



Commission on Aging
Joint Meeting of Health and Wellness and Aging in Community Committee
July 8, 2025
9:30 am-11:30 am

“Health and Wellness & Aging in Community Budget Priority Planning

[Join Zoom Meeting](#)

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82315344483?pwd=U0FxeWxDK0hSaGxwb0krQjY2RUFUZz09>

Agenda

- **Welcome and Introduction**
- **Review and Approval of June 10, 2025 minutes.**
- **Meeting Overview:** At this meeting we will do the following:
 - Develop the 2027 budget priorities from the perspective of the Aging in Community Committee by answering these questions for each priority: Should the COA continue to pursue the 2026-stated priorities, or should these be considered new priorities? For each 2026 priority, why is it still important? Is it achievable? How does this priority support COA? What new priorities should be considered? Use the attached documents as references. Allocate 30 minutes.
 - Develop 2027 budget priorities from the perspective of the Health and Wellness Committee by answering these questions: Should the COA continue to pursue the priorities outlined for 2026, or are there new priorities? For each 2026 priority, why does it remain

important? Is it achievable? How does this priority support the COA? What new priorities should be considered? Use attached documents as reference—30 minutes.

- How can our two committees collaborate more effectively to advocate for these priorities or new ones? - 30 minutes
- **Business Meeting:**
 - Update on County Issues
 - Other Business
- **Next Scheduled Meeting:** No August meeting. September meeting- September 10, 2025. Topic TBD

FY26 Priority	Proposing Committee	Current status – what progress has been made?	Should the COA continue to pursue as a priority? If yes, why is this still important? Is it achievable? How does this priority support COA and A&D missions? What changes should be considered?
1) Create a permanent Marketing and Outreach position in the Department of Aging Disability Services, to be filled by either staff or broker, to promote the many beneficial County programs available to older adults.	Communications		
2) Provide \$10,000 to fund the Commission on Aging's annual public forum that brings together noted experts with members of the public to discuss issues important to older adults.	Communications		
3) Provide funding for the translation of printed materials specific to older adults. Continue funding for important older adult publications such as ads for <i>The Beacon</i> and production of the public access TV program, <i>50+ in Montgomery County</i> .	Communications		
4) Funding Request of \$180,000 to fund crucial initiatives that will advance the ability of	Aging in Community		

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older people in Montgomery County to be in safe, accessible, affordable, and desirable housing.			
5) Funding Request of \$60,000 to support a pilot program that will allow MCDOT to provide backup transportation services, especially to Recreational Centers, so that older adults and people with disabilities are not stranded or left behind.	Aging in Community		
6) Funding Requested of \$50,000 to prepare curricula within Montgomery College and the Gudelsky Institute leading to Universal Design (UD) certification (or degree if warranted), recruit faculty, identify on-the-job training and mentorship opportunities, and relevant UD guidance for developers.	Aging in Community		
7) Funding of \$250,000 to evaluate and expand the Access HEARS pilot program to cover the expense of additional devices and support for	Health & Wellness		

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more needy County residents who are experiencing hearing loss and its adverse outcomes.			
8) Funding of \$250,000 for The Arc of Montgomery to provide respite services to unpaid, live-in, primary caregivers, who are often family members.	Health & Wellness		
9) Funding \$120,000 to provide for mental health services for older adults in Montgomery County, particularly for in-home counseling services.	Health & Wellness		
10) Funding for the expansion and service levels of in-home care services to older County residents by 1) increasing funding for In-Home Aide Services (IHAS) 2) increasing funding for additional DHHS staff and 3) increasing funding for supporting contractors and non-profits that provide the In-Home Aide Services.	Health & Wellness		
11) Provide \$60,000 in funding to clear the waiting list for a program in senior centers providing	Health & Wellness		

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structured activities, socialization, and support designed to meet the needs of older county residents with early-stage memory loss who are aging in place. In partnership with the Recreation Department, a small site in another part of the county could be opened.			
12) Funding for one FTE at a pay grade sufficient to carry out the duties of a full-time Implementation Manager to lead, coordinate, and manage the Implementation Team recommended by the Home and Community-Based Workforce Task Force.	Health & Wellness		
13) Conduct an independent review of the Office of the Montgomery County Grants Management system equitable distribution of grants, assess the need for further reform, and address shortcomings.	Public Policy		
14) Fund a baseline countywide older adult	Public Policy		

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community needs assessment survey to provide insights into the views of our residents on the quality of life in Montgomery County, the effectiveness of current programs in supporting older residents, and areas where additional support is needed.			
15) Reestablish the Senior Fellow program and authorize funding for four Senior Fellow positions for older professionals whose skills and expertise will enhance the ability of county government meet the needs of residents.	Public Policy		
16) Advocate with State delegation and other key actors: to enact legislation enabling delegation authority to Counties for nursing home inspections; to re-establish delegation of nursing home inspections to County via MOU with State (pending permission from CMS), to fully restore the budget for inspections and on-site complaint inspections by the LTCO with additional	Public Policy		

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funding from the State. After executing the MOU, allocate County Funding of \$525,000 to hire, train, and onboard a team of nursing home inspectors.			

ATTACHMENT #4

Request - Provide gap-filling transportation services to older adults and residents with disabilities

FY24 Funding Request- \$120,000

BRIEF STATEMENT

The MC Commission on Aging (CoA) urges the requested funding to the MC Department of Transportation (MCDOT) in order to provide “gap-filling” transportation services for older adults and people with disabilities. The funding would provide an important service that will prevent people with an immediate need of transportation service from falling through the cracks in getting their medical and life care needs met. The service would be modeled after the very successful MC DOT’s Emergency COVID Vaccination Transportation Service.

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Too many County residents miss vital medical appointments and life opportunities because they don’t have access to transportation. Montgomery County residents were vaccinated at a higher rate than many communities because Montgomery County government made a commitment to addressing barriers to vaccination, including transportation to vaccination clinics. The County’s COVID transportation program leveraged existing contracts with Connect-A-Ride and local taxi companies to ensure access to vaccination clinics: this program can be expanded to meet other needs as well.

Connect-A-Ride is a program run by Jewish Council for the Aging under contract with MCDOT. Generally, its services are limited mostly to providing information and referral to older adults and residents with disabilities about the many programs available to meet their transportation needs such as Metro Access, volunteer transportation, and discounted taxi. The COVID transportation program allowed Connect-A-Ride staff to connect residents with free taxi rides when these other programs were unavailable. The COVID transportation program can be expanded to provide transportation for other needs, including trips to medical appointments and opportunities vital for quality of life. Such a program would help ensure that older adults and residents with disabilities get where they need to go.

311 operators are familiar with the Connect-A-Ride service and can connect callers directly to it. Under the existing contract, Connect-A-Ride is required to conduct outreach to make County residents aware of its availability. Funding for this project would go toward staffing and promotion of Connect-A-Ride, as well as funds to cover taxi fares.

ATTACHMENT #5

Recommendation - Establish a safety, accessibility and customer service training program for all Montgomery County taxicab drivers.

Cost - \$190,000 annually

BRIEF STATEMENT

Improve service provided by taxi and other transportation companies to older adults and residents with disabilities by funding the [Passenger Assistance Safety and Sensitivity \(PASS\) training](#). A nationally-recognized industry standard, PASS training ensures that passengers are transported in the most safe, sensitive and careful manner possible. These funds would enable Montgomery College staff to deliver the training to drivers, and DOT to compensate drivers for their time.

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

The MC Commission on Aging (CoA) recognizes the need to provide better training of taxi drivers who serve older adults, people with disabilities, and low-income residents. The CoA has heard on numerous occasions about drivers who are verbally abusive, insensitive, and lack understanding of appropriate customer service techniques, given their clientele, and the proper use of the wheel chair accessible vehicle and equipment. We strongly believe the County needs to provide periodic sensitivity-type customer service training to every driver who serves older adults, people with disabilities, and low-income residents. The drivers need to be compensated for their time to incentivize participation in order for them to attend. The CoA urges the development and implementation of a certified training program that is both required of all taxi drivers and is based on national standards, such as those developed by the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA).

The Commission on Aging and the Commission on People with Disabilities have advocated for more robust training to ensure that taxicab drivers understand their responsibilities when transporting individuals with disabilities and seniors, especially using wheel-chair accessible vehicles (WAV). Respondents to a recent survey about taxicab usage, conducted by the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Transportation, indicated that patrons believed that taxicab drivers have a general lack of awareness of the proper protocols of transporting individuals with disabilities. The County's Call-n-Ride subsidized trip programs, that involve residents that are at a higher level of needs, are a growing percentage of taxicab trips. This makes such a certified training program all the more important.

ATTACHMENT #6

TITLE Certification Program for Stronger Universal Design Implementation for Senior Housing

BRIEF STATEMENT

The MC Commission on Aging (CoA) urges the development and implementation of a Universal Design training and certification program for all developers in Montgomery County as well as staff from the County's offices of Housing and Aging and Disabilities. Such a training and certification program would be needed to insure the options for Universal Design features were adequately considered and implemented in new, existing, and rental housing for older adults. This effort would be done jointly with the MC Offices of Aging and Disabilities, Office of Permitting Services, and the Housing Opportunities Commission. The effort would also engage Developers in the County

FY 2023: Advocacy to County Council for this effort to build a constituency and support. Work with national organizations to frame a concept for a training and certification program.

FY 2024: Funding Requested of \$50,000.

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

It is envisioned that this initiative will have the following outcomes:

1. All developers in Montgomery County should have one staff member certified in UD to review all housing destined/marketed for seniors/people with disabilities whether for sale or rent. The County Housing Department should similarly have staff certified (not just familiar with but certified) in UD, and all housing plans for seniors should be reviewed through that lens.
2. All developers marketing homes to seniors should ask the buyer to sign a document stating which if any UD features, he wishes or does not wish installed prior to moving in. The list of UD features on the document can include the additional price for each feature, if installed. Prices should be based on market prices and verified by the County housing department, comparing with similar costs for non-profits.
3. The County housing Department should prepare a minimum list of UD features to share with potential renters/purchasers.
4. All new senior housing as well as refurbished rental senior housing, in Montgomery County should be pre-equipped with broadband capability strong enough that it can accommodate some of the tech health, safety and entertainment features seniors may need, e.g. cell phones, personal alarms, streaming services, electronic personal assistants like Alexa, virtual medical appointments, remote work or banking needs.

