

Civic and Social Involvement • Communications • Elder Abuse Prevention
Employment • Health and Wellness • Home and Community Based Services • Housing
Outdoor Spaces and Buildings • Senior Public Safety • Transportation



Presented to County Executive Isiah Leggett
By the Montgomery County Commission on Aging
March 28, 2018



COMMISSION ON AGING

March 28, 2018

The Honorable Isiah Leggett
County Executive
101 Monroe Street, 2nd Floor
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear Mr. Leggett,

Thank you for being a great friend to the Montgomery County Commission on Aging and to our many stakeholders. During your almost 12-year tenure as County Executive, you have built an extraordinary legacy. This legacy includes accomplishments affecting all aspects of the lives of vital and vulnerable older adults, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures.

It is with great pleasure that the Chairs of the Commission on Aging during your tenure present you with this booklet as a token of our deep appreciation. It is an accounting of your wide-ranging accomplishments, made even more impressive when one thinks of all the programs, policies, services, and systems that you have fostered. Although they are listed by Age-Friendly Montgomery domains, it is clear that many of your initiatives began years before the County was designated by the World Health Organization as an Age-Friendly Community. These accomplishments have touched all aspects of County life for older adults, including civic and social involvement, communications and outreach, elder abuse prevention, employment, health and wellness, home and community-based services, housing, open spaces and buildings, senior public safety, transportation and those aspects that are designated “dementia-friendly.”

Under your leadership, Montgomery County truly has become a “Community for a Lifetime” for all residents. You had the vision and you saw that it was translated into quality-of-life improvements. On behalf of all older adults in Montgomery County and their families, we thank you, and we wish you the best of luck in the years ahead.

Sincerely,

Isabelle Schoenfeld, Chair and on behalf of COA Chairs (2007-Present)

Noelle Heyman
Judith Levy
Judith Welles
Elaine Binder
Irwin Goldbloom

County Executive Leggett's Accomplishments* in Support of Older Adults (2007-Present)

* The programs, activities, services, and facilities, that were initiated and expanded during Mr. Leggett's tenure are so wide and deep that they could not all be captured in this document. Hence, the accomplishments listed below are a partial accounting of key topics that have a positive impact on the quality of life of Montgomery County's older adult residents and their families.

Selected Accomplishment Under the Leadership of County Executive Ike Leggett

In Support of Montgomery County Older Adults

2007-2018

- 2007:** Completion of the Reingold Strategic Report for improving communications about programs and services for Montgomery County seniors
- 2007:** Held Department Directors' Retreat on Senior Issues
- 2007 - Present:** Creation of Senior Fellow Program leading to appointment of 18 individual Senior Fellows for 20 County government projects
- 2007 - Present:** Continuation of Vital Living Network
- 2008:** Established Senior Subcabinet on Vital Living and eight topic-specific work groups
- 2008:** Held Montgomery County Senior Summit
- 2008:** Established Senior Transportation Program
- 2008 - Present:** Increased funding in the Senior Nutrition Program (more than 4 million meals served)
- 2008- Present:** Produced or preserved more than 2,100 total senior rental units, including approximately 1,700 units affordable to seniors
- 2012:** Commission on Aging Senior Agenda adopted by the County Executive and County Council
- 2012:** Opened White Oak Community Center
- 2013:** Established Mobility and Transportation Coordinator position
- 2013:** Montgomery County named 2013 Best Intergenerational Community by Generations Together
- 2014:** Added Crimes Against Seniors and Vulnerable Adults Abuse Unit to the Montgomery County Elder and Vulnerable Adult Abuse Task Force
- 2014:** Established Villages Coordinator position
- 2014-15:** Commission on Aging Summer Studies leading to enrollment in the World Health Organization's (WHO) International Network of Age-Friendly communities.
- 2015:** Held Montgomery County Summit on Aging
- 2015:** Enrolled Montgomery County in WHO International Network of Age-Friendly Communities
- 2015:** Established Age-Friendly Advisory Group and Work Groups
- 2015:** Enrolled Montgomery County in Dementia Friendly America Program
- 2016:** Established Caregiver Support Facilitator position
- 2016:** Opened North Potomac Community Center
- 2016:** Reopened the rebuilt Ross Body Community Center in Sandy Spring
- 2017:** Received WHO/AARP approval of the Montgomery County Three Year Age-Friendly Action Plan
- 2017:** Received recertification of Montgomery County in WHO/AARP International Network of Age-Friendly Communities until 2020
- 2018:** Reopened Good Hope Community Center
- 2018:** Established full-time Senior Olympics position for Recreation Department

Civic and Social Involvement

- Hired two new senior fellows and launched 50+ Network to increase volunteer opportunities to encourage opportunities for physical, mental, and social interaction.
- Launched Senior Planet program through Older Adults Technology Service (OATS), graduating 200 seniors at 10 different locations (libraries and senior centers) in first year in first year.
- Worked with CountyStat to develop a survey to improve understanding of what organizations in the County provide related to technology training for seniors.
- Using North Potomac Community Center as a model for a multi-cultural center, developed volunteer programs for the Indian and South Asian communities, exchanging information, doing exercises, dances, and food sharing.
- Established “Let’s Share” Program to provide educational and social opportunities for older members of diverse ethnic communities.
- Since 2009, the number of senior Villages in Montgomery County grew from four active Villages to 24 villages with nine more in development. Montgomery County has been promoting Villages through its Regional Service Centers. Since January 2014, a Village Coordinator has been helping to expand the number and capacity of Villages across the County.
- Villages have actively increased leadership among diverse communities (ongoing) and partnered with Community Action Agency, TESS Center, and National Hispanic Council on Aging to offer two-day intensive leadership training in Spanish.
- The Montgomery County Volunteer Center launched a user-friendly website in 2011 that made it easier for individuals to find ways to engage and help others.
- Increased the number of courses offered through Montgomery College Lifelong Learning Institute while expanding class locations, including MCPL (which hosted 23 such events, engaging 328 seniors).
- Montgomery College continued to provide senior tuition waivers for Maryland residents, age 60-plus, to enroll in classes after the regular registration period has passed by paying only fees.
- Montgomery County Public Libraries (MCPL) continued to offer residents aggregated online access to a wide range of career, enrichment and study support resources.
- MCPL expanded technology training with more classes in using computers and devices, downloading e-books and music, sharing via Facebook and using email. MCPL also continued to offer classes such as finance, health, consumer issues and English language learning.

Communications

- Developed, distributed and publicized recognizable, understandable, timely and accessible series of informational flyers. (Transportation Options, Senior Vital Living, Caregiving, Older Driver Safety, Living and Thriving in Montgomery County, The Senior Agenda, Transportation Network Directory for People with Disabilities and Seniors, and Senior Resource Information Guide).

- These branded products on key issues are disseminated online and via senior centers, libraries, senior housing, community centers/groups, tax bill and targeted mailings, County fairs, Beacon newspaper, etc.
- Developed monthly advertisements for the Beacon newspaper, each month focusing on a different Age-Friendly domain and translated ads into Chinese and Spanish.
- Is working to produce short videos to educate seniors on a variety of topics such as how to get a library card, how to get a Smart Trip Card, and information about the availability of activities such as Pickle Ball.
- Established the senior website which is a central portal offering timely information to seniors and caregivers about County services and programs. Information is organized in nine sections: consumer issues, employment and volunteering, health, recreation and libraries, safety, senior housing, social support, transportation and tax and finance. In each section, eligibility requirements are specified along with contact information.
- The County’s 311 telephone and online information and referral system is staffed from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Callers can gain information and track service requests on a wide range of topics, including senior issues. Additionally, the Aging and Disability Senior Resource Line (240-777-3000) is a phone resource for more detailed questions regarding program services and eligibility.
- Produce “Paperless Airplane,” an electronic newsletter sent twice-monthly to 140,000 subscribers, providing County news and information, including items of interest to baby boomers and older persons.
- Health and Human Services – Aging and Disability Resource Unit sends a monthly e-newsletter to increase awareness of senior services and events in the County.
- Provide communications addressing senior issues via County Cable TV (“Seniors Today,” “Make a Difference,” and “Montgomery al Dia”), mailings, bus ads, public forums, County fair, and posters at libraries, recreation facilities, health clinics and senior centers. Montgomery County Media (MCM) provides information to seniors via the internet, social media and print material. The Office of Landlord Tenant Affairs conducts seminars for owners, landlords and residents of multi-housing units to build awareness of services and programs available to older County residents.

Elder Abuse Prevention

- Enhanced and grew the Montgomery County Elder and Vulnerable Adult Abuse Task Force, which was created in 1999. The group works to prevent elder abuse, raise public awareness, support legislative efforts to establish stronger and better laws and, aggressively investigate and prosecute those who commit elder abuse.
- In 2014, the State’s Attorney’s Office created the Crimes Against Seniors and Vulnerable Adults Unit to aggressively prosecute crimes against seniors, including physical abuse, financial exploitation and neglect. This unit includes three specialized Assistant State’s Attorneys and a Program Manager to track all incidents of elder abuse in Montgomery County.
- Established an investigative Elder Abuse section in the Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD), as part of the County’s Elder and Vulnerable Adult Abuse Task Force, to educate the community and aggressively investigate reports of fraud.

- Hold an annual World Elder Abuse Awareness Day events, focusing on educating about elder abuse and providing a wide variety of senior safety information and resources as well as exploitation prevention trainings.
- Increased staffing at Adult Protective Services and the State’s Attorney’s Office to effectively address elder abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- Through the Elder/Vulnerable Adult Abuse Task Force, coordinate information sharing and collaboration among County agencies to hold offenders accountable for committing crimes against elders.
- Increase awareness about where to call for assistance when fraud or abuse is suspected or known.
- Developed an elder abuse screening tool to help first responders capture information encountered when first entering the home of an older adult.
- Provide outreach and education for diverse groups at assisted living and skilled nursing facilities, senior centers and at a variety of senior events and expos.

Employment

- Fund and publicize the annual Jewish Council for the Aging-sponsored 50+ Employment Expo, which benefits thousands of County residents by offering resume and job searching advice and connecting them to employers.
- Montgomery College provides senior tuition waivers for Maryland residents, age 60+, to enroll in classes after the regular registration period has passed.
- Montgomery County Public Libraries (MCPL) offers residents aggregated online access to a wide range of career, enrichment and study support resources.
- CountyStat office developed and fielded an online questionnaire to collect data from local agencies about hiring and maintaining older workers.
- Created a list of organizations in the County which offer a variety of resources for job-seekers, ranging from help with resume –writing and interview skills to technology training and job listings. It is now posted on the WorkSource Montgomery website.
- Encouraged WorkSource Montgomery to create a 50+ Job Seeker Club (now launched) to provide advice about such topics as networking, social media, and resume preparation.
- Made presentations at: the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) on the business case for hiring older workers; the Washington D.C. Roundtable of the American Society on Aging on age-equity in employment and Age Friendly Employment; the HR Bioscience Alliance to inform member organizations on Age-Friendly Montgomery and to gauge interest in promoting assets of the 50+ talent pool. Provided information to leaders of the retiree organizations of international banking organizations including the World Bank, International Development Bank and Pan-American Bank on Age-Friendly Montgomery and work and volunteer opportunities for leaders of their retiree organizations.

- Supported the Office of Human Rights in arranging its first session on age discrimination in employment at its bi-annual workshop for human resource professionals and attorneys from County employers.
- Worked with the Alliance for Workplace Excellence (AWE), which is offering in 2018 a new Certificate of Recognition of Age-Friendly Employers; working with AWE to plan an educational panel on age-friendly best practices, which will be offered at its June 2018 Awards ceremony;
- Worked with the Montgomery County chapter of the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) to help plan a December 2018 educational event, co-sponsored with AWE.

Health and Wellness

- Increased operating hours, programs and services that offer social opportunities, health and wellness programs, lifelong learning and educational programs, exercise classes, dance classes, lectures, cultural programs, vegetable gardens and a variety of County services.
- Provide curb-to-curb transportation services via a contract with Jewish Council for the Aging to provide Monday-Friday services at all five County senior centers.
- Expanded 55+ Active Adults Recreation Programs where baby boomers and older persons gather for educational programs, friendship, entertainment, and many sports.
- Thousands of County residents age 55+ work out using the weights and exercise facilities – including Fitness Clinics – at the 17 County recreation centers. Thousands of older adults swim at County aquatic facilities each year. Hundreds more enjoy mini-trips offered quarterly to destinations and events in the metro Baltimore/DC areas.
- Through partnerships with local hospitals, the number and variety of programs and services offered to seniors in Recreation Department facilities have increased substantially. Examples include the “Senior Fit” exercise program offered by Holy Cross Hospital and the “Senior Shape” exercise program and Heartwell nurse programs offered by Suburban Hospital.
- In 2017, held well-attended Medication Awareness Day event at Holiday Park Senior Center, including an opportunity for safely turning in unused, unwanted medications, one-on-one consultations with a pharmacist for medication review, and educational presentations. Will expand this program to other senior centers in 2018 and 2019.
- Translated medication fact sheet into multiple languages.
- Conducted a pilot program contracting with a nurse and pharmacist to conduct home visits and reviews of medications for people who make frequent visits to emergency rooms.
- Recreation and Planning Department produced a plan on future SeniorScapes parks which provide safe and accessible park settings for people with dementia and their caregivers.
- The Jewish Council for the Aging and the Recreation Department support the Senior Center Plus program for people with mild cognitive impairments who are unable to negotiate participation in regular senior center programs.

- Increased the number of people participating in blood pressure checks at senior centers.
- Support mental health programs including combating social Isolation among seniors who live in the county.
- Increased the number of seniors receiving dental care in the county with community partners and County clinics.
- Partnered with family caregivers and Dementia Friendly Initiative and Advisory group to expand the Medication Management program.
- Created a video (YouTube) to show families and County residents the benefits of the Senior Center Plus program.

Home and Community Based Services

- Provide in-home nurse monitoring for senior and disabled clients through Community First Choice Program, a Medicaid waiver.
- Provide in-home personal care and chore services (sliding fee scale) to assist vulnerable seniors in remaining safe and cared for in the community, while preventing unnecessary institutionalization
- Conduct the Public Guardianship Program.
- Provide Group Home subsidies.
- Offer respite service, on a short-term basis, to family caregivers who support frail elders.
- Conduct the Long-Term Care Ombudsman program.
- Provide dental care and dentures to seniors lacking insurance through mobile dentist.
- Expanded Senior Nutrition Program (SNP) in both in congregant sites and through home-delivered meals.
- Launched Five-Year Food Security Strategy that includes a specific focus on addressing senior hunger.
- Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) serves as lead agency of the Montgomery County Coalition for Care at the End of Life to encourage advance care planning, especially discussion and preparation of advance directives.
- Provide convenient collection of refuse and recycling for frail residents who are unable to bring containers to the curb, due to physical limitations.
- Advertised in Beacon newspaper to educate readers about caregiving services and how to access them; geriatric care manager services; and the County's 3000 telephone number.
- Publish a monthly caregiver support electronic newsletter.
- Established the Montgomery County Caregiver Coalition.
- Conduct Caregiver Support Outreach events in the community

- Partnered with County Council President to convene a caregiver advisory group to help determine needs of caregivers and better outline roles of care managers.
 - Developed a print brochure, “Hire Elder Care Support” and an online elder care support resource guide.
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Housing

- The County has supported the development of 17 senior housing projects, of which eight are complete, two are underway, and seven are committed. In all, these projects will produce or preserve more than 2,100 total senior rental units, including approximately 1,700 units affordable to seniors.
- Partner with the Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC) and DHHS to provide rental assistance to low-income seniors.
- The County partnered with private and non-profit developers to build new affordable housing for seniors. The following are either in the planning stage or under construction — Aspen Hill (110 units); White Oak (105 units); Silver Spring (75 units); East County (121 units); and Silver Spring (267 units).
- Explore and initiate partnerships to expand affordable senior housing, including home sharing where homeowners offer extra room to people looking for affordable housing.
- Granted a loan to refinance the Seabury Community to preserve affordable assisted living beds in the community.
- Sponsor a series of round table education sessions for staff of affordable senior housing communities. Round tables cover a wide variety of topics of interest to staff of senior living communities.
- In collaboration with Montgomery College and various subject matter experts, is working to create a training certificate program for service coordinators and managers of affordable senior living communities.
- Maintained property tax credit for homeowners with limited assets, with an additional such credit for seniors. The credit applies to those who apply and qualify based on modest financial resources.
- Beginning in July 2015, Montgomery County doubled the rate of the senior tax credit and expanded eligibility to include homeowners who are 65 to 70 years old (until this year, the credit was limited to homeowners 70 years and over).
- Property tax credit support for older homeowners who have modest savings are estimated to grow from about \$2 million to approximately \$3 million per year. For residents age 70 and older, retroactive applications for this credit may be made for the prior three years.
- Design for Life, managed by the Department of Permitting Services (DPS), provides partial tax credits to property owners or homebuilders who install measures that improve accessibility, visit-ability and/or livability of residential homes. This model program was initiated in July 2014 to improve the ability of all residents to manage more successfully in homes and age in place and to make homes more accessible to visitors of all ages.
- In 2013, the County began offering homeowners a swifter approval process for accessory apartments, one way to expand affordable housing for seniors.

Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

- Introduced incentives for builders to install accessible park amenities. Density is awarded through zoning process for private development projects and is approved by the Planning Board. In addition, Recreational Guidelines Update – 2016 gives developers points for providing publicly accessible outdoor spaces and amenities.
- Plans are in place for the development of South County Regional Recreation and Aquatics Center in Silver Spring at a Housing Opportunities Commission residential facility.
- Renovated and/or added to exercise areas in current buildings.
- Removed barriers to accessibility throughout our park system. To date over 1,400 barriers have been removed.
- Furthered the Park Prescription program (ParkRx) by partnering with physicians to issue prescriptions for patients to go outside to nearby parks for both health benefits and enjoyment of available activities. Developed an app with the National Park Service to help physicians quickly inform patients about convenient, nearby places with activities matching patients' interests.
- Revised the 2017 Park, Recreation, and Open Space Plan to address the growing senior population and their specific park and recreational needs.
- Completed the Energized Public Spaces plan that identifies walkable open space needs in highly populated areas and recommends solutions to allow access and recreation for all ages.

Senior Public Safety

- In 2008, the County Executive convened the Senior Citizen Fire Safety Task Force, which was charged with developing an aggressive approach to address and reverse the trend of fire risk among seniors. Since then, fire fatalities among seniors have fallen.
- One of the tasks force's most successful and high-profile recommendations has been the implementation of Montgomery County's Fire and Rescue Service's (MCFRS) home safety program-- fire department representatives visit the homes of seniors and persons with disabilities to check smoke alarms, identify and correct any potential safety risks and ensure that the resident has a home fire escape plan. Using an appointment-based scheduling system, the department has visited more than 1,000 senior homes in the first ten months of the program.
- Additionally, the MCFRS personnel partner with communities, neighborhood organizations and residential building managers to develop fire evacuation and escape plans. MCFRS provides "fire safety awareness" training to any group that may interact with "at-risk" seniors in their home – alerting them to check smoke alarms, space heaters and learning cooking practices to help prevent fires.
- Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD) teaches mental health first aid to all recruits and during in-service training.
- Educate the public and caregivers of people with dementia that they should contact police for help when problems arise.

- Partner with MCFRS and Consumer Protection on public speaking events with senior groups.
- Holds special events such as Free Senior Movie at Westfield Montgomery Mall monthly, “coffee with a cop” events and fraud presentations.
- Translated consumer alerts for placement on YouTube, including translation into Spanish.
- Work with Radio America on additional Spanish language programming.
- MCNICCC (Mobile Integrated Community Para-medicine) completed training of MCFRS paramedics and memos of understanding with all hospitals.
- Purchased File of Life packets for distribution and fall prevention equipment and materials.
- The Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (OEMHS) developed and distributes disaster preparedness outreach materials dedicated to seniors and persons with functional disabilities. These materials are currently available in English, Spanish, French and Mandarin. They are widely available at senior centers, libraries and at locations where OEMHS outreach presentations are made. The response to these materials has been very positive.
- OEMHS partners with Maryland Relay to keep people who use TTY machines informed at times of emergencies.
- Conducts Keeping Seniors Safe (KSS), a program developed in conjunction with the Volunteer Resources Section of the MCPD, established in 2009, to increase awareness of safety issues within the senior community and to provide guidance and resources to seniors in regard to these issues, such as safe shopping habits, parking lot safety, Home safety and personal preparedness for an emergency, fraud and scams, identity theft identification and prevention, who to call for emergency and non-emergency needs
- The Alzheimer’s/Dementia Outreach Unit, provides a continuous, layered approach to wandering prevention and general community safety through education of officers and the community, outreach, immediate follow-up and incident response.
- MCPD officers conduct home security surveys in seniors’ homes.
- MCPD officers manage Project Lifesaver to help locate seniors with Alzheimer’s disease.

Transportation

- Extended free bus hours for seniors and people with disabilities.
- Successfully applied for federal funding that lowers co-payments for the lowest-income users of the Call-n-Ride program. Funding to begin in early 2019.
- Increased utilization of accessible taxicabs through use of the Transportation Services Improvement Fund.
- Conducted advertising campaign (exterior/interior of buses and bus shelters) to promote Call-n-Ride and Connect-A-Ride, as well as expanded free/discounted hours on RideOn and Metrobus.
- Advertised bus and Call-n-Ride via a video advertisement in movie theatres, government buildings and social media and incorporated similar information in Beacon newspaper ads.

- Department of Transportation (DOT), DHHS, and the Jewish Council for the Aging conduct outreach efforts to educate senior residential communities, faith communities, and other community organizations about transportation services, older driver safety, and alternatives to driving. Methods included presentations, lobby events, and cable TV shows.
- Collected data from Call-n-Ride customer satisfaction survey to provide direction about areas in need of improvement, internal operations, performance of taxi companies and swipe cards, and how the Department can make access easier.
- Encourage, support, and help recruit volunteer drivers for nonprofit organizations such as The Senior Connection and aging-in-place villages.
- Work to ensure transportation information gets to all audiences, translating information and encouraging telephone translation services for seniors with limited English proficiency.
- Promote Maryland's Resource Guide for Aging Drivers (Paperless Airplane with 120,000 subscribers; Aging and Disability Services' E-news with 8,000 subscribers; and DOT's Go Montgomery) and placed it on the Transportation page on the Senior site: <http://montgomerycountymd.gov/senior/transportation.html>
- Multiple AARP Smart Driver classes were offered in the v-county, as were many CarFit events.
- The Department of Transportation (DOT) has made more than 4,000 bus stops Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant, either through the bus stop improvement program, capital improvement projects, State Highway Administration, public or private projects. DOT continues to improve pedestrian crossings by re-timing all traffic signals to extend pedestrian crossing times to accommodate slower walking speeds, upgrade some traffic signals to include accessible/countdown pedestrian signals.
- DOT also improved visibility by increasing street name sizes by 25%, adding advanced street name signs, using higher grade retro-reflective signs and upgrading stop signs to 30-inch size (from 24-inches) for increased legibility.
- In July 2015, the County enacted legislation to increase the number of wheelchair accessible taxicabs and set a goal that the County's fleet will become 100% accessible by 2025. A new fund, collected as surcharges from transport network companies, will help the County achieve this goal.
- Call-n-Ride currently serves more than 5,000 people; 70% are seniors. The program also serves persons with disabilities. In April 2013, Call-n-Ride was transitioned to an automated debit card system; by reinvesting savings, the program expanded income eligibility in FY15 for greater participation.
- DOT improves pedestrian access by using high visibility ladder bar style at crosswalks, focus on pedestrian access/safety in work zones and continue converting street lights to LED.



Department of Health and Human Services
Commission on Aging
www.montgomerycountymd.gov