

# THE FOOD LITERACY ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

**A landscape scan of existing food literacy resources in Montgomery County released in July 2019 by the Montgomery County Food Council's Food Education Working Group (FEWG).**

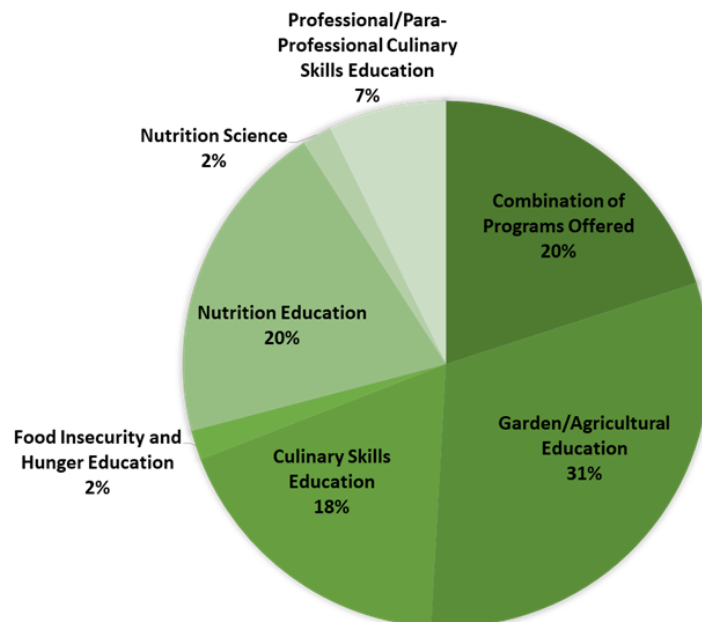
**View the full report here: <https://tinyurl.com/MCFC-FoodLiteracyAssessment>**

- Food Literacy is defined as:
  - Understanding the story of one's food, from farm to table and back to the soil
  - Access to education and resources to make healthful, sustainable food choices
  - Knowing how food is grown and produced, how to choose foods that promote health, and how to prepare food
- The Food Literacy Assessment will be used to identify gaps in resources and barriers to providing and/or accessing services in Montgomery County
- Former FEWG co-chair, Wendy Nevett Bazil led this volunteer-driven project with support from the Department of Family Science at the University of Maryland, College Park

## **Food Literacy Assessment Methodology**

- Data sources included:
  - Online survey (34 programs)
  - Online research conducted by Food Council staff (13 programs)
  - In-depth key informant interviews (8 programs): 5 non-profit organizations and 3 hospitals
  - Joint meeting with the Food Council's Food Recovery and Access Working Group that brought together food banks, faith based organizations, garden education providers, culinary instructors, and hospital wellness representatives (43 respondents)

**In total, data were collected from 98 organizations, informing a robust view of Montgomery County's food literacy offerings.**



## Key Findings

- **Barriers for Providers** include funding, partnership challenges, and client access challenges
- **Barriers for Residents** include transportation, language and cultural barriers, and fear of deportation.
- **Opportunities for improvement/expansion** include providing more multilingual programming, improving accessibility to programs and resources, and increasing training opportunities.

## Next Steps for the Food Council

- Collect further County food literacy program data
- Create a comprehensive Resource Guide
- Identify areas where there is greater need for additional food literacy resources
- Continue to gather stakeholder input on existing programs, barriers, and opportunities for expansion

## Recommendations for Further Inquiry

- Conduct a community needs assessment to more fully understand where gaps in food literacy resources exist from residents' perspectives, and build resident-engaging food literacy resource gap surveys and analyses into Montgomery County's community health needs assessment process
- Research the unique barriers food insecure residents face in accessing food education resources
- Increase available programming and community use of cooking space at County Department of Recreation and other commercial kitchens
- Engage educational institutions in discussions to explore opportunities to expand, standardize, and provide universal access to food education resources throughout the K-12 curriculum.

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**The Montgomery County Food Council** is an independent nonprofit that serves as the central convening organization of nonprofits, businesses, government agencies, and residents in order to improve the environmental, economic, social and nutritional health of Montgomery County, Maryland through the creation of a robust, sustainable, and equitable local food system.

The mission of the **Food Education Working Group** is to improve the eating habits of those who live, work, or play in Montgomery County through advocacy and education on healthy food choices, cooking skills, food safety, food marketing, and participation in the local, sustainable food system.



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[info@mocofoodcouncil.org](mailto:info@mocofoodcouncil.org)