

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY 2022 Policy Agenda



For more than 42 years, the Capital Area Food Bank has served as the backbone of the region's hunger relief infrastructure. Throughout this time, we have responded to several crises—none more significant than COVID-19. In FY21, the Food Bank distributed 20,341,252 million meals to food insecure clients in Prince George's County. Based on prior experience and direct engagement with our clients and partners, the Food Bank expects to see elevated levels of need for years to come. The policy recommendations below represent practical and impactful interventions that can be enacted in 2022 to build upon our distribution efforts and reduce food insecurity among our 94,980 clients in the county.



Create a County-Level Earned Income Tax Credit

The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is one of the most effective anti-poverty tools in U.S. history. Maryland is one of 28 states to supply its own additional credit that builds upon the federal EITC, and counties throughout the state are beginning to enact local credits as well. In Prince George's neighboring Montgomery County, the [Working Families Income Supplement](#) (WFIS) is one of the few municipally driven anti-poverty tax programs in the country. The WFIS takes an innovative and feasible step to match the state's refundable EITC and provide it directly to those in need through state tax returns.

The WFIS functions as a local EITC. However, if Prince George's County were to enact it, it would not be considered a tax program because it is disbursed as a separate, supplemental payment. The [Maryland Center on Economic Policy](#) estimates the average benefit and cost at various county match percentages. If the county chooses to enact a less-than-100 percent match, the initial percentage should increase on an annual basis until it is in lockstep with the state's full amount. If acted upon in a timely manner, the county could ensure that this credit supports nearly 75,000 working-poor families in the 2022 tax filing season.

We request that the county slowly phase in a similar credit to Montgomery County's WFIS that will play a large role in the upcoming tax season.



Create a Full-Time Position or Workload to Synergize and Leverage Federal Resources and Programs

It is estimated that [17% of SNAP-eligible residents](#) in Prince George's County do not participate in the program. This leaves an estimated \$17.2 million going unused annually. Similarly, it is estimated that millions more goes unused in programs such as the EITC, Child Tax Credit, Medicaid, TANF, WIC, etc. After conversations with advocates, policymakers, governmental administrators, and clients, we believe the county could and should activate millions of dollars in federal social welfare by hiring a full-time staffer to increase synergy between federal, state, and local governments and ongoing community-based utilization efforts; to implement and negotiate data-sharing agreements; and to incorporate research-oriented practices into existing and newly created outreach practices.

We request that the county invest in a strategic and coordinated effort to strengthen inter-programmatic utilization efforts and increase participation in social safety net programs.

Based on a survey of 589 clients in Prince George's County, nearly 24 percent indicated that they were receiving no governmental social safety net benefits whatsoever.



Continue Building the Stand Up and Deliver Program to Address Needs Presented by Pandemic

Beginning in April 2020, the Prince George's County Executive's office launched the Stand Up and Deliver program, which is an "innovative and targeted solution to build capacity for community-based organizations and small businesses to address the food insecurity and basic needs" of Prince Georgians.¹ The program uses resources from the county government, local nonprofits, and restaurants to deliver food to those in need. The Food Bank was honored to serve in the early stages of the program as the county began to coordinate donations and to further assess the areas and communities with the highest levels of food insecurity. From May through July, the Food Bank delivered 3.75 million meals throughout the entire county, 1 million of which were directly associated with the program through 10 strategically selected nonprofit sites.

We recommend the county continue to use data to inform investments and to identify strategic partner organizations in areas of need.

In the last ten years, the Capital Area Food Bank has distributed
105,125,442 meals to food insecure clients
in Prince George's County.



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