



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

**COMMISSION ON VETERANS AFFAIRS**  
**★ ★ ★ ANNUAL REPORT 2012 ★ ★ ★**  
*“Veterans Helping Veterans”*

Letter of Transmittal: November, 2012

The Honorable Isiah Leggett, Montgomery County Executive  
The Honorable Roger Berliner President, Montgomery County Council  
Uma S. Ahluwalia, Director, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services

The Commission on Veterans Affairs is pleased to present a summary of its activities for the past year. We continue to advise and consult with you on issues of concern to the estimated 50,000 veterans, and their families, who live in the County. Under your leadership and with your support, the Commission is mandated to research, assemble, analyze and disseminate information that will assist in meeting the needs of veterans and their families. The Commissioners bring knowledge and expertise to the County by providing valuable input and advice on issues affecting our veterans.

We have focused on identifying veterans and their family members, on recognition of active military and veterans and particularly those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our great nation. We thank you for your leadership to recognize and honor those at the Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans event 2012. We are working to end homelessness amongst veterans and thank you and Congressman Chris Van Hollen for your efforts to obtain, for the third year, 15 Veteran Affairs Supportive Housing vouchers bringing the total to 65. The new hiring preference for disabled veterans and veterans brings hope and promise for employment opportunities for veterans. We were pleased on November 6, 2012 with the voters 80% support of Question A which will allow for a special hiring authority, like the federal government has for persons with severe disabilities/disabled veterans. We were also pleased with the **“Respect the Space”** Parking Campaign that will result in increased enforcement of disability parking spaces.

In order to provide greater health care access to veterans, we hope to have your support in working to establish the medical services of a Community-Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) in the County operated by the Veterans Administration (VA). We are currently exploring the establishment of a Veterans Court replicated after the Veterans Treatment Court program in Buffalo, NY, which was designed to keep non-violent offenders out of jail. We recently learned from the VA that nationwide 9% of all incarcerated inmates are veterans.

We wish to recognize and give our personal thanks to all Commissioners, the many community members, and the agency staff who participate in our meetings for their commitment and dedication. We would like to acknowledge DHHS Director Uma Ahluwalia for her role in meeting with the Boards, Commissions and Committees to keep us informed of important health and human services issues, and Betsy Luecking, Staff Liaison, and Carly Clem, OSC, for their outstanding support in providing the Commission with the resources needed to carry out our mission. This report is the result of our combined efforts.

It has been a pleasure to work with you and members of the Commission during our term of service. We are confident that you will continue to support the Commission’s efforts to enhance the lives of our veterans. Our meetings are open to the public, and we invite you to join us for any meeting.

Sincerely,



*Bill Gray*

Bill Gray  
Chair



*Jerry Godwin*

Jerry Godwin  
Vice-Chair



# MEMBERSHIP LIST

2011 - 2012

## VETERANS REPRESENTATIVES

Carl Bedell, American Legion / Military Officers Association of America  
Rich Fales, Veterans of Foreign Wars  
Bill Gray, Vietnam Veterans of America  
J. Mauri Hamilton, PhD, Disabled American Veterans  
Roland R. Kauffman, Vietnam Veterans of America  
Vinod Kris Kumaroo, American Legion/Veterans of Foreign Wars  
Elizabeth (Jane) McCarthy, American Legion  
John Mendez, Veteran

## GENERAL PUBLIC MEMBERS

Sharon Hodge  
Lorrie Knight-Major  
Jacqueline Hunt Ogg  
Lisa Stern

## EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Jerry S. Godwin, Dept. of Economic Development  
Richard M. Schiffauer, Dept. of Health & Human Services  
Michael L. Subin, Office of the County Executive  
Montgomery College

## NON-VOTING CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

Ann Humphrey, Office of Congressman Chris Van Hollen

## STAFF

Betsy Luecking, *Staff Liaison*  
Carly Clem, *Office Services Coordinator*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Membership List	2
HUD, VA Provide Permanent Housing and Support to More Than 180 Homeless Vets in Maryland	3
Veterans Administration Supported Housing (VASH) Request	4
Montgomery County Voters Pass Special Hiring Authority & Overview of Hiring for People with Disabilities, Disabled Veterans, and Veterans	5 - 6
Washington Post Editorial Board Article "Vote For Montgomery County's Question A"	7
Leggett Announces "Respect the Space" Campaign	8 - 9
Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans 3rd Annual Reunion	10
Veterans Day 2011 Program & Celebration	11
Projected Number of Veterans in Montgomery County, Maryland	12
Veterans Stymied By VA Backlog	13
FY12 Key Issues of Concern to County Veterans	14
FY13 Operating Budget Testimony	15
About The Commission	16
Connect With The Commission	17
Commission Presentations for 2011 - 2012	17
How To Contact Your County Elected Officials	18

## HUD, VA PROVIDE PERMANENT HOUSING AND SUPPORT TO MORE THAN 180 HOMELESS VETS IN MARYLAND

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Press Release - March 28, 2012

*Latest estimate shows national veterans homelessness fell by nearly 12 percent*

WASHINGTON - U.S. Housing and Urban Development Secretary Shaun Donovan and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric K. Shinseki announced today that HUD will provide more than \$1,614,832 to six different housing authorities to supply permanent housing and case management for more than 180 homeless veterans in the state.

The permanent supportive housing assistance announced today is provided through HUD's Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Program (HUD-VASH), a program administered by HUD, VA, and local housing agencies across the country.

"It's a national disgrace that one out of every six men and women in our shelters once wore a uniform to serve our country," said HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan. "But we know that by providing housing assistance and case management services, we can significantly reduce the number of veterans living on our streets. Working together, HUD, VA and local housing agencies are making real progress toward ending veteran homelessness once and for all."

"Under the leadership of President Obama, we have made significant progress in the fight to end homelessness among veterans, but more work remains," said VA Secretary Shinseki. "The partnership between the federal government and community agencies across the country has strengthened all of our efforts to honor our veterans and keep us on track to prevent and eliminate veteran homelessness by 2015."

This funding to local housing agencies is part of the Obama Administration's commitment to end Veteran and long-term chronic homelessness by 2015. Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness serves as a roadmap for how the federal government will work with state and local agreements to confront the root causes of homelessness, especially among former servicemen and women.

"These grants are reducing the number of homeless veterans in Maryland, and one day we will see this travesty end," said HUD Regional Administrator Jane C.W. Vincent. "These vouchers put us one step closer to reaching that goal."

The grants announced today are part of \$75 million appropriate for Fiscal Year 2012 to support the housing needs of approximately 10,500 homeless veterans. VA Medical Centers (VAMC) provide supportive services and case management to eligible homeless veterans.

Recipient	Partnering VA Medical Facility	# of Vouchers Awarded	1 Year Budget Authority for Vouchers Awarded
Housing Authority of Baltimore City	VA MD HCS (Baltimore)	75	\$684,687
Housing Opprt Com of Montgomery County	Washington, DC VAMC	15	\$169,502
Housing Authority of Prince Georges County	Washington, DC VAMC	25	\$282,944
Cecil County Housing Agency	Perry Point VAMC	25	\$157,694
Baltimore County Housing Authority	VA MD HCS (Baltimore)	25	\$201,335
MD Dept. of Housing & Community Development	VA MD HCS / Pokomoke City OPC	15	\$118,669

# VETERANS ADMINISTRATION SUPPORTED HOUSING (VASH) REQUEST

## COMMISSION ON VETERANS AFFAIRS

20 January, 2012

Honorable Isiah Leggett  
County Executive  
101 Monroe Street  
Rockville, MD

Dear Mr. Leggett,

On behalf of the Commission on Veterans Affairs, I am writing to request your assistance to have the County request from the Veterans Administration Supported Housing Program (VASH), the national program for providing Section 8 permanent housing assistance to veterans, to give at least 25 vouchers directly to the Montgomery County Housing Opportunities Commission. For each of the last two years, we have been pleased that your requests for the 25 vouchers have been fulfilled and that from last year 25 people are now in the process of renting units and being permanently housed.

The HUD-VASH program combines a Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher with case management and clinical services provided by the VA. Evaluation of the HUD-VASH program has found that recipients increase days housed, employment, income, and social networks. The HUD-VASH program has demonstrated decreases in the number of days recipients spend homeless or in institutions and reductions in the use of alcohol.

It is our understating that the VA Medical Center has over 35 names of veterans in need of housing in the County today. The VA Medical Center locates and prepares the needed documentation for a homeless veteran to enter the VASH program. They then notify the appropriate area HOC/Housing Authority which arranges an interview/intake with the veteran. In 2010 and 2011, through the County's HOC's streamlined system of assigning a key point person, from the time of application to issuing a voucher, the total elapsed time was as little as two days and averaged less than one week. We have heard nothing but superlatives in the way everyone at HOC has assisted these veterans and your professionalism and kindness in working with this special population is remembered and not forgotten.

At any rate, the vouchers for this year are being "divided up" early, in March. If Montgomery County is going to get some directly, this request needs to be made right away. Most homeless veterans are staying in County provided shelters, rehab programs, transitional housing or local hotels in the case of homeless families.

We appreciate any support that you can provide to this effort. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Bill Gray, Chair

## MONTGOMERY COUNTY VOTERS PASS SPECIAL HIRING AUTHORITY & OVERVIEW OF HIRING FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, DISABLED VETERANS AND VETERANS

November, 2012 - The Montgomery County Commission on People with Disabilities and the Commission on Veterans Affairs has been working on having a special hiring authority to promote the hiring of people with disabilities similar to the federal government and the voters of the County gave the go ahead for this initiative during the November 6, 2012 Presidential Election.

Over the past several years the Commission has been fortunate to have County Executive Ike Leggett's support as well as that of the entire County Council to have a question put on the November 6, 2012 ballot so that voters could allow for a change in the merit system to allow for this special hiring authority. Montgomery County Councilmember Phil Andrews who introduced the bill to have it on the ballot along with Joe Adler, Director, Office of Human Resources, have both been instrumental in having this initiative come to fruition because of their strong support of people with disabilities/disabled veterans.



Joe Adler, Director, Office of Human Resources, was among the speakers on November 14 as well as Councilmember Phil Andrews (far left) to celebrate the passage of Question A. Also pictured is Trish Gallalee, Chair of the Commission on People with Disabilities (right).

1. Montgomery County Government provides priority consideration known as the **Hiring Preference** for initial appointment to a County Merit System position for veterans with a disability, veterans without a disability and for persons with a disability. For more information and to claim a hiring preference, please refer to the Careers webpage on [Hiring Preference](#). Since the hiring preference was implemented in 2010, the following have been hired into merit positions: 7 individuals with disabilities, 1 disabled veteran and 27 veterans.
2. The **Customized Employment Public Intern Project** was created based on the County's knowledge that people with significant disabilities often have difficulty accessing County government positions. As an employer, Montgomery County recognizes that there are many job candidates with significant disabilities who have much to offer but have difficulty competing for traditional jobs within the government. To go above and beyond what other County and State agencies have done, Montgomery County has established an initiative to create flexible work opportunities for individuals to fulfill the work requirements of County departments. All County departments will have the opportunity to work with a customized employment career specialist to identify and create part-time position descriptions based on the department's need. Individuals with significant disabilities will be matched to work tasks based on their interests, skills and competencies. The hope is that the public interns will gain job experience and training to be able to compete for merit positions within the County, as well as at other places of employment. For more information, please contact Marie Parker at [mparker@montgomeryworks.com](mailto:mparker@montgomeryworks.com) or 240-283-1574.
3. The **Montgomery County QUEST Intern Partnership** was launched in October 2009 with the Maryland Department of Education Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS). The Quest Intern partnership is designed to provide opportunities for individuals to serve as volunteer interns in County Departments and help them obtain job skills by working on a special project(s). The goal for this initiative was to achieve a minimum of ten (10) QUEST Internship placements to be enrolled at any given time. Participating departments identify internship projects suitable for QUEST Intern placements and submit the project(s) for consideration by the DORS QUEST Intern Coordinator. DORS representatives work with county department staff to recruit, identify, and recommend qualified individuals for the approved department projects. The DORS Coordinator recommends qualified intern candidates for consideration and selection by department staff. Department staff interview internship candidates and select individuals to work in the department for a three month or six-month period. The QUEST internship placements do not impact departmental fiscal requirements, since DORS handles all the pre-intern placement arrangements and provides the intern stipends. DORS provides QUEST Interns with a stipend for the duration of their service plus help interns gain job experience needed to help them achieve their goal of obtaining gainful employment after completing the intern placement with Montgomery County. For more information contact Jody Boon, Division of Rehabilitation Services at [jboone@dors.state.md.us](mailto:jboone@dors.state.md.us) or 410-554-9451.

(continued on page 6)

## OVERVIEW OF HIRING FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, DISABLED VETERANS AND VETERANS CONTINUED

4. The **Montgomery County Project Search Program** was launched by County Executive Leggett in September 2012. It is an intern program to provide opportunities for young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. County Executive Isiah Leggett joined officials from the Ivymount School and SEEC, an adult rehabilitation provider, to launch Project Search Montgomery, a one-year transition program designed for young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Interns are in their last year of high school or are recent graduates. Twelve interns will work in the Departments of Finance, General Services, Permitting Services, Public Libraries, Recreation and Transportation, along with the Office of Human Resources and the Office of the County Executive.

Accordingly, as it relates to employment opportunities, the County will provide reasonable accommodations to applicants with disabilities, in accordance with the law. Applicants requiring a reasonable accommodation for any part of the application and hiring process should contact the Office of Human Resources and request a Human Resources Specialist at 240-777-0311 (Voice) or 240-777-5126 (TTY) for assistance and guidance. You may also request a reasonable accommodation for the selection process via email to [Special.Accommodations@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:Special.Accommodations@montgomerycountymd.gov). Individual determinations on requests for reasonable accommodation will be made in accordance with all applicable laws.

### **On the November 6, 2012 Presidential Ballot**

#### **Montgomery County Question A: Merit System – Hiring Individuals with Disabilities**

Ballot Question: Amend Section 401 of the County Charter to allow the County to operate a program within the merit system to recruit and select qualified individuals with severe physical and mental disabilities on a noncompetitive basis.

Background: The unemployment and underemployment rate of individuals with disabilities is as high as 70%. In Montgomery County, 40% of individuals with disabilities work, 43% are unemployed, and 31% of working age adults (age 18 - 64) with disabilities are unemployed. In Montgomery County, for age 21+, the disabled are three times more likely to be below the Federal Poverty Level (11.4% vs. 3.6%). The employment rate for people with disabilities in Montgomery County is at an all-time low. Educating all government managers as to how to work with this sector of the population (disabled veterans and people with disabilities) to maximize the contributions of this often marginalized community has been challenging. In 2010, the Council passed legislation that gives veterans and people with significant non-cognitive disabilities preference when applying for an entry position in county government, thereby expanding opportunities for people with disabilities in the county government. The Charter Commission had some concerns about the costs of a schedule A-type authority at the time and agreed to set up a subcommittee to investigate further. On July 31st, 2012 the County Council voted unanimously to put the Charter amendment on the ballot.

#### Reasons to Support:

- People with disabilities face discrimination daily and are often perceived to be unable to perform with or without reasonable accommodations.
- The Charter amendment would reduce the high unemployment and underemployment rate for people with disabilities. Montgomery County has taken a number of important steps to expand opportunities and be a model employer.
- Employing such individuals with disabilities in paying jobs will reduce their reliance on government services.
- Those who are hired must still satisfy the job qualifications, but the Charter amendment would help mitigate the general discrimination against people with disabilities.
- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) mandates that state and local governments provide reasonable accommodations to people with disabilities.

## WASHINGTON POST EDITORIAL BOARD ARTICLE “VOTE FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY’S QUESTION A”

**Published: November 2nd, 2012**

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT has long given people with severe disabilities a helping hand in employment by allowing managers to streamline hiring procedures for disabled applicants who qualify for an open job. Now Montgomery County is asking voters to revise the county charter to follow the federal model. It’s a sensible move to help a group that includes wounded veterans and whose unemployment rate is higher than the national average. County voters should vote for Question A on Tuesday’s ballot.

In general, state and local governments have spotty records when it comes to hiring people who are disabled, even those who meet the basic qualifications for jobs. That’s a shame, and it reflects antiquated attitudes.

Plenty of public-sector (and private-sector) jobs can be done by people who are blind, deaf or paraplegic or have autism or Asperger syndrome. Likewise, many people with psychiatric disabilities can perform well in the workplace.

Opponents, including some conservatives, regard hiring preferences for disabled people as akin to race-based affirmative action; in both cases, the result may be that a more qualified applicant is denied employment. But there is a broad and compelling societal interest in helping disadvantaged groups that suffer from prejudice based on ignorance and misperceptions. All the more so in the case of veterans, including those who fought in Iraq and Afghanistan, who return home with severe combat-related disabilities, be they physical or mental.

Last year, the [unemployment rate](#) for those with disabilities was 15 percent, nearly twice the national average. Even as unemployment eased for people without a disability from 2010 to 2011, it remained stuck for disabled people. Similarly, underemployment is a more severe problem for disabled people, a third of whom work part time, compared with 20 percent of those who are not disabled.

Montgomery County’s interest in hiring disabled workers is especially strong given that the gateway for so many injured veterans returning to the United States from foreign wars is Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda. Those veterans, and others with serious disabilities, deserve a fair shot at local employment if they seek it. The county’s charter amendment would help.

# LEGGETT ANNOUNCES “RESPECT THE SPACE” CAMPAIGN



Montgomery County, Maryland  
News Release 11/21/2011

## **Leggett Announces “Respect the Space” Campaign: To prevent the abuse of parking spaces reserved for people with disabilities and to prevent the illegal use of accessible placards and plates**

With the start of the busiest shopping season of the year, County Executive Isiah Leggett introduced a new education and enforcement initiative, “Respect the Space,” to raise awareness about the proper use of accessible parking spaces reserved for people with disabilities.

“During the holiday season, parking lots fill to capacity, making close-in accessible spaces particularly tempting,” said Leggett. “But I urge everyone to think very carefully about who those spaces are intended for -- whether it is an injured veteran, a senior citizen with impaired mobility or a person with a permanent physical disability. We all need to respect the space and help ensure that reserved parking spaces are available for those who truly need them.”

The Respect the Space initiative is a cooperative effort involving the Montgomery County Police Department, the Department of Transportation, the Department of Permitting Services, the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA), and the County’s Commission on People with Disabilities.



Pictured left to right are: disabled Army veteran Sergeant Ryan Major, the County Executive, Chairperson of the Commission on People with Disabilities Trish Gallalee, Police Chief Tom Manger, and MVA Administrator John Kuo.

Joining Leggett and providing remarks were County Council Vice President Roger Berliner, Administrator for the MVA and Governor Martin O’Malley’s Highway Safety Representative John Kuo, Police Chief J. Thomas Manger, member of the County’s Commission on People with Disabilities Dr. Seth Morgan, disabled Army Veteran Sergeant Ryan Major, and the Chairperson for the County’s Commission on People with Disabilities Trish Gallalee.

County Council Vice President Roger Berliner said, “Respecting accessible spaces is our responsibility year-round, but especially during the busy holiday shopping season. We must all do our part to ensure that the disabled members of our community – veterans, seniors, the permanently disabled – have these spaces available to them.”

The campaign’s five-point program includes:

1. An education campaign to inform the public about the serious problem of disabled parking space violations and abuse.
2. A comprehensive survey, conducted by volunteers, of parking lots and garages in the County, including County-owned and operated parking lots, to confirm their compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-mandated space and signage standards.
3. Notification to parking lot owners who aren’t in compliance with mandated standards.
4. More aggressive enforcement of those space and signage requirements by the County’s Office of Permitting Services.
5. Stepped up enforcement by Montgomery County Police in partnership with the MVA of the proper and legal use of parking placards, disabled license plates and accessible spaces.

## LEGGETT ANNOUNCES “RESPECT THE SPACE” CAMPAIGN CONTINUED

MVA Administrator John Kuo said, “Seven years ago, the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration played a leading role in a taskforce that looked at abuses in Maryland’s disabled parking system. We are in full cooperation with Montgomery County’s efforts to identify and enforce the proper and legal use of parking placards and disabled license plates.”

Those who need one must apply for a disable license plate or placard from the MVA. Some basic facts are:

- Those who need an accessible space must apply for and receive a certified placard or plates from the MVA. Without the placard or plate, it is illegal to park in a reserved space, despite one’s disability.
- Vehicles with accessible plates can only use reserved spaces when transporting the person with the certified disability.
- For those with accessible placards and plates, always have the medical certification card available as law enforcement officers and their inspectors have the right to ask to see it.
- Accessible tags and placards must be renewed, even for those with a permanent disability.
- If the need for accessible parking has ended, the placard or plates must immediately be turned in to the MVA.
- Temporary placards are available for periods of three weeks to six months.

Information about how to apply for disabled parking placards and permits, as well as laws and requirements regulating them can be found on the MVA website: [www.mva.maryland.gov](http://www.mva.maryland.gov).

Montgomery County Police Chief Tom Manger outlined the kinds of enforcement that his officers will be conducting. The Chief said, “I am encouraging our officers to issue citations to all vehicles that do not have disabled placards or plates and are parked in accessible spaces. If anyone sees a vehicle without an accessible placard or plate in an accessible space, call the police non-emergency number, 301-279-8000 to report it.”

A growing concern about the problems of accessible parking abuse was brought to the County Executive’s attention by Dr. Seth Morgan, a member of the County’s Commission on People with Disabilities. “Parking illegally for even a minute in a disabled-designated spot causes harm. I want to tell everyone that accessible parking misuse is not a benign, ‘victimless’ crime; the victims are too numerous to count,” said Dr. Morgan. Members of the County’s Commissions on Veteran’s Affairs, Aging, and Health also supported the efforts. Members of those commissions are volunteering to conduct surveys of parking lots for space and signage conformance.

Residents should be aware that people may have “invisible” disabilities – something that is not obvious – but still be fully entitled to park in reserved spaces if they have been certified by the MVA and have an accessible placard or plate.

To find out more information about the Respect the Space initiative, go to the County’s website at [www.montgomerycountymd.gov](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov) and click on the Respect the Space icon on the homepage.

# WELCOME HOME VIETNAM VETERANS 3rd ANNUAL REUNION

County Executive Isiah Leggett presented a Proclamation of Appreciation to Bill Gray, Chair of the Commission on Veterans Affairs, during the Third Annual Vietnam Veterans Reunion held at the Silver Spring Civic Building. The event included a panel discussion on health care for veterans and a presentation of memorial photos. In addition to the Vietnam Veterans pictured, Montgomery County is home to approximately 50,000 veterans.



Commissioner Carl Bedell moderated a panel discussion on *Agent Orange, Health Care and VA Benefits: What You and Your Family Need To Know*.

## Topics and Presenters:

**Agent Orange, Institute of Medicine (IOM) Report, and VA Services** — Michelle Kennedy Prisco, MSN, ANP-C, Nurse Practitioner and Environmental Exposure Clinician, War Related Illness and Injury Study Center (WRIISC) at the Washington, D.C. VA Medical Center.

**Transgenerational Issues of Children and Grandchildren** — Alan Oates, Chair, Agent Orange/Dioxin and Other Toxic Exposures Committee, Vietnam Veterans of America, U.S. Army, 5th Battalion, 6th Mechanized Infantry, 9th Infantry Division, 1968-1969.

**The VA Claims Process** — Jim Vale, Esq., Director, Veterans Benefits Program, Vietnam Veterans of America. Licensed member of the Washington State Bar and an accredited Veterans Service Officer Representative by the VA Office of General Counsel. Served in the U.S. Navy from 1989-1994 as an Aviation Electronics Technician. Legally blinded veteran and graduate of both the VA Blind Rehabilitation Program and the VA Vocational Rehabilitation Program. Completed MBA, MAS, MPA, MAS, EDS & JD degrees after military service. Presented “Rating Blinded Veterans Claims” training at the National Organization of Veterans Advocates (NOVA) Fall 2009 Seminar.

**The VA Appeals Process** — Lauren Kologe, Esq., Deputy Director, Veterans Benefits Program, Vietnam Veterans of America. Licensed member of the Maryland State Bar. She is an accredited Veterans Services Officer Representative by the VA Office of General Counsel and admitted to practice before the U.S. CAVC. She is the co-author of the Sep./Oct. 2011 article, “So you think you might have a claim for PTSD?” in the *VVA The Veteran*.



*Speakers from left to right:* Alan Oates, Chair, Agent Orange/Dioxin and Other Toxic Exposures Committee, Vietnam Veterans of America, Moderator and Commissioner Carl Bedell, Michelle Kennedy Prisco, MSN BC-ANP Washington DC VA Medical Center, Jim Vale, Esq., Director, Veterans Benefits Program, Vietnam Veterans of America, and Lauren Kologe, Esq., Deputy Director, Veterans Benefits Program, Vietnam Veterans of America.

## VETERANS DAY 2011 PROGRAM & CELEBRATION



Montgomery County Executive Isiah Leggett (Center) presented a Proclamation to the Chair of the Commission on Veterans Affairs during the Veterans Day Program and Celebration held at the Silver Spring Civic Center on November 11th, 2011. Pictured (left to right): Montgomery County Councilmember Marc Elrich, Montgomery County Councilmember George Leventhal, Congressman Chris Van Hollen, Commissioner Jane McCarthy, Commissioner Mike Subin, Montgomery County Executive Isiah Leggett, Chair of the Commission on Veterans Affairs Bill Gray, and Vice-Chair of the Commission on Veterans Affairs Jerry Godwin.

The ceremony included the dedication of artwork entitled “Tribute to Our Veterans” created by noted Frederick County sculptor Antonio Tobias (Toby) Mendez. The clay sculpture, cast in bronze, includes panels featuring historic images of honor guards from the five branches of the armed forces, with one panel honoring the changing of the guard at Arlington National Cemetery. Other panels include Ft. McHenry, the Maryland 29th Infantry insignia, the Battle of Burnside Bridge at Antietam, the Silver Spring train station and images of troops heading to service. The glass work that rests on the bronze includes more than two dozen letters written by veterans from the American Revolution to modern times. The glass also includes images of the two former Silver Spring armories and other photos related to veteran history.



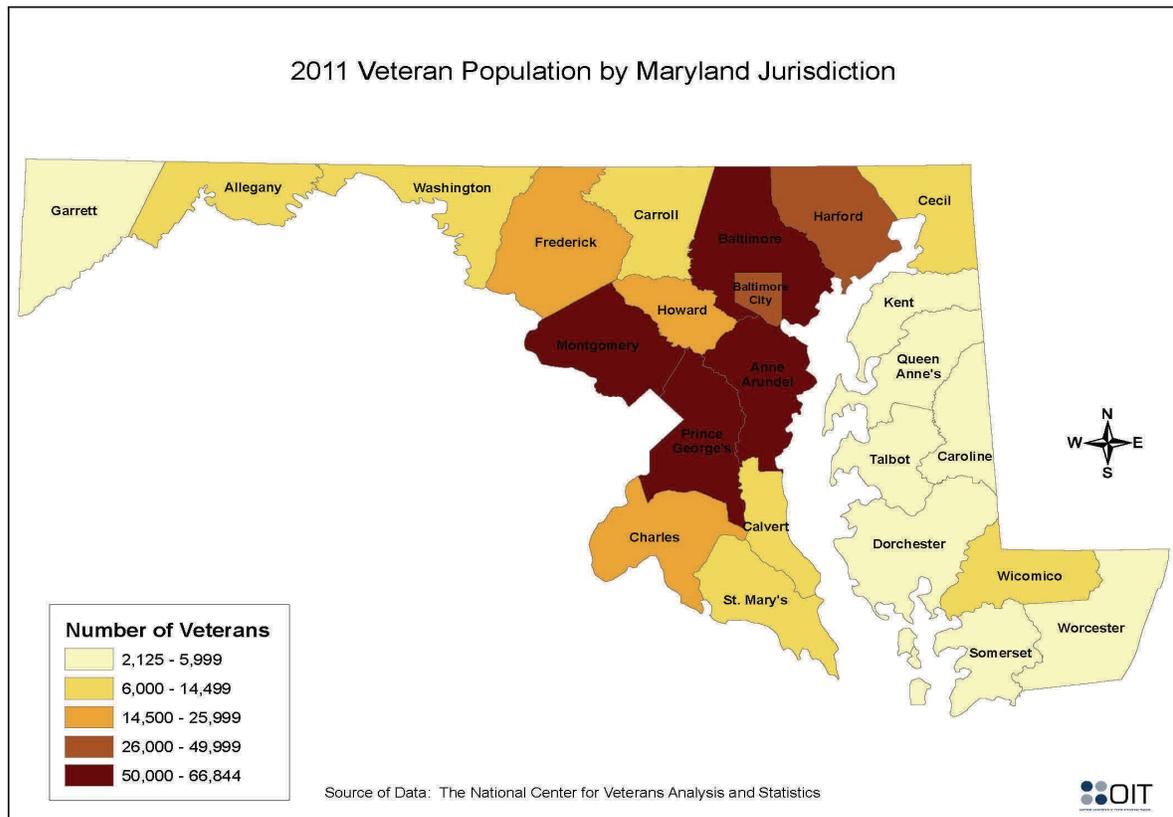
# PROJECTED NUMBER OF VETERANS IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

The U.S. Census Bureau, 2011, estimates that there are approximately **48,759 veterans living in Montgomery County, Maryland**. According to a 2011 American Community Survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, 9% of Americans self-reported as being a veteran. The Census Bureau defines as veteran as men and women who have served (even for a short time), but are not currently serving, on active duty in the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, or the Coast Guard, or who served in the U.S. Merchant Marine during World War II. People who served in the National Guard or Reserves are classified as veterans only if they were ever called or ordered to active duty, not counting the 4 to 6 months for initial training or yearly summer camps. All other civilians are classified as nonveterans.

## Veteran Population of Montgomery County, MD - 2011

Subject	Veterans	Total County Population
Civilian Population 18 years and over	48,759 (6.4%)	750,910
Period of Service	Veterans	% of 48,759
Gulf War (9/2001 or later) veterans	6,972	14.3%
Gulf War (8/1990 to 8/2001) veterans	9,312	19.1%
Vietnam era veterans	17,163	35.2%
Korean War veterans	4,242	8.7%
World War II veterans	6,826	14.0%
Gender	Veterans	% of 48,759
Male	43,151	88.5%
Female	5,608	11.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2011

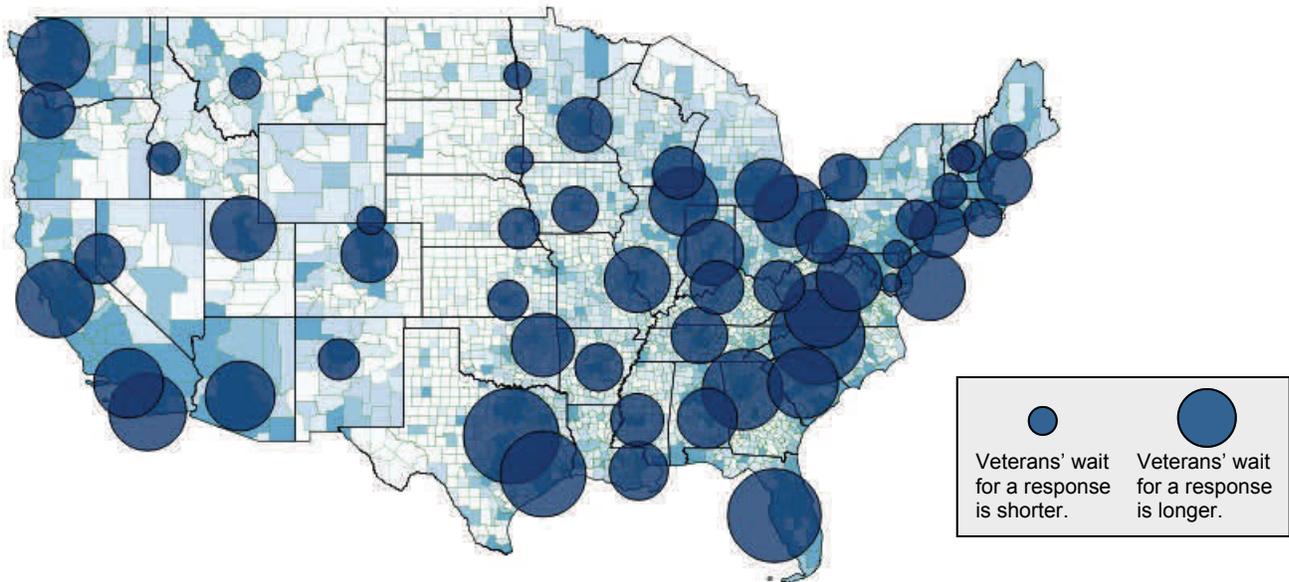


## VETERANS STYMIED BY VA BACKLOG

A national analysis by the Center for Investigative Reporting has found that nearly 825,000 veterans nationwide are stymied by a bureaucratic backlog that has delayed payments for war-related disabilities. President Barack Obama pledged in August 2009 to cut the backlog, and his administration has increased spending on staff and operations. Still, the wait times lengthen. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) pays veterans \$123 to \$2,673 a month, tax-free, for injuries and illnesses sustained in military service. A map of where in the country the backlogs are greatest is on the [Center for Investigative Reporting website](#). The website is updated on a weekly basis.

The VA Baltimore Regional Office is ranked the third worst VA Regional Office out of 58 offices throughout the country based on the average number of days a veteran waits for a response to his or her claims.

- **19,120 veterans await a response to claims** of a disease, injury or illness suffered in the military (as of 10/01/2012).
- **Disability claims grew 31.7%** in the last 1.4 years. While they wait, veterans often cannot access health care from the agency or receive disability compensation.
- **343 days** is the average number of days that a veteran waits for the government to respond to his or her claims (as of 08/2012). That is an **increase of 32.7%** in the prior 1.3 years.
- **1,413 days** is the average wait time for veterans who appeal a claim (as of 05/2012). That is an **increase of 3.2%** in the prior 1.1 years.
- **82.4%** of veterans are waiting 125 days or more for a response from the VA (as of 10/01/2012).
- It will take **850 days** for the VA to respond to all veterans, if no new claims are field (22 claims / day as of 08/2012).



Source: Center for Investigative Reporting

# FY12 KEY ISSUES OF CONCERN TO COUNTY VETERANS

## COMMISSION ON VETERANS AFFAIRS Meeting with County Executive Isiah Leggett February 23, 2012

### Key Issues of Concern to County Veterans

**1. Issue of Concern:** There is a great need to provide more coordinated outreach to better assist Veterans in learning about and applying for the benefits they are entitled to from serving in the U.S. military. Veterans who served in World War II, Korea and Vietnam are too often unaware of their VA benefits related to issues including, but not limited to: agent orange, general health care, attendant care, and nursing home/supportive housing assistance for themselves and their spouses.

**Proposed solution:** We recommend that the County request that the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) provide a full time service officer in Montgomery County. This position would allow more veterans to access more benefits, which often translates into more income for the County. Currently, the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs has a veteran services officer at MontgomeryWorks in Wheaton Plaza on the first and third Friday of the month. The Commission has been in contact with the MDVA and plans are in the works to increase that MDVA representative to 3 days per week. We remain hopeful that this position will be granted full-time status in order to provide our Veterans and their families a level of consistency and reliability in service.

**2. Issue of Concern:** There is a need in the county to provide more consistent community education to veterans on the benefits for which they may be eligible. Though this education is needed for those Veterans who have not been in the service for some time, this need is also true for our Post 9/11 Veterans.

**Proposed solution:** We would like to see a modified version of the Transition Assistance Planning (TAP) Course, traditionally offered to Service Members prior to separation, offered to the county's Veterans on a yearly or semi-annual basis. Whereas the TAP Program is a relatively new program within the Departments of Defense and Labor, many service members never received this information or were not required to participate in these briefings. We request your support in both providing a yearly or semi-annual training and having Montgomery Public Television film these briefings so they can be made available on-demand.

# FY13 OPERATING BUDGET TESTIMONY

## COMMISSION ON VETERANS AFFAIRS

Testimony before the Montgomery County Council on the FY13 Operating Budget  
April 10, 2012

Bill Gray, Chair – Jerry Godwin, Vice-Chair

Good evening, my name is Bill Gray and I am speaking on behalf of the Commission on Veterans Affairs. We appreciate the opportunity to share with you some of our top priorities for the upcoming year. Before using County dollars, we recommend that you set in place practices to take advantage of any and all federally funded programs by the Department of Veterans Affairs or other federal and state programs. For this to happen all agencies and contracted out services need to ask the intake question “Have you or an immediate family member ever served in the U.S. Armed forces, National Guard or Reserves? Then workers should refer these veterans to the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA), Veterans Service Officer located in Wheaton.

We also recommend that the County provide a more coordinated outreach to better assist Veterans in learning about and applying for the benefits they are entitled to from serving in the U.S. military. 70% of veterans never use any VA benefits at all. This is partially because they don't know how to go about getting them or don't even know about them. Veterans who served in World War II, Korea and Vietnam are too often unaware of their VA benefits related to issues including, but not limited to: agent orange, general health care, attendant care, and nursing home/supportive housing assistance for themselves and their spouses. Though this education is needed for those Veterans who have not been in the service for some time, this need is also true for our Post 9/11 Veterans.

We recommend that the County request that the MDVA provide a full time service officer in the County. This position would allow more veterans to access more benefits, which often translates into more income for the County. Currently, the MDVA has a veteran services officer at MontgomeryWorks in Wheaton Plaza on the first and third Friday of the month. The Commission has been in contact with the MDVA and plans are in the works to increase that MDVA representative to 3 days per week. We remain hopeful that this position will be granted full-time status in order to provide our Veterans and their families a level of consistency and reliability in service.

Veterans too often come back from war with problems that lead them into crime. We request that Council to ensure funding for the Criminal Justice Mental Health Pilot program that Raymond Crowel, in HHS, is working on. That would automatically involve dealing with the mental health issues of veterans involved in the criminal justice system.

We request that Council require all departments to apply for federal grants/seek out partnerships with the private and non-profit sector which would benefit Veterans, their spouses and children. Ideally, it will bring money and/or jobs to Montgomery County.

We were pleased this year that Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC) was awarded 15 HUD VASH vouchers for homeless veterans and their families in Montgomery County. These vouchers are provided from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) combined with case management services by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input. Please let us know how we can be of assistance.

# ABOUT THE COMMISSION

## HISTORY

The Commission on Veterans Affairs was established by County legislation in 2008 to advise the County Executive and County Council on the coordination and development of the County's policies affecting veterans and their families.

## MISSION

The Commission's responsibilities are to research, assemble, analyze and disseminate information and educational materials relating to activities and programs that will assist in meeting the needs of veterans and their families; institute and conduct educational and other programs, meetings, and conferences to promote the rights and opportunities for veterans; advise the Executive and the Council on the status of programs and services in the State and County related to the needs of veterans and their families; and assist in planning appropriate public acknowledgement of the contributions made by veterans, and assist in planning.

## MEMBERSHIP

The Commission on Veterans Affairs is composed of sixteen voting members and one non-voting who serve in a volunteer capacity. Members are appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the County Council.

The Commission includes:

- ▶ 8 Veterans
- ▶ 4 General Public
- ▶ 4 Ex-Officio Members
- ▶ 1 Non-Voting Congressional Representative

## MEETINGS

All Commission and Committee meetings are open to the public. The Commission welcomes visitors to join us as we serve the County and its residents. Meetings are subject to change without advance notice. Please call to confirm day and time of meetings and to request any special accommodations. As possible, we adjust meeting dates in order to accommodate days of major religious observances. You can view the Commission meeting agendas and meeting summary minutes online at:

[www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cva](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cva).

### **MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 2012 - 2013**

#### **Full Commission Meeting**

3rd Tuesday of the month, September to June  
Summer recess during July and August

401 Hungerford Drive, Rockville, MD 20850

1st Floor Tan Conference Room

6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

**Workgroups** meet, as needed, at differing locations.



## CONNECT WITH THE COMMISSION



**Visit us on the web!** Read Commission Agendas, Meeting Summary Minutes, testimony, and more! [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cva](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cva)



**Like us on Facebook!** [facebook.com/MCGCVA](https://www.facebook.com/MCGCVA)



**Sign up for eSubscribe** to receive emails about Veterans information and resources. <https://ext01.montgomerycountymd.gov/entp/s1p/esubpublic/newssubscriber.do>



**Sign up for emergency alerts from Alert Montgomery!** Alert Montgomery can deliver important alerts, notifications and updates during a major crisis, emergency, or severe weather event. Notifications and updates can be sent to you on all of your devices at once: email account, cell phone, text page, Blackberry, wireless PDA, or XM Radio Channel 214, Twitter: Add "Montgomery County MD" in find people, Facebook: Add "Montgomery County MD Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security" in friends, or text MONTGOMERY to 411911. Sign up at <https://alert.montgomerycountymd.gov>.

## COMMISSION PRESENTATIONS FOR 2011 - 2012

**November, 2011: Serving Together: Troops, Veterans Family Care Project** – *Jessica McNurlen, Project Director*

---

**December, 2011: MontgomeryWorks Veteran Services** – *Bob Pelletier, GCDF, Veterans Services*

---

**January, 2012: Tribute to Gregory V. Hamilton, U.S. Navy, Vietnam Veteran**

**The Use of EEG Biofeedback for the Treatment of PTSD and TBI** – *Mary Lee Esty, LCSW-C, Ph.D., BCB, BCN*

---

**February, 2012: Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH)** – *Joy Flood, Director of Housing Resources, Housing Opportunities Commission, and Ken Barnum, Homeless Veterans Outreach Social Worker, Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC)*

---

**March, 2012: Agent Orange and Its Effect On Those Who Have Been Exposed To It** – *Tom Berger, Executive Director, Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) Health Council*

---

**April, 2012: The Montgomery College Veterans' Project** – *Zach Zimmerman, former Marine and a Macklin Scholar at Montgomery College*

---

**May, 2012: Wounded Warriors to Work Project** – *LaMont Nowlin, Navy Veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), Wounded Warrior Project Alumni; Brian Nichols, Manager, Warriors to Work; and Daniel Freeland, Brigade Adjutant/(MAP) Manager, Uniformed Services University (USU) Military Personnel Office*

---

**June, 2012: Homeless Veterans and Housing** – *The Honorable George Leventhal, Councilmember, Montgomery County Council*

---

**September, 2012: Update** – *Ed Chow, Secretary, Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs*

---

**October, 2012: Update on Veteran Service Providers** – *Bob Simpson, VP, Military Veterans Operations, Easter Seals, Greater Washington-Baltimore Region; Jessica McNurlen, Project Director, Greater-Washington Baltimore Region; Jessica McNurlen, Project Director, Serving Together, Mental Health Association; and Wayne Miller, LMSW, Readjustment Counseling Services, Vet Center, Bethesda*

# HOW TO CONTACT YOUR COUNTY ELECTED OFFICIALS



**County Executive  
Isiah Leggett**

The **County Executive** can be reached at:

Executive Office Building  
101 Monroe Street, 2nd Floor  
Rockville, MD 20850  
240-777-0311 (V)  
240-773-3556 (TTY)

[ocemail@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:ocemail@montgomerycountymd.gov)



**Montgomery County Council**

The **County Council** can be reached at:

Stella B. Werner Council Office Building  
100 Maryland Avenue  
Rockville, MD 20850  
240-777-7900 (V)  
240-777-7914 (TTY)  
240-777-7888 (FAX)

[county.council@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:county.council@montgomerycountymd.gov)

*Seated, left to right:* President Roger Berliner, Valerie Ervin, Nancy Floreen and George Leventhal.  
*Standing:* Hans Riemer, Craig Rice, Marc Elrich, Vice President Nancy Navarro and Phil Andrews.

---

**Isiah Leggett, County Executive  
Uma S. Ahluwalia, Director  
Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services  
401 Hungerford Drive  
Rockville, Maryland 20850  
240-777-1246 (V) or via MD Relay 711**

**Language translation and alternative formats of this report are available upon request.  
For additional information on the Commission, please call the telephone numbers or write to the  
address listed above or e-mail via the contact information listed below.**

*Montgomery County does not discriminate on the basis of disability in  
employment or in the admission or access to its programs or services.*

2011 - 2012 Annual Report Prepared By:

Betsy Luecking, *Staff Liaison*  
[betsy.luecking@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:betsy.luecking@montgomerycountymd.gov)

Carly Clem, *Office Services Coordinator*  
[carly.clem@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:carly.clem@montgomerycountymd.gov)