



# COVID-19 EMERGENCY FOOD RESPONSE

**HOLLY FREISHTAT**  
**FOOD POLICY DIRECTOR**  
**FOOD POLICY & PLANNING**

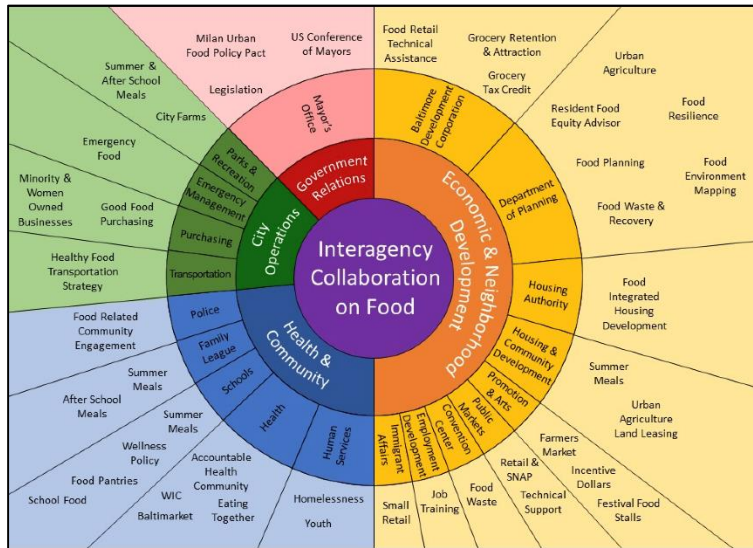
**Prince Georges County Food Security Task Force**

**February 12, 2021**



# FOOD POLICY AND PLANNING DIVISON

Oversee the Baltimore Food Policy Initiative (BFPI), a three-tiered approach to building and equitable and resilient urban food system



## Inter-agency collaboration

- 19 agencies addressing food systems

## Food Policy Action Coalition (Food PAC)

- 60 diverse stakeholders and growing
- Collaboration, idea sharing and collective action and advocacy

## Resident Food Equity Advisors

- 15 residents, 6 meetings, Compensated for their time







# **A CITY COMMITTED TO BUILDING AN EQUITABLE AND RESILIENT URBAN FOOD SYSTEM**



**Sustainability Plan 2019**

# Food System Guiding Principles

1. Use policy to create a more equitable food system
2. Increase resilience at household, community, and food system levels
3. Strengthen and amplify the local food economy
4. Create agriculture land-use policies that encourage urban farms and local food production



Food Systems & Urban Agriculture - The Sustainability Plan





# HEALTHY FOOD ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY



Resident-driven  
processes



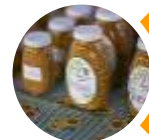
Corner and  
convenience stores



Supermarkets



Public Markets



Food distribution and  
small businesses



Federal nutrition  
assistance



Urban agriculture



Transportation gaps



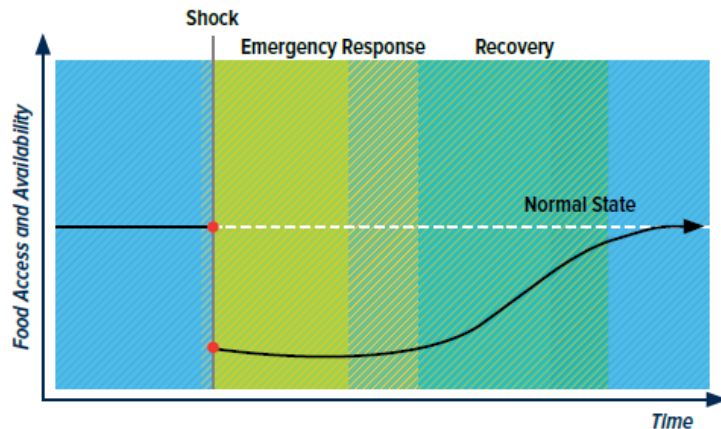


# COVID-19 EMERGENCY FOOD RESPONSE

## PLANNING

# FOOD RESILIENCE PLANNING

Figure 1: Resilience Timeline



## Staffing Structure:

- Food Policy Director
- Food Resilience Planner
- Food Access Planner
- Food Systems Planner

## Reports and Plans:

- Created Plan for Food Access During Incidents and Disasters for the City of Baltimore
- Baltimore Food System Resilience Advisory Report with Johns Hopkins

## Stakeholder Engagement:

- Emergency food working group

## Baltimore Food System Resilience Advisory Report

August 2017





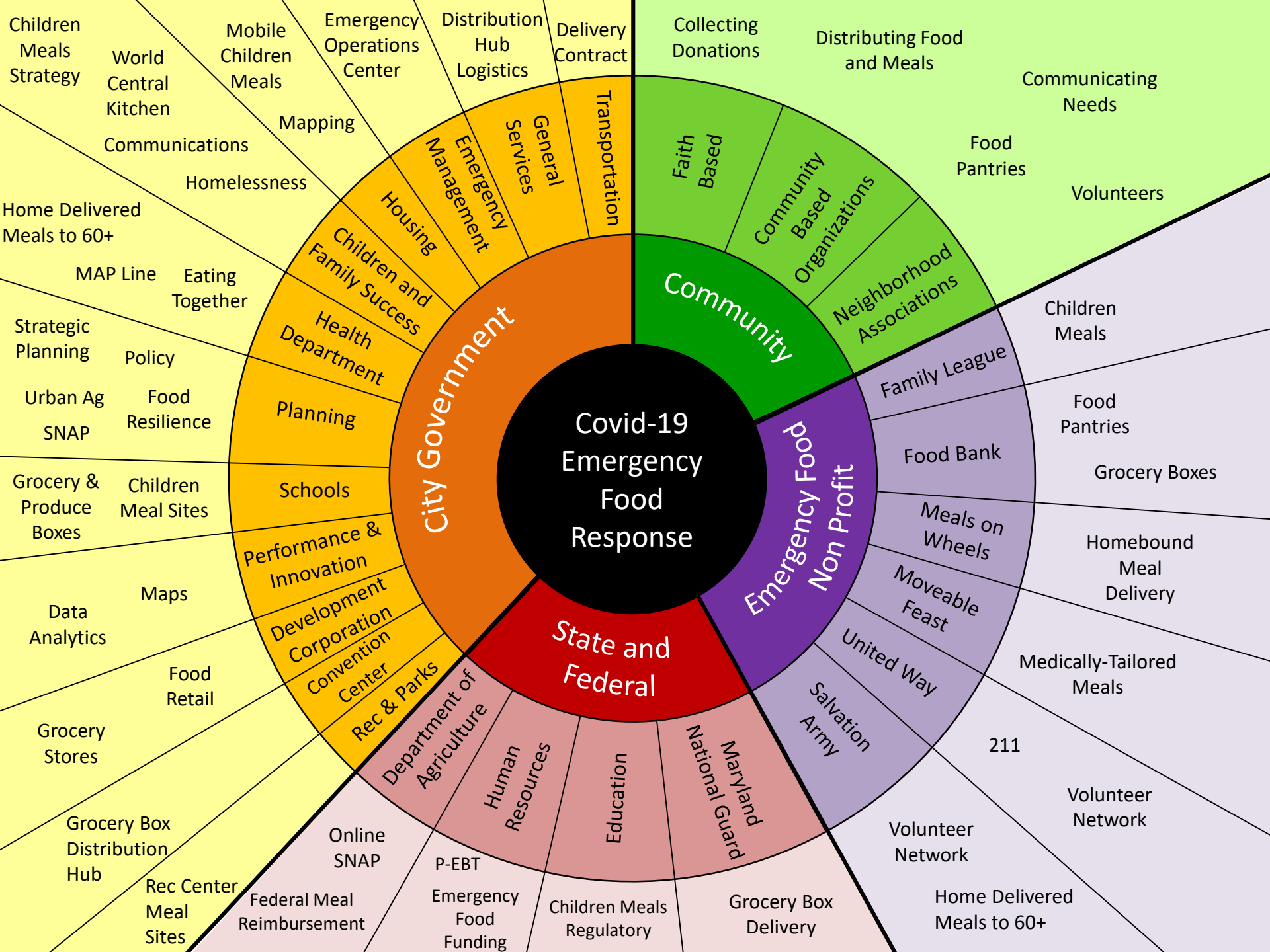
# STANDING UP A COVID-19 FOOD RESPONSE

## Role of Food Policy & Planning

- Lead strategic planning
- Conduct mapping & Data Analysis
- Coordinate with Emergency Operation Center and state and federal agencies
- **Planning Assumptions**
  - Adapt plan from congregate feeding to pandemic response
  - Procurement contracts in place
- **Planning Process**
  - Daily calls with Emergency Food Response Team
    - City agencies & schools
    - Non-profit food providers







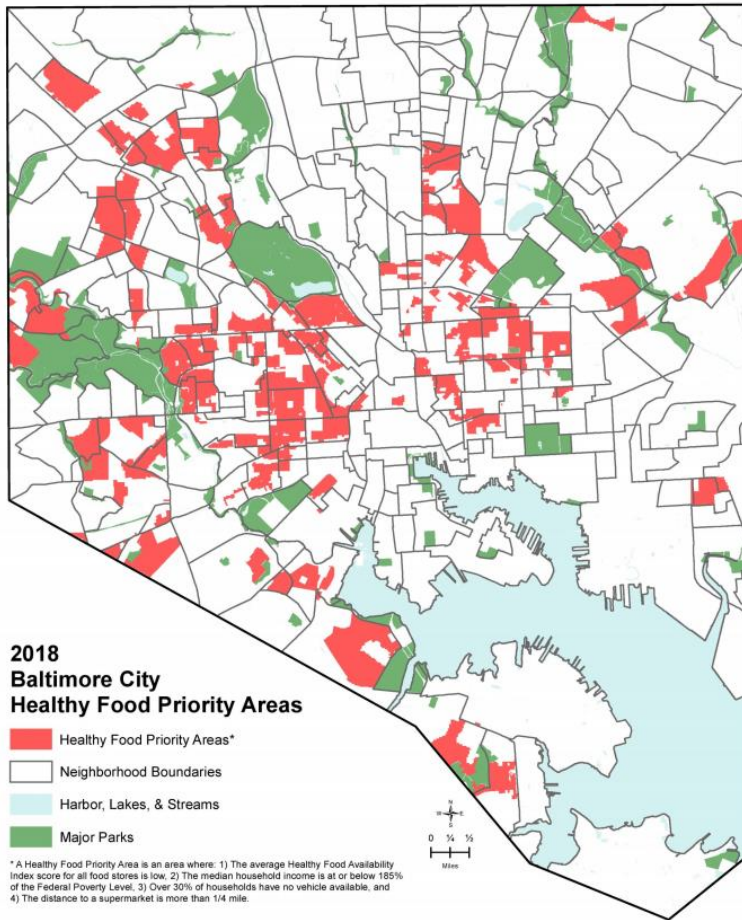


- Compile best practices
- Community informed
- Data driven

- Resident Food Equity Advisors
- Food Policy Action Coalition
- Healthy Food Priority Area Funds
- Community Planners
- Funding and Resources for Community Partners

- Adapt mapping strategies to COVID-19

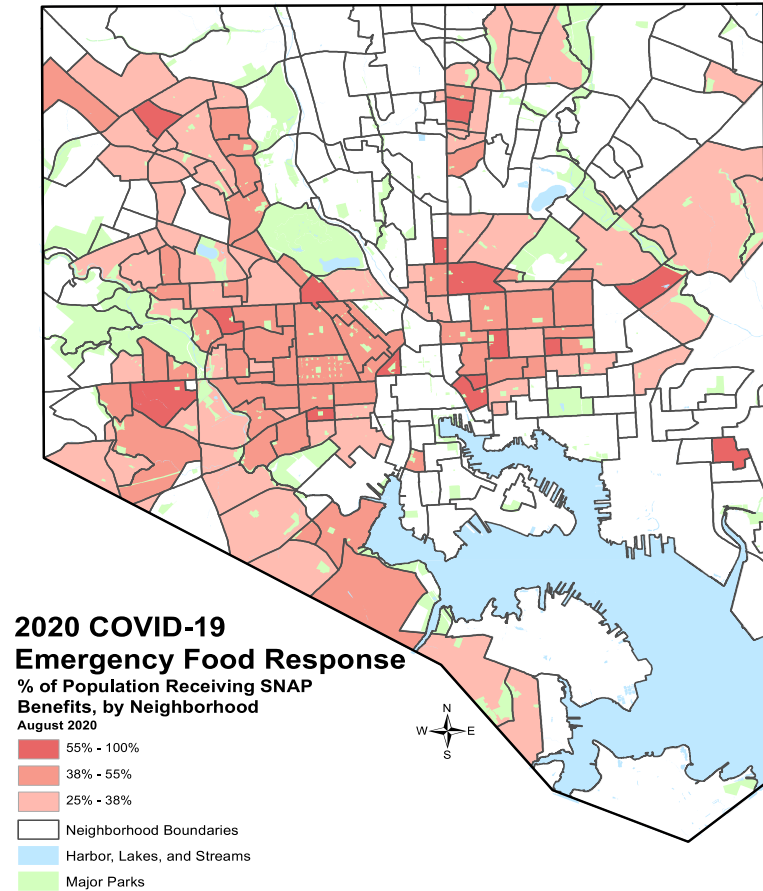
# FOOD ENVIRONMENT MAPPING



**Impact:** 146,000 residents in Priority Areas

**Strategy:** [8-point Healthy Food Environment Strategy](#)

**Resource:** [City & Council Food Environment Briefs](#)



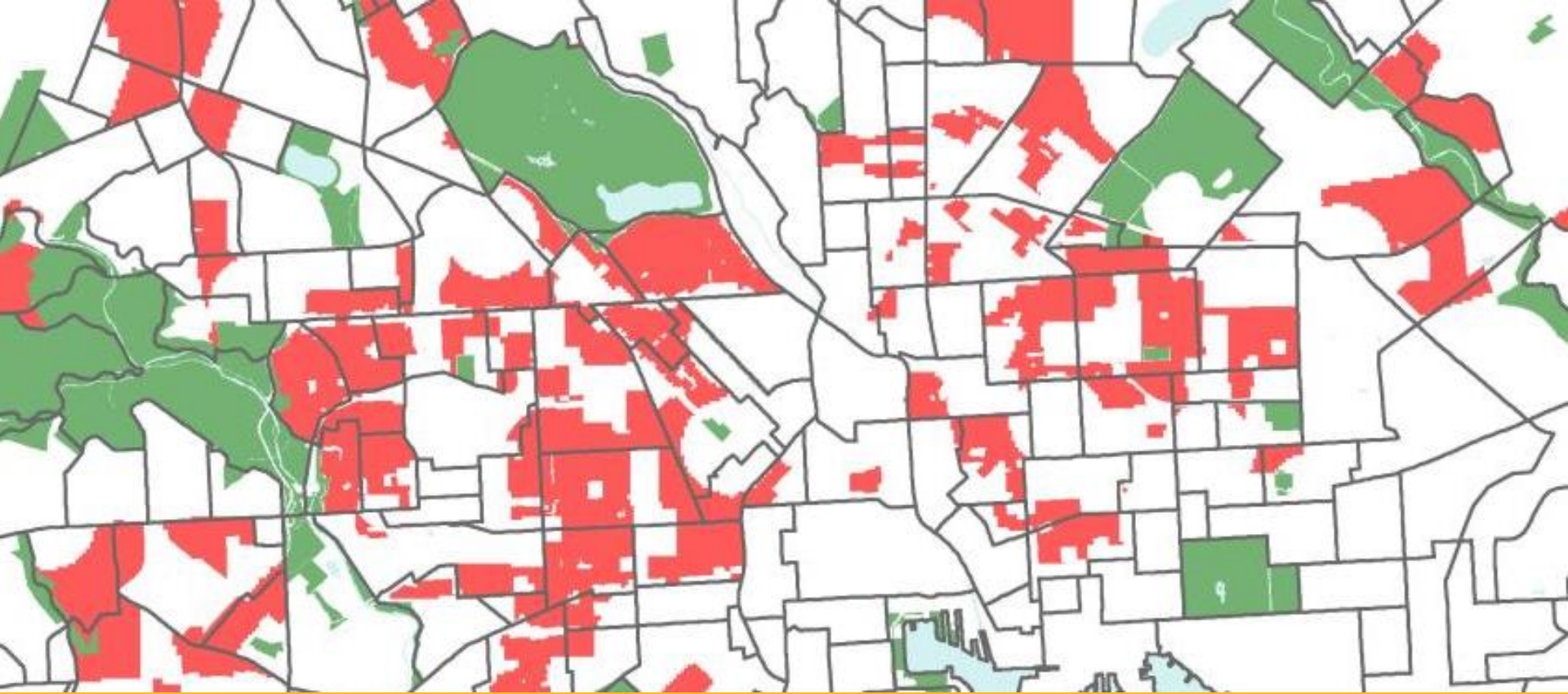
**Impact:** 188,000 residents on SNAP

**Strategy:** [COVID-19 Emergency Food Response](#)

**Resource:** [COVID-19 Food Environment Brief](#)



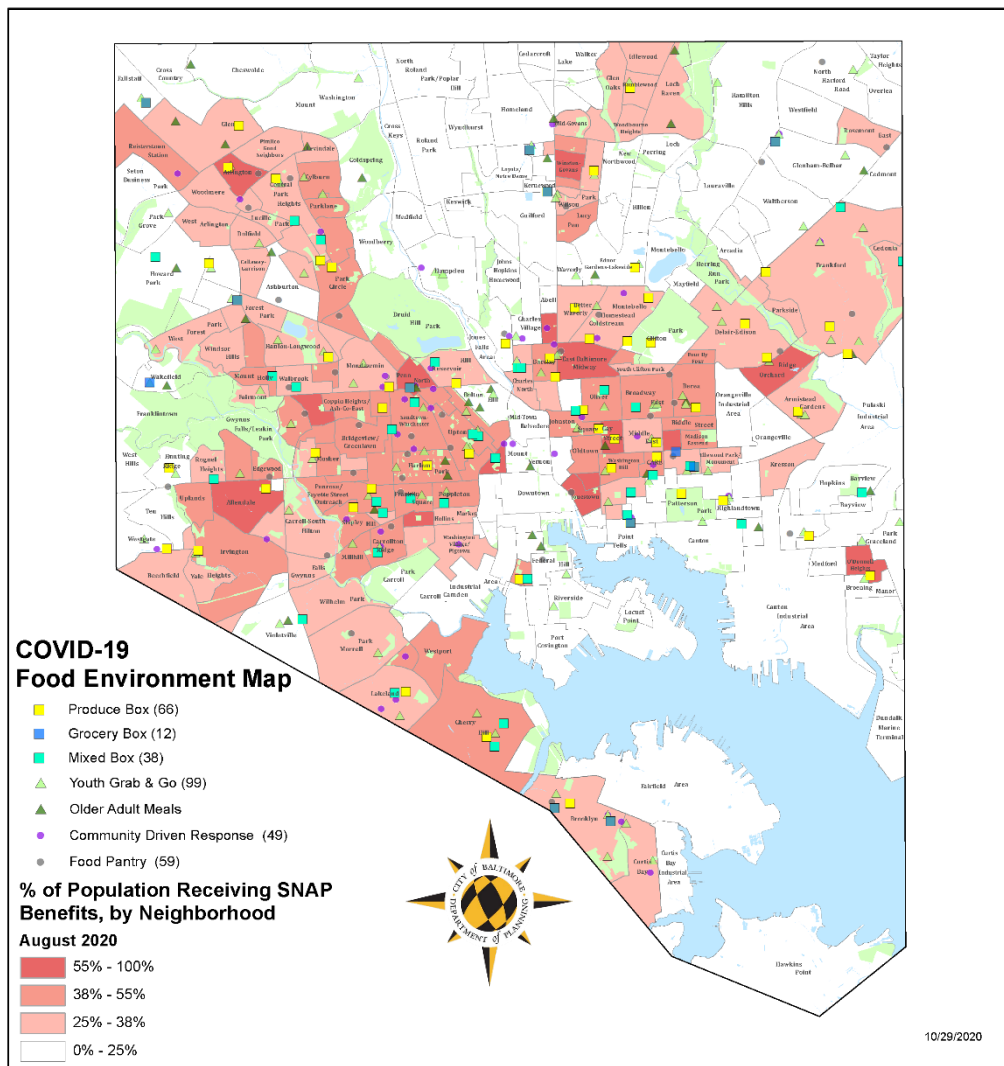




# COVID-19 EMERGENCY FOOD RESPONSE

MAPPING, DATA & RESOURCES

# COVID-19 FOOD ENVIRONMENT MAPPING



## SNAP

~188,000 (August)

## Food Distribution

- 66 Produce Boxes
- 12 Grocery Boxes
- 38 Mixed Food Boxes

## Meal Distribution

- 33 Older Adult Meals
- 99 Youth Grab and Go

## Nonprofit Response

- 49 Community Driven Response
- 59 Food Pantries



# COVID 19 FOOD ENVIRONMENT DISTRICT 12

## BALTIMORE CITY COUNCIL COVID-19 FOOD ENVIRONMENT BRIEF December 2020



### OVERVIEW

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the City of Baltimore developed a comprehensive Emergency Food Strategy involving city agencies and critical nonprofit, business, and community partners. This food security response is based on four key pillars: (1) distribute food boxes, (2) distribute meals, (3) protect and maximize federal nutrition benefits, and (4) build food system resilience through urban agriculture.

The Food Policy and Planning Division of the Department of Planning oversees the Baltimore Food Policy Initiative (BFPI). These briefs provide overviews of the food environment per city council district during the COVID-19 pandemic, and summarize food policy priorities moving into pandemic recovery and long-term resilience.

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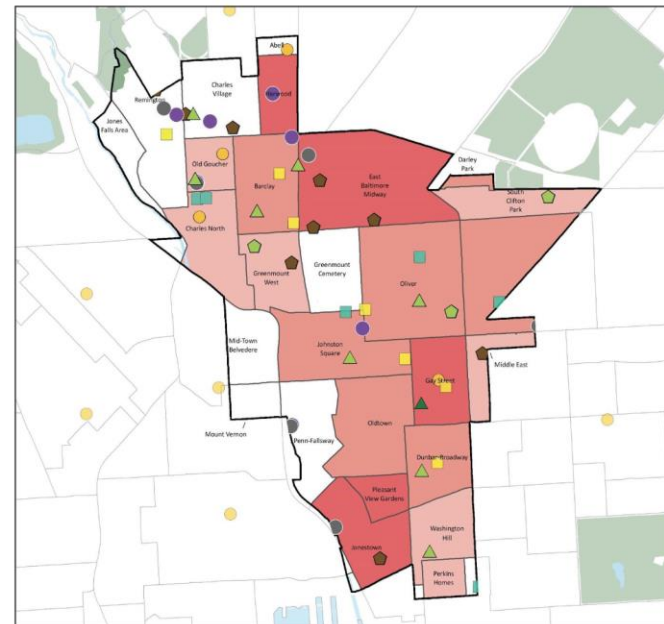
### FOR MORE INFORMATION

**CONTACT:** Holly Freishtat, Food Policy Director, [holly.freishtat@baltimorecity.gov](mailto:holly.freishtat@baltimorecity.gov)

**WEBSITE:** <https://planning.baltimorecity.gov/baltimore-food-policy-initiative>

**FOOD RESOURCES:** <https://coronavirus.baltimorecity.gov/food-distribution-sites>

## 2020 COVID-19 FOOD ENVIRONMENT MAP - DISTRICT 12



### 2020 COVID-19 Food Environment Map - District 12

% of Population Receiving SNAP Benefits, by Neighborhood

August 2020

55% - 100%  
38% - 55%  
25% - 38%

Neighborhood Boundaries

Harbor, Lakes & Streams

Major Parks

#### Food Distribution

Produce Box (7)  
Grocery (0)  
Mixed Box (5)  
Youth Grab & Go (8)  
Older Adult Meals (1)  
Food Pantry (8)  
Community Driven Response (7)

#### Food Retail

Supermarkets (4)  
Farmers Markets (1)  
Public Markets (0)

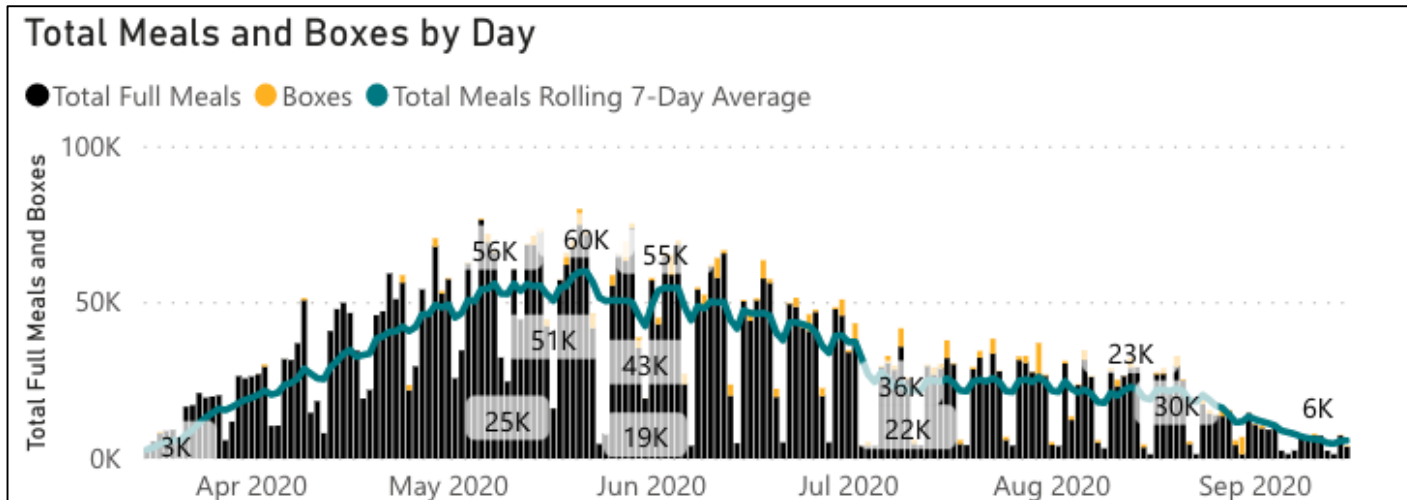
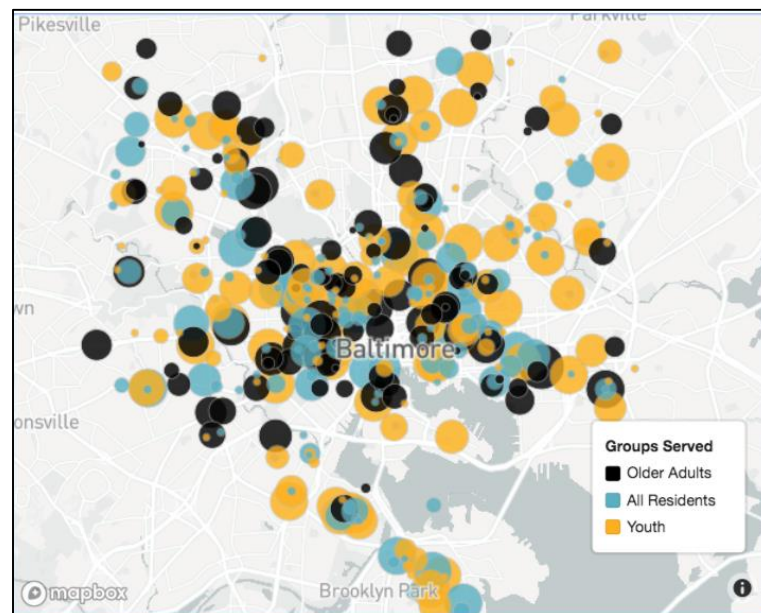
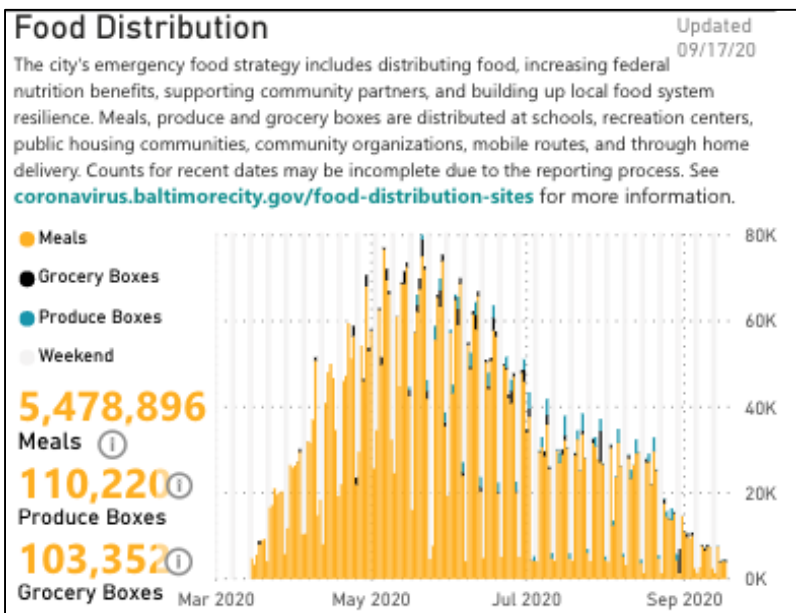
#### Urban Agriculture

Community Garden (9)  
Urban Farms (3)





# COVID-19 FOOD DISTRIBUTION DATA



# COVID-19 FOOD ACCESS RESOURCES

## Impacted by COVID-19? Need food assistance?



Brandon M. Scott  
Mayor

Baltimore City is delivering grocery boxes this winter in partnership with



### Who Qualifies?\*

- ✓ Currently have no food at home or will run out before you can buy more
- ✓ Can't afford paid meal or grocery delivery
- ✓ Are experiencing financial, social or medical hardships due to COVID-19
- ✓ Have someone at home who is able to prepare food

### What should qualifying households expect?

Will receive a grocery box with enough non-perishable food for 1-2 weeks depending on household size  
Will receive a box within 3-4 days of ordering

\*If you don't qualify for home delivery, you can still get food assistance. Visit:  
[coronavirus.baltimorecity.gov/food-distribution-sites](https://coronavirus.baltimorecity.gov/food-distribution-sites)

### To see if you qualify

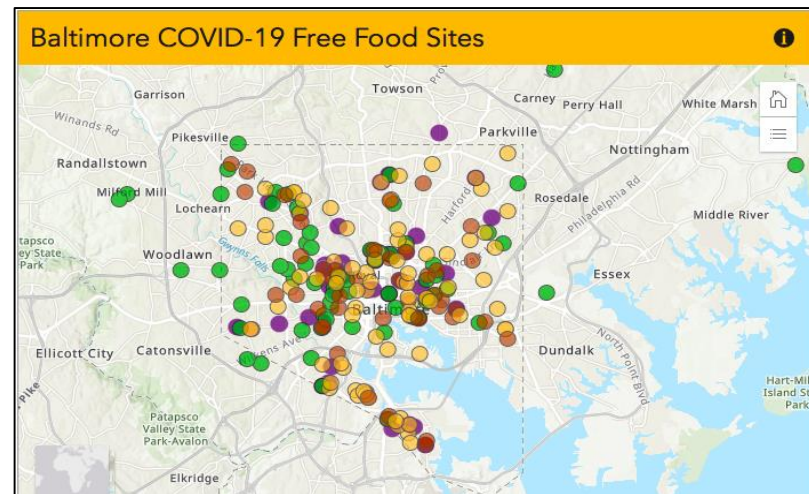
Adults 60 and older: call **(410) 396-2273**  
Residents 59 & younger: call **2-1-1**



For more information about COVID-19 visit:  
[coronavirus.baltimorecity.gov](https://coronavirus.baltimorecity.gov)

## COVID-19 Food Resources

- Baltimore City COVID-19 Food Resources



## Food Policy & Planning Briefs

- COVID-19 Food Environment Brief - Nov 2020
- COVID-19 Council District Food Environment Briefs





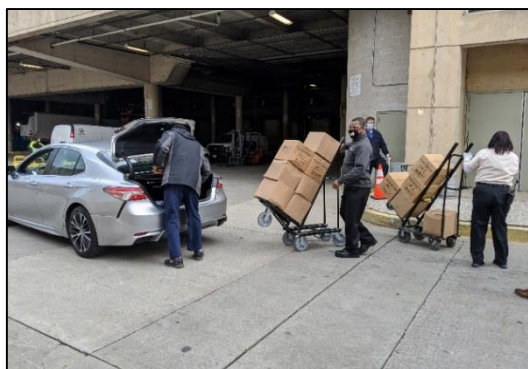


# COVID-19 EMERGENCY FOOD RESPONSE

## IMPLEMENTATION & IMPACT



# FOOD BOXES & MEALS



## Food Box Distribution:

11.8 Million pounds, totaling over 477,000 food boxes, 100 community, schools & rec centers locations

1. **Produce Boxes:** 57 sites, 20 lb. of produce from Coastal Sunbelt Produce & Common Market
2. **Mixed Food Boxes:** 36 sites, 22 lb. of produce, dairy & meat, Saval Foodservice
3. **Home Delivered Grocery Boxes:** 30 lb. shelf stable food boxes, screened for food insecurity by 211 & MAP, partners → Convention Center, Amazon, VOAD, Housing & Community Development (HCD), Maryland Food Bank

## Youth & Older Adult Meals:

Over 7.78 million meals, federally reimbursed, existing programs that have been expanded with waivers



# COVID-19 RELIEF THROUGH SNAP

## SNAP

- Excludes unemployment compensation from being counted as income for the purposes of calculating SNAP benefits & eligibility
- Increases SNAP's monthly benefits for 6-months
- Suspends work requirements for SNAP-eligible college students

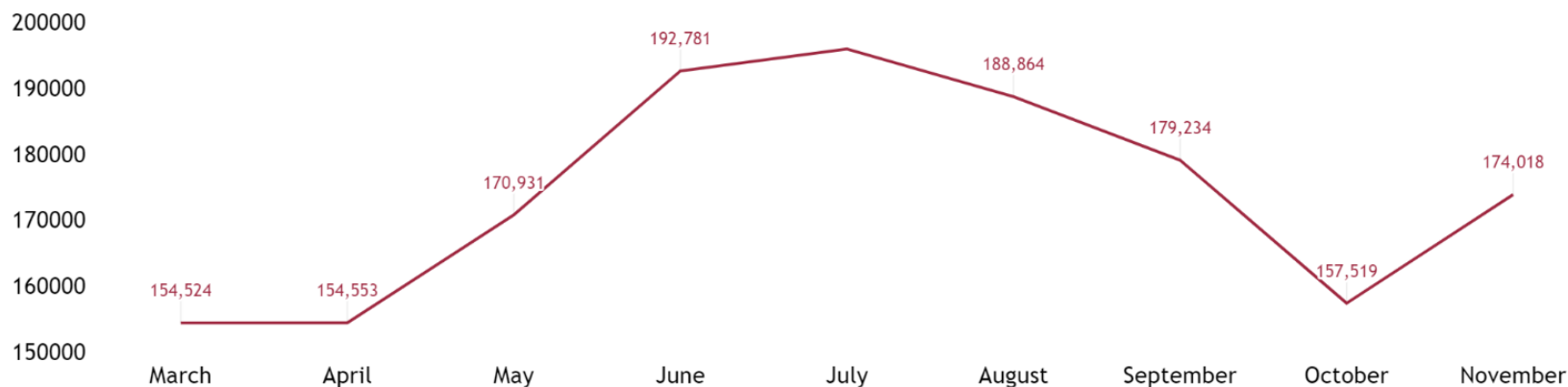
## Pandemic EBT (P-EBT)

- \$5.86 provided to all Baltimore City Public School students per school day

## Online SNAP

- Expedited implementation on May 28th with ShopRite, Amazon, and Walmart

SNAP Participation March - November 2020



# URBAN AGRICULTURE AND LOCAL FOOD

## Urban Farms & Community Gardens

- Growing food as a form of resilience and response
- Encouraging local purchasing to keep farms growing
- COVID Resilience Fund for Black-led Farms



## Farmers Markets & Community Supported Agriculture

- Essential business
- Nutrition incentives
- Support buying from local growers



## Funding

- \$82k Healthy Food Priority Area Funds
- Linking funders with urban ag organizations
- Length of response proves need to invest in longer-term food solutions





# COVID 19 VACCINE READINESS

## Priority Group 1C

**Definition:** Front-line essential workers hold critical jobs essential to the functioning of society and have potential occupational exposure to individuals with COVID-19.

List includes Food and Agricultural workers

- Restaurant workers
- Food Pantries
- Farmers Markets
- Farms
- Grocery/Convenience store workers

## COVID-19 VACCINE DISTRIBUTION PHASE 1<sup>A</sup> 2<sup>B</sup> 3.

\*As of Jan. 25th 2021. Phases subject to change due to CDC, MDH, or FDA updated guidance

**We are in Phase 1C**

PHASE 1A.	PHASE 2.	PHASE 3.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthcare workers</li> <li>• Residents and staff of nursing facilities</li> <li>• First responders, public safety, corrections</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adults 16-64 at increased risk of severe COVID-19 illness due to comorbidities</li> <li>• Essential workers in critical utilities transportation, food service, etc</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General population, including healthy adults age 16-64</li> </ul>
PHASE 1B.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adults 75 years and older</li> <li>• People experiencing homelessness</li> <li>• Shelter staff and residents</li> <li>• High-risk, incarcerated individuals</li> <li>• Individuals in group home settings</li> <li>• Education sector (K-12 Teachers and support staff in schools)</li> <li>• Child care workers</li> <li>• Continuity of government</li> </ul>		
PHASE 1C.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Marylanders over 65.</li> <li>• All other public safety (not in Phase 1A)</li> <li>• All other healthcare (not in Phase 1A), including, but not limited to Lab Services, Public Health, Vaccine Manufacturing, other healthcare professions).</li> <li>• Food and Agriculture Production</li> <li>• Critical Manufacturing</li> <li>• U.S. Postal Service</li> <li>• Public Mass Transit</li> <li>• Grocery Stores</li> <li>• Veterinarians and Support Staff</li> <li>• Clergy and other essential support for houses of worship</li> </ul>		

**It's Baltimore versus COVID.  
Let's win this together.**



Brandon M. Scott  
Mayor

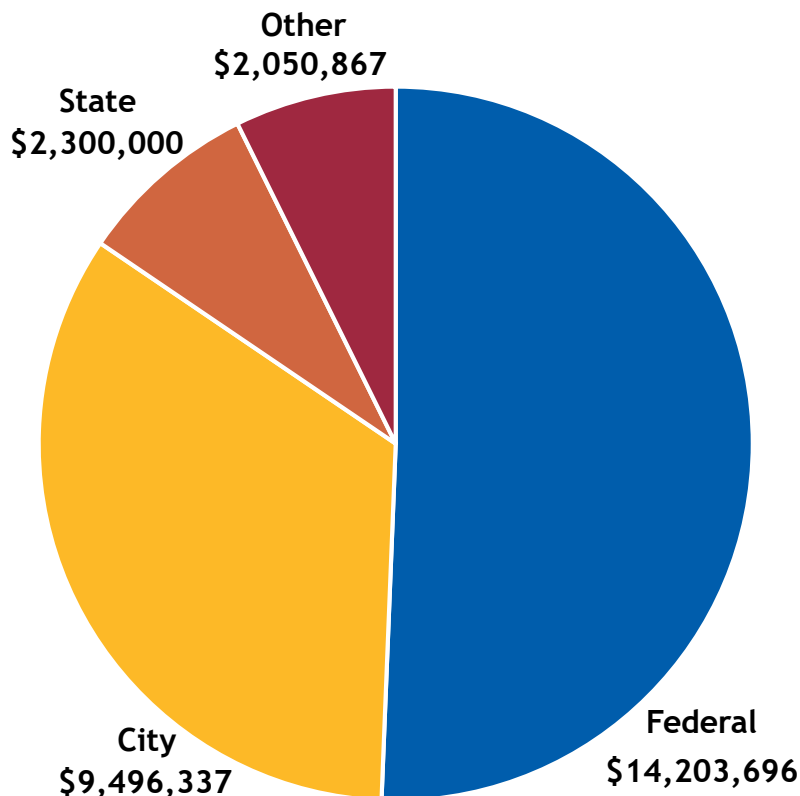
**BALTIMORE  
CITY HEALTH  
DEPARTMENT**

To learn more, visit [coronavirus.baltimorecity.gov/covax](https://coronavirus.baltimorecity.gov/covax)

Coronavirus 2019 Disease(COVID-19) ([baltimorecity.gov](https://baltimorecity.gov))

# FUNDS LEVERAGED: MARCH - AUGUST 2020

Baltimore City has leveraged a total of \$28.1 million.



- Federal**
  - USDA Farmers to Families
  - Summer Feeding Program
  - Older Americans Act
- State**
  - Maryland Dept of Human Services food funds
- City**
  - COVID-19 Budget
- Other**
  - Philanthropic, business, nonprofit





**COVID 19 EMERGENCY FOOD RESPONSE**

**CONCLUSION & LOOKING FOWARD**



# FOOD POLICY AGENDA



PC: United Way of Central Maryland

## Address Food Insecurity

- Covid-19 emergency food response
- Address SNAP policy barriers
- Youth led food insecurity strategy

## Innovations

- Rideshare
- Nutrition Incentives
- Food As Medicine- Produce Rx
- Food Resilience Plan Update

## Prioritize Resident-led priorities

- Urban Agriculture- Equity Framework
- Resident Equity Advisors & Food PAC

## Strengthen and amplify local economy

- Small Food Retail & Food Coops
- Avenue Market
- Good Food Procurement



# REFLECTIONS



- Gaps evident in the system after the pandemic
- Current and shifting of priorities
- Long term and short term strategies to improve the food system
- Given many pressing needs due to COVID, how have the recommendations and your work been impacted?



Holly Freishtat, MS

Baltimore City Food Policy Director

Email: [holly.freishtat@baltimorecity.gov](mailto:holly.freishtat@baltimorecity.gov)

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Website:

<https://planning.baltimorecity.gov/baltimore-food-policy-initiative>