Howard County Food Council
8930 Stanford Blvd | Columbia, MD 21045
410.313.5788 - Voice/Relay
1.866.313.6300 - Toll Free
www.hclhic.org

Minutes – Howard County Food Council General Meeting

Wednesday 14, 2026 at 10:00 – 12:30pm
In-Person at the Harriet Tubman Cultural Center

Members Present:

Alena Wright, Society of St Andrew
Andrew James, Columbia Baptist
Antigone Vickery, Howard County Health Department
Benjamin Barnwell, Department of Community Resources and Services
Carissa Tirado-Marks, The Community Ecology Institute / Freetown Farm
Carla Gates, Reclaiming Health People's Collective
Carrie Ross, Community Action Council of Howard County
Cathy Hudson, Howard County Agricultural Preservation Board
Dawn Williams, Seed & Soil Global Outreach LLC
Divya Sharma, Columbia Gardeners
Ella Schmit, Department of Emergency Management Office of Resilience
Erica Jones, Edesiagurl/Local Harvest Fields
Erika Chavarria, Columbia Community Care
Janelle Crumpton, Howard County Office of Emergency Management
Jennifer Drell, Howard County Library System- Elkridge Branch
Jennifer Holland, Horizon Foundation
Jessica Peirce, IndivisibleHoCoMD Mutual Aid
Lauren Chilton, Howard County Office of Emergency Management
Lee Haigwood, Mary's Land Farm
Linda Ashburn, Howard County Health Department
Lisa King, Columbia Community Center of SDA
Lisa Lachenmayr, University of Maryland Extension
Liz Banach, Morgan Chapel Food Pantry
Maria Cunningham, Mary's land Farm
Maura Rossman, Howard County Health Department
Melissa LePage, GUMC
Melody Green-Lewis, Howard High School Food Pantry
Michael Maggio, Roving Radish
Michelle Feng, University of Maryland Extension
Miriam Anderson, Local Health Improvement Coalition
Miya Morris, Howard County Housing Commission
Reilly Hylton, Chase Brexton Health Care
Shannon Blount, Howard County Public Schools, Community Schools
Shauna Henley, Univ. of Maryland Extension, Baltimore County
Therese "Reci" High, The Community Ecology Institute / Freetown Farm

Xuan Wei, University of Maryland Extension CMREC
Zaheemat Samuel, Howard County Muslim Council

Staff Present:
Reena Rambharat, Howard County Health Department
Nathan Glenn, University of Maryland, Extension - Howard County
Emily Harris, Howard County Food Council

Topic/Agenda	Discussion	Action/Follow-up
Welcome and Introductions	Ms. Emily Harris, Food Council Administrator, Howard County Food Council called the meeting to order at 10:00a.m. She provided a welcome to members in attendance and indicated that the minutes will be shared after the meeting and available on the Food Council's webpage. She reviewed the meeting agenda. Ms. Harris stated that the goals for this meeting were to learn about food gleaning and its ability to reduce food waste and increase access to fresh food for individuals experiencing food insecurity, establish food gleaning connections, and present Workgroup formation updates.	Howard County Food Council Website Presentation Slides
Food Council Overview	Ms. Harris provided an overview of the Food Council's structure and its Strategic Roadmap for FY 2027 - 28.	Howard County Food Council Road Map
Opening Remarks	Dr. Maura Rossman, Health Officer, Howard County Health Department gave opening remarks emphasizing the vital need of the Howard County Food Council and thanking everyone for bringing their expertise to the table. Dr. Rossman also shared that she is retiring at the end of October 2026.	
Food Gleaning Presentation	Alena Wright, Delmarva Program Coordinator, The Society of St. Andrew gave an in depth presentation explaining gleaning and the work of Society of St. Andrew with a focus of the work in Delmarva. The Delmarva office start-up was funded through anonymous donation. It opened in June 2022. They moved 1.3 million pounds of food in first full year and 2.5 million pounds in 2025 to 114 agencies. SOSA supports 15 types of programs outlined in the slides. They are able to connect farmers/food producers to food pantries/banks through volunteers to reduce food waste and increase the amount of fresh food that gets into the hands of community members.	Presentation Slides
Facilitated Gleaning Exercise to Create Potential Connections	The Goal of the Howard County Gleaning Activity was to identify at least five new potential gleaning pathways in Howard County. Attendees were assigned to groups at the beginning of the event in an attempt to split up farmers, organizations with volunteers, and food pantries/banks. The fourth group was made up of people from organizations who identified as having a different primary function in the meeting RSVP.	Presentation Slides

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	Groups began by identifying Challenges, Strengths, and Opportunities related to gleaning. The fourth group then discussed these in more detail and brainstormed action steps that can be taken in the next 1-2 years to reduce the challenges. They recommended the need for: ● Education and awareness of food waste ● Advocacy for coordination entity ● Opportunities and coordination for workforce development ● Knowing the certifications and trainings needed ● Advocacy and data collection to support this needed coordination entity ● More established food council The other three groups focused on creating new gleaning pathways in Howard County. Eight partial pathways were identified with volunteers or farmers/food producers being the missing link.	
Workgroup Update	Members were invited to eat lunch while Food Council updates and Member Announcements were provided. Ms. Harris stated that there were 21 responses to the Workgroup Interest Google Form. The Food Council is finalizing the Job Action Sheets for Workgroup members and Co-Chairs. Invitations to join Workgroups will be sent out to all Howard County Food Council members by early November.	Presentation Slides
Member Announcements	**The following announcements were shared by the group:** Ms. Cathy Hudson shared information about a task force that is focusing on Agriculture in Eastern Howard County. Ms. Shauna Henley announced that she is working with Michelle Feng on a Community Fridge project that will monitor the temperatures of the fridge. Anyone who manages a community fridge and wants to participate is encouraged to contact her. Ms. Miriam Anderson announced the event Through the Eyes of a Community Health Worker: A Photovoice Exhibition on Monday, November 9, 2026, 5:00 – 6:30 PM at East Columbia 50+ Center. Registration is strongly encouraged.	Through the Eyes of a Community Health Worker: A Photovoice Exhibition Registration link.
Next Steps and Action Items	Ms. Harris explained that the information at this meeting will be synthesized and analyzed in the next few months. The results will be shared with members when it is ready. Ms. Harris shared details of the next meeting.	

Wrap Up and Adjournment	Ms. Harris announced the conclusion of the meeting and thanked the participants for joining. ● Shared plans to distribute meeting minutes ● Expressed gratitude and bid farewell. Ms. Harris adjourned the meeting at 12:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted by
Ms. Emily Harris, MS, RDN, LDN
Food Council Administrator,
Howard County Food Council

<u>Future Meeting Dates</u>:

Food Council General Meeting (2nd Wednesday every 3 months) *

- Wednesday, December 9, 10:00 – 11:30 am; (Virtual) Zoom Meeting

**In case of inclement weather, in-person meetings will switch to virtual or cancelled if the Howard County Health Department and the University of Maryland, Extension – Howard County are closed.*