



Hunger remains a critical issue across Maryland. The [2023 Hunger Profiles](#), compiled by Maryland Hunger Solutions (MDHS), provided local data on federal nutrition program participation, population, and poverty for the state's 24 jurisdictions. These data profiles allow policymakers, partners, and the public to understand the state of hunger within Maryland and inform ongoing community and policy conversations about ensuring Marylanders have sufficient nutrition and the opportunity to thrive. Leveraging this data remains a critical piece in our advocacy to protect, strengthen, and increase participation in federal nutrition programs and end hunger in Maryland.

Maryland residents continue to grapple with the effects of the fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic. Hundreds of thousands of Marylanders experienced a hunger cliff with the end of pandemic-era Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Emergency Allotments in March, and over 9 percent of households [experienced food insecurity](#).

MDHS Deputy Director



Maryland Hunger Solutions began the year with the appointment of [Elisabet Eppes](#) as deputy director. Eppes brings over 10 years of experience in public health and is dedicated to combating hunger through advocacy, policy, and outreach. In this new role, she

works closely with other local and state advocates, policymakers, and community partners to end hunger and promote well-being in the state.

Legislative Highlights

During the 2023 Legislative Session of the Maryland General Assembly, MDHS advocated for several key pieces of legislation addressing hunger in the state, including testifying in Annapolis. Legislative pieces that passed this year:

- [Maryland Department of Human Services \(DHS\) Electronic Benefit Transfer Cards — Theft of Benefits \(Prevent Electronic Benefits Theft Act of 2023\)](#): This

act requires DHS to reimburse SNAP participants who were the victims of SNAP benefit theft between January 2021 and October 2022. It also requires DHS to prioritize Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card security in selecting an EBT vendor and to take action to prevent future benefit theft. This state bill complements the fiscal year 2023 Omnibus funding bill passed by the U.S. Congress in December 2022, which included a requirement for states to reimburse SNAP participants who experienced EBT theft on or after October 2022.

- [Maryland Meals for Achievement In-Classroom Breakfast Program — Annual Appropriation](#): This legislation provides full funding for Maryland Meals for Achievement, a longstanding and successful state-funded program allowing all eligible schools to serve breakfast in the classroom and after the bell at no cost to all students. Schools qualify for Maryland Meals for Achievement if 40 percent or more of their students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch. The passage of this legislation means that over 120 new schools will be able to serve breakfast after the bell to all students. Maryland Hunger Solutions and other anti-hunger and school nutrition advocates support in-classroom breakfast after the bell as this ensures that students who are running late to school can still eat breakfast, and removes the stigma of requiring children to walk to the cafeteria to get breakfast.
- [Maryland Food System Resiliency Council](#): This bill permanently establishes the Maryland Food System Resiliency Council within the Office of Resilience in the Maryland Department of Emergency Management and will allow the council to continue its important role in connecting all parts of Maryland's food system and addressing food insecurity across the state. MDHS Director Michael J. Wilson currently serves as the co-chair of the council.

Honors and Recognition

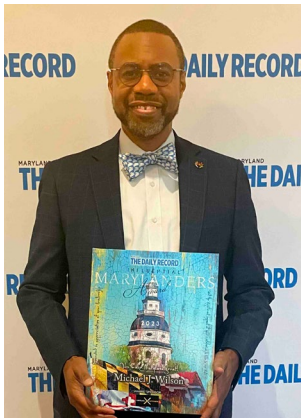
Henrietta Lacks Memorial Award

Maryland Hunger Solutions received the [2023 Henrietta Lacks Memorial Award](#). The Johns Hopkins Urban Health Institute awarded the 2023 Henrietta Lacks Memorial Award

to a collaboration between Maryland Hunger Solutions and Susan Gross, PhD, MPH, associate practice professor of Population, Family, and Reproductive Health at the Bloomberg School of Public Health. The award carried a \$15,000 prize given to the community collaborator, and was presented at the 2023 Henrietta Lacks Lecture, hosted by the Johns Hopkins Institute for Clinical and Translational Research in October.

Most Influential Marylanders

The Daily Record recognized Maryland Hunger Solutions Director Michael J. Wilson as one of the **Most Influential**



Marylanders of 2023. The list recognizes individuals who have made significant impacts in their field and continue to be leaders in Maryland. Recipients are selected by *The Daily Record's* editors for their significant contributions to their respective areas of expertise. Michael J. Wilson was a recipient in the Philanthropy category.

MDHS' Michael J. Wilson accepts one of *The Daily Record's* Most Influential Marylanders awards.

Priorities in 2024

Healthy School Meals for All in Maryland

MDHS is continuing to advocate for legislation to provide healthy **school meals** at no cost to students at all public



MDHS' Elisabet Eppes, Michael J. Wilson, and Julia Gross, and Susan Gross of Johns Hopkins University, raise their hand for Healthy School Meals for All.

and participating nonpublic K–12 schools across the state of Maryland, beginning in academic year 2024–2025.

SNAP Supplemental Benefit

In response to the hunger cliff in Maryland, MDHS is asking the legislature to increase the SNAP minimum benefit from \$23 to \$95 for all participant categories.

Hunger-Free Campuses

MDHS will push for an expansion of the Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program, first authorized by the state legislature in 2021, and crucial changes to ensure the grant program best meets the needs of campuses and students across the state.

Maryland Hunger Solutions in the News

Report: 1 in 9 Marylanders Rely on Federal Programs to Avoid Food Insecurity — *Maryland Public News Service*, October 30, 2023

2023 Henrietta Lacks Memorial Award Winner Maryland Hunger Solutions — Johns Hopkins Urban Health Institute, October 7, 2023

Government Shutdown Could Cut Food Aid for Millions of Women, Children — *Scripps News*, September 27, 2023

Rising Grocery Prices, Food Stamp Cuts, and Summertime Amplify Hunger in Baltimore Food Deserts — *The Baltimore Sun*, August 16, 2023

From \$258 to \$23, SNAP Recipients Will See a Major Reduction in Benefits — *WMAR-TV Baltimore*, February 7, 2023

As we look ahead to 2024, we know more must be done to end hunger across the state. **Make a donation to support our work at www.mdhungersolutions.org.**