Legislation Text

File #: 25-1007, **Version:** 1

Resolution to Allocate Funds for Expanding Food Access and Supporting Local Food Distribution
Whereas, Adequate access to affordable, nutritious food is essential to the health, well-being, and economic security of all Ann Arbor residents;

Whereas, According to the Washtenaw County Health Department, the food insecurity rate among county residents rose to 12.5% in 2022, (**1*)** and continues to increase;

Whereas, Food Gatherers is the underlying food provider to all food pantries in the county, and work with their providers to provide assistance to all in the county;

Whereas, Between July 2021 and July 2023, the number of households relying on Food Gatherers' partner pantries grew by 93%, from 2,778 to 5,374; **(2*)**

Whereas, Many neighborhoods in central and eastern Ann Arbor are considered food deserts, where residents face limited access to fresh groceries due to the concentration of full-service supermarkets on the city's outskirts and significant transportation barriers;

Whereas, Historic zoning policies separating residential and commercial land uses have restricted the establishment of affordable grocery stores in underserved neighborhoods;

Whereas, Spatial inequities in food access disproportionately impact Black, Latino/a, and other marginalized communities, contributing to higher rates of food insecurity among these populations; **(3*)**

Whereas, In 2021, 26% of Black residents and 16% of Hispanic residents in Michigan experienced food insecurity, reflecting stark racial disparities in food access; (**4*)**

Whereas, Local food pantries across Washtenaw County are facing unprecedented demand for food assistance, and according to the Shelter Association of Washtenaw County's Winter 2025 interim report, shelter utilization has increased by 16% since the previous year, and 10% the year before that;

Whereas, Recent federal funding cuts have had a significant negative impact on the social service sector, causing delays and disruptions in food distribution by local providers such as Food Gatherers to communities in need;

Whereas, Food Gatherers has lost access to 15% of the food it previously received from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) due to sudden federal cuts, with no advance notice, impacting a critical and reliable source of high-quality protein, produce, and dairy items essential to Washtenaw County residents; **(5*)**

Whereas, USDA food previously accounted for 30% of the food distributed annually by Food Gatherers across Washtenaw County, representing a loss valued at $2.5 million, which the organization is now attempting to offset using emergency reserves; **(6*)**

Whereas, This loss of federal resources comes at a time when food banks cannot “food drive” their way out of the gap, as it includes perishable, protein-rich items essential for health outcomes, disproportionately affecting vulnerable residents, including children and older adults; **(7*)**

Whereas, Resolution R-24-449 was approved by City Council on December 16, 2024 that allocated funding for negative impacts at the local level due to change in the federal government administration;

Whereas, The City of Ann Arbor has consistently prioritized the public good by investing in initiatives that address food insecurity, promote health equity, and ensure that all residents have access to basic human needs such as nutritious food; and

RESOLVED, That City Council allocates $300,000 of the funding allocated under R-24-449 for negative impacts at the local level due to change in federal government administration to Food Gatherers of Washtenaw County.

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Ghazi Edwin, Watson, Cornell, Harrison, Briggs, and Radina

1* *Food Insecurity Rate*. Health for All Washtenaw. (2022). <https://www.healthforallwashtenaw.org/indicators/index/view?indicatorId=2107&localeId=1363>
2* Parlette, S. (2023, September 22). *Food gatherers: 93% increase in Washtenaw County households using food banks*. WDIV. <https://www.clickondetroit.com/all-about-ann-arbor/2023/09/22/food-gatherers-93-increase-in-washtenaw-county-households-using-food-banks/>
3* Cope, H. (2024, July 18). *What are food deserts?*. Health. <https://www.health.com/food-deserts-8667042>
4* *Hunger in the land of plenty: The food-insecurity picture around Washtenaw County*. Hamlet. (2023, November). <https://www.myhamlet.com/mi/washtenaw-county/articles/hunger-in-the-land-of-plenty-the-food-insecurity-picture-around-washtenaw-county>
5* MacGregor, C. (2025, April 14). *Fewer Resources threaten Safety Net for Washtenaw County’s Food Insecure.* WEMU. <https://www.wemu.org/wemu-news/2025-04-14/fewer-resources-threaten-safety-net-for-washtenaw-countys-food-insecure>
6* MacGregor, C. (2025, April 14). *Fewer Resources threaten Safety Net for Washtenaw County’s Food Insecure.* WEMU. <https://www.wemu.org/wemu-news/2025-04-14/fewer-resources-threaten-safety-net-for-washtenaw-countys-food-insecure>
7* MacGregor, C. (2025, April 14). *Fewer Resources threaten Safety Net for Washtenaw County’s Food Insecure.* WEMU. <https://www.wemu.org/wemu-news/2025-04-14/fewer-resources-threaten-safety-net-for-washtenaw-countys-food-insecure>