

# Montgomery County Farm to Food Bank Program



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A program of the Montgomery County Food Security Task Force, Montgomery County Food Council, Manna Food Center, and the Montgomery County Office of Agriculture

# Background

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- Food Security Task Force established in April 2020 as a response to the increased demand on food assistance providers during the COVID-19 pandemic
  
- Mission:
  - Increase the volume of food in the food assistance system;
  - Improve access to food by building the capacity of the food assistance network to store and strategically, safely, and efficiently distribute food to residents through home delivery and community pickup sites; and
  - To communicate information to residents on available resources and ensure residents are connected with available resources.

# COVID-19 Pandemic Food Security Response Strategy

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Infuse Food Assistance Providers with more Shelf-Stable Pantry Items



Expand Farm to Food Bank Program



Establish web-based intake and delivery platform



Enhance distribution of prepared meals



Other Programmatic Expansion

# Need for Fresh Produce

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- ❑ ~100,000 Montgomery County residents experiencing food insecurity amidst COVID-19 (up from 60k pre-COVID)
- ❑ Manna has seen a 40% increase in the need for food assistance since March
- ❑ As of mid-June, 86% of food assistance providers reported a need for fresh produce, despite access to CFAP boxes
- ❑ Culturally appropriate food assistance



# Leveraging the Local Food Supply

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- ❑ Local farms and food businesses' sales impacted by the crisis
  - ❑ Food producing farms anticipate having excess product during the 2020 growing season
- ❑ Ongoing efforts to facilitate a co-op model amongst Montgomery County farms for aggregation/distribution
- ❑ Simultaneously addressing food insecurity, reducing food waste, and supporting the local food economy



# Farm to Food Bank Program Goals

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- ❑ 1- Provide fresh, sufficient, nutritious, and **diverse** produce to food assistance recipients in Montgomery County.
- ❑ 2 – Support Montgomery County farmers, create new market opportunities for farm products, and develop new purchasing partnerships with local farms/farmers to ensure a sustained and resilient food supply for 2020-2021 and beyond.
- ❑ 3- Reduce food waste by procuring products based on shelf-life, broadening distribution of local farm products to additional County providers, and establishing a secondary sales market for these local products.

# Farm to Food Bank Program: Phase I

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- ❑ Expansion of existing “Farm to Food Bank” efforts
  - ❑ <https://www.mannafood.org/programs/farm-to-food-bank/>
- ❑ MOUs established with six local farms to cover costs of production and offer a reliable, profitable sales partnership
- ❑ Additional funding to support ad-hoc, unscheduled purchases of excesses/overages of products from County farms at a set price-per-pound per item type, using [data collected from 10+ County farms in the Spring of 2020.](#)

# Farm to Food Bank Program: Phase II

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- ❑ Montgomery County table crop farms invited to apply for grant funding, to be awarded in exchange for a commitment to provide product to the program in 2021
- ❑ Funding through the grant program may cover the cost of:
  - ❑ Infrastructure and/or equipment to allow for the increased (volume and/or season extension) production of crops to contribute to the program
  - ❑ Contract growing of specific crops without the need for additional infrastructure
    - ❑ Preference for culturally appropriate crops, sustainable farming practices, supporting diversity and equity in the local agricultural community.
- ❑ Maximum award of \$20,000



# Funding

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- Phase I of the program has been supported by County government funding appropriated to the food security response strategy
- Phase II of the program is funded through a public-private partnership of the Montgomery County government, Manna Food Center, and the Greater Washington Community Foundation

# Farm to Food Bank Program Progress as of October 2020

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- ❑ Deliveries began during the week of 7/27
  - ❑ Partners include Lewis Orchards, Butler's Orchard, Sandy Spring Gardens, the Farm at Our House, Dodo Farms, Metro Microgreens, One Acre Farm, and Eat the Rainbow Farm
  - ❑ Deliveries so far include 50,000+ total lbs of: cucumbers, summer squash, corn, tomatoes, basil, jalepeno peppers, potatoes, lettuce, microgreens
- ❑ Manna Food Center receiving large quantities of produce
  - ❑ Community Food Rescue utilizing ChowMatch to distribute small quantities to food assistance partners
- ❑ \$236,805 in grants awarded to 22 applicants in mid-October, several projects already underway





Questions?

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