

JCRC Food Security Policy Resolution

The Hebrew word for justice, *tzedakah*, is generally understood to mean charity. Attending to the needs of others is an aspect of justice and is a *mitzvah*, an obligation, incumbent upon us in the Jewish community. Providing meals to those in need and supporting efforts to ensure food security for all is a communal responsibility.

In recent years, we as a nation have seen food insecurity increase across a wide demographic range. Food insecurity affects seniors, children, people with disabilities, low income, and more. The Jewish community, too, has witnessed this phenomenon, with increasing demands on kosher food banks nationwide. MAZON, a Jewish response to hunger, is among the foremost organizations – whether Jewish or otherwise – dedicated to combatting hunger.

The Greater Washington area is not immune to these demands. According to a January 2017 Montgomery County (Maryland) report, “there is a growing body of research that connects public health and food insecurity. The connection with food insecurity and health issues is directly related to stress from inadequate income and poor diets.”¹ There are currently an estimated 77,780 food insecure residents in Montgomery County.²

For all of these reasons, the JCRC believes it is imperative to undertake efforts to enhance food security in several key ways:

- The JCRC will advocate for increased funding for public and private programs whose mission is to reduce or eliminate food insecurity.
- We will support initiatives to address food security strategically and systemically in an effort widely used to reduce hunger in our community and country.
- Our support includes, but will not be limited to, support for increased funding for kosher food banks to enable struggling members of our Jewish community to meet their food security needs without compromising their religious obligations.
- Our goal as an organization will be to advocate for these programs until everyone no matter who they are, always knows from where their next meal will come.

¹ A Food Secure Montgomery County, What We Know Now and What We Can Do: A 5-Year Strategic Plan, available at http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/exec/Resources/Files/pdf/MoCo_Food-Security-Plan_2017.pdf.

² *Id.* at 11.