



## 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: **Daniel Koroma**

Campaign Website: [www.danielkoroma.org](http://www.danielkoroma.org)

Candidate for: **District 5**

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

**A: In 2015, I worked with organizations in and out of County government tasked by Council Bill 19-16 to develop a Food Security Plan for the County. The food Plan provided strategies with recommendations that cover a 5 year period and are targeted to five categories of residents experiencing food insecurity: children, seniors, people with disabilities, foreign-born residents and people living below the Self-Sufficiency Standard.**

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: I have done economic and community development work in the Montgomery County for the past 20 years - 16 inside of the County government and 6 years in the private sector. My expertise of helping entrepreneurs start and grow their businesses are what is needed on the County Council. Many of the policy decisions faced in the next Council will be ways to grow our economy in an inclusive and equitable way. My specific plans are:**

**\* Build a robust, sustainable, and diverse local food supply chain**

**\* Supporting key industry sectors that are critical to the County's economy and quality of life, including food businesses, restaurants, entertainment and hospitality sectors**

**\* Building an ecosystem with access to information, availability of capital to help existing entrepreneurs succeed and attract new business investments**

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: I support reviewing some of the outdated assumptions that are factored into calculating family self sufficiency. In Montgomery County, especially in the East County, I believe that many family expenses and financial hardship are underestimated. As a Councilmember, I will work with the Montgomery County Food Council to organize an annual food security conference to update our five year food security plan. The pandemic truly showed us how food insecure many of our neighbors are in Montgomery County.**

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

**A: I believe the County government should play a significant role in increasing access to all federal benefit programs because increased access brings increased self sufficiency. I also believe that the County should help families that advantage of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) program, which helps low- to moderate-income residents and families get a tax relief.**

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: I will work with the Food Council to build a more robust food processing, producing, and marketplace in a accessible reasonable manner. I support more creation of small-scale food businesses and spaces.**

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

**A: I will work with the Food Council to explore ways to attract more State and federal grants by creating food processing and manufacturing grant funds in Montgomery County.**

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

**A: Advancing zero waste take a collective effort from the public and private sectors. Government alone cannot develop these strategies. That is why I will work with the Food Council, Faith communities, and businesses to take collective actions to build a healthy food system. I've done community engagement working on the Food Security Plan and would bring together local and regional organizations who are working within the food ecosystem.**

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: I commend all of the County's partners who have worked diligently to provide health food choices during the pandemic. I believe we should scale up these educational efforts in our schools and underserved communities.**

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: Our food system is unjust because it does not provide healthy, affordable food to everyone. Our urban areas often have no access to any fresh food at all because there are fewer grocery stores. On the other hand, people in rural areas are sometimes unable to afford**



the food they harvest. We need to expand locally produced healthy food items in Montgomery County.

