



MoCo Eats

***Food Waste Prevention and Recovery Efforts that
Build a More Resilient, Sustainable Food System***

March 2025

Montgomery County

Office of Food Systems Resilience



Our Mission: To develop and implement interagency budgetary, regulatory, and operational strategies to build a more equitable, efficient, resilient, and sustainable food system in Montgomery County.

Resilience: *The capability of individuals, communities, and the County to withstand and rapidly recover from food system disruptions, stresses, and changes.*

National, Regional, and Local Food Systems: Interdependent and Interconnected



Residents at Risk of Food Insecurity

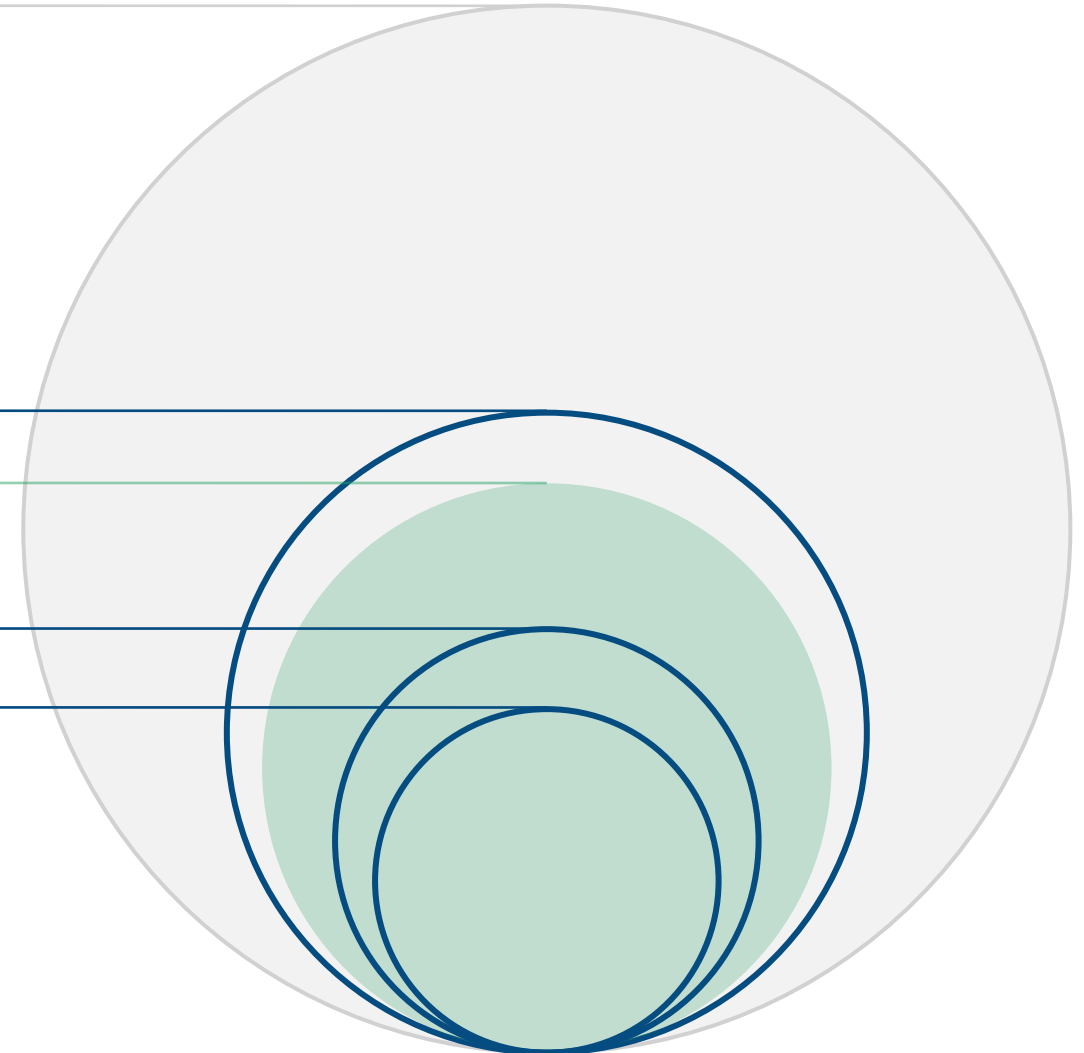
1.05 million people in Montgomery County

403k people (almost **4 in 10** individuals) live in households with incomes below 400% of the federal poverty level (FPL)

323k people live below the **Self Sufficiency Standard**

169k people (**1 in 6** indiv.) live in households with incomes below 185% of the FPL (**FARMs Threshold**)

116k people (**1 in 10** indiv.) live in households with incomes below 130% the FPL (**SNAP Threshold**)



Key Food Recovery Strategies

Community Food Assistance Program: At least 20% of CFA grantees actively engaged in food recovery work

- Partnerships with Manna Food Center via ChowMatch, Capital Area Food Bank to access recovered foods
- Direct partnerships with local retailers, wholesale buyers, institutions (Trader Joes, Giant, Costco, AstraZeneca, etc)
- Waste Audits with DEP

School-Based Food Assistance Grant Program: Two SBFA grant partners, Manna Food Center and So What Else, connect recovered produce with the school communities

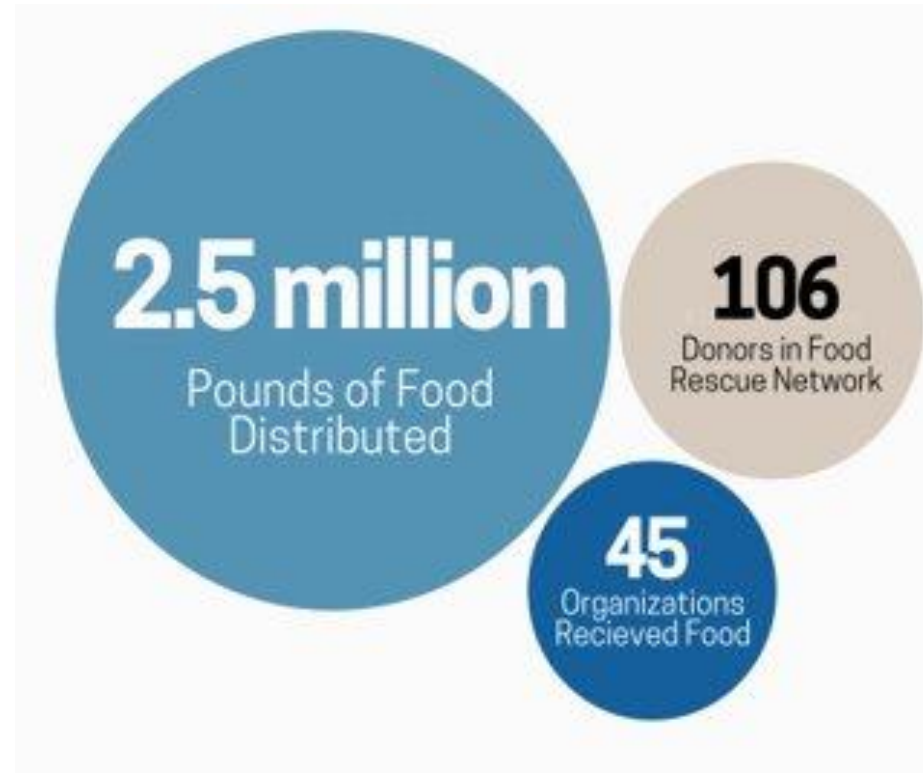
- Increases student access to fresh produce at no or low cost
- Increases awareness of local food sources, local agriculture amongst youth

Cold Storage Infrastructure Grant Program: Launched in spring 2024, more than \$350,000 in total funding supports 14 food assistance providers and farm partners to establish cold storage infrastructure that builds their capacity to store, recover, and distribute fresh foods to residents.

Key Food Recovery Strategies

Community Food Rescue: 10 year partnership between the County and Manna Food Center to connect 150+ partners via ChowMatch, facilitating recovery and redistribution of millions of lbs of food per year

- Farm to Food Bank partners contribute fresh, local produce



Data Analysis: Geographic Impact

FY24 Cold Storage Map

Legend

Food Assistance Providers

FAPs that own refrigeration or freezer space



Farms Cold Storage

Farms that own refrigeration or freezer space



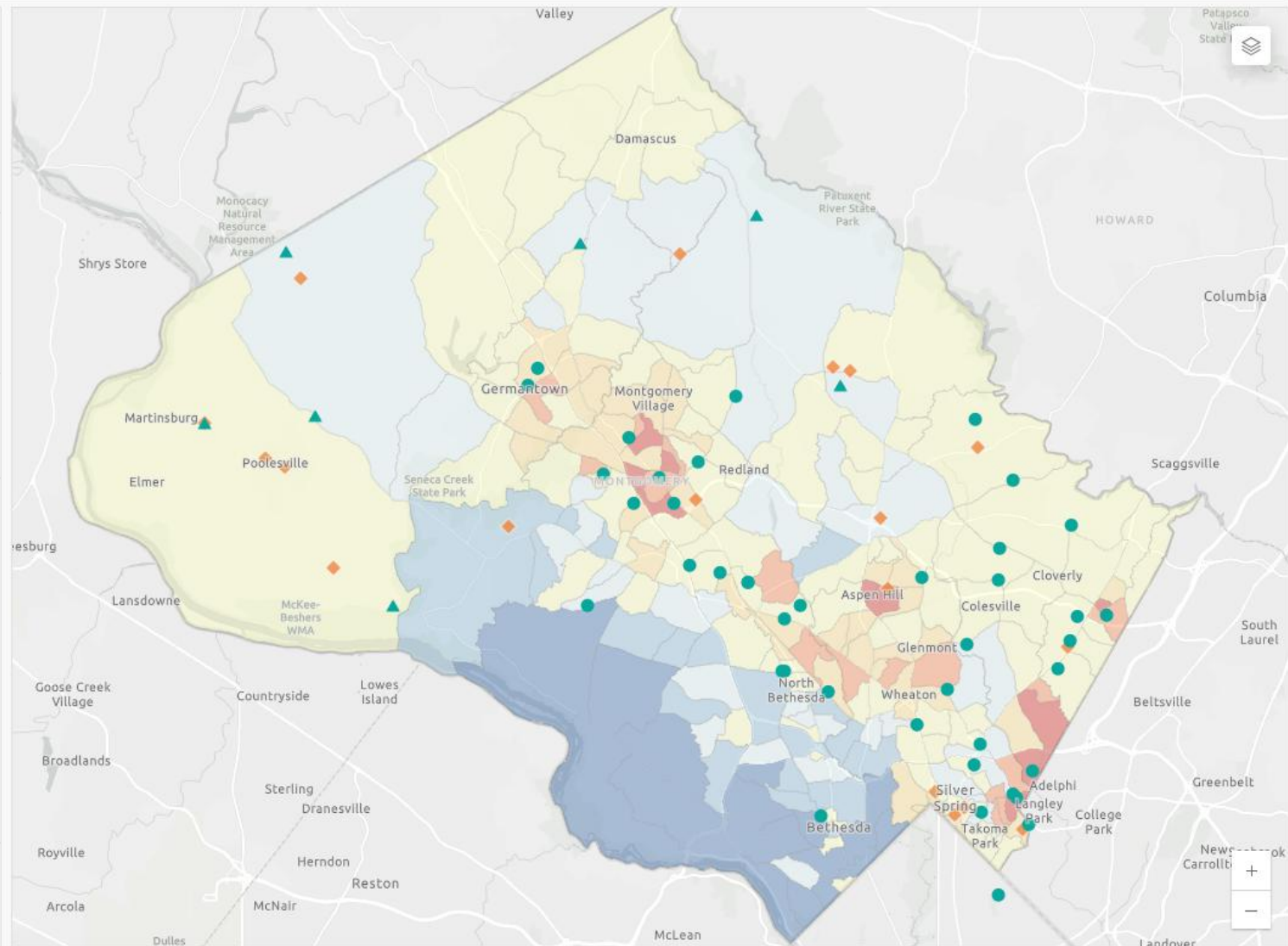
FY24 FSIG Applicants



Community Equity Index (CEI)

- Highly Disproportionate - Disadvantaged
- Moderately Disproportionate - Disadvantaged
- Slightly Disproportionate - Disadvantaged
- Proportionate - Neither Advantaged nor Disadvantaged
- Slightly Disproportionate - Advantaged
- Moderately Disproportionate - Advantaged
- Highly Disproportionate - Advantaged

Montgomery County boundary



City of Gaithersburg, Maryland, MNCPPC, VGIN, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, USDA, USFWS | Ben Kraft, Ph.D. Planning Research Coordi... Powered by Esri

Food Recovery & Waste Prevention Partnerships

- **DEP Edible Food Recovery Working Group:** Connecting with DEP, Manna, Montgomery County Food Council, Office of Agriculture, and other key partners in the food recovery space to identify opportunities to expand edible food recovery
 - DEP Farmers Market Compost Drop-Off Program
- **MCPS Food Recovery Team:** Connected with MCPS Sustainability Division to connect school-based food recovery efforts to school-based food assistance programs
- **Maryland Food System Resiliency Council Distribution and Access Workgroup**
- **Montgomery County Food Council** Wasted Food Prevention & Food Recovery Working Group
- **MoCo MicroHub and Compost System at AHFP**
- **Food Waste Prevention Week Activities and Partnerships**

Opportunities for Community Engagement

- **Retailers, restaurants, wholesalers:** Explore partnerships with community food assistance network to donate food for redistribution, consider onsite food scrap collection strategies
- **Residents:** Collect food scraps at home and recycle at County farmers markets, reduce at-home food waste using tips from DEP ReFED, consider donating to a local food assistance partner
- **Community-Based Organizations:** Connect with partners like Manna Food Center, Capital Area Food Bank to learn about how to expand food recovery efforts
 - Explore grant opportunities that increase cold storage capacity, food recovery infrastructure to support waste prevention

Questions?



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