
Senior Initiative

MISSION STATEMENT

The Senior Initiative is a multi-year, cross-departmental project to (1) improve coordination, community outreach and promotion of programs designed to serve seniors, and (2) identify and plan for the short and long term needs of seniors.

LINKAGE TO COUNTY RESULTS AREAS

- ❖ ***Vital Living for All of our Residents***
- ❖ ***Healthy and Sustainable Communities***
- ❖ ***Safe Streets and Secure Neighborhoods***

PROGRAM CONTACTS

Contact Uma S. Ahluwalia of the Department of Health and Human Services at 240.777.1266 or Rachel Silberman of the Office of Management and Budget at 240.777.2786 for more information regarding this Initiative's operating budget.

FY17 RECOMMENDED ENHANCEMENTS

The FY17 Recommended Budget includes approximately \$23.2 million in tax supported resources identified for seniors, including funds for community organizations that augment County services for seniors and respond to the needs identified in the County Executive's 2015 Summit on Aging. In addition, the approved budget includes \$14.4 million in non-tax supported resources for seniors.

Department of Recreation

- Continue to provide enhanced operating hours at Margaret Schweinhaut, Damascus, and Holiday Park senior centers, providing access to programs and activities an additional 2-8 hours a week.
- Maintain the Jewish Council for the Aging (JCA) Senior Transportation Partnership. The initiative adds needed transportation to senior centers. Bus ridership and participation in center activities has increased at all locations.
- Continue the popular senior mini-trip program. Each senior center and Active Adult Program now receives four trips per year to take seniors to local destinations of interest.
- Maintain support for Multilingual Senior Programming services and for the senior services manager to help meet the growing needs of 55+ Active Adult Recreation programming at Senior Centers.
- Grand opening of the North Potomac Community Center to include a full senior program with plans to add an additional nutrition program, utilizing Federal funds through the Department of Health and Human Services' Aging and Disability Services division, as well as offer classes, programs and services in Fall/Winter of 2016.

Department of Health and Human Services

- Add funding for a senior fellow to support the County's Age-Friendly Communities Initiative.
- Add funds to enhance Medical Adult Daycare subsidies, expanding service to 18 additional clients to attend an Adult Day Care program two days per week for socialization and medical supervision.
- Add funds to provide mandated Adult Evaluation and Review Services (AERS) evaluations to identify available services to help seniors and adults with disabilities remain in the community while functioning at the highest possible level of independence and personal well-being.
- Continue to provide Senior Village start-up grants for low- and moderate-income and diverse communities.
- Continue to provide nurse monitoring services to more than 2,000 senior and disabled clients receiving services through the State's new Medicaid waiver program, Community First Choice.
- Maintain the raised Adult Foster Care reimbursement rate to reduce the gap between the County and State subsidy for senior assisted living group homes.
- Continue support in the Adult Protective Services/Social Services to Adults Program to address an increase in investigations of financial exploitation resulting from new mandatory reporting requirements for banks.

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- Continue to provide for a Caregiver Support Fellow and operating costs to coordinate outreach to seniors and persons with disabilities regarding the available services to ease the burden on caregivers.
 - Continue funding for a Program Manager in the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program, allowing the program to add volunteers and provide more long-term care facility residents with protection and advocacy.

Department of Transportation – Transit Services

- Enhance the Call-n-Ride program by decreasing the minimum age for eligibility from 67 to 65, adding 445 participants to the program.
- Continue enhanced support for Seniors Ride Free.

Fire and Rescue Service (MCFRS)

- Continue support for enhanced Senior Safety Outreach to provide home safety evaluations, education, and outreach programs to address the specific needs associated with the projected growth in the County's senior population.

Department of Housing and Community Affairs

- Add funds to support Victory Crossing, a proposed 105-unit mixed-income senior development located in Silver Spring. The County's investment will support the development of 95 units affordable to residents between 30 and 60 percent of the area median income (AMI). This funding provides a permanent and deeper rent subsidy to 30 percent of the median income.
- Add funds to provide low-income immigrant seniors with in-center, and educational field trip activities through culturally sensitive programs that are estimated to benefit 400 clients.

Public Information Office

- Add funds to support regular ads promoting County programs, resources, and events for seniors in the Senior Beacon.

Non-Departmental Account Community Grants

- Provide grants to our community partners of \$1,008,768 for 32 proposals for seniors to respond to the needs identified in the County Executive's 2015 Summit on Aging supporting diverse senior communities, with particular focus on support for Villages, housing, friendly visitor programs, and in-home services for frail elders. These community organizations are critical to an effective network of services and are often able to provide these services in a more cost-effective, culturally appropriate, and flexible way than County Government. They are also able to leverage community resources that may be unavailable to County Government.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Senior Initiative is a comprehensive response to the various issues facing the growing number of seniors in our community. Montgomery County, much like the rest of the United States, will experience unprecedented growth in the senior population in the coming decades. The number of residents age 65+ in the County is projected to more than double between 2010 and 2040, from 120,000 to 244,000. This will raise seniors' share of the population from 9 percent in 1990 to 20 percent by 2040. The number of residents aged 85 and older is expected to grow the fastest, to 42,900 by 2040.

At the same time, the share of minority residents among the 65+ population is expected to increase from 34 percent in 2010 to 57 percent by 2040. Today, Asian residents make up the largest minority group among County residents age 65+, accounting for 14 percent, with Black residents accounting for 12 percent and Hispanic residents accounting for 8 percent. Today, 31 percent of residents who are age 65 and older speak a language other than English at home, with 18 percent of residents age 65+ speaking English less than very well.

Regarding income, 6.5 percent of the County's seniors live in poverty, with an additional 5.4 percent of seniors living between 100 and 150 percent of the poverty line. Additionally, many seniors are housing burdened; 27 percent of Montgomery County senior homeowners and 61 percent of senior renters are spending more than 30 percent of income on housing. (Source: US Census American Community Survey 2013 and 2014 for current estimates; State of Maryland for population projections.)

To address the needs of this burgeoning population, the County Executive is strategically enhancing a variety of critical senior services. At the same time, through the creation of a Senior Subcabinet, the County Executive has charged his departments with ensuring that senior services are delivered in a coordinated and effective manner.

The leadership of this effort is provided by the Director of the Department of Health and Human Services and the Director of the Department of Recreation who serve as Co-Chairs of the County Executive's Senior Subcabinet on Vital Living. The

Senior Subcabinet has representatives from the following departments: Health and Human Services, Recreation, Fire and Rescue Service, Transit Services, Public Libraries, Housing and Community Affairs, Police, Office of Consumer Protection, Commission for Women, Office of Public Information, Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, CountyStat, and the Office of Community Partnerships (Community Engagement Cluster), as well as the Commission on Aging.

Building upon previous efforts to assess the current needs of seniors and plan for emerging needs (e.g., “A Report on the Needs of Low-Income Seniors in Montgomery County, MD,” June 2002; “Strategic Planning Study of Senior Needs,” December 2002; “Imagining An Aging Future for Montgomery County, MD,” May 2007; “Senior Outreach Strategic Communications Plan for Montgomery County,” October 2007, the “County Executive’s Senior Summit,” November 2008; “A Community for a Lifetime: The Senior Agenda,” December 2012; the County Executive’s Summit on Aging,” December 2015; “Summit on Aging Report,” February 2016) eight key areas have been identified as essential for Montgomery County seniors to “age in community” with safety, dignity, and vitality:

- Communications and Outreach
- Housing and Zoning
- Transportation and Mobility
- Health and Wellness
- Civic and Social Engagement
- Home and Community Support Services
- Safety
- Employment

During the months of October and November 2016, the “Age Friendly Montgomery County Survey” was conducted and Focus groups were held to obtain information from County residents age 55 years and older regarding the aspects of life in the County that they consider positive or favorable and those areas where improvements are needed. Over 2,000 residents responded to the survey and 400 residents participated in focus groups providing valuable insights into the priority concerns and needs of our aging residents. On December 3, 2015, the County Executive convened the “Summit on Aging” to review progress made in advancing the County as an “age friendly” community and to review the survey and focus group results to develop a strategic plan for ensuring that Montgomery County is a community for a lifetime. The County Executive’s 2015 Summit on Aging again addressed these critical elements – with an additional focus on diversity, elder abuse and technology.

Services benefiting seniors are incorporated in the general department program offerings, as well as targeted services. These services respond to critical needs facing the County and the desired outcome of promoting “vital living for all residents.” Below are some of the major County government programs currently supporting County seniors:

Department of Recreation

- Operate six full-service Senior Centers that offer social opportunities, health and wellness programs, life-long learning and educational programs, exercise classes, dance classes, lectures, cultural programs, facility bookings, and more.
- Operate a Senior Transportation Service providing limited range access to each of the six Senior Centers.
- Operate thirteen 55+ Active Adult Centers where seniors gather for educational programs, friendship, entertainment, sports, and other activities.
- Operate a Senior Nutrition Program in cooperation with HHS.
- Operate the Senior Sneaker Exercise Program that provides for adults over 55 years of age access to quality exercise and fitness rooms at Recreation Department Community Centers with a reduced annual membership fee.
- Offer Senior Outdoor Adventures in Recreation day trip programs for active adults over 55 years of age.
- Coordinates, advertises, registers and operates the annual Maryland Senior Olympics.
- Works with other agencies, departments, hospitals, and non-profits to provide a variety of programs, classes, and services identified as community needs to the residents age 55+ of Montgomery County. This includes such programs as WEADD, Tech Fairs, Health and Wellness Expos, Bone Builders, and Senior Fit classes and a huge variety of ongoing classes and programs.

Department of Health and Human Services

- Prevent or reverse nursing home placement for Medicaid eligible persons of all ages by providing supports planning, nurse monitoring and community based services.

- Transport seniors using Transit Services Ride On buses during off-peak hours to provide transportation to County community recreation centers once or more per week and to grocery stores for a limited number of senior housing complexes one time each week.
- Provide supportive contractual services to seniors including “friendly visitor” services, escorted grocery shopping, legal assistance, and Alzheimer’s support services.
- Continue the Escorted Transportation Project with the Jewish Council for the Aging to expand and coordinate new and existing escorted transportation services.
- Promote and expand transportation options available to seniors and people with disabilities through the County Mobility and Transportation Manager who works with advocates and public and private service providers.
- Offer one-stop, hands-on assistance and outreach to County residents regarding services for seniors, persons with disabilities, and their families and caregivers to clarify their needs and identify and access resources.
- Help protect more than 7,700 County residents in 190 assisted living facilities and 34 nursing homes by maintaining a regular presence, investigating complaints, and advocating for seniors rights.
- Guarantee that seniors over the age of 60 have access to meals, nutrition education, and the opportunity for socialization at community and senior centers and senior apartment buildings.
- Provide home delivered meals to chronically ill clients, age 60 and above, to address the nutritional needs of the County’s most frail and vulnerable seniors who are home-bound due to illness or disability and cannot get out or prepare healthful meals on their own. Special consideration is given to low income individuals, minority individuals, those in rural communities, those with limited English proficiency, and those at risk of institutional care.
- Investigate complaints of maltreatment for abuse and neglect against seniors, secure resources, and provide surrogate decision-making for adults adjudicated through the courts.
- Provide in-home support services to help vulnerable seniors remain safe and cared for in the community and to prevent premature and/or inappropriate institutionalization.
- Offer the Home Care Chore Services Program, which is targeted to low income frail elderly and people with disabilities who need help with light cleaning, vacuuming, laundry, and/or meal preparation in order to remain in their own homes and in the community.
- Provide Heavy Chore Services to serve seniors with hoarding behaviors to prevent evictions, condemnation, or to correct health and safety conditions. Services include heavy commercial cleaning and pest fumigation.
- Offer short-term respite services to caregivers who provide ongoing care to frail elders.
- Provide Senior Mental Health Services for home-bound seniors and coordinate medication with medical providers.
- Help meet older adult challenges of remaining independent in their homes as they age in their communities through the “Village” model, a grassroots, consumer driven, and volunteer first model. The Village Coordinator assists 14 current and nine emerging “Villages” and promotes the creation of new ones.

Department of Transportation – Transit Services

- Subsidize taxi service for low income seniors, age 65 and older, to allow for greater mobility and quality of life.
- Provide information and linkage to transportation resources to senior citizens, maintain a database of resources, help callers fill out forms for transportation programs, and links caller with transportation providers.
- Provide fixed route service (Ride On) to many senior centers.
- Transport seniors to five senior centers and for grocery shopping trips during Ride On’s off-peak period.
- Provide free bus fares on Ride On and Metrobus during off-peak periods (Monday-Friday 9:30 AM to 3:00 PM) and half price fares at all other times.
- Improve over 2,925 bus stops as part of Ride On’s safety and accessibility program.
- Improve pedestrian crossings by retiming all traffic signals to extend pedestrian crossing times to accommodate slower walking speeds, upgrade some traffic signals to include accessible/countdown pedestrian signals.
- Improve visibility by increasing street name signs to five inches and upgrade stop signs to 30-inch size (from 24-inches) for increased legibility.

Department of Public Libraries

- Provide programs specifically designed to engage seniors in creative, learning rich events which provide opportunities for social interaction at programs, and after them. These activities are essential to vital living, and provided via grant funding, staff work, and partnerships with Montgomery College’s Lifelong Learning Institute.
- Provide library materials and programs relevant to senior issues. Topics include book discussions, finances, retirement, taxes, health, employment, technology, consumer issues, English language learning, and others. Recent programs include:
 - Partnership with the Alzheimer’s Association of Montgomery County on a program series about coping with the disease for patients and caregivers
 - Keeping Seniors Safe – partnership with MCFRS and MCPD on safety issues

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- Stepping On – partnership with Maryland State Department of Health, programs on preventing falls
 - Holistic health and mediation program series
 - Provide lifelong learning services and materials, including our seniors-focused web page, and training on how to use e-books and computers.
 - Offer large print library materials and other accessibility equipment and services for seniors.
 - Provide Metro Senior SmarTrip cards for purchase at all library branches.
 - Provide substantial volunteer opportunities that are frequently utilized by seniors at every branch, such as the MCPL “Grandreaders” program and Service Corps for Retired Executives business counseling.

Fire and Rescue Service (MCFRS)

- Identify strategies to reduce fire risk among the elderly.
- Identify homebound seniors and those with disabilities to provide information on fire safety and risk reduction assistance including the installation of approved smoke alarms appropriate for their needs.
- Increase collaboration between MCFRS, County agencies and departments, and professional organizations providing services to seniors.
- Initiate a public education and awareness campaign to educate and inform residents regarding the installation and upgrade of smoke alarms required by Maryland’s new Smoke Alarm Law.
- Initiate a door-to-door campaign offering department services to seniors including the evaluation of existing residential smoke alarm equipment, replacement of outdated smoke alarms, and general injury prevention information.
- Offer a free residential safety evaluation for seniors.
- Assist and partner with communities and neighborhood organizations regarding fire safety, the development of home fire evacuation and escape plans and general injury prevention and information.
- Ensure members of the department are aware and responsive to the needs and risks faced by senior citizens.

Department of Housing and Community Affairs

- Continue partnering with “Rebuilding Together” by funding some administrative costs for a highly leveraged program that provides home repairs for low-income homeowners, most of whom are seniors and unable to undertake home repairs on their own.
- Continue partnering with the Housing Opportunities Commission of Montgomery County to provide rental assistance to low-income seniors.

Office of the State’s Attorney

- Aggressively prosecute crimes against seniors and vulnerable adults through the newly created Crimes Against Seniors and Vulnerable Adults Unit of the Office of the State’s Attorney.
- Continue to collaborate closely with Adult Protective Services and the Police Department to address crimes against seniors in an efficient and timely manner that holds offenders accountable for their criminal activity.
- Continue to chair the Montgomery County Elder/Vulnerable Adult Abuse Task Force, which brings together representatives from County Agencies to discuss cases of concern and hosts an annual event on World Elder Abuse Awareness Day to promote education/prevention of senior abuse.
- Collect data on metrics to include the number of investigations opened, inter-agency collaborations, and prosecutions.

Community Engagement Cluster

- Partner with community organizations to provide free tax preparation assistance to low-to-moderate income Montgomery County residents with special attention to seniors age 60+.
- Support opportunities for adults age 60+ to increase access to community activities, socialization, and lifelong learning.
- Provide individual and couples senior counseling services.
- Offer the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) for volunteers age 55+.

Office of Consumer Protection

- Continue to recruit seniors and retired professionals to work at Office of Consumer Protection as volunteers providing administrative and investigative assistance.
- Expand upon Office of Consumer Protection outreach initiatives to provide consumer education regarding consumer scams that target seniors and vulnerable adults.
- Collaborate with legislators and consumer organizations to enact and enhance laws designed to protect seniors from deceptive trade practices.

Office Human Resources

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- Offer the Senior Fellows program to augment the County’s workforce by tapping into the skill sets of highly talented, experienced, and seasoned professionals which includes seniors.

Department of Finance

- Beginning in Levy year 2015, doubled the rate of Senior Tax Credit and expand eligibility to include homeowners who are 65 and older.

Department of Environmental Protection

- Apply for an exemption for curbside refuse and recycling services available to any individual who because of physical limitations (disability or age) is unable to bring containers to the curb.

Office of Public Information

- Produce “Seniors Today,” a monthly cable television show highlighting services and programs of interest to seniors.
- Provide leadership for the Senior Subcabinet on Vital Living Committee’s communications and outreach.
- Create and distribute the Senior Brochure Series including Transportation Options for Seniors (translated into eight languages), Caregiving Resources, Lifelong Learning, and Driving for Seniors.
- Manage seniors website, a central portal offering timely information to seniors and caregivers about County services and programs.

Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD)

- Launched “Keeping Seniors Safe” crime prevention outreach program, which addresses financial and other frauds and scams; identify theft; shopping safety; and emergency preparedness through presentations from Community Outreach Officers and command staff, and brochures distributed widely.
- Conduct home security surveys in seniors’ homes.
- Manage Project Lifesaver to help locate seniors with dementia/Alzheimer’s Disease.

**Senior Initiative
FY17 Recommended Operating Budget
Tax-Supported**

Department	Project/Program	FY17 Recommended
Health and Human Services	Mental Health Services for Seniors and Persons with Disabilities	520,889
	Aging and Disability Services Resource Unit	212,266
	Senior Community Programs	1,648,605
	The Occupational Therapist initiative	230,000
	Senior Food Program	755,370
	Adult Protective Services/SSTA/ Public Guardianship	3,317,496
	The Adult Day Care Subsidies Initiative	321,565
	Respite Services	392,012
	The Home Care Services program	1,938,798
	Senior Group Homes	55,894
	Adult Foster Care	657,788
	Ombudsman Services	503,232
	CFC Supports Planning	832,270
	CFC Nurse Monitoring	1,480,315
	Senior Dental Services	381,399
	The Medical Assistance Eligibility Services	1,024,125
	Enhance Community First Choice AERS Assessment Services	200,000
Sub-total, Health and Human Services		14,472,025
Recreation	Long Branch Senior Center	128,397
	Damascus Senior Center	154,923
	Schweinhaut Senior Center	170,685
	Holiday Park Senior Center	291,542
	North Potomac Senior Center	145,211
	Senior Neighborhood Programs	154,706
	White Oak Community Recreation Center Senior programs	136,060
	Senior Outdoor Adventure Recreation	263,057
	JCA Senior Transportation	574,316
	Senior Mini Trips	50,240
	Manager III - Senior Services	167,154
Sub-total, Recreation		2,236,291
Transportation	Call N Ride Program	3,765,287
	Jewish Council on Aging/Connect A Ride	153,860
	Special Transportation	58,800
	Seniors/Disabled Ride Free Program	196,503
Sub-total, Transportation		4,174,450
Other Departments	Community Engagement Cluster - Individual and Couples Counseling	15,000
	Community Engagement Cluster - RSVP Leadership	42,828
	Police - Project Lifesaver Program	12,500
	State's Attorney - Senior Financial Exploitation Prevention Initiative	710,724
	Human Resources - Senior Fellows	100,000
	County Attorney - Senior Issues	134,768
	Department of Housing and Community Affairs - Victory Crossing	300,000
	Public Information - Senior Beacon Advertising	18,000
Community Grants NDA - Grants for Senior Services	1,008,768	
Sub-total, Other Departments		2,342,588
Total Tax-Supported		23,225,353
Total Non-Tax Supported		14,367,284
Grand Total		37,592,637

Note: Appropriations reported for programs in the Department of Transportation include funds supporting both seniors and the disabled, except Jewish Council on Aging/Connect-A Ride which serves older adults (50+). All other appropriations reflect only funds attributed to senior services.

Non-Tax Supported

Department	Project/Program	FY17 Recommended
Health and Human Services	Aging and Disability Services Resource Unit	554,260
	Senior Community Programs	926,541
	Senior Food Program	1,924,752
	Adult Protective Services/SSTA/ Public Guardianship	2,485,679
	Respite Services	88,392
	The Home Care Services program	763,930
	Senior Group Homes	125,780
	Adult Foster Care	295,953
	Ombudsman Services	276,072
	The Medical Assistance Long Term Care program	2,522,478
<i>Sub-total, Health and Human Services</i>		9,963,837
Other Departments	Department of Transportation - Call N Ride Program	379,110
	Department of Housing and Community Affairs - Elderly Service Plus Center	44,951
	Fire and Rescue - Senior Safety Outreach	100,000
	Department of Transportation - Medicaid Special Transportation	3,879,386
<i>Sub-total, Other Departments</i>		4,403,447
Total Non-Tax Supported		14,367,284

Note: Appropriations reported for programs in the Department of Transportation include funds supporting both seniors and the disabled. All other appropriations reflect only funds attributed to senior services.