



Agriculture

APPROVED FY24 BUDGET

\$1,360,342

FULL TIME EQUIVALENTS

5.90

 JEREMY V. CRISS, DIRECTOR

MISSION STATEMENT




The Office of Agriculture (OAG) was created in July 2016 and exists to promote agriculture as a viable component of the County's economic sector, as well as to preserve farmland as a resource for future agricultural production. The goal of the OAG is to promote Montgomery County as a leader in the agricultural industry by providing support to our farm community and working to educate our residents.

BUDGET OVERVIEW



The total approved FY24 Operating Budget for the Office of Agriculture is \$1,360,342, an increase of \$293,566 or 27.52 percent from the FY23 Approved Budget of \$1,066,776. Personnel Costs comprise 63.65 percent of the budget for ten full-time position(s) and no part-time position(s), and a total of 5.90 FTEs. Total FTEs may include seasonal or temporary positions and may also reflect workforce charged to or from other departments or funds. Operating Expenses account for the remaining 36.35 percent of the FY24 budget.

COUNTY PRIORITY OUTCOMES

While this program area supports all seven of the County Executive's Priority Outcomes, the following are emphasized:

-  **Thriving Youth and Families**
-  **A Growing Economy**
-  **A Greener County**

INITIATIVES

-  Partnered with the Department of Environmental Protection, the Maryland Environmental Service, and the Sugarloaf Citizen Association to allow 20 cubic yard deliveries of Leafgro® to small food producing farms.
-  Partnered with the Montgomery Countryside Alliance to develop a resource guide for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) farmers and with the County's Technology and Business Enterprise Solutions group to incorporate the guide into web pages on the Office of Agriculture website which will provide farmers an opportunity to use the translation services that are built into the website.

- ★ Engaged with the Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) to request approval to establish a shared-use kitchen space and cold storage facility at the Montgomery County Agricultural History Farm Park as an essential strategy to enable capacity-building within the agricultural community in alignment with County values, to enhance our nutrition and food access efforts serving Montgomery County children and families, and to keep local dollars in our local economy by supporting the expansion of farm-to-school and farm-to-table initiatives. Note: this initiative is dependent upon M-NCPPC approval of this request.

INNOVATIONS AND PRODUCTIVITY IMPROVEMENTS

- ★ Created a monthly inter-agency coordination meeting between the OAG, Department of Permitting Services (DPS), and M-NCPPC representatives to review all pending requests surrounding agricultural buildings, agritourism venues, farm alcohol production businesses, agricultural zoning compliance, and all things agriculture to make sure all agencies are sharing information for consensus building on the direction forward.

PROGRAM CONTACTS

Contact Jacqueline Arnold of the Office of Agriculture at 301.590.2859 or Katherine Bryant-Higgins of the Office of Management and Budget at 240.777.2764 for more information regarding this department's operating budget.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

★ Agricultural Services

The Office of Agriculture (OAG) serves in a variety of capacities to provide the following services: implement agricultural policies and programs; provide financial and technical assistance to farmers; manage agricultural education programs; provide financial and staff support to its partner agencies; serve as a liaison between the Executive Branch and the agricultural community via the Agricultural Advisory, Agricultural Preservation, and Montgomery County Farm Bureau Boards; oversee the various land preservation programs; co-sponsor farmers' markets, an annual farm tour, and other activities that promote agricultural businesses and products; and provide mentoring and specialized business training programs. Additionally, the OAG is responsible for the coordination of programs offered by its partner agencies, which are all co-located at the Agricultural History Farm Park in Derwood. These Federal, State, and local partners include the University of Maryland-Extension, the Montgomery Soil Conservation District, the Natural Resource Conservation Service, and the Farm Service Agency.

Program Performance Measures	Actual FY21	Actual FY22	Estimated FY23	Target FY24	Target FY25
Technical assistance contacts with farmers ¹	1,241	2,117	1,900	1,900	2,100
Acres of land under easements inspected by Agricultural Services	1,032	5,292	5,292	5,292	5,292
Percent of easement acres under most restrictive easement disallowing development	32%	32%	32%	32%	32%
Percent of participants who learned or benefitted from Agricultural Services event, training, or farm tour ²	N/A	100%	100%	100%	100%

¹ FY22 is higher than the FY23-FY24 projections because the fuel energy tax relief program applications are administered every two years. There are typically 200+ businesses.

² Suspended in FY21 due to COVID-19.

FY24 Approved Changes	Expenditures	FTEs
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FY24 Approved Changes	Expenditures	FTEs
FY23 Approved	651,346	3.25
Shift: Migration of Expenses from the Capital Budget to the Operating Budget	40,000	0.00
Increase Cost: Three Percent Inflationary Adjustment to Non-Profit Service Provider Contracts	3,394	0.00
Decrease Cost: Eliminate Part-Time Principle Administrative Aide Position	(22,744)	(0.25)
Multi-program adjustments, including negotiated compensation changes, employee benefit changes, changes due to staff turnover, reorganizations, and other budget changes affecting multiple programs.	259,654	2.00
FY24 Approved	931,650	5.00

Soil Conservation

This program is comprised of staff and other resources from federal, state, and local agricultural agencies. It provides technical and outreach educational assistance to farmers/rural landowners for implementing best management and conservation practices. The Montgomery Soil Conservation District (MSCD) assists the County to achieve the nationally mandated, state-assigned, Rural MS4 Permit - Chesapeake Bay Nutrient Diet - Watershed Implementation Program (WIP-III) goals. Failure to achieve the WIP-III goals will likely result in the Federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) instituting the backstop measure which will negatively impact the County and the agricultural community by denying all permits moving forward, and harming the County's rural economy/infrastructure with increased regulatory requirements.

Program Performance Measures	Actual FY21	Actual FY22	Estimated FY23	Target FY24	Target FY25
Soil conservation contacts with farmers and landowners to provide technical assistance	800	1,283	1,283	1,283	1,283
Water quality plans completed	72	43	45	50	55
Percent of interagency site visits coordinated within one business day of agricultural complaint	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Pounds of nitrogen reduced through conservation and best management practices	20,000	31,784	23,213	23,213	23,213

FY24 Approved Changes	Expenditures	FTEs
FY23 Approved	258,709	1.90
Multi-program adjustments, including negotiated compensation changes, employee benefit changes, changes due to staff turnover, reorganizations, and other budget changes affecting multiple programs.	(85,906)	(1.00)
FY24 Approved	172,803	0.90

University of Maryland-Extension (UMD-Extension)

The Montgomery County Extension Office serves as the agricultural outreach and education component of the University of Maryland. This agency is funded cooperatively through local, State, and Federal governments. Farmers, families, and youth are the primary audiences of the Extension Office. Educational programs for farmers include raising crops and livestock, protecting the environment, farm and business management, marketing commodities, and pest management. Programs for families and youth include home horticulture, family budgeting, and consumer education, with a focus on promoting positive parenting, nutrition education and healthy lifestyles, leadership development, and traditional 4-H youth development programs. The Extension Office's professional staff has an extensive network of volunteers to assist them in program delivery. Extension Office staff manage a diverse group of over 3,000 volunteers to respond to over 100,000 information requests each year. Outreach education programs are delivered informally through one-on-one contacts, telephone assistance, the internet, classes and workshops, field days, radio, television, and print media.

Program Performance Measures	Actual FY21	Actual FY22	Estimated FY23	Target FY24	Target FY25
Nutrient management plans completed	89	84	75	0	0
4-H youth development program participants	319	311	311	311	311
Average pre- to post-test score increase of Close Encounters with Agriculture participants on agriculture, nutrition, and the environment ¹	N/A	50%	50%	50%	50%
Percent of Food Supplement Nutrition Education youth participants who try new healthy food	42%	93%	93%	93%	93%
Percent of participants who purchase produce they learn about from Food Supplement Nutrition Education farmers market programming	92%	92%	92%	92%	92%

¹ Suspended in FY21 due to COVID-19.

FY24 Approved Changes	Expenditures	FTEs
FY23 Approved	156,721	0.00
Shift: Migration of Expenses from the Capital Budget to the Operating Budget	199,294	1.00
Multi-program adjustments, including negotiated compensation changes, employee benefit changes, changes due to staff turnover, reorganizations, and other budget changes affecting multiple programs.	(100,126)	(1.00)
FY24 Approved	255,889	0.00

BUDGET SUMMARY

	Actual FY22	Budget FY23	Estimate FY23	Approved FY24	%Chg Bud/App
COUNTY GENERAL FUND					
EXPENDITURES					
Salaries and Wages	477,025	574,703	562,985	688,198	19.8 %
Employee Benefits	134,968	141,145	134,767	177,676	25.9 %
County General Fund Personnel Costs	611,993	715,848	697,752	865,874	21.0 %
Operating Expenses	408,546	350,928	378,922	494,468	40.9 %
County General Fund Expenditures	1,020,539	1,066,776	1,076,674	1,360,342	27.5 %
PERSONNEL					
Full-Time	8	10	10	10	—
Part-Time	1	1	1	0	-100.0 %
FTEs	4.15	5.15	5.15	5.90	14.6 %
REVENUES					
Other Intergovernmental	67,219	63,064	63,064	63,064	—
Miscellaneous Revenues	20,038	0	0	0	—
County General Fund Revenues	87,257	63,064	63,064	63,064	—

FY24 APPROVED CHANGES

	Expenditures	FTEs
COUNTY GENERAL FUND		
	FY23 ORIGINAL APPROPRIATION	1,066,776 5.15
Other Adjustments (with no service impacts)		

FY24 APPROVED CHANGES

	Expenditures	FTEs
Shift: Migration of Expenses from the Capital Budget to the Operating Budget [University of Maryland-Extension (UMD-Extension)]	199,294	1.00
Shift: Migration of Expenses from the Capital Budget to the Operating Budget [Agricultural Services]	40,000	0.00
Increase Cost: FY24 Compensation Adjustment	30,756	0.00
Increase Cost: Annualization of FY23 Lapsed Positions	24,475	0.00
Increase Cost: Annualization of FY23 Compensation Increases	21,415	0.00
Increase Cost: Three Percent Inflationary Adjustment to Non-Profit Service Provider Contracts [Agricultural Services]	3,394	0.00
Increase Cost: Retirement Adjustment	3,331	0.00
Increase Cost: Printing and Mail	1,516	0.00
Decrease Cost: Motor Pool Adjustment	(538)	0.00
Decrease Cost: Annualization of FY23 Personnel Costs	(7,333)	0.00
Decrease Cost: Eliminate Part-Time Principle Administrative Aide Position [Agricultural Services]	(22,744)	(0.25)
FY24 APPROVED	1,360,342	5.90

PROGRAM SUMMARY

Program Name	FY23 APPR Expenditures	FY23 APPR FTEs	FY24 APPR Expenditures	FY24 APPR FTEs
Agricultural Services	651,346	3.25	931,650	5.00
Soil Conservation	258,709	1.90	172,803	0.90
University of Maryland-Extension (UMD-Extension)	156,721	0.00	255,889	0.00
Total	1,066,776	5.15	1,360,342	5.90

CHARGES TO OTHER DEPARTMENTS

Charged Department	Charged Fund	FY23 Total\$	FY23 FTEs	FY24 Total\$	FY24 FTEs
COUNTY GENERAL FUND					
Environmental Protection	Water Quality Protection	449,240	3.10	507,482	3.10
CIP	Capital Fund	240,403	2.25	128,397	1.00
Total		689,643	5.35	635,879	4.10

FUNDING PARAMETER ITEMS

CC APPROVED (\$000S)

Title	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27	FY28	FY29
COUNTY GENERAL FUND						
EXPENDITURES						

FUNDING PARAMETER ITEMS

CC APPROVED (\$000S)

Title	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27	FY28	FY29
FY24 Approved	1,360	1,360	1,360	1,360	1,360	1,360
No inflation or compensation change is included in outyear projections.						
Labor Contracts	0	16	16	16	16	16
These figures represent the estimated annualized cost of general wage adjustments, service increments, and other negotiated items.						
Subtotal Expenditures	1,360	1,376	1,376	1,376	1,376	1,376