

Howard County Food Council BY-LAWS

**Howard County Food Council
BYLAWS**

**ARTICLE I
NAME**

Section 1.1. Legal Name

The name of this organization shall be the Howard County Food Council, herein referred to as “HCFC.”

Section 1.2. Office

The principal office of the HCFC is located within the Ascend One building located at 8930 Stanford Blvd., Columbia, MD 21045.

**ARTICLE II
FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

HCFC is an unincorporated organization led by the Howard County Health Department (HCHD) and the University of Maryland, Extension – Howard County (UME -HC). It was established in 2025 with private grant funding through HCHD and receives additional support from UME-HC and state grants. HCFC also seeks additional funding and in-kind support to implement the Action Plan goals and objectives.

**ARTICLE III
Mission, Vision, and Guiding Principles**

Section 3.1. Mission

The Council works to promote food security in Howard County by bringing together multi-sector partners to advance equitable and sustainable systems-level solutions.

Section 3.2. Vision

A County where all neighbors have reliable access to education, healthy and nutritious food that honors their cultural traditions while empowering individuals with choice and autonomy for generations to come.

Section 3.3. Guiding Principles

Advocacy - Working towards advancing policies that positively impact systems change.

Collaboration - Foster partnerships across various sectors of the food system to advance and support impactful and sustainable solutions.

Equity - Ensure solutions are tailored to neighbors facing barriers to accessing healthy foods.

Inclusive - Uplift the perspectives of those experiencing food insecurity while incorporating diverse partners to ensure equitable and representative participation in the Food Council.

Innovation - Learn, adapt, and implement creative solutions to address food access..

Integrity - Engage with honesty, transparency, and accountability to guide advocacy and commitment to action.

**ARTICLE IV
GOALS**

The HCFC shall:

- Convene a multi-sector group to facilitate collaborative systems-level solutions to address food insecurity among priority populations in Howard County.
- Develop, implement, and periodically update an action plan to address food insecurity, informed by state and local data as well as input from partners and community members.
- Collaborate and support the efforts of partner agencies to increase access to and utilization of food and nutrition resources to improve overall health.
- Identify funding opportunities for initiatives and sustainability of efforts.

**ARTICLE V
MEMBERSHIP**

Membership is open to any organization or individual supporting HCFC’s mission, vision and values as stated in Article III.

Section 5.1. Key Partners

HCFC seeks participation from a variety of partners to ensure a broad cross-section of organizational and community representation to address food insecurity. Special efforts shall be made to recruit neighbors with lived experience of food insecurity and partners with knowledge and experience of the food system. Key partners to be recruited include those in the following sectors:

- Agriculture, Environment and Sustainability
- Education and Research
- Faith-Based and Community Groups

- Food Security and Hunger Relief
- Health and Healthcare Access
- Neighbors with lived experience of food insecurity
- Non-Profit
- Private Sector and Philanthropy
- Social Service and Equity
- State and Local Government

Section 5.2. Recruitment

Interested community members or organization representatives may apply to join the Food Council on a rolling basis. If a representative from a member organization can no longer participate, member organizations shall commit to sending another representative in the individual’s place.

Section 5.3. Voting

Members will have an opportunity to vote on the Council’s initiatives at HCFC meetings or electronically. Each organization/member is given one vote. If multiple members of an organization are part of the Food Council, it is the responsibility of the organization to designate the voting representative. An organization’s voting representative cannot vote as an individual. A simple majority of the votes cast shall carry a motion.

Section 5.4. Resignation

Notice of resignations shall be made in writing to the HCFC Administrator. To reinstate membership, a new application must be completed.

**ARTICLE VI
COUNCIL STRUCTURE**

Section 6.1. Steering Committee

The leadership of the HCFC shall consist of the Administrator, a representative from HCHD and UME-HC. The Food Council Administrator will lead and select the Steering Committee membership of select representatives from various sectors of the food system. The Committee will provide guidance and recommendations as the advising leadership of the HCFC.

Section 6.2 Council Members

HCFC members bring their respective organizations’ expertise and input, actively participate in workgroups, and engage in advancing the strategies outlined in the action plan.

Section 6.3. Council Staff

The HCFC staff shall serve as non-voting members of the Council. Staff will provide support and assistance to help meet HCFC objectives and guide all aspects of the Council.

ARTICLE VII MEETINGS

Section 7.1. Open Meetings

All meetings of the HCFC are open to the public in accordance with the [Maryland Open Meetings Act](#). The HCFC reserves the right to remove any individual(s) from a meeting to avoid disruption to others in attendance. Meeting documents shall be posted on the [HCFC webpage](#).

Section 7.2. Regular Meetings

a. Steering Committee Meeting

The Steering Committee shall meet at least quarterly to guide the development and implementation of the Council's Action Plan. The Steering Committee shall act for the HCFC between meetings of the Council. HCFC staff will organize the Steering Committee meetings.

b. General Food Council Meeting

The full Council shall meet at least quarterly. Other Food Council meetings shall be held as needed to address specific Agenda items upon request by the Steering Committee.

c. Ad Hoc Meetings

Special meetings and their stated purpose may be called by the Steering Committee and may include planning retreats.

ARTICLE VIII AMENDMENTS TO BY-LAWS

These by-laws may be amended and approved at any HCFC Steering Committee meeting by a simple majority of votes cast, provided that the amendment has been submitted to the members in writing at least ten days prior to the meeting.