



**COMMITTEE TO RECOMMEND FUNDING
FOR THE
PUBLIC ELECTION FUND**

Hon. Tom Hucker, President
Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Ave.
Rockville, MD 20850

January 21, 2021

Re: 2021 Report of Committee to Recommend Funding for the Public Election Fund

Dear President Hucker and Councilmembers:

Last year we recommended funding of \$6.3 million for the 2022 election cycle. Since then, a successful ballot question (Question C) has increased the number of open seats from 3 to 5.

Also, with County government and community efforts to promote Racial Equity and Equality in the election process, we may have a larger pool of citizens running for office who will disproportionately apply for public funding to finance their campaigns.

Further, a new state law requires counties to pay the State Board of Election's costs for administering the county's public financing program.

And finally, the Committee notes that final action by the Council on the new district boundaries could come as late as Feb 21, 2022 – only a few days before the primary filing deadline on Feb 28, 2022 -- potentially leaving candidates with very limited time to decide where and whether to run, and if yes, then to get their campaigns organized. The Committee recommends the Council consider ameliorating this potential hardship by putting in place, as soon as practicable, a common fundraising website available to all candidates, similar to the one in use in New York City, which has proven very successful and is in fact used by all candidates (see: <https://www.nycvotes.org/>).

We therefore recommend a fund of \$7.5 million for the 2022 election cycle, primary and general combined, derived approximately, as follows:

County Executive	\$3.0 million
Council At Large	\$1.5 million
Open Council Districts (4, perhaps 5) x \$500,000	\$2.0 million (perhaps \$2.5 million)
Other Council District (5, perhaps 4) x \$150,000	\$750,000 (perhaps \$600,000)
Additional administrative expenses	\$350,000

Total: minimum of \$7.5 million (approx.)

Because there have been no additions to the Fund in the past two fiscal years, only \$2.02 million is currently available. To get to \$7.5 million in time to meet the demand (June 28, 2021 is the starting date for matching funds requests), the Committee recommends \$3.0 million be added in the current budget cycle (FY22, starting July 1, 2021) and \$2.5 million in the following cycle (FY23, starting July 1, 2022).

We thank the Council for the opportunity to assist in the development of this important program.

Respectfully submitted,

David Scull, Chair
Nancy McMahan Farrar, Vice Chair
Lee Annis
Sam Statland
Stephen Whitted

CC:

Hon. Marc Elrich, County Executive
David Crow, Department of Finance
Naeem Mia, County Council