



Maryland Agricultural Commission

2024 FSRC Report

September 11, 2024



Wes Moore | Governor

Aruna Miller | Lt. Governor

Russell J. Strickland | Secretary

MDEM.MARYLAND.GOV



About the Maryland Food System Resiliency Council

Diana Taylor

*Distribution & Access
Committee Chair*

About the FSRC

- **Vision:** To shape a resilient, sustainable, collaborative, and equitable food system for all Maryland communities.
- **Mission:** To advance the Maryland food system's resilience, sustainability, and equity by collaborating with with stakeholders and community partners.
- **Core Values:** Collaboration and Resilience

Council Goals

- 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**

- 4 **Develop a strategic plan to increase the production and procurement** of Maryland certified food.

Committees

The Council's three committees serve as working groups, gathering information and data, garnering stakeholder input, tracking and responding to legislation, and coordinating with state agencies to provide evidence-based recommendations for policymakers.

Communication and Coordination

Distribution and Access

Environment and Production

2024 Recommendations

- Recommendations are categorized by the four goals mandated by statute.
- The following slides provide a summary of the Council's recommendations. Please visit the Council's webpage to access the 2024 Report and recommendations in full:
<https://mdem.maryland.gov/Pages/food-resilience.aspx>
- 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.

Goal 1

- 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**
- 4 Develop a strategic plan to increase the production and procurement** of Maryland certified food.

Goal 1 Recommendations

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

Recommendation 1.1:

Establish and Maintain a Statewide Charitable Food Locator Service

Recommendation 1.2:

Establish and Maintain a Statewide Food Insecurity Map

Recommendation 1.3:

Strengthening the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)

Goal 3

- 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**
- 4 **Develop a strategic plan to increase the production and procurement** of Maryland certified food.

Goal 3 Recommendations

3 Expand the impact of existing food council organizations

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



Agricultural Recommendations

Dr. Stephanie Lansing
Environment & Production
Committee Chair

Goal 2

- 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**
- 4 **Develop a strategic plan to increase the production and procurement** of Maryland certified food.

Goal 2 Recommendations

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

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

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

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

Abstract: Establish 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.

**Legislation
Required?**

✘

**Funding
required?**

✔

Recommendation 2.2: Establishment of Wasted Food Reduction & Diversion Fund & 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
Required?**



**Funding
required?**



Goal 4

- 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**
- 4 **Develop a strategic plan to increase the production and procurement of Maryland certified food.**

Goal 4 Recommendations

4 Develop a strategic plan to increase the production and procurement of Maryland certified food.

Recommendation 4.1: Agricultural Apprenticeship Program

Recommendation 4.2: Agricultural Nutrient Management Planning Support

Recommendation 4.3: Supporting Value-Added Processing Infrastructure

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

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

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

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

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

Recommendation 4.9: Improving Property Taxation Assessments on Agricultural Land

Recommendation 4.1: Agricultural Apprenticeship Program

Abstract:

The Maryland Department of Labor (MDOL) and the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) should coordinate to launch a Registered Agricultural Apprenticeship Program. This collaborative effort would help address employment barriers and enhance workforce development, benefiting both agricultural employers and farmworkers. The Public Sector Innovation Fund can cover up to \$600K of MDA's administrative costs through 2026. Participating employers may be eligible for an annual \$3K tax credit per apprentice (for up to five apprentices). Eligible employers may additionally be reimbursed for cover training costs.

Legislation
Required?



Funding
required?



Recommendation 4.2: Agricultural Nutrient Management Planning Support

Abstract: Secure sustained annual funding of \$3.5 million for the University of Maryland Extension Agricultural Nutrient Management Program (ANMP) to enhance technical assistance and compliance with nutrient management plans. This funding will help increase employee retention, continuity of services, software modernization, and training for nutrient management plan writers.

**Legislation
Required?**

✘

**Funding
required?**

✔

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?**

✘

**Funding
required?**

✔

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

Abstract: Expand food preservation in public schools through cold storage and value-added processing to align Maryland's agricultural growing seasons with school cycles and community nutritional needs. Leveraging existing programs, like [Caroline County's Mobile Market](#), and creating new ones through pilot funding are essential for implementation.

**Legislation
Required?**



**Funding
required?**



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

Abstract:

Establish a revamped grant program to support local food aggregation and processing infrastructure led by government entities and rural regional councils. Eligible applicants would provide at least a dollar-for-dollar match for awarded funds. The program would extend MARBIDCO's existing Certified Local Farm Enterprise Food Aggregation Grant Fund (ending 2025) to facilitate the production, preservation, and procurement of locally-grown food and supporting both wholesale and institutional market development.

Legislation
Required?



Funding
required?



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

Abstract:

Form a temporary Technology in Agriculture Task Force to promote the adoption of digital agricultural technologies to increase farm yields and reduce input costs. The task force, led by MDA, would evaluate existing technologies and adoption strategies from other regions, and provide recommendations for new programs and their economic impacts. Funding is required for MDA to provide administrative support to organize the research, gather data, and provide subject matter expertise.

Legislation
Required?

✘

Funding
required?

✔

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

Abstract:

The FSRC requests that the Maryland Agricultural Commission (MAC) examine the regulatory challenges and barriers impacting small and beginning farmers, such as zoning, permitting, business licensing, and land use agreements. Recommendations provided by the MAC will help producers in navigate contradictory regulations, economies of scale, risks associated with non-commodity or non-traditional crops, and accessing essential resources.

Legislation
Required?

X

Funding
required?

X

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

Abstract: Implement the Maryland Farm-to-School Grant Pilot Program (passed but not funded in 2022) by allocating \$500K in FY26 for schools to purchase local farm products for student meals. This program, to be administered by MSDE in coordination with MDA, will bolster local economies and benefit the health and wellness of Maryland's students.

**Legislation
Required?**



**Funding
required?**



Recommendation 4.9: Improving Property Taxation Assessments on Agricultural Land

Abstract:

Maryland's producers face ongoing challenges relating to commercial tax assessments on agricultural land where value-added activities occur. Continue 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.

Legislation
Required?



Funding
required?



Questions



Thank You!



The mission of the Maryland Department of Emergency Management is to proactively reduce disaster risks and reliably manage consequences through collaborative work with Maryland's communities and partners.

Questions or Comments?

Please Contact:

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