



Approved November 18, 2025

## Montgomery County Community Action Board

October 28, 2025, Meeting Minutes

### Meeting Location

Zoom

### Attendance

#### Members Present

- Rachel Bonas
- Beverly Coleman
- Lisa Conlon
- Erika Conner
- Summer Cook
- Denise Fredericks
- Timothy Robinson
- DaVida Rowley
- Kemmesha Thomas
- Helen Winder

#### Members Not Present

- Luz Cuenca
- Evelyn Okutu
- Will Kenlaw
- Pamela Luckett
- Claudia Simmons
- Mike Subin

#### Staff Present

- Shantá Johnson
- Charlene Muhammad
- Melissa Ferguson
- Leah Goldfine

## Call To Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:12 pm. Prior to the formal board meeting, a discussion was held with numerous members of the Emergency Assistance Coalition and DHHS Services to End and Prevent Homelessness about evictions prevention. The discussion included an overview of the process residents use to request rental assistance in the County and some of the challenges in this process. The EAC shared their request that the CAB support a proposal to establish an Eviction and Displacement Task Force.

## Review and Approval of Consent Agenda

Denise moved to approve the consent agenda and Helen seconded the motion. All voted in favor. The consent agenda included the September 2025 meeting minutes; Meeting Evaluations Summary for September 2025; Executive Director's Report; Head Start Report; Contracts Report; Staff Liaison's Report; Budget report and P Card update; TESS and Navigation reports; VITA report; Proposed CAB bylaws— edits and updates; CAI pre-program survey; CAB CSBG Advocacy Letter to Congressional Delegation; CAB Testimony – HHS Committee Work session for Boards, Committees, and Commissions; CAB Testimony – Council Bill 31-25; VITA Volunteer Survey Summary; and EAC Letter Re: Eviction and Displacement Task Force.

## Meeting Agenda Items

### 1. CAB Updates

Board members received a detailed written report prior to the meeting with updates on the board's work.

#### a. Recent CAB Meetings with elected officials and CAB testimony for HHS Committee

Board leaders shared that they participated in two recent meetings with staff members from Councilmember Friedson's office and Councilmember Glass's office. These meetings focused on CAA programs and CAB priorities. DaVida also testified at the annual County Council HHS Committee work session for Boards, Committees, and Commissions. Councilmembers expressed their appreciation for the CAI program. The session also provided an opportunity to connect with other advisory groups with similar priorities.

#### b. Action Item: Establishment of an Eviction and Displacement Task Force

CAB members discussed the proposal brought forward by the Emergency Assistance Coalition in the pre-meeting discussion to establish an Eviction and Displacement Task Force. Denise moved to support the establishment of the Task Force and Lisa seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

#### c. CSBG Update

Staff shared that there is a lot of uncertainty surrounding Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funding right now. Staff members in the federal HHS office that oversee CSBG funding were laid off during the federal government shutdown. If these reductions are held up in court, it is unclear how the CSBG could be administered without this team and whether or not CSBG would be funded. The

board submitted letters regarding CSBG to members of the Montgomery County Congressional Delegation, an example of which was included in the meeting materials.

d. Bylaws Committee

Staff shared that the updates to the CAB bylaws were still in progress. The Executive Committee reviewed one section of the bylaws pertaining to grounds for removal from the CAB. There were concerns about this section being too vague and potentially leading to issues in the future if we did not have a specific list of grounds for removal. Because the County does not have a specific Code of Conduct for members of advisory groups, we need to determine what would constitute grounds for removal. The hope was to have the draft bylaws ready to present to the CAB by the November meeting.

e. Community Advocacy Institute (CAI) update

Staff shared that the current program is underway and going very well. There is a lot of interest in the CAI right now. There are potential partnerships with the Universities at Shady Grove and the Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Commission, both of which are interested in creating their own advocacy programs.

2. Executive Director's Report

CAB members received a detailed written report from Executive Director Shantá Johnson, along with budget and P card updates, TESS and Navigation reports, and a VITA report. Shantá shared that the Community Action Agency will move to DHHS Children, Youth, and Families on December 1<sup>st</sup>. Head Start will move to DHHS Early Childhood Services on that date as well. Our agency will be working with the Clusters program and the East County Hub once the move becomes official.

Shantá noted that she attended the Maryland Community Action Partnership (MCAP) Board of Directors meeting. MCAP is looking at messaging right now and ensuring that Community Action Agencies are becoming more "anti-poverty" in their work.

Shantá shared that she and Program Manager Monica Rivera-Goldberg are both Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) certified now after successfully completing the training.

3. Head Start Report

Board members received a detailed written report with updates on the Head Start program. Charlene shared that there have been no interruptions in the County's Head Start program, despite the shutdown and delays in funding that other programs are experiencing. The Community-based program application is now available online. The annual Head Start Stakeholders' Meeting will take place in December. Lisa will send the invitation

Charlene shared that the program needs to select a new logo since all Head Start programs have been asked to not use the national logo anymore. MCPS created a logo for Head Start/PreK programs within the public schools, but we would like to have a Head Start-specific logo that includes the new birth to five model and community-based programs. Board members reviewed four logo options and shared their feedback with Charlene. Charlene will also request the Head Start Parents Policy Council's feedback.

#### 4. Contracts and Grant Agreements

Board members received a detailed written report with updates on the agency's contract and grant partners. Shantá introduced Melissa Ferguson, who is the Acting Program Manager and has taken over the agency's full portfolio of grants and contracts following Aizat's retirement. Melissa deferred to her written report and reminded board members of the Annual Partners' Meeting on November 13<sup>th</sup>.

### Next Meeting

The next CAB meeting will be on November 18, 2025.

### Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:48 pm.