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AfriThrive Celebrates \$800,000 Federal Investment in Essex Community Food Hub

Federal funding will expand food storage, distribution, and community health programming for families across Baltimore County and Baltimore City

Last week, U.S. Senator Chris Van Hollen joined AfriThrive leaders, community partners, and supporters to celebrate an \$800,000 federal investment that will help transform the organization's Essex facility into an expanded community food hub serving families across Baltimore County and Baltimore City.

The funding, secured through Congressionally Directed Spending with the support of U.S. Senators Chris Van Hollen and Angela Alsobrooks, will strengthen critical food infrastructure and expand AfriThrive's capacity to provide fresh, nutritious, and culturally meaningful food while supporting long-term community health.

The renovation will expand food storage and cold chain capacity, improve food handling and distribution systems, and create dedicated space for nutrition education, Food is Medicine programming, and other community services. The enhanced facility will allow AfriThrive to serve more families with greater efficiency while providing a welcoming, community-centered environment.

"Far too many Marylanders are struggling with rising costs, and food prices are no exception. That's why we fought to secure this federal funding to support AfriThrive's efforts to help more Maryland families put food on the table," said Senator Chris Van Hollen, a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee.

"Our communities cannot thrive if our people are not fed. AfriThrive is doing the essential work of ensuring families across Baltimore County and Baltimore City have access to fresh, healthy foods. We worked to secure over \$800,000 in federal funding to transform AfriThrive's Essex community food facility, which will now help feed even more families and give families access to nutrition education, programs, and skills development," said Senator Angela Alsobrooks in a prepared statement.

"This federal investment reflects the power of partnership and our shared commitment to ensuring every family has access to nutritious, culturally meaningful food," said Dr. Truphena Choti, Founder and CEO of AfriThrive. "For years, we have served families wherever we could, in the heat, in the cold, and often in borrowed spaces. This investment allows us to build permanent infrastructure that will expand access to healthy food while strengthening the health and well-being of the communities we serve. We are building permanence."

Since 2020, AfriThrive has distributed more than 2.5 million pounds of food and served more than 150,000 individuals across Maryland through its culturally responsive food access programs.

The expanded Essex community food hub will strengthen the organization's ability to meet growing demand while deepening partnerships with schools, healthcare providers, local farms, and community organizations throughout the region. In addition to expanding food storage and distribution capacity, the renovated facility will create dedicated space for nutrition education, Food is Medicine programming, and other community-based services designed to improve long-term health outcomes.

The project represents a significant investment in Baltimore County's food infrastructure and will help ensure more families have reliable access to healthy, culturally meaningful food for years to come.

About AfriThrive

AfriThrive is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that mobilizes, connects, and empowers immigrant and underserved communities through access to nutritious, culturally meaningful food, education, and sustainable community-based solutions. Through food distribution programs, community farming initiatives, nutrition education, and strategic partnerships, AfriThrive is helping create thriving families and healthier communities across Maryland and the Washington, D.C. region. For more information, visit www.afri thrive.org.

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