



APPROVED FEBRUARY 24, 2026

Montgomery County Community Action Board

January 27, 2026, Meeting Minutes

Meeting Location

Zoom

Attendance

Members Present

- Beverly Coleman
- Lisa Conlon
- Erika Conner
- Summer Cook
- Pamela Lockett
- DaVida Rowley
- Mike Subin
- Kemmesha Thomas
- Helen Winder

Members Not Present

- Rachel Bonas
- Denise Fredericks
- Evelyn Okutu
- Timothy Robinson
- Claudia Simmons

Staff Present

- Shantá Johnson
- Charlene Muhammad
- Melissa Ferguson
- Tarcila Lopes-Burkhardt
- Jenny Santos
- Leah Goldfine

Call To Order

An informational meeting started at 6:05 pm prior to a quorum being present. The meeting was officially called to order at 6:38 pm once a quorum was present.

Cluster Projects Presentation

Following the recent DHHS reorganization, the Cluster Projects became part of the Community Action Agency. Cluster Projects Program Managers Jenny Santos and Tarcila Lopes-Burkhardt joined the CAB to share a presentation about their work. They noted that there are three “clusters”: Kennedy, Paint Branch-Springbrook, and Watkins Mill. Each cluster includes the high schools noted, along with middle and elementary schools in that general region of the high school. They have also expanded out of those areas to cover more schools in need. Jenny and Tarcila shared how the Cluster Projects provide care coordination for students and their families at eligible schools. Staff work with families to gain access to community resources and effectively collaborate across multiple organizations and agencies to problem-solve specific barriers or complex issues based on each family's needs and providing social services care coordination management. As DHHS staff, their team can check on benefits for families and assist families to apply for various services.

Jenny and Tarcila discussed the referral process for the program. They noted how some schools included in the Cluster Projects also have Linkages to Learning, Wellness Centers, or Bridge to Wellness programs. For such schools, the Cluster Projects assist families when the other programs are at capacity. Once families are referred to the Cluster Projects, they are served for a six-month timeframe, which can be extended depending on their needs. Services include care coordination, referrals to behavioral health resources, and weekly newsletters.

Board members had an opportunity to ask questions and learn more about the Cluster Projects.

Review and Approval of Consent Agenda

Beverly moved to approve the consent agenda and Pam seconded the motion. All voted in favor. The consent agenda included the November 2025 CAB meeting minutes; November 2025 CAB meeting evaluations summary; Executive Director’s report; Head Start report; Contracts and grants report; Staff Liaison’s report; Navigation and TESS performance reports; CAA/Head Start Budget and P Card updates; CAB testimony in support of the Trust Act; CAB testimony for Board of Education budget hearing; CAA monthly impact reports; CSBG Organizational Standards report; EITC Awareness Day event flyer; and MCAP Advocacy Day flyer.

Meeting Agenda Items

1. CAB Updates

Board members received a detailed written report prior to the meeting with updates on the board’s advocacy work, CAI, and other efforts. Staff noted that the EITC Awareness Day event would likely

be rescheduled due to the snowstorm. Board members would be notified immediately of any changes.

a. Advocacy update

Staff reminded board members about MCAP Advocacy Day on February 5th. Additional volunteers were needed to attend the event as board members take the lead on advocacy visits with elected officials. All board members were encouraged to attend.

b. CAI update

Board members were invited to volunteer at the two CAI testimony practice sessions on March 7th and March 28th. Many volunteers are needed for each session to serve as the “mock County Council”.

c. CSBG Organizational Standards Report

Board members received the agency’s CSBG Organizational Standards Report with their meeting materials. Staff noted that the agency met all of the Standards, providing documentation of each one. Many of the Standards are directly related to the CAB’s work.

2. Executive Director’s Report

Ahead of the meeting, CAB members received a detailed written report from Executive Director Shantá Johnson, along with budget and P card updates, TESS and Navigation reports, and a VITA report. Shantá shared that she attended several DHHS transition meetings in December and January as part of the DHHS reorganization. We have a lot of opportunities for collaboration with our new colleagues and our staff now includes 33 people.

Shantá noted that the CSBG Organizational Standards Report was submitted on time. CSBG funds for this quarter have been disbursed.

3. Head Start Report

Prior to the meeting, Board members received a detailed written report with updates on the Head Start program, along with the FY25 Head Start Annual Report. Charlene shared that the team is moving forward with site visits. The program received notice of its award for FY27. In planning for the FY27 grant, Charlene shared that we will need to submit two grants – one for Early Head Start and one for Head Start.

Lisa shared that the Head Start Party in the Park will take place on June 6th.

Charlene provided an overview of the FY25 Head Start Annual Report, which includes kindergarten readiness data from the winter, referrals for other services, enrollment information, and health and dental information. Charlene noted that the assessment data is usually better in the spring, but our program is on par with other programs. Charlene also noted that according to the data, children who are in the MCPS HS program for two years do better academically later on. Mike moved to approve the FY25 Head Start Annual Report and Beverly seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

4. Contracts and Grant Agreements

Board members received a detailed written report with updates on the agency's contract and grant partners. Melissa shared that Catholic Charities has reported very high call loads for December for emergency assistance requests. When asked about this uptick, staff shared that it was largely due to deportations impacting families financially.

Next Meeting

The next CAB meeting will be on February 24, 2026.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:07 pm.