

Seeding the Montgomery County Food Council

Grant Type: **Dollar support**

Dollar Amount: **\$10,000**

Foundation Name: **Mead Family Foundation**

What was your objective with the grant or initiative?

This grant began as \$10,000 in seed funding to create a food council connecting communities, organizations, and businesses to address food system challenges and opportunities in a comprehensive collaborative approach in Montgomery County, MD. With energy high, the grant supported multiple convenings of over 85 local key stakeholders to build a strategy and working groups.

What were the results of this grant or initiative?

Over the next six years, the Mead Family Foundation provided a total of \$100,000. The initiative is now staffed and receives private and public funds. Four working groups—Environmental Impact, Food Access & Recovery, Food Economy, and Food Literacy—have developed a long-term Food Action Plan for the county, launched a Community Food Rescue food recovery system, and created online resources and networking opportunities supporting Montgomery County food producers and businesses. Grant funds also have sustained the coordination and administration of the 100+ volunteers working to create system-wide change.

Why would you say this grant or initiative had outsized impact?

The efforts of the food council have led to changes in school food offerings and increased collaboration among food growers, distributors, and recipients. Additionally, largely as an offshoot of the food council convenings, a Community Food Rescue program was formed and its subsequent Action Plan adopted by the county in 2013. That pilot is now an ongoing program under the umbrella of the largest local food nonprofit. The rescue program has developed a mobile app that connects businesses with excess food to hunger relief organizations and uses volunteer food runners for transportation (an “Uber” and “Match.com” for food recovery). Through this, 206,486 lbs of food have been rescued and redistributed. The food council remains strong and continues to convene a broad range of key stakeholders to address food system challenges and opportunities. Current projects include a culinary incubator and means to increase the county’s food waste composting capacity.



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