



## Commission on Children and Youth

### December 10, 2025, Meeting Minutes

#### Meeting Location

[https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting\\_NDNhYWM4OTQtZjJjMi00YWEzLWJkODMtZDhiMDk5Mml0NjZi%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%226e01b1f9-b1e5-4073-ac97-778069a0ad64%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22de2fa4d4-1208-482b-9fc8-ea1052f61817%22%7d](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_NDNhYWM4OTQtZjJjMi00YWEzLWJkODMtZDhiMDk5Mml0NjZi%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%226e01b1f9-b1e5-4073-ac97-778069a0ad64%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22de2fa4d4-1208-482b-9fc8-ea1052f61817%22%7d)

#### Attendance

##### Members Present

- Michael Jimenez
- Kirsten Andersen
- Shane Tate
- Molly McAlvanah
- Leon Peace
- Kimberly McClurkin-Harris
- Sara Rosen
- Nina Bersabal
- Keena Howell
- Greg Tucker
- Megan Pantellis
- Johnathan Berhane
- Jessica Isabella Berrellez
- Joelle Butuyan
- Rizwan Rana
- Chelsea Zhu
- Stephanie Clarke
- Ary Amerikaner
- Nandi Walcott
- Jane Chappell
- Corinne Yourman

## Members Not Present

- Sol

## Proof of Quorum

The presence of 13 members confirmed a quorum at 6:36.

## Staff Present

- Jameela Hyland

## Guest Speakers

- Diego Uriburu

## Call To Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:38PM.

## Welcome and Introductions

The Chair provided opening remarks and briefly highlighted the commission's business.

## Review and Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

The Review and Approval of September Meeting Minutes was approved by Marilennis and second by Rizzy Rana.

## Review and Approve Meeting Agenda

The agenda was approved for the meeting at 6:40pm.

## Meeting Minutes Agenda Items

Guest Presentation: "Building Resilience through Connection and Community"

Diego Uriburu, Executive Director of Identity, Inc., opened the discussion with reflections on the roots of youth resilience and the barriers that prevent young people from thriving. He emphasized that "*what makes us sick are the things we cannot talk about*"—a reminder that healing begins with open dialogue, consistent relationships, and environments where youth feel seen and valued.

Key themes included:

- Trust and Consistency: Youth test adults' reliability; resilience grows when adults remain present even after being pushed away.  
Positive Youth Development: Focusing on youth assets, strengths, and capabilities allows young people to see themselves through the eyes of those who believe in them.
- Practical Strategies for Connection: Remembering names and birthdays, recalling personal stories, and creating joyful spaces through play and retreats can significantly strengthen relationships.  
Trauma Awareness: Trauma manifests differently; some youth act out, while others withdraw. A trauma-informed ecosystem must include safe spaces across schools and community settings.

- **Systemic Challenges:** Despite strong programs, Montgomery County faces silos and lacks unified goals. Greater collaboration among agencies and nonprofits could extend the reach of services.
- **Post-Pandemic Struggles:** Many youth and families have not recovered emotionally or economically. Ongoing fears around deportation, instability, and loss contribute to persistent stress.
- **Community Mental Health Workers:** Identity's initiative to train adults and peers as community mental health workers has helped close service gaps and empower residents to support one another.
- **Call to Action:** Uriburu urged the County to coordinate across agencies and act swiftly, predicting that challenges for families and youth will intensify over the next one to three years.

He closed by noting that resilience is nurtured not by programs alone, but by *“people who make the difference.”*

#### Commission Discussion

Following the presentation, commissioners discussed the importance of creating safe spaces for youth and families, reducing barriers for nonprofits to partner with MCPS, and finding ways to extend training and trauma-informed resources to a broader audience. Members noted the need to invest in parents and caregivers as primary sources of youth support, especially for families on the brink of system involvement.

Emerging discussion points included:

- Exploring public–nonprofit partnerships to expand access to youth-serving spaces.
- Increasing awareness of funding constraints and preparing for potential cuts.
- Recognizing new initiatives like MoCo Pride, which demonstrate the value of physical, affirming spaces for youth.

Potential future speakers identified:

- Comfort Cases – Robert Scheer
- MoCo Pride Center leadership
- Foster care system representatives – Rachel Eig or Marilennis Cruz
- Practitioners supporting youth with disabilities – Sarah Milner (Sunflower Bakery)
- DHHS Chief of Children, Youth and Families – Lori Garibay Aquino

#### Youth Subcommittee Report

Youth commissioners shared updates on their focus area of media literacy related to human trafficking and planning for the Youth Voice Roundtable.

- **Format:** Hybrid, with an in-person component at a County recreation center.
- **Timing:** Early April 2026, with the team revisiting whether spring break remains the best window.
- **Next Steps:** Finalize date, secure venue, and coordinate outreach to peers and community leaders.

Next Steps / Takeaways

- Continue refining speaker lineup for early 2026 sessions.
- Support Youth Subcommittee with planning and logistics for the Roundtable.
- Explore opportunities for coordinated advocacy around youth mental health and trauma-informed practices.

## Next Meeting

The next meeting will January 14 at 6:30pm – 8:30pm.

## Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:26pm.