



PUBLIC BENEFITS

THROUGH SCHOOLS

CONVENING

APRIL 9-10, 2024





ADVOCATING FOR INCREASED ACCESS TO PUBLIC BENEFITS IN SCHOOLS

PUBLIC BENEFITS THROUGH SCHOOLS CONVENING 2024

WELCOME



Matthew Smith
Senior Manager, National
Partnerships, Advocacy
Engagement

**PUBLIC BENEFITS THROUGH SCHOOLS
CONVENING 2024**





AGENDA

- Setting the Stage
- Federal & State Advocacy
- Local Advocacy
- Q&A

EVERYONE IS AN ADVOCATE

Advocacy is an activity by an individual or group that aims to influence decisions within political, economic, and social institutions. Advocacy can range from calling your United States Senators or speaking at your local school board meeting.

Advocacy requires data and research to make a solid case, but ultimately it boils down to storytelling. **Your unique experiences are what make you a great advocate.**

Monumental change can occur from advocacy, such as the new summer nutrition programs Summer EBT & rural non-congregate summer meals.

SPEAKERS



Dr. Michelle Lessly Blackburn, Sr. Policy Manager, Institute for Educational Leadership



Allison Schnitzer, Food Access Initiatives Director, Montgomery County Food Council



Annmarie Hart-Bookbinder, Food Security Programs Manager, Montgomery County Food Council



Elizabeth Teuwen, Food Access Manager, Montgomery County Food Council



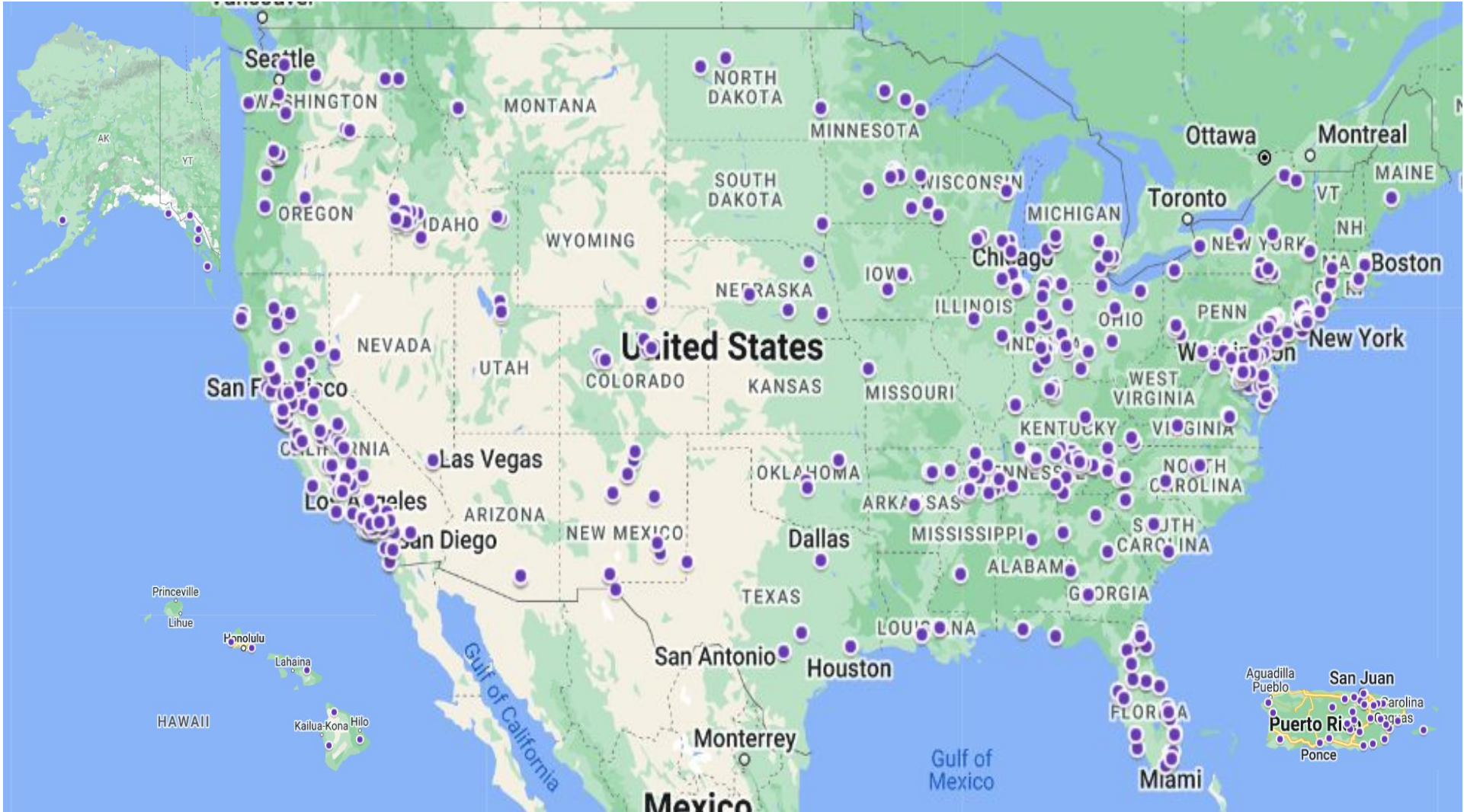
Community Schools Advocacy for Public Benefit

How can you help support policy and advocacy for Community Schools?

The Condition We Want to Create

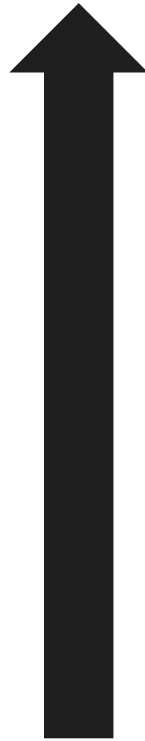
“Schools as centers for creating flourishing communities where everyone belongs, works together, and thrives.”

Community School Communities

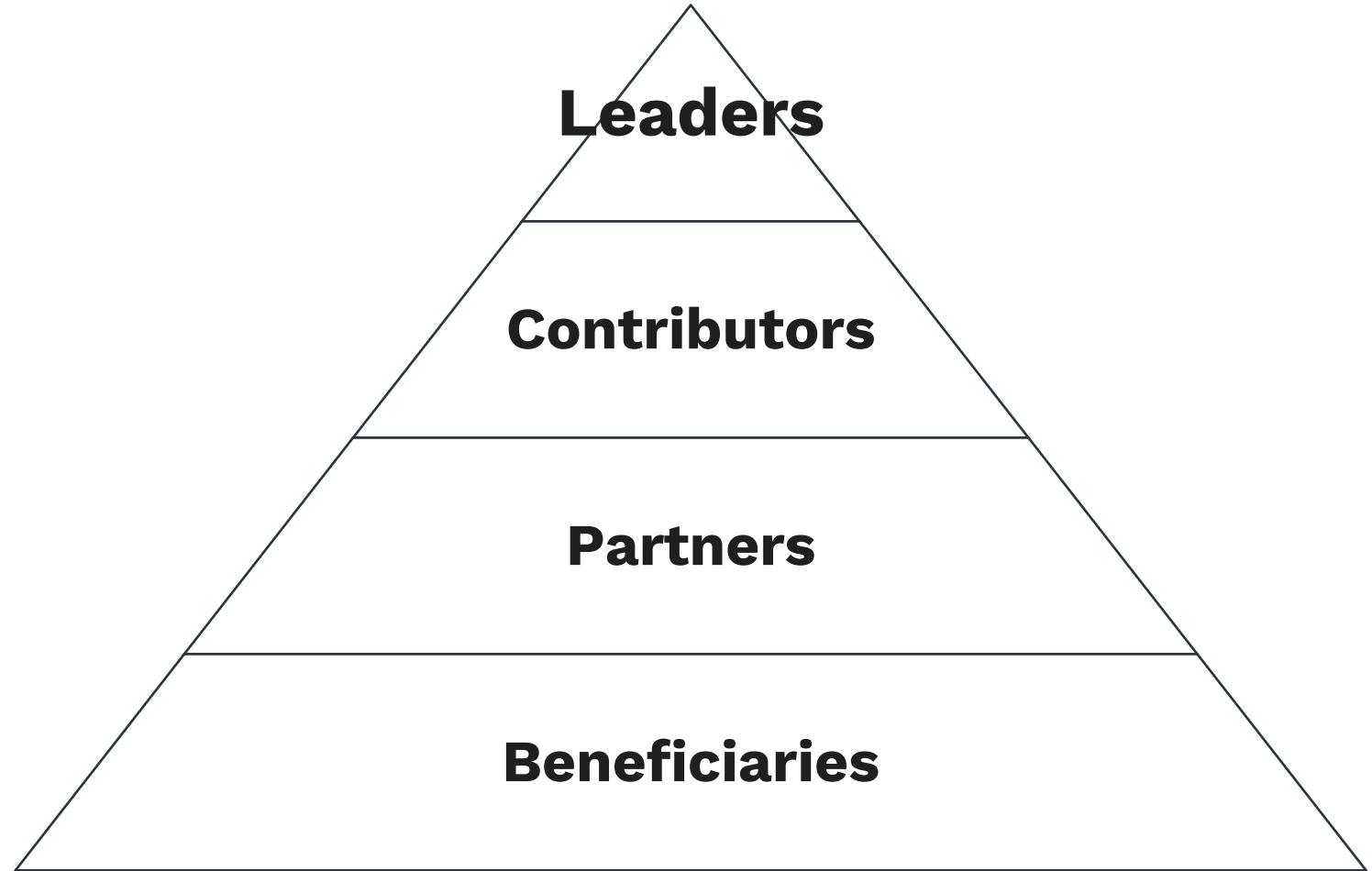


Community Schools Build Leadership

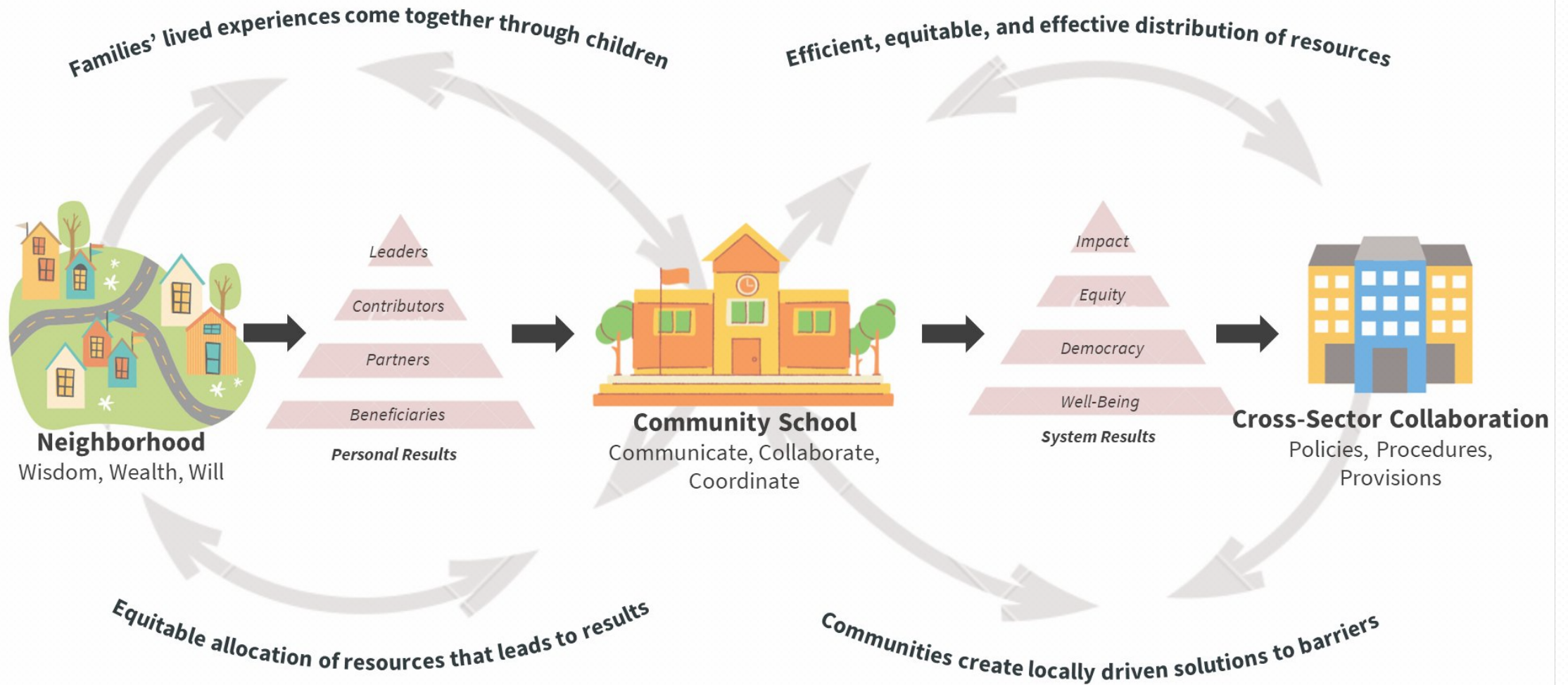
Transformational



Transactional

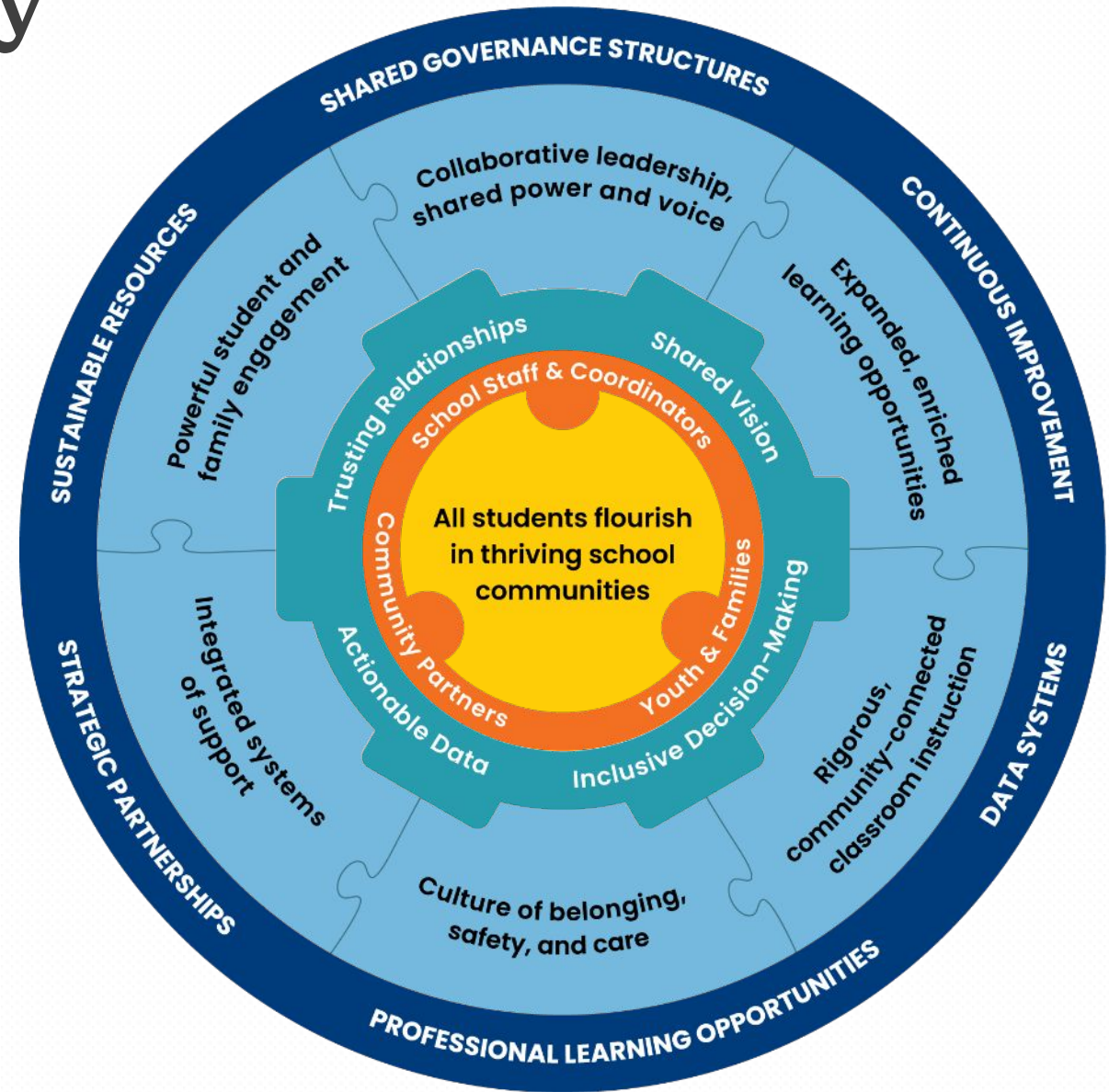


Leveraging Community Schools



What would good policy look like if...

The community school strategy transforms a school into a place where educators, local community members, families, and students work together to strengthen conditions for student learning and healthy development.

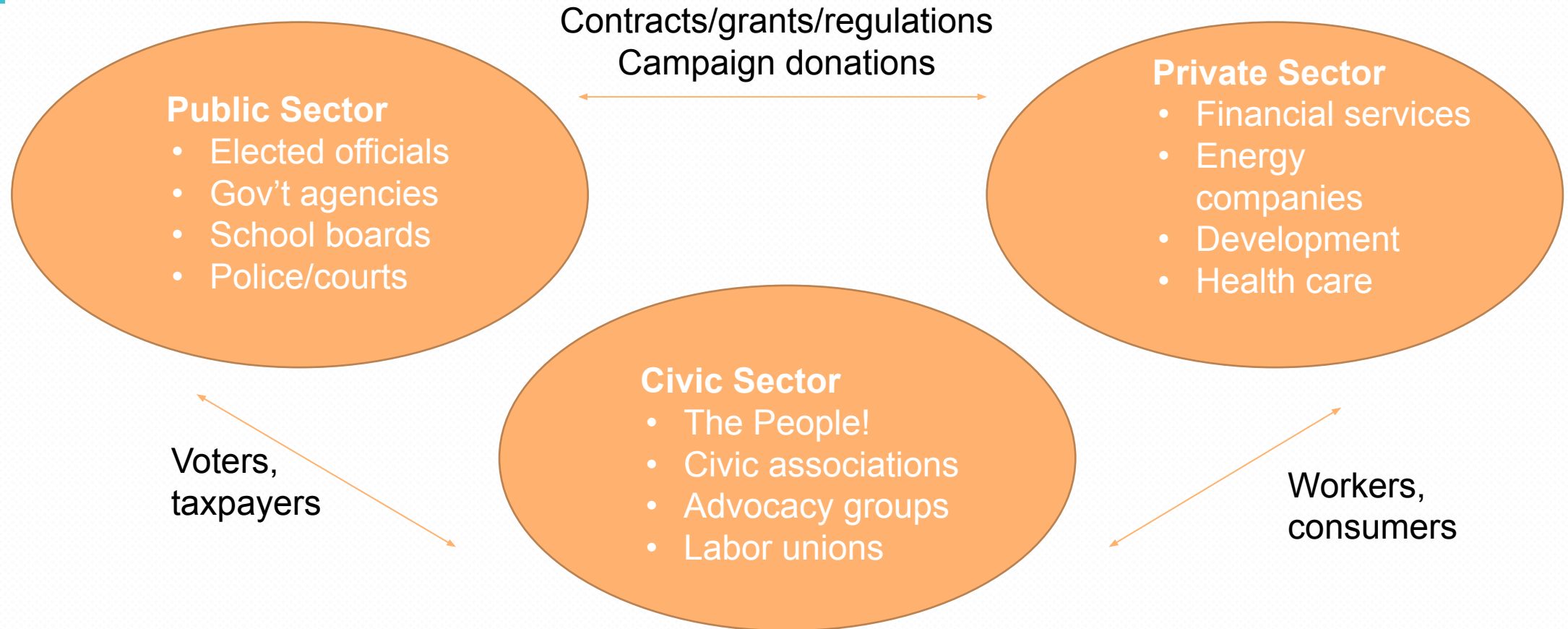




Advocacy Philosophy

Let our work tell the story.
Let the data prove our case.

Three Sectors of Power



118th Congress Policy Agenda

- Informed by our National, State, and Local Partners
- Educators, Parents, Youth, Administrators, Advocates
- 4 months, 280 survey and focus group responses

118th Congress Policy Agenda

- Top three responses:
 - Housing insecurity
 - Food insecurity
 - Transportation insecurity

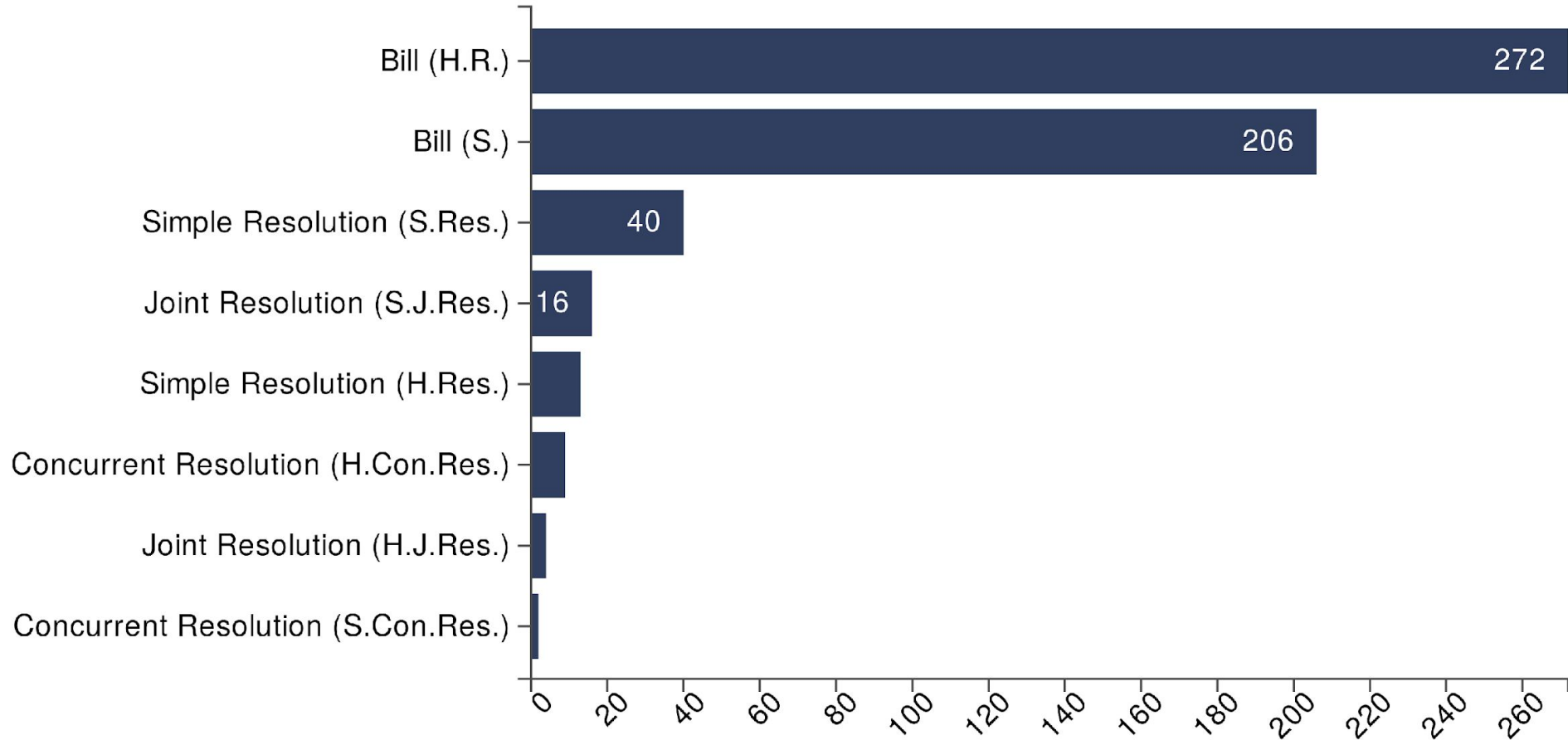
Federal Advocacy

- Meetings with Members of Congress (Staff)
- Sign-On Letters
- Coalition Work/Collaboration
- Meeting with Key National Partners
- National Campaigns

Meetings with Congressional Members

- Can be related to a bill or to educate
- If possible, include people who are doing the work or directly impacted by the work
- Leave collateral (print or digital)
- **ALWAYS HAVE AN ASK!**

Community School Policy Since 2018





WILLIAM R. JOHNSTON, JOHN ENGBERG, ISAAC M. OPPER, LISA SONTAG-PADILLA, LEA XENAKIS

Illustrating the Promise of Community Schools

An Assessment of the Impact of the New York City Community Schools Initiative



Sponsored by the New York City Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

of a Community School Coordinator:
A Case Study



LEARNING POLICY INSTITUTE



Community Schools as an Effective School Improvement Strategy *A Review of the Evidence*

RESEARCH BRIEF | DEC 2017

Anna Maier, Julia Daniel, and Jeannie Oakes

Abstract

The report on which this brief is based synthesizes the research evidence about the impact of community schools on student and school outcomes. Its aim is to support and inform school, community, district, and state leaders as they consider, propose, or implement community schools as a strategy for providing equitable, high-quality education to all young people. We conclude that well-implemented community schools lead to improvement in student and school outcomes and contribute to meeting the educational needs of low-achieving students in high-poverty schools, and sufficient research exists to meet the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) standard for an evidence-based intervention.

The report can be found online at <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/community-schools-effective-school-improvement-report>.

External Reviewers

The report benefited from the insights and expertise of two external reviewers: Jon Snyder, Executive Director of Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education; and Tina Trujillo, Associate Professor at the University of California at Berkeley's Graduate School of Education and Faculty Director of the Principal Leadership Institute. We thank

Increasing economic inequality and residential segregation have triggered a resurgence of interest in community schools—a century-old approach to making schools places where children can learn and thrive, even in under-resourced and underserved neighborhoods. Community schools represent a place-based strategy in which schools partner with community agencies and allocate resources to provide an “integrated focus on academics, health and social services, youth and community development, and community engagement.”¹ Many operate on all-day and year-round schedules, and serve both children and adults.

Although this strategy is appropriate for students of all backgrounds, many community schools arise in neighborhoods where structural forces linked to racism and poverty shape the experiences of young people and erect barriers to learning and school success. These are communities where families have few resources to supplement what typical schools provide.

Community schools vary in the programs they offer and the ways they operate, depending on their local context. However, four features—or pillars—appear in most community schools, and support the conditions for teaching and learning found in high-quality schools (see Table 1).

1. Integrated student supports
2. Expanded learning time and opportunities
3. Family and community engagement
4. Collaborative leadership and practice

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

of a Community School Coordinator:

A Case Study



Michelle Bloodworth, PhD
Anna Horner



Community schools are cost-effective, efficient, and promise exciting returns on our investments for schools, students, and our communities.

$$\text{ROI} = \frac{\text{Value of leveraged resources at a school site toward results} - \text{Cost of hiring, training and supporting a Community School Coordinator}}{\text{Cost of hiring, training and supporting a Community School Coordinator}} \times 100 = 711\%$$

Value of leveraged resources at a school site toward results

Cost of hiring, training and supporting a Community School Coordinator

Sign-On Letters

- Usually related to a specific bill, ask, or action in Congress
- Great way to communicate momentum or interest behind an initiative
- Pay it back

Coalition Work/Collaboration

- Builds momentum and credibility
- Allows for diverse experiences, perspectives, and voices to inform your work and advocacy strategy/approach
- Work together to build the message and network

Meeting with Key National Partners

- Shared goal, even if it means co-opetition
- Shared message
- Share resources, information
- Broader reach

National Campaign: Coordinators Appreciation Week

- Every 3rd Week in September (8th Annual)
- Toolkit/Messaging Guide
- Resolutions introduced in the House and Senate
- Social Media Campaign/Action Network Campaigns
- Site Visits

National Campaign: Coordinators Appreciation Week

- Raise awareness on the national, state, and local levels
- Educate Members of Congress
- Builds momentum to support Appropriations and other FSCS-related bills
- Sets the tone for the school year

National Campaign: Coordinators Appreciation Week



Philadelphia Office of Children and Fa... @PHLfam... · Sep 29, 2022

ICYMI! Last week we celebrated our [#CommunitySchoolPHL](#) Coordinators during [#CoordinatorsRock](#) week! From distributing food and supplies, to offering students support, boosting school spirit and more, we are so thankful for everything Coordinators do for their communities! 🙌



National Campaign: Coordinators Appreciation Week

How to Celebrate

No matter who you are, you can celebrate Community School Coordinators. Check out our list of ideas below!

Ideas for anyone

- ★ Get #CoordinatorsRock trending! Post why you appreciate a Community School Coordinator on social media. See sample posts and graphics on page 9.
- ★ Make a video about the impact your Community School Coordinators and post it on social media using #CoordinatorsRock. Our favorite Coordinator videos will be featured in future Coordinator Spotlights that will be shared with the National Community Schools Coordinators Network. Find helpful tips on how to shoot a video on page 9.
- ★ Get your elected officials and local leaders to celebrate during Coordinators Appreciation Week. Send your governor, mayor, county executive, superintendent, or school board a proclamation request so they can recognize your Community School Coordinators. See our step-by-step guide and template request on page 11.



National Campaign: Coordinators Appreciation Week

The screenshot shows the Action Network website interface. At the top left is the Action Network logo, and at the top right is the IEL logo. Below the logos is a navigation bar with the text "START ORGANIZING:" followed by links for "ACTIONS", "PEOPLE", "DETAILS", and "SUPPORT". On the right side of the navigation bar is a "GO TO A GROUP" dropdown menu. The main content area features the title "Community School Coordinators Appreciation Week". Below the title is a map of the United States and parts of Canada, with city labels including Vancouver, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Houston, Washington, New York, Boston, Toronto, and Quebec. To the right of the map is a text block: "Help us celebrate **Coordinators Appreciation Week (CAW)** by educating others about the role of a Coordinator in the Community Schools System, sharing stories about the work they do and impact they have, and advocating to your local and state policymakers for a Coordinators Appreciation Week proclamation!". Below this text is another paragraph: "Find CAW events near you by typing in your zipcode, or if your hosting your own, fill out the form by clicking the link below to get added to the map and to show how broad this movement is - you can upload files, share in-person or virtual event details, and more!". At the bottom of the page is a purple banner for "COORDINATORS APPRECIATION WEEK 2023" with the dates "SEPTEMBER 18 - 24". The banner includes the Coalition for Community Schools logo and four small images showing people at events. Below the banner is a white box with the text "WANT TO HOST YOUR OWN EVENT?" and a button that says "HOST AN EVENT FOR THIS EVENT CAMPAIGN" with a group of people icon.

State Advocacy

- Network of State-based Coalitions
- Supported by Regional Deputy Directors and Policy Team
- Focus on state legislature and Departments of Education
- Experts on the local and state conditions

2022 State Policy Analysis

- Currently [tracking](#) 32 introduced bills
 - 6 Amendments to Current Statute
 - 4 Appropriations
 - 1 Authorizes Implementation
 - 12 Establishes a Grant Program
 - 5 References as Allowable Use
 - 2 Resolutions
 - 2 Other
- Sample Bill (Amendment to Current Statute): [OK HB 3374](#)
- Sample Bill (Establishes a Grant Program): [AZ SB 1635](#)

Key Learnings

- Clear language around comprehensive strategy; flexibility on local implementation
- Staffing
 - Hiring CSCs at school
 - Systems of support and staff
- Professional learning for everyone
- Collaborative leadership at every stage
- Technical assistance, systems of support

State Advocacy: Minnesota

- Full-Service Community Schools in Minnesota received \$15 million in May 2023 when the state legislature passed an education spending bill.
- State Coalition worked to connect with state legislators by providing public testimonies from parents, students, and coordinators at committee hearings and held multiple Hill days
- Coalition partners include the state teacher's union (ED MN), Wilder Foundation in St. Paul, and individual practitioners

State Advocacy: Minnesota



Angel Smaller, site coordinator for Brooklyn Center Middle and High School, testifies in favor of a bill to increase state funding for community schools. Kevin Miller

Stay Connected!

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!



Join us in Atlanta, **May 29 - 31**





MONTGOMERY COUNTY
FOOD COUNCIL

Advocating for Increased Access to Public Benefits in Schools

No Kid Hungry Public Benefits Access Through Schools Convening
April 9, 2024



Speakers

Allison Schnitzer

Director, Food Access Initiatives
allison@mocofoodcouncil.org

Elizabeth Teuwen

Manager, Food Access Initiatives
elizabeth@mocofoodcouncil.org

Annmarie Hart-Bookbinder

Manager, Food Security Programs
annmarie@mocofoodcouncil.org





Agenda

1. MCFC History and Foundations
2. Post COVID: Connections
3. Local Advocacy for Funding to Advance Food Resources and Benefits Access in Public Schools
4. Lessons Learned



Funding Acknowledgement

None of this work would be possible without the support of No Kid Hungry!

- SNAP in Schools
- Community Nutrition
- Centering Equity Fund



Vision & Mission

MCFC envisions a vibrant and equitable food system that is healthy for our community, economy, and environment.

MCFC builds an equitable, resilient and sustainable local food system through collaboration, transformation, and cultivation.



MCFC Strategic Plan

Collaborate with food system partners

- **Build networks** to connect community members across the food system and cross-sectorally.
- **Communicate through diverse and culturally competent strategies** to effectively connect food system stakeholders, prioritizing community expertise and intentionally evaluating impact

Transform food system

- **Advocate for policy, systems and environmental changes** to promote structural transformation and equitable resources across food system sectors
- **Shift power** to local communities and foster increased equity and diversity of funding and food system financing

Cultivate more robust food system

- **Increase the capacity** of people, communities, organizations and local food businesses to achieve outcomes and maximize impact
- **Strengthen food systems knowledge** to expand awareness and serve as a local and regional resource
- **Build diverse leadership capacity** throughout food system issue areas



MCFC History and Structure

- **2010:** Community Discussions
- **2011:** Advisory Board
- **2012:** Founded
 - Part time coordinator
- **2018:** 501(c)3
- **2019:** Board of Directors
 - 4 full time staff
- **2021:** SNAP CBO
- **2024:** 11 full time staff, 25 volunteer councilmembers, 9 BOD





MCFC Food Security Work

- Food Recovery and Access Work Group
- Food Assistance Resource Directory
- Montgomery County Food Security Plan (2018)
- COVID Food Security Task Force

A Food Secure Montgomery

What we know now and what we can do

A 5-Year Strategic Plan





MCFC Advocacy Work

Two-year Strategic Priority Cycle

- Issue areas that our stakeholders are uniquely qualified to engage on
- Include several areas across the food system: production, aggregation, processing, access, consumption, waste, regeneration, etc.
- Equity as a core focus
- Create structure and organization to focus our work

Food System Advocacy Community Call

2024-2025 Strategic Priorities

- Increase food security
- Increase access to affordable land for food production
- Increase local food and beverage procurement
- Reduce food waste and support food recovery



MCFC SNAP Outreach

- MCFC is a designated CBO with the Maryland DHS SNAP Outreach Program:
- Conduct outreach and provide education on SNAP
- Prescreen Montgomery County residents for SNAP eligibility
- Assist eligible residents with SNAP applications
- Provide residents with information about the status of their SNAP benefits
- **Foster a community of practice by convening monthly SNAP Work Group meetings with OESS**
- **FFY24: SNAP Lead Organization**





Strategic Plan to End Childhood Hunger

Our Role

- Contracted by County Council to create plan
- Community trust via long history of community engagement
- Landscape analysis of Childhood Hunger in the County
- Convene stakeholders to identify recommendations

Key Partners

- 150 organizational partners
- Over 1,300 resident surveys, focus groups
- Montgomery County Department of Health & Human Services
- Montgomery County Public Schools



Serendipity

Long-standing situation:

- Many schools with high levels of need reaching out to food assistance providers
- Many food assistance providers actively serving school sites
- Lack of coordination amongst providers
- Lack of coordination within school system
- Many eligible families/children not participating in SNAP

Opportunities:

- A committed Student Services Staff team member
- Community Schools
- Two large food assistance providers want to coordinate



Strategic Plan to End Childhood Hunger

Utilize what we learned in our work with schools to develop recommendations:

- Expansion of SNAP Enrollment Programs
- Community School Distributions and Pantries
- Expansion of Weekend Bag Distributions





Office of Food Systems Resilience

Recognizing need to shift policy and investment focus from transactional emergency food distribution to long term food system resilience and food sovereignty, MCFC led successful advocacy efforts to establish an Office of Food System Resiliency within Montgomery County government.

Established in 2023, OFSR is mandated to:

- Serve as Liaison between the government and food system stakeholders
- Coordinate County government food system initiatives and projects
- Collect food system data needed to support strategic decision-making
- Support disaster response feeding planning and operations in coordination with local food assistance providers, DHHS, and OEMHS

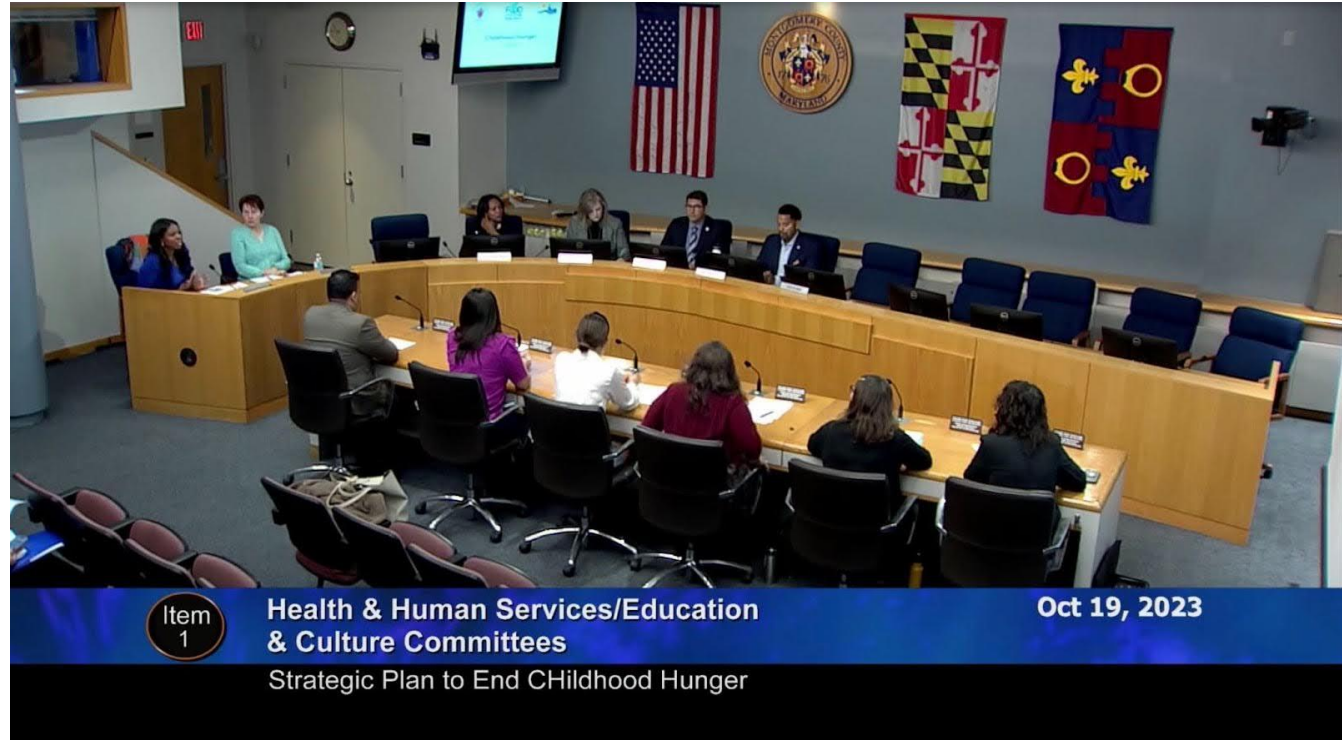




Advocacy Efforts to End Hunger

October 2023: MCFC and OFSR present to Montgomery County Council HHS and Education committees on Plan recommendations

December 2023: OFSR, with support from MCFC, presents \$4.4M Special Appropriation request to fund Plan recommendations to full County Council





Special Appropriation Details

- SNAP Outreach Programs: \$290,000
 - \$90,000 for DHHS Navigation program for Community Schools
 - \$200,000 for SNAP outreach grants targeted to children 0-5 years old
- School-based Food Assistance Grants: \$480,000
 - Awarded to 8 organizations
 - Serving 33 school sites
 - Pantries, markets, pre-packed bags/boxes, grocery gift cards, fresh locally-sourced produce, prepared meals



Special Appropriation Details

- Retail Food Access Pilot: \$1.82M
 - Create a benefits program for families experiencing food insecurity due to benefit ineligibility or inadequacy
 - Food access via an online food retail platform that offers home delivery to mitigate transportation barriers.
- Food as Medicine: \$450,000
 - Healthcare providers offering pediatric services to screen for food insecurity and connect/refer to community partner for regular food provision.
- Resident and Community Gardening: \$200,000
 - Connect residents to gardening education opportunities and fresh, nutritious produce via community partners.



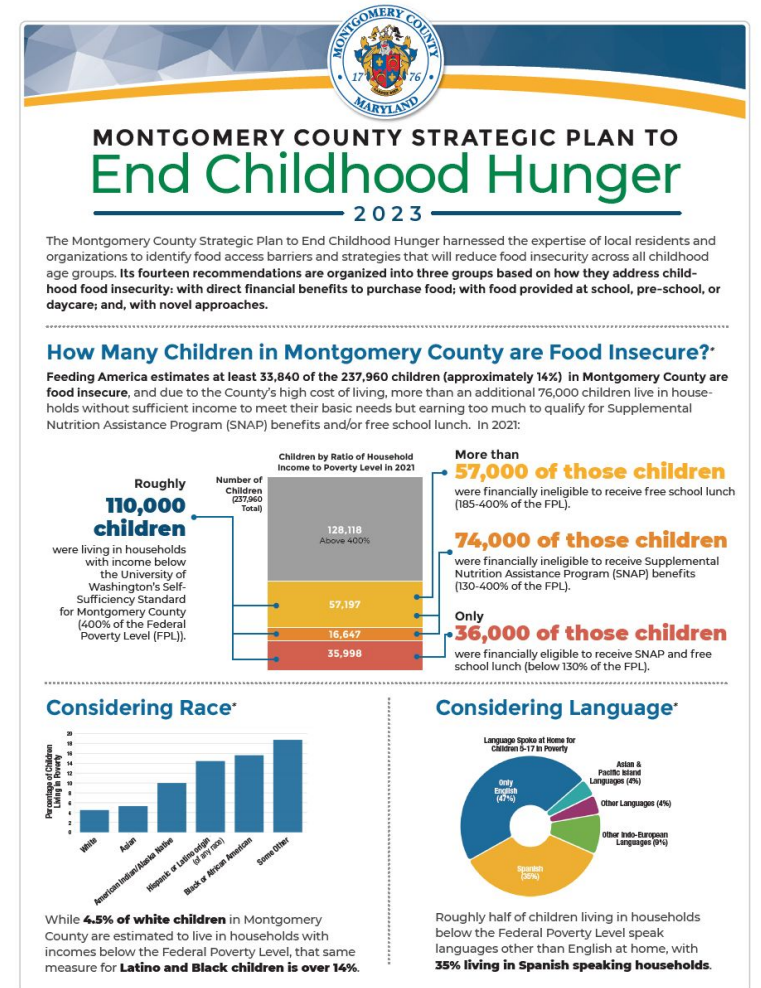
End Childhood Hunger Collaborative

Launching April 17th!

Will bring together those community partners already at work implementing the recommendations of the Strategic Plan to End Childhood Hunger as well as those looking to learn and get involved

MCFC Convening spaces will continue the work:

- Food Security Community
- SNAP Work Group
- Gardening Collaborative
- Advocacy





Lessons Learned

- Build the foundation!
 - Partnerships take time to build and grow
- Advocacy doesn't stop!
 - Advocacy to County Executive and Council to continue to fund recommendations from the Plan in County budget
 - Advocacy for continued attention to hunger issues



MONTGOMERY COUNTY
FOOD COUNCIL

Thank you!

Q&A