

SPRING 2024

# GRANTS TURN CAN'TS INTO CANS...



*...and refrigerators,  
and produce, and a  
stronger Maryland.*





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Maryland Food Bank



## *Hunger is complex*

Talk to five food-insecure neighbors, and you may hear five different underlying reasons for why they've needed to tap into one of the more than 1,110 statewide access points in Maryland's food assistance safety network. For some, it's transportation, for others, it's un- or under-employment, and still others face challenges with child/dependent care.

And to meet these varying needs, we continually create, apply, and modify a spectrum of solutions, all of which begin with food.

Over the past 45 years, we've become experts about a great many things in the food assistance space, but the most important thing we've learned is that having the right resource, in the right place, at the right time for a neighbor in need is the most consequential thing we can do. But Maryland is a very diverse state. What helps people in Pasadena find relief isn't necessarily the same solution for what's needed by folks in Frederick.

Thankfully, at each of those access points sits one of our partners—individuals who know the day-to-day needs of their community better than we ever could. Just like many Maryland families that struggle to make ends meet, many partners lack the resources to tackle the problems preventing their community from thriving.

So that's why, since 2019, we've been helping our partners offer more in their communities through \$3.6M in grants: Food First Capacity Grants that address immediate needs, Hunger Hotspot Grants for rapid relief when hunger spikes, and Neighbor Impact Grants that support systematic change efforts addressing root causes.

And these grants directly support the overall mission of the Maryland Food Bank: Feeding People (Capacity), Strengthening Communities (Hunger Hotspot), and Ending Hunger for More Marylanders (Neighbor Impact).

Within this issue, you'll learn more about these grants, gaining insight into how they are making things better. You'll see some of the organizations that have harnessed the transformative potential of this initiative and meet neighbors who have participated in the programs and services made possible by these grants.

In continued partnership,

**CARMEN DEL GUERCIO**

PRESIDENT & CEO, Maryland Food Bank





### Perdue-ing the Right Thing

To help Maryland families who continue to struggle to put food on their tables, Perdue Farms recently donated more than 58,000 servings of chicken breasts to the Maryland Food Bank, 70,000 pounds in total!

**“As a Maryland-based food and agriculture company, we’re uniquely positioned to help our food-insecure neighbors by donating high quality protein in the form of chicken breasts,”** said Chris Perdue, Vice President, Perdue Farms. “Perdue is proud to give back to the very communities where our families live, work, and go to school,” he continued.



*In total, Perdue Farms donated 2.75 million servings to Feeding America food banks nationwide.*

### Internal Change for External Impact

We’re excited about some recent shifts in the management organization of our company, and are proud to share the news that three key employees have moved into new roles that will allow them to build on the success of their previous ones.

By restructuring roles and moving reporting lines, MFB now has a more traditional leadership structure, one that offers many advantages, including creating better alignment between strategic initiatives, innovation, and essential programs and operations. We believe this change fosters new opportunities and synergies that will help us end hunger for more Marylanders.



**Meg Kimmel**  
Chief Operating Officer



**Elise Krikau**  
Chief Philanthropy Officer



**Tenille Clark**  
Senior Vice President  
of Human Resources



## MFB VOICES

*Hear from more Voices [mdfoodbank.org/voices](https://mdfoodbank.org/voices)*

**"For a long time, I wore food insecurity as a badge on my chest...that's what made me, because I knew how to do without. But I think the food bank definitely played a part in how I was able to survive."**

Nakia Coleman has experienced food insecurity multiple times in her life – both as a child and a parent. Today, she is helping other address the root causes of hunger both through her day job in helping improve housing stability and as a member of our Speakers Bureau.

***"All my life, I've been the benefactor of someone else wanting to do good. So for me, I truly believe this is the rent you pay to be in this world."***





# Granting Opportunity

Since 2019, the Maryland Food Bank has been helping strengthen the food assistance safety net by disbursing \$3.6 million through 300 grants! In that time, tens of thousands of neighbors statewide have already benefitted from the program, but most of the work has been behind-the-scenes.

However, if you are a diligent reader, or regular visitor to our website, you may have read about Marylanders in Carroll County having the chance to pick up food from Westminster Rescue Mission's expanded pantry, The Door Pantry's ability to serve hot meals to hungry Baltimore neighbors via a warming cabinet, or the van that has allowed the St. Michael's Community Center to feed double the numbers of neighbors who lack transportation on the Eastern Shore.

We recently sat down with Meg Kimmel, the Maryland Food Bank's Chief Operating Officer, and long-time food bank employee. In her 12-year tenure, Meg has led teams in Marketing, Strategy, Fundraising, and Programs, providing her a unique perspective into how the food bank operates. Here, she shares some history and thoughts on the strategy, or the "why" behind MFB's robust Grants Program.



*Why does the Maryland Food Bank offer a Grant Program rather than using its own knowledge and experience to spend funds crafting and deploying food access and root cause solutions?*

**Meg:** Ending hunger is a motivating vision, yet the reality is that hunger is a complex socioeconomic problem, with no quick or easy fixes. Our food bank believes that ending hunger requires a resilient, forward-focused network of organizations committed to working together to do their part. Sometimes, ending hunger work requires providing more food and more nutritious food, which we cannot do without that network. At other times, data visualizes new Hunger Hotspots that our Programs team works quickly to address. And alongside all this, is the critical work to change the policies and practices that create hunger in the first place.

No single organization can do all those things which is why we choose to invest in other nonprofits to accelerate their ability to contribute to this shared objective.

*How do the three different types of grants differ, and how do they help further MFB 3.0?*

**Meg:** As Carmen mentioned in his letter, the three grant types offered directly relate to the three legs of our mission statement, which support our all of our strategic efforts:

**Feeding People** becomes less challenging for partners who receive Food First Capacity Grants. These convenient, small infusions of grant dollars (up to \$7,000) can make a huge difference—a new refrigeration unit to hold fresh produce, money to fix a leaky roof, or funds to bring in training around fundraising or strategic planning. We have already seen an incredible ROI on this program—like the expanded food access in Sandtown you'll read about on the next page.

**Strengthening Communities** accelerates when partners are able to address the challenges priority populations face living in under-resourced communities through Hunger Hotspot Grants. Regional Program Directors and Network Partners alike are finding this opportunity to add or expand programs and services to be a powerful solution for local neighbors.

**And our end goal of Ending Hunger for More Marylanders** can be realized sooner through Neighbor Impact Grants. By supporting bold and innovative ideas and approaches that directly address hunger's root causes, the cycle of poverty and hunger will be broken for good. These systems-level initiatives are already laying the groundwork for a hunger-free Maryland.

## Which Grant is Right for Us?

**Food First Capacity** funding is available immediately for MFB Network Partners

**Hunger Hotspot** requests to help priority populations in under-resourced communities are reviewed on a yearly basis

**Neighbor Impact** applications to negate the root causes of hunger are available to any 501(c)(3) in MD, and operate on a two-year cycle



## Don't Take Your Ability to Help Neighbors for Granted

Reach out today to learn more about our Grant Program, and how you can help us realize a hunger-free Maryland even sooner! [kthomas@mdfoodbank.org](mailto:kthomas@mdfoodbank.org)



## GRANTS IN ACTION

### ***Food First Capacity***

In a literal sense, MFB Network Partner New Mount Zion Baptist Church used MFB Food First Capacity funding to purchase a refrigerator to store fresh food, and figuratively through the acquisition of new computers to help organize their work. These quick and relatively simple fixes resulted in a 25% increase in food access by neighbors in Sandtown.

### ***Hunger Hotspot***

Charles County's New Hope Community Services is using grant funding to reduce food insecurity, increase consumption of produce, and provide employment resources to Waldorf neighbors that will "help stabilize individuals and families through emergency resources, utility and rental assistance, and employment skill development," according to executive director Dr. Aaron Jones.

### ***Neighbor Impact Grant***

The Baltimore-based Black Yield Institute (BYI) is using funding to increase food and land equity for neighbors disproportionately affected by systemic racism. The group is working in the Cherry Hill and Curtis Bay areas to both to strengthen the local food chain (by supporting food producers of color) and skill/workforce development (to increase opportunities for people of color to work in agriculture).

"We want to ensure that specifically black and brown and poor people have good food available in the community, food that people decide they actually want to have there, and that the people actually benefit socially, politically, and economically. It is our mission to make that come true," said Eric Jackson, co-director and founder, Black Yield Institute.

In 2023, BYI shared nearly 7,500 meals/9,000 pounds of food, and intends to triple that output, supported by the Neighbor Impact Grant.



***Learn more about how grants are helping organizations statewide—like the Black Church Security Food Network—do more.***







# Advocacy (noun)

/ad•vo•ca•cy/ 'ad-və-kə-sē

:the act or process of supporting a cause or proposal

While national news continues to paint a rosier picture of financial improvement in the country, neighbors statewide continue to tell us that they're struggling to make ends meet. In a recent survey, 31.6% of Maryland adults said their children were sometimes or often not eating enough because food was not affordable. That's simply unacceptable.

Our strategic plan, MFB 3.0 guides our efforts to increase access to nutritious foods, open pathways out of hunger for more Marylanders, and invest in our own sustainability, but we can't make good on those efforts on our own—we need as many allies to act and support our cause (hunger) and proposals (MFB's 2024 Legislative Agenda) as possible.

## That's why we put advocacy into action!

We know financial hardship is a major driver of food insecurity, so we continually seek ways to reduce the financial burden on Maryland families, and increase food security, including through legislation supporting:

- ▶ Breakfast and lunch being universally accessible to students, regardless of a family's ability to pay
- ▶ Maryland's food assistance safety net being always ready and available for neighbors in need
- ▶ Modernization of public benefits like SNAP that can support a household
- ▶ Strengthening Maryland's food system to ensure the availability of healthy food



Judith Kinnie stands between MFB's Ben Gross & Anne Wallerstedt

”

“I grew up in poverty in Western Maryland, was raised on SNAP benefits and continued to receive them into my 20s as a single mom. Because of SNAP, I am a success story. Today, I am Mrs. Maryland America, a doctoral student, and a member of the Speakers Bureau. I am proud of the voice that I have and the opportunity to use it to advocate for others here in Annapolis.”

– JUDITH KINNIE,  
January 17, during the 2024 MD Legislative Assembly



MARYLAND  
FOOD BANK

# PACK TO GIVE BACK

SAVE THE DATE

 **FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 1** 

Pack to Give Back is Maryland's premier year-end event that brings our community together to assemble holiday meal boxes to help feed our neighbors in need.

*Corporate*  
**SPONSORSHIP  
& VOLUNTEER**  
*opportunities available*



[mdfoodbank.org/p2gb](https://mdfoodbank.org/p2gb)

Contact Jessica Palumbo to get the partnership started: [jpalambo@mdfoodbank.org](mailto:jpalambo@mdfoodbank.org)

## BECOME A PACK TO GIVE BACK SPONSOR, AND:

- **Expand** food access to more Marylanders during the holidays
- **Advance** your corporate social responsibility agenda
- **Promote** team building at a fun, feel good event
- **Increase** brand awareness through event signage, social media channels, and inclusion in the MFB Annual Report

*We encourage all our employees to be a force for good. And, just like every year, in 2023, we participated in the annual Pack to Give Back event, helping food-insecure Marylanders celebrate the holidays with a full meal.*

— JENNA HALL

Senior Compliance Analyst, Transamerica

[mdfoodbank.org](https://mdfoodbank.org)



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