



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**BUSINESS LEADERS FIGHTING HUNGER SUPPORTS EMERGENCY NEEDS IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY DURING COVID-19 CRISIS**

*Grants will support Manna, Identity, Universities at Shady Grove, and Five Additional Nonprofits. Coalitions requests matching dollars from local businesses to feed more people.*

**Montgomery County, MD** – Business Leaders Fighting Hunger, Montgomery County’s private sector coalition committed to ending hunger for the 60,000 food insecure people in the county, today announced emergency support to eight organizations impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The grants total \$50,000, but will likely yield far more dollars due to the dollar-to-dollar match that was requested by Business Leaders.

The primary recipients, including [Manna Food Center](#), [Identity](#), and the [Universities at Shady Grove](#), serve diverse populations across the county. Each assist low-income families and underserved youth under normal circumstances, but report that COVID-19 has created an unforeseen urgency that needs to be addressed.

Additional support is also being provided to five other organizations whose mission is to fight poverty in Montgomery County, MD. They are: [Gaithersburg HELP](#), [Meals on Wheels](#), [Nourish Now](#), [Rainbow Community Development Center](#), and [Shepherd’s Table](#).

“Our low-income neighbors are facing an unprecedented double whammy,” said Andy Burness, co-founder of Business Leaders Fighting Hunger and president of Burness, a public interest communications firm that operates out of Bethesda. “Too many struggle on a daily basis in the best of times. Now, COVID-19 is putting people out of work, with no obvious prospect for better days any time soon. These people need to eat, and we wanted to act now.”

“Business Leaders’ support is a start,” Burness said. “It will make a difference for hundreds of families and children in the county. But, we need corporate leaders to join us, donating to these organizations or to any others that are on the front lines serving people who are really suffering now.”

Business Leaders Fighting Hunger is a group of Montgomery County businesses committed to reducing the number of food insecure residents in the county by making strategic investments in programs that tackle the root causes of hunger. The coalition was co-founded by [Sodexo](#) and

Burness. Supporting businesses include [Atlantic Electric Supply Corp](#), [Bass Accounting & Tax Services](#), [Belikove and Graves](#), [Bendler & Company](#), [Bethesda Magazine](#), [Clark Construction](#), David R. and Deborah S. Lambert Charitable Trust, [Golden & Cohen](#), and [SmithPilot](#).

The coalition intends to engage many more businesses. Interested companies or individuals should contact Shondra Jenkins, co-founder and former director of Sodexo's foundation here in Montgomery County. Her email is [shondrabj@gmail.com](mailto:shondrabj@gmail.com), and she can be reached by phone at 240-654-7043.

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