

Food Insecurity in the DMV

FIRST, SOME DEFINITIONS

Food security: Food security refers to the ability to feed oneself and one’s family with enough nutritionally and culturally adequate food to maintain health and well-being. Unfortunately, food insecurity—that is, the inability to provide adequate food due to lack of resources—is an ongoing and growing problem in the US, the wealthiest nation in the world.

A few stats in the District:

- 1 in 7 households in DC is struggling with hunger
- 14.5% of DC residents are food insecure

Food Security is directly linked to socio-economic status.

Food access: Often used in conjunction with describing a food insecure population, a food desert refers to geographic areas where people have limited access to healthy food. Specifically, a food desert in DC is an area where:

- The walking distance to a supermarket or grocery store is more than 0.5 miles,
- Over 40% of households have no vehicle available, and
- The median household income is less than 185% of the federal poverty level for a family of four (which is \$48,470 in 2020)

Of the roughly 49 full-service grocery stores in DC, only THREE are located in Wards 7 and 8

Let’s talk about it

- What is surprising or otherwise interesting to you about the “Hunger Heat Map” above?
- Why do you think there is such a big difference in the number of grocery stores in different parts of DC?
- Where is the closest grocery store to your house and do you typically walk or drive there?
- What are other struggles people have if they cannot access or afford healthy food easily?
- How do you think the current health emergency is impacting people who maybe not have easy access to food on a regular basis?

Take action

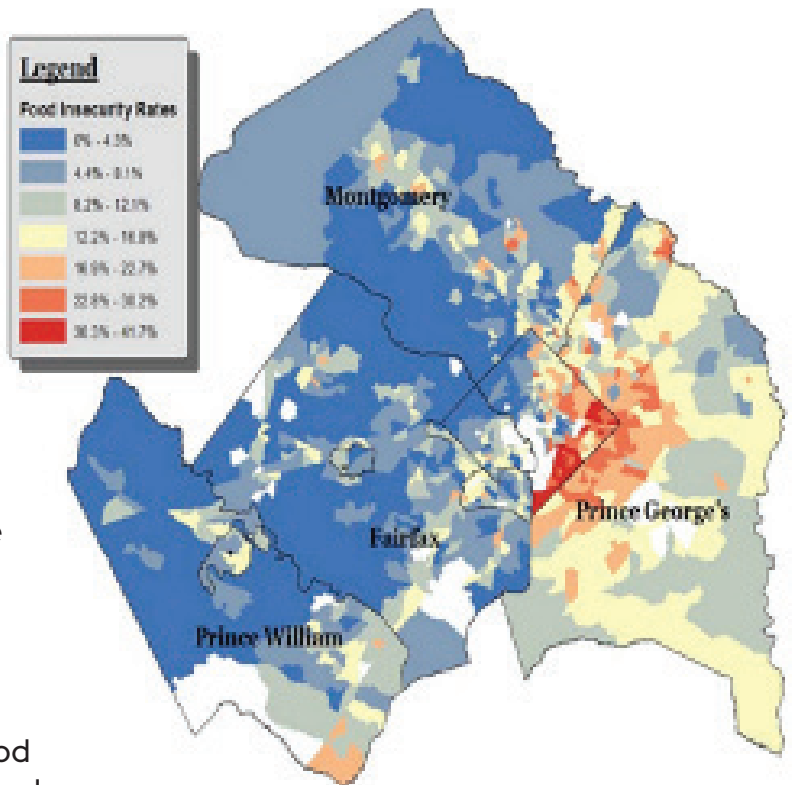
- Make a donation to an organization supporting people who are food insecure right now
- Go through your food pantry and make a basket of food you can donate (if you’re comfortable, drive it over to an organization in need right now; if you want to wait until after it’s ok to go out and about, that’s fine too)

Want more? Visit these links to see how our partners are fighting food insecurity.

[DC Hunger Solutions](#)

[Capital Area Food Bank](#)

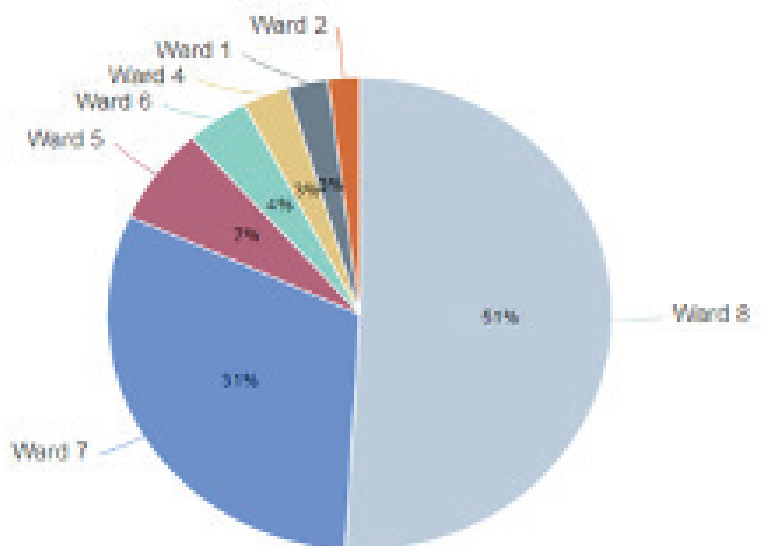
[MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger](#)



Capital Area Food Bank’s “Hunger Heat Map” shows where the greatest food insecurity is in the region

Half of D.C. food deserts are in Ward 8

Areas with limited food access in the District (based on grocery or supermarket proximity, household income, and car access), by ward



Source: D.C. Policy Center
Updated March 16, 2017

For more information and ways to get involved, visit

edcjcc.org/volunteer

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