



Strategic Plan 2022–2026



A Letter to Our Community

To our Manna Food Center community,

As we look ahead to the future of Manna Food Center and the collective impact we can make, we are emboldened by the passion our donors, team members, partners, and supporters all share for eliminating food insecurity in Montgomery County, MD. Working toward this goal, our 2022-2026 strategic plan will guide us in our efforts to deepen our community relationships and direct our resources most effectively for transformational change.

It's estimated that 1 in every 8 people living in the United States experiences food insecurity, making it one of the most significant health crises in our nation. At the height of the Covid-19 pandemic as many as 100,000 Montgomery County residents were thought to lack sufficient food. Food security is a human right, but so many people in the United States are denied food with dignity due to high costs of living and transportation, complicated government programs, structural racism and xenophobia, and lack of affordable healthcare.

Montgomery County is one of the wealthiest counties in the United States, and the consequent rising costs of living have a tremendous impact on underemployed families living in the county who do not experience that wealth, making it difficult to access affordable, nutritious foods. These barriers only grew during the COVID-19 crisis as need increased throughout the county.

As a result of decades of approaching food distribution, education, and advocacy with dignity and respect at the center, Manna Food Center has a deep understanding of how these intersecting challenges affect our neighbors in Montgomery County.

We believe that food is one of the most powerful ways to bring people together, and we are eager to explore creative ways to reach people with the nutritious foods they desire, while building those strong connections.

We look forward to working with you to help turn Manna Food Center's 2022-2026 strategic plan into a reality.

With gratitude,

Lisa Davis, Manna Food Center Board of Directors, Chair
Jackie DeCarlo, CEO of Manna Food Center



A PATH FORWARD:

Manna Food Center's Bold Vision and Strategic Priorities

Our Bold Vision

Our community will be a place where all people at all times have access to safe, sufficient, nutritious food in order to lead fulfilling lives and contribute to making our neighborhoods a place where all live in dignity.

Our Mission

To strive to eliminate hunger through food distribution, education, and advocacy.

Strategic Priorities

From 2022–2026, Manna Food Center will focus on the following three strategic priorities:

1

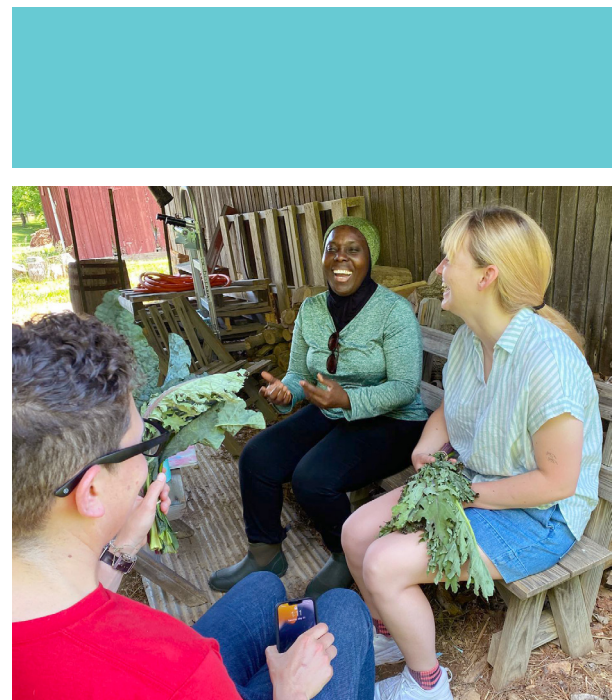
Strengthen and expand the services of Manna Food Center, collaboratively with participants and community partners, to address food insecurity and community health more effectively.

2

Fortify the human, infrastructure, and financial capacity and sustainability of Manna Food Center to optimize impact and support future growth.

3

Advocate to expand access to healthy food, promote food system resilience, and leverage our reputation to address underlying inequities.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1

Strengthen and expand the services of Manna Food Center, collaboratively with participants and community partners, to address food insecurity and community health more effectively.

The magnitude and complexity of food insecurity and intersecting issues means that Manna Food Center must collaborate with organizations who share our vision and commitment. By partnering with individuals with lived experience as well, Manna can learn from the community and continue to increase food security and promote the broader health of the community. Our focus is on implementing participant-informed solutions that prioritize choice and ensure availability of nutritious foods.

To achieve this, our actions will include:

- Determine where there are gaps and overlap among the organizations in the area working on food insecurity and reallocate resources to create more effective distribution points and identify community partners to assist in filling these gaps
- Engage participants through surveys and reviews, gather input through interviews and community committees that value participants time, insights, and advice, and create opportunities to listen and share
- Develop a comprehensive corporate partner strategy, identifying prospective partners for well-rounded, long-term, mutually beneficial engagements
- Commit to Farm to Food Bank partnerships to increase the availability of local, fresh food, as well as support the success of farms led by women and people of color



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2

Fortify the human, infrastructure, and financial capacity and sustainability of Manna Food Center to optimize impact and support future growth.

In order for Manna Food Center to reach its bold vision, it is critical that we are fully staffed, and our team-mates have the resources they need. As we build on four decades of service, we need to evolve our systems and processes, and sustain human interactions and relationships while building in more time to pause and reflect.

To achieve this, our actions will include:

- Safeguard our financial future by implementing our new reserve and investment policies, while increasing revenue and operating efficiently
- Ensure staff are set up for success, implementing findings from staff feedback and resource/technology assessments, as well as expanding the ways staff track and measure progress against goals
- Monitor Key Performance Indicators via a Leadership Team dashboard related to staff and participant engagement, inventory accuracy, and other key metrics reflecting the work of this plan
- Continue trainings for all staff on justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) and launch a staff committee to advance our JEDI commitments.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3

Advocate to expand access to healthy food, promote food system resilience, and leverage our reputation to address underlying inequities

Manna's vision of ending food insecurity in Montgomery County requires systems and policy change and working at a broader scale to address the underlying inequities that lead to food insecurity. Through strategic advocacy partnerships with leading organizations, Manna Food Center can lend support, awareness, and resources to implement change.

To achieve this, our actions will include:

- Educate our community about hunger and its solutions
- Build relationships with elected officials to advance our advocacy agenda and shape policy efforts
- Engage with community members through committees, councils, and task forces to amplify key voices and perspectives
- Commit to work in new ways with current and new organizations working at the intersection of food security, health, and housing



STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Lisa Davis, Chair

Amy Coughenour Betancourt

Jackie DeCarlo

Mardia Dennis

Dzigbordi Egbenya-Hossoo

Gigi Goin

Matthew Keene

Jessica Nardi

Margaret Peng Rogers

Jenna Umbriac

Angela Whitmal



Many thanks to the staff, volunteers, and supporters who are pictured and who inspire us to continue our work in the community. We appreciate Mission Partners, who led us through the creation of this strategic plan.



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Manna Food Center is a welcoming place and well organized. There is so much need and Manna not only provides food that my family needs, but treats me well, too.

MANNA PARTICIPANT



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 Manna Food Center

Manna Food Center
12301 Old Columbia Pike | Suite 200
Silver Spring, MD 20904
mannafood.org