County assessment) may view their roles differently in different communities, and thus provide more healthy food options in areas that have few other food retail options.   This may also reflect a national trend to increase healthy food items in convenience stores in general. The National Association of Convenience Stores (NACS) and United Fresh Produce Association partnered in June 2014 to identify ways to boost sales of fresh fruits and vegetables in convenience stores [10]. Large chain pharmacies may better positioned with resources and store space to install the refrigeration cases necessary to stock perishable healthy foods like fruits, vegetables, and low fat dairy products, even compared to some small grocery stores. However, it is unclear whether consumers will come to view pharmacies and convenience stores as a place to do their food shopping, or whether they continue to only view pharmacies and convenience stores as places to purchase snack and convenience foods.

The fact that the COLAs in Montgomery County are primarily suburban areas is different from food access assessments that have been conducted many other parts of the country, primarily in more urban settings. Compared to urban areas, supermarkets tend to be more prevalent in the suburbs, and of similar quality. Our findings indicate the need for further research on suburban food environments, and how the barriers to food access differ from those of more urban areas.

Our assessment confirmed that in addition to providing the greatest variety of healthy food items, supermarkets also tend to provide the most affordable healthy food items. However, while prices did not vary significantly between COLA and non-COLA supermarkets for most items, affordability (ability to pay the given price) is still a concern for many residents of COLAs. In COLAs, international supermarkets offer an option for affordable meats and seafood but these markets are not always easily accessible. Bananas may be higher priced in convenience stores and small groceries because they are sold individually as snack food, which reinforces that these stores are not the main sources of grocery items, but rather places to get a quick snack or something you need in a pinch.

Environments Supporting Healthy Eating (ESHE) Index Report.   In June 2015, while the FAWG was concluding the Montgomery County community food access assessment, the Environments Supporting Healthy Eating (ESHE) Index (http://www.communitycommons.org/groups/childhood-obesity-gis/eshe/) was released. The ESHE Index was designed to evaluate environmental influences on access to affordable and healthful foods. The ESHE Index indicators come from publically available data, and serves as a way to rank communities, counties and states on factors related to healthy eating.

On a scale of 0 (least supportive) to 1 (most supportive), Montgomery County has an overall ESHE Score of 0.61, and was ranked 7th out of the 24 counties in the State of Maryland (Kent County was the highest ranked Maryland county, and Allegany County was the lowest ranked). While overall food insecurity in Montgomery County (8.3%) was noted to be lower than state (13.1%) and national (15.9%) averages, the report did note that 29.24% of Montgomery County residents live in census tracts with Low Healthy Food Access (as defined by the Modified Retail Food Environment Index Score (mRFEI [11]), 51% live in census tracks with Moderate Healthy Food Access, and only 7.24% live in census tracks with High Healthy Food Access. The mRFEI is a metric that considers both the number of healthy stores (defined as supermarkets, larger grocery stores, supercenters, and produce stores) and less healthy food retailers (defined as convenience stores, fast food restaurants, and small grocery stores with three or fewer employees) within census tracts across each state.
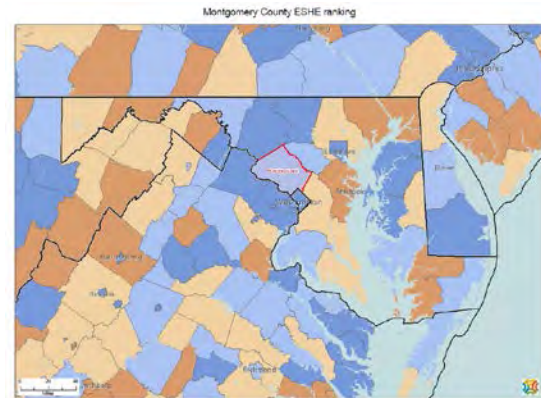
ESHE Index, Within-State Rank by County, ESHE 2015

■ 1st Quartile (Most Supportive)
□ 2nd Quartile
□ 3rd Quartile
■ 4th Quartile (Least Supportive)

The rate of SNAP- and WIC-Authorized Food Store Access per 1,000 residents below 200% of the federal poverty limit was significantly below the state and national average. However, the report also noted that the percentage of low-income Montgomery County residents with low food access (1.35%) was significantly lower than the state (3.24%) and national (6.27%) averages. The number of fast food restaurants per 100,000 residents was lower in Montgomery County (81.6) compared to the state average (86.6), although higher than the national average (72.7). The percentage of adult Montgomery County residents with inadequate fruit and vegetable intake (66.7%) was lower than both the state (72.4%) and national (75.7%) averages.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The activities and data outlined in this report will serve as baseline data for the FAWG's monitoring and evaluation activities going forward. The FAWG plans to continue conducting the Healthy Food Availability Index (HFAI) every one to two years, depending on funding and volunteer capacity, in order to monitor healthy food availability in the county.

The FAWG may consider interviewing or working with store owners to better understand how to increase their capacity to carry more healthy foods. Data from the listening sessions have provided important information on barriers to healthy food access in the County which the Working Group will use this information to establish a plan of work to alleviate barriers to healthy food access.

While the primary target population for this project was the residents of communities identified as having low food access in our mapping efforts (the COLAs), this project will ultimately benefit all Montgomery County residents by improving overall access to healthy foods. The listening sessions allowed the Food Access Working Group to hear directly from residents about their issues and barriers in accessing healthy foods.

The multi-dimensional model of food access first suggested by Freedman *et al* [5] can provide guidance for policy and programmatic interventions to improve nutritious food access. It also emphasizes the need for efforts that address multiple levels of access. Based on the findings of this community food assessment survey, the following potential interventions and the corresponding access domain have been identified.

Economic Access:
- Advocate for minimum wage increase in Maryland.
- Advocate for rent-controlled housing (either to help families balance budgets or to increase access to kitchens at home)
- Provide information on government assistance eligibility.
- Educate or work with grocery stores to offer healthier incentives to the "free soda" deals when spending more.
- Offer education on how to cook and shop on a SNAP budget.
- Increase subsidization of healthy foods, such as the County's farmers market incentive program and other healthy food incentive programs
- Investigate the prices for healthy foods and the shopping habits of community members to determine exactly what factors are bringing up the total bill for groceries.

Service Delivery
- Advising smaller markets how to maintain freshness of produce/meat.

Spatial-temporal
- Encourage grocery stores, and/or faith-based groups and community centers to provide transportation to grocery stores.
- Advocate for establishment of grocery store in Poolesville, MD. Add farmers market and additional food access sites in East County.
- Evaluate the location of community gardens and increase awareness of and/or presence of community gardens in COLAs.

Social Access
- Use Asian and Latino markets which are succeeding in diverse, lower income metropolitan areas, as models for what types of produce to provide in areas with demographically similar populations.
- Encourage grocery stores to hire within the community so that the staff reflects the community it serves.
- Increase the amount of Latin American foods at emergency food sites serving those communities.

Personal Access
- Offer education that promotes preparing food in healthful ways, making unhealthy meals healthier, and planning meals ahead (to resist convenience options).

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APPENDICES
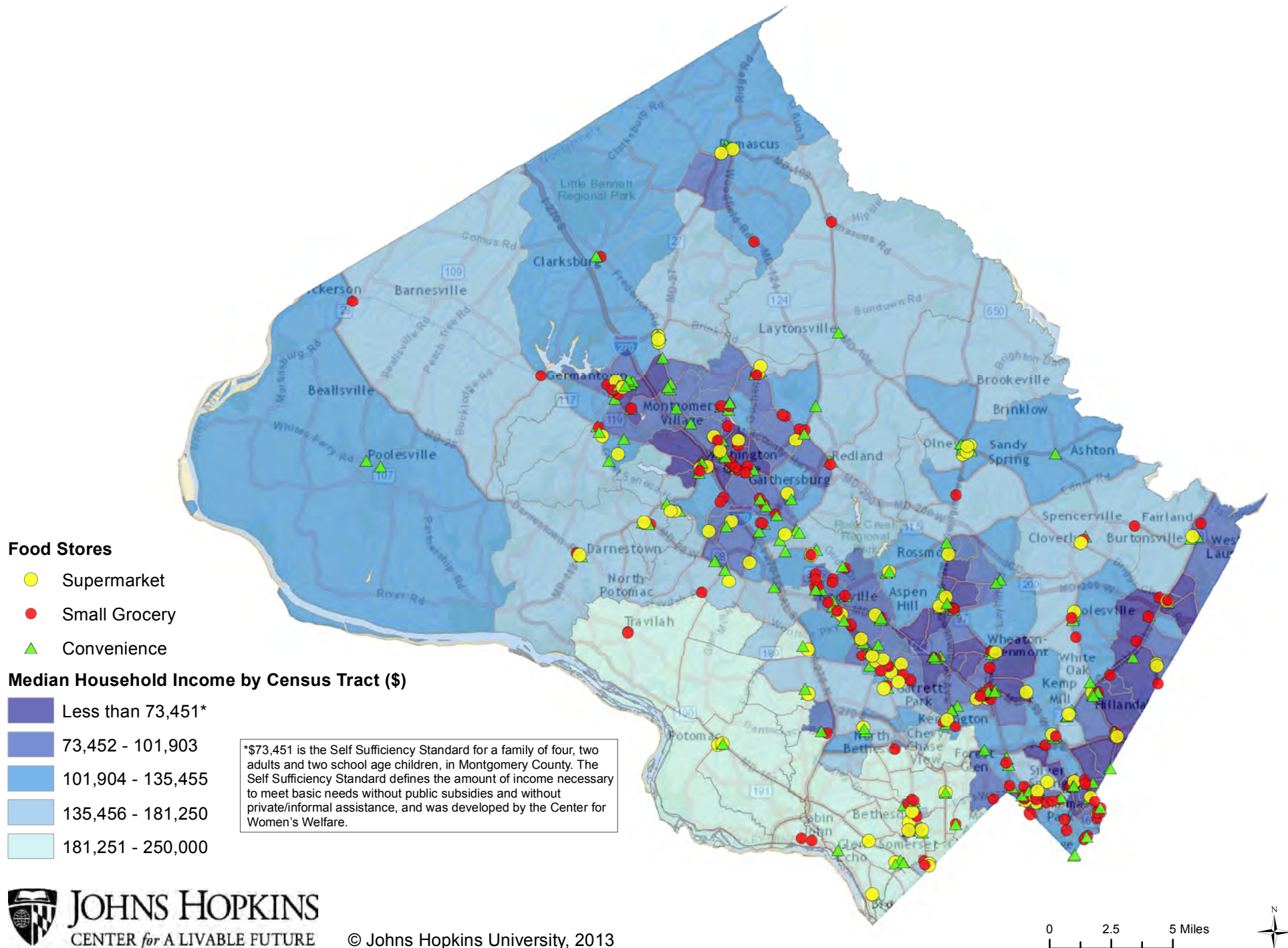
Section 1 – Maps

     Food stores and median household income
     Food stores and vehicle availability
     Supermarkets and buffers – Wheaton-Glenmont
     Healthy Food Availability Index (HFAI) scores for Wheaton-Glenmont stores
     Supermarkets and buffers – Silver Spring
     Healthy Food Availability Index (HFAI) scores for Silver Spring stores
     Supermarkets and buffers – Fairland
     Healthy Food Availability Index (HFAI) scores for Fairland stores
     Supermarkets and buffers – Gaithersburg
     Healthy Food Availability Index (HFAI) scores for Gaithersburg stores
     Supermarkets and buffers – Aspen Hill/Bell Pre

Section 2 – Materials used to conduct the community food access assessment

     Listening session script
     Listening session consent form
     Listening session demographic survey
     Web survey text
     Healthy Food Availability Index (HFAI) data collection form
     Letter to store owners regarding the HFAI data collection

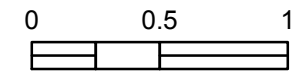# Food Stores and Median Household Income in Montgomery County

Food Stores

- 🟡 Supermarket
- 🔴 Small Grocery
- 🔺 Convenience

Median Household Income by Census Tract ($)

- Less than 73,451*
- 73,452 - 101,903
- 101,904 - 135,455
- 135,456 - 181,250
- 181,251 - 250,000

*$73,451 is the Self Sufficiency Standard for a family of four, two adults and two school age children, in Montgomery County. The Self Sufficiency Standard defines the amount of income necessary to meet basic needs without public subsidies and without private/informal assistance, and was developed by the Center for Women's Welfare.

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0   2.5   5 Miles

Food Stores and Vehicle Availability in Montgomery County
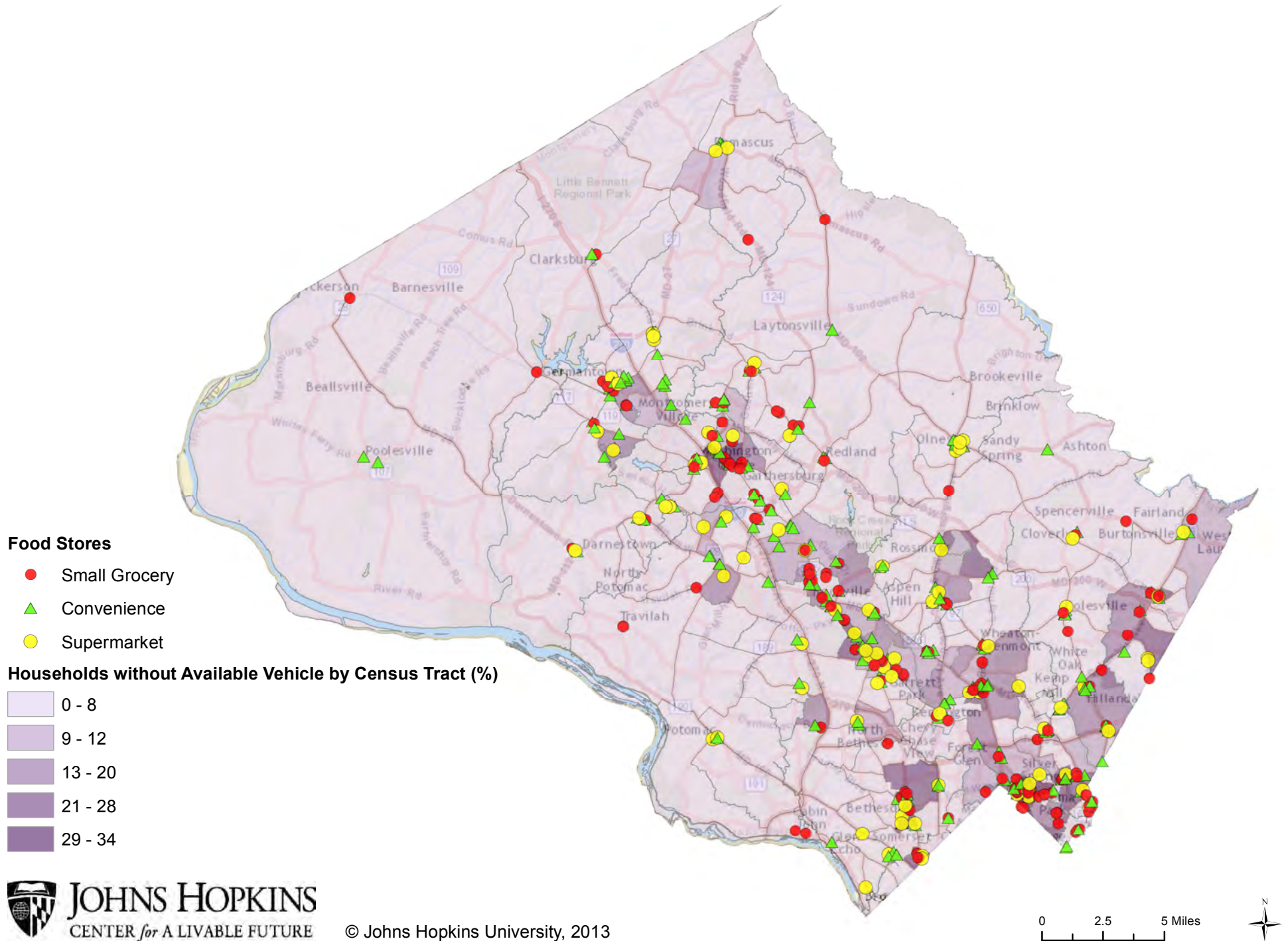
Food Stores

● Small Grocery

▲ Convenience

● Supermarket

Households without Available Vehicle by Census Tract (%)

- 0 - 8
- 9 - 12
- 13 - 20
- 21 - 28
- 29 - 34

0   2.5   5 Miles

N

Wheaton-Glenmont

N

| 0 | 0.5 | 1 |
Miles

- ● Supermarket
- ☐ 1/4 Mile Buffer
- ☐ 1/2 Mile Buffer
- ☐ 1 Mile Buffer
- ▨ Low Income Census Tract

**Population Density
by Cenus Tract**

	0 - 100
	101 - 1,000
	1,001 - 2,000
	2,001 - 4,000
	4,001 - 10,000
	10,001+

May, 2014

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Wheaton-Glenmont

N

0   0.5   1
Miles

HFAI Scores

- 🔴 0.0 - 9.5
- 🟢 9.6 - 19.0
- 🔵 19.1 - 27.5

Population Density
by Cenus Tract

	0 - 100
	101 - 1,000
	1,001 - 2,000
	2,001 - 4,000
	4,001 - 10,000
	10,001+

October, 2015

JOHNS HOPKINS
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Supermarket
Convenience Store
Convenience Store
Small Grocery
Small Grocery
Supermarket
Convenience Store
Supermarket
Convenience Store
Supermarket
Convenience Store

Silver Spring

N
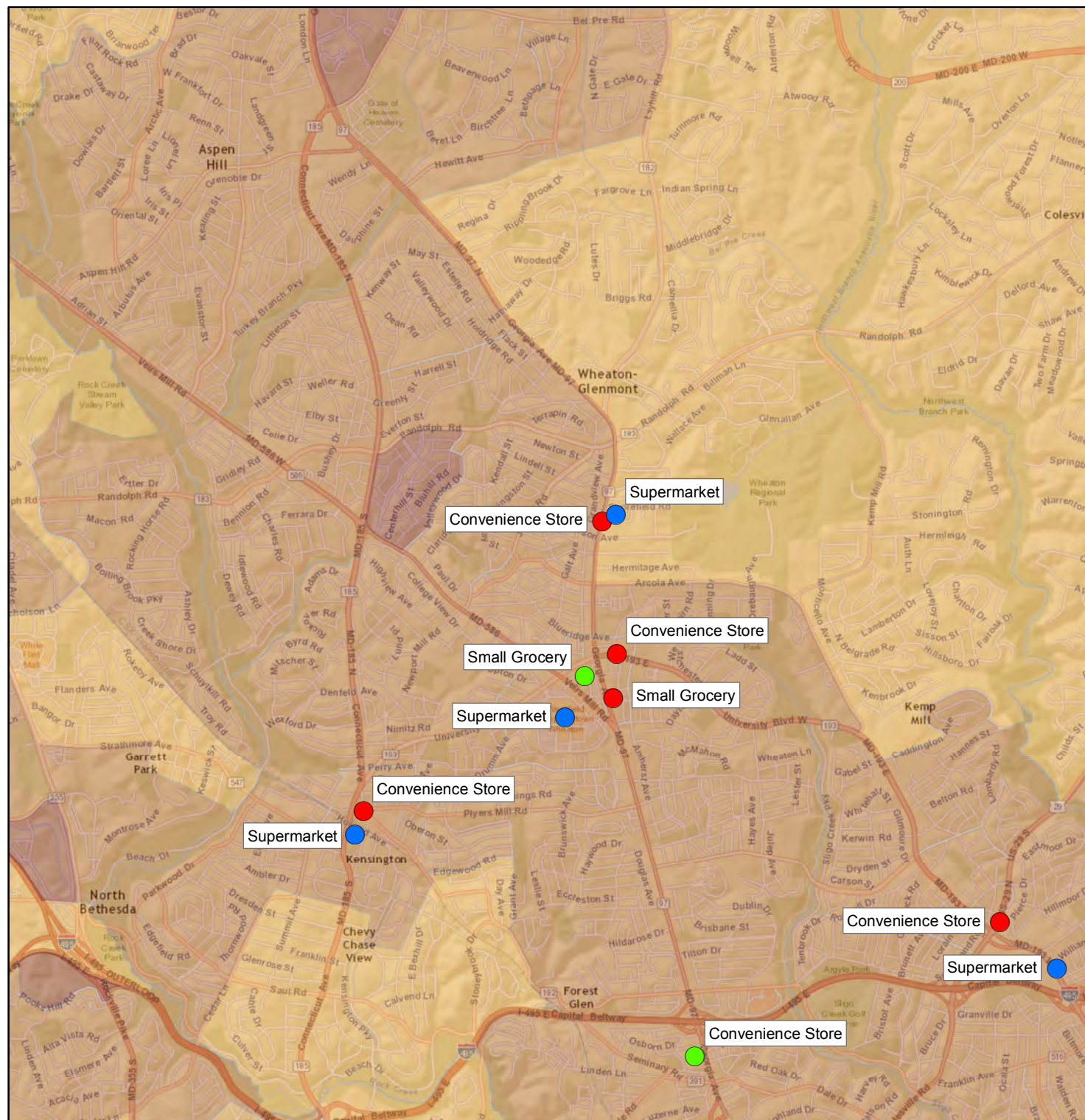
0   0.5   1
Miles

1/4 Mile Buffer
1/2 Mile Buffer
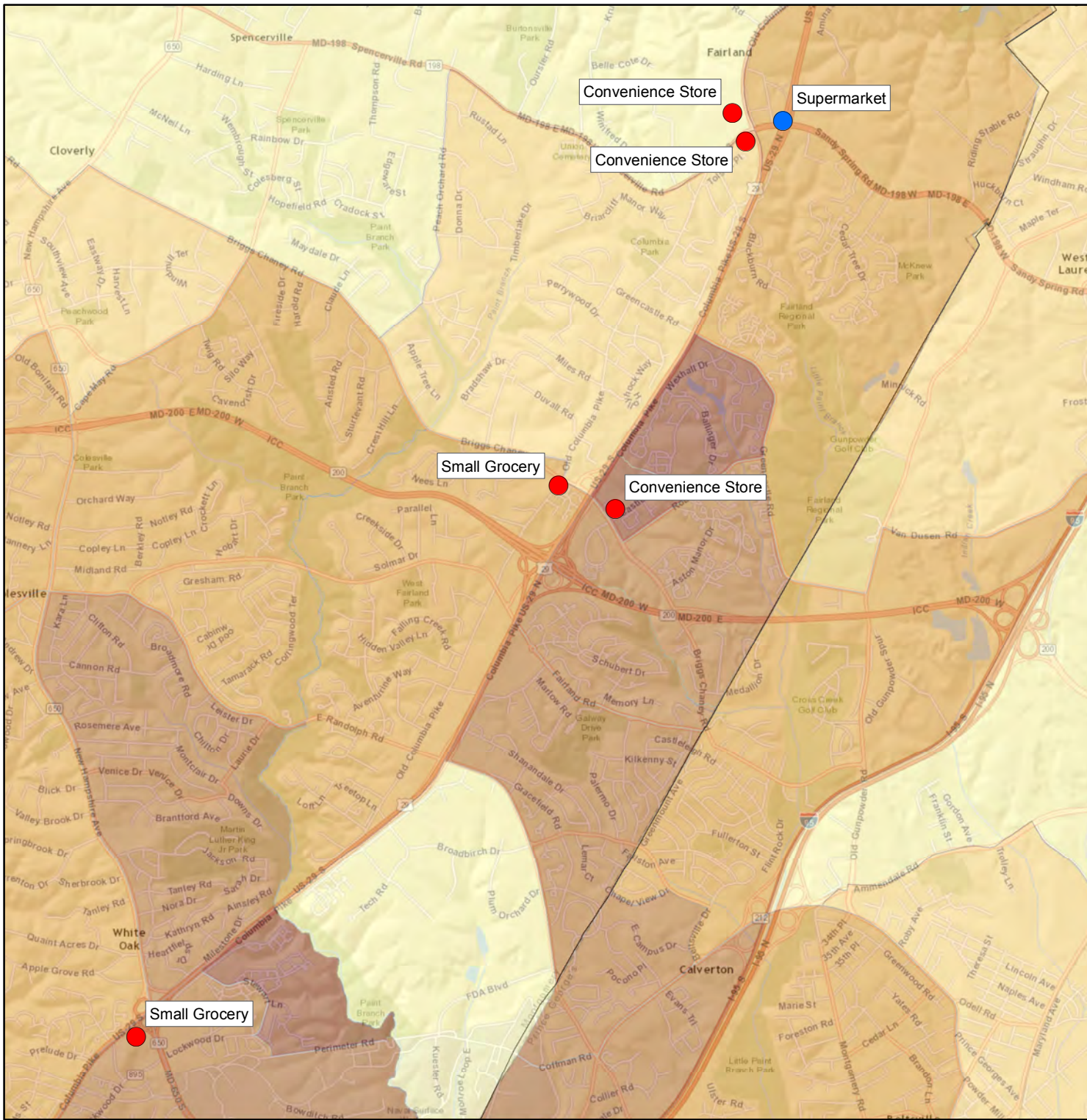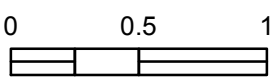**1 Mile Buffer**
⬤ Supermarket
Low Income Census Tract
Low Vehicle Availability

Population Density
by Cenus Tract

0 - 100
101 - 1,000
1,001 - 2,000
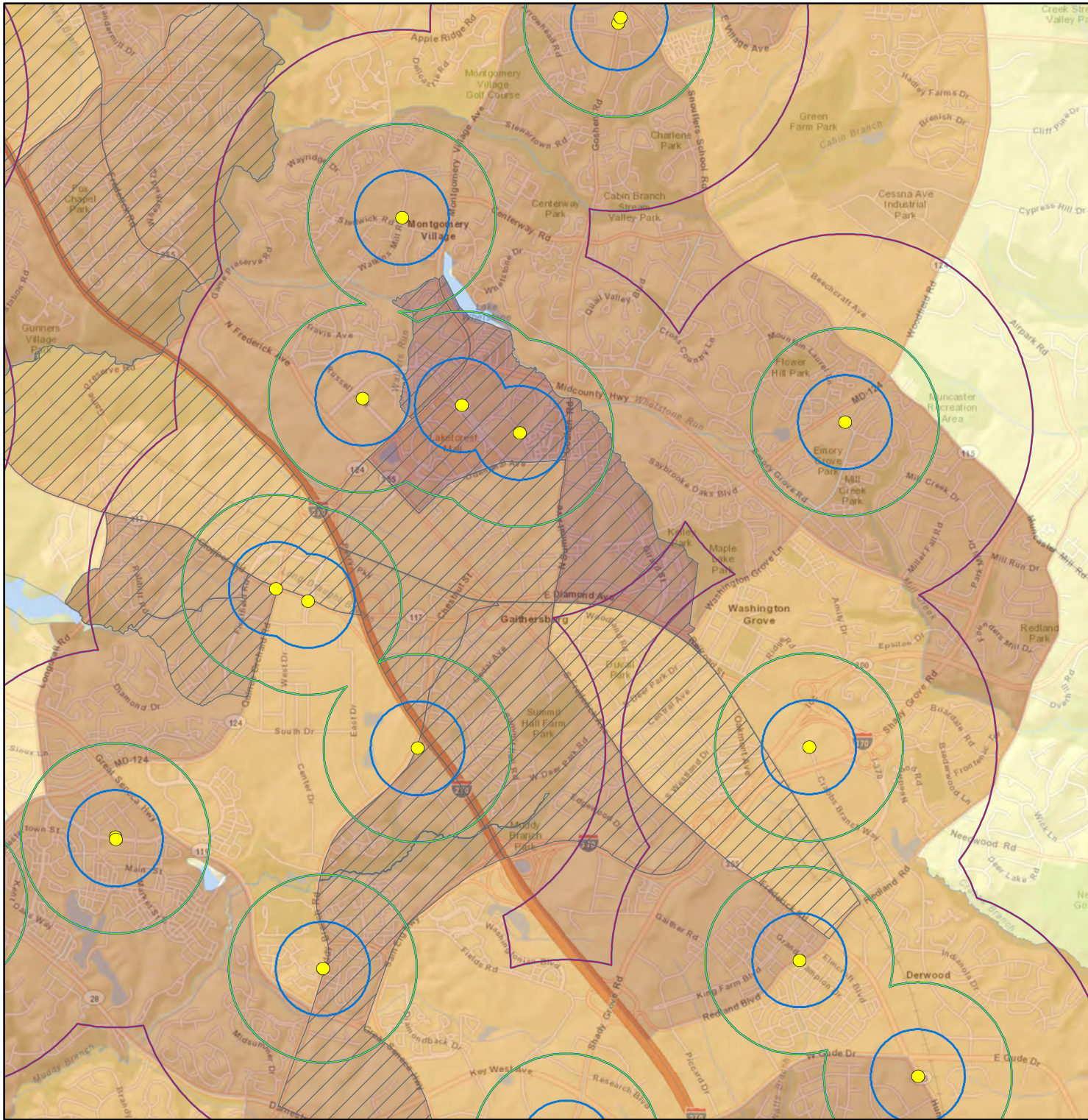2,001 - 4,000
4,001 - 10,000
10,001+

May, 2014

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Silver Spring

N

0   0.5   1

Miles

HFAI Scores

- 🔴 0.0 - 9.5
- 🟢 9.6 - 19.0
- 🔵 19.1 - 27.5

Population Density
by Cenus Tract

	0 - 100
	101 - 1,000
	1,001 - 2,000
	2,001 - 4,000
	4,001 - 10,000
	10,001+

October, 2015

JOHNS HOPKINS
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Convenience Store
Small Grocery
Supermarket
Supermarket
Convenience Store
Convenience Store
Small Grocery
Convenience Store
Convenience Store
Small Grocery
Supermarket
Small Grocery
Small Grocery
Convenience Store
Supermarket
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Supermarket
Supermarket
Supermarket
Convenience Store
Supermarket
Supermarket
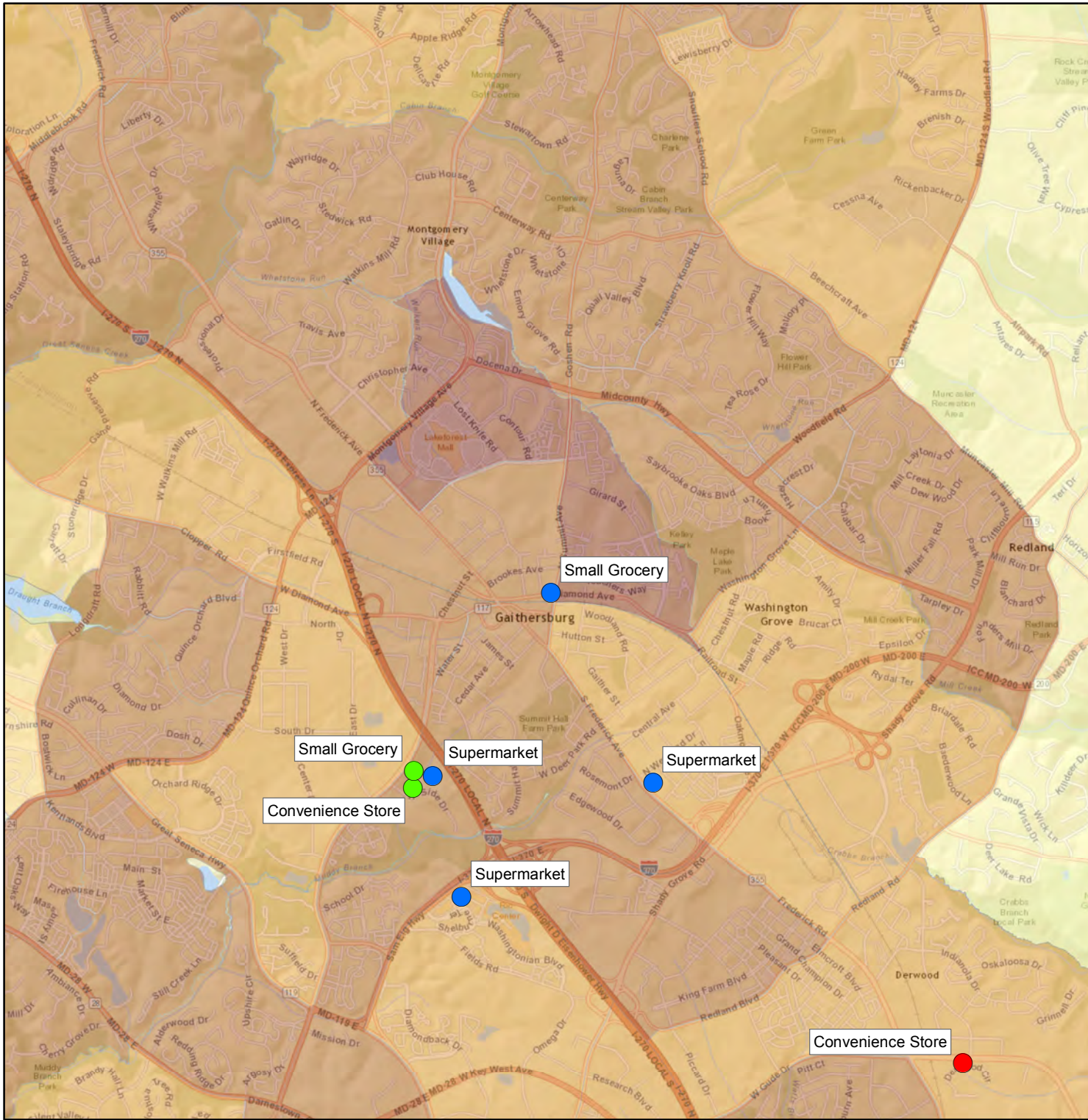Small Grocery

Fairland

N

0   0.5   1
Miles

- ● Supermarket
- ▭ 1/4 Mile Buffer
- ▭ 1/2 Mile Buffer
- ▭ 1 Mile Buffer
- ▨ Low Income Census Tract

Population Density
by Cenus Tract

▢	0 - 100
▢	101 - 1,000
▢	1,001 - 2,000
▢	2,001 - 4,000
▢	4,001 - 10,000
▢	10,001+

May, 2014

JOHNS HOPKINS
CENTER for A LIVABLE FUTURE

Fairland

HFAI Scores

- 🔴 0.0 - 9.5
- 🟢 9.6 - 19.0
- 🔵 19.1 - 27.5

Population Density by Cenus Tract

⬜	0 - 100
🟨	101 - 1,000
🟧	1,001 - 2,000
🟫	2,001 - 4,000
🟤	4,001 - 10,000
🟪	10,001+

October, 2015

JOHNS HOPKINS
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Gaithersburg

N

| 0 | 0.5 | 1 |

Miles

● Supermarket

□ 1/4 Mile Buffer

□ 1/2 Mile Buffer

□ 1 Mile Buffer

▨ Low Income Census Tract

Population Density

by Cenus Tract

	0 - 100
	101 - 1,000
	1,001 - 2,000
	2,001 - 4,000
	4,001 - 10,000
	10,001+

May, 2014

JOHNS HOPKINS
CENTER for A LIVABLE FUTURE

Gaithersburg

N

| 0 | 0.5 | 1 |

Miles

HFAI Scores

- 🔴 0.0 - 9.5
- 🟢 9.6 - 19.0
- 🔵 19.1 - 27.5

Population Density
by Cenus Tract

	0 - 100
	101 - 1,000
	1,001 - 2,000
	2,001 - 4,000
	4,001 - 10,000
	10,001+

October, 2015

Small Grocery

Small Grocery

Supermarket

Supermarket

Convenience Store

Supermarket

Convenience Store

JOHNS HOPKINS
CENTER *for* A LIVABLE FUTURE

Aspen Hill/ Bel Pre
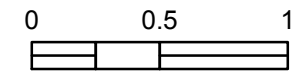
N

0   0.5   1
Miles

- ● Supermarket
- ☐ 1/4 Mile Buffer
- ☐ 1/2 Mile Buffer
- ☐ 1 Mile Buffer
- ▨ Low Income Census Tract

Population Density
by Cenus Tract

	0 - 100
	101 - 1,000
	1,001 - 2,000
	2,001 - 4,000
	4,001 - 10,000
	10,001+

May, 2014

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Montgomery County Food Council
Food Access Working Group

Listening Session Script

Hello everyone! Thank you so much for coming tonight!

My name is _____ and I am a member of the Montgomery County
Food Council's Food Access Working Group.

[Introduce other Food Access Working Group members who are present]

The Food Access Working Group has been charged with increasing access to healthy
foods for all Montgomery County residents.

So, we are conducting a series of these listening sessions to talk with Montgomery
County residents to hear from all of you what is working well for you and what is
not working so well in terms of your ability to find and purchase the types of foods
you want to eat.

While you talk, our job will be to listen. We will be recording this session so that we
don't miss anything important that is said. We would like to ask that you sign this
form saying that we have your permission to record your comments. The
information that you provide will be kept confidential, and we will never identify
you by name when we summarize all the comments.

Additionally, the survey that you were given when you came in will help us gather
general information about who is in the room. We do not want you to put your
name of the form to protect your privacy. All information that you are willing to
provide will be kept confidential.

The information that you share in the discussion tonight will be combined with
comments from participants in other listening sessions that we will be conducting.
We will use the information you provide to identify the barriers to obtaining healthy
food in your community, and develop a plan to eliminate those barriers with the
goal of making it easier for you to find affordable, healthy food items in your
community. Once we have completed all the listening sessions and compiled all of
the comments, we will hold a public meeting to report the findings.

So, we would like to start by just finding out how you currently shop, and then we
will ask you for your suggestions for improving food access in Montgomery County.

CURRENT SHOPPING HABITS
• Where do you choose to shop for food? Why? Where else?

- On average, what is your monthly budget for groceries?
- How often do you buy groceries, daily, weekly, bi-weekly, monthly?
- How do you travel to the supermarket? How long to get there?

- What foods do you typically shop for?
- Are you able to find every food item you are looking for? Which food items do you have trouble finding?

PERCEPTIONS OF FOOD RETAIL OPTIONS
- What do you like/dislike about the big supermarket chains' produce and other food selections (price, quality, variety)?

COOKING KNOWLEDGE/ABILITY
- Do you have any barriers that prevent you from cooking?

FOOD ACCESS
- What other food sources to you use to meet your needs?
- Do you have any other barriers to getting the food you want and need
- Do you have the tools you need to use/prepare the food you need?

PERCEPTIONS OF ORGANIC
- What is your impression of organic foods?
- If you had a choice would you buy organic and/or local?

LOCAL FOOD
- Have you ever shopped at the farmers market?
- Have you ever gone to a "pick your own" farm?

"Healthy foods"
- What types of foods do you think are "healthy"?
- Do you try to buy "healthy" foods, or is that not a concern for you?
- Do you or your family members have health concerns that require you to choose special foods? [If yes] Can you tell us more about these dietary issues? Has this been easy to do or hard to do?

We want to thank you for participating in this listening session! Your comments have been extremely helpful. As a thank you for your participation, we have gift cards from Target for each of you.

Montgomery County Food Council
Food Access Working Group

Consent for recording of community listening sessions

PURPOSE

The Food Access Working Group is working to increase access to healthy foods for all Montgomery County residents.

We are conducting a series of these listening sessions to gather information from Montgomery County residents about what is working well for you and what is not working so well in terms of your ability to find and purchase the types of foods you want to eat.

PROCEDURES

During the listening session, you will be asked questions about your thoughts and experiences related to the food that you can buy in your community. We expect that the listening session will take no more than 90 minutes of your time. You do not have to answer any question that you feel uncomfortable with.

With your permission, we will record the interview with a digital recorder to help us take better notes. The recording will be destroyed once the transcription is completed. The information that you provide will be kept confidential, and we will never identify you by name when we summarize all the comments.

You will receive a $10 Target gift card for your time.

_____   _____
Signature   Print your name

Montgomery County Food Council - Food Access Working Group
Listening session survey

Thank you for agreeing to participate in tonight's Food Access Listening Session. We ask that you please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. This information will be used in combination with the comments you provide during the discussion to help us determine what improvements need to be made to improve access to healthy foods in Montgomery County. The information that you provide will be kept confidential. Please <u>do not</u> write your name, address or telephone number on this survey.

Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin? Please mark one of the boxes below with an X.

☐ Yes   ☐ No

What is your country of origin?   ☐

What race best describes how you identify yourself? Please mark   ☐ X   **one or more boxes**

☐ White

☐ Black or African American

☐ American Indian or Alaska Native

☐ Asian

☐ Native Hawaii or Other Pacific Islander

What zip code do you live in?   ☐

Number of adults over age 18 living in household.   ☐

Number of children 18 and younger currently living in household.   ☐

What is your annual household income?

☐ Less than $25,000

☐ $25,000 to $50,000

☐ $50,000 to $90,000

☐ $90,000 or more

How much money do you spend each month on food for the members of your household?

☐ Less than $300

☐ $300 to $575

☐ $576 to $725

☐ $726 to $900

☐ $900 or more

What, if any, federal food assistance programs do you use?

☐ Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, also known as Food Stamps)

☐ Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

☐ School Breakfast Program

☐ National School Lunch Program

☐ After School Nutrition Program

☐ Summer Nutrition Program

☐ Child and Adult Food Care Program

☐ Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program

☐ The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)/Commodity Food

☐ Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program

☐ Other, please write in the name of the federal program if not listed above.

Do you own a smart phone (a phone that can run applications (apps))?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

Do you have regular access to the internet?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

Thank you for completing this survey, and for participating in the listening session!

Food Access Web Survey Text

The Food Access Working Group has been charged with increasing access to healthy foods for all Montgomery County residents. So, we are conducting a survey in order to hear from you, Montgomery County residents, about what is working well and what is not working so well in terms of the ability to find and purchase the types of foods you want to eat. Additionally, the survey will help us gather general information about who is responding. All information that you are willing to provide will be kept confidential.

The Food Access Working Group will use the information provided on this survey to identify the barriers to obtaining healthy food in Montgomery County communities and develop a plan to eliminate those barriers with the goal of making it easier to find affordable, healthy food items. Once we have compiled all of the survey responses we will hold a public meeting to report the findings.

 Your answers to the following questions will help us address challenges that residents may have to acquiring healthy, safe, and affordable food. We appreciate your honest responses. Please be assured that all of your answers will be anonymous. Thank you.

1. Are you a Montgomery County resident?
2. Where do you shop for food?
3. Why do you shop at the location(s) you listed above?
4. How often do you travel to the supermarket?
5. How long does it take you to get there?
6. Do you have any barriers to GETTING the food you want or need?
7. What are these barriers?
8. What could help you overcome these barriers?
9. Do you have any barriers that keep you from PREPARING the food you want or need?
10. Tell us more about what keeps you from preparing the food you want.
11. What could help you overcome these barriers?
12. Do you ever run out of food by the end of the month?
13. What else do you want to say about food access in your community?

Demographic Questions

14. What is your country of origin?
15. What race best describes how you identify yourself?
    o White/Blanco
    o Black/Negro or African American/afroamericano
    o American Indian/Indio americano or Alaska Native/nativo de Alaska
    o Asian/Asiatico
    o Native Hawaiian/Nativo de Hawaii or Pacific Islander/otra isla del Pacifico
    o Other, please specify.../Otros, especificar...

16. What zip code do you live in?
17. How many adults over age 18 live in your household?
18. How many children age 18 and younger live in your household?
19. What is your annual household income?
    - Less than $25,000
    - $25,000 to $50,000
    - $50,000 to $90,000
    - $90,000 or more
20. How much money do you spend each month on food for the members of your household?
    - Less than $300
    - $300 to $575
    - $576 to $725
    - $726 to $900
    - $900 or more
21. What, if any, food assistance programs do you use? (Check all that apply.)
    - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, also known as Food Stamps)
    - Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
    - School Breakfast Program
    - National School Lunch Program
    - After School Nutrition Program
    - Summer Nutrition Program
    - Child and Adult Food Care Program
    - Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program
    - The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)
    - Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program
    - Other, please specify...

22. Do you own a smart phone (a phone that can run applications (apps))?

If you would like to be entered into a drawing for a $50 Target gift card, please provide an e-mail address, below:

Montgomery County Food Store Study
Healthy Food Availability Index

Store ID: _____ Store #: _____   Data Collector: _____

Type: [ ] Supermarket [ ] Supercenter [ ] Small Grocery [ ] Convenience Store [ ] Pharmacy [ ] Gas Station [ ] Discount Store [ ] Specialty Store	Store Name:					Date:
	Store Address:				Neighborhood:	

	[ ] Confirmed [ ] New [ ] Absent	WIC: [ ] Yes [ ] No	SNAP: [ ] Yes [ ] No	# Registers:	# Aisles:	Prepared Food: [ ] Yes [ ] No	Parking Lot: [ ] Yes [ ] No
	Transportation/Shuttle: [ ] Yes [ ] No		Produce Presentation: [ ] Good [ ] Okay [ ] Poor			Photo: [ ] Yes [ ] No	Refusal: [ ] Yes [ ] No

Measure 1: MILK	**Measure 3: FRUIT**	**Measure 4: VEGETABLES**	**Measure 5: BEEF**

Available: [ ] Yes
                      [ ] No
	Available: [ ] Yes
	                        [ ] No
		Available: [ ] Yes
		                        [ ] No
			Ground Beef [ ] Yes
			Available: [ ] No

1% or Skim   [ ] Yes
Available: [ ] No
	Quality: [ ] A
	                        [ ] UA
		Quality: [ ] A
		                        [ ] UA
			Quality: [ ] A
			                        [ ] UA

Price of 1%: $_____
 	
Unit (Gallon, Pint, etc.)
_____
	Type(s) [ ] 0
	
	Available: [ ] 1-3
	                        [ ] 4-6
	Total #: [ ] 7-10
		Type(s) [ ] 0
		
		Available: [ ] 1-3
		                        [ ] 4-6
		Total #: [ ] 7-10
			% Lean: ___ % Fat: ___
			(of leanest available)
			Price of leanest:
			$_____

Measure 2: JUICE	_____ [ ] 11-25
	                        [ ] >25
		_____ [ ] 11-25
		                        [ ] >25
			Unit:

100% Fruit [ ] Yes Juice Available: [ ] No	*Price* of Bananas $_____ Unit:	*Price* of Carrots (whole) $_____ Unit:	

Measure 6: CHICKEN	**Measure 8: FROZEN FOODS**	**Measure 9: PACKAGED FOODS**	**Measure 11: BREAD**

Available: [ ] Yes
                      [ ] No
	Meal(s) [ ] Yes
	Available: [ ] No
		Dried Beans [ ] Yes
		Available: [ ] No
			Available: [ ] Yes
			                          [ ] No

Quality: [ ] A [ ] UA	Healthier [ ] Yes Meal(s) [ ] No	*Price* of Black Beans: $_____	100% Whole [ ] Yes Wheat [ ] No
Price of Chicken Leg: $_____ Unit: _____ Fresh / Frozen	Available:	Unit: Dried / Can	*Price* of loaf: $_____
		Rice [ ] Yes Available: [ ] No	
Measure 7: SEAFOOD		Pasta(s) [ ] Yes Available: [ ] No	Corn Tortilla [ ] Yes Available: [ ] No
Available: [ ] Yes [ ] No	Fruits(s) [ ] Yes Available: [ ] No	**Measure 10: CANNED FOODS**	**Measure 12: Cereal**

Quality: [ ] A
                        [ ] UA
	Vegetables (s) [ ] Yes
	Available: [ ] No
		Soup(s) [ ] Yes
		Available: [ ] No
		Low-Sodium [ ] Yes
			Available: [ ] Yes
			                          [ ] No

Option(s) [ ] Fresh Available: [ ] Frozen [ ] Both	*Price* of Frozen Corn: $_____ Unit (lb, etc.):	Soup(s) [ ] No Available:	Low Sugar [ ] Yes Options: [ ] No (<7 grams per serving)
Price of Tilapia: $_____ Unit:_____ Fresh/ Frzn		Fruit(s) [ ] Yes Available: [ ] No Vegetable(s) [ ] Yes Available: [ ] No	# Low Sugar [ ] 0 Options [ ] 1 [ ] 2 +

Date updated: 3/15/15

Healthy Food Availability Index Survey
Dates: April 11 & 12, 2015

Dear Market Owner/Manager:

As part of the Montgomery County Food Council's Food Access Working Group, volunteers will be surveying randomly selected food stores across Montgomery County on April 11th and 12th. These surveys will measure the presence of whole and healthy food products in food stores of all types – supermarkets, small groceries, international stores, convenience stores.

The survey requires volunteers to walk through the store and record a selection of products for sale. The volunteers have been trained to do this quickly and discreetly, so as not to interfere with customers in the store. We hope this has been the case in your store.

The surveys will also be used as part of food environment research being conducted at the Center for a Livable Future (CLF) at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. CLF developed the Healthy Food Availability Index using proven methods for measuring the nutritional environment.   If you have any questions about this survey and/or the research, please contact Amanda Behrens Buczynski at CLF at 410-502-7578 or abehren4@jhu.edu .

Thank you,

Kim Robien, PhD, RD
Co-chair, Food Access Working Group, Montgomery County Food Council
Associate Professor, Milken Institute School of Public Health at George Washington University
krobien@gwu.edu

Jenna Umbriac, MS, RD
Co-chair, Food Access Working Group, Montgomery County Food Council
Director of Nutrition Programs, Manna Food Center

MONTGOMERY COUNTY
FOOD COUNCIL

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