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AfriThrive Receives \$165,000 Montgomery County Grant to Expand Access to Healthy Food and Improve Health Outcomes

Partnership will connect healthcare providers, medically tailored food access, and culturally responsive nutrition education for Montgomery County families

AfriThrive has been awarded a \$165,000 grant through the Montgomery County Office of Food Systems Resilience's FY26 Food as Medicine Grant Program to lead the implementation of *Food Is Medicine for Wellness*, an innovative initiative that integrates healthcare and nutrition to improve food security and health outcomes for Montgomery County households experiencing food insecurity and diet-related chronic disease.

AfriThrive will coordinate program delivery in partnership with American Diversity Group and Wholesome Village. Together, the organizations will create a community-based Food as Medicine model that combines healthcare screening, medically relevant food access, culturally responsive nutrition education, and locally produced foods to improve health outcomes for Montgomery County families.

Through clinic-based screening, American Diversity Group healthcare providers will identify and refer eligible households, with children ages 0-18, who are experiencing food insecurity or are at risk for diet-related chronic conditions. Enrolled families will receive bi-weekly distributions of medically relevant, culturally meaningful foods from AfriThrive, paired with nutrition education provided by Wholesome Village designed to support healthier eating habits, improve food security, and help manage diet-related conditions.

"Food insecurity and chronic disease are deeply connected, and no family should have to choose between putting food on the table and protecting their health," said Dr. Truphena Choti, Founder and CEO of AfriThrive. "This partnership allows us to connect families with healthy, culturally appropriate food, nutrition education, and healthcare support so they can build healthier lives. Food is more than nourishment. It is medicine, dignity, and an investment in stronger communities."

"Healthcare providers increasingly recognize that food insecurity is a significant driver of health outcomes," said Mayur Mody, Founder and Executive Director of American Diversity Group. "By integrating clinical screening with medically relevant food access and nutrition education, we're helping families address the root causes of diet-related disease while connecting them with resources that support healthier lives."

"A referral from a provider and a bag of groceries are two different things until someone connects them," said Livleen Gill, MBA, RDN, LDN, Chief Executive Officer of Wholesome Village Inc. "As registered dietitians, that's our role in this partnership: pairing every distribution with education that helps families manage diet-related conditions and build skills that outlast the grant."

The Food Is Medicine for Wellness program reflects Montgomery County's commitment to advancing innovative approaches that improve health outcomes while strengthening local food systems and expanding equitable access to nutritious food.

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.

About American Diversity Group

Founded in Montgomery County, Maryland, American Diversity Group (ADG) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to serving individuals from immigrant, minority, and underserved backgrounds. ADG's work bridges critical service gaps through free weekend clinics, preventive screenings, wellness programs, and digital and financial literacy education. For more information, visit www.americandiversitygroup.org.

About Wholesome Village

Wholesome Village, Inc. is a Maryland-based nonprofit advancing food and nutrition equity through Food is Medicine programming that pairs evidence-based nutrition education with produce prescription initiatives, clinical care linkages, and community partnerships. For more information, visit wvglobal.org.

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