




FOOD
SYSTEMS
RESILIENCE
MONTGOMERY COUNTY

FY24 IMPACT REPORT

Introduction: Office of Food Systems Resilience

MISSION

Build a more equitable, resilient, and sustainable food system in Montgomery County through interagency budgetary, regulatory, and operational strategies.

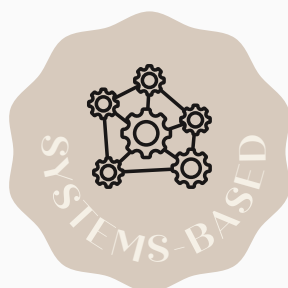
VISION

A community where all residents can obtain healthy, nutritious, and culturally appropriate foods without fear of financial stress, and a local food system that is able to adapt when facing changes and disruptions.

INNOVATIVE APPROACHES

- ✓ **Standardized data reporting** required for all grantees
- ✓ **Criteria-based** and **transparent** funding decisions
- ✓ Incentivized prioritization of **food purchases from local businesses**
- ✓ Community partners funded for **fair wage staffing** and **reliable infrastructure**
- ✓ **Systems-based strategy** aligns food security goals with economic development
- ✓ **Natural resource protection and food education** priorities built into programming
- ✓ Formal partnerships stewarding public dollars leverage **increased philanthropic, state, and federal funds**

VALUES



Montgomery County Food System Landscape

This timeline highlights the evolution of Montgomery County's dedicated food system efforts, showcasing major initiatives and policy developments that have shaped our local food landscape.



Collaboration Connects Local Food Systems



Photo Sources (Clockwise starting top left): OFSR-led panel at the National Anti-Hunger Policy Conference, April 2024; National Public Health Week Proclamation, April 2024; Sandy Spring Gardens Farm Tour hosted by Manna Food Center, May 2023

01. Interagency Convenings

The OFSR hosted 8 Interagency Convenings in 2024, engaging 95 unique Montgomery County government partners representing 34 agencies and departments. These sessions built internal networks to collectively identify all existing County food system-related policies and datasets, highlight resources, and foster new partnerships.

02. State & Regional Collaboration

The OFSR Director serves as an appointed member of the Maryland Food System Resiliency Council, the Governor's Intergovernmental Commission on Agriculture, and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Government's FARM Committee. OFSR team members highlight County successes and identify best practices to replicate through participation in more than 30 local, statewide, and national committees and workgroups focused on addressing food system issues.

03. Community Engagement & Insights

The County's first Annual Food Assistance Census by OFSR gathered data from 72 organizations on operational strengths and needs to inform strategy and funding decisions. A Food Security Community Town Hall with the Montgomery County Food Council engaged 60+ partners in the County's budget process, and ongoing engagement with partners allows for resident perspectives to guide OFSR workplans.

04. Engaging with Partners

Through monthly site visits, the OFSR engages directly with partners, gaining firsthand insight into their work and identifying opportunities for deeper support. Additionally, networking opportunities, including listening sessions and community lunches, provide spaces for open dialogue and relationship-building.

Nourishing Futures



Photo Source: The County Executive joined OFSR and staff from Stephen Knolls School to distribute prepared meals from School-Based Food Assistance grantee Shepherd's Table to students and their families.

School-Based Food Assistance in Action

In FY24, **\$480,452** in OFSR grants supported eight organizations to implement innovative food programs in partnership with Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), creating a model for addressing school community needs across more than **30 school sites**.

11,847

Students served

8,848

Households supported

The Power of Food as Medicine

OFSR's total investment of **\$450,000** enabled five partners to serve **seven healthcare sites**—including two County-wide hospital systems and four school-based health and wellness centers—to connect pediatric patients and their families with locally grown, culturally relevant food to address food insecurity and diet-related disease, while promoting healthy eating.

“IT'S ABOUT BUILDING RESILIENT COMMUNITIES, IMPROVING PUBLIC HEALTH, AND FOSTERING A DEEPER CONNECTION TO OUR ENVIRONMENT. THESE GRANTS SUPPORT THOUSANDS OF RESIDENTS WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED HIGH BARRIERS TO ACCESSING NUTRITIOUS, CULTURALLY RELEVANT FOOD.”

County Executive Marc Elrich

866

Children received weekly/ bi-weekly food assistance

412

Households received nutrition/food education

98%

Of distributed food was locally sourced

Strengthening the Food Chain



Photo Sources: Produce stored at the MoCo MicroHub, a collaborative cold storage investment acquired by the Montgomery County Food Council, with partnership from the Office of Agriculture and OFSR. Photos courtesy of the Montgomery County Food Council.

Cold Storage Infrastructure Grants

OFSR awarded **\$350,000** to **14 nonprofit organizations and farm partners** to enhance cold storage capacity, supporting self-sufficiency within our local food system to safely store fresh and recovered food until it can be distributed to residents. This grant program entailed close collaboration with Manna Food Center and leveraged \$122,568 in funds contributed by The Morningstar Foundation.

Maryland Market Money

In 2024, OFSR facilitated **\$140,079** in purchases made at **seven County farmers markets** using SNAP, FMNP, and WIC benefits, helping families afford fresh, local food while directly supporting farmers. **6,156** SNAP transactions made at these locations received a matched benefit through Maryland Market Money, significantly boosting purchasing power and equitable access to locally grown food for households experiencing food insecurity.

Community Food Rescue

This contract partnership with **Manna Food Center** has developed a sustainable food recovery and distribution network engaging more than **150 donors, volunteers, and recipient organizations** in 2024. Community Food Rescue's relationships with restaurants, food retailers, gardens and farm partners have connected millions of pounds of food to residents experiencing food insecurity, while preventing waste and fostering cross-sector connections.

2.5 million

Pounds of Food Distributed

106

Donors in Food Rescue Network

45

Organizations Received Food



Photo Source: Montgomery County Government Office of Public Information

“THIS PROGRAM PROVIDES HOUSEHOLDS WITH CRITICAL SUPPORT TO PURCHASE HEALTHY FOODS OF THEIR CHOICE AND BE ABLE TO FOCUS ON THE WELL-BEING OF THEIR CHILDREN.”

OFSR Director Heather Bruskin

The MC Groceries program entails a first of its kind public-private partnership with Instacart to expand retail food access for households not eligible to receive SNAP benefits because their income falls into the “Self-Sufficiency Gap,” earning too much to qualify for federal assistance but not enough to cover necessities, including consistent access to nutritious food. MC Groceries leverages Instacart Health Fresh Funds to provide nearly 500 Montgomery County families — **including more than 1,000 total children** — with monthly stipends for online grocery shopping and delivery. This innovative **\$1.82M investment** reflects a dignified, flexible approach to support food security and combat childhood hunger, while boosting the County’s food economy.

469

County families served in 2024

\$71,381

Amount spent on **fresh produce** purchases in 2024

4,911

Total orders placed in 2024

Expanding Access

According to estimates by the U.S. Census Bureau in 2023, roughly **1 in 10 (or more than 27K) Montgomery County children** live in households with incomes below 130% of the federal poverty line, which is the income eligibility threshold to qualify for SNAP ¹.

770

SNAP applications submitted by grantees in 2024

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Outreach Grant Program

This grant program allocated **\$201,000** to expand outreach efforts and build staff capacity for **five state-designated SNAP Outreach organizations** to provide application and enrollment assistance to Montgomery County families eligible for SNAP benefits.

\$143,362

Projected additional benefit dollars invested in local economy monthly



Photo Source: Community Distribution Event at Silver Spring Christian Reformed Church, February 2024

Food Staples Partner Program

This program invested in purchases of shelf-stable foods, fresh produce, and frozen proteins for distribution to residents via **70+ Capital Area Food Bank and Manna Food Center Food Assistance Provider Partners**. These purchasing partnerships were established during the pandemic and continued to meet a growing food assistance need for County residents as COVID-era programs ended.

12 million

Pounds of food distributed in FY24

¹ Based on estimates in the U.S. Census, American Community Survey, Table B17024 (2023).

Supporting Growers



Photo Source: Sandy Spring Gardens Farm Tour with the Montgomery County Food Council, May 2023

Farm to Food Bank Program

78,000+

Total pounds of food purchased from **26 MoCo farms**

\$163,000

Invested in infrastructure & equipment through Collaborative Funding Agreements

With Manna Food Center, OFSR launched the Farm to Food Bank (F2FB) Collaborative Funding Agreement Program as a new contract-based opportunity that funded capacity-building projects for **10 County farms**, increasing local food production and contributions to County food assistance programs through F2FB.

Resident and Community Gardening Grant Program

This program increases County resident access to yard, patio, and neighborhood gardening supplies, space, and education through **grants to seven organizations**, supporting long-term food security and food production within our community.

\$210,559

Total awarded

1,000+

Residents engaged via gardening activities and access to harvested food

Maximizing Impact Through Data and Evaluation

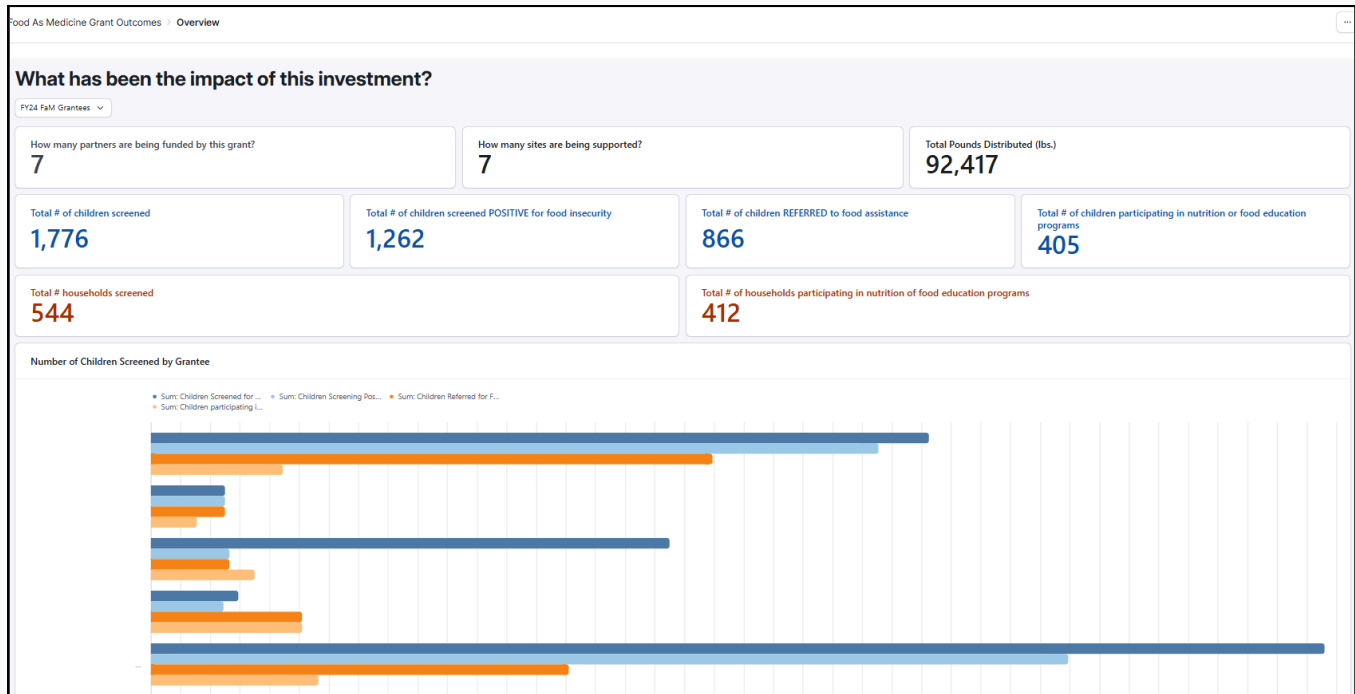


Photo Source: Food as Medicine Data Dashboard monitored by the OFSR team

FOOD SYSTEMS RESILIENCE | **IMPACT REPORT PLATFORM**

School-Based Food Assistance Grant Program

Welcome to the Impact Report Platform! Grantees of the Fiscal Year 2024 School-Based Food Assistance Grant Program are expected to submit a mid-cycle and end-of-cycle programmatic and financial report.

Report Type: Programmatic or Financial Report

Report Type: Mid-Cycle, End-Cycle, or Financial Report *

Programmatic Report: Mid-Cycle Report

Name of your organization *

+

Participation and Implementation

Total # of Students (duplicated) *	Total # of Households (duplicated) *	Total # of Households with children 0-5 (duplicated)
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Will you be providing unduplicated totals for students or households in this report? *

Reporting Note:

Duplicated: the total number of units your organization served over a specified period of time.

Unduplicated: the total number of unique units your organization served over a specified period of time.

With duplicated counts, you might count the same person or household more than once, but with unduplicated counts, you count them only once even if you serve them numerous times during the relevant performance period.

Yes

No

Household Zip Codes

If the home zip codes of food assistance recipients were collected, follow these instructions to provide data:

- Select the zip codes of school-based food assistance recipients served during the relevant performance period by clicking on the [+] button below
- Type the total number of households that you served, that live in that zip code

Photo Source: Reporting platform used by School-Based Food Assistance program grantees

To ensure funds are used effectively, OFSR needed a simple, affordable, and efficient way to track program results, support grantees, and evaluate performance.

The OFSR team developed a low-code database system — the **OSFR Impact Report Platform** — to collect, organize, and analyze program data. This platform customizes reports to meet each program’s needs, streamlines grantee reporting, and flags compliance issues. Built-in automated reminders help grantees stay on track, while the platform allows OFSR to aggregate data and assess the impact of each grant investment.

With this system, **OSFR can monitor grantee and program performance, track historical data, and clearly communicate broader outcomes through data dashboards.**

The platform has strengthened OFSR's data and evaluation framework, supporting **98% reporting compliance** amongst FY24 grantees.

Past and Future

7

New Grant Programs
Launched in 2024

"Thanks to this program I could have fresh fruits and vegetables without cost and they were a big help to my family."

Feedback from School-Based Food Assistance Program participant

52

Unique OFSR grant recipients in FY24

\$2 M

Total grant funding distributed

Food insecurity in Montgomery County has increased in the past year (from 27% in 2023 to 34% in 2024)² and continues to disproportionately affect communities of color, households with children, and households with earnings below the Self Sufficiency Standard.³

To address these disparities, OFSR continues to prioritize investments in value-added, equity-driven strategies that:

- **Center data & performance goals** in program creation, implementation, & evaluation
- **Maximize** non-County public & private dollars
- **Build capacity** in the community & nonprofit sector
- **Align** food security efforts with climate & economic priorities

Building on this foundation, OFSR's FY25 priorities will focus on expanding and enhancing:

- **Aggregation and processing** of local food
- Coordination of **food recovery** efforts
- External **public and private resources**
- Demographic and geographic focused **data analysis**
- Direct **community feedback loops**
- Strategic investment to **close service gaps**

We will also **deepen the connections between investments and strategic priorities**, through approaches including values-driven food procurement, choice-based assistance models, and food waste analysis and management.

"SNAP is very needed and I am very grateful that they are here to help."

Feedback from SNAP Outreach Program participant

500

Unique stakeholder partnerships fostered in 2024

Thanks to Our Partners!

FY24 OFSR Grantees and Contractors:

Adventist Healthcare Inc.
AfriThrive Inc.
American Diversity Group
American Muslim Senior Society
Beauty Blooms Farm
Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation
Capital Kosher Pantry (Yad Yehuda)
Casa Ruben Inc.
Capital Area Food Bank
Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington Inc.
Celestial Manna
Charles Koiner Center for Urban Farming
Chicken of the Woods Permaculture Farm, LLC
Chirandu Farm, LLC
Community Engagement & Consultation Group Inc.
Community FarmShare
Community Food Forest Collective Inc.
Community Health and Empowerment through Education and Research Inc.
Food Research and Action Center
Gaithersburg Community Soup Kitchen
Gaithersburg HELP
Germantown HELP
Guru Gobind Singh
Here2Help
Holy Cross Health Inc.
Instacart
Islamic Center of Maryland
Jesus House
KPC Buddhist Relief
Liberty Grove United Methodist Church
Living Faith Lutheran
Manna Food Center Inc.
Maryland Department of Agriculture
Maryland Hunger Solutions
Meals on Wheels of Takoma Park/Silver Spring
Meals on Wheels of Washington DC
Montgomery County Food Council
Mount Calvary Baptist Church
Nourishing Bethesda Inc.
Olney HELP
One Acre Farm, LLC
Rainbow Community Development Center
Rockville HELP
Sandy Springs Gardens
Small Things Matter Inc.
So What Else Inc.
The Equity Center
The Peoples Community Baptist Church
The Salvation Army Montgomery County Corps
The Shepherd's Table
The Upcounty Hub Inc.
Tommy's Pantry
Vietnamese American Services
Vietnamese Literary and Artistic Club



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