

MEMORANDUM

April 12, 2023

TO: Health and Human Services Committee

FROM: Tara Clemons Johnson, Legislative Analyst
Essie McGuire, Senior Legislative Analyst

SUBJECT: FY24 Operating Budget, Office of Food System Resilience

PURPOSE: Worksession, recommendations and votes expected

Expected Attendees:

Heather Bois Bruskin, Director, Office of Food System Resilience
Eva Acevedo, Fiscal and Policy Analyst, Office of Management and Budget

Office of Food System Resilience

The Office of Food Resilience (OFSR) is charged with developing and maintaining a strategy for improving the efficiency, equity, sustainability, and resilience of the food systems in Montgomery County. Ensuring greater County government focus on food systems data collection, monitoring, and reporting (including food access and security data) is a priority of the OFSR. They are a non-principal office that will serve as a central liaison and coordinator for the County food systems initiatives and projects through public-private partnerships.

The Office will be supported by three full-time staff. The Director was hired March 2023 and recruitment is currently underway for the two vacancies, which are Term positions funded through June 2026 – Program Manager I and a Performance Management and Data Analyst II.

FY23 Budget Updates

Funds were appropriated for the OFSR in FY23; however, the office did not become operational until the Director was hired in Spring 2023. FY23 OFSR operating funds were utilized to support food insecurity priorities including the Market Money Grants program, Gardening grants, Farm to Food bank and the Strategic Plan to End Childhood Hunger.

- The OFSR is partnering with the Office of Grants Management to launch the Resident and Community Garden Grant Program with FY23 funds in late April 2023, modeled after the 2020 County Gardening grant program.

FY24 CE Recommended Budget – OFSR

	FY23 Approved	FY24 Rec
Personnel Total (3 FTEs)	\$348,725	\$385,131
Operating		
Farm to Food Bank Program	\$350,000	\$350,000
Montgomery County Food Council	\$200,000	\$200,000
Market Money Grants Program	\$125,000	\$125,000
Community Gardening and Local Resilience programs	\$50,000	\$50,000
Miscellaneous Operating (Data Collection and Events)	\$8000	\$8,000
One-time items	\$6,129	N/A
Total	\$1,087,854	\$1,118,131

The FY24 budget is the same services budget from FY23. There is a small increase from \$1,087,854 to \$1,118,131 due to the annualization of personnel costs, GWA, and group insurance adjustment. Personnel Costs comprise 34% of the budget and Operating Expenses account for the remaining 66%.

FY24 Strategic Plan for OFSR

The OFSR and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Directors are currently establishing long-term plans for managing food-related funding in FY24. As the OFSR is not fully staffed and still being established, these plans are still in progress. Formal budget consolidations will likely take effect beginning with FY25.

In the short-term, DHHS will continue to provide contract monitoring services for all contracts (F2FB, MCFC, MMM) funded in the OFSR budget, as there is no contract monitor currently on the OFSR staff. The OFSR is currently providing strategic planning, program coordination, contract development, and community partner and vendor engagement support to DHHS food-related programs for FY23 and in preparation for FY24. DHHS staff are providing guidance to the creation of the OFSR strategic plan and launch process. OFSR initiatives will focus on long-term strategic planning (likely FY25) for County food security investment and implementation of current policy initiatives such as the Strategic Plan to End Childhood Hunger.

Highlights of the anticipated work plan for the first year of the OFSR are detailed in the bullets below. Additional information reported by OFSR is available at circles 2-3.

- Establish interagency coordination mechanisms within County government, including formal creation of a Food Systems Leadership Committee and a Food Systems Workgroup with participation from key partner agencies including the Departments of Health and Human Services, Environmental Protection, General Services, and the Offices of Agriculture, Community Partnerships, Procurement, and Emergency Management and Homeland Security, as well as Park and Planning, MCPS, and MCEDC.
- In coordination with the Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice, assess and address the racial inequities and disparities present in all aspects of the food system.
- Develop a long-term county government framework for financial sustainability and strategic investment in food security programs and partnerships that center equity, efficiency, and effectiveness in enhancing resident access to nutritious and culturally diverse food.
- Conduct landscape assessments and gap analyses of:
 - County food system financial investments and assets, including procurement, vendor contracts, grants, public land, staffing, and infrastructure;
 - County food systems policy, including County legislation and regulations (such as land-use and licensing) as well as strategic plans and operational policies; and
 - Currently available food systems data collected both internally and externally, and current mechanisms for communication and analysis of data.

Racial Equity and Social Justice - OFSR

The OFSR provided the following detail on the impact of Racial Equity and Social Justice (RESJ) in the priorities and FY24 recommended budget of the new office.

The OFSR mission is to ensure equality in the way food assistance is provided and address any disparities. As a stand-alone office, this office will form a CORE Team to incorporate equity in all decisions and plans. With a CORE Team, the OFSR will allocate and support the use of staff time to CORE team activities because it will only strengthen their knowledge, skills, and abilities when working within the community. This vision statement they create will clearly define for the public, nonprofits, businesses, and intergovernmental agencies how OFSR plan to work towards a more resilient food system for all.

To support RESJ through the OFSR, staff will be tasked to organize and lead, so that racial equity and social justice is always at the forefront of the conversation when developing the framework, future programs, initiatives, and procedures. One or more staff will be designated to participate in professional development and will be community focused with direct engagement within the community and work with the other OFSR staff, using the community's input to create strategies.

Council staff recommendation: support the Executive's recommended budget at \$1,118,131. This funding will support current programming and allow the Office to launch their

planned programs and initiatives. The committee may want to request an update on the following during the first 6-9 months of FY24:

- Strategic Plan to End Childhood Hunger implementation addressing strategies, policy changes and innovations;
- In conjunction with DHHS, the OFSR should propose an operating and administration sustainability plan for FY25 and beyond for the Service Consolidation Hubs and the Food Staples program. Both programs included one-time FY24 recommended funds to support food insecurity.

This report contains:

FY24 OFSR Recommended budget
Responses to Council Staff Questions

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Food Systems Resilience

RECOMMENDED FY24 BUDGET

\$1,118,131

FULL TIME EQUIVALENTS

3.00

HEATHER BOIS BRUSKIN, DIRECTOR

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Office of Food Systems Resilience is to develop and implement interagency budgetary, regulatory, and operational strategies to build a more equitable, efficient, resilient, and sustainable food system in Montgomery County.

BUDGET OVERVIEW

The total recommended FY24 Operating Budget for the Office of Food Systems Resilience is established at \$1,118,131. Personnel Costs comprise 34.44 percent of the budget for three full-time position(s) and no part-time position(s), and a total of 3.00 FTEs. Total FTEs may include seasonal or temporary positions and may also reflect workforce charged to or from other departments or funds. Operating Expenses account for the remaining 65.56 percent of the FY24 budget.

COUNTY PRIORITY OUTCOMES

While this program area supports all seven of the County Executive's Priority Outcomes, the following are emphasized:

- Thriving Youth and Families**
- A Growing Economy**
- An Affordable, Welcoming County for a Lifetime**
- Effective, Sustainable Government**

INITIATIVES

- Establish interagency coordination mechanisms within County government, including the formal creation of a Food Systems Leadership Committee and a Food Systems Workgroup with participation from key partner agencies including the Departments of Health and Human Services, Environmental Protection, General Services, and the Offices of Agriculture, Community Partnerships, Procurement, and Emergency Management and Homeland Security, as well as Montgomery County Public Schools, Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, and Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation.
- In coordination with the Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice, address the racial inequities and disparities present in all aspects of the food system.

- ★ Serve as a liaison between government and food system partners, including residents, businesses, and non-profit organizations. Establish communications, survey mechanisms, and feedback loops to ensure policy development and implementation is directly informed by the insight and expertise of the community.
- ★ In collaboration with partner agencies, launch government planning processes to establish long-term priorities and strategies for building food system resilience, including increased local food production and enhanced food-based economic opportunity.
- ★ Develop a long-term county government framework for financial sustainability and strategic investment in food security programs and partnerships that center equity, efficiency, and effectiveness in enhancing resident access to nutritious and culturally diverse food.
- ★ Conduct landscape assessments and gap analyses of County food system financial investments and assets, County food systems policy, and currently available food systems data collected both internally and externally, including mechanisms for communication and analysis of data.
- ★ Establish baseline metrics for key food systems data points and create a dashboard mechanism for tracking longitudinal data. Enhance and refine community service provider partner data collection, reporting, and analysis processes.
- ★ Engage and coordinate with statewide, regional, and national partners to share best practices, maximize external resources, and implement collaborative strategies for policymaking that strengthens equity and food system resilience both in our County and beyond our borders.

PROGRAM CONTACTS

Contact Heather Bois Bruskin of the Office of Food Systems Resilience at 240.773.3349 or Eva Acevedo of the Office of Management and Budget at 240.777.2763 for more information regarding this department's operating budget.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

☀ Food Systems Resilience

The Office of Food Systems Resilience (OFSR) is charged with developing and maintaining a strategy for improving the efficiency, equity, sustainability, and resilience of the food systems in Montgomery County. Through fostering public-private partnerships with the community toward systems change, OFSR will expand upon the County Government's investments in ensuring equitable and dignified access to nutritious, culturally diverse foods for all residents and harness the unique strengths of business, nonprofit, and government partners to enhance the health of our people, economy, and natural resources. Ensuring greater County government focus on food systems data collection, monitoring, and reporting (including food access and security data) is a priority of OFSR.

BUDGET SUMMARY

	Actual FY22	Budget FY23	Estimate FY23	Recommended FY24	%Chg Bud/Rec
COUNTY GENERAL FUND					
EXPENDITURES					
Salaries and Wages	0	0	0	304,455	—

BUDGET SUMMARY

	Actual FY22	Budget FY23	Estimate FY23	Recommended FY24	%Chg Bud/Rec
Employee Benefits	0	0	0	80,676	—
County General Fund Personnel Costs	0	0	0	385,131	—
Operating Expenses	0	0	0	733,000	—
County General Fund Expenditures	0	0	0	1,118,131	—
PERSONNEL					
Full-Time	0	0	0	3	—
Part-Time	0	0	0	0	—
FTEs	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.00	—

FY24 RECOMMENDED CHANGES

	Expenditures	FTEs
COUNTY GENERAL FUND		
<u>Other Adjustments (with no service impacts)</u>		
Shift: Food Resilience Budget from County Executive Office to Office of Food Systems Resilience [Food Systems Resilience]	1,087,854	3.00
Increase Cost: Annualization of FY23 Personnel Costs	21,725	0.00
Increase Cost: FY24 Compensation Adjustment	8,552	0.00
FY24 RECOMMENDED	1,118,131	3.00

FUNDING PARAMETER ITEMS

CE RECOMMENDED (\$000S)

Title	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27	FY28	FY29
COUNTY GENERAL FUND						
EXPENDITURES						
FY24 Recommended	1,118	1,118	1,118	1,118	1,118	1,118
No inflation or compensation change is included in outyear projections.						
Labor Contracts	0	10	10	10	10	10
These figures represent the estimated annualized cost of general wage adjustments, service increments, and other negotiated items.						
Subtotal Expenditures	1,118	1,128	1,128	1,128	1,128	1,128

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FY 24 County Council Budget Discussions: HHS Committee 4/17/23

Office of Food Systems Resilience (OFSR)

- The line item for the budget in FY24 mirrors the FY23 budget, as follows:
 - Farm to Food Bank Program: \$350,000
 - Montgomery County Food Council: \$200,000
 - Market Money Grants Program: \$125,000
 - Community Gardening and Local Resilience Grants Program: \$50,000
 - Miscellaneous Operating Expenses: \$8,000
 - Remaining funds are for Director, PMDA, and Program Manager I positions
- The OFSR and DHHS Directors are currently establishing long-term plans for managing food-related funding in FY24. As the OFSR is not fully staffed and still being established, these plans are still in progress. Formal budget consolidations will likely take effect beginning with FY25. At a minimum, in the short-term DHHS will continue to provide contract monitoring services for all contracts (F2FB, MCFC, MMM) funded in the OFSR budget, as there is no contract monitor currently on the OFSR staff. The OFSR is currently providing strategic planning, program coordination, contract development, and community partner and vendor engagement support to DHHS food-related programs for FY23 and in preparation for FY24. DHHS staff are providing guidance to the creation of the OFSR strategic plan and launch process. OFSR initiatives will focus on long-term strategic planning (likely FY25) for County food security investment and implementation of current policy initiatives (such as the Strategic Plan to End Childhood Hunger).
- Both positions have been posted for recruitment with a priority application deadline of April 7th, but open until filled. First round interviews are expected to be conducted in late April.
- While the F2FB and MMM program contracts continue to be monitored by DHHS, the OFSR is closely engaged with the F2FB program operations and engages regularly with all F2FB partners in planning and maximizing the impact of the program funds and maintains connection with the MMM vendor on policy and programmatic issues. Both contracts are in good standing and in progress for full spend-down in FY23, and looking forward to continued partnership in FY24.
 - The OFSR is partnering with the Office of Grants Management to launch the Resident and Community Garden Grant Program with FY23 funds in late April 2023, modeled after the 2020 County Gardening grant program.
- The OFSR is developing a Strategic Plan to guide the Office's short and long-term goals and initiatives. The anticipated work plan for the first year of the OFSR includes:
 - Establish interagency coordination mechanisms within County government, including formal creation of a Food Systems Leadership Committee and a Food

Systems Workgroup with participation from key partner agencies including the Departments of Health and Human Services, Environmental Protection, General Services, and the Offices of Agriculture, Community Partnerships, Procurement, and Emergency Management and Homeland Security, as well as Park and Planning, MCPS, and MCEDC.

- In coordination with the Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice, assess and address the racial inequities and disparities present in all aspects of the food system.
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 - Currently available food systems data collected both internally and externally, and current mechanisms for communication and analysis of data.
- Establish baseline metrics for key food systems data points and create a dashboard mechanism for tracking longitudinal data. Enhance and refine community service provider partner data collection, reporting, and analysis processes.
- Engage and coordinate with statewide, regional, and national partners to share best practices, maximize external resources, and implement collaborative strategies for policymaking that strengthens equity and food system resilience both in our County and beyond our borders.
- Serve as a liaison between government and food system partners, including residents, businesses, and non-profit organizations. Establish communications, survey mechanisms, and feedback loops to ensure policy development and implementation is directly informed by the insight and expertise of the community.
- In collaboration with partner agencies, launch government planning processes to establish long term priorities and strategies for building food system resilience, including expanding local food production, a resident-centered coordinated food assistance distribution network, strengthening processing and distribution infrastructure, coordinating capacity for future crises, increasing economic opportunities in the food system, pursue food-centered strategies for climate change adaptation and mitigation, and guide strategic investments in food security and systems.