



## 2022 County Council Candidate Questionnaire

The Food Council invited all County Council candidates to complete a 9-item questionnaire, which was developed in collaboration with our community partners. Our goal is to provide information on local candidate's food system priorities and commitments. As a 501c3 nonprofit organization, we do not endorse candidates.

For more information, please contact Heather Bruskin, Executive Director at [hbruskin@mocofoodcouncil.org](mailto:hbruskin@mocofoodcouncil.org).

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Name: **Evan Glass**

Campaign Website: <https://www.evanglass.com/>

Candidate for: **At-Large**

1. Please describe your personal and/or professional engagement in any local food systems initiatives, policies, and programs.

**A:** I am a proud backyard composter and make sure any food waste that is generated by myself or my husband is put in our dual chamber bin. Recognizing that Montgomery County generates 147,000 of food waste per year, I passed legislation to make it easier for farmers to compost our food waste. I am also proud to have worked with MCPS and the Parks Department, in coordination with local non-profits, to establish more community gardens throughout the county. It's critical that we reduce our food waste and expand access to low cost and highly nutritious food. During the height of the pandemic, I supported hundreds of thousands of dollars for the food security task force and funds for culturally appropriate meals, and worked with Montgomery College to establish food drives serving thousands of residents throughout the county.

2. Please describe any plans you have for creating economic opportunities for individuals who identify as Black, Indigenous, Latinx/Latino, and/or a person of color, particularly in food and agriculture?



**A: It is critical that we continue supporting organizations like MARBIDCO, which provides technical and financial support to farmers. Knowing that many farmers in Montgomery sell their products at farmers markets, I want to continue our work to reduce barriers to participation and also make it cheaper to lease agricultural land in Montgomery County. There are also innovative policies that we should explore to support community farming opportunities for Black, Indigenous, LatinX and/or people of color.**

3. Please describe your position on addressing income insufficiency, which is a major contributor to food insecurity in our County. Please describe any positions or initiatives in your platform that focus on food security.

**A: Montgomery County has a median household income of over \$100,000, yet many communities struggle to afford basic necessities like housing, healthcare and food. During the height of the pandemic, I initiated the COVID Rental Relief program to help the county's most vulnerable residents remain in their homes. That program event grew to over \$100 million dollars and helped more than 30,000 renters throughout the county. Additionally, I support free bus fare for all riders, recognizing that a \$2 fare adds up for many who are cost-burdened. These two initiatives, in addition to the many more I have initiated or supported, exposes the work we need to do to achieve equitable policies – for food, housing, transportation, and many more.**

4. What role should the County government have in improving resident access to federal benefit programs, such as SNAP and WIC.

**A: The county has an important role to play in the support of SNAP and WIC. In addition to funding these programs, we need to do a better job of reaching out to and informing the communities that qualify for these benefits. At least 100,000 eligible residents in Montgomery County are not taking advantage of these programs and the county has to do a better job of providing assistance to residents who are entitled to them. The county needs to reduce barriers and address any negative perceived stigmas that come with applying for SNAP or WIC.**

5. It is likely that the impacts of climate change, national and global politics, and future disasters will further disrupt food production, supply chains, and food security networks. Please describe any policies and programs that you will propose or support to address local food system resilience?

**A: As the pandemic and the ongoing supply issues have shown us, our food system is fragile. Luckily, Montgomery County has over 500 farmers producing a wide array of agricultural commodities including table crops like fruits and vegetables. I want to encourage more residents to purchase directly from farmers by making CSAs more accessible, making it easier for farmers to participate in farmers markets, bolstering the county's farm to food bank program and incentivizing grocers to offer more localized produce. We need to harvest our full potential to combat global food disruptions.**

6. Please describe any initiatives or policies you would propose to increase local food production and access to affordable agricultural land.



**A: Montgomery County Public Schools, restaurants and other commercial food processors should be purchasing more of their food from Agricultural Reserve. I would work with colleagues to develop policies that encourage or require stronger relationships with the Agricultural Reserve community.**

**More technical and financial support should be provided to offset operation costs, innovations and increases in food production. The County has an agricultural land link program, but we need to do more to ensure agricultural land remains affordable and accessible. Besides continuing to support agricultural land preservation programs, I would look to create programs that subsidize agricultural land leases on a per-acre basis as well as work with OAG to create incentive programs that attract historically disadvantaged communities into the agricultural spaces.**

7. Please describe any initiatives or policies you will propose to reduce food waste and advance zero-waste strategies.

**A: Montgomery County generates 147,000 tons of food waste per year. I was proud to pass zoning legislation that allows farmers to accept more of our food waste so they can turn it into compost and mulch. Recognizing that food waste continues to be a major problem for our waste stream, I will advocate for expanding curbside food waste pick up programs, expand backyard composting opportunities and develop regulations to require restaurants and other large commercial generators of food waste to compost. I also strongly support the creation of a composting facility in Montgomery County.**

8. Where do you see opportunities for the County government to support food education? How can the County support residents in making healthy and sustainable food choices easier?

**A: The county should integrate food education into curriculums at the elementary, middle and high school levels. Food choices and nutritional intake overtime are important determinants of health, and as a member of the Health and Human Services Committee, I am committed to ensuring we are supplying our next generation with the tools and resources to make better nutritional decisions over their lifetime.**

9. What do you see as the biggest food system challenges in the County and what do you believe is the role of the County Council in addressing them? How should community stakeholders be engaged in that work?

**A: One of the biggest food system challenges we have in the county is figuring out how to unlock the Agricultural Reserve so that it can serve more of our residents. Our farmers are not able to capitalize on the economies of scale like farmers in other regions. We need to develop and enact policies that reduce the cost of production and increase access to county residents, especially those who need it the most.**

