



Department of Health and  
Human Services  
Office of Community Affairs  
Montgomery County, MD  
[www.montgomerycountymd.gov](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov)

Montgomery County DHHS  
Community Action Agency

2424 Reddie Drive  
Suite 238  
Wheaton, MD 20902

Main: 240-777-1697  
MD RELAY: 711

**Celebrating Community Action's 50th Year!**



*Montgomery County, Maryland*

# Community Action Board

Annual Report

2013-2014







### *Our Mission:*

*To conduct and promote programs that create an awareness of poverty,  
to promote coordination among agencies and better use of resources,  
to develop leadership among low-income residents of the County,  
and to develop community strategies to attack the basic causes of poverty.*

Alternative formats of the Community Action Board Annual Report 2013-2014 are available upon request. To request this information in alternative formats, please call 240-777-1697 or e-mail Leah.Goldfine@montgomerycountymd.gov. TTY users, please call MD Relay (711).



[www.mc311.com](http://www.mc311.com)

Call 311 or 240-777-0311

**Montgomery County Maryland  
COMMUNITY ACTION BOARD  
2013-2014**

**Chairperson: Walter Woods, Jr.  
Vice Chairperson: Matthew J. Green, Jr.  
Secretary: Gerald J. Roper, Sr.**

Romeo Adjam, *Representative of the Head Start Policy Council and Representative of the Low-Income Community, Damascus*  
Alejandro Becerra, *Human Rights Commission*  
Mary Bennett, *Stepping Stones Shelter*  
Kevin Bryant, *Representative of the Low-Income Community, Gaithersburg*  
Stacy Coletta, *Department of Transportation*  
Lisa Conlon, *Board of Education*  
Lily Echeverria, *Spanish Catholic Center, Catholic Charities*  
Thomas Ferleman, *Representative of the Low-Income Community, Germantown*  
Steven M. Galen, *Primary Care Coalition (Ex-Officio)*  
Tekele (Marie) Ghonda Gha, *Representative of the Low-Income Community, MidCounty*  
Matthew J. Green, Jr., *Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity*  
Gail Gunod-Green, *Housing Opportunities Commission*  
Chandra Harris-Jackson, *Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless*  
Nadine Jackman, *Representative of the Head Start Policy Council and Representative of the Low-Income Community Gaithersburg*  
Pamela Lockett, *County Council Designee*  
Julieta Machado, *Spanish Catholic Center, Catholic Charities*  
Lauren Newman, *Department of Health & Human Services*  
Shiela Ortiz, *Representative of the Low-Income Community, Silver Spring*  
Stephen Reese, *Primary Care Coalition*  
Gerald Roper, *People's Community Baptist Church*  
Laurie-Anne Sayles, *Representative of the Low-Income Community, Gaithersburg*  
Juliette Traore, *Representative of the Low-Income Community, Rockville*  
Walter Woods, Jr., *County Executive Designee*  
Betsy Wyse Jett, *Human Rights Commission*

The Community Action Board (CAB) serves in an advisory capacity to the County Executive and County Council, and as an advocate on behalf of the poor and working poor of the County. Members are appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the County Council.

The Board has four areas of responsibility, as defined through its enabling legislation:

- *Assessing the needs and problems of low-income people in the County;*
- *Recommending programs to meet the needs and solve the problems;*
- *Reviewing the Community Action Agencies' staff implementation of those programs; and*
- *Maintaining County policy and service delivery from the point of view of low-income residents.*

The Montgomery County Community Action Board is the governing body for the Montgomery County Head Start Program and the Community Action Agency. An annual report on the Head Start program is required by Public Law 110-134 "Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007" reauthorizing the Head Start program, Sec. 644 (a)(2) [42 U.S.C. 9839].

The Community Action Board meets on the Fourth Tuesday each month at 7 pm, except in July, August and December. Meetings are held at 101 Monroe Street, Rockville, in the 9th Floor Conference Room. The Executive Committee meets on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 4 pm, at 2424 Reedie Drive, Wheaton, MD.

Montgomery County will provide sign language interpreters/auxiliary aides upon request. Please contact Leah Goldfine at Leah.Goldfine@montgomerycountymd.gov or 240-777-1697 at least three business days in advance. TTY users, please call MD Relay (711).

*Inquiries may also be made through the County Executive's office:  
240-777-2528 or [CountyExecutiveBoard@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:CountyExecutiveBoard@montgomerycountymd.gov)*



## HISTORY OF COMMUNITY ACTION

On August 20, 1964, President Lyndon Baines Johnson signed into law, Senate Bill 2642, better known as the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, declaring “unconditional war on poverty.” Title II of that law, provided for urban and rural communities to mobilize their resources to combat poverty through Community Action Programs. The most important provision of the Economic Opportunity Act was the requirement that Community Action Programs be developed, conducted, and administered with the maximum participation of area residents.

The following year, Community Action Agencies (CAA) were established, and Head Start programs opened around the country to provide comprehensive services—including health care, social services, and early education—to low-income preschool children. Since then, the Montgomery County CAA and its Board, have been charged with the responsibility of recommending programs to improve the lives of the County’s poor, the development of leaders within low-income communities, and the development of systems to increase their self-sufficiency, self-esteem and gain more control over their own lives. Today, the national Community Action Partnership network remains the largest single provider of Head Start programs.

The Community Action Board (CAB) serves as the governing body for Montgomery County Head Start. CAB shares program governance with the Head Start Policy Council and works closely with Montgomery County Public Schools, the delegate agency providing services, under the auspices of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Community Action Agency, the official grantee, and in collaboration with DHHS’ Early Childhood and School Health Services.

Together, this strong partnership assures that some of Montgomery’s most economically fragile children, including those with disabilities, are receiving the education, health, nutrition, and social services they need to succeed in school. Parents are involved in all aspects of the Head Start Program, with representatives serving on the Head Start Policy Council as well as the Community Action Board.

Originally, a number of Community Action services were delivered directly by County employees. Over time, nonprofit community providers have assumed this work, with the support of volunteers and a blended funding stream that includes, but is not wholly reliant upon, Montgomery County and other public funding. Staff of the CAA provide technical support to strengthen these services and to monitor that public funding is spent as intended.



*President Lyndon Johnson signs the War on Poverty Bill in the White House Rose Garden during a ceremony in 1964. The legislation led to the establishment of several programs, including Community Action Agencies.*

### **Enabling Legislation: Article IV. Community Action Agency, Sec. 27-40.**

**Statement of policy:** “It is the public policy of the County to promote programs to create an awareness of poverty; promote coordination among private and public agencies concerned with poverty; promote better use of existing resources and develop leadership among poor citizens to solve community problems; and develop broad community strategies to attack the basic causes of poverty.”

*(1976 L.M.C., ch. 1, § 1; 1977 L.M.C., ch. 28, § 10; 1977 L.M.C., ch. 30, § 15; 1997 L.M.C., ch. 25, §1.)*

**In Sec. 27-41 (a)**, it is further stated that “There is a Community Action Agency within the Executive branch of the County government. The Agency creates and maintains community action programs to encourage the use of public and private resources to enable low-income people to become self-sufficient; to reduce poverty in the County; to involve the low-income population in developing and carrying out anti-poverty programs in the County; and to make government more responsive to the needs of low-income people.”

## The Montgomery County Community Action Board FY 2014 Year in Review

In Federal FY 2014, the Community Action Board continued its work advocating for low-income residents through testimony, meetings with elected officials, speaking engagements, coalitions, County events, and collaboration with other Boards, Committees and Commissions. CAB achieved many successes throughout the year, including increased funding for the Working Families Income Supplement and restored funding to prevent a Head Start class from being eliminated due to sequestration. The Board's priorities for the year included raising awareness of poverty in Montgomery County, advocating for the use of the Self-Sufficiency Standard as an accurate measure of the cost of living, identifying funding to update the Maryland and Montgomery County SSS reports, supporting the EITC as a way to raise families out of poverty, and advocating for equitable access to early childhood education.

### The Board participated in testimony, advocacy, and collaboration throughout the year, including:

- Testimony about CAB priorities for the County Council's HHS Committee.
- Advocacy in support of 100% restoration of funding for the County's Working Families Income Supplement.
- Testimony at the Universal PreK Breakfast at the Joint House and Senate Priorities Hearing.
- Letter of support for the County's minimum wage bill.
- Meeting with County Executive Ike Leggett to request \$5 million to expand PreK, additional VITA funding and an update of the Self-Sufficiency Standard.
- Presentation about the EITC at the *National Conference on Ending Poverty*.
- Advocacy in support of the Maryland Prekindergarten Expansion Act of 2014.
- Testimony at County Council public hearing regarding funding for CAB priorities.
- Written testimony in support of the Senior Property Tax Credit.
- Testimony at MD DHCD public hearing supporting the proposed CSBG funding allocation formula.
- Testimony at County Council Hearing regarding proposed "Ban the Box" Legislation.
- Meeting with former Board of Education President Christopher Barclay regarding Universal PreK.
- Participation in a national EITC kickoff event at the Capitol with County Councilmember Hans Riemer.
- Meeting with members of the Commission on Child Care to discuss implementation of PreK programs.
- Presentation about the EITC at a Commission for Women meeting.
- Participation in quarterly meetings with DHHS Director, Uma Ahluwalia, for B/C/C Chairs.



*Left: Board Chair, Walter Woods, received the Board Member of the Year Award at the 2014 Maryland Community Action Partnership Gala.*

*Right: Board member, Pamela Luckett, testifies about the EITC on Capitol Hill.*

**HEAD START IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY** is a comprehensive program to prepare young children, ages 3-5, for success in school. Services are provided for low-income children and families including developmentally appropriate pre-school education, health and social services, services to children with disabilities, as well as a nutrition and parent involvement program. During school year 13-14, 628 three and four-year-old children were served in 33 classes in 27 schools and 1 private child care center. Children in the private child care center site were able to receive full day services in one location, a boon for working families. The program is measured annually using MSDE definitions of readiness; full readiness is defined as consistently demonstrating skills, behaviors, and abilities needed to meet kindergarten expectations successfully. Demand for the program dramatically exceeds the enrollment capacity.



### **Parent Involvement with Montgomery County's Head Start**

Parent involvement is key to the success of the Head Start Program. Through home visits, phone calls, and direct contacts, Family Service Workers connect families to critical services, both in school and in the in community. These services ensure that children receive all of the support necessary to be "kindergarten ready." Parents are invited to participate in parent meetings, special activities, and trainings throughout the year. These programs allow parents to connect with one another and build a stronger support system. All families received at least one service during the course of their child's enrollment in Head Start.

#### **Services Provided to Head Start Families:**

- Emergency/ crisis intervention (immediate needs for food, clothing or shelter)
- Housing assistance (subsidies, utilities, repairs)
- Mental health services
- ESL (English as a Second Language)
- Adult education (including GED)
- Job training
- Substance abuse services
- Child abuse and neglect referrals
- Domestic violence services
- Child support assistance
- Health education
- Assistance to families of incarcerated individuals
- Parenting education
- Marriage education

#### **Ready for Kindergarten:**

The Montgomery County Head Start Program offers a quality educational experience to children and families in order to prepare them with the foundational knowledge and skills necessary for success in kindergarten and beyond. Aligned with the *Maryland State Department of Education's Voluntary State Curriculum* and the *Montgomery County Public Schools K-8 Curriculum Framework*, the Pre-K/Head Start curriculum provides a strong emphasis on literacy and mathematics foundational concepts and skills, with age-appropriate science, social studies, art, music, movement and technology experiences. Head Start teachers utilize research-based instructional strategies in whole-group, small-group, and one-on-one settings. Parents are provided with information and materials to support their children's learning at home and they are encouraged to participate in all school experiences. 68% of Head Start children entered kindergarten fully ready to succeed in school and an additional 22% were approaching readiness.

Head Start Services	Total # Served FY12	Total # Served FY13	Total # Served FY14	Total # Planned FY15
<b>Funded Enrollment</b>	<b>648</b>	<b>648</b>	<b>628</b>	<b>648</b>
MCPS Head Start Enrollment	618	628	608	628
Community-Based Head Start in Child Care Centers	30	20	20	20
Total Actual Enrollment	705	700	660	n/a
Full Day Head Start classes	18	18	18	17

**Head Start Enrollment and Attendance:** Head Start in Montgomery County is a school based program, following the annual calendar of Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS)

Head Start Enrollment	Total # Served SY 10-11	Total # Served SY 11-12	Total # Served SY 12-13	Total # Served SY 13-14
September	646	639	646	628
October	647	638	648	628
November	648	643	647	628
December	648	640	648	628
January	648	647	648	628
February	648	648	646	628
March	648	644	646	628
April	648	643	643	628
May	646	635	640	628
June	641	635	638	621
<b>Attendance Rate</b>	<b>92.51%*</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>94.01%*</b>
Avg. Enrollment	646.8	641.2	645	627.3

The socio-economic status of the Head Start families and the high cost of housing in Montgomery County combine to create the conditions for a high level of mobility that negatively affects the children's attendance. However, attendance and enrollment figures over the past several years reflect a positive familial attitude toward good attendance. Teaching teams and family service workers collaborate with parents by providing support and problem-solving strategies to remove any barriers that may negatively affect attendance.



**Trends**

- ⇒ Of the **49 three year old children** with established eligibility for Head Start, Montgomery County served 43 over the course of the year, in two classes which served **15 three year olds each**. It is estimated that over 1,000 three year old children are Head Start eligible based on census data; applications are purposively limited because of the few Head Start seats actually available for three year old children.
- ⇒ Of the **1,138 four year old children** whose families established eligibility for Head Start, Montgomery County served 617 of the four year olds during the course of the school year.
- ⇒ 520 other four-year olds children with established eligibility for Head Start, were not served by Head Start; and were served in MCPS PreK classrooms in compliance with state law. Over 1,600 four-year old children whose eligibility is based on FARMS were served by Prekindergarten
- ⇒ Twenty Head Start eligible children at Fairland ES received Head Start level services in a “PreK exception” classroom, funded through MSDE to mitigate the effects of the federal sequester which reduced Montgomery County’s federal child development/ Head Start grant for FY14.
- ⇒ Approximately **30-33%** of the Head Start eligible children are served in our County by Head Start. %.

Source: data from MCPS regarding registration and enrollment rates for School Year 13-14, and PIR report from August 2014.

**Percentage of enrolled children that received medical exams in SY 13-14: 100%!**

Head Start Health Services	Total # Served FY11	Total # Served FY12	Total # Served FY13	Total # Served FY14
Medical exams	98%	98%	96%	100%
Health insurance at end of HS year	95%	96%	100%	100%
Dental Exams/ preventive care	96%	95%	95%	79%

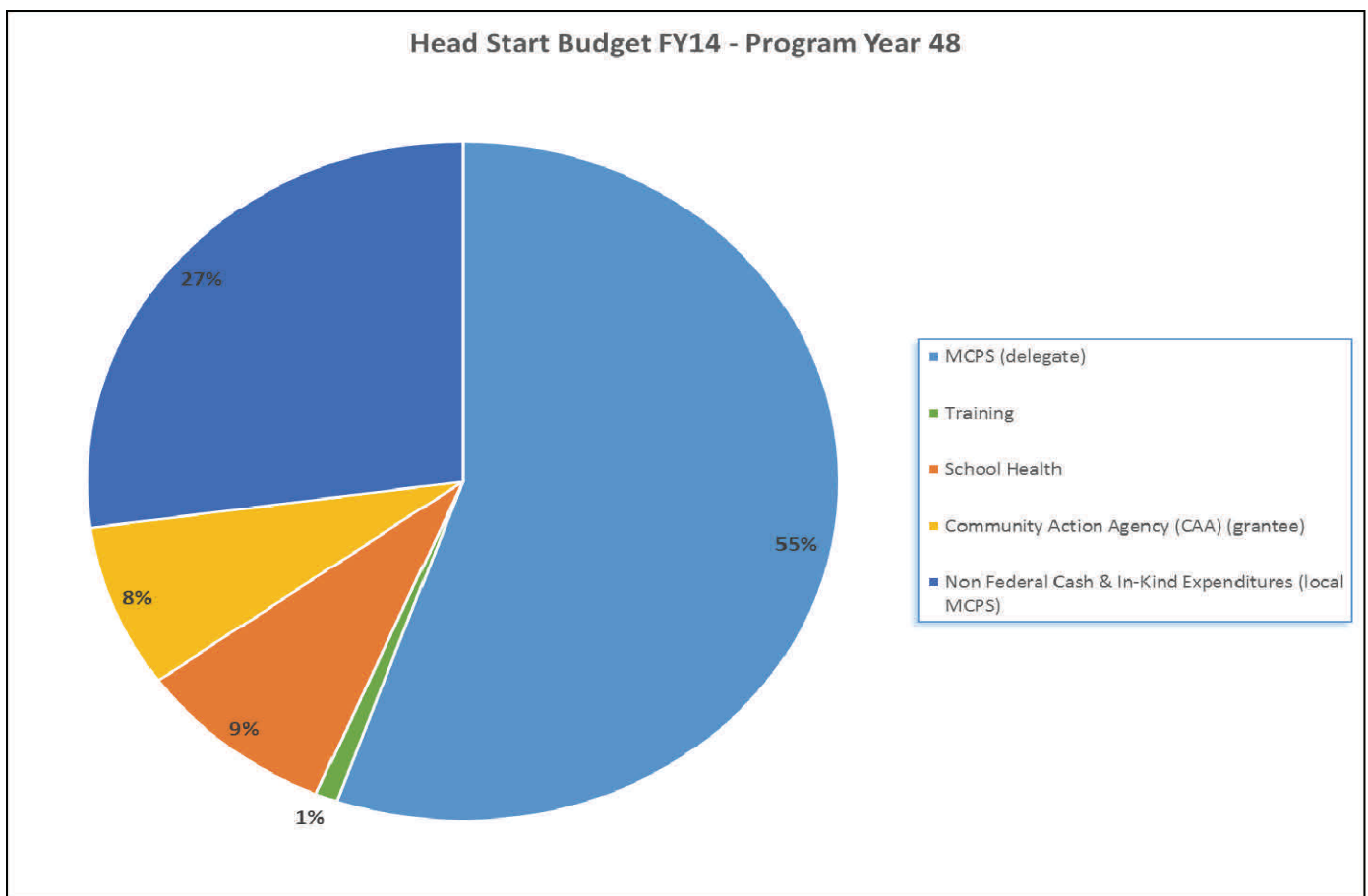


*Parent Policy Council officers being sworn in – January 2014*

**Results of the most recent review by the Secretary and the Financial Audit.**

As part of its 2013 Triennial Federal Head Start Monitoring Review report, the Office of Head Start, Administration for Children and Families, followed up on its on-site monitoring review conducted in October 2012. The review noted program strengths in the area of Family and Community Engagement (FCE) through its system of tracking contacts, the annual Community Providers Collaboration Forum, and the diversity of FCE staff. The delegate's electronic system for tracking contacts with families and their progress towards goal achievement ensured families received timely, high-quality services. As a result of the review of the Montgomery County Head Start, the MCPS Transportation Department adopted a procedure whereby all bus drivers assigned to Head Start routes will be screened for TB, with procedural changes to assure compliance.

**Financial Audit:** Montgomery County has an annual Independent Auditor's Report on Internal Control, Over Financial Reporting and on Compliance and Other Matters, Based on an Audit of Financial Statements Performed in Accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*. A copy of the Audit for the year ending June 30, 2014, is available at the County's website: [http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/Finance/Resources/Files/data/financial/FY14\\_MOCO\\_Single\\_Audit\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/Finance/Resources/Files/data/financial/FY14_MOCO_Single_Audit_FINAL.pdf) The most current Montgomery County MD Report on Expenditures of Federal Awards for Fiscal Year 2014 was performed for the County Council and County Executive by CliftonLarsonAllen LLP, Certified Public Accountants and Consultants.



**Head Start Budget Basics:****Program Year 48 = School Year 2013-14 = Fiscal Year 2014****PY 48 = SY 13-14 = FY 14****PY 48 COMPARISON OF BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES FOR HEAD START & PY 49 PROPOSED**

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>FY14 BUDGET</b>	<b>EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>FY15 AWARD</b>
Personnel	\$532,458	\$3,891,540	\$442,120
Fringe Benefits	\$60,611		\$191,368
Travel	\$10,023	\$12,571	\$2,000
Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$0
Supplies	\$31,561	\$20,361	\$12,500
Contractual	\$3,676,077	\$367,075	\$3,986,255
Other	\$58,059	\$77,242	\$33,577
Training*/ Technical Assistance	57188*	57188*	57188*
<b>Subtotal Federal</b>	<b>\$4,368,789</b>	<b>\$4,368,789</b>	<b>\$4,667,820</b>
Non Federal	\$1,092,197	\$1,653,986	\$1,166,955
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,460,986</b>	<b>\$6,022,775</b>	<b>\$5,834,775</b>

\*Training is included in variety of categories and not added into the subtotal federal award.

*Personnel* for Head Start includes DHHS staffing, that is, community health nurses, school health room aides, dental hygienist, nurse administrator, community services aide, and grantee Head Start program manager, program aide, and administrative specialist. *Travel* includes costs associated with reimbursing staff for travel to Head Start sites to provide health and dental services, and for staff and parents to attend trainings and national, regional, and state conferences.

*Contractual services* includes all delegate costs including the required audit (A133), personnel costs (e.g., teachers, paraeducators, speech pathologists, psychologists, social workers, social service assistants) and training and technical assistance for delegate staff. Contractual health costs include specialty dental treatment providers, not available through insurance or dental clinics, and Mobile Medical Care, Inc. to provide contractual Head Start Nurses. Under Community Action Agency (CAA) contractual services includes funding for Community- Based Head Start child care center site at Montgomery College and for training for the Policy Council and Community Action Board on shared governance and methods to achieve board goals within a government structure.

*Other* funding within MCPS covers a variety of expenses including training & staff development, child liability insurance, parent services such as training, parent/child mathematics and literacy activities, bus transportation for classes to attend field trips, reimbursement of mileage for home visits and parent meetings for teachers, paraeducators, special needs teacher, and social service assistants. *Other* funding for CAA provides assistance with costs for family related activities, and supplies necessary to conduct various meetings. These funds provide a range of administrative supports to the Montgomery County, MD, Head Start Program such as local travel costs for contract and grant monitoring. Other funding for School Health includes costs associated with continuing education and performance standard training for Head Start School Health Room nurses, technicians and hygienists and providing educational training experiences and materials for parents, students and non professional staff.

All *MCPS costs* are combined into contractual services under the federal award because the funds are granted for a "pass-through" with MCPS as the subrecipient/ delegate agency.

## VITA and Financial Education Partnership

The VITA Program provides free tax preparation services to low-income County residents. This critical service helps to ensure that low-income tax filers receive all of the Earned Income and Child Tax Credits they qualify for. Free tax services are offered at various locations throughout the County. The VITA program relies on the support of over 70 volunteer tax preparers, who, during tax season 2013, contributed 2,764 hours of service. In Tax Year 2013, the VITA program helped clients file 2,073 tax returns, with an average federal and state refund of \$1,266. The total amount of all federal and state tax refunds for tax year 2013 was \$2.6 million for all VITA clients.

### The VITA Program's Impact: The EITC in Montgomery County



YEAR	# Returns	Total Fed & State Refund (\$)	Avg. Fed & State Refund	EITC \$	State EITC	County EITC	Total EITC
2010	1,455	\$ 2,379,105	\$ 1,635	\$ 601,629	\$ 150,408	\$ 114,859	\$ 866,896
2011	1,868	\$ 2,912,130	\$ 1,559	\$ 732,235	\$ 183,059	\$ 126,127	\$ 1,041,421
2012	2,359	\$ 2,921,660	\$ 1,239	\$ 867,405	\$ 216,851	\$ 158,085	\$ 1,242,341
2013	2,073	\$ 2,623,510	\$ 1,266	\$ 723,995	\$ 180,999	\$ 136,654	\$ 1,041,648
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,755</b>	<b>\$ 10,836,405</b>	<b>\$ 1,425</b>	<b>\$ 2,925,264</b>	<b>\$ 731,317</b>	<b>\$ 535,725</b>	<b>\$ 4,192,306</b>



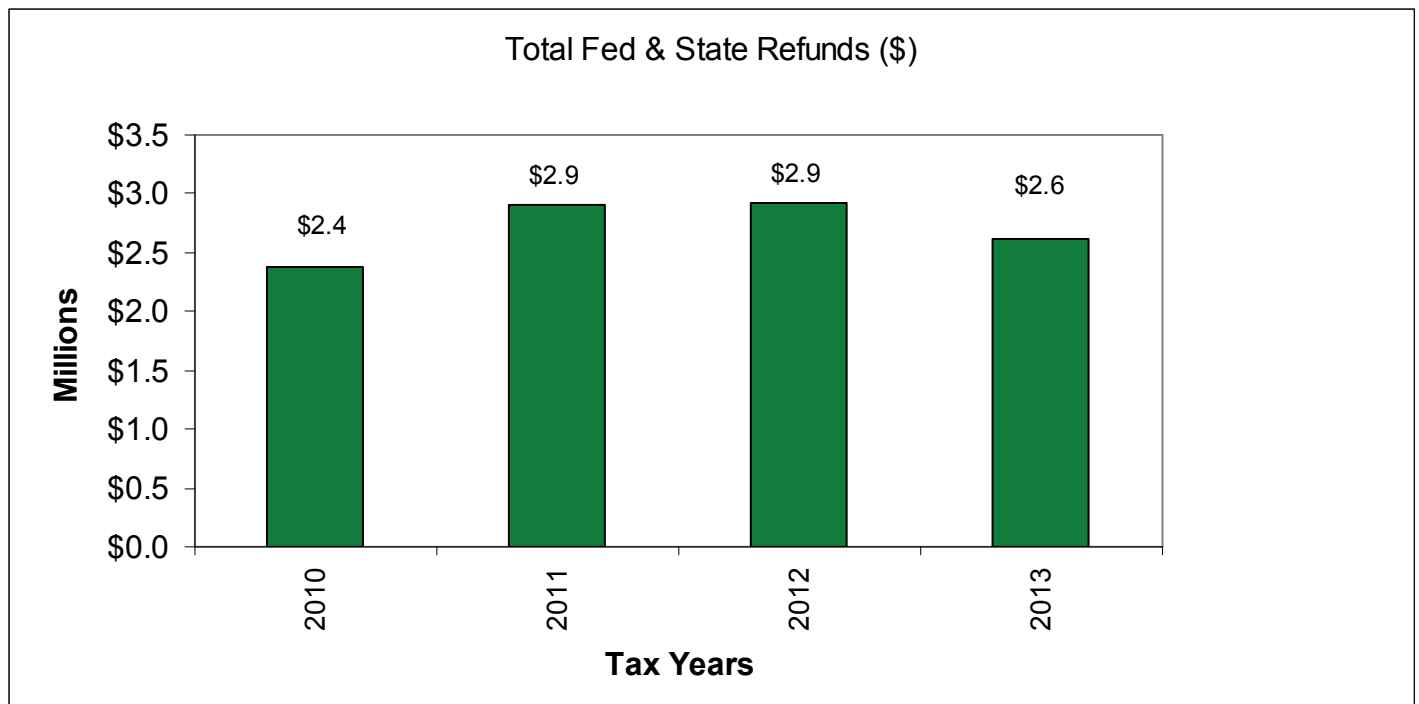
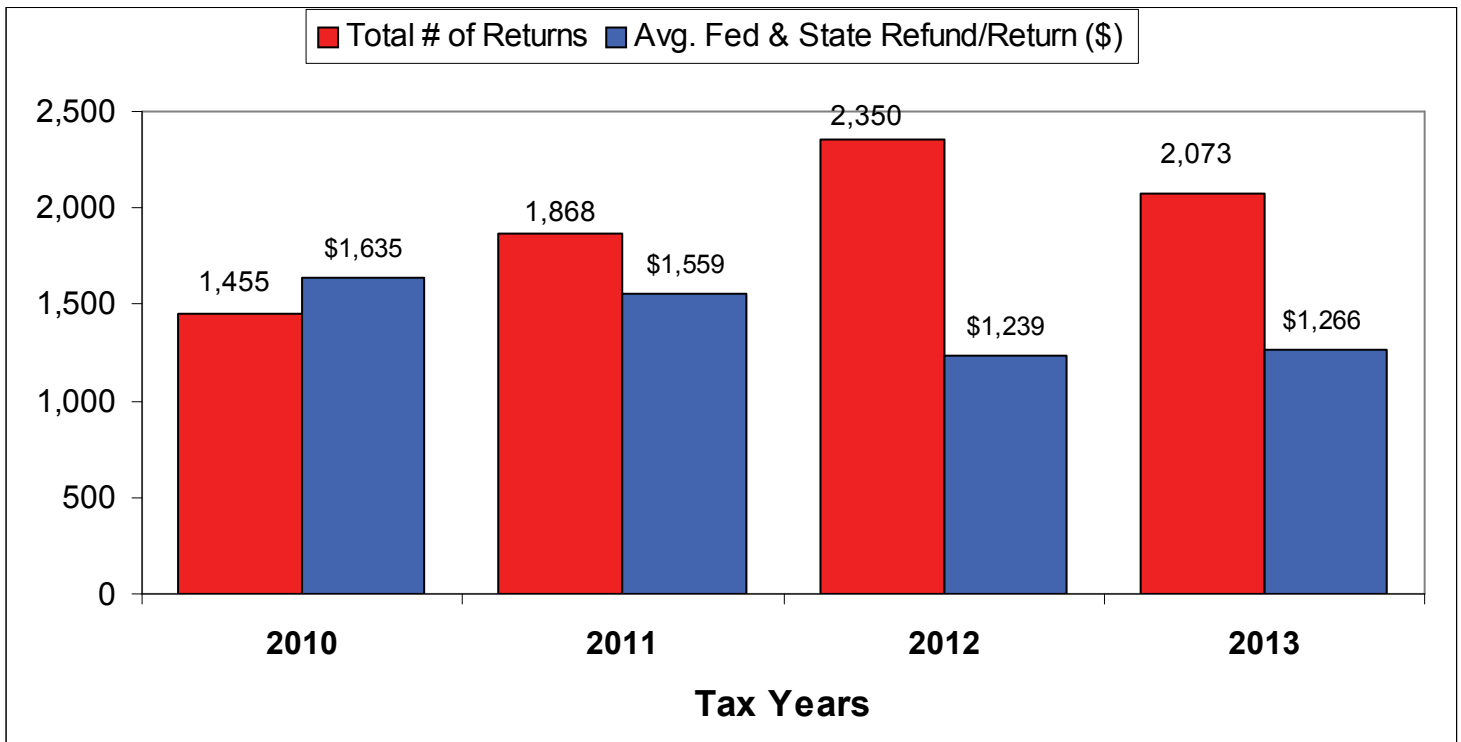
Left: Staff and Board members met with County Councilmember, Hans Riemer, at a meeting to discuss the EITC. Pictured left to right: CAA Executive Director, Sharon Strauss; Board Chair, Walter Woods; VITA Program Manager, Taunya Johnson; Councilmember Hans Riemer; Maryland CASH Campaign Director of Financial Education, Sue Rogan; and VITA Contractor, Abiola Abodunrin.

Right: In 2014, the Council issues a proclamation for the EITC. Pictured left to right: Board Member, Pam Lockett; CAA Executive Director, Sharon Strauss; Councilmember Nancy Navarro; Stepping Stones Shelter Executive Director, Denise Fredericks; Maryland CASH Campaign Director of Financial Education, Sue Rogan; Former VITA Intern and Former EITC Recipient, Robin "Camille" Henry, and Councilmember Hans Riemer.



**During Tax Year 2013, VITA returned over \$2.6 million in state and federal refunds to 2,073\* households. VITA taxpayers owed over \$1 million to the state and federal governments.**

\*This includes taxpayers who filed for previous year returns post-season.



## A Salute to Community Partners

The Community Action Agency provides services to the low-income community through partnerships with many non-profit organizations. These organizations provide a wide range of services, including food and clothing assistance, legal services, youth programs, and community development.

### Community Action Agency's Partners, FY14:

- **C-4 Clothing Closet**—Provides clothing, baby items, backpacks for students at the beginning of the school year and holiday gifts for children during the holidays. Served over 1,000 families in FY14.
- **Caribbean Help Center**—Provides operating support to provide emergency assistance, food distribution and health care referrals. In FY14, they assisted 919 clients.
- **CASA de Maryland**—Provides employment, training and supportive services to low-income residents with limited English proficiency at three locations. In FY14, 3 DACA clinics assisted 152 residents. In East County, 909 clients received case management and referrals. Provided 9,049 day labor placements, 75 unduplicated part-time job placements, and 59 unduplicated fulltime jobs.
- **Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington, Inc.**—Provides emergency services, outreach, and case management to low-income residents. Provided case management services and information and referrals to 8,977 clients in FY14.
- **Circle of Rights, Inc.**—Provides increased public awareness and outreach about stroke prevention to minority populations. In FY14, held 14 workshops for 876 participants on health promotion including stress reduction, high blood pressure, nutrition and communicating with doctors.
- **Community Health & Empowerment Through Education and Research (CHEER)** —Provides health and community engagement for County residents. Reached 300 residents through outreach efforts.
- **Crossroads Community Food Network**—Provides staff support, food subsidies and operating for markets nutrition program. In FY14, distributed \$23,284 in Fresh Checks to hundreds of families, which may be redeemed for fresh fruits and vegetables at the Crossroads Farmers Market.
- **Cultural & Diversity Enrichment Services (CADES-USA)**—Provides programs for immigrant youth, which include cultural and academic enrichment. Provided services to 11 youth throughout FY14.
- **EduCare Support Services**—Provides emergency food services to seniors and disabled residents. Provided food to 115 home-bound residents in FY14.
- **Eastern Montgomery Emergency Assistance Network (EMEAN)**—Provides emergency services to families in Eastern Montgomery County. Served 219 families in FY14.
- **Family Services, Inc.**—Provides case management services and covers a portion of the office expenses for Neighborhood Service Center in Gaithersburg. Served 854 clients in FY14.
- **IMPACT Silver Spring** —Provides community building and civic participation programs. Facilitates an extensive campaign to connect vulnerable residents to direct services and help them build connections and coordinates exchange meetings, Neighborhood Circles, and community events. In FY14, knocked on 7,045 doors, formed 12 Neighborhood Circles, recruited and trained 150 volunteers, and hosted 5 community events.



*Staff from CAA partner, Manna Food Center, provide a healthy cooking demonstration at the TESS Center.*

- **Interfaith Works Clothing Closet**—Operates a clothing center, which distributes donated clothing and house wares to referred clients free of charge. Served 13,073 residents in FY14.
- **International Rescue Committee**—Provides immigration and safety net services to newly-settled refugees in the County. In FY14, settled 45 refugees and linked these individuals with necessary services.
- **Korean Association of the State of Maryland Metro Area Inc.**—Provides social services for Korean immigrants. Services include translation, transportation, advocacy and referrals. Served 378 clients in FY14.
- **Korean Community Service Center of Greater Washington Inc.**—Provides outreach, referrals, and social services to low-income Asian residents. In FY14, provided case management services to 1,208 clients, health promotion to 2,538 individuals, social services to 902 individuals and information and referrals to 1,047 clients.
- **Manna Food Center**—Distributes food to low-income residents, pantries, shelters, soup kitchens, emergency organizations, and group homes. Serve as the County's designee for Temporary Emergency Food Assistance. In FY14, served 11,827 households and worked with 8 farmers markets and 6 local markets to collect 102,486 pounds of fresh produce for low income families.
- **Mid-Atlantic Gleaning** —Distributes food from farmers that cannot be sold, but is still edible, with those in need. In FY14, provided 53,795 pounds of fresh produce to low income families.
- **Montgomery County Maryland Bar Foundation**—Provides pro bono legal services for low-income residents. Operates 4 free legal clinics in the County, which advised 1,622 clients and handled 2,308 cases.
- **The Non-Profit Village Center**—Provides resources to nonprofits, including discounted office space, trainings, workstations, receptionist, copier, fax, scanner, internet services and postage. In FY14, served 17 nonprofit organizations and 3 virtual tenants.
- **Spanish Catholic Center**—Provides case management, health services, English classes, job training, emergency food support, and other services to low-income clients. During October—June, assisted 140 people in applying for support services, referred 274 clients to Manna, 33 to Interfaith Clothing Closet, 39 to their internal medical care program, and 155 to their internal employment program.
- **Whitman Walker Health**—Coordinates the “Removing the Barriers” training, which educates healthcare professionals about health issues impacting LGBT youth. Initiation of the training was delayed to FY 15, when 4 training dates were held.
- **Women Who Care Ministries, Inc.**—Administers a free food distribution program and backpack weekend food program in collaboration with MCPS. During FY14, provided 63,400 food sacks to 38 schools, serving approximately 1,645 children weekly.
- **The YMCA- Benchmarks Program**—Provides an academic enrichment after school program for 36 middle school youth in the Rosemary Hills community. In FY14, served 32 middle school-age students.

#### Making a Difference:

**July 2013:** A family came to the Montgomery County Family Center (MCFC) [at Catholic Charities] seeking food from the Choice Pantry. It was discovered that the client was behind in many of her monthly bills and rent. The family would receive case management services until they became self-sufficient. Catholic Charities helped pay the car insurance and rent and sought other services to help stabilize the family.

**Dec. 2013:** The client successfully filed for bankruptcy through the Archdiocesan Legal Network. Through community referrals, Catholic Charities provided more than \$4,000 in rental assistance, allowing the client to stay in her home and maintain her Section 8 voucher. The client was able to pay her January 2014 rent in full and on time - a big accomplishment for her. She requested an automatic payment from her paycheck to her landlord twice a month to cover her rent. She planned to start one-on-one financial counseling. She will continue case management at Catholic Charities to ensure her continued success.

## CAB Supports Montgomery County Minimum Wage Increase

In FY14, the Community Action Board supported the County Council's efforts to increase the County minimum wage. Council Bill 27-13 proposed to increase the County's minimum wage incrementally over the course of three years. The minimum wage would ultimately increase to \$11.50 per hour on October 1, 2017.

The Board submitted a letter of support, emphasizing the fact that the high cost of living in Montgomery County makes it incredibly difficult for families to pay for the necessities when earning minimum wage. The Board provided information from the 2012 Maryland Self-Sufficiency Standard, which found that for a family of four with two working parents, it costs \$83,000 to afford the "basics" in the County. This family income is four times the Federal Poverty Level.

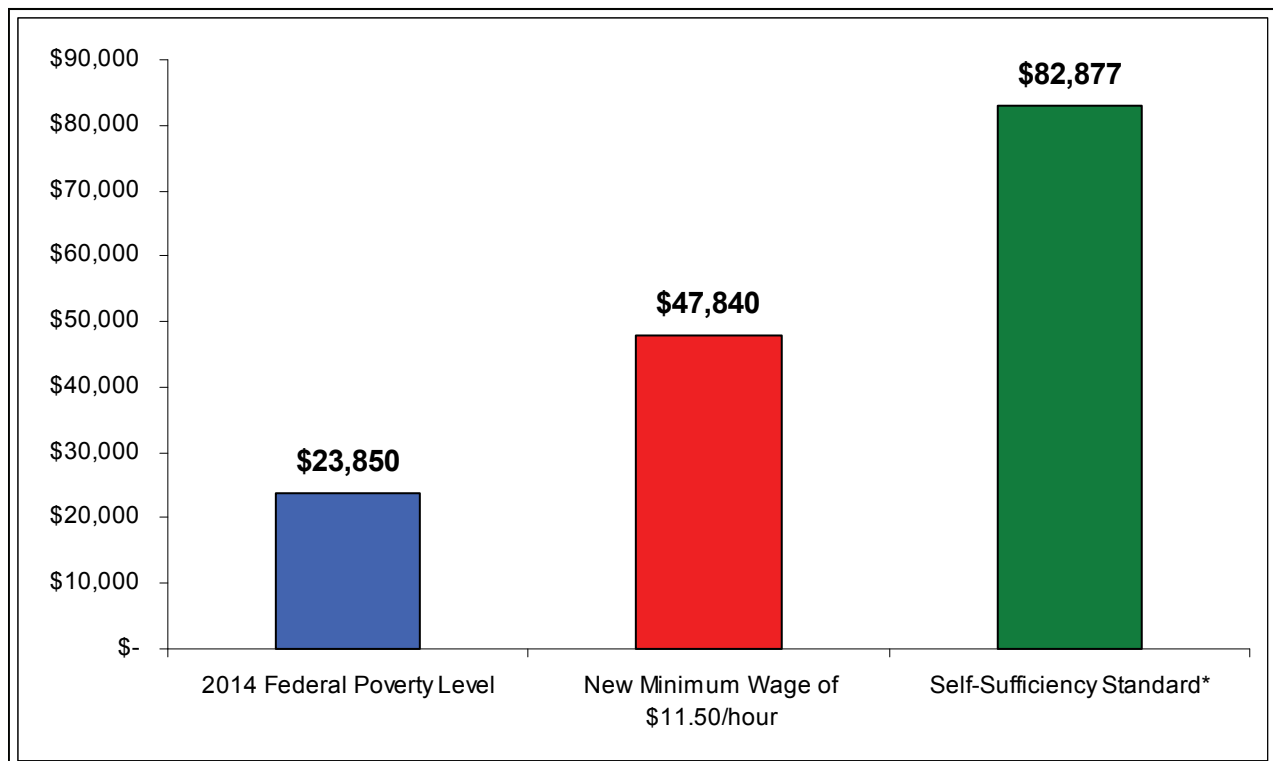
Bill 27-13 was enacted on November 26, 2013 and signed into law on December 5, 2013.

### New County Minimum Wage Effective Dates

	October 1, 2014	October 1, 2015	October 1, 2016	October 1, 2017
New County Minimum Wage	<b>\$8.40/ hour</b>	<b>\$9.55/ hour</b>	<b>\$10.75/ hour</b>	<b>\$11.50/ hour</b>

### A Comparison: Poverty, the New Minimum Wage and Self-Sufficiency

#### A Family of Four with Two Working Parents



*\*Self-Sufficiency Standard for a family of four with two working adults, 1 preschooler, and 1 school-age child*



## Community Action Month Celebration

On May 27, 2014, the Community Action Board held its annual Community Action Month Celebration and Volunteer Recognition Program at the Silver Spring Civic Center. The event marked the 50th anniversary of Community Action and included a special proclamation from County Executive Ike Leggett highlighting this milestone. The event honored dedicated volunteers and local organizations with the Marcia Plater and Henry L. Dixon, Jr. Community Action Service Awards. Outgoing Board members, along with volunteers from the TESS Center and VITA Program, were also honored at this event.



*Top: Board Vice-Chair, Matthew J. Green, Jr., welcomes guests to the 2014 Community Action Celebration.*

*Bottom: Honorees, community members, partners, and supporters gathered to celebrate extraordinary volunteers in the County and the work of Community Action.*



## Department of Health and Human Services – TESS Center

The Community Action Agency's Takoma-East Silver Spring (TESS) Center has provided direct services and referrals to members of the community for over 40 years. Walk-in clients receive referrals to programs offering food and nutrition, clothing, medical assistance, educational services, housing, and many other vital supports. Clients receive direct assistance applying for benefits and learn about the many services offered in the County. TESS hosts numerous programs, groups, classes and special events, including English classes, cooking seminars, senior social groups, and play groups. The TESS Center also hosts the VITA Program, which offers free tax preparation services to low-income residents.

All services at the TESS Center are offered free of charge. The staff relies on the ongoing support of more than 30 dedicated volunteers. To address the needs of the County's increasingly diverse residents, the TESS Center provides services in English, Spanish, and Amharic.

### FY 2014 TESS Center Highlights

- **Summer Meals Program**—Throughout the summer of 2014, the TESS Center served free lunches to over 50 children in the community each day.
- **Affordable Care Act**—ACA navigators worked with clients at the TESS Center to help residents sign-up for health insurance.
- **Pro Bono Legal Program**—Volunteer attorneys from the Pro Bono Program provided free legal services at the TESS Center two evenings each month.
- **Holiday Giving**—As part of the County's Holiday Giving Coalition, families in need were referred to TESS for food, toys, coats, and family resources during the holiday season.
- **Senior Social Group**—More than 30 seniors participated in a monthly social group at the TESS Center.
- **Judy Center Play Group**—The TESS Center hosted weekly play groups and parent support sessions throughout the year.
- **Voter Registration Day**—The TESS Center participated in the National Voter Registration Day on September 23rd. Staff from the Board of Elections provided on-site voter registration for local residents.



*Community Connector, Victoria Hall, prepares for summer meal distribution. Over 50 children received free lunches each day at the TESS Center*



### The TESS Center

8513 Piney Branch Avenue  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20901

Main: (240)773-8260 Fax: (301)565-5713

# Community Action: Helping People, Changing Lives!



## MONTGOMERY COUNTY COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY

2424 Reddie Drive, Suite 238

Wheaton, MD 20902

MAIN: 240-777-1697 TTY Users, please call MD RELAY: 711

Sharon Strauss, Executive Director  
Abiola Abodunrin, VITA Contractor  
Josue Canas, Office Services Coordinator, TESS Center  
Diana Day, Office Services Coordinator  
Patsy Evans, Program Manager, Head Start  
Melissa Fergusson, Program Specialist, Contracts  
Denall Fowler, Administrative Specialist, Head Start  
Leah Goldfine, Program Manager  
Gladys Hernandez, Community Services Aide, TESS Center  
Jessica Huitz, Program Aide, Head Start  
Taunya Johnson, VITA Coordinator  
Maureen Larenas-Rivas, Program Specialist, TESS Center Manager  
Janet Lee, Head Start Consultant  
Aizat Oladapo, Program Manager, Contracts  
Yadira Sanchez, Community Services Aide, TESS Center



### The Promise of Community Action

*Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community, and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.*

