



Montgomery County, MD
Department of Health and
Human Services
Office of Community Affairs
www.montgomerycountymd.gov

Montgomery County DHHS
Community Action Agency
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Montgomery County, Maryland
Community Action Board
Annual Report
2014-2015





Our Mission:

To reduce poverty and increase self-sufficiency among County residents through services, partnerships, and advocacy.

Alternative formats of the Community Action Board Annual Report 2014-2015 are available upon request. To request this information in alternative formats, please call 240-777-1697 or e-mail Leah.Goldfine@montgomerycountymd.gov TTY users, please call MD Relay (711).



www.mc311.com

Call 311 or 240-777-0311

**Montgomery County Maryland
COMMUNITY ACTION BOARD
2014-2015**

**Chairperson: Matthew J. Green, Jr.
Vice Chair: Chandra Harris-Jackson
Secretary: Stephen Reese**

Alejandro Becerra, *Human Rights Commission*
 Mary Bennett, *Stepping Stones Shelter*
 Stacy Coletta, *Department of Transportation*
 Lisa Conlon, *Board of Education*
 Jackie Dennard, *People's Community Baptist Church*
 Mohamed Doumbia, *Representative of the Head Start Policy Council and Representative of the Low-Income Community, Rockville*
 Lily Echeverria, *Spanish Catholic Center, Catholic Charities*
 Thomas Ferleman, *Representative of the Low-Income Community, Germantown*
 Tekele (Marie) Ghonda Gha, *Representative of the Low-Income Community, MidCounty*
 Matthew J. Green, Jr., *Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity*
 Gail Gunod-Green, *Housing Opportunities Commission*
 Chandra Harris-Jackson, *Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless*
 Nadine Jackman, *Representative of the Head Start Policy Council and Representative of the Low-Income Community, Gaithersburg*
 Pamela Lockett, *County Council Designee*
 Stephen Reese, *Primary Care Coalition*
 Laurie-Anne Sayles, *Representative of the Low-Income Community, Gaithersburg*
 Juliette Traore, *Representative of the Low-Income Community, Rockville*
 Walter Woods, Jr., *County Executive Designee*

The Community Action Board (CAB) serves in an advisory capacity to the County Executive and County Council, and as an advocate on behalf of the poor and working poor of the County. Members are appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the County Council.

The Board has four areas of responsibility, as defined in its enabling legislation:

- *Assessing the needs and problems of low-income people in the County;*
- *Recommending programs to meet the needs and solve the problems;*
- *Reviewing the Community Action Agencies' staff implementation of those programs; and*
- *Maintaining County policy and service delivery from the point of view of low-income residents.*

The Montgomery County Community Action Board is the governing body for the Montgomery County Head Start Program and the Community Action Agency. An annual report on the Head Start program is required by Public Law 110-134 "Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007" reauthorizing the Head Start program, Sec. 644 (a)(2) [42 U.S.C. 9839].

The Community Action Board meets on the Fourth Tuesday each month at 7 pm, except in July, August and December. Meetings are held at 101 Monroe Street, Rockville, in the 9th Floor Conference Room. The Executive Committee meets on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 4 pm, at 2424 Reedy Drive, Wheaton, MD.

Montgomery County will provide sign language interpreters/auxiliary aids upon request. Please contact Leah Goldfine at Leah.Goldfine@montgomerycountymd.gov or 240-777-1697 at least three business days in advance. TTY users, please call MD Relay (711).

*Inquiries may also be made through the County Executive's office:
240-777-2528 or CountyExecutiveBoard@montgomerycountymd.gov*

HISTORY OF COMMUNITY ACTION

On August 20, 1964, President Lyndon Baines Johnson signed into law, Senate Bill 2642, better known as the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, declaring “unconditional war on poverty.” Title II of that law, provided for urban and rural communities to mobilize their resources to combat poverty through Community Action Programs. The most important provision of the Economic Opportunity Act was the requirement that Community Action Programs be developed, conducted, and administered with the maximum participation of area residents.

The following year, Community Action Agencies (CAA) were established, and Head Start programs opened around the country to provide comprehensive services—including health care, social services, and early education—to low-income preschool children. Since then, the Montgomery County CAA and its Board, have been charged with the responsibility of recommending programs to improve the lives of the County’s poor, the development of leaders within low-income communities, and the development of systems to increase their self-sufficiency, self-esteem and gain more control over their own lives. Today, the national Community Action Partnership network remains the largest single provider of Head Start programs.

The Community Action Board (CAB) serves as the governing body for Montgomery County Head Start. CAB shares program governance with the Head Start Policy Council and works closely with Montgomery County Public Schools, the delegate agency providing services, under the auspices of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Community Action Agency, the official grantee, and in collaboration with DHHS’ Early Childhood and School Health Services.

Together, this strong partnership assures that some of Montgomery’s most economically fragile children, including those with disabilities, are receiving the education, health, nutrition, and social services they need to succeed in school. Parents are involved in all aspects of the Head Start Program, with representatives serving on the Head Start Policy Council as well as the Community Action Board.

Originally, a number of Community Action services were delivered directly by County employees. Over time, nonprofit community providers have assumed this work, with the support of volunteers and a blended funding stream that includes, but is not wholly reliant upon, Montgomery County and other public funding. Staff of the CAA provide technical support to strengthen these services and to monitor that public funding is spent as intended.



President Lyndon Johnson signs the War on Poverty Bill in the White House Rose Garden during a ceremony in 1964. The legislation led to the establishment of several programs, including Community Action Agencies.

Enabling Legislation: Article IV. Community Action Agency, Sec. 27-40.

Statement of policy: “It is the public policy of the County to promote programs to create an awareness of poverty; promote coordination among private and public agencies concerned with poverty; promote better use of existing resources and develop leadership among poor citizens to solve community problems; and develop broad community strategies to attack the basic causes of poverty.”

(1976 L.M.C., ch. 1, § 1; 1977 L.M.C., ch. 28, § 10; 1977 L.M.C., ch. 30, § 15; 1997 L.M.C., ch. 25, §1.)

In Sec. 27-41 (a), it is further stated that “There is a Community Action Agency within the Executive branch of the County government. The Agency creates and maintains community action programs to encourage the use of public and private resources to enable low-income people to become self-sufficient; to reduce poverty in the County; to involve the low-income population in developing and carrying out anti-poverty programs in the County; and to make government more responsive to the needs of low-income people.”

The Montgomery County Community Action Board : FY 2015 Year in Review

The Board continued its efforts to advocate for low-income residents throughout FY15. Through testimony, letters of support, poverty forums, and participation in community events, the Board served as a strong voice for the County's poor in a variety of settings. Key highlights for the Board in FY15 included:

Advocacy: Food and Nutrition

- October – Sign-on letter to President Obama regarding funding for Child Nutrition Programs
- March – MD Hunger Solutions Hunger Free Schools Act sign-on letter supporting food and nutrition programs
- June – Food Research and Action Center's petition requesting support for SNAP
- July—Sign-on letter regarding Summer Meals Act, Stop Child Summer Hunger Act, and the Healthy Meals for Young Children Act

Advocacy: Housing

- July—Letter of support for Council Bill 19-15: Landlord-Tenant Relations
- July—Letter of support for Council Bill 21-15: Renters' Property Tax Relief Supplement
- July—Letter of support for Council Bill 22-15: Income Restricted Housing Website

Advocacy: Earned Income and Child Tax Credits

- January – Laurie-Anne Sayles and Pam Luckett participated in an EITC Day event on Capitol Hill where Laurie-Anne spoke on a panel
- March – Sign-on letter from Corporation for Enterprise Development (CFED) regarding VITA funding
- May – Pam Luckett and Laurie-Anne Sayles present at the Interfaith Works Caregivers Conference about the self-sufficiency standard and EITC
- July—Sign-on letter from CFED's Taxpayer Opportunity Network to Congress regarding maintaining provisions of the EITC and CTC

Advocacy: Early Childhood Issues

- April – Executive Committee met with Hans Riemer to discuss proposed child care bill
- April – CAB submitted letter regarding County Council bills on child care, supported amendment to create a child care policy office within HHS
- June – Executive Committee members met with Board of Education Vice President Mike Durso to discuss CAB priorities for children and youth
- June – CAB members met with Board of Education members, Jill Ortman-Fouse and Rebecca Smondrowski to discuss the Board's priorities related to early childhood education, youth programs, and issues impacting low-income families

Advocacy: Workforce

- February – Letter of support for the County Council's Paid Sick and Safe Leave Bill
- April—Sign-on letter from Employment Law Center letter regarding raising the federal minimum wage

Advocacy: Safety Net/Self-Sufficiency/Other

- July—Letter of support regarding County's proposed budget savings plan—expressing the need for ongoing support of safety net services
- July—Letter of support regarding Commission of People with Disabilities' request to lobby
- March—Sign-on letter from Coalition on Human Needs regarding advocacy agenda

Advocacy: Consumer Protection

- October— Sign-on letter regarding Payday Lending Bill
- March—Sign-on letter from Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition regarding Auto Insurance Prohibitions

CAB Priorities:

- October – Chandra Harris-Jackson testified at HHS Committee Roundtable for Boards, Committees, and Commissions
- October – Laurie-Anne Sayles testified at the HHS Community Budget Forum
- November – Stephen Reese testified on behalf of the Board at Joint hearing with Montgomery County Delegation
- February – Chandra Harris-Jackson spoke about CAB priorities at CE's annual meeting with B/C/C Chairs and Vice-Chairs
- February – Chandra Harris-Jackson and staff met with State Senator Brian Feldman to discuss CAB priorities
- April – CAB Chair Matthew J. Green, Jr. testified at County Council budget hearing regarding CAB priorities

Conferences/ Training

- February – Maryland Community Action Partnership Legislative Conference in Annapolis
- April – County's ethics training for Boards, Committees and Commissions
- May – Maryland Community Action Partnership Conference



Left: Board Members Present at the 2015 Interfaith Works Caregivers Conference. Pictured Left to Right: CAB Member, Pam Luckett; CAB Member, Laurie-Anne Sayles; CAA Executive Director, Sharon Strauss; and Robin McKinney, Maryland CASH Campaign

Right: CAB Member, Laurie-Anne Sayles provided remarks on Capitol Hill, at the national EITC event marking the 40th anniversary of the EITC, the country's largest economic mobility program in the country.

CAB Hosts Poverty Forums in Gaithersburg, East County, and Long Branch

The Montgomery County Community Action Board Presents



THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY COMMUNITY ACTION BOARD PRESENTS



In FY 2015, the Community Action Board set out to host poverty forums at various locations throughout the County. The goal was to provide a platform for residents to share their concerns and recommendations about important issues impacting the low-income community. Over 200 participants attended these programs to share their thoughts and ideas about housing, jobs, transportation, and child care. Information gathered at the sessions was included in a report and advocacy handout, which were shared with the County Executive, County Councilmembers, Montgomery County delegation members, and policymakers within the County. Participant feedback also became a vital part of the Board's advocacy agenda. The Board met with several County Councilmembers, Members of the Board of Education, and Department leadership to discuss the information gathered at these forums.

Following the success of the first two poverty forums, the Board determined that its next step would be to host small focus group sessions at the Takoma-East Silver Spring (TESS) Center. The first focus group for seniors was held on September 25, 2015. The second and third sessions (for ESOL class participants and Judy Center parents respectively) were held in October at the beginning of FY 2016.



Scenes from the *Raise Your Voice!* Forum in Gaithersburg and the *Raise Your Voice EAST* Forum in East County.

HEAD START IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY is a comprehensive program to prepare young children, ages 3-5, for success in school. Services are provided for low-income children and their families including developmentally appropriate pre-school education, health and social services, services to children with disabilities, as well as a nutrition and parent involvement program. During school year 14-15, 648 young children were served in 34 classes in 29 schools and 1 private child care center. Demand for the program dramatically exceeds the enrollment capacity.

Parent Involvement with Montgomery County's Head Start

Services received by Head Start Families SY14-15	
emergency/ crisis intervention (immediate needs for food, clothing or shelter)	100%
housing assistance (subsidies, utilities, repairs)	10%
mental health services	10%
ESL	38%
adult ed (incl GED)	19%
job training	30%
substance abuse	0.2%
child abuse and neglect	1%
domestic violence	3%
child support assistance	0.5%
health education	3%
assistance to families of incarcerated individuals	0.2%
parenting education	16%
marriage education	2%
families that received at least one service	100%

Head Start Enrollment and Attendance: Head Start in Montgomery County is a school based program, following the annual calendar of Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), with a federally funded enrollment of 648.

Head Start Enrollment	Total # Served SY 11-12	Total # Served SY 12-13	Total # Served SY 13-14	Total # Served SY 14-15
September	639	646	628	629
October	638	648	628	630
November	643	647	628	622
December	640	648	628	643
January	647	648	628	648
February	648	646	628	647
March	644	646	628	646
April	643	643	628	646
May	635	640	628	638
June	635	638	621	637
Attendance Rate	n/a	n/a	94.01%*	91.63%
Avg. Enrollment	641.2	645	627.3	638.7

*based on attendance on the first week of February.



Trends

- Of the **49 three year old children** with established eligibility for Head Start, Montgomery County served 43 over the course of the year, in two classes which served **15 three year olds each** and in several mixed age classes. It is estimated that over 1,000 three year old children are Head Start eligible based on census data; applications are expressly limited because of the few Head Start seats actually available for three year old children.
- Of the **1,138 four year old children** whose families established eligibility for Head Start, Montgomery County **served 632 of the four year olds** during the course of the school year.
- Over **500 four-year old children**, with established eligibility for Head Start, were unable to be served by Head Start; and were **placed in MCPS PreK classrooms** in compliance with state law. Over 1,600 four-year old children whose eligibility is based on FARMS were served by PreK.
- Twenty Head Start eligible children at Fairland ES received Head Start level services in a “PreK exception” classroom, funded through MSDE, to mitigate the effects of the federal sequester which reduced Montgomery County’s federal child development/ Head Start grant for FY14.
- Conservatively **only 33%** of the Head Start eligible children are served in our County by Head Start.

Source: data from MCPS regarding registration and enrollment rates for School Year 14-15, and PIR report from August 2015.

Percentage of enrolled children that received medical exams in SY 14-15: **100%!**

Head Start Health Services	Total # Served FY12	Total # Served FY13	Total # Served FY14	Total # Served FY15
Medical exams	98%	96%	100%	100%
Health insurance at end of HS year	96%	100%	100%	100%
Dental Exams/ preventive care	95%	95%	79%	96%

Ready for Kindergarten

The Montgomery County Head Start Program offers a quality educational experience to children and families in order to prepare them with the foundational knowledge and skills necessary for success in kindergarten and beyond. At the start of the 2014-2015 school year, Maryland teachers administered the new Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) across the state, a much more rigorous assessment process. To determine the readiness level of each kindergartener. KRA uses age-appropriate performance tasks that measure specific skills and observations of children’s work and play to determine what each entering kindergartener knows and is able to do in four specific domains: Language & Literacy, Mathematics, Physical Well-Being & Motor Development, and Social Foundations. The KRA measures the skills and behaviors that children learned prior to entering kindergarten. In Montgomery County, 30% of children from low-income households are ready for kindergarten, compared with 60% of children from mid- to high-income households. Specifically, 34% of children who previously attended Head Start exhibited the foundational skills and behaviors that enable a child to fully participate in the kindergarten curriculum, which is *demonstrating readiness* consistently. An additional 41% were *approaching readiness*, that is, showed some of the foundational skills and behaviors that are needed to participate in the kindergarten curriculum. Only 21% showed *emerging readiness*, in which children displayed minimal foundational skills and behaviors needed to meet kindergarten expectations successfully. On the previous state measure, last year 68% of Head Start children entered kindergarten fully ready to succeed in school and an additional 22% were approaching readiness.



Parent Policy Council officers being sworn in in January 2014

Results of the most recent review by the Secretary and the Financial Audit

As its 2013 Triennial Federal Head Start Monitoring Review, the Administration for Children and Families conducted an on-site monitoring review in October 2012 which identified that the program was not in compliance with federal Head Start regulations. The grantee and its delegate agency did not ensure each staff member had an initial health examination including screening for tuberculosis (TB); the grantee's policies did not require bus drivers or the Transportation Director to obtain TB screenings because transportation is an optional offering for HS parents, given by the MCPS transportation department. When a follow-up review was conducted in April 2013, it was determined that all personnel had been screened and the delegate had changed its practice to require that all vehicle drivers on Head Start routes take a TB test. As a result, a procedure was developed for the grantee to contract for TB testing for all drivers assigned to Head Start routes future.

The law authorizing Head Start requires that the Office of Head Start (OHS) include in the monitoring reviews of Head Start agencies a valid and reliable research-based observational instrument that assesses classroom quality, including the assessment of multiple dimensions of teacher-child interactions that are linked to positive child outcomes and later achievement. CLASS™ assesses interactions between children and teachers in three broad domains of classroom quality: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support. CLASS™ monitoring includes the use of a randomly selected sample of classes for observations; for each preschool class in the sample, trained and certified CLASS reviewers conducted two 20 minute observations and scored each dimension using a 7-point scale. These observations became part of the monitoring review report.

The Designation Renewal System

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 required the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to determine which Head Start Programs may be designated for renewal without having to compete with other entities in their community. Only those Head Start agencies found under this system to be delivering the very highest-quality and comprehensive Head Start programs that meet the educational, health, nutritional, and social needs of the children and families they serve, and meet applicable program and financial management requirements and standards, are designated for renewal and receive continued funding automatically, without having to compete. All other grantees must re-compete for renewed funding.

Montgomery County Community Action Agency was determined to be ineligible for automatic renewal and designated for competition based on its average CLASS™ score in the domain of Emotional Support, which assesses teachers' support of children's social and emotional functioning in the classroom. This occurred following a federal monitoring team visit in 2013, at which time reviewers rated Montgomery's Head Start program 5.5313 on a 7 point scale in Emotional Support, .0104 below the national cut off for this domain. Since it did not score among the nation's top 90% of programs, MC Head Start was designated to compete for renewed funding, and submitted a detailed grant application in the Fall of 2014. We successfully competed and received funding in June 2015 for a new five-year grant for FY16, that is, Year 50 of the Montgomery County Head Start program.

Financial Audit: Montgomery County has an annual Independent Auditor's Report on Internal Control, Over Financial Reporting and on Compliance and Other Matters, Based on an Audit of Financial Statements Performed in Accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*. A copy of the Audit for the year ending June 30, 2015, is not yet completed, and when available will be found at the County's website: <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/Finance/financial.html> The most current Montgomery County MD Report on Expenditures of Federal Awards for Fiscal Year 2014 was performed for the County Council and County Executive by CliftonLarsonAllen LLP, Certified Public Accountants and Consultants.

Head Start Budget Basics:

Program Year 49 = School Year 2014-15 = Fiscal Year 2015

PY 49 = SY 14-15 = FY 15

PY 49 COMPARISON OF BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES FOR HEAD START & PY 50 PROPOSED

CATEGORY	FY15 BUDGET	EXPENDITURES	FY16 AWARD
Personnel	\$442,120	\$4,061,066	\$459,797
Fringe Benefits	\$191,368		\$200,183
Travel	\$2,000	\$23,773	\$2,000
Equipment	\$0	\$0	\$0
Supplies	\$12,500	\$53,054	\$5,303
Contractual	\$3,986,255	\$427,631	\$3,983,225
Other	\$33,577	\$102,295	\$17,312
Training*/ Technical Assistance	57188*	57188*	57188*
Subtotal Federal	\$4,667,820	\$4,667,819	\$4,667,820
Non Federal	\$1,092,197	\$1,866,625	\$1,333,063
Total	\$5,760,017	\$6,534,444	\$6,000,883

* included in variety of categories and not added into the subtotal federal award.

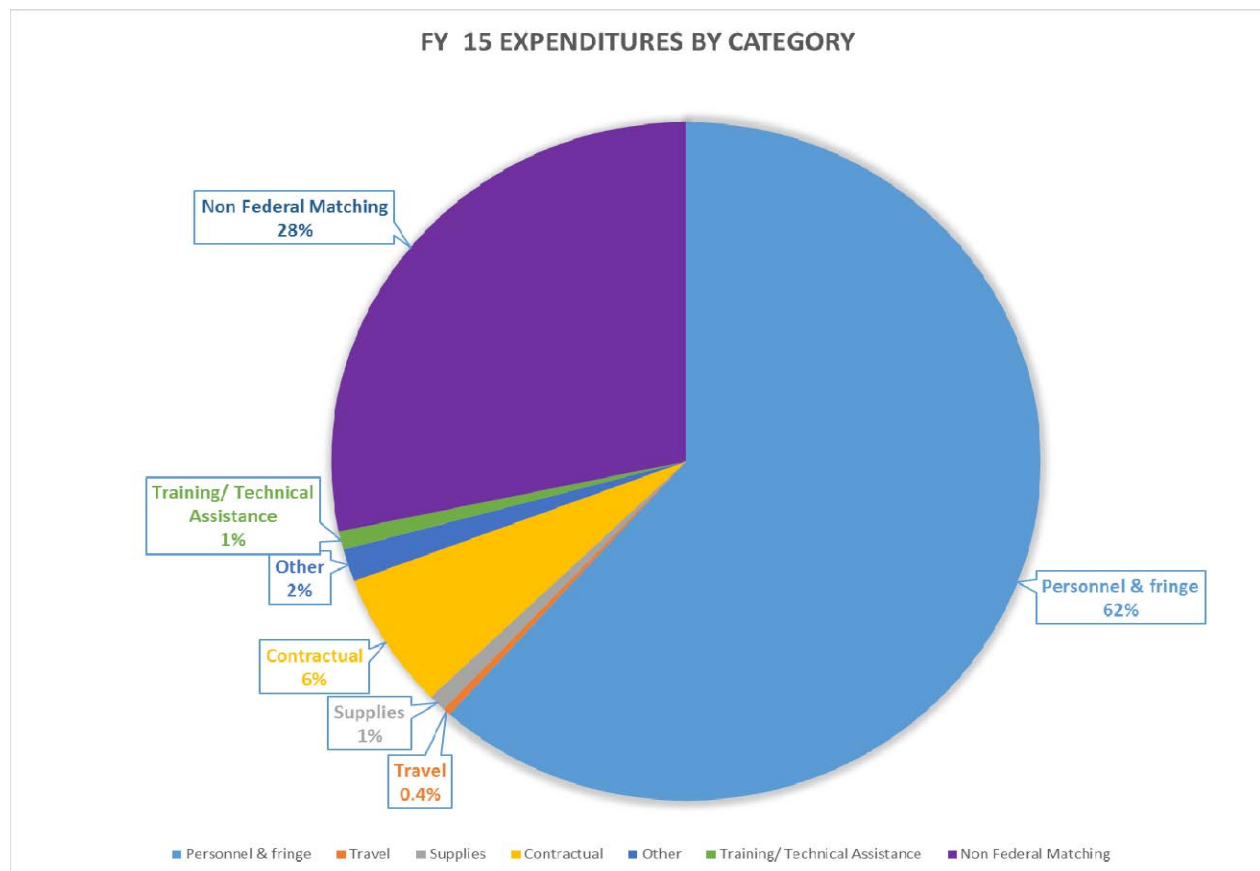
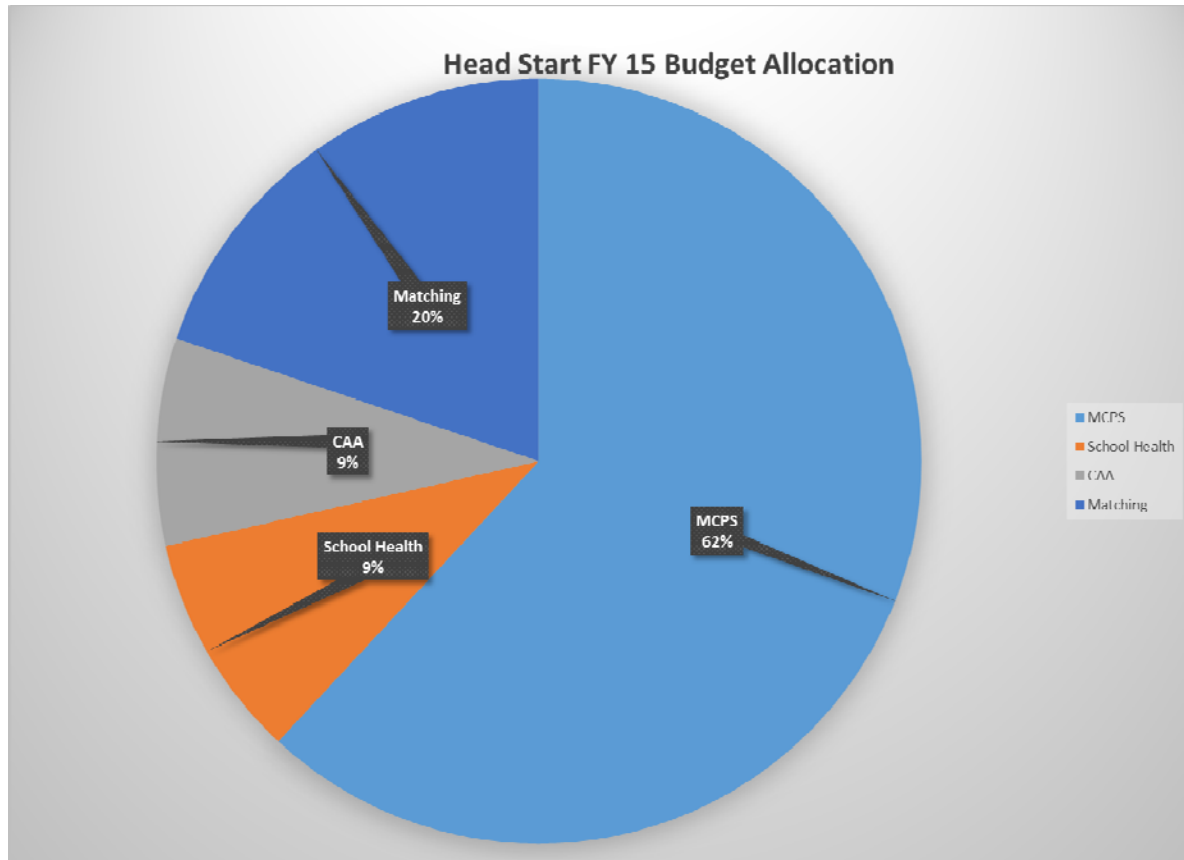
In the chart above, the FY15 *budget* and FY 16 *award* columns reflect the federal grant Notice Of Award in which all MCPS funds are granted as a "pass-through" for the subrecipient/ *delegate* agency and are reflected as part of the contractual line-item. The *expenditures* column reveals **all** Head Start FY15 expenditures by line-item for MCPS, the delegate, CAA, the grantee, and DHHS' School Health.

Personnel for Head Start includes DHHS staffing, that is, community health nurses, school health room aides, dental hygienist, nurse administrator, community services aide, Head Start program manager, program aide, and administrative specialist. *Travel* includes costs associated with reimbursing staff for travel to Head Start sites to provide health and dental services, and for staff and parents to attend trainings and national, regional, and state conferences.

Contractual services covers all delegate costs, including the required audit (A133), personnel costs (e.g., teachers, paraeducators, speech pathologists, psychologists, social workers, social service assistants) and training and technical assistance for delegate staff. Contractual health costs include specialty dental treatment providers, not available through insurance or dental clinics, and Mobile Medical Care, Inc. to provide contractual Head Start Nurses. Community Action Agency (CAA) contractual services includes funding for the Community- Based Head Start child care center site at Montgomery College and for training for the Policy Council and Community Action Board on shared governance and methods to achieve board goals within a government structure.

Other funding within MCPS covers a variety of expenses, including training & staff development, child liability insurance, parent services such as training, parent/child mathematics and literacy activities, bus transportation for classes to attend field trips, reimbursement of mileage for home visits and parent meetings for teachers, paraeducators, special needs teacher, and social service assistants.

Other funding for CAA provides assistance with costs for family related activities, and supplies necessary to conduct various meetings. These funds provide a range of administrative supports to the Montgomery County, MD, Head Start Program such as local travel costs for contract and grant monitoring. Other funding for School Health includes costs associated with continuing education and performance standard training for Head Start School Health Room nurses, technicians and hygienists and providing educational training experiences and materials for parents, students and non professional staff.



VITA and Financial Education Partnership

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program provides free tax preparation services to low-income residents throughout Montgomery County. VITA is a volunteer-based program, relying on the critical support of 94 volunteers throughout the year. Services are offered year-round in Wheaton, Rockville, Gaithersburg, and Long Branch (TESS Center). Special populations, including Limited English Proficient residents, seniors, disabled residents, small business owners, and family child care providers, are served through the VITA Program. The VITA Program also supports financial education and in FY15, supported Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) outreach at various events.

The VITA Program's Impact: The EITC in Montgomery County



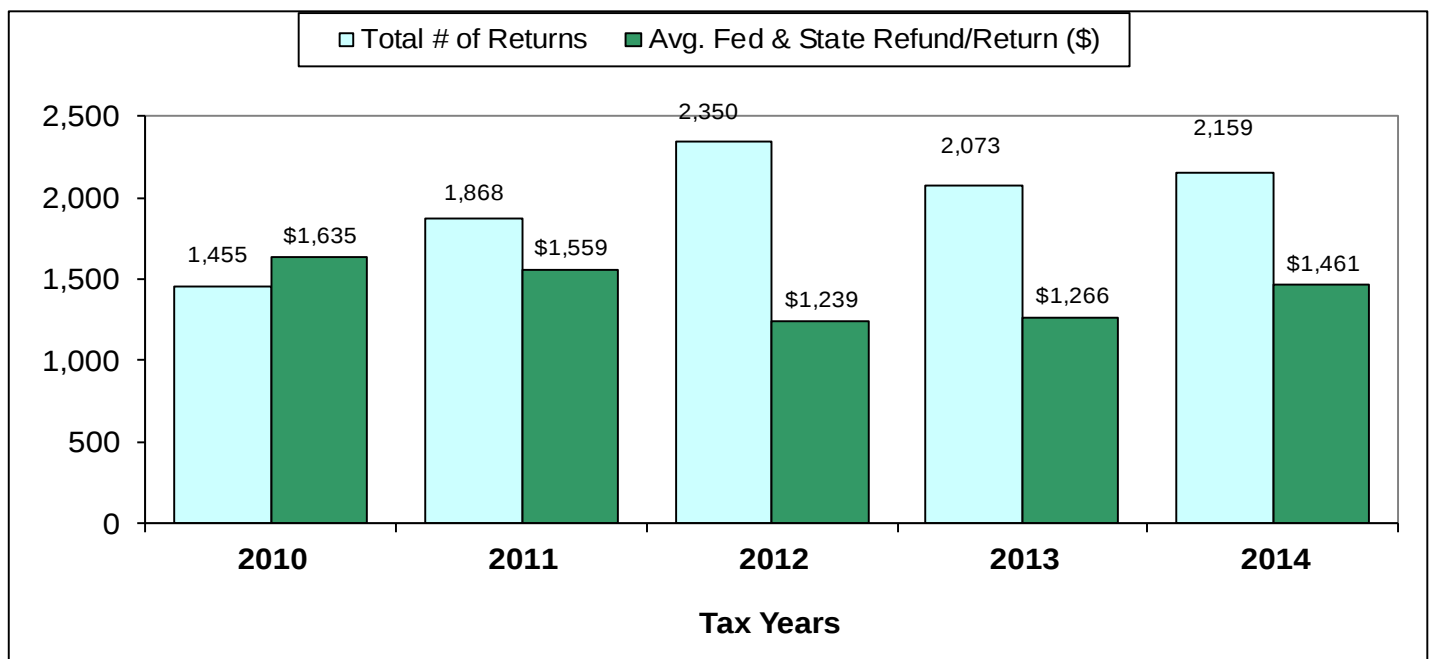
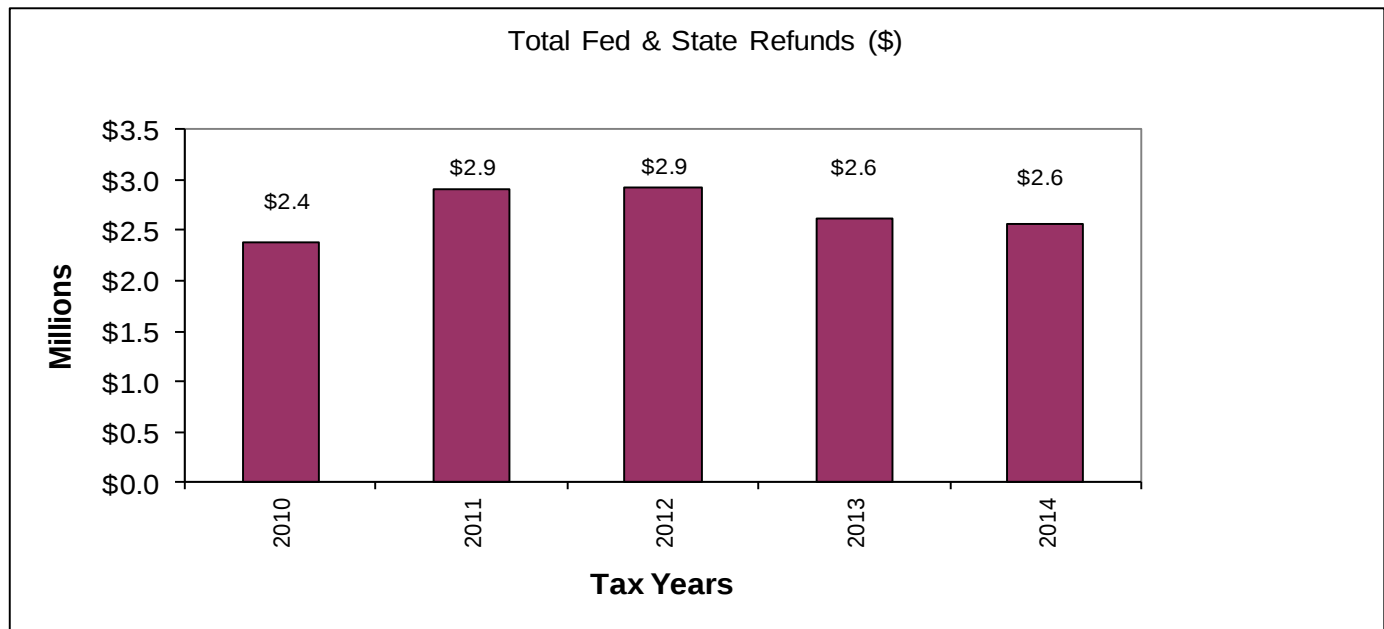
YEAR	# Returns	Total Fed & State Refund (\$)	Avg. Fed & State Refund	EITC \$	State EITC	County EITC	Total EITC
2010	1,455	\$ 2,379,105	\$ 1,635	\$ 601,629	\$ 150,408	\$ 114,859	\$ 866,896
2011	1,868	\$ 2,912,130	\$ 1,559	\$ 732,235	\$ 183,059	\$ 126,127	\$ 1,041,421
2012	2,359	\$ 2,921,660	\$ 1,239	\$ 867,405	\$ 216,851	\$ 158,085	\$ 1,242,341
2013	2,073	\$ 2,623,510	\$ 1,266	\$ 723,995	\$ 180,999	\$ 136,654	\$ 1,041,648
2014	2,159	\$ 2,568,113	\$ 1,189	\$ 750,941	\$ 187,735	\$ 159,575	\$ 1,098,251
TOTAL	9,914	\$ 13,404,518	\$ 1,378	\$ 3,676,205	\$ 919,052	\$ 695,300	\$ 5,290,557



From Left to Right: Jessica Huitz, Head Start Program Aide; Sharon Strauss, Community Action Agency Executive Director; Eddie Mendes, VITA Community Fellow; Abiola Abodunrin, VITA Tax Preparer; Jeff Weber, VITA volunteer; and Frederick Medley II, PNC Assistant Branch Manager

During Tax Year 2014, VITA returned over \$2.6 million in state and federal refunds to 2,159* households. VITA taxpayers owed nearly \$900,000 to the state and federal governments.

*This includes taxpayers who filed for previous year returns post-season.



A Salute to Community Partners

The Montgomery County Department of Health & Human Services Community Action Agency provides services for to the low-income community through partnerships with many non-profit organizations throughout the County. These organizations provide a wide range of services, including food and clothing assistance, legal services, youth programs, and community development.

Community Action Agency's Partners, FY15:

- **Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center**—Provides free legal services to low-income immigrants with limited English proficiency. Maintains help line in 4 main Asian languages. In FY15, addressed 178 legal cases.
- **Caribbean Help Center**—Provides emergency assistance, food distribution, and health care referrals. In FY15, served 869 clients with social services and 304 clients received emergency food assistance.
- **CASA de Maryland**—Provides employment, training and supportive services to low-income residents with limited English proficiency at three locations. In FY15, hundreds of clients received assistance with DACA applications. Between July and June, 4,195 clients obtained health insurance, 150 clients received financial coaching and opened bank accounts, 136 completed immigration applications, and 237 received information and referral services. July through June, supported 7,482 day labor placements, 45 unduplicated part-time job placements and 77 unduplicated full time job placements.
- **Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington, Inc.**—Provides emergency services, outreach, and case management to low-income residents. Between July and June, assisted 9,015 callers and walk-ins.
- **Circle of Rights, Inc.**—Provides increased public awareness and outreach about stroke prevention to minority populations. Between July and June, held a total of 10 health topic presentations.
- **Community Health & Empowerment Through Education and Research (CHEER)** —Provides health and community engagement for residents. In FY15, connected 1,300 residents to health insurance, led Spanish Diabetes Wellness Circle with 12 participants, and conducted outreach to 46 people in the Long Branch area.
- **Community Ministries of Rockville**—Supports language outreach and citizenship classes. In FY15, enrolled 171 children in English language classes. Of the 39 adults who took the citizenship class, 16 became U.S. citizens.
- **Crossroads Community Food Network**—Provides food subsidies, nutrition education, and operates markets for low-income residents. In FY15, hosted 24 Healthy Nutrition Program workshops in two public schools for 180 students and ensured that 1,460 County families had access to produce through the Fresh Checks Program.
- **Cultural & Diversity Enrichment Services (CADES-USA)**—Provides programs for immigrant youth, which include cultural and academic enrichment. In FY15, served 11 school-age students.
- **EduCare Support Services**—Provides emergency food services to seniors and disabled residents. In FY15, served 309 home-bound residents.
- **Family Services, Inc.**—Provides case management services and serves as a Neighborhood Opportunity Network site. In FY15, 488 clients were served with referrals and assistance with applications.
- **IMPACT Silver Spring** —Provides community building and civic participation programs. Provides services through the Neighborhood Opportunity Network initiative. In FY15, knocked on 7,539 doors to provide outreach. Helped plan large events, including Audacity of Hoops, IMPACT Now, and Thanksgiving Parade.



Volunteers from Kids in Need Distributors (KIND) load donated food for distribution.

- **Interfaith Works Clothing Closet**—Operates a clothing center, which distributes donated clothing and house wares to referred clients free of charge. In FY15, served 24,638 clients, with the help of 187 volunteers.
- **International Rescue Committee**—Provides immigration and safety net services to newly-settled refugees in the County. In FY15, served 1,200 clients with case management and referrals. Assisted 120 County residents in reuniting with their children.
- **Kids in Need Distributors (KIND)** - Distribute food to schools so that low-income children receive food on Fridays for the weekend. In FY 15, served 1,100 children in 15 schools.
- **Korean Association of the State of Maryland Metro Area Inc.**—Provides social services, including translation, transportation, advocacy, citizenship classes, and referrals. In FY15, 418 clients were served.
- **Korean Community Service Center of Greater Washington Inc.**—Provides outreach, referrals, and social services to low-income residents. In FY15, served 1,421 with case management, income assistance, and financial classes, 506 clients received health care referrals/enrollment assistance, and 2,125 received referrals.
- **Manna Food Center**—Distributes food to low-income residents, pantries, shelters, schools, soup kitchens, emergency organizations, and group homes. Serve as the County's designee for Temporary Emergency Food Assistance. In FY15, 11,430 households received 2-3 boxes of food. During the school year, 2,358 children received 90,000 snacks through the Smart Snacks Program. In FY15, worked with 7 farmers' markets and 5 local markets to collect 110,614 pounds of fresh produce for low income families.
- **Mid-Atlantic Gleaning Network**—Provides emergency food relief for low-income individuals by involving them in the harvest of fresh fruit and vegetables. In FY15, planned 30 gleaning events, provided Manna Food Center with 16,682 pounds of produce, and delivered 95,957 pounds of produce to Pastors Lopez and Portillo Churches.
- **Montgomery County Maryland Bar Foundation**—Provides pro bono legal services for low-income residents. Supported 8 legal clinics per month, with 1,602 people attending and 780 clients advised by attorneys.
- **Mover Moms**—Promote volunteerism in shelter programs and job readiness in jails. In FY15, provided resources to 5 County shelters.
- **Our House, Inc.**—Serves as a residential job training center for at-risk youth. Contract supported the development of a computer/technology center.
- **Spanish Catholic Center**—Services include case management, health services, English classes, job training, and emergency food support for low-income clients. In October– June, 101 clients participated in integrated health prevention workshops and 51 clients received internal medicine and dental services. During July-June, 224 received employment counseling, 2,286 received employment referrals, 431 participated in job readiness class.
- **Women Who Care Ministries, Inc.**—Administers a free food distribution program and backpack weekend food program in collaboration with MCPS. During FY15, supplied 1,984 children with food sacks in 38 schools. A total of 78,180 sacks were distributed.
- **World Organization for Resource Development & Education (WORDE)** - Operates support for crisis and resource center/services for low income county residents. In FY15, served 80 teenagers and 243 adults with appointments. Held 15 Global citizen group sessions at Gaithersburg High School,
- **The YMCA- Benchmarks Program**—Provides an academic enrichment after school program. In FY15, served 31 middle school students at Rosemary Hills Primary School.

Making a Difference: Caribbean Help Inc.

A mother and her two children came from Haiti and moved to the U.S. to live with relatives. Two months later, the homeowners became angry because she was unable to pay rent and even threatened to kick her out. She came to Caribbean Help Center and explained her problem to us. We proposed that she enroll in our workforce development program. Upon her enrollment, we assisted her to prepare a resume, fill out several job applications online, and network with local church pastors. After six months, she was on the verge of leaving the US and going back to Haiti, but an employer called us with a job offer. Now she is well off living an independent life with her children.

Community Action Month Celebration

On May 27, 2014, the Community Action Agency held its annual Community Action Month Celebration and Volunteer Recognition Program at the Silver Spring Civic Center. Over 100 members of the community attended this event. The event honored dedicated volunteers and local organizations with the Marcia Plater and Henry L. Dixon, Jr. Community Action Service Awards. Outgoing Board members, along with volunteers from the TESS Center and VITA Program, were also honored at this event. Outgoing Board member, Walter Woods, was also honored at the event. Mr. Woods began his service on the Community Action Board as a Head Start Policy Council Representative and later served on the Executive Committee and as the Chair of the Board.



Top Left: The Community Action Agency received a Proclamation from County Executive Ike Leggett in honor of Community Action Month. Pictured from left to right: Betty Lam, Chief of the Office of Community Affairs; Sydney Katz, County Councilmember; Matthew J. Green, Jr., Chair of the Community Action Board; Sharon Strauss, Executive Director of the Community Action Agency; and Uma Ahluwalia, Director of the Department of Health and Human Services

Top Right: Volunteers from the TESS Center. Pictured from left to right: Brunilda Mauras, Alicia Gonzalez, and Maria Quiroga

Bottom Left: Members of former Board member Gerald Roper's family attended the event to celebrate Mr. Roper's contributions and honor him with a new award in his name.

Bottom Right: Staff from CareerCatchers accept the Henry L. Dixon, Jr. Award for an organization serving adults. Pictured from left to right: Matthew J. Green, Jr., Chair of the Community Action Board; Gail Gunod-Green, Community Action Board member; and Mana McNeill and K. Kunda from CareerCatchers.

Department of Health and Human Services – TESS Center

The Community Action Agency's Takoma-East Silver Spring (TESS) Center continues to serve the needs of some of the County's most vulnerable populations. The bi-lingual staff (Spanish/English and Amharic/English) provide culturally-competent, high-quality services and referrals to 8,686 clients in FY15. With four full-time staff members, two part-time Community Connectors, and the support of numerous volunteers, the TESS Center addresses some of the most important issues facing the community, including housing, child care, health insurance, immigration, educational concerns, and more.

FY 2015 TESS Center Highlights

- Served **8,686** clients throughout the year
- Provided **55** eye referrals and **109** referrals to the dental clinic.
- The Pro Bono program provided **533** individuals/families with free legal services
- Served **1,355** free lunches to children as part of the Summer Meals Program
- Provided **380** referrals to the Manna Food Center
- Served **228** seniors through the Senior Social Program
- Served **69** families through the Holiday Giving Program
- Served **153** children through the Judy Center's Literacy Play Groups
- Through partnership with Community Health and Empowerment through Education and Research (CHEER), provided health outreach to **720** clients
- Served **40** students through IMPACT Silver Spring's ESOL classes at the Center
- Through partnership with Mary's Center, provided support to **120** women through the Women's Support Group



Senior Social

The TESS Center offers a Senior Social Program on the last Friday of the month throughout the Spring, Summer, and Fall. The program includes guest speakers, special activities, and presentations.,

Pictured above: Volunteer Elsa Strohecker assist seniors with a crafts project during a Senior Social



Summer Meals Program

In 2015, the TESS Center partnered with Montgomery County Public Schools and Maryland Hunger Solutions for the second year in a row to serve as a drop-in site for the Summer Meals Program. As many as 269 children received free lunches at the TESS Center each week and 1,355 lunches were distributed throughout the summer.

Pictured Left: High School volunteers help distribute lunches for the Summer Meals Program

The TESS Center

8513 Piney Branch Road
Silver Spring, Maryland 20901
Main: 240-773-8260 Fax: 301-565-5713
TTY Users, Please call MD Relay: 711

Community Action: Helping People, Changing Lives!



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY

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Sharon Strauss, Executive Director
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Abiola Abodunrin, VITA Contractor
Birtucan Assres, Community Connector, TESS Center
Josue Canas, Office Services Coordinator, TESS Center
Diana Day, Office Services Coordinator
Patsy Evans, Program Manager, Head Start
Melissa Ferguson, Program Specialist, Contracts
Leah Goldfine, Program Manager
Victoria Hall, Community Connector, TESS Center
Gladys Hernandez, Community Services Aide, TESS Center
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Iliana Umanzor, Community Services Aide, TESS Center



The Promise of Community Action

Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community, and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.

