



Commission on People with Disabilities

Orientation Outline 2025

The Office of the County Executive in consultation with the Office of the County Attorney establishes policies and procedures for all Montgomery County Government Boards, Commissions and Committees (BCC).

What is the Commission on People with Disabilities (CPWD)?

The Commission was established by County legislation in 1978. The Commission is an advisory body to act on behalf of the County's residents with disabilities. The Commission provides advice, counsel, and recommendations to the Government of Montgomery County, Maryland in general, the County Executive, and the County Council in particular. Its responsibilities involve those matters influencing provision of services, County Government policies and procedures, development and implementation of state and federal laws, and any other issues affecting lives, rights, and welfare of the people it represents. The Commission is composed of 25 members who are appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the County Council.

InclusionMontgomery: Dedicated to the Inclusion of People with Disabilities in our Community

The CPWD is committed to people with disabilities having equal access to programs and services, equitable treatment, a fair allocation of community resources and social connectedness through engagement in the community at the level of his or her choice. Self-determination and supporting caregiver families should be at the core of short or long-term support planning. Individuals indicate their need for transportation, medical, legal, housing, respite, employment, volunteerism, and leisure activities and the activities that will make for a meaningful day. We are dedicated to planning with, for, and serving the whole community regardless of disability, race, color, religion, ancestry, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, genetic status, family responsibilities, gender identity, presence of children, and family structure or any other characteristic.

Duties of the Commission on People with Disabilities

The CPWD advises the County Government and the Department of Health and Human Services relative to:

- ▶ review programs and services for people with disabilities, including identifying unmet needs and gaps in services;
- ▶ identify, analyze, and evaluate barriers to programs and services for people with disabilities;
- ▶ review reports and publications of government agencies providing services to people with disabilities;
- ▶ review federal, state and local legislation that concerns or would affect people with disabilities;
- ▶ study ways to maximize the use of facilities and services available to people with disabilities;
- ▶ conduct open meetings to provide direct communication among people with disabilities, private and public organizations, and the general public regarding programs and services for people with disabilities;
- ▶ initiate conferences of interagency planning group and create special task forces to identify and assess needs and promote the coordination of services among public and private agencies, departments, and organizations that provide services and programs for people with disabilities;

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Via MD Relay 711

- ▶ identify and recommend to the County Executive and the County Council appropriate sources of state and federal funding for services and programs for people with disabilities;
- ▶ make recommendations for procedures, programs, and legislation to promote the well-being of people with disabilities;
- ▶ submit an annual report by November 1 each year to the County Council and the County Executive that includes: the status of services and programs for people with disabilities in the County; recommendations for the more effective delivery of services and programs to people with disabilities; and annual budget and policy priorities for delivery of services to people with disabilities;
- ▶ advise the Department of Health and Human Services in carrying out the duties and responsibilities imposed by federal laws affecting people with disabilities; and
- ▶ make recommendations to the Department of Health and Human Services about the County's contribution to programs and services for people with disabilities. (1979 L.M.C., ch. 4, § 2; 1979 L.M.C., ch. 20, § 3; FY 1991 L.M.C., ch. 6, § 2; 1995 L.M.C., ch. 13, § 1.) Editor's note-Section 5 of 1995 L.M.C., ch. 13, reads as follows: "Sec. 5. A regulation that implements a function assigned to the Department of Health and Human Services by 1995 LMC ch. 13 continues in effect but is amended to the extent necessary to provide that the regulation is administered by the Director of the Department of Health and Human Services."
- ▶ The Commission serves as advisory to the County on compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Including Project Civic Access, Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988 and other disability rights laws.
- ▶ The Commission year is October 1 – September 30.

Membership Composition

Voting Members

The composition is defined by enabling legislation. The Commission is a diverse group with:

- ▶ more than 50% of people with disabilities,
- ▶ 13 representatives of people with disabilities,
- ▶ 3 members who are parents of people disabilities,
- ▶ 9 members who represent organizations and agencies serving people with disabilities,

Non-Voting Members

1 non-voting member from the:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| • Department of General Services | • Montgomery County Public Schools |
| • Department of Libraries | • Office of Human Resources |
| • Department of Recreation | • Maryland Department of Rehabilitation Services |
| • Department of Transportation | • M-NCPPC, Montgomery Parks |
| • Housing Opportunities Commission | |
| • Montgomery College | |
- ▶ 2 non-voting members from the Department of Health and Human Services,
 - ▶ 1 non-voting member from the Commission on Veterans Affairs per Bill 4-16 effective 7-20-16, and
 - ▶ Other non-voting members as designated by the County Executive.

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Election of Officers

Depending on the BCC's enabling documentation, the BCC chair and vice chair are generally elected by membership or designated or appointed by the County Executive. BCCs should elect officers (chair/vice chair/secretary or other officers) according to the BCCs enabling documentation or bylaws if applicable. [See Electing Officers](#).

- Officer elections should be held by secret ballot.
- The best practice is for the elections to be announced a month before the BCC meets. Then members can nominate themselves or another member and the BCC can vote on the officers at the next meeting.
- Officers should serve the term prescribed in the enabling documentation or one year.
- If an officer election results in a tie, the BCC should vote until the tie is resolved.

BCC Staff Role and Responsibilities

A BCC staff liaison is generally designated by the director or supervisor of the department or office with which the BCC is affiliated or is the director or supervisor of the department or office. Sometimes the staff is designated by the Chief Administrative Officer or County Executive. The Department of Health and Human Services must provide the staff support, including administrative and programmatic support, necessary for the Commission to perform its duties.

The role of the BCC staff liaison is to serve as the link between the BCC and the department with which the BCC is affiliated and the County Executive's Office. Maintain membership lists, maintain member attendance records, reserve County meeting space

- Attend BCC meetings, transmit meeting materials to members, oversee member financial disclosure compliance, process member reimbursement forms,
- Provide member orientation, control/order any material with County logo (e.g. letterhead),
- Obtain County ID badges for members if necessary,
- Ensure compliance with County Ethics Law,
- Ensure compliance with other County Practices and Procedures and other departments with oversight (e.g. ADA, Office of Intergovernmental Relations, Public Information Office), advise County Executive staff of member change of address, employment, etc.,
- Take and maintain meeting minutes, ensure board stays on mission in compliance with enabling legislation, ensure compliance with Robert Rules of Order on Formal Matters.

Chair Role and Responsibilities

The chair must do the following (responsibilities shared with BCC staff are in *italics*):

- *Ensure that a BCC acts within the authority of its enabling documentation. i.e., acts within its mission.*
- *Preside over meetings and ensure that the BCC complies with Roberts Rules of Order for formal action.*
- Set meeting dates in compliance with enabling documentation.
- Set agendas in cooperation with members.
- Coordinate subcommittees.

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The Chair may do the following:

- Recognize non-member attendees and set aside time for them to speak.
- Remove a non-member.
- *Send/sign attendance violation notice letters.*

Absence of Chair

- **A chair must preside over every BCC meeting.** In the absence of a chair the vice chair can preside over the meeting.
- **An elected chairman pro tem:** If neither the chair or vice chair is present, the BCC staff or another member should call the meeting to order and the BCC should elect a temporary chair to preside over the meeting.

BCC Member Role and Responsibilities

The role of the BCC member is to carry out the substantive work of the group according to the BCC's enabling legislation. BCC work is collaborative, and no single member should represent the group, send correspondence, or act on behalf of the group unless approved by the group.

BCC members must:

- Complete training (within 90 days of Council confirmation of their appointment) on the Maryland Open Meetings Act, Montgomery County Ethics Law, and basic parliamentary procedure.
- Comply with the Montgomery County Ethics Law. Members of quasi-judicial and licensing BCCs must also complete an initial, annual, and final financial disclosure statement with the Ethics Commission.
- Comply with the County's attendance policy.
- Complete Risk Management Volunteer and Driver Forms.
- BCC members are eligible for reimbursement for travel and dependent care for in-person meetings attended.

Advocacy/Lobbying

The word "lobby" is defined as "to conduct activities (as engaging in personal contacts or the dissemination of information) with the objective of influencing public officials and especially members of a legislative body with regard to legislation and other policy decisions." The CPWD enabling legislation gives the authority to advise the County Executive and the County Council. The CPWD is an advisory board and makes recommendations to the County Executive and County Council in collaboration with the Office of Intergovernmental Relations (OIR). The Commission can also lobby at the State and Federal level with the approval of the OIR, which is authorized to lobby on behalf of the County Government. For the BCCs that newly have advocacy authority under Bill 37-15 (see Legislation section), there is a formal process that has been developed by OIR that will delineate future advocacy approval processes between the "Bill 37-15" BCCs and OIR. Please note that any proposed legislation or advocacy by a BCC to the State should be endorsed by a majority of the BCC's members or represent a consensus view of the BCC. Procedurally, the Commission Staff Liaison is required to submit an Advocacy Request Form to the Office of Intergovernmental Relations (OIR) prior to commenting on any proposed State or Federal legislation. The Advocacy Request Form can be found at: www.montgomerycountymd.gov/boards/advocacy-form.html.

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Proposing Legislation

Commissioners are appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the County Council. Commissions can go directly to the County Executive or County Council to recommend County legislation as nothing prohibits that. However, the County Attorney has advised the Commission that it is protocol or courtesy of BCC's as they are appointed by the County Executive for the Commission to request support first of the County Executive or executive staff on any proposed County legislation. If the County Executive supports the request of the Commission, then the Executive will send the legislation to the County Council.

Commission Meeting Location

For now, meetings are being held via zoom. Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of the month (September to June) from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. via zoom at this time. When it is safe, we will resume meeting at the Executive Office Building (EOB), 101 Monroe Street, Rockville, Maryland, in the Lobby Auditorium. The Annual Planning Meeting of the Commission is held at an offsite location in the fall for the purpose of setting goals for the year's activity. Full Commission Meetings are not held in July and August. As possible, we adjust meeting dates in order to accommodate days of major religious observances. [See Paratransit Procedures](#). It is the policy of the County not to use Zoom chat during a meeting. Meetings are not to be recorded or live streamed without permission of the County. Staff must submit a request for meeting to be recorded.

VIRTUAL MEETING CHAT FEATURE – DON'T USE IT

The prohibition against recording "chats" in County meetings is in Section 6.3 of AP 6-1. [See AP 6-1 for eBudget.pdf](#). ("If the technology being used to record the meeting or training has a "chat" or "comment" feature that allows public comment, it must be turned off during the meeting. Enabling the chat feature on a recorded meeting or training requires a specific exemption from the CAO or designee.")

Attendance/Removal from the Commission

A member of a commission who misses more scheduled meetings or hearings than the number of allowed absences, computed by the following table, or who misses 3 consecutive scheduled meetings, is automatically removed. Scheduled meeting or hearing means any meeting or hearing for which at least 7 days advance notice was given, and which was held as scheduled. This is calculated on a rolling year, not from September to June.

Number of Meetings Held in One Year	Allowed Absences
1 – 4	1
5 – 8	2
9 – 12	3
13 – 16	4
17+	5

Attendance will be taken at the Full Commission Meetings and monthly Committee meetings. [See Attendance Provisions for Boards, Committees and Commissions](#).

Inclement Weather Policy

If a BCC is meeting virtually, the inclement weather policy does not apply, and the BCC can meet as scheduled unless Montgomery County Government is closed.

If a meeting is in person:

- If Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) open late, BCC morning meetings are cancelled.
- If MCPS closes early, or if afternoon or evening activities are cancelled, BCC afternoon and evening meetings are cancelled.
- If MCPS is closed all day, all BCC meetings for that day and evening will be cancelled.
- BCCs may change to virtual meetings during an inclement weather event and should plan for such events so that members and frequent meetings attendees are aware and must also update meeting notices on the BCC Trumba Calendar.

Terms of Appointment

The County Executive appoints Commission members. The County Executive appoints voting members subject to confirmation by the County Council. The County Executive may appoint additional non-voting members from other governmental agencies. All voting appointments are for a 3-year term beginning October 1, except appointments to fill unexpired terms. While the law establishing the CPWD states that members serve 3-year terms, Article XI, Section 2-148 (a)(1) of the County Code, which applies to all County boards, committees and commissions, states that “no individual should ordinarily serve more than 2 consecutive full terms....” Further, section 2-148 (a)(2) states that “[A]ny individual who has served 2 full terms on a group is not eligible to serve on the same group until one year has elapsed. The appointing authority [the County Executive] may waive this restriction if: (A) no other qualified applicant is available; or (B) other unique circumstances justify the reappointment of the particular individual.”

Appointments

In making appointments to groups, the appointing authority should consider the following criteria: interest, diversity of background and professions, relevant experience and expertise, and geographic balance. To promote broad participation, no individual should ordinarily serve more than 2 consecutive full terms or serve on more than one group at any one time. However, an individual may serve on more than one group at the same time if the law that created a committee requires or allows a member of that group to be selected from members of another County group.

Applications:

- Are viable for one year from the application deadline of the notice to which the applicant responded.
- A BCC can select from previous applicants within the one-year timeframe (unless it is time for the regular annual recruitment). BCC staff contacts an applicant recommended from a previous recruitment, but for which there were no positions available at the time, to determine if the applicant is still interested and wished to be considered for appointment.

Incumbents

Incumbents must apply for reappointment through the online application system when the vacancy notice is posted, not before or after. They should include a brief letter of interest and resume.

- Although there is a tendency for incumbents to be reappointed, it is not automatic.
- Incumbents should not be on the nominating committee when they are applying for reappointment.
- Incumbents should not be interviewed.

Voting - Quorum

- BCCs must follow Robert's Rules of Order when taking formal action.
- A BCC must have a quorum present at the meeting to act.
- A quorum is the simple majority of voting members authorized in the BCC's enabling documentation. Vacancies on a BCC do not reduce the quorum requirement.
- A majority vote of more than half the voting members (the quorum) present is required for a motion to pass.
- When a BCC votes to elect officers, if the election results in a tie, the BCC should continue to vote until the tie is broken.
- Voting by Email: If an urgent vote is required, members may vote by email, but the vote must be ratified (i.e., another vote must be taken) at the next virtual or in-person meeting.
- BCC work is collaborative and final work products and actions must be voted upon by the group.
- The chair or any other board member may only act after the action is voted on and approved by the entire board, and the board designates the chair or a particular member to take the action.
- Absentee Voting: There is no absentee voting. There can be voting by email for the occasional urgency, but after voting by email, the issue and vote should be on the next meeting's agenda as an action item with a brief explanation and the result of the email vote. Document the ratified vote in the minutes

Committees/Workgroups

The Committees and workgroups carry out the work of the CPWD. The State Open Meetings Act applies to County Committees and requires that Committees give reasonable public notice of meetings. The Commission gives a 7 day notice for full Commission meetings. Meetings must be open to the public and held in an accessible place. Unless otherwise stated, Committee meetings are held at 401 Hungerford Drive, Rockville. On-site parking is available. A Committee may hold a closed session only for the reasons set forth in the State Open Meetings Act.

- ▶ Every CPWD member can participate in work of a committee or workgroup.
- ▶ Adhoc committees or workgroups are established to achieve the desired outcome of a Commission priority.
- ▶ Committees/workgroups report to the CPWD and are not authorized to act on their own in the name of the CPWD.

Liaison Activities of the Commission

- The Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Commission (IDDC) has a voting member appointed by the Chair of the CPWD to serve on the IDDC per their enabling legislation.
- Commission on Aging
- Commission on Veterans Affairs
- HHS Advisory Leadership Council
- Legislative
- Community Education and Outreach
- Library Services
- MD Alliance of Disability Commissions and Committees
- Any County Board, Committee or Commission

The CPWD is frequently asked to send representatives to other advisory groups and does so as members' interest permit.

Representation

CPWD members represent the CPWD at meetings or when giving testimony on legislation or other matters, only when they are authorized to do so by the Chair. CPWD members may not identify the CPWD with a position unless it is an established position of the CPWD.

Correspondence

Should only be sent by BCC staff/County employees on behalf of the BCC. No correspondence should be sent without knowledge of BCC staff. This includes agendas and minutes to BCC members.

All official commission correspondence goes out under the signature of the chair. Commissioners are not to send out positions representing the commission. Commissioners can send out opinions stating they are a commission member but acting as a private citizen.

Commission Meeting Procedures

- ▶ Committee meetings may be conducted informally, but the parliamentary procedures of Roberts Rules of Order govern formal actions or decisions on controversial matters. [See Summary of Roberts Rules of Order](#).
- ▶ The published agenda forms the structure of the meeting.
- ▶ Action Items – The business of the CPWD is conducted by voting on action items. If time permits, motions for action should be reviewed with the Steering Committee prior to being placed on the agenda for the full CPWD meeting. [See BCC Voting Procedures](#).
- ▶ Notice of Meetings – Advanced notice of all CPWD meetings and documents will be emailed prior to the meeting. Documents will include the following:
 - Agenda
 - Minutes of the previous meeting
 - Other information as needed

You can also view the agenda and meeting minutes online at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cpwd. Please contact Carly Clem via email carly.clem@montgomerycountymd.gov or call 240-777-1252 (Office), 202-853-1109 (Work Cell) if you would like a hard copy of these documents.

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Timing and Adoption of Minutes – Open Meetings Act

The Maryland Open Meetings Act requires public bodies to “have minutes . . . prepared” “for those as soon as practicable” after their **commission/committees meetings named in the enabling legislation**. § 3-306(b); see that for also § 3-307(d)(1) (providing that the nineteen public bodies subject to § 3-307 “shall approve meeting minutes in a timely manner”). As explained by the Compliance Board, a draft summary of a meeting does not become a set of “minutes” until the public body has adopted it as minutes. See 6 OMCB Opinions 187, 190 (2009) (“To qualify as minutes of the public body, the public body must approve them.”); see also 14 OMCB Opinions 3, 3-4 (2020) (concluding that computer-generated “notes” of a meeting did not constitute minutes because they had not been reviewed and adopted by the members of the public body). Section 3-306(b)’s timelines. In Maryland, public bodies are required to keep minutes of their open meetings for five years according to the Maryland Attorney General. The Open Meetings Act does not afford the public any right to participate in the meeting, it does assure the public right to observe the deliberative process and the making of decisions by the public body at open meetings. Public participants generally are not invited to speak during presentations and time is set aside at the end of the meeting to allow the public to speak. The only obligation to the public is that meetings comply with the Open Meetings Act rules. The public can only participate if recognized by the Chair.

Posting of Documents Online - Commission Websites

Only final documents including minutes, letters, etc., should be posted online. Drafts can be sent to Commissioners for comment. The following websites were created by Commission staff except for the Design for Life Tax Incentive Program which is housed on the Permitting Services website.

Disability Services

www.montgomerycountymd.gov/disability

Transportation Network Directory for People with Disabilities and Adults Age 50+

www.montgomerycountymd.gov/tnd

Commission on People with Disabilities

www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cpwd

Disability Network Directory

www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dnd

Design for Life Tax Incentive Program

www.designforlifemc.org

Americans with Disabilities Act Reasonable Accommodations

If you need an ADA reasonable accommodation to participate in any of our meetings, please feel free to discuss this with staff. Sign language interpreter services and other types of reasonable accommodation will be provided upon request, preferably 5 business days or with as much advance notice as possible. Please call Carly Clem at 240-777-1252 (Office), 202-853-1109 (Work Cell), via MD Relay at 711 or email Carly.Clem@montgomerycountymd.gov. In all situations, a good faith effort (up until the time of the event) will be made to provide accommodations. Alternative formats of our documents are available upon request by contacting staff. [See Meeting Accessibility Policy](#).

Translators of Foreign Language

Translators of foreign language are required to be provided upon request by meeting attendees. The County has a pool of interpreters. For quasi-judicial boards it may be necessary to contract with a County approved company if County employees are not able to translate legal proceedings. How to request must be on all agendas.

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Parking Permits

As of September 1st, 2002, parking at the EOB underground parking lot will be by permit only. Commissioners who need to park at the EOB for the full Commission meeting will have to obtain a County identification badge from the EOB's Security Office. Commission staff will provide forms and instructions. [See Memo: Photo Identification Card for Commission Members](#). **If applicable, please complete the [Request for Identification Access Card Application](#) and the [Parking Permit Application](#).**

General Volunteer Registration Form

Completion of this form is required by all volunteers. The County provides General Liability Coverage for volunteers. Details of coverage may be discussed with the Division of Risk Management. **Please complete the [General Volunteer Registration Form](#).**

Mileage/Dependent Care Reimbursement

CPWD members traveling to and from official meetings are entitled to mileage reimbursement. Mileage forms should be submitted monthly. All mileage reimbursement requests must be submitted by June 20, prior to the end of the County's fiscal year. Please review the [Reimbursement Policy](#).

- ▶ Mileage to the full CPWD meetings, the Steering Committee meetings and other Committee or Workgroup meetings is reimbursed at the flat rate of \$10 per meeting. Persons certified to use MetroAccess are eligible to be reimbursed for \$10 per meeting to cover the cost of the trip.
- ▶ Child Care and dependent care expenses are reimbursed at \$30 per meeting for attending the full CPWD meeting, the Steering Committee meeting and other Committee or Workgroup meetings.

Requests for reimbursement should be submitted using the [Meeting Reimbursement Request Form](#).

MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARDS, COMMITTEES, AND COMMISSIONS (BCCs) REQUIRED TRAINING

Mont. County Code Sec. 2-148 (d) BCC members (including ex officio members) and staff are **required** to take the three training modules below within 90 days of their confirmation or assignment to a BCC. The link to each training can be accessed separately below.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY ETHICS LAW TRAINING – The training is online, and consists of viewing a 50-minute video, completing an evaluation form, receiving a certificate by email and uploading the certificate.

- **Link to Montgomery County Ethics Law Training:**
www.montgomerycountymd.gov/Ethics/training/bcc-ethics-training.html
- Each individual trainee should electronically save the certificate received by email.
- **If there is no evaluation link after the training**, the pop-up blocker in the browser should be turned off. Fast forward to the 48 minute and 20 second part of the video. The **evaluation** button appears beneath the video at about the 48 minute 25 second mark. If members are still unable to access the evaluation and certificate, please let staff know.
- **There may also be an issue if members have already registered for the Ethics Training and try to re-register.** In that case they can register again using a different email address. If they don't have another email address to use, please let staff know and TEBS can "unregister" them from the training.

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MARYLAND OPEN MEETINGS ACT (OMA) TRAINING – The training takes approximately 2-1/2 hours and consists of six training lessons. The training should be completed as soon as possible; however, if the participant can't complete the training all at once, it may be broken up into multiple sessions using the same computer.

- **Link to Maryland Open Meetings Act Training:**
www.igsr.umd.edu/VLC/OMA/class_oma_intro1.php
- Fill out and print a certificate of completion of the training. Each individual trainee should complete their own certificate. Certificates must be printed immediately upon completion of the training. After the training is completed, the certificates will not be accessible.
- Each individual trainee should electronically scan and save their certificate.

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE TRAINING – The training is online, and consists of viewing a short video, taking a quiz, receiving a certificate by email and uploading the certificate.

- **Link to BCC Parliamentary Procedure Training:**
www.montgomerycountymd.gov/boards/training/parliamentary-procedures.html
- Each individual trainee should electronically save the certificate received by email.

LINK TO UPLOAD TRAINING CERTIFICATES OF COMPLETION – For all three training modules.

Each individual trainee should upload the certificate received by using the form on the BCC webpage. Individuals should complete the online form, which includes a field for the staff liaison's email address. When that address is entered, an email is generated to the staff liaison with the certificate attached. Staff liaisons will then track the participation of their BCC members.

- Fill out and print a certificate of completion of the training. Each individual trainee should complete their own certificate. Certificates must be printed immediately upon completion of the training. After the training is completed, the certificates will not be accessible.
- Each individual trainee should electronically scan and save their certificate.
- CEX staff gets copies of emails with certificates, but an automatic list is not created. Each individual trainee should upload the certificate received by email using the form on the BCC webpage. Individuals should complete the online form, which includes a field for the staff liaison's email address and generates an email to the staff liaison with the certificate attached. Staff liaisons should then track the participation of their BCC members.
- **Training Certificate Upload:** www.montgomerycountymd.gov/boards/training/Certificate.html