Montgomery County

FOOD EQUITY PLAN

2019
Mission

The Food Equity Coalition’s mission is to increase community food security in Montgomery County by:

- Align goals, strategies and activities of existing coalitions and organizations working to address community food security and determine gaps.
- Enhance communication and coordination between agencies and resources.
- Expand and focus public information efforts with consistent vocabulary to promote food equity.
- Coordinate, improve, and expand community food security resources and activities.
- Develop shared measurements to evaluate efforts.

Vision

Decreasing food waste

Decreasing food insecurity

Increasing availability of healthy, affordable local food

Food Insecurity

Food insecurity is the disruption of food intake or eating patterns because of lack of money or other resources (Food Access Research Atlas, USDA).

Goal

Review and analyze Foodbank childhood hunger programs to identify ways to better serve the whole family.

Identify and address hunger relief programming service gaps and areas of unmet needs.

Expand Foodbank partner agency capacity.

Key Measure

Completion of Childhood Hunger Strategic Plan.

# of new or re-located programs placed in identified areas.

# of partner agencies reporting increased capacity.

Vibrant Farms

Vibrant farms are often “local farms” that shorten the gap between farmer and consumer and actively contribute to sustaining and revitalizing regional food systems and economies.

Goal

Enhance communication amongst farmers to share resources and plan collaboratively.

Explore and support a distribution and aggregation mechanism for Montgomery County supply chain.

Promote agriculture-education programs for Montgomery County growers.

Pursue additional grants and financial resources to support vibrant farms in Montgomery County.

Advocate for public policies and practices that support agricultural use within the local food system.

Key Measure

# of farmers participating in shared resource network.

System developed to coordinate supply & demand of local food.

# of growers participating in agriculture-education programs.

$ gained.

Advocacy plan developed.
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**Strong Communities**
The increasing popularity of local foods may be attributed to their perceived higher product quality and freshness. Purchasing local foods help support local farm economies and/or farmers that use certain production practices that are more environmentally sustainable.

**Goal**
Expand community food initiatives in Montgomery County food desert census tracts.

**Key Measure**
- # of new initiatives implemented.
- # of activities engaging residents.
- # of individuals and organizations represented in the Food Equity Coalition and its activities.

**Sustainable Ecosystems**
Fact: Food is one of the top three waste materials being landfilled. Materials contributing to landfills could be decreased by 15% if food waste was eliminated.

**Goal**
Collaborate with existing organizations to increase soil management education opportunities.

**Key Measure**
- # of individuals educated.
- # of organizations practicing soil management.
- Pounds/tons of food diverted from landfill. # of commercial businesses composting food.

**Thrvng Local Economy**
Low income areas are less likely to have supermarkets or chain grocery stores nearby and tend to have a higher number of convenience stores and small food markets that carry foods of lower nutritional value.

**Goal**
Describe and quantify Montgomery County’s food economy.

**Key Measure**
- Completion of Food Shed Assessment.
- $ of local healthy food purchased.
- # of individuals and organizations practicing soil management.
- Pounds/tons of food diverted from landfill. # of commercial businesses composting food.

**Healthy People**
Risk factors for many chronic diseases can begin early in life, but evidence shows that making dietary and lifestyle changes may prevent disease progress and premature death.

**Goal**
Develop healthy food zones in areas with low community food security.

**Key Measure**
- # of healthy food zones developed.
- # of new initiatives implemented.
- # of activities engaging residents.
- # of individuals and organizations represented in the Food Equity Coalition and its activities.

**Goal**
Collaborate with existing organizations to increase soil management education opportunities.

**Key Measure**
- Completion of Food Shed Assessment.
- $ of local healthy food purchased.
- # of livable wage jobs created to support the local food system.
- # of new grocery stores/corner stores in low community food security areas.
Food-Related Definitions

**Food Desert**
Low income census tracts where a significant number of residents are more than 1 mile in urban areas or 10 miles in rural areas from the nearest supermarket. (Adapted from Food Access Research Atlas, USDA).

**Food Equity**
Everyone, no matter their race, income, or ability, can access and afford a basic healthy diet and work to support a food system that produces this vision (Center for Social Inclusion).

**Food Justice**
Communities exercising their right to grow, sell, purchase, and eat healthy food. Healthy food is fresh, nutritious, affordable, culturally-appropriate, and grown local with care for the well-being of the land, workers, and animals (Just Food).

**Food Insecurity**
Disruption of food intake or eating patterns because of lack of money or other resources (Food Access Research Atlas, USDA).

**Food Security**
A household’s consistent ability to provide enough food for every person in the household for an active and healthy life (adapted from Feeding America).

**Community Food Security**
A fair and sustainable food system that benefits our economy, our environment and all people (adapted from Whole Measures for Community Food Systems).

**Food Access**
Access to healthy, affordable, and culturally-appropriate food (American Planning Association).
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