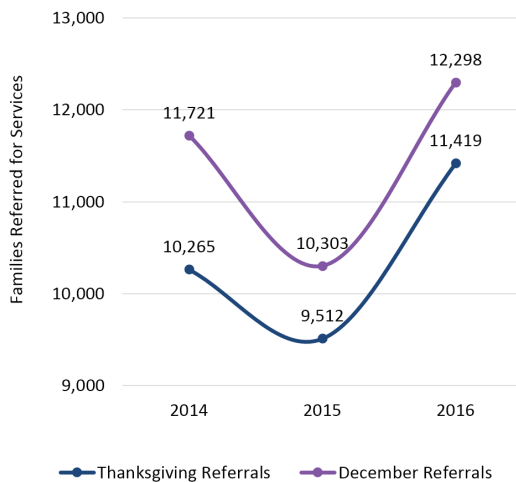## About the
Holiday Giving Project

For over 30 years, the Holiday Giving Project (HGP) of Montgomery County, Maryland, has provided Thanksgiving and December holiday assistance to low-income households. A network of social workers, school counselors, and other human service professionals refer families and individuals in need of holiday assistance.

Holiday Giving Project of Montgomery County

Families Referred for Services

	2014	2015	2016
December Referrals	11,721	10,303	12,298
Thanksgiving Referrals	10,265	9,512	11,419

— Thanksgiving Referrals   — December Referrals

DHHS
MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Serving as the coordinating agency

The **Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)** is among the largest agencies in Montgomery County government and is responsible for public health and human services that help address the needs of our community's most vulnerable children, adults and seniors. DHHS regularly evaluates service delivery and outcomes to identify gaps and equitable service solutions which reduce disparities and improve individual, family and community health and social outcomes.

PACS

Holiday Giving Project
of Montgomery County

Helping neighbors in need during the holiday season

Montgomery County, Maryland
Department of Health and Human Services

How does it work?

Local non-profit agencies, faith-based organizations, service organizations and government agencies come together each year to form the Holiday Giving Project (HGP) Coalition. Member agencies of the HGP Coalition work collaboratively and independently as neighborhood zipcode coordinators (ZCC), splitting the county into small areas for distribution of assistance.

ZCC are responsible for soliciting donations, organizing assistance distribution events, and communicating the details of the distribution events to recipients and referring parties. Donations of food, gift cards, and toys come from private and public donations.

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) hosts the referral database, provides training to referring parties and ZCC as necessary, facilitates the work of the Coalition, monitors outcomes, and provides overall Project coordination.

What is the referral process?

Referrals are made by Montgomery County Public School (MCPS) counselors, other non-public school counselors and staff from local non-profits, governmental, and faith-based agencies. Agencies interested in referring families for assistance need to meet specific eligibility criteria and register in advance.

Referring parties obtain informed consent from families prior to referring them for assistance. Referred families must be residents of Montgomery County and need assistance.

What happens after referral?

Referrals made to the HGP are assigned to a ZCC as capacity allows, on a first come basis. Referral to the HGP database is not a guarantee that the family will be served. All assistance provided is based on the availability of donations. The Project makes every attempt to serve as many families in need as possible, but sometimes requests for assistance exceed the capacity of donations received.

Once assigned to a ZCC, letters or postcards are generated informing families where their community distribution point is located and when it will be held. These are mailed to families for Thanksgiving food distribution, December toy distribution, or in many cases distribution for both holidays, depending on the need.

Referring parties may track referrals they have made to the HGP database including which agency has been assigned to provide assistance, whether they have been deactivated as a duplicate referral, and whether the family attended the distribution to receive the assistance.

Holiday Giving Quick Facts

▶ All food, gift cards, and gifts come from private and public donations

▶ Referrals are coordinated through a centralized database

▶ More than 11,400 unduplicated families were identified for Thanksgiving assistance in 2016, a +38% increase over the prior year

▶ Nearly 12,300 unduplicated families were identified for the December toy distribution services, an increase of more than 1700 families over the 2015 giving season