



## Existing and Emerging Food Hubs in Maryland 2015

### Background

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The Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC) prepared this report as a summary report on existing and emerging Food Hubs across Maryland. The report recognizes local efforts, lets elected officials know of serious efforts being undertaken in the state to help consumers gain better access to locally grown food, helps identify areas of need, and provides a blueprint for the state. SMADC undertook this report through a transparent process, inviting all willing hubs to participate.

In Maryland, demand is on the rise for local farm fresh food. Food Hubs are also on the rise, and can fill a gap in food aggregation and distribution. The USDA working definition of a food hub is:

“A centrally located facility with a business management structure facilitating the aggregation, storage, processing, distribution, and/or marketing of locally/regionally produced food products.” “By actively coordinating these activities along the value chain, food hubs are providing wider access to institutional and retail markets for small to mid-sized producers, and increasing access of fresh healthy food for consumers, including underserved areas and food deserts.”

This report uses the USDA definition above, and information gathered by the National Food Network (NGFN) Food Hub Collaboration which further defines the work of food hubs.

“A regional food hub is a business or organization that actively manages the aggregation, distribution, and marketing of source-identified products primarily from local and regional producers for the purpose of strengthening producer capacity and their access to wholesale, retail, and institutional markets. Source identified means that, to some extent, the stories of the food, the producer, the production methods—or simply the location—stay with the product. One distinguishing characteristic of a food hub compared with a conventional produce wholesaler is intent. By design, many food hubs have a mission to strengthen local producers’ capacity and increase their access to markets.” – National Good Food Network (NGFN) Food Hub Collaboration

SMADC compiled information on the existing and emerging food hubs in Maryland based on internet research and staff outreach. The list represents the food hubs and information that we are aware of to date.

A copy of the 2014 Maryland Food Hubs report can be found on SMADC's website at, [www.smadc.com](http://www.smadc.com) under Food/Farms/Nutrition, Maryland Food Hubs. SMADC is also working with the Wallace Center at Winrock International on an expanded Maryland Food Hub Report, to be released in the spring of 2016.

## **Existing Food Hubs in Maryland**

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The following food hubs are operating in Maryland and are recognized by both the [National Good Food Network](#) and [USDA](#) .

1. [Friends and Farms, LLC](#) Columbia, Maryland  
*\*Source of information: generated from the website in 2015 ([www.friendsandfarms.com](http://www.friendsandfarms.com)) and directly from Philip Gottwals, Friends and Farms, LLC in 2014.*
  - a. Hub Model: Privately Held Business
  - b. Years in Operation: 3
  - c. Customer Supply/Scale: Customized regional food basket offered to direct customers and retail on a weekly basis with drop off and pick up locations around the Baltimore Metro area. Suppliers are located in MD, VA, WV, and PA. The business aggregates food from the Loveville Produce Auction, Maryland Food Center Authority, and many independent growers and processors. Serving approximately 650 families.
  - d. Status:
    - ✓ USDA recognized
    - ✓ National Good Food Network recognized
  
2. [Garrett Growers Cooperative, Inc.](#) Oakland, Maryland  
*\*Source of information: generated from the website ([www.garrettgrowers.com](http://www.garrettgrowers.com)) and directly from Cheryl DeBerry, Garrett Growers Cooperative, Inc. in 2015.*
  - a. Hub model: Cooperative
  - b. Years in operation: 4
  - c. Customer supply/scale: Garrett Grower's sells to institutions (2%), wholesale (3%), caterers (5%), restaurants (50%), retail (40%). They have a CSA and mostly sell in the Deep Creek lake area. They buy direct from farms in Maryland and from a wholesaler/distributor/auction as needed (rarely).
  - d. Status:
    - ✓ USDA recognized
    - ✓ National Good Food Network recognized

- b. Mission/goals: “The goal of our cooperative is to provide service at cost to members.”
  - h. Additional information/future plans: Annual gross sales (range): \$30,000-\$70,000. Currently works with Garrett County Economic Development, University of Maryland Extension in Garrett County, and with the statewide food hub meetings.
- 3. **Hometown Harvest** Frederick, Maryland
 

*\*Source of information: generated from the website in 2015([www.hometownharvest.com](http://www.hometownharvest.com)) and directly from Tony Brusco, Hometown Harvest in 2014.*

  - a. Hub model: Privately held business
  - b. Years in operation: 6
  - c. Customer supply/scale: Suppliers are located in MD, VA, and PA. Customers are located in MD, DC, and VA. Hometown Harvest offers home delivery service of local, organic food and non-certified organic food. Serves about 2,000 customers.
  - d. Status:
    - ✓ USDA recognized
    - ✓ National Good Food Network recognized
  - e. Additional information/ future plans: The business is farmer owned and operated. “We are working to move the business on to our farm. Once completed, Hometown Harvest will have an on-site market and commercial kitchen at the farm. The kitchen will give us the ability to add additional value added items to our menu. “ – Tony Brusco, Owner of Hometown Harvest
- 4. **Maryland Farm to Table Produce** Baltimore, Maryland
 

*\*2015 update: no longer in operation.*
- 5. **Washington's Green Grocer** Capital Heights, Maryland
 

*\*Source of information: generated from the website ([www.washingtonsgreengrocer.com](http://www.washingtonsgreengrocer.com)) in 2015.*

  - a. Hub model: Privately Held Business
  - b. Years in operation: 21
  - c. Customer supply/scale: Coordinates the sale and marketing of farm sourced food, aggregates food from farmers along the mid-Atlantic. Recipients are direct consumers in the Washington D.C. area, supply is also donated within the D.C. area, distributes directly to consumers in the Washington D.C. area. Suppliers are located in Washington D.C., MD, VA, PA, NY.
  - d. Status:
    - ✓ USDA recognized
    - ✓ National Good Food Network recognized

## Emerging Food Hubs in Maryland

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1. [Baltimore Food Hub](#) Baltimore, Maryland

*\*Source of information: generated from the website in 2015*

*(<http://www.baltimorefoodhub.com>) and directly from Greg Heller, American Communities Trust in 2014.*

- a. Hub model: TBD
- b. Years in operation: Less than 1 year
- c. Customer Supply/Scale: Serving the Baltimore metro area. Commercial kitchen space for rent by the hour to culinary entrepreneurs and food truck operators, the incubator also provides business technical assistance, access to affordable start-up capital, and contract opportunities to help community-based food entrepreneurs legitimize and grow their businesses. Office space for food businesses and nonprofits is also offered. As entrepreneurs create new businesses, job training, urban farming, farm stand/garden center may be available.
- d. Status:
  - ✓ Operating
- e. Mission/goals: “It is the goal for the Food Hub to deliver a set of programs and services focused on investing in and empowering the local food economy through small business development for culinary entrepreneurs. This work will include small business technical assistance and building relationships between major food buyers, suppliers, value-added producers and others within the sector. A primary focus of the Baltimore Food Hub’s work will be wealth building for low-income, immigrant, and minority entrepreneurs and workforce candidates, and local job creation. The Baltimore Food Hub promotes local and regional foods in Baltimore City. We are growing the food innovation economy by offering entrepreneurs and food businesses resources to scale their mission.”
- f. Additional information/future plans: “The Baltimore Food Hub is a physical development project East Baltimore that will transform a 3.5 acre site into a campus of facilities and programs focused on building the Baltimore food economy, workforce, and food access opportunities. The Hub will include a kitchen incubator, workforce facilities, shared office space, urban agriculture, and community gardens. First phase construction began in the fall of 2014 with development concluding at the end of 2015. The Hub is managed by an advisory board of project stakeholders with a development team including American Communities Trust, Historic East Baltimore Community Action Coalition, and others.”

2. [Chesapeake Farm to Table](#) Sparks, Maryland

*\*Source of information: generated from Audrey Swanenberg, Chesapeake Farm to Table in 2015.*

- a. Hub Model: Privately held
  - b. Years in Operation: Less than 1
  - c. Customer Supply/Scale: Supplying 30 restaurants, sourcing from 20 small sustainable farms in Maryland.
  - d. Status
    - ✓ Operating
  - e. Mission/goals: “To help build more profitable sustainable small-scale agriculture in Maryland. We are a farmer-owned, cooperatively managed online marketplace for purchasing high-quality, local and sustainably grown produce. Our goal is to strengthen the local sustainable food movement by creating an easy system for buyers to "walk the talk" and truly buy locally.”
  - f. Additional information/future plans: Looking to increase to working with institutions and a broader restaurant market. Currently working with UMD Extension, Future Harvest Chesapeake Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture.
3. [Chesapeake Harvest \(Eastern Shore Food Hub\)](#) Easton, Maryland  
*\*Source of information: generated from the web and Tracy Ward, executive director, Easton Economic Development Corporation, Chesapeake Harvest, and Andy Andrews, Chesapeake Harvest in 2015.*
- a. Hub model: Maryland benefit LLC owned by a non profit
  - b. Years in operation: 0, planning for September 2015
  - c. Customer Supply/Scale: The food hub plans to serve wholesale, institutions (schools, hospitals, etc.), restaurants, hunger community, and retail (retail will be later in the process). Customers will be from a 200 mile foodshed. Plan to buy direct from Delmarva growers, farms in Maryland, and regional farms (surrounding states). First year sales estimated \$1.2 million.
  - d. Status:
    - ✓ Emerging
  - e. Additional information/future plans: The hub is working with Common Market, and is interested in working with other organizations across the state.
4. [Community FARE](#) Frederick, Maryland  
*\*Source of information: generated from the website (<http://www.communityfare.org>) and directly from Janice Wells, Community FARE in 2015.*
- a. Hub model: Nonprofit
  - b. Years in operation: Expect to open in 2016
  - c. Customer supply/scale: Wholesale, institutions (schools, hospitals, etc.), restaurants, hunger community, and direct from farms in Maryland, and regional farms in surrounding states.
  - d. Status:

✓ Emerging

- f. Mission/goals: “To diversify, expand and safeguard the future of a healthy regional food supply by supporting the economic vitality of small farmers and promoting stewardship of the land, air and water.”
  - g. Additional information/future plans: Working to raise funds to do a market study, feasibility for food hub in Frederick and business analysis in fall 2015. Community FARE will work to foster planning around local food access in Frederick City. Community FARE (DBA) is part of the Land and Cultural Preservation Fund, Inc. and is a sister organization to both Friends of Frederick County and Community Renewable Energy. Interested in working with other organizations to discuss possibilities like working with distributors and other regional food hubs such as Common Market.
5. **Howard County**  
*\*Source of information: generated from the website in 2015 (<https://rovingradish.com>) and from Kelly Dudeck, Howard County, in 2014.*
- a. In 2014, the Roving Radish was a part of a broader food initiative unveiled by the Howard County Food Policy Task Force. The County was developing a comprehensive approach to nutrition and sustainability, which included the creation of a Food Hub where locally produced food can be prepared and distributed, and where entrepreneurs can work on food initiatives.
  - b. **The Roving Radish**
    - a. Hub Model: Nonprofit
    - b. Years in Operation: 2
    - c. Customer supply/scale: Open to the general public and subsidized for low-income residents. Currently working with 6 Maryland farms.
    - d. Status:  
✓ Operating
    - e. Mission/goals: “Dedicated to promoting farm to table healthy eating habits to our community, while creating sustainable markets for our local and regional farms”.
    - f. Additional information/future plans: The Roving Radish is Howard County’s initiative to bring fresh, affordable and healthy meals to county residents, and price assistance to families in need. The Roving Radish started in 2014 and continued through 2015. The Roving Radish is selling healthy meal kits, sourced from local and regional farms, to the community. The meal kits are made available to all Howard County residents, and are offered at a discounted price to those in need.
6. **Southern Maryland**  
*\*Source of information: generated directly from Christine Bergmark, SMADC, Priscilla Wentworth, SMADC and Farming 4 Hunger, and Bernie Fowler, Jr., Farming 4 Hunger in 2015.*

- a. **Agricultural Business Park and Food Innovation Center**
  - a. Hub model: TBD
  - b. Years in operation: Planned for 2016
  - c. Customer supply/scale: Schools, hospitals, stores, restaurants. Suppliers are farmers located within the region. The Center will buy direct from regional farms.
  - d. Status:
    - ✓ Emerging
  - e. Mission/goals: The Center will increase the region's capacity to meet consumer demand for locally produced foods and create new jobs for the region. It will make it more efficient for farmers to aggregate and distribute local food, and help our farmers and food businesses gain better access to the DC-Baltimore metro region. The first key elements will be a meat processing facility and retail store to serve the region's multi-cultural community, with capacity for a distribution facility and commercial kitchen for start-up food innovation businesses using local produced food, and land for new farmer incubation. A centrally located center (or series of sites) will allow businesses to share assets, personnel, training, cross marketing, and more. The Center will incorporate living wage and green design as much as finances and resources permit.
  - f. In addition to the key initial components, there are plans to add an outdoor/indoor farmers' market, depending on site location, and phase in other needed facilities.
  
- b. **Hub and Spoke Program / Farming 4 Hunger:**
  - a. Hub model: Nonprofit
  - b. Years in operation: 3
  - c. Customer supply/scale: The Hub and Spoke model seeks to increase access for fresh locally grown farm food to the hunger community and area's working poor in the five counties of Southern Maryland. The partnership between Farming 4 Hunger and the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC) has worked to build capacity for local farms and support the community by aggregating and distributing surplus and "extra" produce in a timely and efficient manner, and providing a financial incentive for farmers. Farming 4 Hunger, a nonprofit, distributes 1.6 million pounds of fresh, local produce to the hunger community each year. In 2014, 29 farms in Southern Maryland supplied produce that was placed in the hands of the needy within 24-48 hours.
  - d. Status:

- ✓ Operating
- e. Mission/goals: The goal is to increase access to fresh food in communities of need, while supporting local farmers in Southern Maryland.
- f. Additional information/ future plans: 2013 Task Force Report: [The Task Force Study on the Implementation of a Hub and Spoke Program in Southern Maryland](#). [Proposed Maryland Tax Credit Incentive](#): A key component of the Hub and Spoke model is an economic incentive for farmers to donate food that would reimburse a portion of the harvest, packaging, and delivery costs. The Task Force recommended a state tax credit of 50% of wholesale value for eligible farm donations from conventional farms and a 75% tax credit for certified organic products. This was introduced to the Maryland legislature as a bill in 2014 and 2015 and has not passed to date. The bill is expected to be reintroduced in early 2016.

### **Additional Resources to the Maryland Local Food Supply Chain**

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*\*Note: the additional listings are not recognized as food hubs, but have a goal/program within their organization to source food from local farms. This listing does not include regional food distributors at this time.*

#### **Maryland Food Center Authority (MFCA)**, Jessup, Maryland

- Model: Privately held business
- Status:
  - ✓ Operating
- Mission/goals: “As a geographically centralized distribution hub dedicated to food distribution, the Maryland Food Center maximizes the efficiency of the food industry and ensures Maryland's future food supply. The MFCA is dedicated to combining the very best in public and private efforts in planning and developing regional food industry facilities throughout Maryland.”

#### **Maryland Food Bank** Baltimore, Maryland

- Model: Nonprofit
- Years in operation: 36 years
- Status:
  - ✓ Operating
- Mission/goals: To lead the movement and nurture the belief that together we can improve the lives of Marylanders by ending hunger.
- Additional information: The Maryland Food Bank partners with local farms to grow and distribute fresh produce through their Farm to Foodbank program.



## **Maryland Wholesale Auctions**

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*\*Note: the additional listings are not recognized as food hubs, but have a goal/program within their organization to source food from local farms. This list is not comprehensive of all wholesale auctions.*

### **Cheltenham** Cheltenham, MD

- Model: Wholesale auction
- Years in operation: 26
- Scale: wholesale produce auction for producer growers and buyers from MD and VA, open seasonally, auction system pricing.
- Status:
  - ✓ Operating as a wholesale distribution site

### **Loveville Produce Auction** Loveville, MD

- Model: Wholesale auction
- Years in operation: 9 years
- Scale: Wholesale produce auction for producer growers and buyers from MD and VA, open seasonally, auction system pricing.
- Status:
  - ✓ Operating as a wholesale distribution site

## Contact Information

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For more information about this report:

*The Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC) is committed to: a) a market-driven and sustainable farming future as Maryland transitions away from tobacco. b) a Maryland where farmland preservation, and environmental stewardship positively impact the quality of our air and water and c) cultivating awareness among consumers and leaders of the vital role our farms play in a balanced community, safe, nutritious food and a cleaner and healthier environment. To learn more about additional programs and resources, contact SMADC, P. O. Box 745, Hughesville, MD 20637; phone: 301-274-1922, Ex. 1, fax: 301-274-1924; email [cbergmark@smadc.com](mailto:cbergmark@smadc.com); or visit [www.smacd.com](http://www.smacd.com).*