

Montgomery County 2024 Federal Priorities

Transportation

Bus infrastructure investment. Urge Congress to appropriate in FY25 authorized funding for transit programs including the Capital Investment Grants (CIG) Program, the Low or No Emission Vehicle Program, and the Bus and Bus Facilities Program that are critical to advancing transit projects across the County that reflect prioritizing climate change, resilience, equity, and safety goals under the 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. The CIG program is anticipated to be a key funding source for the Veirs Mill Road and MD 355 bus rapid transit projects.

Federal discretionary grant requests for transportation improvement projects. Request support from our Congressional Delegation for certain highly competitive grants through the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) including:

- Project Connect at the North Bethesda Transit Oriented Development- funding through the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) discretionary grant program
- MD 586 (Veirs Mill Road) Bus Rapid Transit Small Starts Grant through the CIG Program
- MD 355 Flash BRT project for New Starts funding through the CIG program
- Bus and Bus Facilities, Low Emissions/No Emissions Grant to defray the incremental cost of zero-emissions bus purchases (§ 5339(b) and § 5339(c))
- Safe Streets for All (SS4A) Grant for safety-related improvements in and around Germantown

Zero emission vehicles (ZEVs). Urge Congress to approve FY25 appropriations accelerating the use of ZEVs (including zero emissions charging and alternative refueling networks). Funding should include an equity focus to ensure that low- and moderate-income households benefit from new technologies through enhanced federal tax credits and other incentives, as well as supporting federal tax credit and rebate programs for micromobility devices (i.e., electric bikes).

Fund transit operations and community connections to achieve equity. Request Delegation support for competitive funding opportunities open to local governments to reconfigure existing transit networks and explore transit pilot programs using transit as important equity promotion tools including allowing and providing federal operating support for transit.

Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Discretionary Grant Program. Support increased appropriations in FY25 for USDOT's RAISE Grant program providing capital investment funding for surface transportation projects with significant local and regional impact.

Increase Federal Role in supporting the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). State Governments appear to be providing funding to fill the operating subsidy gap

for WMATA in FY25. A longer-term funding plan that addresses operating needs and the looming capital funding deficit needs to be developed this year. Support increased federal participation in support of the transit services operated by WMATA that are essential for the proper functioning of the National Capital region. Encourage efforts to return the region's federal workforce to the office to help sustain WMATA and the economy of Washington, D.C. Financial support for WMATA is a very large burden on the Maryland Transportation Trust Fund and is affecting the ability of the State to meet other important transportation needs.

Federal Transportation Trust Fund Modernization. As is the case in many states, the Federal Transportation Trust Fund no longer provides adequate support for the investments needed to sustain and improve the nation's transportation system. Inflationary pressures, improved fuel efficiency, and electrification of the fleet point is needed to supplement and eventually replace revenues from motor vehicle fuel taxes. The Delegation should encourage efforts to modernize the funding plan for surface transportation at the national level.

Environment

Energy and Climate Change. Encourage Delegation to advocate for a more expeditious implementation of critical and unprecedented energy use and climate action goals established under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Inflation Reduction Act, and the CHIPS and Science Act. Specifically, encourage federal agencies to tackle:

- Power plant emissions standards
- Vehicle fuel efficiency / emissions standards
- Energy-using equipment efficiency standards (e.g., furnaces, water heaters)
- Investment in federal resilience programs (e.g., National Flood Insurance Program)
- Federal investment and reforms to accelerate the just and equitable development of interstate electricity transmission infrastructure and utility-scale energy storage development

Pesticide Use Preemption. Urge Delegation to oppose the preemption of state and local pesticide use by rejecting amendments to the Farm Bill reauthorization that could be the vehicle for rolling back pesticide safety. Montgomery County has a law prohibiting the use of synthetic pesticides for use on lawns, playgrounds, mulched recreation areas, and private childcare facilities. The local law not only allows the County to regulate storage and spills in retail operations, but also ensures pesticides are not stored on shelves with food products, and regulates the use of harmful pesticides on lawns, playgrounds, and childcare facilities. Montgomery County encourages the Delegation to oppose H.R. 7266 to amend the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (this 2022 bill will get a new number this year), and H.R. 4288 the Agricultural Labeling Uniformity Act. The passage of these provisions would preempt local governments like Montgomery County from adopting/implementing pesticide laws that are more protective than federal rules. Furthermore, these provisions would forbid states from enacting and enforcing supplemental requirements for warnings or other information, such as potential antidotes. Depriving consumers of this information is harmful to the public interest and would likely make it harder for injured residents to seek justice against irresponsible companies.

High-Speed Internet

Affordable Connectivity Program. Urge Delegation to support any effort to continue funding for the Federal Communication Commission's (FCC) Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) which is set to run out of money in April of 2024. The ACP provides 270,000 low-income Maryland families- including nearly 24,000 living in Montgomery County- with a monthly \$30 discount on home broadband service from participating internet service providers. Support cosponsoring bills (H.R. 6929/ S. 3565) that would replenish the program with \$7 billion in funding.

Oppose Local Authority Preemption Bill for Broadband Deployment Projects. Urge Delegation to reject the partisan American Broadband Deployment Act of 2023 (H.R. 3557) which threatens a variety of state and local government zoning and land use authorities over wire, wireless, and cable deployment. This is a legislative priority of multiple local government organizations including the National Association of Counties, the National League of Cities, and the U.S. Conference of Mayors.

Public, Educational, and Governmental Access Channels (PEG Channels). Under the previous Administration, the FCC issued a ruling that jeopardizes the ability of the County to continue to rely on PEG support and other in-kind benefits that may require an offset against franchise fees. Pending legislation, S. 340 and H.R. 907, would clarify that only cash payments constitute a franchise fee. Several members of the Delegation have cosponsored this legislation. We urge those who have not to consider doing so.

Digital Discrimination. Reject a partisan resolution in the House (H.J.Res. 107) that would overturn a final rule by the FCC addressing digital discrimination aimed at preventing discrimination in access to broadband services.

Affordable Housing and Human Services

Expand opportunities to create and preserve affordable housing. Urge Delegation to advocate for innovative federal tax abatement policies that can incentivize housing preservation. Urge Congress to increase annual appropriations in FY25 for housing programs that include the HOME Investment Partnership Program, the Housing Choice Vouchers program, and the Emergency Solution Grant program.

Modify Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program. Support legislation to expand and strengthen the LIHTC program which is recognized as the primary federal policy tool for encouraging the development and rehabilitation of affordable rental housing.

Accessible, affordable, high-quality, and safe child care. Urge Delegation to continue collaboration with House and Senate colleagues to provide supplemental funding in 2024 to address the growing child care crisis in our communities. Support increases in FY25 appropriations under the mandatory and discretionary titles of the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) program used to advance the County's ability to invest in child care infrastructure, boost supply, and serve more eligible families.

Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP). Request Delegation to support making permanent the federal water assistance program. The Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission reports that as of December 2023, more than 2,100 customers in Montgomery County have been served by LIHWAP. Continued funding of this benefit will assist Maryland families who are behind more than 30 days or more on their drinking water and wastewater bills.

Immigration and New Arrivals. Montgomery County, like other local governments, has experienced an influx of migrants with complex needs and little to no support. In April 2022, the County took a proactive approach to addressing the immediate needs of new arrivals by engaging a local first response nonprofit partner and working closely with DC counterparts to secure funding through FEMA's Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP). Federal assistance was available through December of 2023 when FEMA transitioned the program to the Shelter Services Program (SSP) which, due to technical challenges involving a fiscal agent, led to a federal funding lapse. Montgomery County and the State of Maryland quickly took steps to appropriate over \$2 million to ensure the continuity of services at the respite center for the remainder of the year. Since mid-2022, the center has served more than 1,000 migrant families (or more than 4,500 individuals) with a steady stream of arrivals to the County each day. Recognizing the partisan impasse in Congress on immigration policy, the County urges the Delegation to support increased funding in FY25 for FEMA's SSP program which Montgomery County will apply for to use toward providing transitional shelter and stabilization services. In addition, the County urges the Delegation to encourage the Biden Administration to issue a new rule authorizing a longer automatic extension of Employment Authorization Documents (EAD) allowing migrants to seek employment and/or remain employed while awaiting processing by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

Reauthorize Behavioral and Mental Health Programs. Urge Delegation to advance H.R. 4531/S. 3393, the bipartisan SUPPORT Act (Support for Patients and Communities Reauthorization Act) that provides funding to assist with providing quality, accessible, and comprehensive mental health treatment and counseling services. Support FY25 appropriations for critical direct mental health delivery programs serving adults and children including funding for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

Integration of primary care and behavioral health services. Urge Congressional support for federal grant and state Medicaid funding expansion through the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) model that integrates primary care services with mental health and substance use disorder services using clinical, financial, and administrative strategies with the goal of improving overall health outcomes.

Biotech and Life Sciences Economy

Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H). Continue partnership with our Congressional Delegation to secure a Montgomery County location as the permanent headquarters for ARPA-H- the newly launched federal biomedical and health research agency

driving transformative biomedical and health breakthroughs. The agency is temporarily located in flexible space in DC until a permanent location is available in 2027 or 2028.

Nutrition Programs and the Farm Bill Reauthorization

Reauthorization of the Farm Bill. Urge Delegation to advance legislation fully funding all 12 titles of the Farm Bill- specifically nutrition programs under Title IV. Support increased access to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Reauthorization of FAA

Reauthorization of Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Adopt the multi-year FAA reauthorization including new federal discretionary grant funding opportunities for airport modernization projects and planning, as well as progressive environmental policies promoting the use of unleaded aviation fuel. Urge Delegation's support for the Montgomery County Airpark to be designated as one of the first general aviation airports equipped with infrastructure offering unleaded fuel for eligible aircraft.

Higher Education

Expand access to postsecondary training and degrees. Urge Delegation to support enhanced eligibility for Pell grants including for short-term training programs.

Strengthen Adult Basic Education (ABE) and Adult Basic Education Federal workforce education programs. Urge Congress to approve FY25 appropriations for basic skills programs authorized under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

Advance immigration reform for Dreamers and DACA recipients. Urge Congress to advance an immigration bill that includes tools to make education accessible for students with diverse immigration statuses.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY'S FISCAL YEAR 2025
CONGRESSIONALLY DIRECTED SPENDING/
COMMUNITY PROJECT FUNDING REQUESTS

- Real Time Crime Center \$2,100,000 request
- Emergency Communication Center Perimeter Secure Fence \$1,500,000 request
- Flex On-Demand Microtransit Vehicles \$5,760,000 request
- Bethesda Metro Station Purple Line Improvements
South Entrance Mezzanine \$11,600,000 request
- Zero Emission Bus (ZEB) Purchases \$5,116,115 request
- Security Cameras for Parking Garages \$4,350,000 request
- Net Zero Mowing Equipment Transition \$656,000 request
- US 29 Critical Bike & Pedestrian/ Safety Improvements \$5,000,000 request
- Electric Maintenance Truck Pilot \$1,200,000 request
- Rooftop Solar for Parking Garages \$2,750,000 request
- Wheaton Branch Flood Mitigation \$3,300,000 request
- Urban Shade Tree Planting \$1,000,000 request
- Building Decarbonization Retrofit Accelerator for
Under-Served Buildings \$181,500,000 request
- Healthy, Efficient, Electrified, Climate-Adopted Pilot
For Low- and Moderate-Income Homes \$1,500,000 request
- Façade Easement Program for the White Oak Commercial
Area and Transit Center \$1,000,000 request