



## Commission on Veterans Affairs 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 (BCCs).

### **What is the Commission on Veterans Affairs (CVA)?**

The Montgomery County Commission on Veterans Affairs was established by County legislation in 2008 with the goal of the Commission to provide advice to the County Executive and County Council on the status of programs and services related to the needs of Veterans. This legislation was initiated by then County Executive Isiah Leggett who had served as Captain, US Army, during the Vietnam War. Veterans have made an important contribution to the community by their service in the Armed Forces of this Nation, and Montgomery County is committed to showing its commitment and support for all Veterans and their families.

### **Duties of the Commission on Veterans Affairs**

The Commission duties include:

1. research, assemble, analyze and disseminate information and educational materials relating to activities and programs that will assist in meeting the needs of veterans and their families;
2. institute and conduct educational and other programs, meetings, and conferences to promote the rights and opportunities for veterans;
3. advise the Executive and the Council on the status of programs and services in the State and County related to the needs of veterans and their families; and
4. assist in planning appropriate public acknowledgement of the contributions made by veterans and assist in planning commemoration activities recognizing the contributions made by veterans.
5. By October 1<sup>st</sup> the Commission shall submit an annual report on its functions, activities, and accomplishments to the County Executive and Council. The Commission membership terms go from November 1 to October 31.

### **Membership Composition**

#### **Voting Members:**

The Commission has **16 voting members** (9 Veterans, 4 public, 3 ex officio), appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the County Council.

- 1) The Executive should appoint **9** members who are veterans and who may be members of Veterans groups such as:
  - Vietnam Veterans of America,
  - American Veterans (AMVETS),
  - Disabled American Veterans,
  - Veterans of Foreign Wars,
  - Women Veterans of America,
  - American Legion, or
  - Military Order of the Purple Heart

- 2) The Executive must appoint **4** members to represent the general public which can include non-veteran family members and caregivers.
- 3) The Executive must designate **3** ex-officio members or their designee to serve and have no term limit:
  - Director, Dept. of Health and Human Services
  - County Executive, and
  - Director, Montgomery College

#### ***Non-Voting Member(s):***

- The Executive must invite a representative of the County's Congressional delegation who is either a member of the delegation or an individual designated to represent the delegation to be a non-voting member of the Commission.
- The Executive must also appoint a member from the Commission on People with Disabilities to be a non-voting member of the Commission per Bill 4-16 effective 7-20-16.

#### **BCC Staff Role and Responsibilities**

A BCCs staff liaison is generally designated by the director or supervisor of the department or office with which the BCCs 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 role of the BCCs staff liaison is to serve as the link between the BCCs and the department with which the BCCs is affiliated and the County Executive's Office.

- Maintain membership lists, maintain member attendance records, reserve County meeting space,
- Attend BCCs 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 the board stays on mission in compliance with enabling legislation, ensure compliance with Robert Rules of Order on Formal Matters.

#### **Appointment of Officers**

The CVA chair and vice chair are designated or appointed by the County Executive.

#### **Chair Role and Responsibilities**

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

- *Ensure that a BCCs acts within the authority of its enabling documentation. i.e., acts within its mission.*
- Preside over meetings and *ensure that the BCCs comply with Roberts Rules of Order for formal action.*

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- Set meeting dates in compliance with enabling documentation.
- Set agendas in cooperation with members.
- Coordinate subcommittees.

### **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 BCCs 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 BCCs staff or another member should call the meeting to order, and the Commission should elect a temporary chair to preside over the meeting.

### **BCCs Member Role and Responsibilities**

**The role of the BCCs member** is to carry out the substantive work of the group according to the BCC's enabling legislation. BCCs 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.

### **BCCs 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.
- BCCs members are eligible for reimbursement for travel and dependent care for in-person meetings attended.

### **Terms of Appointment**

While the law establishing the CVA 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 individual." Per the County Attorney's Office on March 15, 2024, the ex officio members on the Commission don't have term end dates, so ex-officio members can continue to serve without being reappointed until they are replaced by their Agency Head, Department Head or the County Executive.

## **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 BCCs can select from previous applicants within the one-year timeframe (unless it is time for the regular annual recruitment). BCCs 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 wishes 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. The Staff Liaison will give you notice when you need to reapply. 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.

## **Required Meetings**

The meetings are at the call of the Chair, but not less than 9 times per year. This Commission meets 10 times per year; The Commission year and member term is September 1 – October 31, the third Tuesday of the month except for July and August when the Commission does not meet.

## **Monthly Commission Meeting Location**

Meetings are currently being held via zoom. Meetings are held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. When meeting in person, meetings are held at the Department of Health and Human Services, 401 Hungerford Drive, Rockville, 1st Floor 1A/1B Conference Room. An Annual Planning Meeting of the Commission is held in September for the purpose of setting goals for the year's activity. As possible, we adjust meeting dates in order to accommodate days of major religious observances. A staff person must be in attendance at all official Commission or Committee meetings.

## **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.")

## **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 Commission was established to advise the Executive and the Council on the status of programs and services in the State and County impacting veterans and their families but may also engage in advocacy or lobbying activity at the state or federal levels with approval by the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs.

- BCCs listed in County Council Bill 37-15 are authorized to lobby the state and federal government but only upon approval of the director of the department with which the BCCs is affiliated and the Office of Intergovernmental Relations.
- BCCs created after Bill 37-15 was enacted may be authorized to lobby the state and federal government if their enabling documentation contains this or similar language “Advocacy. The Board must not engage in any advocacy activity at the State or federal levels unless that activity is approved by the Office Intergovernmental Relations.”
- BCCs must complete the Advocacy Request Form to request the approval of the department director and the Office of Intergovernmental Relations. legislation. The Advocacy Request Form can be found at:  
[www.montgomerycountymd.gov/boards/advocacy-form.html](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/boards/advocacy-form.html).

## **Correspondence**

Correspondence should only be sent by BCCs staff/County employees on behalf of the Chair of the BCC. No correspondence should be sent without knowledge of BCCs staff. This includes agendas and minutes to BCCs members. This is to ensure that official correspondence is kept on record.

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.

## **Representation**

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

## **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 BCCs 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.

## **Voting - Quorum**

- BCCs must follow Robert's Rules of Order when taking formal action.
- BCCs must have a quorum present at the meeting to act.
- A quorum is the simple majority of voting members authorized in the BCCs enabling documentation. Vacancies on BCCs 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.
- 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.
- BCCs 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 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

## **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.

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

Attendance will be taken at the Full Monthly Commission Meetings.

## **Committees/Workgroups**

The Committees and workgroups carry out the work of the CVA. 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 CVA member can participate in the work of a committee or workgroup.
- ▶ Ad hoc committees or workgroups are established to achieve the desired outcomes of a Commission priority.
- ▶ Committees/work groups report to the CVA and are not authorized to act on their own in the name of the CVA.

### **Committees**

- Executive Committee
- Workgroups Established Annually Based on Priorities

### **Liaison Activities of the Commission**

- Commission on Aging
- Commission on People with Disabilities
- HHS Advisory Leadership Council
- Community Education and Outreach
- Legislation

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

### **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.](#)
- The published agenda forms the structure of the meeting.
- Action Items – the business of the CVA is conducted by voting on action items.
- Notice of Meetings – advanced notice of all CVA meetings will be emailed prior to the meeting. Emails will include the following:
  - Agenda
  - Meeting Summary Minutes of the previous meeting
  - Attendance Report
  - Other information as needed

### **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.

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## **Posting of Documents Online – Useful Websites**

Only final documents including minutes, letters, etc., should be posted online. Commission staff created and update all of the websites except for the Design for Life Tax Incentive Program which was created and updated by the Department of Permitting Services.

### **Veterans Information & Resources**

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

### **Commission on Veterans Affairs**

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

### **Commission on Veterans Affairs Facebook**

[www.facebook.com/MCGCVA](http://www.facebook.com/MCGCVA)

### **Veterans Network Directory**

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

### **Disability Network Directory**

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

### **Design for Life Tax Incentive Program**

[www.designforlifemc.org](http://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](mailto: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 Languages**

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.

## **Mileage/Dependent Care Reimbursement**

CVA members traveling to and from official meetings are entitled to mileage reimbursement. Mileage forms should be submitted quarterly. All mileage reimbursement requests must be submitted by **June 30**, the end of the County's fiscal year.

- Mileage to the full monthly CVA meetings and official 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. Requests for reimbursement should be submitted using the [Reimbursement Form for Members of Board, Committees and Commissions](#).
- Child Care and dependent care expenses are reimbursed at \$30 per meeting for attending the full CVA meeting, the Steering Committee meeting and other Committee or Workgroup meetings. Requests for reimbursement should be submitted using the [Reimbursement Form for Members of Boards, Committees and Commissions](#).



## **Inclement Weather Policy**

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

If a meeting is in person:

- If Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) open late, BCCs morning meetings are cancelled.
- If MCPS closes early, or if afternoon or evening activities are cancelled, BCCs afternoon and evening meetings are cancelled.
- If MCPS is closed all day, all BCCs 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 BCCs Trumba Calendar.

## **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](#).**

## **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](http://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.

**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](http://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](http://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](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/boards/training/Certificate.html)