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Maryland



FOOD SYSTEM
RESILIENCY
COUNCIL

Maryland Food System
Resiliency Council (FSRC) **2024**
Annual Report to the
Maryland General Assembly



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Executive Summary

With the publication of their fourth annual report, the Maryland Food System Resiliency Council (FSRC) acknowledges that the inequities throughout our food system are most acutely felt by historically marginalized communities, including those integral to the production and distribution of our nation's food. The disproportionate distribution of social and environmental determinants of chronic health conditions, socioeconomic advantage, and reliable access to basic necessities stems from a long history of racial injustice and structural inequities. Hazards and supply chain disruptions resulting from climate change, public health emergencies, and conflict will continue to exacerbate these disparities for present and future generations.

In response to pressing inequities in Maryland's food system, including the food insecurity and economic crises resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Maryland General Assembly established the Maryland Food System Resiliency Council in 2021. The FSRC's [33 appointees](#) include members representing both chambers of the Maryland General Assembly, several state agencies and their secretaries, nonprofit and private sector organizations, community partners, academic institutions, and independent Maryland food businesses. Together, these individuals work collaboratively to achieve the four goals mandated by the Maryland General Assembly ([MD. Code Ann., Pub. Safety § 14-1102, 2024](#)):

1. To address the food insecurity crisis in the State resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting economic crisis;
2. Develop equity and sustainability policy recommendations to increase the long-term resiliency of the food system;
3. Expand the impact of existing food council organizations; and
4. Develop a strategic plan to increase the production and procurement of Maryland certified food.¹

Following the publication of the FSRC's Annual Report to the Maryland General Assembly in November 2023, the FSRC was formally moved under the Maryland Office of Resilience (MOR) within the Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM). In conjunction with MOR's broader resilience goals for the

¹Maryland Food System Resiliency Council, §14 (2024).
<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Laws/StatuteText?article=gps§ion=14-1101&enactments=false>



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state, the FSRC continues to address threats and gaps in food system resilience through a quantifiable and collaborative approach to problem-solving. The FSRC's three committees serve as working groups, collecting information and data, garnering stakeholder input, tracking and responding to state legislation, and coordinating with state agencies to provide evidence-based recommendations for policymakers: Communication and Coordination; Distribution and Access; and Environment and Production.

The FSRC and committees met regularly over the past seven months to develop this legislatively mandated report. The FSRC acknowledges that the root causes of food system vulnerability and food insecurity are complex. More time, resources, and consideration are required to achieve the goals as identified in the statute. While MDEM staff assisted in drafting the content of this document as part of that requirement, this report reflects the wisdom, knowledge, and experience of the expert members of the FSRC. This document and the recommendations below are not a MDEM product, but a product of the FSRC.

Recommendation 1.1: Establish and Maintain a Statewide Charitable Food Locator Service

Abstract: Create a user-friendly, public-facing tool using existing technology to help Maryland residents locate charitable food sources, including food pantries, feeding programs, and more. This tool will leverage existing data and be modeled after similar products by the Maryland Food Bank and Capital Area Food Bank.

Legislation Required? No.

Funding Required? No.

Recommendation 1.2: Establish and Maintain a Statewide Food Insecurity Map

Abstract: Develop a comprehensive, public-facing map to visualize food insecurity and service gaps in Maryland. This map will combine existing data and maps to provide a holistic view of needs, services, and gaps, aiding data-driven decision-making and coordination between governmental and non-governmental entities. Together, the data set and map will serve as a visual dashboard to assist stakeholders in understanding a more complete picture of the depth and breadth of food insecurity in Maryland in terms of social determinants of health, changing population demographics, infrastructure, and more. This initiative will require funding for development and maintenance.



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Legislation Required? No.

Funding Required? Yes.

[Recommendation 1.3: Strengthening the Emergency Food Assistance Program \(TEFAP\)](#)

Abstract: Enhance the [TEFAP](#) program by adjusting state policies to improve access and efficiency. Key changes include raising the income eligibility threshold, simplifying eligibility verification, and utilizing digital intake platforms. The goal is to make the program more equitable and effective for Marylanders experiencing food insecurity.

Legislation Required? No.

Funding Required? No.

[Recommendation 2.1: Establish a Distributed Network of Cold Storage for Food System Resiliency](#)

Abstract: Establish strategically-located cold storage facilities across Maryland to increase food aggregation, enhance distribution capacities, and reduce food loss. These facilities will be tailored to community needs and can be solar-powered for resilience and sustainability. Funding of \$6.3 million is required for implementation of a cold storage grant program. This funding will cover the materials for construction as well as expenses required for grant program administration.

Legislation Required? No.

Funding Required? Yes.

[Recommendation 2.2: Establishment of Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund and Grant Programs](#)

Abstract: Establish a fund and grant program to support community-led projects aimed at reducing food waste and environmental impacts. Funded by a \$2/ton solid waste disposal surcharge, this initiative will support on-farm composting, food recovery efforts, and educational programs. Legislation and funding are required to establish and administer these programs.

Legislation Required? Yes.



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Funding Required? Yes.

Recommendation 3.1: Expand Local Food Policy Councils to Strengthen Food System Resiliency

Abstract: Establish a state-led grant program to fund local food policy councils in Maryland, providing \$40,000 to each of the ten food local councils to employ part-time coordinators. This will enhance communication, data analysis, and community engagement to strengthen food system resiliency. A total of \$400,000 is required for this recommendation.

Ten food councils include: Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, Caroline County, Frederick County, Kent County, Midshore, Montgomery County, Prince George's County, Upper Shore, and Western MD.

Legislation Required? No.

Funding Required? Yes.

Recommendation 4.1: Agricultural Apprenticeship Program

Abstract: The Maryland Department of Labor (MDOL) and the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) should coordinate to develop and implement a Registered Agricultural Apprenticeship Program to expand the agricultural workforce, including on small farms with diversified production models. The Public Sector Innovation Fund can cover up to \$600,000 of MDA's administrative costs through 2026, including the staffing, curriculum design, and training materials required to implement the Registered Apprenticeship Program. Participating agricultural employers may be eligible for an annual \$3,000 tax credit per apprentice (for up to five apprentices). Additionally, MDOL may provide grants for eligible employers to cover training costs. Supplemental funding may be needed to address the wage barriers inherent to the agricultural industry.

To promote and support this program, MDA can coordinate with local food councils, Future Harvest, Maryland Farm Bureau, and Cooperative Extension offices. The American Job Centers should also include agricultural jobs in their listings and ensure agricultural employers are integrated into Maryland's broader workforce development programs. This collaborative effort would help address employment barriers and enhance workforce development, benefiting both agricultural employers and farmworkers.



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Legislation Required? No.

Funding Required? Yes.

Recommendation 4.2: Agricultural Nutrient Management Planning Support

Abstract: Secure sustained annual funding of \$3.5 million for the University of Maryland (UMD) Extension's Agricultural Nutrient Management Program (ANMP) is recommended to enhance technical assistance and compliance with nutrient management plans. This funding will promote higher quality nutrient management planning through increased employee retention, continuity of services, software modernization, and training for nutrient management plan writers.

Legislation Required? No.

Funding Required? Yes.

Recommendation 4.3: Supporting Value-Added Processing Infrastructure

Abstract: Develop programs to establish and incentivize community-based and regional infrastructure for value-added processing, providing small producers access to well-equipped commercial kitchen spaces and processing facilities. This will support resilient business models with diverse enterprises and multiple revenue streams, and will also help minimize food loss.

Legislation Required? No.

Funding Required? Yes.

Recommendation 4.4: Local Preservation in Food Access Priority Areas and Within Schools

Abstract: This recommendation proposes expanding food preservation in public schools through methods such as cold storage and value-added processing to align Maryland's agricultural growing seasons with school cycles and community nutritional needs. New food preservation programs in public schools can be modeled after existing successful programs like [Caroline County's Mobile Market](#). Legislation and funding are encouraged to support these initiatives and provide community-based resources such as mobile cold storage units in high-priority areas. Leveraging existing programs and creating new ones through pilot funding are



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essential for implementation.

Legislation Required? Yes.

Funding Required? Yes.

Recommendation 4.5: Funding for a Local/Regional Farm Food Aggregation and Processing Matching Grant Program

Abstract: This recommendation suggests establishing a revamped grant program to support local food aggregation and processing infrastructure, aiding small farms in meeting the demand of institutional buyers like schools and hospitals. The program would extend the existing Certified Local Farm Enterprise Food Aggregation Grant Fund (set to end in 2025) managed by the Maryland Agricultural and Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation (MARBIDCO). Eligible applicants, such as local governments, municipalities, community colleges, universities, county school systems, or rural regional councils, would provide at least a dollar-for-dollar match for awarded grant funding. This recommendation aims to facilitate the production, preservation, and procurement of locally-grown food, supporting both wholesale and retail markets. The program requires \$1 million annually starting in fiscal year 2026.

Legislation Required? No.

Funding Required? Yes.

Recommendation 4.6: Formation of Task Force to Assess Adoption of Digital Agricultural Technologies by Maryland Farmers

Abstract: A temporary Technology in Agriculture Task Force is proposed to assess and recommend digital agricultural technologies to increase farm yields and reduce input costs through more efficient production methods. The task force would evaluate existing technologies and adoption strategies from other regions, and provide recommendations for new programs and their economic impacts. The task force, led by the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA), would include members from various relevant stakeholders and aim to integrate technologies like IoT, drones, and data analytics into Maryland's agricultural sector. Funding is required for MDA to provide administrative support to organize the research, gather data, and provide other expertise to assist committee members with recommendation



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development and assessment of economic impacts.

Legislation Required? No.

Funding Required? Yes.

[Recommendation 4.7: Assessing and Addressing Regulatory Challenges for Small and Beginning Farmers](#)

Abstract: This recommendation aims to identify and mitigate regulatory challenges and barriers impacting small and beginning farmers, such as zoning, permitting, business licensing, health department, lease agreements, and land use protocols. The FSRC requests that the Maryland Agricultural Commission (MAC) examine these barriers and propose improvements to the regulatory framework, as outlined in the MAC's recently adopted [strategic plan](#). Doing so will support producers in navigating contradictory regulations, economies of scale for equipment, risks associated with non-commodity/non-traditional crops, and access to resources like land, labor, and capital.

Legislation Required? No.

Funding Required? No.

[Recommendation 4.8: Incentive to Increase Locally Produced Food Served in Schools](#)

Abstract: This recommendation aims to implement the Maryland Farm-to-School Grant Pilot Program, initially introduced in HB147 which was passed but not funded in 2022. The program would provide funds to school districts for purchasing local agricultural products, thereby promoting nutritious, locally-sourced meals for students. Successful models from Caroline and Frederick counties demonstrate the program's potential benefits for local economies and student health and wellness. The program, to be administered by the Maryland State Department of Education in coordination with the Maryland Department of Agriculture, requires \$500,000 in funding for fiscal year 2026.

Legislation Required? No.

Funding Required? Yes.



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Recommendation 4.9: Improving Property Taxation Assessments on Agricultural Land

Abstract: The FSRC recognizes that challenges still exist for agricultural producers relating to commercial tax assessments on agricultural land, where value-added agricultural activities occur. The FSRC supports continued efforts to establish appropriate mechanisms and regulations through the State Department of Assessments and Taxation (SDAT), encouraging, rather than disincentivizing, producers to expand and operate value-added agricultural enterprises. The FSRC acknowledges that a solution to this operational barrier may or may not require legislative action through statute, but will require policy changes nevertheless.

Legislation Required? Yes.

Funding Required? No.



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Introduction

The Maryland Food System Resiliency Council (FSRC) was established in 2021 and is codified in the Code of Maryland Regulations, Public Safety, § 14-1101-1103. The FSRC was formed in response to the food system vulnerabilities exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The FSRC harnesses the collaborative efforts of Maryland State agencies and food system experts to address the issues impeding production, distribution, and access to nutrition across Maryland. Its members strive to achieve the goals set forth by law:

1. To address the food insecurity crisis in the State resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting economic crisis.
2. Develop equity and sustainability policy recommendations to increase the long-term resiliency of the food system.
3. Expand the impact of existing food council organizations; and
4. Develop a strategic plan to increase the production and procurement of Maryland certified food.

Over the past year, the FSRC diligently worked on the complex issues outlined in the Next Steps section of the [Annual Report](#) presented to the Maryland General Assembly in November 2023.² Following the publication of the FSRC's Annual Report to the Maryland General Assembly in November 2023, the FSRC was formally moved under the Maryland Office of Resilience within the Maryland Department of Emergency Management. The three committees worked to develop policy recommendations to advance equity, accessibility, sustainability, and resilience within Maryland's food and agricultural landscape.

²Maryland Food System Resiliency Council (FSRC). (2023). *2023 Report to the General Assembly* (No. 3). Maryland Department of Emergency Management. [https://mdem.maryland.gov/Food%20Security%20Council%20Minutes/Public%20Safety%20Article%20C2%A7%2014-1103\(c\)\(3\)%20\(MSAR%20%23%2013048\).pdf](https://mdem.maryland.gov/Food%20Security%20Council%20Minutes/Public%20Safety%20Article%20C2%A7%2014-1103(c)(3)%20(MSAR%20%23%2013048).pdf)



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2024 Recommendations

The following is a detailed discussion of the recommendations endorsed by the Maryland Food System Resiliency Council (FSRC) and reflects the work undertaken since its establishment in 2021. Many of the FSRC's 2024 Recommendations build on those included in previous years' reports. The evolution of these recommendations has resulted from the 2024 legislative session as well as coordination with state agencies and food system stakeholders.

Goal 1

To address the food insecurity crisis in the State resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting economic crisis by:

- *Coordinating state and local level food insecurity services to support residents of the state.*
- *Tracking and analyzing data to create a comprehensive map of food insecurity across the state and identify gaps in service.*
- *Leveraging federal and private sector grants and other resources in order to address food insecurity needs.*
- *Advising the state on how best to allocate resources and increase efficiency.*
- *Exploring the role of and potential use for the federal community eligibility provision to ensure all students in the state are fed.*
- *Making recommendations to the Maryland State Department of Education and the Maryland General Assembly to implement relevant findings.*

Recommendation 1.1: Establish and Maintain a Statewide Charitable Food Locator Service

Using existing technology and available data, create a public-facing, user-friendly tool to direct Maryland residents to existing, local sources of charitable food. The technology product would include food pantries, feeding programs, school pantries, The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) distribution sites, "pop up" pantry



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sites, and more. The [Maryland Food Bank](#) and the [Capital Area Food Bank](#) have similar products for their service areas.^{3,4}

Is legislation required to implement?

No. Establishing and maintaining a statewide charitable food locator service will not require legislation to implement. Tools currently exist that draw in publicly available data sets. However, legislation or an Executive Order requiring state agencies to share key data elements (Medicaid, SNAP, etc.) may be necessary. An Executive Order may provide more flexibility as data elements change regularly and new programs are added. Additional federal permissions may be necessary for federal data sets.

Is funding required to implement?

No. If existing tools are used, there would be no additional costs. If a new tool is built, there would be one-time development costs in addition to possible ongoing licensing fees. \$50,000 would be sufficient to create a new tool or customize an existing product. The funding requested in the following [Recommendation 1.2](#) will provide sufficient technical expertise to cover the costs of preparing and loading the data.

Recommendation 1.2: Establish and Maintain a Statewide Food Insecurity Map

Create a public-facing [ArcGIS](#) map to visualize food insecurity data and identify gaps in service.⁵ Existing maps can be combined and modified to show data by geographic areas (zip code, county, census place or census tract). Methodologies and data analytics currently exist that can show the disparity between levels of need and current resources. Creating a comprehensive public-facing data set for mapping will enable and support data-driven decision-making to help understand where the food insecurity levels are acute and/or rising. Qualitative data and expertise will always be necessary, however, this map will clearly indicate where additional resources are needed, and why.

There is no single, holistic, statewide map that incorporates population & demographics information, program information (e.g. Supplemental Nutrition

³Welcome to the Maryland Hunger Map. (2023). [ArcGIS]. Maryland Food Bank.

<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/fe4fdacfd20b46c08dac240ca8dd6192>

⁴Find Food Near You. (2019). [GIS]. Capital Area Food Bank. <https://www.capitalareafoodbank.org/find-food-assistance/>

⁵ArcGIS. (2024). ArcGIS. <https://www.arcgis.com/index.html>



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Assistance Program [SNAP] enrollment or utilization), and services information. Furthermore, the resources required to maintain each of these maps create duplication of effort and a lack of cohesive, systematic understanding of food insecurity in Maryland during normal operations and emergency response. A holistic approach could eliminate redundancy and, as a result, free up limited resources and improve the end-user experience.

Development of this data set will enable coordination and collaboration between governmental and non-governmental entities that provide resources and support to Marylanders experiencing food insecurity. Together, the data set and map will serve as a visual dashboard to assist stakeholders in understanding a more complete picture of the depth and breadth of food insecurity in Maryland in terms of social determinants of health, changing population demographics, infrastructure, and more.

The map should incorporate data from existing maps to provide a holistic view of needs, services, and gaps. Various maps currently exist in Maryland and are run by government and non-governmental entities, each with a specific audience and different area of focus:

- The Maryland Food Bank and Capital Area Food Bank have maps that reflect their service areas and jointly cover the entire state.
- [Future Harvest](#), [Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments](#), and the [Maryland Department of Agriculture](#) have developed a Find-a-Farmer or Market Map.^{6, 7, 8}
- [Montgomery County](#), [Baltimore City](#), and [Anne Arundel County](#) have created their own maps.^{9, 10, 11}
- The [Prince George's Food Equity Council](#) has published a healthy food priority area map.¹²

⁶Future Harvest. (2024). *Beginner Farmer Training Program*. Future Harvest. <https://futureharvest.org/programs/beginner-farmer-training-program/>

⁷Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MW COG). (2024). *NCR GDX Regional Food Resources Initiative*. Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MW COG). <https://www.mwcog.org/environment/data-and-tools/ncr-gdx-regional-food-resources-initiative/>

⁸*Maryland Farmers Market Directory*. (2024). [Map]. Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA). <https://maryland.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=831025f376b4478c9dc22d8e0f945805>

⁹*MoCo Food Map*. (2024). [GIS]. Montgomery County Food Council. <https://mocofoodcouncil.org/mocofoodmap/>

¹⁰Baltimore City Government. (2018). *Mapping and Data*. Baltimore City Department of Planning. <https://planning.baltimorecity.gov/baltimore-food-policy-initiative/food-environment>

¹¹*Food Environment Anne Arundel County*. (2018). [Map]. Anne Arundel County Government. <https://aacpsschools.org/nutrition/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Food-Environment-Map-2018.pdf>

¹²*Healthy Food Priority Areas - Prince George's County, Maryland*. (2019). [Map]. Prince George's Food Equity Council. <https://princegeorges.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/9f9202c51cc345ab9e0e1aa21a23bb76>



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- The Maryland Department of Planning provides a range of interactive GIS maps including [Priority Funding Areas Interactive Map](#) or State Land Use Map.¹³
- MDEM's Operational Situational Picture for Response to an Emergency ([OSPREY](#)) provides key Maryland-specific data and hazard-related information, including Community Lifelines.¹⁴
- [County Health Rankings](#) provides an interactive map of Maryland's public health data, including its [Food Environment Index](#).^{15, 16}

Because up-to-date food system data is important in both normal operating circumstances and emergency response operations, the FSRC recommends allocating funds to coordinate with both government and non-governmental organizations to develop and maintain a Maryland food insecurity map. This may be achieved by working with an organization to update and expand an existing public-facing Geographic Information System (GIS) map to support food system resilience efforts across state agencies. In addition, while the Maryland Department of the Environment's [Environmental Justice Screening Tool](#) includes elevated exposure to agricultural hazards, such as through proximity to concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs), socioeconomic and environmental indicators contributing to diet-related health disparities (e.g. proximity to healthy food retailers) are not explicitly named.¹⁷ Data from the holistic food insecurity map can be used to update this and other Maryland maps identifying priority areas for promoting community resilience.

The comprehensive food insecurity map should include at minimum the following layers:

- Census tract, zip code, or county-level data
 - Federal census data (income, demographics, unemployment rates, etc.)
 - Federal poverty level from the American Community Survey analysis

¹³*Priority Funding Areas*. (2009). [Map]. Maryland Department of Planning. <https://planning.maryland.gov/Pages/OurProducts/pfamap.aspx>

¹⁴*Operational and Situational Preparedness for Responding to an Emergency (OSPREY)*. (2024). [Map]. Maryland Department of Emergency Management. <https://mdem.maryland.gov/pages/ospreylanding.aspx>

¹⁵*County Health Rankings & Roadmaps*. (2024). *Maryland: Data by County*. <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/health-data/maryland?year=2024>

¹⁶*Food Environment Index in Maryland*. (2024). [Map]. County Health Rankings & Roadmaps. <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/health-data/health-factors/health-behaviors/diet-and-exercise/food-environment-index?state=24&year=2024#map-anchor>

¹⁷*Environmental Justice Screening Tool*. (2024). [Map]. Maryland Department of the Environment. https://mde.maryland.gov/Environmental_Justice/Pages/EJ-Screening-Tool.aspx



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- Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed ([ALICE](#)) data¹⁸
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) enrollment and utilization rates
- The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) utilization
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families ([TANF](#)) enrollment¹⁹
- Medicaid utilization
- State agency data applicable to health disparities
- School-based nutrition programs like the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program, and Community Eligibility Provision enrollment
- Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) enrollment and utilization rates
- Existing food assistance providers
- Identified areas of unmet needs
 - Hunger “hot spots” (current food resources compared to need by geographic unit)
 - [USDA Food Access Research Atlas](#)²⁰
- [Maryland Certified Local Growers](#)²¹
 - Production & aggregation facilities
 - Distribution centers
 - Farmers markets
- Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) and [Maryland Market Money](#) (MMM) locations²²
- Critical infrastructure
 - Cold storage facilities

Is legislation required to implement?

¹⁸United for ALICE. (2024). *Research Center - Maryland*. United for ALICE. <https://www.unitedforalice.org/state-overview/Maryland>

¹⁹U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Family Assistance. (2022, June 29). *Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Family Assistance. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ofa/programs/temporary-assistance-needy-families-tanf>

²⁰United States Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. (2024, April 17). *Food Access Research Atlas*. United States Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/>

²¹Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA). (2024). *Certified Local Farm and Fish Program*. Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA). https://mda.maryland.gov/maryland_products/Pages/certified-local-farm.aspx

²²Southern Maryland Agriculture Development Commission (SMADC), Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA), Maryland Agricultural & Resource Based-Industry Development Corporation (MARBIDCO), & Farms and Food Access for a Resilient Maryland (FFARMD) Foundation. (2024). *Maryland Market Money*. Maryland Market Money. <https://www.marylandmarketmoney.org>



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No. Legislation is not required to establish a comprehensive food insecurity map as existing tools can be used to draw in publicly available data sets. However, legislation or Executive Order requiring state agencies to share key data elements (Medicaid, SNAP, etc.) may be necessary. An Executive Order may provide more flexibility as data elements change regularly and new programs are added. Additional federal permissions may be necessary for federal data sets.

Is funding required to implement?

Yes. Updating existing data sets and maintaining additional layers will require annual funding for staff to conduct data collection and management, respond to requests for data or analysis, and address emergency response needs. The map must be accessible and user-friendly so that the data it contains is shared widely. This may require separate hosting and public promotion. If the map is created by a state agency, this will also require additional funding for services provided by the Department of Innovation and Technology ([DoIT](#)) in supporting/maintaining the GIS platform.²³ Allocation of \$300,000 across two years would be sufficient to employ one full-time researcher, one part-time GIS specialist, and resources to develop and maintain the map and database.

Recommendation 1.3: Strengthening the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)

Change state policies governing the TEFAP program to make it easier for more Marylanders experiencing food insecurity to utilize this federally funded program.

The Emergency Food Assistance Program ([TEFAP](#)) is a cornerstone of the food supply for [Feeding America](#) food banks and the neighbors served. Since the program's inception about 40 years ago, the program has relied on the infrastructure of food banks to channel nutritious commodities to families in need.^{24, 25} The Capital Area Food Bank (CAFB) is one of only six Feeding America food banks that serve TEFAP in three states. Opportunities to innovate and strengthen TEFAP have grown ever more important as food banks across the country seek to leverage the support of governmental programs to counteract skyrocketing food costs and dwindling food donations.

²³Maryland Department of Information Technology (DoIT). (2024). *DoIT*. Maryland Department of Information Technology (DoIT). <https://doit.maryland.gov/Pages/default.aspx>

²⁴Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS). (2024). *The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)*. Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS). <https://dhs.maryland.gov/bureau-special-grants/tefap/>

²⁵Feeding America. (2024). *Feeding America*. Feeding America. <https://www.feedingamerica.org/>



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Capital Area Food Bank (CAFB) in coordination with 22 other food banks across the country [published a report](#) outlining key findings from food banks' perspectives on the program and suggestions for federal enhancements via USDA rulemaking processes and the Farm Bill.²⁶ The Maryland Food Bank (MFB) and CAFB have reviewed state TEFAP practices and created suggestions for state-level innovations in the following aspects of service and administration:

1. Improving neighbor access and experience;
2. Streamlining reporting processes and technological interfaces;
3. Updating notification schemes and usage of funding streams; and
4. Collaborating on the Maryland State Distribution Plan.

TEFAP has four key eligibility determination requirements in federal statute: name, number of people per household, address indicator, and proof of need based on income. States have a measure of discretion in dictating how these federal standards are administered. For example, some states collect full addresses, while others only request a ZIP code or state of residence. Strategic consideration was undertaken related to the innovations to potentially begin improving Marylanders' ability to equitably and efficiently access food:

- Approve MDHS' request to increase the TEFAP income threshold from the current 150% federal poverty line (FPL) to 185%. This amendment follows USDA Food and Nutrition Services (FNS), Mid-Atlantic Regional Office (MARO) standards, since MARO states currently have an income eligibility level no higher than 185% of the FPL, allowing households to be automatically eligible to receive TEFAP based on the participation of all other means-tested, social safety net programs.
- If possible, CAFB and MFB will work toward accepting 100% of entitlement and bonus foods offered to Maryland by the federal government.
- Collect only federally-required information from neighbors, and prohibit the collection of additional eligibility information such as identification documents and neighbor signature. At this time, MARO requires an address in compliance with federal guidelines. Pending updates to the [proposed Access and Parity rule](#), collect only a zip code rather than full address.²⁷
- Facilitate neighbors' intake experiences by using digital intake platforms.

²⁶The Capital Area Food Bank (CAFB). (2022). *TEFAP Reform*. The Capital Area Food Bank (CAFB). <https://www.capitalareafoodbank.org/what-we-do/advocacy-public-policy/tefap-reform/>

²⁷United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. (2023, November 3). *Food Distribution Programs: Improving Access and Parity Proposed Rule*. United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. <https://www.fns.usda.gov/usda-foods/improving-access-parity-proposed-rule>



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Further, states are beholden to much of the funding provided by USDA in terms of time, amount, and format. The FSRC supports reforming how these funding streams are announced, administered, and operationalized. This can provide a unique opportunity to ensure these crucial programs are meeting the needs of the intended parties.

States possess the ability to convert up to 20 percent of entitlement funding to administrative support as outlined in federal regulation. Of food banks surveyed in the report, out-of-pocket costs to administer the program were on average, 9 and 16 percent for federal fiscal years 2021 and 2022, respectively. On the other hand, it may be the case that a food bank needs to increase its TEFAP food sourcing and choose not to convert any funds to administrative in any given year. The decision-making process for conversion should be more inclusive as food banks' needs, like those of their clients, fluctuate greatly from year to year. MDHS should continue to consult food banks in the future before converting TEFAP food dollars into administrative funds to be used by the food banks.

Is legislation required to implement?

No.

Is funding required to implement?

No.

Goal 2

Develop equity and sustainability policy recommendations to increase the long-term resiliency of the food system:

- *Addressing and eliminating racial inequalities in the food system.*
- *Addressing and eliminating diet-related public health disparities.*
- *Addressing and eliminating food deserts.*
- *Reducing food waste, increasing recycling, and encouraging other relevant environmental impacts.*

Recommendation 2.1: Establish a Distributed Network of Cold Storage for Food System Resiliency

The FSRC recommends strategically locating cold storage facilities within communities to expand food aggregation and distribution capacities in Maryland.



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Leveraging existing infrastructure and markets to identify and establish strategic cold storage locations for community organizations will help them reduce food loss by effectively aggregating and distributing produce and other perishable food products.

Increasing cold storage capacity at the local level (at food pantries, schools, community centers, and farms) was identified by the FSRC in the [2021](#), [2022](#), and [2023](#) reports as an essential component in improving Maryland's food system resiliency. Cold storage helps to expand the availability of nutritious, fresh, healthy food for distribution to communities. Cold storage units assist in reducing wasted food residuals of produce, often locally grown, by extending the shelf life of food, including rescued and donated food. In Maryland, small food distributors are forced to turn away donations or rescued foods due to limited or lack of cold storage capacity.

Cold storage is a statewide issue that needs community-based solutions. To aid with food storage and distribution, [the Institute for Public Health Innovation](#) supplied three cold storage trailers in Prince George's County (PGC), which can store and distribute 32,100 pounds each week.²⁸ In Charles County, the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC) spearheaded the [SoMD Community Fridges program](#) to increase food rescue by matching donors with farmers and providing fridge and freezer space while aiding in coordinating transportation.²⁹ Community fridges can be accessed at Charles County public schools for county residents. There is a need for funding to expand these programs into regional and state-wide efforts.

Cold storage that is tailored to the local community's needs minimizes food losses and maximizes food distribution at any point in a community's food system. Cold storage that can accommodate larger equipment, such as pallet jacks, can improve the ability of organizations, pantries, school districts, or community centers to accept and distribute a larger variety of foods, including fresh produce and culturally appropriate items. This would additionally ensure local agricultural products are consumed rather than being wasted.

One way to increase cold storage efficiency while working toward state climate change goals is coupling cold storage with solar panels and battery energy storage

²⁸Institute for Public Health Innovation. (2023, February 2). *Cold Storage Infrastructure Improvement*. Institute for Public Health Innovation. <https://www.institutephi.org/services/capacity-building/coldstorage/>

²⁹Southern Maryland Agriculture Development Commission (SMADC). (2024). *SMADC Farm to Community Fridge Guide*. Southern Maryland Agriculture Development Commission (SMADC).

<https://smadc.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/SMADC-Farm-to-Fridge-Guide-for-Farmers-5-6-24-updated.pdf>



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systems. In addition to reducing environmental impacts, solar-powered cold storage units could be used in events of emergency, such as power outages, periods of grid instability, natural disasters, or delays in supply-chain deliveries for food distribution networks. [A study of farmers in India](#) who used solar-powered cold storage units saw a payback of their investment in 2 years while saving \$7,449 annually.³⁰ [A 2022 study on cold storage](#) indicated that adding solar panels reduces overall operation costs by 15% and decreases energy usage by 87%.³¹ There is a need to provide funding mechanisms for strategic cold storage units that are solar-powered for resiliency during disasters and reduce greenhouse gas emissions throughout their lifetime.

Creating a cold storage fund would allow more units to be placed within communities to reduce food waste, promote food recovery, and increase food security and resiliency within communities. Grant awardees would be responsible for reporting metrics on the impact of food saved (including pounds of food stored and preserved annually), estimated annual financial impact of the cold storage investment, and maintenance costs for five years after receiving grant funding.

While the FSRC has not yet identified a state agency to implement this cold storage grant program, several recent programs in the Mid-Atlantic could serve as models. Maryland's implementing agency may consider these examples while also catering to its own capacity and objectives. For instance, Pennsylvania's [Food Recovery Infrastructure Grant](#) has funded community-based projects to preserve and distribute locally-produced food to communities facing food insecurity. Recipients of this grant have indicated that additional costs, such as materials delivery fees, maintenance and repair expenses, and energy expenditures, were factored into the total project budget. Additionally, the [cold storage infrastructure grant program](#) recently implemented by the Montgomery County Office of Food Systems Resilience may also serve as a model demonstrating the FSRC's vision of community resilience for a statewide cold storage grant program.^{32, 33}

Is legislation required to implement?

³⁰Mishra, R., Chaulya, S. K., Prasad, G. M., Mandal, S. K., & Banerjee, G. (2020). Design of a Low Cost, Smart and Stand-Alone PV Cold Storage System Using a Domestic Split Air Conditioner. *Journal of Stored Products Research*, 89, 101720. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jspr.2020.101720>

³¹Xiao, X., Fu, Y., Yang, Y., & Zhang, X. (2022). Sustainable Solar Powered Battery-Free Wireless Sensing for Food Cold Chain Management. *Sensors International*, 3, 100157. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sintl.2022.100157>

³²Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection. (2024). *Recycling Financial Assistance*. Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection. <https://www.dep.pa.gov/443/Business/Land/Waste/Recycling/Municipal-Resources/FinancialAssistance/Pages/default.aspx>

³³Montgomery County Government. (2024, June 7). *Fourteen Nonprofit Food Assistance Organizations and Farm Partners Receive Grants to Build Food System Capacity and Strengthen Community Resilience*. Montgomery County Government. https://www2.montgomerycountymd.gov/mcportalapps/Press_Detail.aspx?Item_ID=45365



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No. Legislation is not needed to implement a grant program.

Is funding required to implement?

Yes. A minimum of \$6.3M is required to implement this recommendation to accommodate cold storage infrastructure for agriculture, food distribution, food donation, and other needs to increase food system resiliency. This level of funding could run a grant program for cold storage needs, including freezers, refrigerators, cold storage lockers, cold storage trucks, and other cold storage needs.

While the cost will vary for each proposal based on installation and maintenance plans submitted to the grant fund, the \$6.3 million requested would be enough to cover \$60,000 for the administration of the grant, as well as to fund approximately 20 large (24'x40' estimated at \$170,000) and 40 small (20'x20' estimated at \$71,000) walk-in cold storage units that are solar-powered with battery back-up. The cost estimates are based on building and installation costs that include a pad, electrical upgrades, equipment, and labor. Administrative funding would support marketing the grant funds, creating the cold storage request for proposals, and evaluating the applications based on locational need, maintenance plans with timelines, and collaboration plans for short-term emergency coordination, if needed.

Recommendation 2.2: Establishment of Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund and Grant Programs

The FSRC recommends the creation of an on-farm organics diversion and recycling grant program and fund to support resilient community food systems and reduce negative environmental impacts.

A grant program can boost community-led projects and leverage local food system expertise to address the identified needs for expanded infrastructure and education to prevent, reduce, rescue, and divert wasted food. A nonlapsing funding mechanism, such as the \$2/ton disposal surcharge proposed in the 'Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund and Grant Programs – Established' proposed in [HB1318](#) in the 2024 legislative session, could support the administration of the grant program without impacting the state budget.³⁴ Furthermore, the fund would enable residents in the state to continue to benefit from locally-driven projects that also help the state reach its goals for wasted food and greenhouse gas emission reductions. Similar disposal surcharges implemented in other jurisdictions have

³⁴Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund and Grant Programs - Established, No. HB1318 (2024). <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/hb1318>



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successfully funded local projects for the storage and distribution of surplus food that would otherwise go to waste, thus benefiting communities, food system resiliency, and food security. Grant funds promoting the development of distributed on-farm composting systems support food system resiliency and local food production while reducing environmental impacts.

The funds from the surcharge could be divided into two funding mechanisms. First, the Maryland Department of Agriculture could create an On-Farm Organics Diversion and Recycling Grant through a special, nonlapsing fund to support a new On-Farm Organics Diversion and Recycling Grant program to increase the number of organic recycling sites, prevent on-farm food waste, and promote on-farm food recovery. Second, the Maryland Department of the Environment could create a Wasted Food Reduction and Diversion Fund—a special, nonlapsing fund for a new Waste Food Reduction and Diversion Grant Program to aid with infrastructure and education efforts that reduce food waste, and rescue and divert surplus food. These two nonlapsing funding support mechanisms would be funded through a statewide solid waste disposal surcharge to be collected by owners and operators of refuse disposal systems with surcharge revenue remitted quarterly to the Comptroller. The \$2 per ton of solid waste rate processed by a refuse disposal site would provide the means to provide incentives and cost-sharing for organics recycling. Funding (\$250,000) from the surcharge would be used to create educational materials, provide technical assistance, facilitate community engagement, and incorporate Environmental Justice. The fund would provide 25 percent of administrative costs to administer the grant awards.

According to the [National Council of State Legislatures](#), 29 states have additional surcharges for solid waste.³⁵ Over one-third of these states have a surcharge between \$1-\$2. The \$2 per ton fee proposed in Maryland is less than the disposal fees of our two neighboring states. [West Virginia](#) has a \$2.55 surcharge per ton of solid waste that will increase to a \$2.75 surcharge in 2025.³⁶ Pennsylvania has a \$6.25 per ton surcharge spread across three initiatives. Pennsylvania's [Growing Greener Grants](#) has a \$4 per ton charge funding the Growing Greener Grants Program established by [Act 68 of 1999](#), a \$0.25 per ton charge funding an Environmental Stewardship Fund (ESF) established by [Act 90 of 2002](#), and a \$2 per ton charge for waste disposal at landfills and resource recovery facilities established by [Act 101 of 1988](#) to finance the Recycling

³⁵National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL). (2021). *States With Landfill Tipping Surcharges*. National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL).
<https://cdn.ilsr.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/State-landfill-tipping-surcharges.2021.pdf>

³⁶West Virginia State Treasurer. (2024). *Solid Waste Management Additional Surcharge*. West Virginia State Treasurer.
<https://www.wvtreasury.com/Banking-Services/Revenue-Distributions/Solid-Waste-Management-Additional-Surcharge>



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Fund to award municipal grants for recycling collection, education, processing facilities, and equipment.^{37, 38, 39, 40} Additional state and local surcharge examples are the [Institute for Local Self-Reliance](#) website.⁴¹

Is legislation required to implement?

Yes.

Is funding required to implement?

Yes. The State Budget may appropriate funding for the grants and programs. The \$2 per ton tipping fee would create substantial funds for both programs with administration costs taken from the fund to properly support education, technical assistance, and assist with community engagement and Environmental Justice incorporation.

Goal 3

To expand the impact of existing food council organizations by:

- *Providing coordination and facilitation of knowledge exchange at the state level.*
- *Supporting identification and application of grants to operating funds to support existing and new food council organizations as needed.*

³⁷Jones, S. (2021, February 11). *Pennsylvania – Waste Disposal Surcharges*. Institute for Local Self-Reliance. <https://ilsr.org/articles/pennsylvania-waste-surcharges-2/>

³⁸1999 Act 68 - Environmental Resources (27 PA.C.S.), 1999–68, C1. 27 (1999). <https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/li/uconsCheck.cfm?yr=1999&sessInd=0&act=68>

³⁹2002 Act 90 - Chapter 62 Waste Transportation Safety (2002). <https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/li/uconsCheck.cfm?txtType=HTM&yr=2002&sessInd=0&act=0090.&chpt=000.&subchpt=000.&sctn=002.&subsctn=000>

⁴⁰1988 Act 101 - Municipal Waste Planning, Recycling, and Waste Reduction Act, No. P.L. 556, No. 101 (1988). <https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/Legis/LI/uconsCheck.cfm?txtType=HTM&yr=1988&sessInd=0&smthLwInd=0&act=0101>.

⁴¹Jones, S. (2022, February 4). *Surcharges On Waste Disposal Fund Composting*. Institute for Local Self-Reliance. <https://ilsr.org/articles/disposal-surcharges-fund-composting/>



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Recommendation 3.1: Expand Local Food Policy Councils to Strengthen Food System Resiliency

Not surprisingly, funding has been cited as a perennial problem since food councils began forming in the 1980s. Advocacy and civic engagement are challenging to evaluate, and many private funders do not support advocacy efforts. Outside of in-kind contributions, councils most commonly received funding from private foundations (42% of councils); individuals (34%); and local, state, or government grants (27%) and budgets (27%). Funding for council work remains scarce, even with their stepped-up roles during the pandemic. A national survey of food councils in 2023 by the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future found that 31% report having no funding; 24% \$1-\$10,000; 10% between \$10,001-25,000; 16% between \$25,001-100,000; and 19% over \$100,000. 44% have paid staff.

In Maryland, all ten existing food councils have received funding through the USDA Regional Food System Partnership Planning Grant through September 2024, and will require additional funding and administrative support to sustain them and build capacity. A state-initiated grant program would be greatly beneficial for existing food councils to build capacity and assist new councils to form. The FSRC recognizes the budget limitations for such a state-funded program and recommends a Food Council Coordinator Grant Program providing \$40,000 per council to employ a part-time coordinator. The coordinator would support communication between food councils across the state, assist with data collection and analysis to monitor food insecurity in local jurisdictions, and support equitable community engagement around council priorities.

Is legislation required to implement this recommendation?

No.

Is funding required to implement this recommendation?

Yes. \$400,000 is needed to hire part-time coordinators for the food councils with a demonstrated need for support staff as well as to cover the costs involved in administering this grant program.



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Goal 4

Develop a strategic plan to increase the production and procurement of Maryland certified food including:

- Increasing the quality and quantity of production as well as aggregation, marketing, and distribution of local food in urban, suburban, and rural settings.*
- Increasing procurement of local food through schools, universities and other institutions.*
- Creating additional market opportunities for Maryland food businesses.*
- Expanding access to small-scale manufacturing and food production infrastructure.*

Recommendation 4.1: Agricultural Apprenticeship Program

The FSRC recommends that the Maryland Department of Labor (MDOL) coordinate with the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) to incorporate and pursue agricultural employers, coordinate rotating farm labor, and support farmworkers in obtaining off-season jobs for Maryland's [American Job Centers, Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning](#).⁴² The goal is to create Registered Apprenticeship opportunities for agricultural jobs on farms, including small farms with diversified production models. The [US Department of Labor](#) has previously approved apprenticeship [frameworks for farmers and agricultural workers](#), many of which could be adapted to establish Registered Apprenticeship opportunities in Maryland.^{43, 44}

MDOL is [Maryland's State Apprenticeship Agency](#) and has authority from the US Department of Labor to develop and approve Registered Apprenticeship programs in Maryland. Presently there are no direct agricultural apprenticeship programs active in Maryland.⁴⁵ The [Public Sector Innovation Fund](#) has \$3 million available in total, capped at \$600k per state or local public agency, to cover [administrative costs](#)

⁴²Maryland Department of Labor (MDOL). (2024). *Maryland's American Job Centers - Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning*. Maryland Department of Labor. <https://www.dllr.state.md.us/county/>

⁴³United States Department of Labor (DOL), Employment and Training Administration. (2024). *Apprenticeship*. United States Department of Labor (DOL). <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/apprenticeship>

⁴⁴United States Department of Labor (DOL). (2024). *Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers* [Text]. Apprenticeship USA. <https://www.apprenticeship.gov/apprenticeship-occupations/listings?occupationCode=11-9013.00>

⁴⁵Maryland Department of Labor (MDOL). (2024). *Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Program (MATP) - Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning*. Maryland Department of Labor (MDOL). <https://labor.maryland.gov/employment/appr/>



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required to implement apprenticeship programs through 2026.^{46,47} Eligible costs include staffing, curriculum design, training materials, and supportive services to address employment barriers. MDA lacks the staff and funding capacity needed to implement an agricultural apprenticeship program at this time. Given industry-specific factors, MDA would be the most appropriate state agency to manage such a program if provided the necessary funding and resources. Incentives for employers to participate include assistance in obtaining labor and a \$3,000 per apprentice per year [tax credit](#) (up to five apprentices).⁴⁸ Additionally, employers may be eligible to receive grant funding through MDOL to [cover the costs of training](#) apprentices.⁴⁹

A potential barrier for agricultural employers lies in the existing compensation policy, which guides employers to pay apprentices an unspecified percentage of their supervisors' salaries ([see item F](#)).⁵⁰ In agriculture, this percentage may result in wages below the minimum wage. Unlike the Fair Labor Standards Act ([FLSA](#)), the Registered Apprenticeship Program does not have agricultural carve-outs in its compensation policy.⁵¹ Therefore, supplemental funding may be required to ensure fair compensation for apprentices working for employers who earn less than minimum wage or can demonstrate financial need on a case-by-case basis.

MDA may coordinate with organizations such as local food councils, [Future Harvest](#), [Maryland Farm Bureau](#), and [Cooperative Extension](#) offices to promote the Registered Apprenticeship Program to farm employers, including small and mid-sized operations as well as agricultural businesses with a variety of enterprises and market

⁴⁶Maryland Department of Labor (MDOL). (2023, November 16). *Public Sector Apprenticeship Innovation Fund - Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Program (MATP) - Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning*. Maryland Department of Labor (MDOL).

<https://www.labor.maryland.gov/employment/appr/apprpublicsector.shtml>

⁴⁷Maryland Department of Labor (MDOL). (2024). *Public Sector Apprenticeship Innovation Fund - Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Program*. Maryland Department of Labor (MDOL).

<https://www.labor.maryland.gov/employment/appr/SAEFPublicSectoronepager.pdf>

⁴⁸Maryland Department of Labor (MDOL). (2024). *Maryland Tax Credit for Eligible Apprentices - Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Program (MATP) - Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning*. Maryland Department of Labor (MDOL). <https://labor.maryland.gov/employment/appr/apprtaxcreditinfo.shtml>

⁴⁹Maryland Department of Labor (MDOL). (2024). *Apprenticeship Grant Funding Opportunities - Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Program (MATP) - Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning*. Maryland Department of Labor (MDOL). <https://www.labor.maryland.gov/employment/appr/apprgrants.shtml>

⁵⁰Maryland Division of State Documents. (2024). *Standards of an Apprenticeship Program* (No. 09.12.43.05). Maryland State Government. <https://dsd.maryland.gov/regulations/Pages/default.aspx>

⁵¹United States Department of Labor (DOL), Wage and Hour Division. (2024). *Wages and the Fair Labor Standards Act*. United States Department of Labor (DOL). <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/flsa>



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outlets.^{52, 53, 54} Further, the American Job Centers should include agricultural jobs in their job placement listings for clients and ensure agricultural employers are being served through other Maryland workforce development programming, such as the [Maryland Corps/Service Year Option](#) and the Maryland State Department of Education's [apprenticeship partnership with FFA](#) (formerly Future Farmers of America).^{55, 56}

Is legislation required to implement?

No.

Is funding required to implement?

Yes. To effectively adapt and implement the Registered Apprenticeship Program for the agricultural industry, MDA will require administrative funding and staffing support. Additionally, establishing a supplemental fund may be necessary to ensure fair compensation for apprentices for employers who earn less than minimum wage or can demonstrate financial need.

Recommendation 4.2: Agricultural Nutrient Management Planning Support

Nutrient Management Plans (NMPs) are existing production tools and regulation requirements for farm owners and operators to adhere to the EPA's Water Quality Act to minimize pollution to the Chesapeake Bay. Since 2022, the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) and the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) have had to increase staff resources to confirm compliance with the appropriate State and Federal water quality standards, effluent limitations, and pollution control laws and regulations that require development and implementation of NMPs.

The University of Maryland (UMD) Extension's [Agricultural Nutrient Management Program](#) (ANMP) aids farm owners and operators to write their NMPs according to

⁵²Future Harvest. (2024). *Beginner Farmer Training Program*. Future Harvest. <https://futureharvest.org/programs/beginner-farmer-training-program/>

⁵³Maryland Farm Bureau. (2017, November 4). *Maryland Farm Bureau*. Maryland Farm Bureau. <https://mdfarmbureau.com/>

⁵⁴University of Maryland Extension (UME). (2024). *University of Maryland Extension (UME)*. University of Maryland Extension (UME). <https://extension.umd.edu/home/>

⁵⁵Department of Service and Civic Innovation. (2024). *Department of Service and Civic Innovation*. Department of Service and Civic Innovation. <https://dsci.maryland.gov/Pages/default.aspx>

⁵⁶Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). (2024). *FFA*. Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). <https://marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Pages/CTE-Programs-of-Study/CTSOs/FFA.aspx>



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existing and newly enacted regulatory practices and standards to achieve compliance.⁵⁷ Currently, UMD does not have permanent funding to support the 31 permanent positions in ANMP. MDA and UMD announced last year there was a need for a [new strategy](#) in the delivery of NMP writing services. \$3.5 million is needed to enhance the program quality while increasing the salary and duration of the positions, thereby improving employee retention and continuity of services.⁵⁸ Currently, UMD's funding is an annual downstream award from the EPA.

A sustained funding source for UMD is needed to provide technical assistance to all Maryland producers, especially producers with limited resources, and is a necessary step toward compliance and environmental stewardship. Currently, nutrient management plan writers are contract workers at UMD, which reduces staff retention. Sustained funding directly to UMD for nutrient management planning support statewide would increase NMP compliance and help build continued trust in the community with long-term NMP writers.

Additionally, funding is needed for UMD to modernize software and tools for developing NMPs and continued support for the regulated agricultural community in utilizing the modernized tools. The software and tools for developing NMP need to be updated to ensure that all data, sourced from existing and newly enacted regulatory practices and standards, is properly captured, categorized, and analyzed to help MDA, MDE, and policymakers understand the effectiveness of evolving nutrient management planning on both agricultural viability and environmental protection. NMP writers also need more training, where available, to incorporate soil health and biological processes into recommendations, as nutrient management planning expands and becomes more complex. Additional resources are needed for small farms and urban agriculture to ensure continued support and effective compliance.

Long-term employment of ANMPs is crucial for UMD's goal to increase farm acreage supported from 300,000 (30% of the state's farmland) to 470,000 acres (approximately 50%) to ensure compliance rates in the state are closer to 100% and reduce the number of farms without proper annual NMP submission. This additional nutrient management support would be consistent with the 2022 legislation (HB

⁵⁷University of Maryland Extension. (2024, January 22). *Agricultural Nutrient Management Program*. University of Maryland Extension.
<https://extension.umd.edu/programs/agriculture-food-systems/program-areas/integrated-programs/agricultural-nutrient-management-program>

⁵⁸Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA). (2023, July 17). *Maryland Department of Agriculture Announces New Strategy at Nutrient Management Summit*. Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA).
<https://news.maryland.gov/mda/press-release/2023/07/17/maryland-department-of-agriculture-announces-new-strategy-at-nutrient-management-summit/>



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649) that charges UMD to reduce "significant" noncompliance among permit holders, which can include increased fines, more frequent on-site inspections, and notices of deficiency being issued and documented by MDE as the delegated authority to enforce this law. Additional capacity and resources are needed to fulfill the UMD technical assistance requests as well as the additional auditing and administration support at MDA.

Is legislation required to implement?

No. Legislation is not required to increase funding for new nutrient management state agency personnel at MDA and MDE, and to change funding allocations to UMD.

Is funding required to implement?

Yes. Funding is needed for two full-time equivalents (FTEs) at MDE and two FTEs at MDA assigned to technical assistance and enforcement for NMP. Sustained funding (non-contract) is needed for UMD at \$3.5 million annually, with cost-of-living increases, for Nutrient Management Plan services. This sum includes personnel to provide training, education, and the maintenance and upgrades to nutrient management planning software and tools. In addition, one-time funding of \$900,000 during the first year is needed for UMD to develop new nutrient management planning software, maintenance, and customer service.

Recommendation 4.3: Supporting Value-Added Processing Infrastructure

The FSRC recommends programming and initiatives to incentivize and establish community-based and regional infrastructure to provide access to value-added processing for small and expanding producers. Necessary infrastructure includes well-equipped and compliant kitchen space for shared production of value-added and processed agricultural goods, with other opportunities for simple processing of raw produce for expanding distribution to institutional markets and other relevant channels.

Increasing the production of value-added and preserved agricultural goods for Maryland's small farms will help to minimize food waste and support resilient business models with multiple enterprises. This recommendation is not limited to new development and encourages the leveraging of existing infrastructure and co-packing or cooperative opportunities. The FSRC recommends consideration of value-added processing opportunities for new and emerging programs, as well as leveraging existing programs and funding.



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Is legislation required to implement?

No.

Is funding required to implement?

Yes. Funding for local and regional agencies is needed. See Recommendation 4.4 and 4.5 for examples of funding mechanisms.

Recommendation 4.4: Local Preservation in Food Access Priority Areas and Within Schools

The FSRC recommends exploring opportunities to solve the mismatch between Maryland's agricultural growing seasons, school cycles, and community nutritional needs. Consumption of locally grown foods by students and community members could be increased through the expansion of food preservation methods, such as increased capacity for cold storage or value-added processing of perishable goods. Schools and community-based organizations need access to infrastructure to expand preservation programs and distribute local produce year-round. Preservation programs could additionally benefit aggregators or producers by providing them access to cold storage facilities over the summer. As suggested in [Recommendation 2.1](#), funding of mobile cold storage units should also be explored to enable community-based organizations to increase food access in high-priority areas.

Launching pilot programs at schools and institutions (e.g., correctional facilities, hospitals, or at public parks and recreation locations) to recreate the success of the [Caroline County Public Schools](#) program to freeze, preserve, and serve local food in their school system may require legislation.⁵⁹ Through the generous donation of a transit bus from the Maryland Department of Transportation, Caroline County created a [Mobile Market](#), addressing transportation and financial barriers for residents to access healthy foods.⁶⁰ The Mobile Market provides residents of all ages year-round access to local agricultural products with additional programming for Caroline County's children, a quarter of whom currently face food insecurity. Methods and funding needed to expand this model to other county school systems and community groups should be explored.

The FSRC recommends consideration of preservation and local food access

⁵⁹Caroline County Public Schools. (2024). *Caroline County Public Schools Food Services*. Caroline County Public Schools. <https://www.carolineschools.org/page/food-services>

⁶⁰Caroline Culinary Arts Center. (2024). *Shore Gourmet Curbside Market*. Caroline Culinary Arts Center. <https://www.carolineculinaryarts.org/shogo-mobile>



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opportunities throughout the state of Maryland, leveraging existing programs and resources and creating funding for new programs on a pilot program basis. The matching grant fund in [Recommendation 4.5](#) and pilot program funding in [Recommendation 4.8](#) could be initial funding sources, with other relevant funding sources explored.

Is legislation required to implement?

Yes. Legislation is encouraged to institute a pilot program.

Is funding required to implement?

Yes. The pilot program would require funding either through new funding or leveraging existing resources.

Recommendation 4.5: Funding for a Local/Regional Farm Food Aggregation and Processing Matching Grant Program

In 2020, the passage of [Senate Bill 985/House Bill 1488](#) established the [Certified Local Farm Enterprise Program](#) managed by the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) and the [Certified Local Farm and Fish Enterprise Food Aggregation Grant Fund Programs](#) managed by the Maryland Agricultural and Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation (MARBIDCO).^{61, 62, 63, 64} The legislation also established a 20% procurement goal for Maryland state agencies and institutions to purchase locally grown food (now including certain invasive fish species) from certified local farm enterprises. The rationale for this was that many institutional and wholesale buyers who want to purchase locally sourced food experience difficulty in meeting their supply-sourcing needs when contracting with small farms.

Through the Certified Local Farm and Fish Enterprise Food Aggregation Grant Fund, MARBIDCO has supported the development of local food aggregation infrastructure in Maryland to help meet current and future wholesale and institutional market demand for locally produced food. Over five years, small farm producer groups and public entities were provided with funding to help with the aggregation of local farm and fish products, including the construction of processing and storage facilities and

⁶¹Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA). (2024). *Certified Local Farm and Fish Program*. Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA). https://mda.maryland.gov/maryland_products/Pages/default.aspx

⁶²Certified Local Farm Enterprise Program and Certified Local Farm Enterprise Food Aggregation Grant Fund – Establishment, No. HB1488 (2020). <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2020RS/bills/hb/hb1488t.pdf>

⁶³Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA). (2024). *Certified Local Farm and Fish Program*. Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA). https://mda.maryland.gov/maryland_products/Pages/default.aspx

⁶⁴Maryland Agricultural & Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation. (2024). *Agricultural & Rural Business Industry Grant Programs*. MARBIDCO. <https://www.marbidco.org/grant-programs>



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the purchase of capital equipment. A modest amount of start-up working capital was also made available through this program. Funding for this program is currently scheduled to end in fiscal year 2025.

Many farmers seeking access to more diverse markets for their agricultural products often face challenges in producing the volume required to meet the demand of large buyers like wholesale food distributors and institutions (such as schools, hospitals, and large food banks). Table crop producers may also produce a significant quantity of raw agricultural products, or "seconds", that are not suitable for immediate sale to fresh retail consumer markets but would have value if processed and preserved for later sale to wholesale and institutional markets (and retail markets as well).

[Recommendation 4.3](#) addresses the need for programming and related initiatives to incentivize and establish community-based and regional infrastructure for value-added processing as a means of providing access to needed processing equipment and infrastructure for small and expanding producers. [Recommendation 4.4](#) addresses timing challenges between Maryland's agricultural growing seasons, school operational cycles, and community nutritional needs. This mismatch could be alleviated by increasing cold storage, canning, and other food preservation practices, thereby increasing quantities of Maryland-grown food to be consumed by students in schools and universities as well as by community members. A necessary infrastructure includes a well-equipped, food safety compliant space for the production of value-added and processed agricultural goods. The infrastructure should additionally support other opportunities for simple processing of raw produce as well as cold storage for the preservation of perishable products to expand distribution to institutional markets and other relevant channels.

The FSRC proposes that a revamped Local/Regional Farm Food Aggregation and Processing Matching Grant Program be established to assist eligible public sector entities with their projects. Eligible applicants would include local governments, municipalities, community colleges, universities, county school systems, or rural regional councils. A majority of the funding would be used to cover the capital expense for facilities and equipment, with some flexibility allowing for a portion of the funds to be used as working capital. Applicants would be required to provide at least a dollar-for-dollar match for grant funds. Other requirements would include the demonstrated utilization of wholesale and institutional market channels and purchase of local farm food products from certified local farm and fish providers.

Is legislation required to implement?

No. MARBIDCO could implement this new/revamped program if funding were



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provided in the State Budget.

Is funding required to implement?

Yes. \$1 million per year is recommended. Funding would be channeled through a continuation of the Certified Local Farm Food and Fish Producer Aggregation Grant Program beginning in fiscal year 2026.

Recommendation 4.6: Formation of Task Force to Assess Adoption of Digital Agricultural Technologies by Maryland Farmers

The FSRC recommends the adoption of currently available sensing and data technologies to significantly increase yields and/or decrease labor needed on farms, thereby increasing the ability of Maryland farms to meet the needs of the local population and enhancing the resiliency of the food system.

The Rockefeller Foundation states that [we need to modernize data and technology platforms](#) to transform our food system.⁶⁵ The FSRC recommends increasing the use of e-agriculture, smart farming, and other digital technologies, such as blockchain, Internet of Things (IoT), sensors, drones for crop maintenance, drones with multi-spectral imaging technology for assessing plant health, radio frequency identification (RFID) for animal identification, global positioning systems (GPS), geographic information systems (GIS), mobile apps, e-commerce, artificial intelligence, and data analytics. These technologies can be integrated into livestock and crop management as well as other processes germane for large, medium, and small food producers. This digital data-driven agriculture will provide more effective monitoring, improve communication and documentation, and thereby inform the decision-making of Maryland farmers.

A temporary Technology in Agriculture Task Force should be formed to prepare specific recommendations for technology adoption and support. The Task Force will assess industry needs and priorities, including access to broadband and digital technology, to determine the highest and best use of funding and support programs. This will include a review of agri-technology adoption in other states and countries. The Task Force will prepare specific recommendations for new programs and estimate the economic impact and cost of such recommendations. Special attention must also be paid to increased cybersecurity risks as the use of digital

⁶⁵The Rockefeller Foundation. (2020). *Reset the Table Meeting the Moment to Transform the U.S. Food System*. The Rockefeller Foundation.
https://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/RF-FoodPolicyPaper_Final2.pdf



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agriculture technologies expands. The Task Force will evaluate the potential hazards to the food supply chain that may result from this expansion, and provide recommendations as to how these threats may best be mitigated.

The FSRC recommends the Task Force be established on a temporary basis of no less than one calendar year, and assigned to draft and publish recommendations specific to the expansion and adoption of technological developments across relevant agricultural sectors. Recommendations could include AgriTech business incubators, tax incentives, funding programs, and other avenues to support the adoption of new technology in agriculture that will advance the industry and food system resilience. Acknowledging the complexity and scope of the charge, the Task Force will employ technical expertise as needed. The FSRC also recommends any findings by the Task Force requiring efforts or programming beyond the timeline allocated be presented to the Maryland Agricultural Commission (MAC) for inclusion in ongoing Commission activities or a new subcommittee.

The Task Force would be led by the Maryland Department of Agriculture, with committee members from the Department of Commerce, county agricultural offices, University of Maryland Extension, [Rural Maryland Council](#), agricultural producers, and other relevant stakeholders.⁶⁶ Task Force appointment would involve consideration of cybersecurity, state climate goals, environmental impact, and rural community livelihood.

Is legislation required to implement?

No. Legislation is not necessary to establish the Technology in Agriculture Task Force.

Is funding required to implement?

Yes. Funding is required for MDA to provide administrative support, including research organization, data gathering, and other expertise, to assist committee members with recommendation development and assessment of economic impacts.

Recommendation 4.7: Assessing and Addressing Regulatory Challenges for Small and Beginning Farmers

Small farms and producers face unique challenges and barriers including contradictory regulations (e.g., zoning, permitting, business licensing, health department, lease agreements, and land use protocols), economies of scale for

⁶⁶Rural Maryland Council (RMC). (2024). *Rural Maryland Council*. Rural Maryland Council. <https://rural.maryland.gov/>



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equipment (shared resources and joint services), risks associated with non-commodity/non-traditional crops, and access to resources such as land, labor, and competitive financial programs. Existing barriers should be examined and recommendations made to improve the regulatory framework for farming, especially with regard to small-scale agricultural production.

The [Maryland Agricultural Commission](#) (MAC) is appointed by the Governor and was established to formulate and make proposals for the advancement of Maryland agriculture by serving as an advisory body to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Agriculture.⁶⁷ The MAC's recently adopted [strategic plan](#) includes regulatory restrictions among their list of priority issues for the coming year.⁶⁸ The FSRC requests that barriers of entry and expansion for small-scale producers be considered by the MAC this annual cycle. The MAC recommends programs and policies that meet the State's agricultural strategy goals and could serve as the appropriate body for understanding barriers to small producers and making necessary recommendations for improving the regulatory framework.

Is legislation required to implement?

No.

Is funding required to implement?

No.

Recommendation 4.8: Incentive to Increase Locally Produced Food Served in Schools

The FSRC recommends implementing the Maryland Farm-to-School Grant Pilot Program introduced in [HB147](#) which was passed but not funded in 2022. The Grant Pilot Program will provide school districts with the needed funds to purchase healthy, local agricultural products (e.g., produce, meat, poultry, honey, etc.) to serve their students.⁶⁹ The purpose of the pilot program is to incentivize the production, procurement, and provision of local foods in school meals through grant funding for

⁶⁷Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA). (2024). *Maryland Ag Commission*. Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA). https://mda.maryland.gov/about_mda/Pages/default.aspx

⁶⁸Maryland Agricultural Commission (MAC). (2024). *Strategic Plan for the Maryland Agricultural Commission*. Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA). <https://mda.maryland.gov/Documents/Strategic%20Plan%20for%20the%20Maryland%20Agricultural%20Commission%20V1.5.pdf>

⁶⁹Maryland Farms and Families Fund, Maryland Food and Agricultural Resiliency Mechanism Grant Program, and Maryland Farm-to-School Meal Grant Pilot Program – Alterations and Establishment, No. HB147 (2022). <https://legiscan.com/MD/bill/HB147/2022>



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eligible school districts. Local school districts are eligible to receive grant awards from the fund if they operate reimbursable federal nutrition programs (e.g. the National School Lunch Program).

Local school districts may use the grant money for the purchase, processing, procurement, staffing, or infrastructure investments needed to meet the number of meals with a local food component. Resources obtained through this funding can be used to increase the school districts' spending capacity to regularly purchase fresh foods from local producers at the price required to sustain their businesses.

There are several successful models of this approach within the state. [Caroline County Public Schools](#) has engaged in the purchase of local produce to serve in their schools for many years. The program collaborates with producers to secure produce at an appropriate rate and desired quantity regularly, with arrangements in place for the necessary cold storage and processing of perishable products. This program additionally expands employment opportunities for kitchen staff during the summer months, demonstrating positive impacts on the local economy on several levels.

Since 2018, Frederick County has conducted a [Farm to School \(F2S\) Program](#).⁷⁰ Incubated underneath Community F.A.R.E., F2S has since spun out as its own 501(c)3 entity and has partnered with the Frederick County Public Schools Food and Nutrition Services Department. F2S funders have included USDA grants, the school district, and private foundations. F2S provides students with increased access to locally grown fruits and vegetables. In addition to providing the students with healthier, more nutritious food, the program has successfully developed relationships between the area's farmers and the school district. During the 2021-2022 school year, \$81,109 was spent on local produce and fruits for use in the Frederick County Public Schools. Similar to Caroline County's programming, F2S positively impacts the local economy.

The proposed Maryland Farm-to-School Grant Pilot Program would provide the opportunity for school districts to begin or expand access to local foods, build partnerships with their local producers, and offer a competitive price for the purchase of local goods. The program would also enable eligible districts to build capacity to process and store fresh foods through infrastructure, staffing, and equipment. The proposed grant program could also benefit historically marginalized or socially disadvantaged producers. The school districts will have more flexibility over their procurement of local foods, allowing them to purchase from producers who may otherwise be overlooked or unable to participate due to pricing or other

⁷⁰Farm to School Frederick, Inc. (2024). *Farm to School Frederick*. F2S Frederick. <https://www.f2sfrederick.org>



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constraints.

The Maryland Farm-to-School Grant Pilot Program could be administered by the Maryland State Department of Education in coordination with the Maryland Department of Agriculture. Awards could be based on criteria that include the local school district's participation in the reimbursable federal nutrition program, the school district's demonstration of how meal reimbursements will support the development, cultivation, and longstanding commitment to incorporating local food components into school districts. School districts would be strongly encouraged to prioritize purchasing from historically marginalized or socially disadvantaged producers, processors, distributors, or businesses. Metrics will be generated and tracked by the administering agencies to evaluate the success of the programs.

Is legislation required to implement?

No. Legislation is not required to implement this program. The legislation for the pilot program was passed in 2022 but was not funded at that time.

Is funding required to implement?

Yes. Funding for the implementation of the Maryland Farm-to-School Grant Pilot Program is required. The original request of \$500,000 would provide funding to offer a competitive grant pilot program in fiscal year 2026.

Recommendation 4.9: Improving Property Taxation Assessments on Agricultural Land

The FSRC recognizes that challenges still exist for agricultural producers relating to commercial tax assessments on agricultural land, where value-added agricultural activities occur. The FSRC supports continued efforts to establish appropriate mechanisms and regulations through the State Department of Assessments and Taxation (SDAT), encouraging, rather than disincentivizing, producers to expand and operate value-added agricultural enterprises. The FSRC acknowledges that a solution to this operational barrier may or may not require legislative action through statute, but will require policy changes nevertheless.

Is legislation required to implement?

Yes. Statutory changes may be necessary, although policy changes through the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) could also be considered.

Is funding required to implement?

No.



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Committee Summary

Communications and Coordination Committee

Voting Member Roster

Committee Position	Name, Affiliation
Chair	Heather Bois Bruskin, <i>Director Office of Food Systems Resilience Montgomery County</i>
Co-Chair	Anne Palmer, <i>Director of Practice Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future</i>
Co-Chair	Michelle Caruso, <i>Director of Policy & Partnerships Montgomery Council Food Council</i>
Member (FSRC Co-Chair)	Nancy Nunn, <i>Assistant Director Harry R. Hughes Center for Agro-Ecology</i>
Member (FSRC Co-Vice Chair)	Dr. Stephanie Lansing <i>Professor of Environmental Science & Technology University of Maryland, College of AGNR</i>
Member	Steve McHenry, <i>Executive Director MARBIDCO</i>
Member	Sen. Katie Fry Hester <i>Maryland State Senate</i>

Non-voting Participant Roster

Committee Position	Name, Affiliation
Participant	Beth Brewster, <i>Food Service Supervisor Caroline County Public Schools</i>
Participant	Brian Alexander, <i>Senior Manager of Advocacy & Public Policy Capital Area Food Bank</i>
Participant	JD Robinson, <i>Anti-Hunger Program Coordinator (SNAP) Maryland Hunger Solutions</i>
Participant	Grace Leatherman, <i>Executive Director Future Harvest</i>



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Participant (FSRC Co-Vice Chair)	Mark Powell, <i>Marketing Service Program Manager</i> <i>Maryland Department of Agriculture</i>
Participant	Shannon McDonald, <i>Natural Resource Planner</i> <i>Maryland Department of Environment</i>
Participant	Diana Taylor, <i>Senior Program Manager</i> <i>Partnership for Children and Families (Anne Arundel County)</i>
Participant	Lisa Lachenmayr, <i>Director</i> <i>University of Maryland Extension SNAP-Ed</i>

Overview. From January through April, the Communications and Coordination Committee met weekly to review and monitor legislation in the Maryland General Assembly pertaining to food, farm, and community resilience.

Subject matter experts. For the second consecutive year, the Center for Health and Homeland Security (CHHS) performed legislative tracking for the Maryland Food System Resiliency Council (FSRC). Working with FSRC members and staff at the Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM), CHHS compiled a tracking spreadsheet for all food system-related bills and selected a number each week to present to the Communication and Coordination Committee.

Total bills reviewed	45 (27 unique bills)
Total bills supported	16 (8 unique bills)
Total supported bills sent to the Governor and enacted	8 (4 unique bills)

SB0035/HB0666 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - State Supplement
Sponsored by Sen. McCray/Sponsored by Del. Shetty et al.

Repealing the minimum age that a member of a household must be for eligibility for a State-provided supplemental benefit under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; and increasing the amount of the supplemental benefit that the State must provide from \$40 to \$95.

FSRC voted to support on 2/5/24. The bill was signed by the Governor, effective October 1, 2024.



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SB0425/HB0386 Maryland Meals for Achievement In-Classroom Breakfast Program - Alterations (Maryland Meals for Achievement Flexibility Act of 2024)
Sponsored by Sens. Hettleman, Guzzone, and Elfreth/Sponsored by Del. Feldmark

Clarifying that secondary schools participating in the Maryland Meals for Achievement In-Classroom Breakfast Program may serve breakfast in any broadly accessible part of the school; and authorizing elementary schools participating in the Program, subject to certain approval and allowances, to serve breakfast in any broadly accessible part of the school, including from "Grab and Go" carts.

The FSRC voted to support on 1/22/24. The bill was signed by the Governor, effective July 1, 2024.

SB0440/HB0447 Income Tax Credit - Venison Donation *Sponsored by Sen. Elfreth et al./Sponsored by Del. Love et al.*

Allowing an individual, subject to certain requirements and limitations, to claim a credit against the state income tax for certain qualified expenses if the individual harvests an antlerless deer and donates the deer meat to certain organizations; and requiring by January 31 each year, each venison donation program that accepts certain donations to report to the Comptroller the name and home address of each donor and the number of deer donated by each donor who intended to claim the income tax credit.

The FSRC voted to support on 2/5/24. The bill was signed by the Governor, effective July 1, 2024.

SB1074/HB0991 Agriculture - Food Processing Residuals Utilization Permit - Establishment *Sponsored by Sens. Ready, Elfreth, West, and Lewis Young/Sponsored by Dels. Ziegler, Allen, and Ruth.*

Establishing a food processing residuals utilization permit; prohibiting a person from utilizing food processing residuals in the state unless the person obtains a permit; requiring the Maryland Department of Agriculture to provide a certain notice and information to certain persons; establishing the Food Processing Residuals Administration Fund as a special, nonlapsing fund; authorizing a representative of the Department to enter and inspect any site where food processing residuals are utilized; authorizing the Department to administer a Commercial Hauler Certification Program; and generally relating to food processing residuals utilization permits.



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The FSRC voted to support, with amendments, on 3/4/24 and submitted testimony. The bill was signed by the Governor, effective July 1, 2024.

Distribution and Access Committee

Voting Member Roster

Committee Position	Name, Affiliation
Chair	Diana Taylor, Senior Program Manager Partnership for Children and Families (Anne Arundel County)
Co-Chair	Meg Kimmel, Chief Operating Officer Maryland Food Bank
Member (FSRC Co-Chair)	Nancy Nunn, Assistant Director Harry R. Hughes Center for Agro-Ecology
Member	Brian Alexander, Senior Manager of Advocacy & Public Policy Capital Area Food Bank
Member	JD Robinson, Anti-Hunger Program Coordinator (SNAP) Maryland Hunger Solutions
Member	Lisa Lachenmayr, Director University of Maryland Extension SNAP-Ed
Member	Theresa Stahl, Nutritionist Alleghany County Health Department Vice-Chair, Western Maryland Food Council
Member	Del. Lorig Charkoudian Maryland House of Delegates
Member	Beth Brewster, Food Service Supervisor Caroline County Public Schools

Non-Voting Participant Roster

Committee Position	Name, Affiliation
Participant	Steve McHenry, Executive Director MARBIDCO



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Participant	Chloë Waterman, <i>Senior Program Manager</i> <i>Friends of the Earth</i>
Participant	Grace Leatherman, <i>Executive Director</i> <i>Future Harvest</i>
Participant	Senator Katie Hester <i>Maryland State Senate</i>
Participant	Michelle Caruso, <i>Director of Policy & Partnerships</i> <i>Montgomery Council Food Council</i>
Participant (FSRC Co-Vice Chair)	Dr. Stephanie Lansing, <i>Professor of Environmental Science & Technology</i> <i>University of Maryland, College of AGNR</i>
Participant	Dr. Lila Karki, <i>Asst. Professor & Program Evaluation Specialist</i> <i>University of Maryland, Eastern Shore Extension</i>
Participant	Heather Bois Bruskin, <i>Director</i> <i>Office of Food Systems Resilience Montgomery County</i>
Participant	Shannon McDonald, <i>Natural Resource Planner</i> <i>Maryland Department of Environment</i>

Overview. Since the publication of the FSRC's 2023 Report, the Distribution and Access Committee has convened monthly to discuss strategies and develop recommendations to reduce food insecurity and promote food equity in Maryland.

Subject matter experts. The Distribution and Access Committee invited various subject matter experts to present on priority issues including:

- **Shannon McDonald**, Natural Resource Planner, Maryland Department of the Environment - Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling (SWIFR)
- **Michelle Caruso**, Strategic Partnerships Manager, Montgomery County Food Council - Maryland Local Food Council Collaborative
- **Andrew Baker**, Food and Wellness Coordinator with Maryland Department of Aging (MDOA) - Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)
- **Casey Dyson**, Government Relations and Public Funding Director, Food and Friends - Medically Tailored Meals and Food is Medicine
- **Emily Bauer**, Acting Senior Director Office of Nutrition Assistance Programs, Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) - The Restaurant Meals Program (RMP)



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- **Dr. Darriel Harris**, Cynthia and Robert S. Lawrence Fellow, Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future - Intersectionality of Housing Policy, Distribution of Grocery Retailers, Hypersegregation, and Food Insecurity in Maryland

Environment and Production Committee

Voting Member Roster

Committee Position	Name, Affiliation
Chair (FSRC Co-Vice Chair)	Dr. Stephanie Lansing, <i>Professor of Environmental Science & Technology University of Maryland, College of AGNR</i>
Co-Chair (FSRC Co-Chair)	Nancy Nunn, <i>Assistant Director Harry R. Hughes Center for Agro-Ecology</i>
Member	Grace Leatherman, <i>Executive Director Future Harvest</i>
Member	Steve McHenry, <i>Executive Director MARBIDCO</i>
Member	Chloë Waterman, <i>Senior Program Manager Friends of the Earth</i>
Member	Dr. Lila Karki, <i>Asst. Professor & Program Evaluation Specialist University of Maryland, Eastern Shore Extension</i>
Member	Lee H. Babcock, <i>Chair Frederick County Food Council</i>
Member	Mike Scheffel, <i>Director of Agricultural Services Montgomery County Department of Agriculture Member, Maryland Farm Bureau</i>
Member	Allyson Redpath <i>Director, Entrepreneurship Maryland Department of Commerce</i>
Member (FSRC Co-Vice Chair)	Mark Powell, <i>Marketing Service Program Manager Maryland Department of Agriculture</i>



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Non-Voting Participant Roster

Committee Position	Name, Affiliation
Participant	Heather Bois Bruskin, <i>Director Office of Food Systems Resilience Montgomery County</i>
Participant	Senator Katie Hester <i>Maryland State Senate</i>
Participant	Diana Taylor, <i>Senior Program Manager Partnership for Children and Families (Anne Arundel County)</i>
Participant	Michelle Caruso, <i>Director of Policy & Partnerships Montgomery Council Food Council</i>
Participant	Lisa Lachenmayr, <i>Director University of Maryland Extension SNAP-Ed</i>
Participant	Shannon McDonald, <i>Natural Resource Planner Maryland Department of Environment</i>
Participant	Beth Brewster, <i>Food Service Supervisor Caroline County Public Schools</i>
Participant	Leslie Sessom-Parks, <i>Chief, Professional Development & Performance Maryland State Department of Education</i>

Overview. The Environment and Production Committee met every two to four weeks to discuss recommendations to strengthen the production and procurement of Maryland certified food, including addressing barriers experienced by small farms and mitigating food loss through food recovery strategies.

Subject matter experts. The Environment and Production Committee invited several subject matter experts including:

- **Lindsay Smith**, Regional Food Systems Planner, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MW COG), and **Allison Tjaden**, Special Projects Manager, Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) - Climate Pollution Reduction Grant Program (CPRG)
- **Lisa Garfield**, Research Director, Future Harvest - Million Acre Challenge



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- **Alisha Mulkey**, Program Manager of Planning and Development, Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) Office of Conservation - Healthy Soils Program
- **Dwight Dotterer**, Nutrient Management Program Administrator, Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) - Updates to Nutrient Management Planning in Maryland

Next Steps. A priority issue that the Environment & Production Committee plans to pursue in the coming year is addressing local agricultural price constraints in Maryland for consumers, institutional buyers, and producers.

Areas of concern:

- Price constraints force procurement of agricultural products out of state.
- Current SNAP benefits may be insufficient to meet the dietary and local food purchasing needs of Maryland's population experiencing food insecurity.
- Recent food is medicine, produce prescription, and nutrition education programs have been productive, but have had a limited reach.

Potential courses of action:

- Maryland Market Money could be expanded across the state to double the purchasing power of Maryland SNAP beneficiaries.
- Data collection and analysis are necessary to evaluate and demonstrate the direct benefits between local food consumption and health benefits.
- Identification of other states that have set a premium on local food to be factored into procurement would be of value.
- Prices and payments would likely need to be established prior to the growing season to incentivize the practice.
- Quantifying the impact of other incentives beyond price, such as job creation and environmental impacts, should also be conducted.

Summary of Council Activities

In addition to its regular virtual Council and Committee meetings, the Maryland Food System Resiliency Council (FSRC) held in-person events including two regional food and farm tours, and a hybrid Council Forum. This section will highlight the activities of the FSRC between December 2023 and June 2024.

March 5, 2024 - C & S Wholesale Grocers Tour

The components of food security as defined by [Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future's Food System Resilience: A Planning Guide for Local Governments](#) include availability, accessibility, and acceptability.⁷¹ To adequately ensure that these components are met, food retailers must stock their shelves with locally, regionally, and globally sourced products with the services of reliable suppliers. Recognizing that a resilient food system hinges on a supply chain with a diverse network of small to large-scale producers, manufacturers, and distributors, the FSRC sought to deepen their understanding of how wholesale grocery suppliers operate.



Members of the Maryland Food System Resiliency Council, Maryland Department of Emergency Management Staff, and Community Partners at C & S Wholesale Grocers in Aberdeen, MD

After an informative Lunch & Learn session with C & S Wholesale Grocers' Senior Manager of Business Continuity, Katie Murphy, in January 2023, the FSRC organized

⁷¹Moore, E., Biehl, E., Burke, M., Bassarab, K., Misiaszek, C., & Neff, R. (2022). *Food System Resilience: A Planning Guide for Local Governments*. Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future. <https://clf.jhsph.edu/sites/default/files/2022-12/the-resilience-planning-guide.pdf>



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a warehouse visit in [Aberdeen, MD](#).⁷² The warehouse tour was attended by twenty-three individuals split into two groups.

Founded in 1918 as a supplier to independent grocery stores, C & S Wholesale Grocers, LLC is now the largest wholesale grocery supplier in the United States. C & S Wholesale Grocers supplies more than 7,500 independent supermarkets, chain stores, military bases, and institutions with over 100,000 different products. C & S also operates and supports corporate grocery stores and services independent franchisees under a chain-style model throughout the Midwest, South, and Northeast.



Members of the Maryland Food System Resiliency Council, Maryland Department of Emergency Management Staff, and Community Partners at C & S Wholesale Grocers in Aberdeen, MD

C & S Wholesale Grocers' warehouses typically operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. One warehouse can ship on average up to 1 million cases a week, and dispatch up to 150 trucks per day. While some locations use automated systems for product selection, the majority of this work is performed by a highly skilled workforce. This industry heavily depends on fuel and electricity to maintain status quo operations.

Due to storage limitations, most grocery retailers rely on a "just-in-time" ordering system with an expected turnaround time of 12-24 hours between placing an order and receiving a delivery. Stores often receive 4-5 deliveries from C & S in one week. Because of the ever-present urgency in this industry, continuity of the food supply chain is critical to ensuring communities' needs are met. This is especially true during or immediately following a disaster.

⁷²C & S Wholesale Grocers. (2024). *Aberdeen, M.D.* C & S Wholesale Grocers. <https://www.cswg.com/about/locations/aberdeen-md/>



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April 26, 2024 - Frederick Farm & Food Tour

The FSRC met in Frederick County on April 26th for a food and farm tour including stops at Hemp's Meats (Jefferson, MD), Open Book Farm (Middletown, MD), Frederick Social (Frederick, MD), and Moon Valley Farm (Woodsboro, MD).

Bill Hemp, owner of [Hemp's Meats](#) (est. 1849) in Jefferson, explained the history of the business and how they navigate procurement and processing works.⁷³ Hemp's Meats works with regional producers and their products include meat from livestock they raise on the farm. Hemp's Meats prioritizes using the whole animal.



MK Barnet, co-owner/co-founder of Open Book Farm (Middletown, MD)

MK and Andrew Barnet, owners of [Open Book Farm](#) (est. 2011), welcomed the FSRC to their property where they raise vegetables, poultry, and livestock with an emphasis on land stewardship.⁷⁴ The owners met early in their farming careers and, after working for multiple farms along the East Coast, launched Open Book Farm on rented land in Myersville, MD. In 2015, they purchased land in Middletown to grow their business. They focus on direct-to-consumer market outlets including a community supported agriculture (CSA) program, an online farmstand, and the Saturday Petworth Community Farmers Market in Washington D.C. Though previously USDA certified organic, they decided not to renew their certification due to the low return on investment and time-consuming administrative components.

⁷³Hemp's Meats. (2024). Hemp's Meats. <http://www.hempsmeat.com/>

⁷⁴Open Book Farm. (2024). Open Book Farm. <https://www.openbookfarm.com>

The farmers value transparency with their customers regarding their land management practices and continue to use organic growing practices.

Next, the FSRC visited [Frederick Social](#), where owners Mike & Audi Nagi served a locally sourced lunch spread and gave a presentation describing their restaurant, which prioritizes values-aligned sourcing.⁷⁵ The owners discussed the barriers they face as new, small food business owners, and shared their hopes for the establishment of more food and farm hubs in Maryland.



Emma Jagoz, owner/founder of Moon Valley Farm (Woodsboro, MD)

The FSRC's last destination was [Moon Valley Farm](#) in Woodsboro, MD, where owner, Emma Jagoz, provided a brief walking tour of the property while describing the farm's growing practices, as well as how the farm has evolved and expanded since its inception in 2012.⁷⁶ Jagoz is a self-taught farmer who emphasizes the health benefits of growing and eating produce using sustainable, organic practices.

Moon Valley Farm is USDA certified organic and operates as a farm hub in partnership with other organic farms across the region. They sell a variety of locally produced goods directly to customers and restaurants in the D.C., Baltimore,

⁷⁵*Frederick Social - Self-Pour Taphouse.* (2024). Frederick Social. <https://www.frederick-social.com>

⁷⁶*Moon Valley Farm.* (2024). Moon Valley Farm. <https://www.moonvalleyfarm.net>

Frederick, and Northern Virginia areas. In addition to their year-round CSA program, Moon Valley Farm offers home delivery and pick-up locations for products ordered through their online farmstand. Jagoz is an advocate for local food production and procurement and explained that Moon Valley Farm partners with the local public school system, delivering apples and carrots on a regular basis.

Jagoz raised salient resiliency issues to the FSRC, including how partnerships with other farms through a farm hub promote supply chain resilience. The redundancy inherent to the aggregation model enables them to work with institutions and other wholesale customers.



Emma Jagoz, owner/founder of Moon Valley Farm (Woodsboro, MD)

May 1-2, 2024 - Council Forum

The FSRC met for a two-day hybrid forum at the [Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center](#), where they heard from several food system experts and discussed next steps for the FSRC after being assigned to the Maryland Office of Resilience under the Maryland Department of Emergency Management.⁷⁷ With FSRC members residing across the state, this was a rare opportunity to engage face-to-face in important conversations including reflection of past achievements and priority setting for future efforts.

⁷⁷Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center. (2024). *Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center*. Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center. <https://bayrestoration.org/>



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Staff of Maryland Office of Resilience and appointed members of the Maryland Food System Resiliency Council at the Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center

Invited speakers presented on a variety of pertinent topics, as described below:

Lauren Finegan, Research Associate with [MIT Center for Transportation and Logistics](#), presented findings from her supply chain resilience case studies reviewing threats to the food supply chain.⁷⁸ Topics investigated in this study include cybersecurity attacks, disruptions to [fuel](#) and personal protective equipment ([PPE](#)) supplies, extreme fluctuations in consumer demand due to real or perceived scarcity, and the role of public-private coordination.^{79, 80}

Leslie Sessom-Parks, FSRC member and Chief of Professional Development & Performance in the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) Office of School & Community Nutrition Programs, and **Kanika Campbell**, Specialist for Select Nutrition Initiatives at the MSDE, Office of School and Community Nutrition Programs, shared their findings on farm to school sustainability and local procurement initiatives in Maryland's public school systems. In 2019, only 15 percent of Maryland's total school meal costs were attributable to local food sources. MSDE is actively working to increase this percentage. In their investigation of current farm to

⁷⁸Massachusetts Institution of Technology (MIT). (2023, November 1). *MIT Center for Transportation & Logistics*. Massachusetts Institution of Technology (MIT). <https://ctl.mit.edu/>

⁷⁹Goentzel, J., Finegan, L., Graham, C. D., & Russell, T. (2022). *National Fuel Ecosystem Assessment Summary*. <https://dspace.mit.edu/handle/1721.1/138838>

⁸⁰McGuigan, M. K. (2022). *Simulating COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment Use in Acute Care Hospitals* [Thesis, Massachusetts Institute of Technology]. <https://dspace.mit.edu/handle/1721.1/144720>



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school implementation, MSDE has learned that some of the obstacles to program sustainability include:

- Varying definitions of “local”, which many interpret as “farm fresh” without specification for producer location.
- Logistical challenges including capacity limitations relating to labor, processing equipment and infrastructure, and inventory management.
- Mismatched timing for peak farm season and school year.
- Challenges obtaining the product volume needed in a pre-set timeframe, in part due to the unpredictable nature of agriculture and growing conditions as well as limited production capacity for independent, local farmers.
- Stringent federal child nutrition requirements including serving size, nutrition standards, and labeling.
- Budgetary constraints to purchase products at price required to be sufficiently profitable for small, independent producers.

Grace Leatherman, FSRC member and Executive Director of Future Harvest, discussed the priorities and needs of small to mid-sized producers in the region. She provided an overview of regenerative farming practices, Future Harvest’s Beginning Farmer Training Program, Agricultural and Leadership Development Initiative, Pick-Your-Own Consultant Program, Field School events, and Million Acre Challenge.

Beth Brewster, FSRC member and Food Service Supervisor for Caroline County Public Schools, provided an inspiring overview of the programs offered by Caroline County Public Schools and its associated nonprofit organization, [Caroline Culinary Arts](#).⁸¹ With a mission to address food access through an equitable, holistic approach, Caroline Culinary Arts provides affordable and accessible farm fresh foods through several programs and community resources:

- Shore Gourmet’s Mobile Market
- Farmscripts/Wellness Incentives
- [Backpack Program](#)
- Workforce Development Programs
- Purchasing [Invasive Blue Catfish](#) for School Meals⁸²
- Educational Outreach and Events
- Emergency Cold Storage Facilities

⁸¹Caroline Culinary Arts. (2024). *Caroline Culinary Arts Center*. Caroline Culinary Arts. <https://www.carolineculinaryarts.org/>

⁸²University of Maryland Extension. (2020). *Chesapeake Bay Blue Catfish: Invasive, but Delicious and Nutritious!* Maryland Department of Natural Resources. https://dnr.maryland.gov/fisheries/Documents/Chesapeake_Blue_Catfish.pdf



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Conclusion and Next Steps

The FSRC strives to build consensus and coordinate efforts with state agencies and community partners to bolster agricultural, economic, and community resilience. Over the coming year, the Council and its Committees will meet regularly while continuing to engage with state and local level stakeholders. The recommendations included in this report may continue to evolve as new information and partnerships emerge.

Topics identified for the coming year include:

- Gathering data from across the state to assess the facilitators and barriers to food system resilience and their distribution throughout Maryland's local jurisdictions. The [Community and Agriculture Resilience Audit Tool](#) (CARAT) has been identified as a possible resource to inform this process.⁸³
- Addressing barriers to institutional procurement of Maryland certified products.
- Increasing the production of table crops in Maryland by building capacity among agricultural businesses through access to technical support, equipment, infrastructure, and a skilled labor force.
- Minimizing food loss through diversion of surplus perishable foods to emergency food distribution programs, enhancement of food preservation infrastructure, and expansion of value-added resources for Maryland's producers.
- Developing a strategic vision and systems-based approach to information-sharing and coordination with the ten local food councils across Maryland (Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, Caroline County, Frederick County, Kent County, Mid Shore, Montgomery County, Prince George's County, Upper Shore, and Western Maryland).

The FSRC will continue to meet regularly, identify gaps in Maryland's food system, make evidence-based and community-driven policy recommendations, and promote public health equity, food security, and environmentally-sound practices.

⁸³ The North American Food Systems Network (NAFSN). (2024). *Community & Agriculture Resilience Audit Tool*. CARAT Tool. <https://carattool.org/>



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Moon Valley Farm (Woodsboro, MD)

Acknowledgement

In May of 2024, the Maryland Food System Resiliency Council (FSRC) welcomed a new Co-Chair, Nancy Nunn, Assistant Director of the Harry R. Hughes Center for Agro-Ecology, to lead the FSRC alongside Secretary Russell Strickland of the Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM).

The FSRC acknowledges the tremendous and inspiring work of Michael J. Wilson, former Director of Maryland Hunger Solutions, who served as Co-Chair for five of the seven months encapsulated in this report. The FSRC wishes Michael J. Wilson well in his new role as the Deputy Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Human Services, and thanks him for promoting equitable food access for Marylanders of all ages, and for his dedication to advancing the FSRC's goals over the past several years.



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Appendix A: Council Member Roster

Organization	Name
Maryland Department of Emergency Management (FSRC Co-Chair)	Secretary Russell Strickland
Harry R. Hughes Center for Agro-Ecology (FSRC Co-Chair)	Nancy Nunn <i>Assistant Director</i>
Maryland State Senate	Senator Katie Fry Hester
Maryland House of Delegates	Delegate Lorig Charkoudian
Maryland Department of Human Services (FSRC Co-Vice Chair)	Emily Bauer <i>Senior Director</i> <i>Office of Nutrition Assistance Programs</i>
Maryland Department of Agriculture (FSRC Co-Vice Chair)	Mark Powell <i>Marketing Service Program Manager</i>
Maryland Department of Commerce	Allyson Redpath <i>Director, Entrepreneurship</i>
Maryland Farm Bureau	Mike Scheffel <i>Director of Agricultural Services</i> <i>Montgomery County Department of Agriculture</i>
Maryland Agricultural & Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation	Stephen McHenry <i>Executive Director</i>
University of Maryland, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (FSRC Co-Vice Chair)	Dr. Stephanie Lansing <i>Professor of Environmental Science & Technology</i>
Food Council Member	Lee H. Babcock <i>Frederick County Food Council (Chair)</i>
Food Council Member	Theresa Stahl <i>Nutritionist, Alleghany County Health Department</i> <i>Western Maryland Food Council (Vice-Chair)</i>
Food Council Member	Michelle Caruso <i>Director of Policy & Partnerships</i> <i>Montgomery Council Food Council</i>
University of Maryland, Eastern Shore Extension	Dr. Lila Karki <i>Assistant Professor and Program Evaluation Specialist</i>
University of Maryland Eastern Shore, Small Farm Program	Berran Rogers <i>Small Farm Program Coordinator</i>
University of Maryland Extension, SNAP-Ed	Lisa Lachenmayr <i>Director</i>
Public School System	Beth Brewster <i>Food Service Supervisor</i> <i>Caroline County Public Schools</i>
Maryland State Department of Education	Leslie Sessom-Parks <i>Chief, Professional Development & Performance</i>
Statewide Food Insecurity Advocacy Organization	JD Robinson <i>Anti-Hunger Program Coordinator - SNAP</i> <i>Maryland Hunger Solutions</i>
Farmer	Jesse Albright <i>Owner, Farmer</i> <i>Albright Farms (Baltimore County)</i>
Food Business Owner	Heather Buritsch <i>Headwaters Seafood & Grille (Talbot County)</i>



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Food Business Owner	Jon Class <i>Class Produce Group</i>
Food System Policy Expert	Grace Leatherman <i>Executive Director Future Harvest</i>
Food System Policy Expert	Anne Palmer <i>Director of Practice Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future</i>
Food System Policy Expert	Lindsay Adams <i>Food Resilience Planner Baltimore City Department of Planning Baltimore Food Policy Initiative (BFPI)</i>
Racial Equity in Food System Policy Expert	Diana Taylor <i>Senior Program Manager Partnership for Children and Families (Anne Arundel County)</i>
Food System Impacts on Climate Change and the Environment Expert	Chloë Waterman <i>Senior Program Manager Friends of the Earth</i>
Food, Nutrition, and Public Health Expert	Daphene Altema-Johnson <i>Program Officer, Food Communities & Public Health Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future</i>
Office of Food Systems Resilience, Montgomery County	Heather Bruskin <i>Director</i>
Maryland Food Bank	Meg Kimmel <i>Chief Operating Officer</i>
Capital Area Food Bank	Brian Alexander <i>Senior Manager of Advocacy & Public Policy</i>
Maryland Department of Environment (Ex Officio)	Shannon McDonald <i>Natural Resource Planner</i>