



# Maryland Food System Resiliency Council

Distribution & Access Subcommittee  
June 2, 2022 1:00pm-2:00pm

1. **Welcome**
2. **Group Discussion**
  - a. Invited Speakers
    - Sydney Daigle (Director, [Prince George's County Food Equity Council](#))
      - 1) Food Councils range from non-profit to government affiliated, which means operations will vary
      - 2) October 2013- PGC FEC developed from concerned citizens living in the port towns (specific concerns include health disparities, equity concerns, limited access to healthy foods). This group was successful in programmatic works
      - 3) The food policy council uptake was examined and implemented as a higher level strategy to address policy challenges
      - 4) Mission/Vision: to ensure that every resident in our county can easily access healthy, affordable, culturally appropriate, sustainably produced foods in their community, food workers (farmers, grocery stores, restaurants) should be able to expect safe working conditions and living wages at their job, that Growers should be able to stay on their land, and farmland should be preserved in perpetuity.
      - 5) Priority/Focus: (racial justice, environmental justice and community health)
        - a. Grow food and preserve farmland - ensuring farmers/growers can grow food easily and keep land, limiting barriers, helping urban farmers (urban agriculture policy – overhauling the urban farm definition) resulting in 70% of the land is now zoned for urban farming
        - b. Urban Ag incubator allows Urban Farmers to access



- land in a region where land is expensive. Provides land and technical assistance on park and planning parcels where farmers can try their hand at being an urban farmer.
- c. Advocacy activities for support with county government – establishing staff positions to assist farmers in navigating policies
- 6) Access to healthy foods – working with Maryland Market Money Program, and Food as Medicine with Giant Food (Note: programmatic activities take a lot of time but provides more funding, however this means less time for policy and system change work)
    - a. Coordinating a network of food access providers – helping pantries during the pandemic with resources including: gaps in service, providing culturally appropriate foods, grant writing, cold storage
  - 7) Foods in Jail – examining foods provided during incarceration, inequity in who is incarcerated, their diet while incarcerated, resulting effects on health, and discrimination experienced after their released in conjunction with nutrition driven health outcomes
  - 8) Strengthen the local food economy – Development of the Healthy Food Priority Areas Map: identify and mapping food swamps (areas with a high density of unhealthy foods), areas with retailers who sell healthy foods, transportation, income levels, etc.
  - 9) Working with the Health Department on the Healthy Corner-store initiative – to create a toolkit for owners who want to improve their stores (selling healthy items)
  - 10) Farmers’ Market- reducing permit cost, incorporating into the food rescue program which redistributes foods from the farmers’ market to food pantries
  - 11) Braided Funding – average operating cost 500,000 per year, but cost does vary according to programmatic work, grants like County Council, and philanthropic investment. Government funding is somewhat more standardized.
  - 12) 4 FTE
  - 13) PGCFEC is connected in a larger non-profit “Institution for Public Health Innovation”
- Heather Bruskin (Executive Director, [Montgomery County Food](#))



### Council)

- 1) 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of County Funding – began in 2010 with a grassroots group of farmers, food security experts, governmental agencies, etc. came together to discuss food systems issues, identifying collaboration is needed to address these concerns.
- 2) 2012 – 25,000 dollars of seed money was granted to launch the council (current budget: 900,000 per year, 35-40% from the county, 20% from the federal government, and remaining amount from foundations, which 70% is for food security programs)
- 3) 2018 – the council transferred from four contractors to a 501c3 status, becoming an employer (set-up HR benefits plan, payroll, accounting, this work is ongoing)
- 4) 2019- established a Board of Directors as a requirement associated with non-profit status (two boards manage the council (1) Board of Directors – managing structural operations, (2) Council members – managing programmatic work/food system work)
- 5) Montgomery County – unique challenges: **(1)** 1/3 agricultural preservation area, which means limited growth for urban ag/space for residents to grow food, **(2)** currently about 100,000 residents, including over 40,000 children are food insecure, due to the high cost of living for family of 4 (90,000 annual income needed for basic self-sustaining needs, SNAP eligible averages income about 48,000) many families fall within this gap, **(3)** one of the largest school systems, which makes school based programs more complex
- 6) Mission/Vision – MCFC builds an equitable, resilient and sustainable local food system through collaboration, transformation, and cultivation. MCFC envisions a vibrant and equitable food system that is healthy for our community, economy, and environment.
- 7) Written strategies
  - ✓ Increase capacity of local programs, businesses, and organizations
  - ✓ Grow and strengthen network and partnership
  - ✓ Lead advocacy and drive policy and process change
  - ✓ Build knowledge and awareness of resources and issues



- ✓ Research and communicate opportunities and challenges
  - ✓ Foster food system leadership locally, regionally and nationally
- 8) 25 council members – membership provides opportunity for professional development for experts, as well as, contribution to the work of the council. There are 4 working groups including:
- ✓ Environmental Impact
  - ✓ Food Education
  - ✓ Food Economy
  - ✓ Food Recovery and Access
- 9) Council Members Commitments: monthly working group, internal meetings, annual retreat, and special events. Leadership Commitments include committee, working groups, initiative, community engagement, metric reporting, and responsiveness and active participation
- 10) Board of Directors Commitment: meeting (biweekly in February, currently monthly), internal meeting optional, annual retreat, special events, member commitment up to 2 years, strategic and financial planning, resource management, executive supervision, and financial contribution.
- 11) Joint committees – interact with the board of directors and the council including:
- ✓ Policy
  - ✓ Nominating
  - ✓ Racial Equity Activities
  - ✓ Development and Communication
  - ✓ Alumni
  - ✓ Special Event
  - ✓ Public convening bodies:
    - a) Working Groups
    - b) Food Security Community Advisory Board
    - c) Gardening Subcommittee
    - d) Benefits Outreach and Enrollment Subcommittee
- 12) Advocacy and Drive Policy and Process Changes – Food security community advisory board
- 13) Online Resources includes virtual trainings, food security community call, and regularly updated database of food



assistance providers (over 120).

b. Open Discussion for Recommendations development

3. **Next Steps and adjourn**