



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.

Name: **Harold Maldonado**
Campaign Website: www.haroldmaldonado.com
Candidate for: **District 7**

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

A: none

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 plan to support a shift from the council putting emphasis on big corporate companies to small-and-medium businesses that will strengthen job creation across the county. As an economist with expertise in economic development, I plan to improve the county's investment climate to attract investment both locally and from outside in the all industries, including food/agriculture, as emphasis on small and medium businesses will do the following:

- 1. create low-skilled jobs for minorities, college students, high schoolers.**
- 2. improve/strengthen local supply chains.**
- 3. create economic externalities that will increase economic activity, tax collection, and job creation.**
- 4. halt businesses from leaving the county.**
- 5. completely revise the current rules and regulations for current and new businesses -- create incentives for current and new businesses to stay in the county.**

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: The council has been incompetent in addressing job creation writ large for all income levels. I plan to have a 4-year economic plan to revamp the economic development of the county, which will have one target, among others, to create jobs across the board.

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



A: The county should support these programs and champion their objective, which is to support low-income residents have access to basic food security, but also make sure that these programs support the people that need them.

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 plan to have a complete and exhaustive study on the current science. Questioning the science on current climate change information is SCIENCE.

The county's food security rests on how we manage urbanization efforts by the current plan to expand urbanization across the county, which is wrong. In order to safeguard and maintain our county's food security depends on how we create laws and regulation to protect current agricultural land from unneeded and unwarranted urbanization efforts.

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

A: I plan to support a plan to protect current agricultural land and incentivise the increase of agricultural production and investment through tax and regulatory incentives to increase food production by at least two-fold. My 4-year economic plan will have a section on safeguarding and bolstering food security in the county.

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

A: Optimizing local resources, writ large, is something I care about deeply. Just like wasteful spending by the current council, the reduction of food waste is something we must address. Again, if elected, I plan to propose a complete review of all aspects of economic activity in the county, which includes ways we can reduce food waste that will include a program with the private sector and non-profits to better use food surplus.

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: Healthy food consumption and sustainable food choices are themes that go hand-in-hand with education at all levels. Thusly, I would envision a program that includes schools and Montgomery College to take this on. Religious organizations are also a good partner to have for these efforts.

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: Food security is low in the county and this needs to be addressed. Vulnerable pockets of the population is under food security stress and this needs to be addressed. Food programs should be focused on residents who need them, not the other way around.

