

# COMMISSION ON PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES ANNUAL REPORT 2024



Commission on People with Disabilities  
October 25, 2024

*Via Letter of Transmittal Electronically*

Honorable Marc Elrich, Montgomery County Executive  
Honorable Andrew Friedson, President, Montgomery County Council  
James C. Bridgers, Jr., Ph.D., MBA, Director, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services

The Commission on People with Disabilities is pleased to present a summary of its activities for the past year. We continue to advise and consult with you on issues of concern to the safety and well-being of an estimated 98,682 people with disabilities who live in the County, according to the 2023 U.S. Census Bureau. Please note the County resident disability data on page 13 — 23,521 with hearing, 16,425 with vision, 38,813 with cognitive and 43,587 with ambulatory disabilities. The census does not include mental health data. We continue to work to improve the lives of people with disabilities.

1. The safety of all pedestrians remains a major concern of the Commission. The Commission is willing to provide input to help assure that pedestrian travel-way design changes include consideration of the needs of all pedestrians including those who have a vision, hearing, intellectual/developmental and/or physical disability. Our input early in the design process will permit a more thorough consideration of the challenges faced by people with disabilities before plan development and subsequent finalization. We can help with proposed changes in sidewalks, bicycle lane design and appropriate placement, electric scooter use planning and program design, sidewalk construction and all other pedestrian transportation design considerations. Our early involvement may avoid the need for costly retrofitting and reconstruction. The Commission has a long history of successful collaboration with the County on many issues and would like to continue this tradition with the Montgomery County Department of Transportation to develop safer designs for all pedestrians.
2. We appreciate the ongoing review of the Transportation Services Improvement Fund Disbursement guidelines. Use of this fund to promote availability of accessible taxi service in the County requires reconsideration and revitalization. People with disabilities find that the lack of reliable taxi services is a barrier to getting to work, medical appointments, and other life activities.
3. The Commission had recommended that the County establish an Intellectual and Development Disability Commission to advise the County, State and Federal government. The Commission was pleased when the County established the new Commission and appointed and confirmed the new members for that Commission on September 12, 2023.
4. If you are looking for information available to you on a broad range of disability issues go to the Commission's Disability Network Directory ([www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DND](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DND)) and the home page for disability services at [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/disability](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/disability).

We wish to recognize and give our personal thanks to all Commissioners, community members, and agency staff who participate in our meetings for their commitment and dedication in promoting the civil rights and independence of people with disabilities. For the upcoming year, Tonya Gilchrist will be serving as Chair and Jamila Michael-Sobratti will serving as Vice-Chair. It has been a pleasure to work with you and the members of the Commission. We are confident that you will continue to support the Commission's efforts to enhance the lives of people with disabilities in our County. Our meetings are open to the public, and we invite you to join us at our meetings.

Sincerely,



Karen Morgret  
Acting Chair

[www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cpwd](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cpwd)

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## **MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**



### **Aging & Disability Services - Aging & Disability Resource Unit**

Provides hands-on assistance, referrals to service, and information to adults 60+, caregivers and persons with disabilities of any age. It is the primary entry point for most DHHS Aging and Disability services.

240-777-3000 (Voice) • MD Relay 711 • 240-777-4000 (Emergency After Hours)

Email: [ADS@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:ADS@montgomerycountymd.gov) • [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/hhs](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/hhs)

**Hours:** Monday and Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

# COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP LIST - 2024

## PUBLIC VOTING MEMBERS

Shameen Anthanio-Williams  
Tonya Gilchrist  
Karen Goss  
Leslie Green Lyles  
Samuel Korper  
Cindy LaBon

Ricardo Lopez  
Jamila Michael-Sobratti  
Rebecca Murphy  
Christian Navarro  
Deborah Rozell  
Nina Russell

Mary Simons  
Christopher Sinsheimer  
Jeneva Stone  
Teresa Villani  
Jeneva Stone

## ORGANIZATION / AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES VOTING MEMBERS

Azeb Adere, *Ethiopian Eritrean Special Needs Community*  
Jennifer Berzok, *Jennifer K. Berzok Consulting*  
E. Felicia Brannon, *Rare Disease Advisory Council – State of Maryland*  
Tria Gray, *Service Coordination, Inc.*  
Karen Morgret, *Acting Chair, Treatment and Learning Centers*  
Lisa Quinn, *Reach Every Voice*  
Richard Shermanski, *American Speech-Language Hearing Association*  
John Whittle, *Consultant, Service Coordination, Inc.*

## NON-VOTING MEMBERS - PUBLIC AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES

Matthew Barkley, *ADA Title II Compliance Manager, Department of General Services*  
Jennene Blakely, *M-NCPPC, Montgomery Parks*  
Patricia Cochrane, *Montgomery County Public Schools*  
Rebecca Grayson, *Housing Opportunities Commission*  
Candace Groudine, *Human Rights Commission*  
Angelisa Hawes, *Montgomery County Public Libraries*  
Karen Hochberg, *Targeted Recruitment Specialist, Office of Human Resources*  
Denise Isreal, *Department of Transportation*  
Angela Luskey, *Department of Recreation*

## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES - STAFF MEMBERS

Betsy Tolbert Luecking, *Community Outreach Manager*  
Carly Clem, *Program Specialist II*

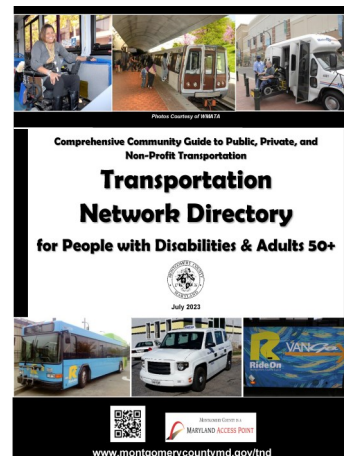
## Online Disability Resources Provided by the Commission

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY DISABILITY WEBSITE:** If you are looking for information available to you on a broad range of disability issues including such information as how to apply to the Developmental Disabilities Administration to Caregiver Support go to [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/disability](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/disability)



**DISABILITY NETWORK DIRECTORY:** A directory of provider agencies, businesses and advocacy organizations that offer local, state and national resources for people with disabilities. The Disability Network Directory is available online at [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dnd](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dnd).

**TRANSPORTATION NETWORK DIRECTORY:** Comprehensive listing of public, private and non-profit transportation in the Washington Metropolitan Region, State of Maryland and beyond. Includes information for people with disabilities and adults 50+. This guide was compiled to assist County residents to better coordinate their transportation needs. To download a copy of the guide visit [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/tnd](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/tnd).



To request alternative formats of these publications, please call 240-777-1252 (V), MD Relay 711, or email [mccpwd@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:mccpwd@montgomerycountymd.gov).

# ABOUT THE COMMISSION

## HISTORY

The Commission on People with Disabilities was established by County legislation October 17, 1978 to advise the County Executive and County Council on the coordination and development of the County's policies affecting residents with disabilities.

## MISSION

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 the provision of services, County policies and procedures, development and implementation of state and federal laws, and any other issues affecting the lives, rights, and welfare of the people it represents. The Commission operates in belief that people with disabilities have the right to the same opportunities in life as people without disabilities; and that this right can best be ensured by a commitment to enhancing the image, status, and quality of life of all children and adults with disabilities.

## MEMBERSHIP

The Commission on People with Disabilities is composed of 25 voting members who serve in a volunteer capacity. Members are appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the County Council.

The Commission includes:

- ▶ 13 people with disabilities,
- ▶ 3 parents of people with disabilities, and
- ▶ 9 representatives of public and private service providing agencies

The Commission also includes ex-officio members that are appointed to represent the Departments of Health and Human Services, Transportation, Recreation, Libraries, General Services, Office of Human Resources, and the Human Rights Commission. There are also members who represent Montgomery College, Montgomery County Public Schools, Housing Opportunities Commission, Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services, and Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission/Montgomery Parks.

## MEETINGS

All Commission and Committee meetings are open to the public. The Commission welcomes visitors to join us as we serve the County and its residents. Meetings are subject to change without advance notice. Please call to confirm day and time of meetings and to request any special accommodations. As possible, we adjust meeting dates in order to accommodate days of major religious observances. You can view the Commission meeting minutes or check meeting schedules times online at: [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cpwd](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cpwd).

## MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 2024 - 2025

### Full Commission Meeting

2nd Wednesday of the month,  
except for July and August  
virtually via Zoom  
6pm - 7:30pm

### Steering Committee Meeting

3rd Wednesday of the month  
virtually via Zoom  
5:30pm - 6:30pm

### Workgroups

Meet, as needed, at differing locations

## COMMISSION STRUCTURE

The Commission operates through a structure that is re-evaluated annually to respond to changing needs. The Steering Committee is responsible for planning and directing the activities of the Commission and for overseeing the activities of the committees.

The work of the Commission is done by Commission members and interested persons from the community. In addition, coordinators are assigned to take lead responsibility for public relations and legislation. The Nominating and Selection Committees, required for administration purposes, were also established.

*The Commission encourages that all residents with disabilities and their families communicate with their elected officials about their needs for programs and services. Go to the Office of Governmental Relations website for information on how to contact your elected officials: [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OIR](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OIR).*

## INCLUSION MONTGOMERY

Dedicated to the inclusion of people with disabilities in our community. We believe that people with disabilities have a right to equitable treatment, a fair allocation of community resources and social connectedness through engagement in the community at the level of their 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.



Sign up for eSubscribe to receive emails about disability information and resources:  
[www.montgomerycountymd.gov/govdelivery](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/govdelivery)



## COMMISSION PRESENTATIONS FOR 2023 - 2024

- October 2023** **Employment Programs Promoting the Hiring of People with Disabilities - New Federal Funding and Enhanced Services** – Beth Lash, Regional Director, Division of Rehabilitation Services, and Anthony Featherstone, Executive Director, WorkSource Montgomery, Inc.
- 
- November 2023** **Housing Accessibility in Montgomery County – Let’s Determine What Needs to be Done Design for Life Property Tax Incentive Program** – Gail Lucas, Division Chief, Customer Support and Outreach, Permitting Services
- Moderately Priced Dwelling Units** – Jackie Simon, Realtor, Former Commissioner and Former Chair of the Housing Opportunities Commission
- 
- December 2023** **Infants and Toddlers Early Intervention Program** – Jennifer Arnáiz, Administrator, Early Childhood Services, Montgomery County Department of Health & Human Services and Remarks by Dr. Barbara Howard, Developmental Behavioral Pediatrician, President of CHADIS
- 
- January 2024** **Designated Bike Lanes and Effective Communication: When does a person with a vision disability know it might be safe to cross a bike lane (especially those with lanes going both ways to get to a bus stop?)** – Sue Crawford, Co-Chair of the Pedestrian Access Committee, American Council of the Blind
- M-NCPPC and MCDOT to Develop a Curbless and Shared Street Design Guide** – Dan Goodman, AICP, LEED AP, Mid-Atlantic Planning Director
- 
- February 2024** **Brookside Gardens Accessibility** – Mary Joy Mulumba, Community Outreach Fellow Brookside Gardens, Montgomery Parks, M-NCPPC
- Adventure Sports Park at Wheaton Regional Park** – Matt Weir, Landscape Architect Project Manager and Tricia McManus, Design Section Manager, Montgomery Parks | M-NCPPC
- 
- March 2024** **MCDOT Accessibility Design Guide** – Matt Johnson, Bikeways Coordinator, Montgomery County Division of Transportation Engineering and James Elliott, Consultant, Toole Design
- Montgomery Parks Upcoming Adaptive Programs and Some Great Accessible Trails** - Jennene Blakely, CTRS, CPRP | Program Access Manager, Montgomery Parks | The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
- 
- April 2024** **Transition Services Update** – Patricia Cochrane, Supervisor, MCPS Transition Services, Department of Special Education Services, Office of Special Education
- 
- May 2024** **Discussion with The Honorable Andrew Friedson, President, Montgomery County Council** – Commissioner Identified Topics to be Addressed: Accessible Housing and Design for Life Property Tax Incentive Program, Enforcement of Accessible Parking Spaces, Designated Bike Lanes, and Plans to Ensure Safe Sidewalks in the County
- 
- June 2024** **New ADA Title II Regulations for Websites and the Final Rule: What Does it Mean for Montgomery County Websites** – Matt Barkley, ADA Compliance Manager, Montgomery County Government, and Myra Coffield, Commissioner and Web Accessibility Expert
- 
- September 2024** **Design for Life Update** – Gail M. Lucas, Division Chief, Customer Support and Outreach, Department of Permitting Services, Montgomery County Government

# PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING THE 34TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT



On July 23, 2024, Councilmember Gabe Alborno presented a proclamation with the Montgomery County Commission on People with Disabilities to celebrate the 34th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, also known as ADA. The Commission on People with Disabilities estimates that approximately 98,887 people in Montgomery County live with disabilities, according to the 2022 U.S. Census Bureau. This week, we celebrate the accomplishments that Montgomery County residents living with disabilities have made to enrich our community.



Matthew Barkley, ADA Title II Compliance Manager, Department of General Services, gives remarks.



# PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING THE 34TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

- WHEREAS** during the month of July we are pleased to celebrate the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA is a Civil Rights law and a critical piece of legislation that protects the rights of people with disabilities from discrimination. In 1978, the Montgomery County Commission on People with Disabilities was established. The partnership between County government and the Commission reflects Montgomery County's ongoing commitment to the goals of the ADA, and;
- WHEREAS** the ADA is continually updated to enhance accessibility and ensure nondiscrimination across various platforms and services. Keeping in step with evolving technological and societal barriers, in 2024, some important rules were established to the ADA that impact digital environments, and;
- WHEREAS** one of the most significant updated rules to the ADA concerns digital accessibility, specifically for web content, social media and mobile apps provided by state and local governments. This standard ensures that people with disabilities can access e-government and public information services without barriers, and;
- WHEREAS** the U.S. Department of Justice's 2024 rulemaking on Digital Accessibility for Title II of the ADA adopts the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines Version 2.1, Level AA as the technical standard for state and local governments' web content and mobile apps. Montgomery County is responsible for implementing these guidelines by April 2026. As was the case before the passage of the ADA in 1990, Montgomery County is ahead of schedule implementing these new rules thanks to the diligence of Chris Daniel and his colleagues at TEBS, and;
- WHEREAS** the Commission on People with Disabilities estimates that approximately 98,887 people in Montgomery County live with disabilities, according to the 2022 U.S. Census Bureau. The 2024 ADA amendments are a significant step toward greater inclusivity, pushing for comprehensive accessibility in both digital and physical spaces.
- NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the County Council of Montgomery County, Maryland hereby recognizes the month of July, 2024 in Montgomery County as the

## 34th ANNIVERSARY OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

**AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that we celebrate the accomplishments that Montgomery County residents living with disabilities have made to enrich our community. With the introduction of AI and other digital platforms we also commit to providing fully inclusive services, ensuring that people with disabilities have equal access to all the wonderful programs and services that Montgomery County has to offer.



Presented on this 23<sup>rd</sup> day of July in the year 2024.

Gabe Albornoz  
Councilmember

Andrew Friedson  
Council President

# WHAT THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT MEANS

## **Montgomery County, MD Commission on People with Disabilities What the Americans with Disabilities Act Means July 26, 2024**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is landmark civil rights legislation that was signed into law 34 years ago on July 26, 1990. But, the history of the disability movement and the ADA did not begin at the signing ceremony at the White House in 1990.

The fight for disability rights began more than 70 years ago in the 1950's when parent groups throughout the country refused to accept that institutionalization was the only option for their children who had a disability. They wanted their children to lead fulfilling lives in the community and not shuttered away in dark institutions.

In the 1960s, people with disabilities began to take charge of their own advocacy organizations and moved away from the patriarchal and charity-based model that dominated many existing disability organizations. Additionally, people with various types of disabilities began to join together in their advocacy efforts. It became apparent that the old system of single disability organizations had separated people with disabilities from each other resulting in advocacy that too often contradicted each other.

The wave of self-advocacy led to the establishment of local groups like the Montgomery County Commission on People with Disabilities, established in 1978, to advocate for the rights of people with disabilities. The history of the ADA and the Commission is a testament to the movement's commitment to solidarity among people with different disabilities. The Commission was established to be a cross disability group and has members who have a developmental, psychiatric, sensory or physical disability. It also includes parents, and agencies that serve people with disabilities. The Commission addresses county policy issues such as transportation, housing, health care, mental wellness, telecommunications, and recreation. Cross disability input is critical to best advising the County Executive and County Council on what programs and services have barriers or meet the needs of all people with disabilities.

The Commission has for years advised the Recreation Department and the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning on such things as the development of the accessible floating fishing pier, ramps and boats at Black Hills Regional Park and working with Recreation on the development of Hadley's Park. At this time, the Commission is advising the County and Park and Planning on the safety issues posed to individuals who are blind or who have a physical disability regarding bike lanes and floating bus stops. The Commission advises the Montgomery County, MD and the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission in establishing priorities to come into compliance with the settlement agreement with Project Civic Access of the Department of Justice: [www.ada.gov/montgomery\\_co\\_pca/montgomery\\_co\\_sa.htm](http://www.ada.gov/montgomery_co_pca/montgomery_co_sa.htm)

Therapeutic Recreation has had a long-time member of the Commission and seeks advice on many programs. We know that the Montgomery County Recreation Department is committed to compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and provides reasonable accommodations upon request.

Within Montgomery County, people with disabilities have been preferentially able to gain employment, receive tax incentives to make homes accessible, access safe public transportation, recreational programs and facilities previously unavailable to them.

Thus, the importance of the ADA is readily apparent: by specifically prohibiting discrimination and mandating equal opportunity and access for both employment and public services. The ADA has empowered individuals with disabilities and enabled people with disabilities to take an active role in society and make choices for themselves in how they live their life. The saying goes "Nothing about us, without us."

Thank you for your role in ensuring that County agencies comply and celebrate the ADA!

Betsy Tolbert Luecking, Community Outreach Manager  
Commission on People with Disabilities - Commission on Veterans Affairs



# FY25 OPERATING BUDGET PRIORITIES

## Commission on People with Disabilities Montgomery County Council FY25 Operating Budget Priorities for April 9, 2024 Karen Morgret, Acting Chair

The Commission on People with Disabilities (CPWD) supports the County Executive's allocation of \$800,000 to reduce long-standing waitlists and increase capacity in programs serving vulnerable populations, older adults, and individuals with disabilities. The CE Recommended budget increases capacity for the following programs, each of which have over 150 waitlisted individuals: Adult Protective Services case management (\$197,000); Home Care Services (\$161,000); and Coordination of Community Services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (\$63,000).

The Medicaid Community First Choice Nurse Monitoring program budget increases by \$180,000 and is fully offset by revenue. Almost \$200,000 is allocated to continue services that were previously made possible with federal funds, including Senior Lunch site at the Silver Spring Recreation and Aquatic Center (\$148,000) and prenatal engagement initiatives for vulnerable populations (\$50,000).

Enhances supplemental funding for reimbursements to critical providers, including \$697,000 for a 3% increase to the Developmental Disability Provider Supplement and the Adult Medical Day Care Provider Supplement. This budget also includes \$112,000 to increase respite care provider reimbursement rates by \$2 per hour on average.

The CPWD supports full funding of the Developmental Disability Supplement. The current budget includes a 3% increase for the supplement, and the request from InterACC/DD was 4.5% which the Commission supports. The full request includes an increase for the cost-of-living increase that is projected, is critical for program expansion, transitioning youth and waiting list placements which are anticipated to grow as the state of Maryland implements the "End the Wait" initiative. Currently nearly 4,000 people are supported each year and this number is expected to grow. The number of Direct Support Professional (DSP) hours have increased 4% to 6 million. Provider agencies continue to invest in recruitment and retention of talent. This continues to be a huge challenge. Wages in Montgomery County are the highest in the state and talent is often sought for by other employers in the area offering wages higher than nonprofits that support individuals with disabilities to live, participate, work in the community and live full lives can offer employees.

The Council created the IDD Commission last year on the recommendation of the CPWD. The Commission would like to thank the Council for quick action to create this new commission. The enabling legislation gave this Commission the authority to advise the State Developmental Disability Administration and other State agencies as appropriate. The Council approved a part-time staff person to support the work of this group and the enabling legislation included the number of meetings required to be held per year. The CPWD requests that the Council consider making the position full-time, if needed to support the work of this group.

We strongly support the Pedestrian Safety Program items totaling \$4,996,000 listed in the Vision Zero Budget. We recommend that the County prioritize pedestrian safety over all other MCDOT projects (such as installation of bicycle lanes and floating bus stops). **Sidewalk installation should be a top priority in all parts of the County with an emphasis on pedestrian safety above all modes of transportation on all MCDOT projects.** This emphasis must begin especially on roads leading to schools where there is no bus service and must continue until all roads in the County are safe for all pedestrians. This will require the County to take legislative action to make sidewalks mandatory, preventing homeowners from blocking sidewalk installation. In most neighborhoods, the lack of sidewalks forces pedestrians, including children, to walk in the street amongst car traffic and this is an intolerable situation. The County needs to immediately address the number of severe pedestrian injuries since they are higher than bicycle accident injuries. The Commission will continue to monitor the County's Transportation Services Improvement Fund (TSIF).

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment. Your consideration of the CPWD comments is greatly appreciated.

# COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL PRESIDENT ANDREW FRIEDSON

## Commission on People with Disabilities

May 16, 2024

The Honorable Andrew Friedson, President, Montgomery County Council  
Via: Electronic Facsimile

Dear Council President Friedson:

On behalf of the Commission on People with Disabilities, I want to thank you for your excellent presentation to the Commission on May 8, 2024. The Steering Committee met last evening, and I want to share with you their recommendations regarding the issues you addressed. We ask that members of the Commission are included as participants on any workgroups that are established and that you keep the Commission updated on implementation plans.

The Commission sees pedestrian safety as the most critical issue for people with disabilities and the whole community. We continue to be very concerned about the over installation of designated bicycle lanes that appear to be hardly used and how they impact pedestrians, particularly people who are blind, needing to cross designated bike lanes and the effect on available accessible and typical parking spaces. We recommend that you consider the use of traffic cameras to get data on bicyclists' use of designated bike lanes. The current design of Old Georgetown Road by the State has had a huge negative impact on drivers who now spend an hour getting to Wisconsin Avenue where it once took 15 minutes. We recommend that you work with the State to have these designated bike lanes removed.

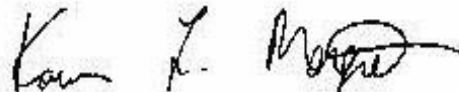
The ability to walk [or roll] safely and conveniently in one's community is the minimum expectation a County resident should have. As mobility impaired individuals, low vision/blind pedestrians and or those with low hearing (amongst other disabilities), we know that walking in roadways is never safe or comfortable and must not be the only option for pedestrians. There are an estimated 400 pedestrians with severe or fatal injuries per year in the County. We request information from your data collection system on how many miles of sidewalks need to be installed and how many people use bicycle lanes to get to work. We hope that the installation of designated bike lanes will be discontinued. We are hopeful more thought will be given to the process of ongoing improvement in pedestrian safety in the County with the increased installation of sidewalks.

We recommend that enforcement of existing laws regarding ADA Accessible Parking be prioritized collaboratively by the Permitting Office, Police Department and Office of Human Rights. Accountability of accessible parking needs local clarification of enforcement responsibilities. We ask that you advise us as to enforcement the Maryland Accessibility Code requires under [Laws - Statute Text \(maryland.gov\)](https://www.maryland.gov/laws-statute-text)

Regarding Accessible Housing and the Design for Life Property Tax Incentive Program, [www.designforlifemc.org](http://www.designforlifemc.org), we ask that you work with Permitting to help make the program easier to access especially for the Nine Accessibility Features. Other jurisdictions have adopted the Design for Life program, and we hope to make it more user friendly.

We look forward to continuing in our advisory capacity as a resource to Montgomery County as plans evolve further. Thank you for your leadership and consideration.

Sincerely,



Karen Morgret  
Acting Chair

# COMMENTS ON MONTGOMERY COUNTY BILL 33-23 VOLUNTARY REGISTRATION FOR 911

December 18, 2023

The Honorable Councilmember Dawn Luedtke  
Montgomery County Council

*Via Electronic Facsimile*

RE: Comments on Montgomery County Council Bill 33-23 Voluntary Registration for 911

Dear Ms. Luedtke:

On behalf of the Commission for People with Disabilities I am writing to follow up on our previous correspondence and comments on Montgomery County Council Bill 33-23 Voluntary Registration for 911. We would like to thank you for visiting the Commission and appreciated the additional information provided to help us to determine if we might change our position as stated in the Commission's letter on October 30, 2023. After careful consideration of our discussion and the information provided we remain steadfast in our significant concerns about the ability to safeguard this information, the cost to maintain the accuracy of the information, and the danger first responders may face if the information is not accurate. Therefore, the Commission does not support voluntary registration for 911 as we stated in the October 30, 2023, letter.

The Commission continues to believe that County should spend the proposed funding of Bill 33-23 on training first responders would better serve the needs and improve interactions with persons with disabilities in all types of emergency situations. This training would help first responders remain current on the best way to manage situations where people with disabilities are on the scene whether in their home or in the community. In addition, this training would benefit every person who has a disability in an emergency whether on a list or not. We believe additional training will better prepare first responders for any situation they may face without operating on assumptions provided from a database where the information may no longer be valid and it could put first responders at risk because of this misinformation.

We recommend that the County direct any leftover funding to continued support for the Developmental Disability Supplement. In addition, increased support for more services for transitioning youth, mental and behavioral health services for younger children and teens with disabilities including co-occurring disabilities.

The Commission is willing to assist in the development of any training programs for first responders to effectively respond in an emergency when people who have a temporary or permanent disability are present.

Respectfully,



Patricia A. Gallalee, Chair

c: Dr. Patrice McGhee, Chief, Aging and Disability Services



## ACCESSIBLE FLOATING LAUNCHES INSTALLED AT SENECA LANDING SPECIAL PARK (RILEYS LOCK)

Montgomery Parks, part of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, has completed construction of a second floating launch for non-motorized boats improving accessibility and safety for kayakers, canoeists and paddle boarders at Seneca Landing Special Park Riley's Lock.

The site, located in Poolesville, is one of the busiest access points to the Potomac River and adjoins the National Park Service's popular C&O Canal. Prior to the new floating launch, motorized and non-motorized boats were sharing the same ramp, causing conflict and safety issues. The ramp was also not ADA accessible presenting numerous challenges for users with disabilities.

The Program Access Office in conjunction with Black Hill Regional Park submitted a grant application in early 2024 to the Christopher and Dana Reeves Foundation for funding to install another accessible kayak launch at the Black Hill Regional Park boating facility area. Funding was received and that project should be completed over the next year. MP is working on providing more adaptive kayaking programs in the spring.

*Photos courtesy of Betsy Luecking*



### NEW ADAPTIVE PADDLING PROGRAM WITH MONTGOMERY PARKS AT SENECA LANDING SPECIAL PARK (RILEYS LOCK)

Enjoy an inclusive evening on the water with Montgomery Parks' new Adaptive Paddling Program in partnership with Team River Runner. This program is designed for individuals with disabilities and their family or friends and provides an accessible and accommodating experience. Trained staff or volunteers will accompany you on the water to ensure a safe and enjoyable program. Please register the individual with a disability and indicate the number of guests accompanying them during the registration process. Participants will be contacted prior to the program to discuss specific modifications necessary to ensure your success on the water. To request other reasonable modifications or for any questions, please contact 301-495-2581 (Voice), MD Relay 711 7724 or email program access - [ProgramAccess@MontgomeryParks.org](mailto:ProgramAccess@MontgomeryParks.org).

<https://montgomeryparks.org/about/parks/accessibility/inclusive-special-events-and-programs/>



### MONTGOMERY PARKS' NEW ADAPTIVE MOUNTAIN BIKING PROGRAM

Montgomery Parks has recently invested in two new e-assist adaptive mountain bikes: a Lasher recumbent all-terrain handcycle and a TerraTrike all-terrain foot pedal bike, which will be available for future use.

Individuals aged 16 and up can borrow them free of charge with advance notice, allowing riders to try the bikes before committing to a purchase. A single bike can cost up to \$15,000 or more.

The Adaptive Mountain Biking Program is organized with Montgomery Parks, Mid-Atlantic Off-Road Enthusiasts (M.O.R.E.), Friends of Patapsco Valley State Park, and Lancaster Recumbent.

From [Source of the Spring online publication](#)

# WHO HAS A DISABILITY IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD? AN OVERVIEW

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2023 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, there are approximately **98,682 persons living in Montgomery County, MD with a disability**. These figures excluded individuals who reside in nursing homes or other institutions. **Please note:** Some individuals may have identified as having multiple disabilities and age population totals will not equal disability type totals. For cognitive difficulty, ambulatory difficulty, and self-care difficulty, the 'Population under 18 years' includes persons aged 5 to 17. Children under 5 are not included in these measures.

## 2023 Disability Characteristics - Montgomery County, MD

**Total Population With A Disability: 98,682**

### Total Population By Disability Type

With a hearing difficulty	23,521	With an ambulatory difficulty	43,587
With a vision difficulty	16,425	With a self-care difficulty	19,378
With a cognitive difficulty	38,813	With an independent living difficulty	34,842

### Disability Type By Detailed Age

#### Population under 5 years

With a hearing difficulty	0
With a vision difficulty	213

#### Population 5 to 17 years

With a hearing difficulty	115
With a vision difficulty	1,209

#### Population under 18 years

With a cognitive difficulty	7,053
With an ambulatory difficulty	860
With a self-care difficulty	2,441

#### Population 18 to 34 Years

With a hearing difficulty	832
With a vision difficulty	2,785
With a cognitive difficulty	8,348
With an ambulatory difficulty	2,212
With a self-care difficulty	1,906
With an independent living difficulty	4,109

#### Population 35 to 64 years

With a hearing difficulty	7,727
With a vision difficulty	5,740
With a cognitive difficulty	11,298
With an ambulatory difficulty	10,697
With a self-care difficulty	3,904
With an independent living difficulty	8,447

### Disability Type By Detailed Age

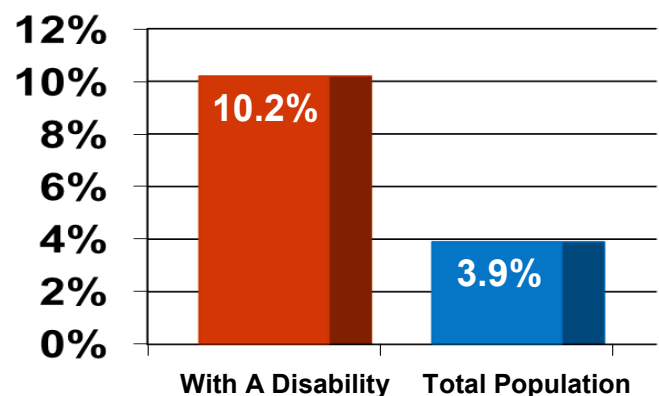
#### Population 65 to 74 Years

With a hearing difficulty	5,463
With a vision difficulty	2,503
With a cognitive difficulty	3,341
With an ambulatory difficulty	8,158
With a self-care difficulty	2,889
With an independent living difficulty	5,693

#### Population 75 and older

With a hearing difficulty	13,304
With a vision difficulty	3,642
With a cognitive difficulty	7,210
With an ambulatory difficulty	18,967
With a self-care difficulty	8,246
With an independent living difficulty	18,540

### Unemployment Rate - Montgomery County, MD 16 Years and Older - Labor Force Participation Non-Institutionalized Civilian Population



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2023

# MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS SPECIAL EDUCATION

## Number of Montgomery County Public School Students with Disabilities Ages 3 - 21 Receiving Special Education Services

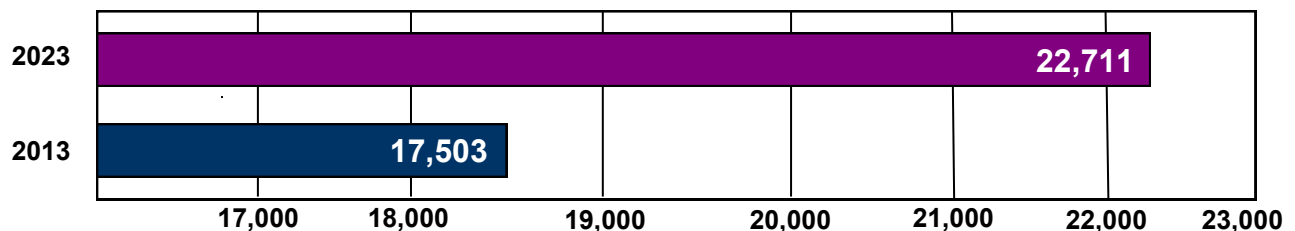
As of October 2023, there were **22,711** students with disabilities enrolled in Special Education. This population makes up **14.2%** of the County's total school enrollment of 160,223 students.

Disability Type	# of Students 2022	# of Students 2023	% Between 2022 and 2023
Autism	3,649	4,205	+ 15.2%
Deaf	61	56	- 8.2%
Deaf-Blindness	3	2	- 50%
Developmental Delay	3,390	3,500	+ 3.2%
Developmental Delay (Extended IFSP)	144	158	+ 9.7%
Emotional Disability	724	712	- 1.7%
Hearing Impairment	156	161	+ 3.2%
Intellectual Disability	596	599	+ 0.5%
Multiple Disabilities	591	634	+ 7.3%
Orthopedic Impairment	12	11	- 8.3%
Other Health Impairment	3,623	3,687	+ 1.7%
Specific Learning Disability	6,470	6,690	+ 3.4%
Speech and Language Impairment	2,016	2,229	+ 10.5%
Traumatic Brain Injury	13	17	+ 30.7%
Visual Impairment	54	49	- 9.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>21,502</b>	<b>22,711</b>	

Source: Maryland State Department of Education - Special Education/Early Intervention Services Census Data 10/2022 and 10/2021

## Montgomery County School Enrollment - Special Education Ages 3 to 21

Special Education enrollment has **increased by 5,208 students or 29.7%** over the last ten years.



# of students ages 3 - 21 enrolled in Special Education in Montgomery County Public Schools

Source: Maryland State Department of Education - Special Education/Early Intervention Services Census Data 10/2023

## Students with Disabilities By Race Compared with General Education Students By Race - Ages 3 to 21

**SWD = Students with Disabilities / GE = General Education (includes students with disabilities)**

	Grand Total	Asian		Black or African American		White		Hispanic		Two or More Races	
		Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
<b>SWD</b>	21,358	1,692	7.9%	5,645	26.4%	5,116	24.0%	7,842	36.7%	999	4.7%
<b>GE</b>	158,231	22,266	14.1%	34,627	21.9%	40,062	25.3%	52,853	33.4%	7,968	5.0%

Source: MSDE - Special Education/Early Intervention Services Census Data 10/2022. Does not include Eligibility 3 students. Grand total includes American Native/Alaska Native (44 SWD) and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (24 SWD).



## DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY RESOURCES AND INFORMATION

- [Developmental Disabilities - Montgomery County Disability Network Directory](#)
- [Autism Resources - Montgomery County Disability Network Directory](#)

### Montgomery County Public Schools Programs for Children with Developmental Disabilities/Delays

- [Infants & Toddlers](#)
- [Child Find](#)
- [Autism Waiver](#)
- [School to Work Transition Services Unit](#)
- [Connecting School and Adult Life Brochure](#) (PDF)

### [Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration \(DDA\)](#)

301-362-1500 (Voice) • 301-362-5131 (TTY) • 1-888-207-2479 (Toll Free)

To determine eligibility for DDA funded services, individuals must apply to Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration for these programs that are then administered by local [Coordination of Community Services Agencies](#).

- Behavior Support
- Individual and Family Support
- Coordination of Community Services
- Employment
- Housing
- Low Intensity Support Services
- Nursing
- Self-Directed Services
- Transitioning Youth with Disabilities



### Step-by-Step Guide to the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) Process

Potomac Community Resources, in collaboration with DDA, has produced five short videos to help families and developmental disability professionals throughout the State of Maryland learn about the services and supports offered by DDA and how to access them. All videos include ASL simultaneous interpretation.

[www.pcr-inc.org/step-by-step-guide-to-the-developmental-disabilities-administration-process](http://www.pcr-inc.org/step-by-step-guide-to-the-developmental-disabilities-administration-process)

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT NETWORK

### Community Support Network - Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services

Aging and Disability Services — 1401 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD 20850 — 240-777-1216 (Voice)  
Community Support Network for People with Disabilities (CSN) provides services that enable individuals to remain in their home or in the least restrictive environment and provides general support, guidance, and assistance to clients with developmental disabilities and their families. This program area coordinates and monitors services and supports (including crisis management, intervention, and school-to-work transition assistance) to people with developmental disabilities eligible to receive services through the State Developmental Disabilities Administration (Coordination of Community Services Program); provides service coordination to eligible young people funded under the Maryland Home and Community Based Services Waiver for Children (ages 0-21) with Autism Spectrum Disorder (Autism Waiver Program); and provides financial assistance to State-funded providers who serve adults with developmental disabilities.

- The **My Turn program** provides support and assistance to families with children ages three to thirteen who have developmental disabilities and are not connected with State of Maryland resources. Services include outreach, assistance with summer camp placements and other programmatic and financial assistance.
- CSN also **conducts site visits to group homes** that serve developmentally disabled clients in the County and monitors contracts that provide services to people with various disabilities including visual and hearing impairments.
- CSN **Autism Waiver** staff coordinate with Montgomery County Public Schools staff and monitor services for children (ages 0 - 21) in the program who have been diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Through the Autism Waiver Program, students and families receive respite care, environmental accessibility adaptations, family training, supported adult life planning, and intensive individual support services in the home and community, therapeutic integration service, service coordination and, in some cases, residential habilitation.
- The **Coordination of Community Services (CCS)** program is one of six agencies in the County that provides case management services to eligible school to work transition students and adults people who have developmental disabilities and are eligible for the Maryland DDA Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Waiver services.

## DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY (DD) SUPPLEMENT

CSN provides County financial assistance to State-funded providers who serve adults with developmental disabilities. In FY23, the 41 DD Supplement providers received \$259,190,372 in DDA revenue for services rendered in Montgomery County to Montgomery County residents. The County FY25 DD Supplement amount is \$21,694,038. The FY24 DD Supplement amount was \$21,062,172.

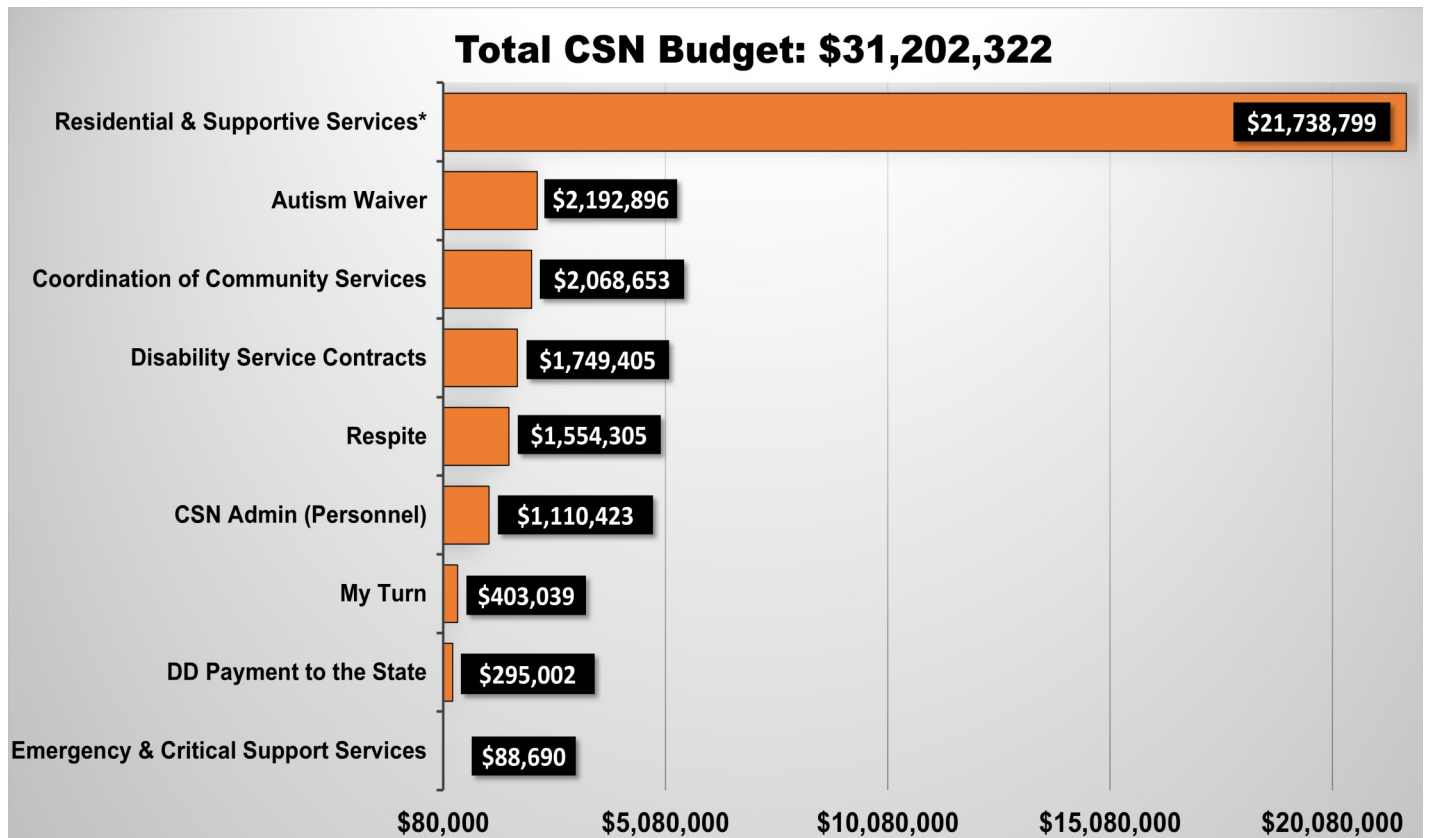
## MARYLAND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES ADMINISTRATION WAITING LIST

*Data from Onesta Duke, Southern Maryland Regional Director, Developmental Disabilities Administration, Maryland Department of Health as of August 8, 2024 (Note: Developmentally Disabled only; Supports Only excluded)*

### 763 people on the waiting list in Montgomery County (fluctuates day by day)

- 0 people in the Crisis Resolution priority category
- 717 people are categorized as Current Request, which means there are no immediate health or safety concerns
- 46 people are categorized as Crisis Prevention, which means the person is or will be in a health or safety crisis within the next year or so

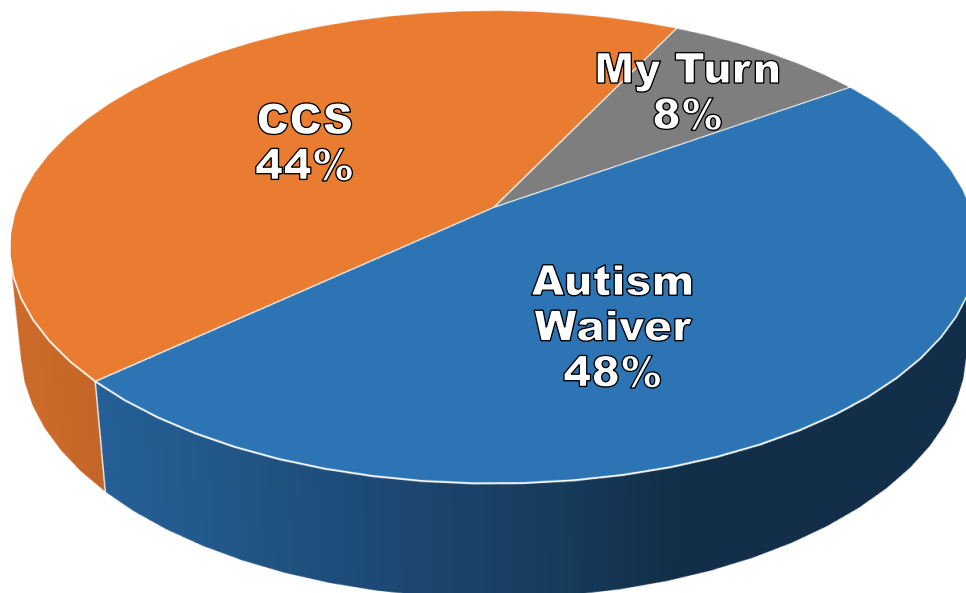
## COMMUNITY SUPPORT NETWORK (CSN) FY25 BUDGET BY PROGRAM



\* Residential & Support Services includes support to developmental disability service providers.

## CSN CLIENT BREAKDOWN BY PROGRAM

**Total CSN Clients: 966**  
**Coordination of Community Services (CCS): 425 clients**  
**Autism Waiver: 463 clients**  
**My Turn: 78 clients**



*Data from August 2024*



# MONTGOMERY COLLEGE

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & CONTINUING EDUCATION

240-567-5188 (V) • Email: [wdce@montgomerycollege.edu](mailto:wdce@montgomerycollege.edu)  
[www.montgomerycollege.edu/workforce-development-continuing-education](http://www.montgomerycollege.edu/workforce-development-continuing-education)

### **The Graduate Transition Program, (GTP)**

The [Graduate Transition Program](#) at Montgomery College, Rockville Campus, is a custom-tailored learning community program that offers students a unique post-secondary opportunity to further their formal education. The objective of the program is to enable students, while in a supportive college environment, to transition to greater independent living through developmentally appropriate educational, vocational, and life-skill services. This two-year, tuition-based, credit-free certificate program focuses on basic academic skills, and enhances students' potential success as productive citizens in the community.

The College schedule consists of two 14-week semesters, for two years. Students receive academic instruction 3 hours per day, Monday through Friday. Small class sizes, experienced faculty and staff, and individual classroom assistants encourage an interactive and dynamic learning environment designed specifically for students with special needs. Classes offered include Reading and Writing, Science, Health, Anatomy, World History and Current Events, Communications and Public Speaking, Art, Computers, and more. During the student's two-year period, Montgomery College works with the DDA providers to offer volunteer position, internships, and paid employment. This program is offered on the Rockville campus of Montgomery College.

### **Connecting Reading and Writing Program**

This program connects [Reading and Writing Skills](#) students need to prepare for college level course work. The program is designed to enhance reading comprehension, writing skills, and build vocabulary. Students learn and practice reading and writing skills by enrolling in both courses.

During 25 sessions, students receive instruction in reading comprehension and vocabulary building. Students learn to identify the main idea, follow a sequence of events, and recognize supporting details. Students improve their writing and speaking skills when they learn to summarize and outline reading materials, take better notes, and build your vocabulary. The program offers students the tools necessary to develop better writing skills. Reading and writing skills are combined in this class in a comprehensive, systematic process. Students learn to write descriptive and narrative paragraphs, use punctuation correctly, and compose demonstration speeches. The program helps prepare students for the college's assessment test, Accuplacer.

This program is offered on the Rockville and Takoma Park campuses of Montgomery College.

### **Driver's Education with Additional Support**

This course provides the exact same MVA curriculum as SFT-043 Driver Education, but with built-in supports. Montgomery College's Driving School and its instructors are Maryland MVA licensed and certified. Additional support instructors are dually certified in Special Education. This course, in a small classroom environment, prepares rookie drivers to test for a Maryland driver's license. Additional Supports include, but are not limited to:

- Differentiated instruction, supplemental aides and supports including a multi-sensory approach to learning.
- Behind the wheel is one-on-one instruction with a dually certified MVA and MSDE Special Education Educator
- Smaller class size
- Quizzes and tests are read aloud
- Extra time is granted to students for quizzes and tests
- Manipulatives (by cars) are used to better explain situations
- A copy of all PowerPoints and instructor notes are provided to the student.

If you have a Disability Support Request you need to call Natalie Martinez, Workforce Development and Continuing Education Counselor at 240-567-4118 (V) or email [Natalie.Martinez@montgomerycollege.edu](mailto:Natalie.Martinez@montgomerycollege.edu) at least four weeks prior to the start of the class to arrange for accommodations and/or assistive technology.

# DESIGN FOR LIFE PROPERTY TAX INCENTIVE PROGRAM

Make your home accessible with a Montgomery County Tax Credit



**DESIGNFORLIFE**  
Every home accessible for everyone.



designforlifemc.org



View [Home Modification & Design Consultation](#) for a resource listing of Government /Building Codes, Assessment and Consultation, Architects, and Renovation and Construction

Design for Life, managed by the Department of Permitting Services, provides partial tax credits to property owners or home builders who install measures that improve accessibility, visit-ability and/or live-ability of residential homes. This legislation was promoted through efforts of the Commission for People with Disabilities and embraced by the County Council and the County Executive. For retrofits to existing single family homes, such accessibility measures can include things like installing entry doors wide enough for wheelchairs, providing a no-step entry into the home, improving bathroom access with grab bars or roll-in showers, wider doorways, etc. This model program was initiated in Montgomery County to improve the ability of all residents to manage more successfully in homes, to improve people's ability to age in place and to make homes more accessible to visitors of all ages.

Credits are available for accessibility features added to single family homes and condominiums. Tax credits for improvements that make a home qualify as a visitable or livable home are available for single family homes and townhouses. If you add a feature and it costs at least \$500 up to \$2,500 you get a 50% credit. If you make your home visitable the credit is \$3,000 and if you make it livable the credit is \$10,000, credit max is \$2,000 per year. For more information view [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/design/Resources/Files/PDF/DFLTaxCreditIncentiveTable.pdf](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/design/Resources/Files/PDF/DFLTaxCreditIncentiveTable.pdf).

The process for building permits with Design for Life (DFL) features is as follows:

1. When a building permit with Design for Life (DFL) features has received the final inspection for the project from the Department of Permitting Services (DPS), the homeowner/applicant must complete and submit the DFL tax credit application (see attached).
2. The applicant must submit the required documentation along with tax credit application, which consists of contracts, receipts, and invoices to demonstrate the cost or amount of money spent for the project along with a complete list of features and costs of each feature.
3. The application is then reviewed and DPS signs off on the affidavit.
4. The tax credit application package is then sent to the Finance Office electronically to process the tax credit information.

**Download Design for Life Property Tax Incentive application:**

[www.montgomerycountymd.gov/design/Resources/Files/PDF/DesignForLifeApplicationforTaxCredit.pdf](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/design/Resources/Files/PDF/DesignForLifeApplicationforTaxCredit.pdf)



## Who Needs An Accessible Home? You Do!

1. Live longer in the home you love.
2. Welcome all guests with diverse mobility.
3. Increase the value of your home.
4. Qualify for property tax credits.
5. Make everyone feel welcome.

# DESIGN FOR LIFE PROPERTY TAX INCENTIVE PROGRAM - AT A GLANCE

Accessibility	Property Tax Credit—runs with property	School Impact Tax Credit	Applicability	Program annual limit	Type of residence ownership
<b>Feature</b> 1. no-step front door entrance or a no-step entrance to another location providing access to the main living space 2. ramp creating a no-step entrance 3. interior doorway w/32-inch clear opening 4. exterior doorway w/32-inch clear opening + exterior lighting controlled from inside the residence or automatic or continuously on; 5. walls around a toilet, tub, or shower reinforced and properly installed grab bars 6. maneuverable bathroom or kitchen 7. an exterior or interior elevator or lift or stair glide unit; 8. accessibility-enhanced bathroom, including a walk-in or roll-in shower or tub 9. alarm, appliance, and control structurally integrated to assist with a sensory disability	50% of eligible costs  Up to \$2500 less other subsidy  Amount of credit that exceeds tax imposed carries over	NA	Expenditures in excess of \$500  Incurred within 12 months of application	\$100,000	Multi-family condo Attached sf Detached sf
<b>Level I (Visitable)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>permanent addition</li> <li>single family residence</li> <li>at least one no-step entrance</li> <li>connected to an accessible route</li> <li>to a place to visit on the entry level</li> <li>a usable powder room or bathroom, and</li> <li>a 32-inch nominal clear width interior door</li> </ul>	Up to \$3000 less other subsidy including school impact tax credit  Maximum credit to be applied in any tax year is \$2000 and excess credit carries over	5% of the single family houses in project- \$500/Level I house  10% of the single family houses in project- \$1,000/Level I house  25% of the single family houses in project- \$1,500/Level I house  30% of the single family houses in project- \$2,000/level I house  Applies only where there is no bonus density for DFL units	Expenditures in excess of \$500  Incurred within 12 months of application	\$500,000	Attached or detached single family
<b>Level II (livable)</b>  Visitable criteria above  PLUS  Accessible circulation path that connects the accessible entrance to an accessible kitchen, a full bath, and at least one accessible bedroom	Up to \$10,000 less other subsidy including school impact tax credit  Maximum credit to be applied in any tax year is \$2000 and excess credit carries over	NA	Expenditures in excess of \$500  Incurred within 12 months of application	\$500,000	Attached or detached single family



# DISABILITY NETWORK DIRECTORY



**An online directory of providers, agencies, businesses and advocacy organizations.**

**[www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dnd](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dnd)**

**Find resources and information on the following topics:**

- Access & ADA-Related Issues including Curb Cuts & Sidewalks
- Adaptive & Medical Equipment
- Adult Medical Day Centers
- Advocacy
- AIDS/HIV Resources
- Assistive Technology
- Autism Resources
- Behavioral Health, Counseling & Wellness Supports
- Blind/Low Vision Resources including Macular Degeneration
- Brain Injury Resources
- Camps - Day and Summer
- Caregiver Supports
- Case Management
- Centers for Independent Living
- Child Care including Arc Programs
- Children & Youth Services
- Clothing
- Commissions on People with Disabilities (Statewide & Regional)
- Computer Support/Training
- Conflict Resolution
- Consumer Protection
- Counseling
- Deaf Resources including Sign Language Interpreting Services & Cart Reporting
- Deaf-Blind Resources
- Dental Services
- Design for Life Property Tax Incentive
- Developmental Disabilities
- Disability Specific Resources
- Education Resources - Adults
- Education - Children & Youth including Assessment Services
- Emergency Resources
- Employment including Employment Funding, Business Assistance & Job Lines / Websites
- Estate Planning
- Evacuations & Disaster Resources
- Faith-Based Resources
- Financial including Financial Assistance, Financial Counseling & Financial Loans / Grants for Accessibility
- Food including HELP, Food Warehouses, Pantries and Soup Kitchens, Home Delivery & Preparation
- Furniture
- Government - Local Depts of Social Services
- Hard of Hearing Resources
- Health & Wellness
- Health Insurance
- Home Care Services - Funding Resources
- Home Care and Home Health Providers
- Hospice Services
- Hospitals
- Housing including Housing Advisors / Older Adults, Housing Providers, Financial Assistance, Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC), Legal Issues, Home Modifications & Design Consultation, & Ramp, Lift, Elevator & Automated Door Providers/ Installation
- Independent Living Skills
- Learning Disabilities including Testing & Diagnostic Services
- Legal Services including Disability Law Attorneys, Estate Law Attorneys, & Free, Low Cost & Pro Bono
- Legislation
- Loan Closets
- Long Term Care
- Medicaid Waivers
- Medical Care Services
- Medication Resources
- Parenting Supports
- Parking
- Property Tax Credits - County, State & Federal
- Recreation
- Respite Care
- Service Animals
- Spinal Cord Injury
- Substance Abuse
- Support Groups including Sibling Support
- Transitioning Youth
- Transportation
- Veterans
- Volunteer Services

# COMMISSION ON PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES COMMEMORATES 45TH YEAR

The County Commission on Handicapped Individuals was established by the County Council on October 17, 1978. In October of 1977, County Executive James Gleason established a Task Force on Concerns of the Handicapped. Their Task Force report in June, 1978 later led to the County Council taking this action. This month the Commission celebrates 41 years of advising the County on disability issues and concerns. The Commission was located in the Office of Family Resources and at that time Chuck Short was the Director of that Office.

Effective November 9, 1990, the Commission was renamed in Bill 49-90 to the Commission on People with Disabilities and added four more slots for people with disabilities. Over the years, the Commission has benefitted greatly from the strong support of all County Executives and County Council Members to have this County become a leader in the nation on disability issues. We have also benefitted greatly from our many citizens/former Commissioners who have worked for the federal government on disability issues. Former Commission member Larry Roffee went on to be the first Executive Director of the US Access Board, and now David Capozzi who is also a former Commissioner is now the Executive Director there. The Commission has served under County Executives James Gleason, Charles Gilchrist, Sidney Kramer, Neal Potter, Douglas Duncan and Isiah Leggett.

## Commission's Key Advocacy/Advisory Highlights:

- [Bill 46-09 - Personnel - Regulations - Persons with Disabilities - Hiring Preference](#) (effective February 2, 2010 and applies to persons with disabilities, Veterans, and Veterans with disabilities) - **NACO 2014 Achievement Award Winner** - Mark Maxin, Assistant General Counsel for Administration, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission and former Commissioner was instrumental in making legal cases on both employment bills for the Commission
- [Bill 32-12 - Personnel - Regulations - Persons with Disabilities - Noncompetitive Appointment](#) (effective February 5, 2013 - 80% of voters voted to adopt) Noncompetitive hiring preference for people with severe disabilities
- [Bill 5-13 - Property Tax Credit - Accessibility Features](#) (enacted November 19, 2013 - **Design for Life Property Tax Incentive Program** that provides property tax credits up to \$10,000 for levels of accessibility installed in new construction and existing homes - **NACO 2018 Achievement Award Winner**
- HOC and Adventist Rehabilitation Hospital in the establishment of 6 accessible apartments at **Metro Pointe** for younger adults who were living in nursing homes **Montgomery's Best Honor Awards Recipient 2008**
- [Zoning Text Amendment 06-17](#) permits by right vs a zoning variance unroofed and open structure in an easement including a ramp and chairlift that allows a person with a physical disability access to a one family dwelling and is exterior to the one family dwelling
- [Resolution 16-931 - Policy Regarding the Use of Brick and Other Pavements in the Public Right-of-Way](#) for County sidewalks particularly red brick pavers
- County purchasing **accessible Ride On busses in 1978** before the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act
- [Pedestrian Winter Safety Act of 2001](#) - Snow removal legislation
- [Respect the Space](#) program to assess proper parking signage so it can be enforced by the police department
- Establishment of a Center for Independent Living or **Independence Now**
- Installation of the **elevator at the Marc Train station** in Rockville

## COMMISSION ON PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES COMMEMORATES 45TH YEAR CONTINUED

- **Scattered site housing** for people with mental illness and other disabilities.
- Department of Transportation on **access issues for people who are blind** in downtown Silver Spring.
- Evaluating and working closely with the **Strathmore** on making the Music Center and Mansion accessible and user-friendly for people with disabilities.
- Assessing ADA compliance in 200+ **polling places** in partnership with the Montgomery County Board of Elections.
- **Assistive Listening Systems** in County buildings. The Commission Sent a request to Strathmore Hall to make neck loops an option for guests. Strathmore responded that they have neck loops and that they will be training staff to ensure that patrons know that is an option. Initiated effort to have HHS install integrated audio loop systems in with public address system into designated meeting rooms. Pushed for a clause to be included in mental health service proposals that makes it clear that those services must be inclusive, i.e., must provide assistive listening devices for people who are deaf and hard of hearing, both for group sessions and one-on-one therapy. County contract now includes provision for CART (Computer Assisted Real-time Captioning) accommodations and other provisions.
- **Advocated for trial VRS/VRI installation** in two locations in the county, possibly in libraries. VRI would to allow people who are deaf and hard of hearing people who have not made an appointment to be provided access when they walk in for services. VRS would allow deaf and hard of hearing people to place phone calls using sign language. Montgomery County now has a free emergency notification system for the public which is a tremendous benefit for deaf and hard of hearing people who rely on their wireless devices or email. To sign up go to [www.montgomerycountymd.gov](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov) and click on "Alert Montgomery".
- **Community Support Services** for people with developmental disabilities reinstated to provide 500 persons with Coordination of Community Services.
- Montgomery County Government on **compliance with the ADA**.
- **US Department of Justice Project Civic Access Settlement Agreement** including Montgomery Parks.
- **Waivers from the Maryland Accessibility Code Accessibility Code** per State law as recognized local disability advisory group.
- Advising County on **pedestrian safety issues** and safety concerns about floating bus stops and bike lanes.
- **Bill 33-15 Transportation Service Improvement Fund**: Established the fund based on placing a 25 cent surcharge on all Transportation Network Companies (Uber, Lyft, etc.) for rides originating in Montgomery County with the fund designated to be used to promote accessible vehicle ride availability in the County In order to establish the fund, permission was sought and obtained from the Maryland State Government.

## MONTGOMERY COUNTY COVID-19 PANDEMIC INFORMATION PORTAL

The COVID-19 Pandemic has put a strain on all residents and especially on vulnerable populations including children and adults with disabilities. The County is committed to minimizing the detrimental effects on COVID-19 and to maintain long-term access to services, community engagement and social engagement. Many aspects of all of our lives have been impacted including the need for readily accessible reliable information and available resources on topics such as general medical care resources, mental wellness and behavioral health care, food security, safe housing, personal safety, freedom to worship without fear, etc. We encourage you to use the Montgomery County COVID-19 Information Portal:

<https://montgomerycountymd.gov/covid19/get-help/>

***Stay Positive, Test Negative  
Go Outside, Call a Friend, Get Some Exercise, Stay Connected***

### **American Council of the Blind COVID-19 Resources**

<https://acb.org/acb-covid19-response>

### **Maryland Department of Disabilities COVID-19 Resources**

<http://mdod.maryland.gov/news/Pages/Covid-resources.aspx>

### **National Federation of the Blind**

<https://www.nfb.org/resources/covid-19-resources>

### **National Deaf Center COVID-19 Resources**

<https://nationaldeafcenter.org/covid-19/>

### **National Multiple Sclerosis COVID Resources**

<https://www.nationalmssociety.org/managing-ms/living-with-ms/diet-exercise-and-healthy-behaviors/vaccination/covid>

## TEXT-TO-911 NOW AVAILABLE IN MARYLAND

If you're experiencing an emergency and are unable to place a voice call, you can send a text to 911. Follow these steps to request emergency services:

### **Enter 911 in the "To" line.**

1. Enter a brief message that includes the location of the emergency and type of service needed – police, fire, or ambulance.
2. Hit send.
3. Respond to questions from the responding 911 specialist and follow the instructions he or she provides.

### **Tips for using text-to-911:**

- If text-to-911 is not available in your area, or if it is temporarily unavailable, you should receive a message from your carrier letting you know to place a phone or relay call.
- Pictures and/or videos cannot be received by 911 via text
- If you include another contact on your text it may not be received by 911
- English is the preferred language for text, however, some limited translation services may be available
- Text in short, simple messages; Do not use abbreviations or slang
- Do not text and drive





# SAFETY AND EMERGENCY RESOURCES

- [File of Life - Montgomery County Fire & Rescue Service](#)
- [Smoke Alarm Program - Montgomery County Fire & Rescue Service](#)
- [Fire Safety Checklist for Older Adults - Montgomery County Fire & Rescue Service](#)
- [Fire Safety for Children with Special Needs - Montgomery County Fire & Rescue Service](#)
- [Fire Safety for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing \(Visual Smoke Alarms\) - Montgomery County Fire & Rescue Service](#)
- [Falls Prevention - Free Home Safety Evaluations - Montgomery County Fire & Rescue Service](#)
- [Autism, Intellectual, Developmental Disabilities \(IDD\) and Alzheimer's Outreach Program – Montgomery County Police Department](#)

## STAY ALERT!

You are encouraged to sign up for emergency alerts from **Alert Montgomery**. Montgomery County officials can use this alerting system to contact you before or during a major crisis, emergency, or severe weather alert. Alerts MAY be broadcast via the following delivery methods:

- Email account (work, home, other)
- Cell phone (SMS Text)
- Everbridge Mobile Member App
- Home phone (Voice)
- Cell phone (Voice)
- TTY device
- Twitter: Following “@ReadyMontgomery”
- Facebook: Add “Montgomery County MD Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security” in friends

While signing up for Alert Montgomery is free of charge, your wireless carrier may charge you a fee to receive text messages.

<https://alert.montgomerycountymd.gov>



Montgomery County encourages all residents to put together a plan for emergencies. The County has emergency response plans in place for dealing with emergencies from snow storms to terrorist attacks.

However, each person is strongly encouraged to develop their own personal plan. Montgomery County has developed the Plan 9 Guide for residents. It is a simple guide to nine essential items to help residents shelter in-place during emergencies.

We also encourage people to request a File of Life that allows you to fill out your medical history and rescue personnel are trained to look for this File on your refrigerator. To request a File of Life, call the Health and Human Services Aging and Disability Resource Unit: 240-777-3000 (V), 240-777-2545 (TTY), or visit [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OEMHS](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OEMHS)



Collect these **nine essential items** to help you shelter-in-place in the event of an emergency.



**1. Water:** One gallon per person per day for three days. Replace the water every 6 months.



**2. Food:** Non-perishables such as canned or packaged food. Enough to last 3 to 5 days per person.



**3. Clothes:** One change of clothes and footwear per person. Consider packing blankets, rain-gear, and outerwear in case of severe weather.



**4. Medications:** Three days worth of prescription medications. Be sure to mark the expiration dates and change as needed.



**5. Flashlight:** A bright flashlight and extra batteries. Do not use candles as they are fire hazards.



**6. Can Opener:** Manual can opener in case there's no electric power. Buying foods with pull-open cans is also helpful.



**7. Radio:** Battery-powered radio and extra batteries. Crank operated or solar powered radios are also helpful.



**8. Hygiene Items:** Basics like soap, toilet paper and a toothbrush. Moist toiles are useful.



**9. First Aid:** Basics like antiseptic, gloves, bandages, and non-prescription medicines. Many stores have pre-made kits.

## HOW TO CONTACT YOUR COUNTY ELECTED OFFICIALS



**County Executive  
Marc Elrich**

The **County Executive** can be reached at:

Executive Office Building  
101 Monroe Street, 2nd Floor  
Rockville, MD 20850  
240-777-0311 (V)  
240-773-3556 (TTY)

[County.ExecutiveI@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:County.ExecutiveI@montgomerycountymd.gov)



**Montgomery County Council**

*Standing, left to right: Sidney Katz, Laurie-Anne Sayles, Andrew Friedson (President), Natali Fani-González, and Gabe Albornoz. Seated, left to right: Will Jawando, Kristin Mink, Marilyn Balcombe, Evan Glass, Dawn Luedtke, and Kate Stewart (Vice President)*

The **County Council** can be reached at:

Stella B. Werner Council Office Building  
100 Maryland Avenue  
Rockville, MD 20850  
240-777-7900 (V)  
MD Relay 711 (TTY)  
240-777-7989 (FAX)

[county.council@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:county.council@montgomerycountymd.gov)

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**Marc Elrich, County Executive**  
**James C. Bridgers, Jr., Ph.D., MBA, Director**  
**Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services**  
**Patrice L. McGhee, DPA, Chief, Aging and Disability Services**  
**Commission on People with Disabilities**  
**401 Hungerford Drive, 4th Floor**  
**Rockville, Maryland 20850**  
**240-777-1252 (V) ♦ via MD Relay at 711**  
[MCCPWD@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:MCCPWD@montgomerycountymd.gov)

**Language translation and alternative formats of this report are available upon request.**  
**For additional information on the Commission,**  
**please call the telephone numbers or email via the contact information listed above.**

*Montgomery County does not discriminate on the basis of disability in employment or in the admission or access to its programs or services.*

2024 ANNUAL REPORT PREPARED BY:

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