



**OUR MISSION:**

Working to enhance the economic prosperity of greater Silver Spring through robust promotion of our member businesses and unrelenting advocacy on their behalf.

**Special Appropriation to the Fiscal Year FY21 Operating Budget  
Montgomery County Government, Economic Development Fund,  
Support for COVID-19 Response – Reopen Montgomery, \$14,000,000  
PUBLIC HEARING – July 7, 2020**

The Greater Silver Spring Chamber of Commerce appreciates the Council's efforts to support businesses as they navigate through the reopening of our economy. Programs like the Public Health Emergency Grant (PHEG), the telework grant, and the recent 3R initiative provide some of the resources necessary to allow many businesses to survive this unprecedented crisis. The Reopen Montgomery effort is another step in helping our businesses and nonprofit members continue to exist and serve our community.

It is encouraging to see so many of our businesses able to open again, serve their customers, and begin to generate income. But the process and necessary requirements for reopening bring certain financial burdens that make getting back to business even more challenging. The cost of providing PPE, signage, protective dividers, cleaning supplies, and more, is not insignificant. All businesses will need these supplies and, given the continued scarcity of some, price remains high. Further, the need to do more frequent cleaning means that some businesses will have to reassign or bring on additional staff. These increased expenses come at a time when most businesses must still operate at reduced capacity for a yet undetermined period of time. The idea of generating a profit, or even breaking even, is still a long way off for far too many.

That's why we commend the Council for proposing the Reopen Montgomery effort, and we strongly support the special appropriation that will make it happen.

As you consider the parameters of this program, we have a few suggestions that would provide the flexibility to be more inclusive in supporting area businesses and non-profits, while protecting the County's interests in ensuring the monies go to support our local community. Unfortunately, some Montgomery County businesses were left out of the PHEG program, though they are physically located in the County, have fewer than 100 employees in the location in the County, and experienced a near total loss of revenue due to the mandated closure of certain businesses. The sole reasons for exclusion was that the number of employees did not constitute more than 50% of the parent company's total payroll and the revenue generated was not more than 50% of the parent company's entire income....despite the fact that all the revenue generated in the County is spent in the County and the business's accounting is segregated from the parent company. To address this, we suggest the following:

*The definition of a local business/non-profit can include divisions of organizations that are not based in Montgomery County, but do meet the following criteria:*

- *The organization's division is located in Montgomery County;*
- *The accounting for revenues and expenses of the organization's County-based division clearly separates County-based financial activity from that of the larger organization;*
- *Any funds received through this program may only be spent on the Montgomery County-based entity;*
- *The organization agrees to provide any financial documents required to verify the above; and*
- *The organization meets all other requirements of this program.*

Thank you for your support of County businesses and nonprofits. And thank you for considering our suggested changes that will extend the benefits of the Reopen Montgomery initiative to support organizations important to our local economy.