

FARM TO FOODBANK PROGRAM

FY2023 IMPACT REPORT

Montgomery County, MD

Kale, potatoes, apples, squash; the list goes on! These are just a handful of the variety of fresh, local produce that was purchased through Montgomery County's Farm to Food Bank program in FY2023.

The Farm to Food Bank program—funded by Montgomery County and administered by Manna Food Center—strengthens our local food economy and provides better access to fresh, local, nutritious food for residents experiencing food insecurity.



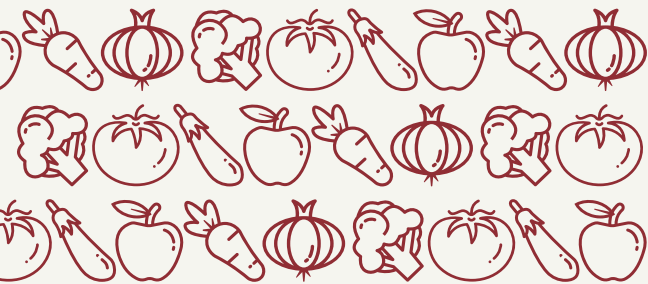
Report prepared by Manna Food Center
Impact numbers reflect FY2023: July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023



FY23 OVERVIEW

Through this program, farmers submit offers for Manna to purchase. If approved, those products are matched with an appropriate food assistance provider for distribution in Montgomery County.

- **4** additional farms joined the network
- **29** participating farms
- **54** recipient food assistance programs



114,469

pounds of food purchased in FY2023

In addition to supplying Manna with fresh products for our Food for Families program, a variety of meat, eggs, fruit, and vegetables were delivered to shelters, churches, community centers, schools, and more, including the **7 Montgomery County Service Consolidated HUBS.**



Participating Farms

- Alden Farms
- Amaranth Acres
- Beauty Blooms
- Bella Vita
- Blueberry Gardens
- Butler's Orchard
- Chicken of the Woods Permaculture Farm
- Chirandu Farm
- Common Root Farm
- Cremin Livestock
- Dodo Farms
- Evans Homes and Gardens
- Farm at Home
- Greenway Farm
- Lewis Orchards
- Love and Grit Farm
- Nahr Farms
- One Acre Farm
- Passion to Seed Gardening
- Peas and Peace Farm
- Plow and Stars Farm
- Purple Mountain Organics
- Red Wiggler Community Farm
- Roslyn Farm
- Sandy Spring Gardens
- Savage Acres Farm
- Serenity Orchards
- The Farm at Our House
- The Hines Garden
- Tikkun Olam Farm

CAPACITY-BUILDING GRANTS

In partnership with the Montgomery County Office of Agriculture and the Montgomery County Food Council, Farm to Food Bank also offers farms annual capacity-building funds.



In FY23

\$125,000

in capacity-building grants awarded to

18 farms

Multiple farmers expressed need for cold storage via capacity-building grants, stating: **“Refrigeration was so critical that it’s almost hard to calculate exactly how invaluable it was. I was able to revolve my whole operation around the fact that I had a good cold place to store the vegetables.”** Cold storage gives farmers the flexibility to hold and store food at safe and appropriate temperatures to ensure consumers are receiving products as fresh as possible.

Increasing necessary infrastructure provides flexibility for farmers to test out new growing methods, as one farmer stated **“The Farm to Food Bank Capacity-Building grant allowed us to experiment with an organic vegetable growing system that has a lot of potential benefits in regenerative vegetable production. The roller-crimper adds a dimension to our stewardship of our soil. These grants are a small but important step toward a happier, healthier Montgomery County.”**



- **73.7%** of farmers reported increased labor efficiency
- Total increase in farm profitability, incl. labor costs: **\$78,622**
- Increased production/yield from grants: **31,920 lbs**
- **3,655 lbs** in reduced food waste due to grant funds

Farmers gave the Farm to Food Bank Program an average rating of 4.75/5!





COMMUNITY IMPACT

The financial relief that this program provides to families is invaluable, **“with the rise of inflation, families are super grateful to receive resources on a monthly basis. It allows them to budget for other necessities,”** said a school system partner.

Ensuring students in Montgomery County have access to healthy food is a high priority for Manna Food Center and each week during this school year, **Farm to Food Bank volunteers delivered 1,622 lbs of fresh produce and eggs to 4 elementary school-based pantries Manna operates**, equivalent to 1,391 meals. Available items included apples, cauliflower, sweet potatoes, and sweet peppers.



Guru Nanak Foundation



Small Things Matter



Guru Gobind Singh Foundation

Sharing local produce with the food assistance network in Montgomery County is an essential goal of the Farm to Food Bank program. Volunteer food runners deliver vegetables to Guru Nanak Foundation of America and Small Things Matter for their weekly distributions. At Guru Gobind Singh Foundation, volunteers create freshly prepared meals from farm-fresh ingredients and distribute those meals to partner food providers and directly to residents.

In February of this year, Manna received a grant from the **Healthcare Initiative Foundation** to experiment with adding contract growing as a complement to the offer-based Farm to Food Bank system. Two farms and two recipient organizations were paired in June 2023.

