# Recover Delaware Roundtable #3: **Food Security**

**By the Delaware Council on Farm and Food Policy, August 2021**

## Food Access

### Part of Emergency Management & Preparedness

Governments at all levels—municipal, county, and state—are most prepared to respond effectively during an emergency or unexpected circumstance when they have access to mechanisms that can inform their understanding and expedite decision making. More specifically, governments are better off when they have an updated and ongoing grasp of community needs and what resources are required to address them. Ensuring that communities have secure access, availability, and affordability of food resources is crucial to a government's emergency management and preparedness. Like other public health crises, natural disasters, or lasting economic downturns the impact of COVID-19 shed light on socioeconomic gaps and compounded challenges that families were already facing to meet their basic needs. An inability to meet basic needs increases a family's risk of becoming food insecure.

### Impacts of COVID-19 in Delaware[i]

- Increase in population requesting food assistance
- Increase in population requiring meal delivery at home
- Decrease in volunteers within charitable food service
- Logistical challenges with school meals
- Delayed response in supply chain to meet increased demands

## Food Security

### Defined by Ranges of Severity[ii]



| **High Food Security** | **Marginal Food Security** | **Low Food Security** | **Very Low Food Security** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Household has no reported indication of food access problems or limitations. | Household has one or two reported indications, typically of anxiety over food sufficiency or shortage of food in the house. Little or no indication of changes in diets or food intake. | Household reports reduced quality, variety, or desirability of diet. Little or no indication of reduced food intake. | Household reports multiple indications of disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake. |

## Common Terms in the Field[iii]

| | |
|---|---|
| **Access** | Refers to the location of the food supply and a household's or community's distance to that location. Includes travel time to shopping, transportation reliability, etc. |
| **Availability** | Refers to the situation where food is made to exist for consumption at local levels where local individuals of households can locate their needed foods. Also depicts the production and supply of varieties of foods. |
| **Affordability** | Refers to food prices and people's perception of worth relative to the cost. Includes the ratio of wages to the price of individual food items or combination of items. Also includes the availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods. |
| **Acceptability** | Refers to people's attitudes about attributes of their local food environment and the degree to which local food meets certain personally held standards. Also includes how well local food sources accept and adapt to local residents' needs. |

# Food Security Guide

## A Tool for Governments to Support Community Needs

During the spring of 2020, billions of federal relief dollars began flooding into state and local governments throughout the country. As a variety of funds trickled into Delaware, government agencies began asking, "Where do funds need to be allocated? What are the greatest needs? Who has capacity and where?"

The Delaware Council on Farm and Food Policy is working with local government officials and community organizations to develop clear and specific guidance designed to assist local, county, or state governments in achieving food security within their jurisdictions. An effective food security guide is one that equips governments with the tools that are necessary to understand specific challenges; be aware of vulnerabilities; partner with community organizations; and positively impact residents' access to food resources. The guide will focus on three areas:



**Understanding Context**     **Prioritizing Needs & Allocating Resources**     **Supporting Community Efforts**

Successful resilience strategies pool together resources at all levels and from both government and non-government sources. The COVID-19 pandemic emphasized how critical it is to incorporate food access and food security as part of Delaware's resilience strategy.

Community organizations and government agencies can work hand-in-hand to build resilience:

| Role of Government | Role of Community Organizations |
|---|---|
| • Capital & Resource Supports<br>• Comprehensive Planning<br>• Facilitate Coordination<br>• Infrastructure | • Place-Specific Context<br>• Direct Contact with Community<br>• Local Logistics & Data<br>• Volunteer Network |

Resources for understanding the context and options for local action on food security in Delaware include the Delaware Food Resources Map, a guide to healthy food access for Delaware local governments, and FEMA's COVID-19 Food and Nutrition Resource Roadmap.[iv]

## About the Council

The Delaware Council on Farm and Food Policy is a 15-member group created to advise the Delaware Secretary of Agriculture on topics related to food access and food security throughout the state. Council members contribute expertise spanning 5 sectors—food production & markets, health & nutrition, food service & food assistance, community planning, and cooperative extension.

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## About the Institute for Public Administration

The University of Delaware's Institute for Public Administration (IPA) addresses the policy, planning, and management needs of its partners through the integration of applied research, professional development, and the education of tomorrow's leaders.

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[i] Norris, Erin, "Food Security and Resilience in a Disaster Setting", presentation during 3rd Annual Farm & Food Planning and Networking Seminar, May 2021.

[ii] Feeding America, "Understand Food Insecurity," 2021, https://hungerandhealth.feedingamerica.org/understand-food-insecurity/; U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service, "Definitions of Food Security," September 2020, https:// www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us/definitions-of-food-security.aspx.

[iii] Cadieux et al., "Food Affordability," in *FoodWords Draft*, April 2015, https://scalar.usc.edu/works/foodwords-draft/food- justice-food-security.

[iv] Michalowski, Allison and Marcia Scott, "Access to Healthy Food: A Guide for Delaware Local Governments," 2019, https://udspace.udel.edu/bitstream/handle/19716/24267/Access-to-Healthy-Foods-2019.pdf; Institute for Public Administration, University of Delaware, "Delaware Food Resources Map," 2021, https://arcg.is/1bCLaD; Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), "COVID-19 Food and Nutrition Resource Roadmap, Version 2.0)," 2021, https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_covid-19-food-nutrition-resource-roadmap-version2.0_05-05-2021.pdf.