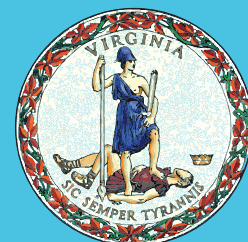


Virginia Roadmap to End Hunger



Commonwealth of Virginia
2020

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October 20, 2020

Dear Fellow Virginians,

As a human crisis, not just a healthcare crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought renewed attention to the broader social determinants of health— food security chief among them.

Prior to the onset of COVID-19, Feeding America estimated that nearly 843,000 Virginians were food insecure, including 234,000 children. Current Feeding America projections indicate that an additional 447,000 Virginians will experience food insecurity at some point during the next year because of COVID-19.

The Commonwealth has made dramatic progress against hunger in recent years but we know that we can and must do more to fix this solvable problem. At the beginning of my Administration, we prioritized addressing nutrition and food access through our Governor's Children's Cabinet. Working together, we have expanded access to child nutrition programs, promoted local agriculture, strengthened cross-sector partnerships, and invested in food access projects in under-resourced communities. I am grateful to the members of the Children's Cabinet working groups who have worked diligently to strengthen Virginia's food system.

One tool that will assist our efforts going forward is this Roadmap to End Hunger. Collectively, we have identified a cohesive set of goals and strategies that we know will move the needle on food security in Virginia. The Roadmap to End Hunger provides critical next steps to developing substantial policy recommendations, programs and partnerships that will benefit our children and communities for years to come.

This report looks beyond our current struggles and outlines a way forward to not only help transform Virginia's food system but to also make significant progress towards ending hunger in the Commonwealth for good.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ralph S. Northam".

Ralph Northam



Governor Northam at We Care food box pack out event (July 31, 2020)

INTRODUCTION

Hunger in Virginia is a solvable problem. By and large, the resources we need are available to us, but too many barriers still stand between low-income families and affordable, healthful foods. We must address the realities of systemic under-investment in marginalized communities, and the resulting injustices of unaffordable housing, transportation, health care, and nutrition. We can and we must do more to overcome the obstacles that plague federal nutrition programs and inhibit market-based solutions.

Food access is one of the great equity issues of our time.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the fundamental inequities that have long existed in our food system. Feeding America estimates that nearly half a million more Virginians will experience food insecurity this year as a result of pandemic-related job losses, disproportionately impacting minority communities.² This report was largely developed before the pandemic came to the Commonwealth, but the solutions remain the same: maximize federal nutrition program participation and access, invest in a strong regional food system, and empower local communities.

Governor of Virginia Ralph S. Northam and First Lady of Virginia Pamela Northam are committed to improving food security in the Commonwealth. They have established a nutrition and food security work group within the Children's Cabinet to develop goals, identify strategies, and make comprehensive recommendations to the Governor that will expand access to nutritious food and decrease food insecurity, especially among students, mothers, and young children. Additionally, in the wake of COVID-19, a State Feeding Taskforce was convened to provide coordination of Virginia's emergency response efforts to increased demand for food and food supply chain disruptions in communities across the Commonwealth. Their work builds on the efforts initiated by former Governor Terence R. McAuliffe and First Lady Dorothy McAuliffe, who established the Commonwealth Council on Bridging the Nutritional Divide and expanded meal programs for children more than any administration in Virginia history.

The Roadmap is not intended to be a one-size-fits-all, comprehensive set of recommendations for achieving universal food security. Rather, it seeks to illuminate a pathway to improved food access for all Virginians through practical programmatic and policy solutions. It should serve as a guide and source of inspiration for the people who work every day to organize their neighbors, learn from one another, advocate and act to achieve lasting change.

CHILDREN'S CABINET OVERVIEW

The Way Ahead for Virginia's Children: Establishing the Children's Cabinet

On June 21, 2018, Governor Northam issued Executive Order Number 11 establishing the Children's Cabinet for the purpose of developing goals, strategies, and recommendations to support children and families across the Commonwealth.

The Children's Cabinet is chaired by First Lady Pamela Northam and members include Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry Bettina Ring, Secretary of Education Atif Qarni, Secretary of Health and Human Resources Dr. Daniel Carey, Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security Brian Moran, and Lieutenant Governor Justin Fairfax.

The Executive Order outlined four key priority areas for the Children's Cabinet: Early Childhood Development and School Readiness, Nutrition and Food Security, Trauma-Informed Care, and Student Safety.



First Lady of Virginia Pamela Northam

Nutrition and Food Security

The overarching goal of the Children's Cabinet regarding nutrition and food security is to ensure that Virginia's children have consistent, reliable access to healthy foods. To achieve this goal, the Children's Cabinet has focused on three primary and contributing objectives:

1. Expanding access to nutritious food and decreasing food insecurity for children
2. Expanding access to nutritious food and decreasing food insecurity for pregnant women
3. Promoting community-based food systems to increase access to healthy, local foods

In order to enhance coordination across state agencies and external stakeholder organizations, the Children's Cabinet has been supported by a food security working group and is composed of participants from state agencies, nonprofits, and advocacy organizations.

Early childhood is the most critical time period for nutritional access because of the lifelong impact food insecurity has on growth and development. Children benefit from federal nutrition programs when they participate in child care and pre-K programs; First Lady Pamela Northam's goal of universal access for three and four-year-old children would have a significant, positive impact on efforts to end hunger in Virginia. Through Executive Directive Four, Governor Northam established the Executive Leadership Team on School Readiness to develop a plan to ensure that all at-risk three and four-year-olds in Virginia have access to a quality, subsidized early education option by 2025.

VIRGINIA ROADMAP TO END HUNGER

At its October 2, 2018 meeting, the Children's Cabinet directed the Nutrition and Food Security working group to assemble a report that offers a comprehensive review of food access in the Commonwealth. The intent of the report is to provide concrete strategies for accomplishing the ultimate goal of ensuring Virginia children and vulnerable populations have consistent, reliable access to healthy foods.

The Virginia Roadmap to End Hunger report includes input from the Governor's Children's Cabinet, feedback from regional town hall meetings, and contributions from Nutrition and Food Security working group members.



TAKEAWAYS FROM REGIONAL TOWN HALLS

From March to June 2019, input was solicited from key leaders, stakeholder groups, and community members who work within and are impacted by the food system. The Federation of Virginia Food Banks, Virginia Department of Social Services, and Virginia Governor's Office led town hall meetings in seven locations (Abingdon, Roanoke, Danville, Hampton, Fairfax Co., Norfolk, and Richmond City). These listening sessions offered key insights into how unique challenges and initiatives at the local level can inform statewide policy.

Increase communication. Recognition that while there is significant work around food insecurity in most communities, there are often gaps in communication surrounding work that is happening.

Substantial transportation issues and barriers exist in both rural and urban communities.

Opportunities exist to bundle/layer service providing a holistic approach to addressing the needs of the family across a range of services and programs.

A stigma around hunger and food access still exists creating additional barriers to food access and program participation.

Nutrition education and exposure to healthy/nutrient-dense food is a critical component including how and what to purchase, prepare, and cook. Numerous new and existing programs include a cooking component (classes for all ages/target groups).

Enhance community collaboration/partnerships by establishing task forces, holding engagement meetings, creating action planning sessions, and identifying regional champions.

Workforce development, skills training and financial literacy are contributing factors and part of the continuum of services required to address food insecurity.

Emphasize the role of food access in better health outcomes.

There is growing interest/momentum in urban farming/community gardens and consumers desire to have improved connectivity to the food system.

Recognize the significant benefits of two-generational programming.

Recognition of limited access to nutritious foods specifically in food deserts.

DATA STORY

HUNGER IN VIRGINIA

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines food insecurity as a lack of consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy life. According to Feeding America's Map the Meal Gap report, the best available approximation of food insecurity prevalence, 842,870 Virginians experienced food insecurity in 2018, including 233,530 children.¹

Feeding America estimates that an additional **447,000** Virginians will experience food insecurity in 2020 as a result of the **COVID-19 pandemic**, increasing the Commonwealth's food insecurity rate from 9.9% to **15.1%** on an annual basis.²

Food Insecurity and Poverty

Food insecurity is a symptom of poverty. Food is not a fixed cost so it is often sacrificed, in terms of both quantity and quality, to accommodate other basic needs. There are steps we can take now to increase household purchasing power in the short-term and assuage the conditions of poverty in the long-term, thereby reducing hunger in our communities..

876,000

people in Virginia live in poverty; represents one-in-nine (11%) Virginians³

340,000

family households in Virginia live in poverty, while an additional 937k households are above the poverty level but do not earn enough to cover the "bare minimum" survival budget for child care, housing, food, transportation, health care and other needs. These are Asset Limited, Income Constrained Employed (ALICE) families.³

What does it cost to afford the basic necessities?

The Household Survival Budget gives the cost of housing, child care, food, transportation, and health care at a bare-minimum "survival" level. It does not include any savings, leaving households without a cushion for unexpected expenses and unable to invest in the future. Yet even this minimal budget was much higher than the adjusted Federal Poverty Level of \$11,880 for a single adult and \$24,300 for a family of four in 2016.⁴

Health Disparities

Studies have shown that food insecurity is associated with decreased nutrient intakes; increased rates of mental health problems and depression, diabetes, hypertension, and hyperlipidemia; worse outcomes on health exams; being in fair or poor health; and poor sleep outcomes.⁵

Food insecure seniors are **2.33×** more likely to report being in poor or fair health compared to food-secure seniors⁶



Food insecure adults report **greater difficulty** affording a **diabetic diet** and **lower abilities to address issues related to diabetes** compared to food secure adults.⁷

Nutrition Program Participation

75% of eligible Virginia seniors participate in SNAP⁸

61% of free and reduced students receive school breakfast⁹

15% of free and reduced students receive a free meal during the summer⁹

COVID-19 Economic Fallout

Studies show a sharp increase in food insecurity resulting from the economic downturn. A Virginia Tech survey of Virginia households in April 2020 found that 69.4% of respondents said it was 'often' or 'sometimes' true that "I/we worried whether my food would run out before I/we got money to buy more"¹⁰

- » Nearly 61% said it was "often" or "sometimes" true that "I/we couldn't afford to eat balanced meals."¹⁰
- » 17% replied 'yes' to "In the last 12 months was your child or were the children ever hungry but you just couldn't afford more food."¹⁰
- » Northwestern Institute for Policy research estimates that food insecurity in Virginia increased from 9.4% in February to 22% in June.¹¹
- » Feeding America estimates 447,000 more Virginians will become food insecure this year – passing 1.2 million total.²
- » 4 of the 5 U.S. localities with the greatest expected increase in child food insecurity percentage are in northern Virginia (Falls Church, Arlington, Loudoun, Fairfax City).²

69.4% of Virginia households said it was 'often' or 'sometimes' true that "I/we worried whether my food would run out before I/we got money to buy more"¹⁰





TOP TEN BY 2025

These aspirational goals represent our greatest opportunities to reduce food insecurity in Virginia over the next five years:

1. On average, 70% of free or reduced-price eligible students participating in school lunch will also participate in school breakfast.
2. Every school with a 50% Identified Student Percentage or greater will participate in the Community Eligibility Provision.
3. All localities will have adequate nutritional support for children during school breaks through Summer EBT, the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), and/or food bank programming such as School-based Pantries and Weekend Food Backpacks.
4. The SNAP participation rate will reach 90% (of eligible individuals) or higher.
5. Virginia Fresh Match and the WIC and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Programs will be available at all highly accessible, high-need farmers' markets.
6. Virginians will have streamlined access to food security information and benefit programs.
7. A framework for incentivizing investment in food deserts and marginalized communities will be established.
8. Evidence-based nutrition education programming will be made available to food insecure families in all regions of the Commonwealth.
9. Home delivered meals for seniors and people living with a disability will be provided as a Medicaid covered service.
10. A statewide network of Hunger Action Coalitions will be established to advance the goals of the Virginia Roadmap to End Hunger and to identify and address local opportunities for improving food access.



EXPAND CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS

Ensure all schools with a 50% Identified Student Percentage (ISP) or higher participate in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)

- » Provide targeted outreach and technical assistance by the Virginia Department of Education in partnership with No Kid Hungry and the Virginia Poverty Law Center to include providing in-depth financial analysis and expanding partnerships with community stakeholders

Ensure all low-income children have access to nutrition programs during school breaks

- » Secure Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) funding to provide additional funds for SNAP households with children in localities with limited access to Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) sites
- » Expand the number of SFSP congregate meal sites through sponsorship recruitment, outreach, and technical assistance
- » Increase the number of SFSP sites serving more than one meal per day



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- » Coordinate across state agencies and private partners to implement an annual outreach/marketing strategy to improve awareness among eligible families
- » Test innovative service delivery modules for child hunger programs

Achieve 70% average daily school breakfast participation among free and reduced price meal qualifying students compared to school lunch participation

- » Sustain and grow state funding streams to support Breakfast After the Bell models
- » Require actionable improvement plans from schools that are below the established school breakfast participation goal
- » Assist schools and districts with reaching the established school breakfast goal by providing implementation support and technical assistance
- » Engage school administrators in supporting school meal programs



Eliminate the reduced-price meal category to ensure all low-income families have access to school meals at no cost

Remove financial barriers to school meal access

- » Eliminate the reduced-price meal category to ensure all low-income families have access to school meals at no cost
- » Explore other measures to reduce the burden of school meal debt affecting families struggling to make ends meet

Ensure the availability of at least one Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) afterschool meal/snack opportunity in all eligible localities

- » Through outreach initiatives and technical assistance, ensure each school division with at least one eligible school participates in CACFP At-Risk Afterschool Meals or Snacks
- » Assist schools and community organizations with establishing programs, expanding access, and reaching the established CACFP goal

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Sustain funding support for child nutrition programs provided by Virginia's food banks

- » Meet the basic needs of low-income families with children by providing food for the weekends, establishing food distributions at schools, and serving nutritious meals through afterschool and summer programs

Increase the number of meals served through CACFP at daycare centers and family daycare homes by 20%

- » Extend program eligibility to centers and homes receiving subsidy funding
- » Implement consistent messaging around CACFP as an indicator of quality childcare
- » Increase training opportunities for CACFP sponsors and eligible centers
- » Provide targeted outreach, data sharing, and technical assistance through a sustained partnership of the Virginia Department of Social Services, Virginia Department of Health, and the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation

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Increase the number of meals
served through CACFP at daycare centers
and family daycare homes by 20%



IMPROVE PARTICIPATION IN SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP) AND WOMEN, INFANTS, AND CHILDREN (WIC) PROGRAM

Achieve 90% participation among eligible individuals in SNAP by 2025

- » Create partnerships and increase the number of outreach vendors to improve SNAP outreach, particularly among seniors and in rural areas
- » Expand outreach and application assistance services in areas of Virginia where eligibility is high and participation is low, including addressing lack of broadband preventing access to online applications and limited transportation, which prevents eligible participants visiting local Virginia Department of Social Services offices
- » Partner with local offices to promote best practices to increase access to SNAP benefits for eligible households
- » Utilize technology to improve program access including an automated phone system, extending program reach, and online services
- » Engage and test innovative strategies and models to increase SNAP awareness and participation

Provide access to employment, education, and/or training opportunities for SNAP recipients

- » Partner with community organizations and educational institutions to increase employment, education and training services for Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs)
- » Increase the number of SNAP Employment and Training providers and leverage federal funding available as part of the SNAP Employment & Training State Plan
- » Virginia will continue to take the SNAP Employment and Training (E&T) Pledge. “Pledge States” pledge to offer employment and training services to time-limited SNAP recipients. Taking the pledge allows Virginia to receive additional federal funds to provide employment and training services to SNAP recipients that are able-bodied adults without dependents

Increase the reach of SNAP nutrition education

- » Work with contracted partners who help SNAP recipients make healthy choices with their benefits, to extend their reach and achieve a greater level of SNAP recipient population penetration



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- » Identify additional, innovative, and non-traditional venues for SNAP nutrition education to enhance the education experience and tie to purchases of healthy foods and skills in food preparation

Increase participation in the Virginia WIC Program by 2 percent

- » Complete a process improvement plan to evaluate all aspects of the WIC Program
- » Track eligibility and participation across categories including pregnant women, postpartum women, breast-feeding women, infants, and children 2-5 years through implementation of the WIC district scorecard
- » Implement data sharing agreements to identify potentially eligible participants
- » Support data sharing agreements between state agencies to identify and connect with those who are participating in SNAP, Medicaid, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) but are not participating in WIC
- » Include screening and applying for WIC in state agency online screening and application portal

Intensify WIC outreach efforts by participating in or coordinating community activities in conjunction with local family, health, and nutrition security-related events

- » The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) will work with local agency providers to establish an annual outreach plan detailing their goals

Improve the participant experience with the WIC program

- » Develop a WIC mobile app for participants of the program to provide assistance with food benefits, nutrition education, location of WIC authorized vendors, and assistance identifying approved WIC foods
- » Pilot online tools to allow participants to schedule WIC appointments and complete online nutrition education without having to physically visit a clinic to have benefits issued





Virginia's **senior population** is expected to **double by 2030**, which means our public safety net and service delivery systems **will need to grow** and become more responsive to the unique needs of older food insecure Virginians.¹²

INCREASE NUTRITION SUPPORT FOR SENIORS

Grow caseload for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)

» Expand CSFP program participation to meet the growing demand

Low-income seniors have the opportunity to receive a monthly box of nutritious USDA commodities once per month through the CSFP. Administered by Virginia's food banks, the program began in 2016 and currently serves its maximum caseload of **10,801 people**.

Increase participation in federal nutrition programs among eligible seniors

- » Evaluate participation in the Elderly Simplified Application Demonstration grant
- » Re-brand SNAP for seniors to encourage participation with support from the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and Federation of Virginia Food Banks
- » Increase sponsor and site participation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
- » Provide outreach and program information on CACFP to adult daycare providers as part of licensing processes through Virginia Department of Social Services.



GROW ACCESS TO LOCAL FOODS FOR SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES



Increase procurement of Virginia Grown foods in child nutrition programs to \$22 million annually by 2022

- » Provide financial incentives to defray administrative and/or offset additional costs of local products to encourage the purchase of local foods
- » Develop resources and training for farmers, school and child nutrition staff, early care education sites, and educators with interagency support from Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Virginia Department of Health, and Virginia Cooperative Extension

Utilize healthy food incentives to increase consumer purchasing power so individuals and families with tight food budgets can bring home more fruits and vegetables.



Virginia Fresh Match (VFM) is a voluntary network of farmers markets, mobile markets, Community Supported Agriculture (CSAs), farm stands and neighborhood grocery stores who work collaboratively to provide healthy food incentives. VFM incentives double the value of federal nutrition benefits, like SNAP, and increase consumer purchasing power so individuals and families with tight food budgets can bring home more Virginia Grown fruits and vegetables.

- » Provide Virginia Fresh Match incentives and support for partner retail outlets that serve high-need populations, including farmers markets, mobile markets, farm stands, Community Supported Agriculture (CSAs), and neighborhood grocery stores
- » Secure state funding, as part of a diverse incentive funding portfolio, to support Virginia Fresh Match incentives at retail outlets that serve high-need populations
- » Work with public, private and nonprofit stakeholders to promote, integrate, and secure ongoing support for Virginia Fresh Match at partner retail outlets
- » Work with Virginia Cooperative Extension SNAP-Ed to increase the number of farmers markets that accept SNAP and offer Virginia Fresh Match incentives, to continue to integrate the Healthy Retail Program and Virginia Fresh Match, and to increase SNAP-Ed programming at partner retail outlets

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Expand WIC and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Programs (FMNP) statewide

- » Increase the number of WIC FMNP outlets in VA from seven Health Districts to 10 Health Districts (out of 33 total) serving high need populations
- » Increase WIC FMNP redemption rates from 39 percent to 60 percent by improving access to authorized farmers at farmers markets where the vouchers are issued
- » Increase the number of senior FMNP outlets in VA from 10 Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) to 15 AAAs (out of 25 total) serving high need populations
- » Increase senior and WIC FMNP authorized farmers and farmers markets throughout VA by expanding from five growing regions to six growing regions (out of 6 total)
- » Increase the number of authorized growers in the areas identified as food deserts

Establish the Virginia Agriculture Surplus System (VASS)

- » Facilitate the donation of local food crops to the Federation of Virginia Food Banks through the provision of a safe, efficient system, which allows for the reimbursement of farmers for costs incurred in the process of harvesting, packaging and/or processing foods intended for donation

MILK FOR GOOD

Image used with permission from The Dairy Alliance.



Milk is the **most requested** yet **least donated** food item in Virginia's emergency food network. For the first time, in partnership with The Dairy Alliance and the Virginia State Dairymen's Association, all seven regional Feeding America food banks are purchasing fresh, locally processed milk to improve the nutritional inventory of the Commonwealth's pantries.

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STRENGTHEN CONNECTIONS BETWEEN FOOD ACCESS PROGRAMS AND THE HEALTH CARE SECTOR

Support the integration of the Hunger Vital Sign screening into well child visits, assessments, home visiting programs, and systems to identify households as being at risk for food insecurity

- » Integrate the Hunger Vital Sign screening into existing systems including: electronic medical records, referral systems, state agency applications, and others
- » Create resource and referral information that healthcare providers, state and local organizations, and other groups can offer to families who are identified as being food insecure. These should include information for federal nutrition programs, state programs, seasonal programs, as well as local food assistance programs
- » Communicate the availability of the Hunger Vital Sign resources to healthcare providers, public health providers, state agencies, and others

Increase state agency support for federal nutrition program utilization through partnerships with healthcare providers and organizations

- » Increase partnerships with the medical community through the Virginia Department of Health and Virginia Department of Social Services to increase SNAP and WIC utilization. The departments will encourage medical providers to educate patients about the impact of nutrition on health outcomes

Develop options to expand home-delivered meals for older adults and individuals with disabilities as a Medicaid-covered service

- » Identify and evaluate options to provide home delivered meals as a Medicaid covered service

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ENCOURAGE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE INVESTMENT IN FOOD DESERTS AND MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES

Utilize urban agriculture as a strategy to increase healthy food access, revitalize communities, connect multiple generations, and grow and sell culturally appropriate food

- » Create statewide consensus to define urban agriculture, capture current urban agriculture sites, identify opportunities for urban agriculture expansion, and develop programmatic and policy recommendations to expand urban agriculture
- » Identify and promote policies necessary to support urban agriculture and remove policies hindering urban agriculture in communities
- » Provide urban agriculture educational programs, outreach, and technical assistance through partnerships with local organizations, non-profits, Virginia's land grant universities, Virginia State University and Virginia Tech, as well as Virginia Cooperative Extension

Partner with the private sector to increase access to locally produced, healthy food for low-income individuals

- » Support corner store initiatives aimed at improving access to healthy foods within underserved communities across the Commonwealth
- » Coordinate investment in small businesses and community development projects in underserved neighborhoods, which could include food hubs, logistics companies, and food incubators/small batch manufacturing, and others
- » Invest in innovative food retail strategies through the Virginia Food Access Investment Program and Fund and other economic development opportunities
- » Utilize Equitable Food Oriented Development (EFOD) and similar strategies to create economic opportunities in food and agriculture, healthy neighborhoods, and build community assets, pride, and power by and with historically marginalized communities



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Explore Corporate Philanthropy Opportunities

- » The Commonwealth will work with corporations and corporate foundations to identify opportunities for donations to charitable food organizations. This may include, but is not limited to, funding initiatives, equipment, or donations of perishable and non-perishable foods

AMPLIFY PUBLIC AWARENESS OF HUNGER IN VIRGINIA AND SUPPORT INFORMATION SHARING ACROSS PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS

Establish a comprehensive, user-friendly, online resource that provides public access to statewide data related to food security, nutrition programming, and diet-related illness.

- » Support FeedVA.org as the Commonwealth's resource for data, connectivity to resources, and best practices related to Virginia's food system and food access
- » Maintain up-to-date statewide data annually by establishing partner agreements with state agencies who collect pertinent data
- » Promote FeedVA.org to increase awareness to the public of its availability
- » Support the promotion of Hunger Action Month and the Feed VA Day of Action in September

Conduct a recurring food security survey

- » Identify Virginia-specific food insecurity data to inform outreach, programs, and policy development

Explore ways to address hunger within the college and university community

- » Identify risk factors for food insecurity among college and university community members
- » Convene partners to address hunger within the college and university community

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SUPPORT COMMUNITY ORGANIZING TO COMBAT FOOD INSECURITY AND HUNGER

Every region in Virginia will have a local Hunger Action Coalition to combat food insecurity and hunger in their local communities.

- » Support the development of Hunger Action Coalitions to pursue the goals of the Roadmap at the local level and initiate successful collaborations
- » Convene Hunger Action Coalitions to review progress on the Roadmap to End Hunger goals and activities

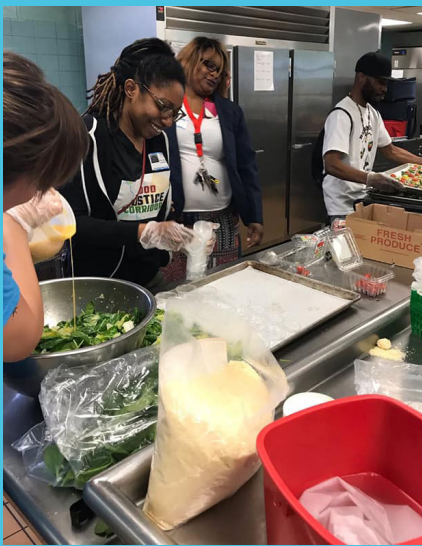
LOCAL HUNGER ACTION COALITIONS

State policies and programmatic priorities will only be successful if tied to authentic partnerships with grassroots organizations, which are driven by the lived experiences of food insecure families. The following are two examples of advocacy groups organizing at the local level to improve food access for their communities. Investing in their work and offering space for these groups to learn from one another will strengthen food access across the Commonwealth.



RICHMOND FOOD JUSTICE ALLIANCE:

The Richmond Food Justice Alliance (RFJA) is a resident-led organization advancing healthy food access by addressing historical inequities that drive low food access in communities within the City of Richmond. Alliance members serve on the Richmond's Food Access and Equity Task Force which is housed at Richmond City Health District (RCHD). The Task Force conducts local food access and equity policy assessments and promotes urban agriculture, nutrition education, community engagement, policy change, and overall access to healthy food for low-income, low-access communities in Richmond. It is composed of community advocates, academia, community leaders, members of the business sector, representatives from local government, and other stakeholders. Through RFJA, residents of the Commonwealth are being given the opportunity to make recommendations for policies that will ultimately affect their communities. This represents a shift from the typical dynamic where state agencies merely inform residents of policy decisions to a new dynamic where state agencies authentically partner with residents to craft policies.



LOCAL HUNGER ACTION COALITIONS

CULTIVATE CHARLOTTESVILLE'S FOOD JUSTICE NETWORK:

Cultivate Charlottesville is an integrated approach to building a healthy and just food system personally, in communities, and across systems and structures. It is implemented through the City Schoolyard Garden initiatives for youth, the Urban Agriculture Collective farming and community market, and the Food Justice Network advocacy and partnerships. The Charlottesville Food Justice Network program (CFJN) was initially launched as part of a USDA Community Food Projects Grant called Plant, Grow, Harvest! Charlottesville. Alongside partners in the grant, CFJN focuses on building equity and food justice with youth and their families facing economic challenges. Central to the vision of CFJN is a commitment to address racial inequities, promote systems change and center the voices and choices of people experiencing food inequities. With more than 50 food security and hunger relief organizations operating in Charlottesville, CFJN is striving to implement an integrated approach that will truly move the needle on food insecurity and decrease health disparities.



Local Foods, Local Places
tour of food equity sites
in Charlottesville



WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP



Donate

your time, money, and resources to the emergency food system



Grow

nutritious foods in your backyard or a community garden to sell or donate to a local pantry



Educate

yourself and others about the importance of healthy food access and the extent of food insecurity in Virginia through [FeedVA.org](https://www.feedva.org) and other resources



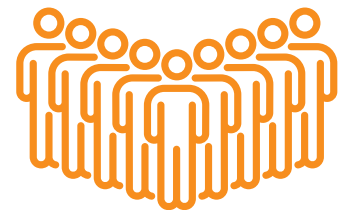
Advocate

for policies in your school system and local and state government that improve food access for low-income households



Shop

at your local farmers market or community-owned grocery store



Organize

your communities to collaboratively and inclusively address barriers to healthy food access

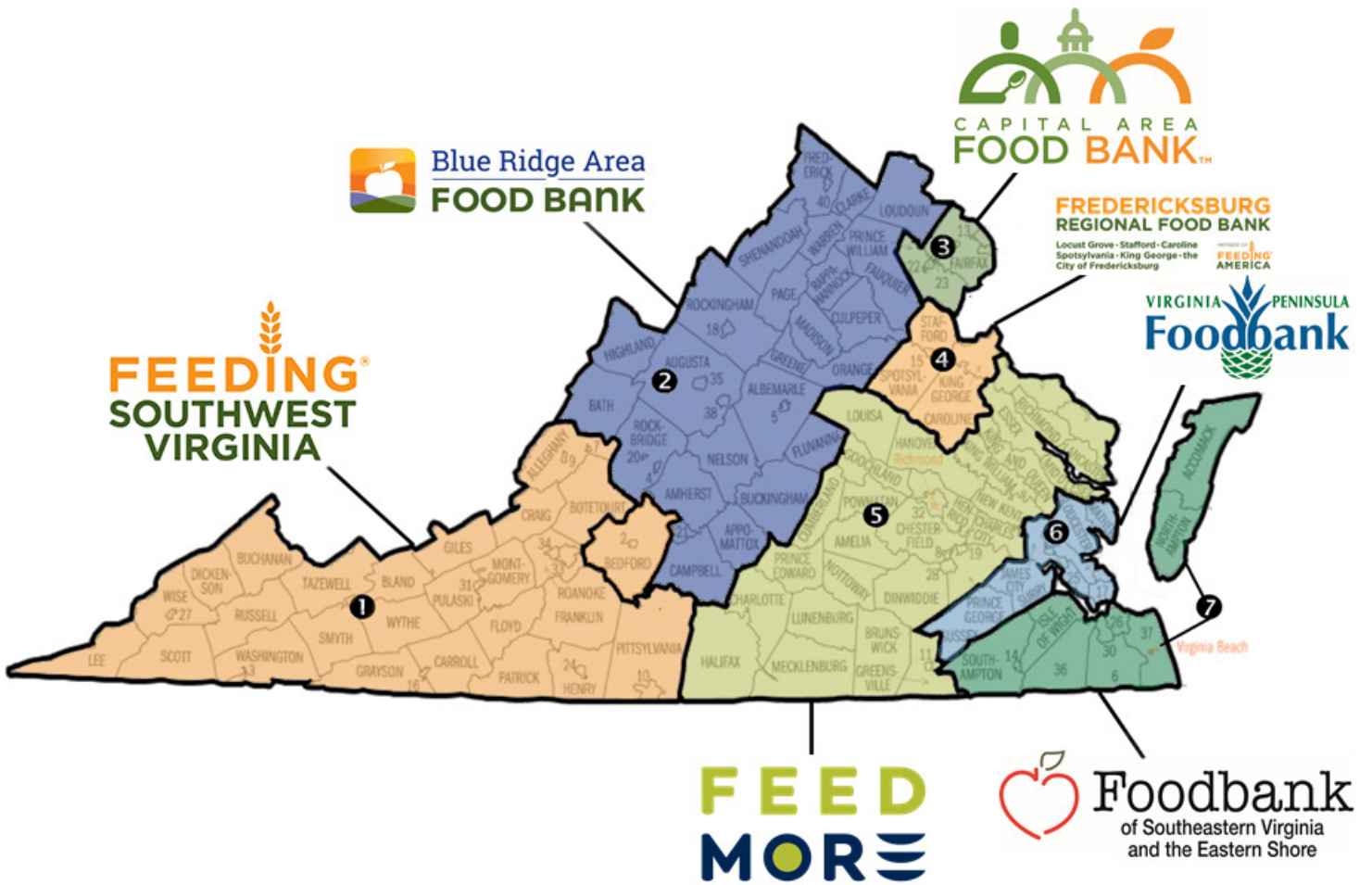
APPENDIX A

CITATIONS:

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APPENDIX B

FOOD BANK SERVICE AREA MAP:



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