



**Commission on People with Disabilities**  
**Montgomery County Council**  
**FY25 Operating Budget Priorities for April 9, 2024**  
**Karen Morgret, Acting Chair**

The Commission on People with Disabilities (CPWD) supports the County Executive's allocation of \$800,000 to reduce long-standing waitlists and increase capacity in programs serving vulnerable populations, older adults, and individuals with disabilities. The CE Recommended budget increases capacity for the following programs, each of which have over 150 waitlisted individuals: Adult Protective Services case management (\$197,000); Home Care Services (\$161,000); and Coordination of Community Services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (\$63,000).

The Medicaid Community First Choice Nurse Monitoring program budget increases by \$180,000 and is fully offset by revenue. Almost \$200,000 is allocated to continue services that were previously made possible with federal funds, including Senior Lunch site at the Silver Spring Recreation and Aquatic Center (\$148,000) and prenatal engagement initiatives for vulnerable populations (\$50,000).

Enhances supplemental funding for reimbursements to critical providers, including \$697,000 for a 3% increase to the Developmental Disability Provider Supplement and the Adult Medical Day Care Provider Supplement. This budget also includes \$112,000 to increase respite care provider reimbursement rates by \$2 per hour on average.

The CPWD supports full funding of the Developmental Disability Supplement. The current budget includes a 3% increase for the supplement, and the request from InterACC/DD was 4.5% which the Commission supports. The full request includes an increase for the cost-of-living increase that is projected, is critical for program expansion, transitioning youth and waiting list placements which are anticipated to grow as the state of Maryland implements the "End the Wait" initiative. Currently nearly 4,000 people are supported each year and this number is expected to grow. The number of Direct Support Professional (DSP) hours have increased 4% to 6 million. Provider agencies continue to invest in recruitment and retention of talent. This continues to be a huge challenge. Wages in Montgomery County are the highest in the state and talent is often sought for by other employers in the area offering wages higher than nonprofits that support individuals with disabilities to live, participate, work in the community and live full lives can offer employees.

The Council created the IDD Commission last year on the recommendation of the CPWD. The Commission would like to thank the Council for quick action to create this new commission. The enabling legislation gave this Commission the authority to advise the State Developmental Disability Administration and other State agencies as appropriate. The Council approved a part-time staff person to support the work of this group and the enabling legislation included the number of meetings required to be held per year. The CPWD requests that the Council consider making the position full-time, if needed to support the work of this group.

We strongly support the Pedestrian Safety Program items totaling \$4,996,000 listed in the Vision Zero Budget. 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 a top priority in all parts of the County with an emphasis on pedestrian safety above all modes of transportation on 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 safe for all pedestrians. This will require the County to take legislative action to make sidewalks mandatory, preventing homeowners from blocking sidewalk installation. In most neighborhoods, the lack of sidewalks forces pedestrians, including children, to walk in the street amongst car traffic and this is an intolerable situation. The County needs to immediately address the number of severe pedestrian injuries since they are higher than bicycle accident injuries. The Commission will continue to monitor the County's Transportation Services Improvement Fund (TSIF).

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment. Your consideration of the CPWD comments is greatly appreciated.