
Senior Initiative

MISSION STATEMENT

The Senior Initiative is a multi-year, cross-departmental project to (1) improve coordination, community outreach and promotion of programs designed to serve seniors, and (2) identify and plan for the short and long term needs of seniors.

LINKAGE TO COUNTY RESULTS AREAS

- ❖ *Vital Living for All of our Residents*
- ❖ *Healthy and Sustainable Communities*
- ❖ *Safe Streets and Secure Neighborhoods*

PROGRAM CONTACTS

Contact Uma S. Ahluwalia of the Department of Health and Human Services at 240.777.1266 or Rachel Silberman of the Office of Management and Budget at 240.777.2786 for more information regarding this Initiative's operating budget.

FY16 RECOMMENDED ENHANCEMENTS

The FY16 Recommended Budget includes approximately \$28.2 million in tax supported resources identified for seniors, including funds for community organizations that augment County services for seniors. In addition, the approved budget includes \$13.7 million in non-tax supported resources for seniors.

Department of Recreation

- Continue to provide enhanced operating hours at Margaret Schweinhaut, Damascus, and Holiday Park senior centers, providing access to programs and activities an additional 2-8 hours a week.
- Maintain the Jewish Council for the Aging (JCA) Senior Transportation Partnership. The initiative adds five days a week transportation to all five senior centers. Bus ridership and participation in center activities has increased at all locations.
- Continue the popular senior mini-trip program. Each senior center and Active Adult Program now receives four trips per year to take seniors to local destinations of interest.
- Maintain support for Multilingual Senior Programming services and for the Senior Services manager to help meet the growing needs of 55+ Active Adult Recreation programming at Senior Centers.

Department of Health and Human Services

- Continue providing nurse monitoring services to more than 2,000 senior and disabled clients receiving services through the State's new Medicaid waiver program, Community First Choice.
- Maintain the raised Adult Foster Care reimbursement rate to reduce the gap between the County and State subsidy for senior assisted living group homes.
- Continue funding support for Adult Day Care subsidies to increase the number of clients able to attend an Adult Day Care program two days per week for socialization and medical supervision.
- Continue support in the Adult Protective Services/Social Services to Adults Program to address an increase in investigations of financial exploitation resulting from new bank mandatory reporting requirements.
- Commit continuous support for a Caregiver Support Fellow and operating costs to coordinate outreach to seniors and persons with disabilities regarding the available services to ease the burden on caregivers.
- Continue funding for a Program Manager in the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program, allowing the program to add volunteers and provide more long-term care facility residents with protection and advocacy.

Department of Transportation – Transit Services

- Continue funding enhanced Call-n-Ride eligibility requirements to increase subsidies and reduce monthly co-payments for 528 current participants. This has also increased the number of County residents eligible for the program.

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- Continue enhanced support for Seniors Ride Free.

Fire and Rescue Service (MCFRS)

- Continue support for enhanced Senior Safety Outreach to provide home safety evaluations, education, and outreach programs to address the specific needs associated with the projected growth in the County's senior population.

Office of the State's Attorney

- Support newly created Crimes Against Seniors and Vulnerable Adults Unit in the State's Attorney's Office established mid-year FY15 through reallocation of existing resources. Enhanced the unit by hiring a Program Manager to coordinate elder and vulnerable adult cases with partner agencies and assist with workload of Assistant State's Attorneys assigned to the unit (\$115,913).

Department of Housing and Community Affairs

- Add funds to support Mount Jezreel Senior Housing, a proposed 75-unit mixed-income senior development located in Silver Spring. The county's investment will support the development of 67 units affordable to residents between 30 and 60 percent of the area median income (\$2,000,000).
- Add funds to support Parkview Glenmont, a proposed mixed-income senior development to be located adjacent to the newly constructed WMATA parking garage on Georgia Avenue. The proposed Housing Acquisition and Preservation project will include approximately 100 units (\$5,000,000 CIP).

Non-Departmental Account Community Grants

- Provide grants to our community partners of \$977,459 for 33 proposals for seniors. Community organizations augment and supplement government programs by providing services such as intergenerational programming, health and wellness initiatives, transportation, culturally and linguistically appropriate case management and legal assistance, and safety net services such as utility support and food assistance. These community organizations are critical to an effective network of services and are often able to provide these services in a more cost-effective, culturally appropriate, and flexible way than County Government. They are also able to leverage community resources that may be unavailable to County Government.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Senior Initiative is a comprehensive response to the various issues facing the growing number of seniors in our community. Montgomery County, much like the rest of the United States, will experience unprecedented growth in the senior population in the coming decades. The Maryland Department of Planning projects that between 2000 and 2020 the senior population will increase by 80 percent. During that period, the non-senior population will increase by only 12 percent, thus seniors as a group are growing over six times faster than non-seniors. By 2020, seniors will comprise 22 percent of the County population, compared to 20 percent currently.

Recognizing the need to address the needs of this burgeoning population, the County Executive is strategically enhancing a variety of critical senior services. At the same time, through the creation of a Senior Subcabinet, the County Executive has charged his departments with ensuring that senior services are delivered in a coordinated and effective manner.

The leadership of this effort is provided by the Director of the Department of Health and Human Services and the Director of the Department of Recreation who serve as Co-Chairs of the County Executive's Senior Subcabinet on Vital Living. The Senior Subcabinet has representatives from the following departments: Health and Human Services, Recreation, Fire and Rescue Service, Transit Services, Public Libraries, Housing and Community Affairs, Police, Office of Consumer Protection, Commission for Women, Office of Public Information, Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, CountyStat, and the Office of Community Partnerships (Community Engagement Cluster), as well as the Commission on Aging.

Building upon previous efforts to assess the current needs of seniors and plan for emerging needs (e.g., "A Report on the Needs of Low-Income Seniors in Montgomery County, MD," June 2002; "Strategic Planning Study of Senior Needs," December 2002; "Imagining An Aging Future for Montgomery County, MD," May 2007; "Senior Outreach Strategic Communications Plan for Montgomery County," October 2007, the "County Executive's Senior Summit", November 2008; "A Community for a Lifetime: The Senior Agenda", December 2012) eight key areas have been identified as essential for Montgomery County seniors to "age in community" with safety, dignity, and vitality:

- Communications and Outreach

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- Housing and Zoning
 - Transportation and Mobility
 - Health and Wellness
 - Civic and Social Engagement
 - Home and Community Support Services
 - Safety
 - Employment

Services benefiting seniors are incorporated in the general department program offerings, as well as targeted services. These services respond to multiple critical needs facing the County at this time and the desired outcomes to promote “vital living for all residents.” Below are some of the major County government programs currently supporting County seniors:

Department of Recreation

- Operate the five full-service Senior Centers that offer social opportunities, health and wellness programs, life-long learning and educational programs, exercise classes, dance classes, lectures, cultural programs, facility bookings, and more.
- Operate a Senior Transportation Service providing limited range access to each of the five Senior Centers.
- Operate the eleven 55+ Active Adult Centers where seniors gather for educational programs, friendship, entertainment, sports, and other activities.
- Operate a Senior Nutrition Program in cooperation with HHS.
- Operate the Senior Sneaker Exercise Program that provides for adults over 55 years of age access to quality exercise and fitness rooms at Recreation Department Community Centers with a reduced annual membership fee.
- Offer Senior Outdoor Adventures in Recreation day trip programs for active adults over 55 years of age.

Department of Health and Human Services

- Prevent or reverse nursing home placement for Medicaid eligible persons of all ages by providing supports planning, nurse monitoring and community based services.
- Transport seniors using Transit Services Ride-On buses during off-peak hours to provide transportation to County community recreation centers once or more per week and to grocery stores for a limited number of senior housing complexes one time each week.
- Provide supportive contractual services to seniors including “friendly visitor” services, escorted grocery shopping, legal assistance, and Alzheimer’s support services.
- Continue the Escorted Transportation Project with the Jewish Council for the Aging to expand and coordinate new and existing escorted transportation services.
- Promote and expand transportation options available to seniors and people with disabilities through the County Mobility and Transportation Manager who works with advocates and public and private service providers.
- Offer one-stop, hands-on assistance and outreach to Montgomery County residents regarding services for seniors, persons with disabilities, and their families and caregivers to clarify their needs and identify and access resources.
- Help protect more than 7,700 County residents in 190 assisted living facilities and 34 nursing homes by maintaining a regular presence, investigating complaints, and advocating for seniors rights.
- Guarantee that seniors over the age of 60 have access to meals, nutrition education, and the opportunity for socialization at community and senior centers and senior apartment buildings.
- Provide home delivered meals to chronically ill clients, age 60 and above, to address the nutritional needs of the County’s most frail and vulnerable seniors who are home-bound due to illness or disability and cannot get out or prepare healthful meals on their own. Special consideration is given to low income individuals, minority individuals, those in rural communities, those with limited English proficiency, and those at risk of institutional care.
- Investigate complaints of maltreatment for abuse and neglect against seniors, secure resources, and provide surrogate decision-making for adults adjudicated through the courts.
- Provide in-home support services to help vulnerable seniors remain safe and cared for in the community and to prevent premature and/or inappropriate institutionalization.
- Offer the Home Care Chore Services Program, which is targeted to low income frail elderly and people with disabilities who need help with light cleaning, vacuuming, laundry, and/or meal preparation in order to remain in their own homes and in the community.
- Provide Heavy Chore Services to serve seniors with hoarding behaviors to prevent evictions, condemnation, or to correct health and safety conditions. Services include heavy commercial cleaning and pest fumigation.

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- Offer short-term respite services to caregivers who provide ongoing care to frail elders and provide relief from the demands of care-giving.
 - Provide Senior Mental Health Services for home-bound seniors and coordinate medication with medical providers.
 - Help meet older adult challenges of remaining independent in their homes as they age in their communities through the “Village” model, a grassroots, consumer driven, and volunteer first model. The Village Coordinator assists current and emerging “Villages” and promotes the creation of new ones.

Department of Transportation – Transit Services

- Subsidize taxi service for low income seniors, age 67 and older, to allow for greater mobility and quality of life.
- Provide information and linkage to transportation resources to senior citizens, maintain a database of resources, help callers fill out forms for transportation programs, and links caller with transportation providers.
- Provide fixed route service (Ride On) to many senior centers.
- Transport seniors to five senior centers and for grocery shopping trips during Ride On’s off-peak period.
- Provide free bus fares on Ride On and Metrobus during off-peak periods (M-F 9:30 AM to 3:00 PM) and half price fares at all other times.
- Improve over 2,925 bus stops as part of Ride On’s safety and accessibility program.

Department of Public Libraries

- Provide programs specifically designed to engage seniors in creative, learning rich events which provide opportunities for social interaction at programs, and after them. These activities are essential to vital living, and provided via grant funding, staff work, and partnerships with Montgomery College’s Lifelong Learning Institute.
- Provide library materials and programs relevant to senior issues. Topics include book discussions, finances, retirement, taxes, health, employment, technology, consumer issues, English language learning, and others.
- Provide lifelong learning services and materials, including our seniors-focused web page, and training on how to use e-books and computers.
- Offer large print library materials and other accessibility equipment and services for seniors.
- Provide Metro Senior SmarTrip cards and reduced fare paper fare cards for purchase at all library branches.
- Provide substantial volunteer opportunities that are frequently utilized by seniors at every branch, such as the MCPL “Grandreaders” program and Service Corps for Retired Executives business counseling.

Fire and Rescue Service

- Identify strategies to reduce fire risk among the elderly.
- Identify homebound seniors and those with disabilities to provide information on fire safety and risk reduction assistance including the installation of approved smoke alarms appropriate for their needs.
- Increase collaboration between MCFRS, County agencies and departments, and professional organizations providing services to seniors.
- Initiate a public education and awareness campaign to educate and inform residents regarding the installation and upgrade of smoke alarms required by Maryland’s new Smoke Alarm Law.
- Initiate a door-to-door campaign offering department services to seniors including the evaluation of existing residential smoke alarm equipment, replacement of outdated smoke alarms, and general injury prevention information.
- Offer a free residential safety evaluation for seniors.
- Assist and partner with communities and neighborhood organizations regarding fire safety, the development of home fire evacuation and escape plans and general injury prevention and information.
- Ensure members of the department are aware and responsive to the needs and risks faced by senior citizens.

Department of Housing and Community Affairs

- Continue partnering with “Rebuilding Together” by funding some administrative costs for a highly leveraged program that provides home repairs for low-income homeowners, most of which are seniors and are unable to undertake home repairs on their own.
- Continue partnering with the Housing Opportunities Commission of Montgomery County to provide rental assistance to low-income seniors.

Office of the State’s Attorney

- Aggressively prosecute crimes against seniors and vulnerable adults through the newly created Crimes Against Seniors and Vulnerable Adults Unit of the State’s Attorney’s Office.
- Continue to collaborate closely with Adult Protective Services and the Police Department to address crimes against seniors in an efficient and timely manner that holds offenders accountable for their criminal activity.

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- Continue to chair the Montgomery County Elder/Vulnerable Adult Abuse Task Force, which brings together representatives from County Agencies to discuss cases of concern and hosts an annual event on World Elder Abuse Awareness Day to promote education/prevention of senior abuse.
 - Collect data on metrics to include the number of investigations opened, inter-agency collaborations, and prosecutions.

Community Engagement Cluster

- Partner with community organizations to provide free tax preparation to low-to-moderate income Montgomery County residents with special attention to seniors age 60+.
- Support opportunities for adults age 60+ to increase access to and participate in community activities, socialization, and lifelong learning.
- Provide individual and couples senior counseling services.
- Offer the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) for volunteers age 55+.

Office of Consumer Protection

- Continue to recruit seniors and retired professionals to work at Office of Consumer Protection as volunteers providing administrative and investigative assistance.
- Expand upon Office of Consumer Protection outreach initiatives to provide consumer education regarding consumer scams that target seniors and vulnerable adults.
- Collaborate with legislators and consumer organizations to enact and enhance laws designed to protect seniors from deceptive trade practices.

Office Human Resources

- Offer the Senior Fellows program to augment the County's workforce by tapping into the skill sets of highly talented, experienced, and seasoned professionals which includes seniors.

Department of Finance

- Continue the Senior Tax Credit for eligible residents at least 70 years of age that reduces the taxpayer's tax bill.

Department of Environmental Protection

- Access an exemption for curbside refuse and recycling services available to any individual who because of physical limitations (disability or age) is unable to bring containers to the curb.

Office of Public Information

- Produce "Seniors Today," a monthly cable television show highlighting services and programs of interest to seniors.
- Provide leadership for the Senior Subcabinet on Vital Living Committee's communications and outreach.
- Create and distribute the Senior Brochure Series including Transportation Options for Seniors (translated into eight languages), Caregiving Resources, Lifelong Learning, and Driving for Seniors.

Senior Initiative FY16 Recommended Operating Budget

Tax-Supported

Department	Project/Program	FY16 Recommended
Health and Human Services	Mental Health Services for Seniors and Persons with Disabilities	510,761
	Aging and Disability Services Resource Unit	197,513
	Senior Community Programs	1,666,099
	The Occupational Therapist initiative	230,000
	Senior Food Program	743,785
	Adult Protective Services/SSTA/ Public Guardianship	3,058,867
	The Adult Day Care Subsidies Initiative	221,565
	Respite Services	339,249
	The Home Care Services program	2,048,686
	Senior Group Homes	41,105
	Adult Foster Care	687,255
	Ombudsman Services	482,869
	CFC Supports Planning	945,236
	CFC Nurse Monitoring	1,360,075
	Senior Dental Services	443,101
	The Medical Assistance Eligibility Services	984,449
Sub-total, Health and Human Services		13,960,615
Recreation	Long Branch Senior Center	115,557
	Damascus Senior Center	145,908
	Schweinhaut Senior Center	222,609
	Holiday Park Senior Center	165,517
	Senior Neighborhood Programs	241,100
	White Oak Community Recreation Center Senior programs	127,423
	Senior Outdoor Adventure Recreation	244,574
	JCA Senior Transportation	640,220
	Senior Mini Trips	50,240
	Add Manager III - Senior Services	111,875
Sub-total, Recreation		2,065,023
Transportation	Call N Ride Program	3,315,169
	Jewish Council on Aging/Connect A Ride	153,860
	Special Transportation	45,000
	Seniors/Disabled Ride Free Program	182,003
Sub-total, Transportation		3,696,032
Other Departments	Community Engagement Cluster - Individual and Couples Counseling	21,000
	Community Engagement Cluster - RSVP Leadership	37,369
	Police - Project Lifesaver Program	12,500
	State's Attorney - Senior Financial Exploitation Prevention Initiative	681,936
	Human Resources - Senior Fellow expansion	100,000
	County Attorney - Senior Issues	128,350
	Department of Housing and Community Affairs - Glenmont Metro	5,000,000
	Department of Housing and Community Affairs - Mt. Jezreel	2,000,000
	Community Grants NDA - Grants for Senior Services	977,459
Sub-total, Other Departments		8,958,614
Total Tax-Supported		28,680,284

Note: Appropriations reported for programs in the Department of Transportation include funds supporting both seniors and the disabled, except Jewish Council on Aging/Connect-A Ride which serves older adults (50+). All other appropriations reflect only funds attributed to senior services. FY16 DHCA appropriations include \$5.0 M for the Glenmont Metro project funded in the CIP.

Non-Tax Supported

		FY16
Department	Project/Program	Recommended
Health and Human Services	Aging and Disability Services Resource Unit	514,219
	Senior Community Programs	854,695
	Senior Food Program.	1,789,073
	Adult Protective Services/SSTA/ Public Guardianship	2,431,662
	Respite Services	88,145
	The Home Care Services program	749,615
	Senior Group Homes	120,024
	Adult Foster Care	296,594
	Ombudsman Services	279,225
	The Medical Assistance Long Term Care program	2,532,249
Sub-total, Health and Human Services		9,655,500
Other Departments	Department of Transportation - Call N Ride Program	379,110
	Fire and Rescue - Senior Safety Outreach	100,000
	Department of Transportation - Medicaid Special Transportation	3,526,720
Sub-total, Other Departments		4,005,830
Total Non-Tax Supported		13,661,330

Note: Appropriations reported for programs in the Department of Transportation include funds supporting both seniors and the disabled. All other appropriations reflect only funds attributed to senior services.