

Commission on People with Disabilities
Montgomery County Council
FY23 Operating Budget Priorities –April 19, 2022
Seth Morgan, MD, Chair

1) Transportation

- We recommend that the County prioritize pedestrian safety over all other MCDOT projects (such as installation of bicycle lanes and floating bus stops). **Sidewalk installation should be the top priority in all parts of the County with pedestrian safety being the prime emphasis of all MCDOT projects.** This emphasis must begin especially on roads leading to schools where there is no bus service and must continue until all roads in the County are made safe for all pedestrians. This will require the County to take legislative action to make sidewalks mandatory preventing homeowners from blocking sidewalk installation. Pedestrians being forced to walk in the street amongst car traffic should not be tolerated.
- Given the high pedestrian severe injury and death figures from vehicular accidents published by MCDOT, sidewalk installation must be accomplished before efforts at opening up County roads to bicycles. By and far, the number of severe pedestrian injuries outstrip those of bicycle accident injuries in number and must be addressed immediately.

2) Early Intervention Screening Program for Children ages 0-3

Early diagnosis and treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) in childhood has been shown to significantly decrease the lifelong severity of disabling deficits caused by this disorder in up to half of children treated. Availability of tools needed to screen and treat ASD in infants is most urgently needed especially in socioeconomically disadvantaged populations in the County. We support early intervention screening initiative for this year's budget of \$121,325 (\$621,148 over five years).

3) Funding to Supplement Programs Serving People with Developmental Disabilities

The Commission supports the funding of the Developmental Disability Supplement increasing by \$1.1 million to \$20.2 M this year. The supplement assists providers to pay a livable competitive wage to direct care staff.

4) Fund a Shelter for the Picnic Area at Riley's Lock

The Commission applauds Montgomery Parks for the installation of the accessible launch for kayakers/canoers and other users at Riley's Lock (Seneca Landing Special Park). It is used daily by the general public but is especially useful for people with disabilities (including disabled Veterans) for access to Seneca Creek and the Potomac River. We recommend the County Council provide needed funding through the Parks CIP for the design and construction of a shelter for the picnic area for all but especially for people who have disabilities and who have temperature regulation issues to be safer and more comfortable while using and enjoying the park.

5) Designate Manager to Oversee Employment Programs and Outcomes for Contractors

People with disabilities face disproportionate barriers to employment. There is a need to coordinate/oversee the outcomes for all County funded employment programs under a County staff person with overall goals and results monitoring. We recommend that each County funded organization have the goal to have 3-5 performance measures related to outcomes for each contract, along with annual budget amount, so that better, more coordinated decisions can be made in the budgeting and contracting process for the employment of people with disabilities. Currently, there is a County special assistant that oversees Worksource Montgomery but does not oversee all employment contractors/agencies serving people with disabilities. The County spends over a million dollars per year to employ people with disabilities through AP 1-10 contracts in departments such as corrections and libraries. We recommend oversight of funding used for the purpose of employment for all populations.