



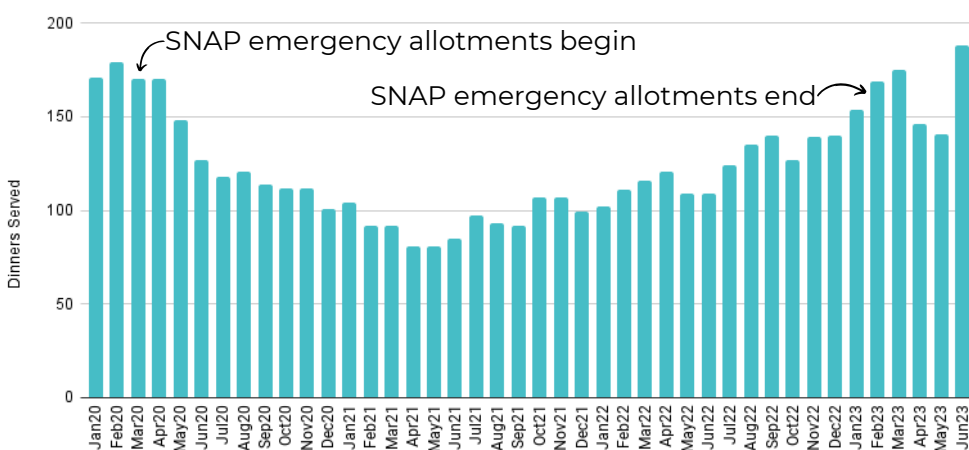
# Homelessness & Food Insecurity at Shepherd's Table

At Shepherd's Table, the majority of our meal guests are actively experiencing homelessness, whether that be sheltered, unsheltered, or in an unstable housing situation.

**We have served 48% more meals in 2023 compared to 2022.**

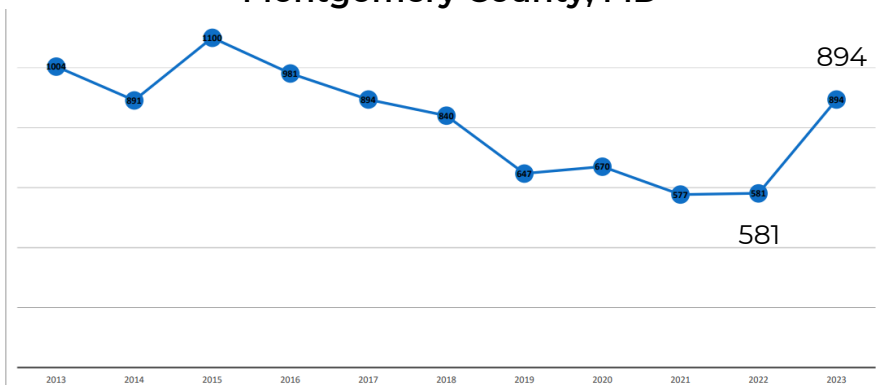
Our increasing demand for meals also coincides with diminishing COVID-era food and housing safety nets like emergency SNAP allotments and emergency rental assistance (USDA).

Shepherd's Table Monthly Dinner Averages



Source: Shepherd's Table 2023

People Experiencing Literal Homelessness\* in Montgomery County, MD



Source: Montgomery County ICH May 2023

**Homelessness in Montgomery County, MD has increased 53% since 2022.**

Homelessness and hunger have surpassed pre-pandemic levels, so it's vital that we continue funding both short and long term solutions for housing and food security.

\*HUD definition: lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, includes shelter residents



In July 2022, we held a Community Listening Session at Progress Place, focused on access to food assistance. By creating a space for our clients to share their lived experiences, we hope to use this feedback to inform the policy solutions we advocate for locally and state-wide.

### Main Takeaways from Clients:

- More **case management support** is needed for SNAP applications due to learning disabilities, accessing personal documents, access to computers
- Without a place for **safekeeping**, many participants had missing EBT cards so Shepherd's Table is their sole food source
- While meal guests enjoyed the variety of meals served at Shepherd's Table, choosing their own food for **personal preference** or health reasons is very difficult when experiencing homelessness
- SNAP oftentimes requires **access to a kitchen** to prepare food, and our clients do not have access to a kitchen

### Supporting Policies

- Invest in behavioral health and social services work force including peer support specialists
- Fund affordable housing, permanent supportive housing, shelter beds, and storage options
- Incentivize participation in Maryland's Restaurant Meal Program
- Increase SNAP minimum benefits from \$23 per month
- Expand SNAP to include more hot foods
- Decrease/eliminate time requirements for county residency eligibility
- Increase funding to local food assistance providers



Here at Shepherd's Table we aim to improve quality of life, create a pathway towards self-sufficiency, and inspire hope for the most vulnerable in our community.

Everyone deserves nutritious and delicious food of their choice, and safe, stable, and affordable housing.