



**Committee:** Joint  
**Committee Review:** N/A  
**Staff:** Vivian Yao, Legislative Analyst  
**Purpose:** To receive testimony/final action - vote expected  
**Keywords:** #youthsports

AGENDA ITEM #11  
September 15, 2020  
**Public Hearing/Action**

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## SUBJECT

Special Appropriation to the County Government's Fiscal Year 2021 Operating Budget, Department of Recreation, Countywide Program - Youth Sports Initiative, \$500,000 (Source of Funds: General Fund Reserves) and Office of Community Use of Public Facilities, Facility Fee Assistance Program – Youth Sports Initiative, \$500,000 (Source of Funds: Federal Grant)

## EXPECTED ATTENDEES

None

## COUNCIL DECISION POINTS & COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

- Public hearing and action on the special appropriation.
- The Joint Health and Human Services, Education & Culture, and Planning, Housing and Economic Development Committee discussed the special appropriation and the need for youth sports programming as a result of COVID restrictions on July 29. The Joint Committee did not vote on the appropriation as the public hearing on it was yet to be held.

## DESCRIPTION/ISSUE

Youth sports have significant social and wellness benefits to participants. In addition to promoting mental and physical health and activity, youth sports help develop confidence, keep youth engaged in productive activities, and help to teach team building and goal setting objectives. However, according to the Office of Legislative Oversight March 10, 2020 report "Youth Sports in Montgomery County", youth sports participation in Montgomery County is disproportionately higher in more affluent regions of the County and "many areas lack access to affordable youth sports."

The COVID-19 pandemic's impact on youth sports has been profound. The future of the sector is uncertain as youth sports organizations are experiencing severe revenue losses as a result of restrictions intended to reduce virus transmission. The lack of programming availability is particularly affecting children from low-income families. These youth face numerous challenges including food and housing insecurity, as well as barriers in remaining physically active during the pandemic, such as lack of space for social distancing in their communities. As sports programs resume operations, families impacted by job losses will be less able to afford program fees. Organizations that serve low-income youth expect that they will need to provide free programming in order for youth to participate but doing so will be particularly challenging given budget constraints.

## SUMMARY OF KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

Increasing the availability of youth sports services and supporting youth sports organizations are important in providing positive, structured activities for children who would otherwise lack access to services that support their healthy development. These services are particularly needed this fall due to MCPS's virtual-only instructional model and cancellation of all fall and winter sports.

This special appropriation will provide:

- \$500,000 appropriated to the Department of Recreation to provide affordable and universal youth sports leagues and activities targeting underserved communities in the County. The Department's approach will emphasize core fundamentals, interest exploration, motor development, sport discovery, rules and techniques, using a multi-sport/multiactivity participation strategy. Service delivery will address barriers to participation that may include paying coaches if volunteers cannot be recruited, charging nominal fees on a sliding scale, partnering with a nonprofit to distribute sports equipment to children that cannot afford it, and improving accessibility.
- \$500,000 appropriated to the Office of Community Use of Public Facilities (CUPF) to be disseminated through a Facility Fee Assistance Program to reduce fees for field and building use for youth sports programs that are primarily serving vulnerable/low-income youth and are free to participants or charge a nominal fee.
- The source of funding is \$500,000 in General Fund Reserves and \$500,000 in Federal Grant funding.

### **This report contains:**

Proposed Resolution

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Resolution No.: \_\_\_\_\_  
Introduced: July 28, 2020  
Adopted: \_\_\_\_\_

**COUNTY COUNCIL  
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND**

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Lead Sponsor: County Council

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**SUBJECT:** Special Appropriation to the Fiscal Year 2021 Operating Budget  
Montgomery County Government  
Department of Recreation  
Countywide Program - Youth Sports Initiative  
\$500,000 (Source of Funds: General Fund Reserves) and  
Office of Community Use of Public Facilities,  
Facility Fee Assistance Program – Youth Sports Initiative  
\$500,000 (Source of Funds: Federal Grant)

**Background**

1. Section 308 of the County Charter provides that a special appropriation is an appropriation which states that it is necessary to meet an unforeseen disaster or other emergency, or to act without delay in the public interest. Each special appropriation shall be approved by not less than six Councilmembers. The Council may approve a special appropriation at any time after public notice by news release. Each special appropriation shall specify the source of funds to finance it.
2. On March 11, 2020 the World Health Organization declared coronavirus COVID-19 a pandemic, and it has spread rapidly throughout the world. As of July 14, 2020, there were 15,883 confirmed cases in Montgomery County. There were 724 confirmed deaths and 38 probable deaths in Montgomery County. To slow the spread of the disease, Maryland Governor Hogan declared a State of Emergency on March 5, 2020 and issued Executive Orders that closed schools, closed non-essential businesses, and required Maryland residents to shelter at home. The disease has disproportionately affected lower-income communities and communities of color in the County.
3. According to the Aspen Institute’s Project Play, the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on youth sports has been profound and concerns exist about the future of the sector, particularly with respect to access for children from low-income families. Youth sports organizations are experiencing severe revenue losses due to the pandemic. In the initial weeks of the pandemic, an informal poll of over 1,000 Project Play webinar participants from youth sports organizations showed that over half of respondents anticipated at least a

50% drop in revenue in the next year. Parents are increasingly concerned about sending their children back to sports due to fears of illness.

4. Youth from low-income families face significant challenges. Jon Solomon of the Aspen Institute noted that cancelations of sports programs, which provide a support system for many youth, are hitting youth in low-income families the hardest. These youth face numerous challenges including food and housing insecurity, as well as barriers in remaining physically active during the pandemic such as lack of space for social distancing in their communities. As sports programs resume operations, families impacted by job losses will be less able to afford program fees. Organizations that serve low-income youth expect that they will need to provide free programming in order for youth to participate, but doing so will be particularly challenging given their budget constraints.
5. This post-COVID-19 landscape exacerbates inequities already existing in the County. According to the Office of Legislative Oversight March 10, 2020 report “Youth Sports in Montgomery County”, youth sports participation in Montgomery County is disproportionately higher in more affluent regions of the County. Although lower cost recreational sport opportunities that do not require tryouts are thriving in some areas of the County, “many areas lack access to affordable youth sports” and for providers of youth sports, “recruiting volunteer coaches and securing athletic facilities for their activities are two key challenges.”
6. Youth sports have significant social and wellness benefits to participants. In addition to promoting mental and physical health and activity, youth sports help develop confidence, keep youth engaged in productive activities, and help to teach team building and goal setting objectives.
7. Increasing the availability of youth sports services and supporting youth sports organizations are important to provide positive, structured activities for children who would otherwise lack access to these services that will support their healthy development. This special appropriation will provide:
  - \$500,000 appropriated to the Department of Recreation to provide affordable and universal youth sports leagues and activities targeting underserved communities in the County. The Department’s approach will emphasize core fundamentals, interest exploration, motor development, sport discovery, and rules and techniques, using a multi-sport/multiactivity participation strategy. Service delivery will address barriers to participation that may include paying coaches if volunteers cannot be recruited, charging nominal fees on a sliding scale, partnering with a nonprofit to distribute sports equipment to children that cannot afford it, and improving accessibility.
  - \$500,000 appropriated to the Office of Community Use of Public Facilities (CUPF) to be disseminated through a Facility Fee Assistance Program to reduce fees for field and building use for youth sports programs that are primarily serving vulnerable and/or low-income youth and are free to participants or charge a nominal fee.

8. Notice of public hearing was given and a public hearing was held.

**Action**

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland approves the following resolution:

A special appropriation to the FY21 Operating Budget of the Montgomery County Government is approved as follows:

<u>Department</u>	<u>Personnel Expense</u>	<u>Operating Expense</u>	<u>Capital Outlay</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>Source of Funds</u>
Recreation	\$150,000	\$350,000	\$0	\$500,000	General Fund Reserves
CUPF	\$0	\$500,000	\$0	\$500,000	Federal Grant

This special appropriation must only be used to implement the program described in paragraph 7.

This appropriation is needed to address a public health emergency and to act without delay in the public interest.

This is a correct copy of Council action.

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Selena Mendy Singleton, Esq.  
Clerk of the Council