

Montgomery County Awards More Than \$215K for Community Gardens and Food Security

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Courtesy Montgomery County

Montgomery County has awarded more than \$215,000 in grants to five local organizations to expand community gardens, increase access to fresh produce and strengthen food security efforts across the county.

The Montgomery County Office of Food Systems Resilience recently distributed \$215,653 through its Fiscal Year 2026 Resident and Community Food Gardening Grant Program. The funding will support projects led by Clifton Park Baptist Church, the

Community Food Forest Collective, Community Health and Empowerment through Education and Research, the Glenmont Forest Neighbors Civic Association and The Charles Koiner Center for Urban Farming.

The projects will expand neighborhood gardens, school-based food forests, youth gardening programs and urban farming initiatives, while providing gardening education and increasing access to culturally relevant foods. Together, the organizations are expected to engage approximately 1,320 residents and produce nearly 33,800 pounds of edible crops over the next 17 months. Nearly 27,000 pounds of that food will be donated through Montgomery County's food assistance network, benefiting more than 12,500 residents.

County Executive Marc Elrich said the program supports community-driven efforts to improve food access. "These projects will ensure that locally grown, culturally familiar foods get right into the hands of County residents accessing food assistance resources," he said.

Launched in 2021 as part of the County's pandemic response, the gardening grant program has since expanded to support the County's Strategic Plan to End Childhood Hunger while also advancing climate and sustainability goals through local food production, pollinator habitats and reduced food transportation emissions.