



Takoma Park City Council Meeting – October 23, 2024 Agenda Item 3

Voting Session

Single Reading Ordinance Authorizing Award of FY25 Food Insecurity Reduction Grant Funds

Recommended Council Action

Adopt the Grants Review Committee FY25 Food Insecurity Reduction Grant Award Recommendations.

Context with Key Issues

In October 2021, The City issued an RFP for services to reduce food insecurity among city residents through one of two tracks, either food distribution or increased access to SNAP (the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program). Four contracts were awarded for FY23 and renewed in FY24, three for food distribution and one for SNAP outreach, funded through ARPA.

In lieu of renewing existing contracts for FY25, the City instead created a competitive grant program in order to open up the opportunity to a greater number of applicants, as well as invite innovative ideas for addressing food insecurity beyond those set by the City.

The City of Takoma Park's Food Insecurity Reduction Grants provide financial support to specific programs, projects, and events that reduce or prevent food insecurity among residents of Takoma Park. Grant awards range from \$10,000-\$30,000 for the 15-month period beginning October 1, 2024 and ending December 31, 2025. All funded projects must be completed by December 31, 2025, with the possibility of a 6-month extension if necessary. There is no match required by the grantee.

The program is administered by the Department of Housing and Community Development and staffed by the City's Grants Coordinator. Based on the Community Quality of Life model, the Grants Review Committee, comprised of residents appointed by the City Council, reviewed all completed applications and developed funding recommendations forwarded to the City Council.

The \$215,000 of ARPA funds identified for food insecurity reduction in the FY25 budget was augmented by reallocating unencumbered ARPA funds in the amount of \$4,388 from the Community Quality of Life grant program. These funds were a combination of a small surplus over initially-awarded funds, and the reduction of a grant award at the request of a grantee organization. This results in a total of \$219,388 in ARPA funding available for Food Insecurity Reduction Grants, which must be encumbered by December 31, 2024.

Eleven applicants requested a total of \$ 300,978.00 in funding. Eight applications were from organizations that have not received previous food insecurity reduction funding from the City. The Grant Review Committee recommends funding the following nine programs at the levels indicated. *Note that some projects were funded at less than requested levels in order to award funds to a greater number of worthy projects. Should additional ARPA funds become available, the Grants Review Committee requests that they be distributed to those under-funded projects.*

Seven Food Distribution Projects

Small Things Matter: "Kokua Foods" to provide the residents at several low-income housing complexes access to fresh produce and culturally appropriate foods on a bi-weekly basis on the first and third Thursday of each month. Residents will select the foods they want in a "grocery shopping" format. \$30,000

Meals on Wheels of Takoma Park/Silver Spring: "Daily Delivery: Fighting Neighborhood Food Insecurity in Takoma Park" to deliver two meals/weekday to approximately 50 unique homebound clients each year. One meal is served hot off the stove, and the other is a deli lunch with sides and salads. \$30,000

EduCare Support Services Inc: "The Takoma Park Food Pantry: Pantry on the Go" to deliver perishable and non-perishable food items to seniors, individuals with disabilities, and low-income families in Takoma Park and surrounding communities on a monthly distribution cycle, with participants receiving a 3-day supply of food tailored to their family size. \$30,000

So What Else Inc: "Food Distributions at Takoma Park Elementary School" to deliver 60 to-go bags on a biweekly basis, providing an assortment of both fresh and shelf-stable goods designed to supplement a family's food usage. \$30,000

CHEER: "Ensure Food Security through Culturally Appropriate Food Distribution" to provide two cohorts of 50 community members with bi-weekly vouchers to be used at two partner local grocery stores that serve the community with their own cultural and religiously sensitive foods. \$30,000

Adventist Community Services of Greater Washington Inc.: "Mother and Child Nutrition Program" to provide a consistent and stable supply of healthy food/nutrition for enrolled pregnant and lactating mothers and their children from neonatal to age two. \$28,278

Enterprise Community Development: "Food Pantry at Essex House" to establish a food pantry at Essex House, an affordable housing property to address the persistent issue of food insecurity among residents. \$20,000

One Workforce Development Project

Crossroads Community Food Network: "A Holistic Approach to Reducing Food Insecurity in the Takoma Langlely Crossroads" to Address the underlying factors contributing to food insecurity, namely poverty and unemployment. Empower residents to start and grow their food businesses, through a combination of outreach, resources, and one-on-one technical support. \$10,555

One Sustainability/Education Project

Community Food Forest Collective: "Community Food Forest Expansion Project" to expand the food forest program beyond school sites, and provide workshops for the community on regenerative urban agriculture, ecologically-sound food production and land stewardship. \$10,555

Council Priority

Advancing a Community of Belonging

Community Development for an Improved & Equitable Quality of Life

Environmental Considerations

Small Things Matter's grocery store model of food distribution and Enterprise's choice model minimize food waste by allowing beneficiaries to select only the items they like and will use. Meals on Wheels and So What Else partner with local food recovery organizations, also reducing food waste. The Community Food Forest Collective focuses on hyper-local regenerative urban agriculture, ecologically-sound food production and land stewardship.

Fiscal Considerations

Full funding of this grant program comes from ARPA funds, which must be encumbered by December 31, 2024 in order to be used to benefit of Takoma Park residents.

Racial Equity Considerations

The Food Insecurity Reduction grant application requires that every applicant for funding explain how their proposed project incorporates racial equity, and the Grants Review Committee scores those responses. The average race equity score for the nine recommended programs is 4.23 out of 5. Crossroads Community Food Network's proposed project focuses primarily on Black, Brown, and immigrant food entrepreneurs in the Takoma/Langley Crossroads. CHEER includes bilingual outreach staff in their pilot project.

Attachments and Links

- [Single Reading Ordinance](#)
- [Recommended Project Summaries](#)

Introduced by:

**CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND
ORDINANCE 2025-**

**AUTHORIZING AWARD OF
FY25 FOOD INSECURITY REDUCTION GRANT FUNDS**

WHEREAS, The City of Takoma Park’s Food Insecurity Reduction Grants provide financial support to specific programs, projects, and events that reduce or prevent food insecurity among residents of Takoma Park; and

WHEREAS, the availability of grant funding was announced in August 2024; and

WHEREAS, eleven (11) applications were received and forwarded to the Grants Review Committee for review and evaluation; and

WHEREAS, a total of \$219,388.00 has been budgeted for the FY25 Food Insecurity Reduction Grants program from ARPA Funds; and

WHEREAS, the funding recommendations of the Committee were presented to the Council for consideration on October 16, 2024; and

WHEREAS, the Council concurs with the Committee’s funding recommendations.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND THAT:

SECTION 1. FY25 Food Insecurity Reduction Grants are awarded for the following projects:

Grantee	Project Name	Grant Amount
Small Things Matter	Kokua Foods	\$30,000
Meals on Wheels of Takoma Park/Silver Spring	Daily Delivery: Fighting Neighborhood Food Insecurity in Takoma Park	\$30,000
EduCare Support Services Inc	The Takoma Park Food Pantry: Pantry on the Go	\$30,000
So What Else Inc	Food Distributions at Takoma Park Elementary School	\$30,000
CHEER	Ensure Food Security through Culturally Appropriate Food Distribution	\$30,000
Adventist Community Services of Greater Washington Inc.	Mother and Child Nutrition Program	\$28,278
Enterprise Community Development	Food Pantry at Essex House	\$20,000
Crossroads Community Food Network	A Holistic Approach to Reducing Food Insecurity in the Takoma Langley Crossroads	\$10,555

Community Food Forest Collective	Community Food Forest Expansion Project	\$10,555
----------------------------------	---	----------

SECTION 2. City staff is authorized to make administrative reallocations between grantees in the event grantees are unable to utilize the grants as awarded.

SECTION 3. The City Manager is further authorized to execute any documents and take any action necessary to carry out the intent of this Ordinance.

SECTION 4. This Ordinance shall become effective upon adoption.

ADOPTED BY ROLL CALL VOTE THIS ____ DAY OF _____, 2024:

AYES:

NAYS:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

FY2025 Food Insecurity Reduction Funding Recommendations Project Summaries

Adventist Community Services of Greater Washington Inc.	Various Locations (delivery)
Requested: \$28,278	Recommended: \$28,278
<p>Mother and Child Nutrition Program</p> <p>The project will provide a consistent and stable supply of healthy food/nutrition for enrolled pregnant and lactating mothers and their children from neonatal to age two. Currently enrolled families receive monthly supplies of diapers and hygiene supplies. Proposed food supplies will be provided in addition to regular supplies of food, diapers and hygiene kits.</p>	

CHEER (Community Health and Empowerment through Education and Research)	Various (cohorts/stores to be identified)
Requested: \$30,000	Recommended: \$30,000
<p>Ensure Food Security through Culturally Appropriate Food Distribution</p> <p>In this pilot project, two cohorts of 50 families and partner local grocery stores will be identified. CHEER will give participants a voucher/card on a biweekly basis for spending at one partner store frequented by that community. They will assign bilingual outreach staff to serve as the liaison among CHEER, the store, and the residents. Each family \$35 biweekly as a credit to the store for a period of 2 months. Community members will receive this credit in the form of a CHEER voucher/coupon where they can choose the foods that they want from the store, benefitting both the family and the local business.</p>	

Community Food Forest Collective	Various Locations
Requested: \$27,700	Recommended: \$10,555
<p>Community Food Forest Expansion Project</p> <p>Expand locations from TPES and MCC to include a Carroll Avenue site and a Montgomery County parks site in Takoma Park. Conduct workshops on seed saving, mushroom cultivation, herb growing, home composting, food preservation, fruit tree grafting, backyard permaculture, balcony gardening and other topics that will introduce attendees to culturally diverse and new foods, teaching them the skills needed to make the most of these community assets. Continue to engage a diverse range of people, especially those from historically and systematically marginalized communities.</p>	

Crossroads Community Food Network	Takoma Langley Crossroads/Community Kitchen
Requested: \$20,000	Recommended: \$10,555
<p>A Holistic Approach to Reducing Food Insecurity in the Takoma Langley Crossroads</p> <p>The project will empower residents to start and grow their food businesses. By providing free, bilingual business support, access to an affordable shared-use community kitchen, and the potential of Crossroads Farmers Market as a retail outlet, this project empowers historically marginalized food entrepreneurs. This collaborative approach fosters a more vibrant and sustainable local food economy, increasing access to affordable, culturally appropriate food choices.</p>	

EduCare Support Services Inc	Various Locations (delivery)
Requested: \$30,000	Recommended: \$30,000
<p>The Takoma Park Food Pantry: Pantry on the Go</p> <p>This program partners with various host sites, including retirement homes, senior centers, faith-based organizations, and other central locations in low-income communities. This ensures that services are accessible to those who may not have the means to travel to traditional food pantries. The project is designed to overcome common barriers to food access by delivering food directly to those who may have difficulty reaching stationary food pantries due to mobility issues or lack of transportation. Pantry on the Go also addresses the critical need for fresh produce, providing large quantities of fresh fruits and vegetables that might otherwise spoil.</p>	

Enterprise Community Development	Essex House
Requested: \$30,000	Recommended: \$20,000
<p>Food Pantry at Essex House</p> <p>The food pantry will operate with a dual-distribution model, providing two distinct distributions each month. The first distribution will consist of shelf-stable items such as canned goods, grains, and other non-perishable foods, ensuring that residents have a reliable stock of essential food items that can last through the month. The second distribution will focus on fresh, perishable items, including fruits, vegetables, dairy products, and meats. Each distribution will be organized in a grocery bag format, with enough food to sustain an average household for several days. The pantry will operate on a choice-based model, allowing residents to select the items that best meet their needs and preferences, which helps in reducing waste and ensures that the food distributed is culturally appropriate and aligned with residents' dietary restrictions.</p>	

Meals on Wheels of Takoma Park/Silver Spring	Various Locations (delivery)
Requested: \$30,000	Recommended: \$30,000
<p>Daily Delivery: Fighting Neighborhood Food Insecurity in Takoma Park</p> <p>Volunteers deliver two meals/weekday to approximately 50 unique homebound clients each year. Meals are tailored to allergy and religious restrictions, and a vegetarian option is offered. Volunteers help prepare meals and deliver meals, providing a lens into each clients' lives, helping identify additional needs. Services stretch beyond the immediate community: volunteers liaise with clients' families, friends, and emergency services, serving elders and people living with disability or illness regardless of age or income; and combatting social isolation. They partner with local food recovery organizations, which helps reduce food waste and build community.</p>	

Small Things Matter	Hampshire Tower Apartments, Parkview Towers Apartments, Edinburgh House Apartments, Cambridge Apartments, Winslow House Apartments
Requested: \$30,000	Recommended: \$30,000
<p>Kokua Foods</p> <p>This food distribution program will provide the residents at several low-income housing complexes with access to fresh produce, shelf-stable, and culturally appropriate foods on a bi-weekly basis on the first and third Thursday of each month. Residents select the foods they want in a "grocery shopping" format bringing their own bags to fill. The team comes from the community served, with several of team members living in the apartment buildings served. This provides incredible and</p>	

immediate feedback on the quality, quantity, and types the residents need, which are tailored to each building. They incorporate produce from food rescue efforts to ensure that residents receive a wide variety of produce.

So What Else Inc	Takoma Park Elementary School
Requested: \$30,000	Recommended: \$30,000
Food Distributions at Takoma Park Elementary School So What Else collaborates with numerous organizations, businesses, and restaurants to secure food donations, which are then distributed to MCPS school sites. Types of food include fresh, perishable goods (such as fruit and vegetables) as well as shelf-stable goods. This grant will expand the program to include Takoma Park Elementary School, where 60 to-go bags will be delivered on a biweekly basis.	