



Maryland Food System Resiliency Council

Distribution & Access Subcommittee
June 30, 2022 1:00pm-2:00pm

1. **Welcome**
2. **Group Discussion**
 - I. Subcommittee Meeting Schedule Updates
 - i. D&A meetings will be changed to once a month, on the last Thursday of the month
 - ii. Upcoming meetings: 7/28/22, 8/25/22 (1pm – 2: 30pm)
 - II. Open Discussion for Recommendation Development
 - i. Food councils should remain as a recommendation, possibly linked to SPINE activities
 - ii. State Partnership Improving Nutrition and Equity (SPINE)
 - o The State Partnerships Improving Nutrition and Equity (SPINE) Program is a national grant program that addresses food and nutrition security through sustainable and equitable actions that tackle economic and social conditions limiting food and nutrition security across the lifespan. As part of this program, the Maryland Department of Health has convened a food and nutrition security advisory working group to support SPINE efforts and guide program components. The SPINE team is looking for individuals with lived experience of food and nutrition insecurity to participate in advisory working group meetings. These individuals will serve as a voice for persons and communities who have been impacted by food and nutrition insecurity, providing guidance and support to build and implement the SPINE State Action Plan.
 - o SPINE's proposals for Local Health Improvement Coalitions (LHICs) closely links with the subcommittees current interest for local food councils as a strategic recommendation to be considered for the Nov 1st Report



- (Meg Kimmel co-chair will be added to the upcoming meeting with SPINE)
- o Support for SPINE activities should be included in D&A recommendations, including food councils with clear funding, as well as, guidelines/criteria for organizational operations of food councils
 - o Resiliency Hubs should continue to be a recommendation, linking hubs to underprivileged areas.
 - o Meg Kimmel with MFB – currently examining community mediation centers (CMC) criteria, and how it can translate into food, related to local food councils, food hubs (i.e. food and community resource centers). Further findings will be discussed at the July D&A meeting
 - o Baltimore County added a staff position to focus on food insecurity for its residents. Meg Kimmel will pursue a meeting to determine the scope of this position's interactions with community based organizations, etc.
 - o SNAP Benefits are currently being distributed at the max allotment, due to the public health emergency (waivers are still in effect)
 - o Summer SNAP roll-out and other contract work is still ongoing (participants include children who are eligible to receive free/reduced lunch and are active in SNAP, however the local jurisdiction determines funding and the amount of children eligible).
 - o P-EBT SNAP for summer and P-EBT during school time are separate programs from Summer SNAP. Approval recently granted from DHS federal partners, and data are provided from MSDE to issue benefits (challenges occur due to outdated/error in data, for example changes of caregiver for children, wrong address, etc.))
 - o SNAP re-determinations started in January, and April started the re-determination interview resulting in 40% of the caseload closing, due to missing mandatory documentation, etc.
 - o Ongoing fraud with EBT: this is a nationwide concern, there are two vendors for EBT, who are responsible for managing the benefits once DHS determines an applicant's benefit eligibility. Vendor contracts were established 5-10 years prior to this electronic theft, DHS is working on new security measures until a new RFP.



- o Replacement of benefits via DHS : benefits cannot be replaced with federal funding, per federal regulations, currently there is no funding appropriated. DHS continues to examine additional funding streams.

3. **Next Steps and adjourn**

- I. Update for the next meeting include:
 - i. Meg Kimmel (MFB) work on Community Mediation Centers
 - ii. Diana Taylor, and Meg Kimmel follow up with SPINE partnership
- II. Start drafting recommendations for Nov 1st Report