

# Montgomery County

## Farm to Food Bank FY2022 Impact Report



There is nothing like biting into a freshly harvested ripe, juicy peach at the height of summer. The Farm to Food Bank program administered by Manna Food Center aims to make this experience available to more of our County's residents. This initiative increases access to fresh, nutritious food for County residents challenged by food insecurity amidst rising inflation and the residual impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. It also provides the dual benefit of providing funds to enhance and strengthen the County's local food system.

Farm to Food Bank is a partnership with the Montgomery County Food Council and the County Office of Agriculture and made possible by generous funding from: the Greater Washington Community Foundation, the Sodexo Stop Hunger Foundation, Business Leaders Fighting Hunger and the County Department of Health and Human Services. Now in its third year, the program continues to recruit new local farmers and offer diverse locally produced food items to the food assistance network throughout the County. In FY22, for the second year in a row, the Farm to Food Bank program distributed capacity-building grant funds to further build our local food system's ability to supply vegetables, fruit, meat, eggs, grains and beans for purchase by Manna.





# IMPACT

## FY22 Statistics

- **32** farms participated by making offers in the Farm to Food Bank program
- A total of **76,933 lbs.** was purchased or donated and a total of **\$181,600** spent
- A total of **64,110** meals were provided to Manna Food Center's participants and **45** food assistance providers
- **\$141,553** in grant funds (from both the Community Foundation and Montgomery County DHHS) were awarded to **20** farms, **9** of which are owned by females and/or farmers of color.

## Grant Investments

The capacity-building grant projects are estimated to produce an additional **13,543** pounds of food for the food assistance network. The farms also reported other areas of impact as follows:

**65%** of all farms reported increased food production



**60%** of all farms reported increased labor efficiency

**20%** of all farms reported reduced food waste



**55%** of all farms reported increase in sales or gross income

**40%** of all farms reported increased material efficiency



Common Root Farm 2022



Dodo Farm 2022



One Acre Farm 2022

## Participating Farms

- Alden Farms
- Amaranth Acres
- Beauty Blooms
- Bella Vita
- Blueberry Gardens
- Butler's Orchard
- Button Farm
- Chicken of the Woods
- Common Root
- Cremin Livestock
- Dodo Farms
- Eat the Rainbow
- Farm at Home
- Farm at Our House
- Fresh Mama
- Hines Garden
- Lewis Orchards
- Love and Grit
- Metro Microgreens
- One Acre Farm
- Passion to Seed
- Peas and Peace Farm
- Plow and Stars
- Purple Mountain
- Red Wiggler Community Farm
- Roslyn Farm
- Sandy Spring Gardens
- Savage Acres
- Serenity Orchards
- Somerset
- Tikkun Olam

## IMPACT

## Why farmers like this program

Overall - our experience with Farm-to-Foodbank has been 100% top notch awesome! The Farm-to-Foodbank program has been nimble enough for both small and large food producers, helped address unique farmers needs during pandemic and non-pandemic times, and has gotten better each year, showing responsiveness to farmer input.

## Recipient Organizations

We utilized every bit of the produce yesterday, with just a few eggplants left, which will be used this week. We are so appreciative of the food runners and farmers for their generous donations! It feels so good to offer fresh healthy alternatives to families in need, moving away from processed foods as much as possible. We served 400 families yesterday, so the need is still here.

- Neeta Singh, Guru Nunak Foundation of America



Greatest benefit in participating -- we've increased capacity and options to help more families with fresh, organic produce and foods. Grateful for the partnership. It helps to offset a handicap most HUBs have in providing healthier options and fresh quality produce. -Stephanie Paraiso, Harvest Intercontinental Church Hub



Utilizing the infrastructure of Manna's Community Food Rescue, volunteers make transporting food possible for busy farmers and food recipient organizations that have little driver capacity. Maintaining a volunteer network that is robust enough to capture all farm offers and volunteers with large enough vehicles to take all the volume available can be a challenge. We are working on ways to address this limitation and, in the meantime, Manna is equipped to pick up the largest offers in our trucks and utilize that food directly through our Food for Families program.

The pricing list for Farm to Food Bank was created and is maintained with farmer input. We aim for a fair price, more than wholesale but less than retail. This pricing structure has been the primary factor in this program's success. The ability to continue to provide an appealing price for product and to respond to the increasing costs of farm supplies, labor, and equipment will depend on having a steady source of funding for direct purchasing. The ability for our local farms to continue to respond to the impact of climate change and the need for a resilient source of food in our region will depend on consistent funding for capacity-building efforts, like the Farm to Food Bank grants.

As participating farmer, Robert True of Blueberry Gardens, puts it, "The organization of the whole system from front office to grower to distribution is an amazing undertaking that takes constant attention. My belief is that a regular injection of a large amount of funding could exponentially expand quality food getting to people in need and simultaneously build a stronger local vibrant table food production system."

