



Strategic Plan Scope of Work

Montgomery County seeks a vendor to assist with developing a strategic plan to guide future direction of its Food Policy Council (Council) work. The Council, housed within the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Public Health, first convened in August 2024. In its first two years, the Council has focused on developing core infrastructure, identifying priority focus areas, and building and engaging members. The Council is now at an important time to apply what has been learned during its first two years to clearly identify future goals and roles. The selected vendor will facilitate a planning process and draft a strategic plan that will guide the work of the Food Policy Council for the next three years.

Background

Established in 2024 by the Board of Commissioners and housed within the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Public Health, the Montgomery County Food Policy Council's mission is to create a more equitable and sustainable food system in the County by:

- Increasing coordination of County services and resources
- Improving communication among food systems stakeholders
- Identifying collective goals and developing ways to achieve them

The Council envisions a robust and economically thriving food system wherein all Montgomery County residents have access to local, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food.

Since its inception, the Council has achieved the following:

- Engaged more than 170 unique participants through quarterly General Membership Meetings.
- Established three working groups: Network Development, Food Security, and Farmer Development

- Developed and implemented a grant process, resulting in distribution of \$610,000 in Food Systems Infrastructure Grant funding
- Piloted Agventure, an agritourism initiative, designed to increase engagement with the diverse farming community in Montgomery County.
- Established a monthly newsletter with over 500 subscribers

For a full list of Council activities, please review this [2025 Impact Report](#).

Scope of Work

The Leadership Team identified connection, education, and policy as the primary focus areas for the Food Policy Council work during its first two years. Initiatives growing from these early focus areas include: facilitating peer learning and collaboration through site visits and networking opportunities, creating learning forums such as a food systems lunch and learn series, and developing data and policy briefs outlining the local impacts of food system policy changes to support informed planning and action steps.

To define the future focus areas of the Council and develop goals that align to the evolving needs of the County and broader food landscape, Montgomery County seeks a vendor to facilitate a focused strategic planning process.

The outcomes of this process should include:

Establish a strategic direction for the Montgomery County Food Policy Council for the next three years.

Deliverables should include:

- A set of prioritized strategic goals that reflect the Council's mission, strengths, and opportunities for impact within the local food system.
- Measurable objectives and recommended actions associated with each goal.
- Identification of near-, mid-, and long-term priorities to guide Council activities and resource allocation.
- A concise strategic planning document summarizing goals, objectives, and recommended priorities.

Develop a practical framework for monitoring progress and demonstrating impact.

Deliverables should include:

- A set of performance measures and indicators aligned with identified goals and objectives.
- Recommendations for tracking outputs, outcomes, and progress over time.
- A simple reporting structure that can be implemented by Council members with minimal administrative burden.
- Guidance on how evaluation data can be used to inform future planning, communications, and stakeholder engagement.

Clarify the Montgomery County Food Policy Council's role within the local food system and align future activities with that role.

Deliverables should include:

- An assessment of the Council's current functions, strengths, and areas of opportunity.
- Identification of the Council's primary role(s), such as convener, educator, advocate, advisor, coordinator, or catalyst for systems change.
- Recommendations for aligning projects, initiatives, and partnerships with the Council's defined purpose and strategic priorities.
- A concise role statement that can be used to communicate the Council's value and mission to stakeholders.

Final Deliverable

In addition to the individual components above, the consultant should provide:

- A final strategic planning report summarizing findings, stakeholder input, strategic priorities, evaluation recommendations, role definition, and network analysis.
- Presentation of findings and recommendations to the Food Policy Council and key partners.
- Electronic copies of all final materials and planning documents.

Process

While the vendor will determine the process for developing the plan, we expect the following components to be included at minimum:

- 5-7 Key Informant Interviews

- 2-3 Focus Group Conversations with Leadership Team, Working Group Members, and other food system stakeholders
- 1-2 work sessions with County and Food Policy Council leaders
- A presentation of a draft plan to the Food Policy Council Leadership Team

Monthly check-ins with the Food Policy Coordinator will be required to assess project progress.

Application Process and Timeline

- Proposal submission deadline: August 30
- Proposal Review: Early September
- Contract Award: Late September
- Strategic Plan Development: September – December 2026

The project must be completed by December 18, 2026.

Bids

Interested parties are encouraged to provide clear and succinct information that demonstrates their qualifications, approach, and ability to complete the project within the proposed budget and timeframe. Proposals exceeding five pages (excluding resumes and work samples) are discouraged. Please submit the following materials to Sam Applefield, Food Policy Coordinator at samuel.applefield@montgomerycountypa.gov by August 28.

1. Organizational Overview and Qualifications

Provide a brief description of the applicant organization, including:

- Relevant experience facilitating strategic planning, coalition development, network analysis, or food systems initiatives.
- Experience working with community-based organizations, advisory councils, public sector entities, or multi-stakeholder partnerships.
- Knowledge of food systems, food security, public health, or related fields.

2. Project Approach

Describe how the applicant would approach the scope of work, including:

- Facilitating stakeholder input and engagement.
- Developing strategic goals and priorities.
- Clarifying organizational roles and functions.

- Conducting stakeholder or network analysis.
- Developing practical evaluation measures.

Applicants should describe their overall approach without requiring a detailed work plan.

3. Relevant Experience and Work Samples

Provide:

- Descriptions of up to three similar projects completed within the past five years.
- One or two sample deliverables (strategic plans, stakeholder assessments, evaluation frameworks, facilitation summaries, etc.) that demonstrate relevant experience.

4. Project Team

- Identify key personnel who would work on the project, including:
- Name and role.
- Relevant qualifications and experience.
- A brief resume or biography (1-2 pages per key staff member maximum).

5. Timeline and Availability

Describe:

- Ability to complete the project within the required timeframe.
- Any anticipated scheduling considerations.
- Proposed milestones at a high level.

6. Budget

The total funds available to support this project are \$20,000. Please provide:

- Total project cost.
- Brief budget narrative describing major cost categories.

7. References

Provide contact information for three clients for whom similar work has been completed.