



MONTGOMERY COUNTY FOOD COUNCIL

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Working to cultivate a robust, sustainable, local food system!



Our **mission** is to bring together a diverse representation of stakeholders in a public and private partnership to improve the environmental, economic, social and nutritional health of Montgomery County, Maryland through the creation of a robust, local, sustainable food system.

Council Overview

The Montgomery County Food Council was founded in 2011 and launched in 2012 with our first public meeting. The Food Council is comprised of a diverse group of stakeholders who examine how well the local food system is serving its community. Our goal is to influence key aspects of the food system (production, processing, distribution, access, consumption and recycling) in order to enhance the environmental, economic, social, and nutritional health of the residents of Montgomery County, Maryland.

Our Supporters

The Food Council is grateful for the generous support of our funders, such as:

- Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of the Mid-Atlantic States
- Mead Family Foundation
- Montgomery County Council
- Montgomery County, MD Office of the County Executive
- Town Creek Foundation



Our Current Initiatives

- **FOOD ACTION PLAN:** We are currently creating a Food Action Plan, a document that will thoroughly assess the current state of our County's food system and determine a long-term strategy for addressing existing issues.
- **FOOD SECURITY:** We are collaboratively implementing the findings of the Food Security Plan, a Countywide assessment of the food security landscape, to reduce the food security barriers faced by Montgomery County residents and conduct further research to gather food security data by census tract within relevant data sets. We are also creating a Food Assistance Resource Directory to build stronger connectivity between the organizations providing food assistance services.
- **FOOD WASTE DIVERSION:** We are actively engaged in efforts to redirect unused food to animal feed and to compost. We are partnering with the Department of Environmental Protection on the creation of the Strategic Plan to Advance Composting by creating stakeholder and key resource lists, planning stakeholder meetings and submitting stakeholder interview questions. We support and advise the Community Food Rescue system.
- **LOCAL FOOD ECONOMY:** We are supporting the County Executive's Office in collecting feedback from local food businesses on how the County's regulatory environment can be improved. We are also updating our local Food Guide and creating an online directory to showcase the wide variety of local foods available for purchase in our County and to increase consumer, retail and wholesale demand for local foods.
- **FOOD LITERACY:** We are conducting a comprehensive assessment of food literacy resources in the County and listening sessions with residents to identify their interests and barriers to accessing these resources.



Our **vision** is for Montgomery County to cultivate a vibrant food system that consciously produces, distributes, and recycles food making it accessible to all citizens while promoting the health of the local food economy, its consumers and the environment.

Our Recent Accomplishments

- Submitted oral and written testimony and conducted other advocacy efforts on numerous policy issues on the County, State and Federal level, including ten letters of support that we submitted during the 2016 Maryland State legislative session. Advocacy efforts addressed all aspects of the food system.
- Partnered with the Office of the County Executive to create the Food Security Plan, a comprehensive report examining the current state of food security in our County. We led community engagement efforts to foster a collaborative process and incorporate the feedback of over 300 stakeholders.
- Supported the crafting and passage of Bill 28-16, the Strategic Plan to Advance Composting, an important step in expanding our County's food waste diversion capacity.
- Published the Food Hub Study, detailing suggested next steps for increasing County farmers' connectivity to regional markets and overall profitability.
- Released local Food and Beverage Guide, a comprehensive resource featuring 60+ packaged goods, beverages, desserts and confections created by Montgomery County food artisans.
- Hosted local Food and Beverage Fair, which connected more than 24 local food and beverage artisans with regional distributors, restaurant, wholesale and retail buyers.
- Published School Garden Brochure to educate schools of the benefits of and resources available for having a school garden.
- Published the Community Food Access Assessment, which summarized a three-year research project to identify County communities of low access and barriers to healthy food access.

Council Members

Council Members are committed to improving the Montgomery County food system and have an expertise in local food-related issues such as agriculture, food security and access, nutrition, food business and industrial practices, food education and research, land use and urban food production and distribution.

Members serve two-year terms on the Food Council and strive to develop collaborative solutions to community food system issues.

They actively participate in at least one Working Group or in one internal committee (Development, Monitoring & Evaluation, or Steering) of the Food Council.

The application cycle for Food Council Members opens annually in October.



County Council Public Hearing, Strategic Plan to Advance Composting Bill



Eat Local All Year Challenge



Chef and Farmer Summit

Working Groups

The Working Groups are subcommittees within the Food Council that address specific issues. The groups meet monthly to conduct research, inform and recommend policy change, and develop initiatives that nourish our community.

- Food Economy:** Supports producers, processors, distributors, retailers and consumers of local foods.
- Food Recovery and Access:** Works to increase recovery of, equitable access to and advocacy for more healthful food for County residents.
- Environmental Impact:** Examines issues of local land and water use and seeks to reduce the food system's environmental footprint.
- Food Literacy:** Educates County residents about agriculture, gardening, nutrition and cooking with the goal of increasing knowledge of the local environment and personal health.

All are welcome to join our Working Groups. Visit our website to learn how to get involved.



Food Council Outing to Chocolates & Tomatoes Farm



"Eat at Home: Why Buying Local Matters" Public Meeting



World Food Day County Council Proclamation