



# We Want Your Input! Employee Input Initiative

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County Executive Marc Elrich strongly believes Montgomery County employees that interact directly with residents, stakeholders, vendors, community partners, and even government itself know and understand their concerns, frustrations, and complaints. The perspective and experience of County employees could be helpful to residents and visitors served by County government. In the development of this initiative, innovation was encouraged and employees were urged not to be satisfied if something can be improved.

The County Executive directed the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to create opportunities for dialogue with all County employees to gather ideas that could shape the County's customer service opportunities, improve customer service, make the County government better, improve our operations, shape the development of the operating budget, and possibly be implemented into the budget.

OMB partnered with the Innovation and Civic Design Team to create the opportunities for dialogue with all the County employees.

## Our Strategy

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In September 2021, OMB and the Civic Design Team launched a pilot and asked four departments to participate to streamline the process and better prepare for the launch to all County employees.



All County employees were invited to submit ideas on new initiatives for funding, re-allocation opportunities, cost savings measures, how the County spends money, how money can be better spent, and how business can be conducted differently and more efficiently. All County employees received an email that provided a link to submit their ideas via Microsoft Forms (a safe platform that was accessible to all employees), view a video from the County Executive, and learn about the initiative

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by viewing a brief PowerPoint presentation.

Employees could submit up to five (5) ideas each and were encouraged to categorize their ideas to the best of their ability among the following categories:

- **IDEA CATEGORIES**
  - Improving Customer Service
  - Making County Government Better
  - New Initiatives
  - Saving the County Money
  - Smarter Spending
- **COST CATEGORIES**
  - Low-Cost
  - No-Cost

### Submission - October 2021

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A total 125 ideas were submitted by 74 employees representing 20 different Montgomery County government departments. Ideas were submitted by employees in the following departments:

Alcohol Beverage Services	Department of Technology and Enterprise Business Solutions
Community Engagement Cluster	Department of Transportation
Department of Environmental Protection	Fire and Rescue Services
Department of Finance	Office of Animal Services
Department of General Services	Office of Consumer Protection
Department of Health and Human Services	Office of Human Resources
Department of Permitting Services	Office of Management and Budget
Department of Police	Office of Procurement
Department of Public Libraries	Office of Public Information
Department of Recreation	Office of the Sheriff

The greatest number of submitted ideas were applicable to the operations of following departments:

- Department of General Services
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Department of Technology and Enterprise Business Solutions
- Office of Human Resources
- Office of Procurement

Once submitted, the OMB team reviewed, sorted, and categorized the ideas to make sure the designation was appropriate and to determine which department would be responsible for implementing the idea. The team audited each participating member's ranking and used the following rubric to rank the ideas:

1. Implementation level of effort (time, cost, staff, etc.): 1 = high effort, 5 = low effort	1	2	3	4	5
2. Cost, or more accurately, Value for the money spent*: 1 = low value, 5 = high value	1	2	3	4	5
3. Staffing needs for the idea (once it's executed): 1 = many FTEs, 5 = fewer FTEs	1	2	3	4	5
4. Feasibility of the idea taking root and living on: 1 = low/difficult to sustain, 5 = high/easy to sustain	1	2	3	4	5
5. Does the idea improve results/outcomes? 1 = no/likely no, 3 = maybe, 5 = yes/likely yes	1	2	3	4	5

The highest possible score was 25; the lowest possible score was 5.

## Voting - November 2021

All Montgomery County government employees were presented with the opportunity to vote on 99\* of the submitted ideas. Voters could indicate whether they thought the idea should be pursued/implemented and if they thought was it a great idea.

Five hundred sixty-two (562) employees voted on the ideas they supported.

\*NOTE: Duplicate ideas were removed and consolidated before the voting process.

## Virtual Ideation Workshops - November 2021

Seventy-nine (79) ideas were selected to be more fully expanded and considered in an Ideation Workshop (these ideas needed more brainstorming). So as to fully understand some submissions, some idea submitters were invited to an Ideation Workshop to provide clarification and fully vet the ideas with other employees. OMB conducted three workshops.

The participants were divided into smaller breakout groups to provide a safe space for open dialogue to explain the idea, respond to questions from other employees, and explain how it might best be implemented, the benefits to the County, the customer, the employees and where possible a guesstimate of the implementation costs and amount of time needed to implement the idea.

- 52 employees were invited to the workshops
- 33 employees were able to attend the workshops

OMB provided equitable access to technology equipment (reserved computer space) so that employees whose job responsibilities/daily work activities don't include access to computers, etc. could participate in the workshops (e.g., frontline employees, etc.).

Workshop participants provided a written summary of the Ideation Workshop discussion along with any modifications or clarifying information to the OMB/County Stat team.

## Review/Analysis - November 2021 through February 2022

OMB uploaded the employee ideas; the employee commentary from the Ideation Workshops; the review team scores; and the employee voting percentiles into OMB's budget development/decision support system to share with OMB analysts and incorporate the ideas into the budget review process with department directors and County leadership. This allowed the ideas to accompany department budget requests and for the ideas to be included in the budget discussions of the department that would be responsible for implementing the idea.

Some employee ideas are currently being implemented within departments. OMB continues to work with departments on implementation of ideas where feasible.