



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

Montgomery County, Maryland
Community Action Board
Annual Report
2009-2010

.....

Montgomery County DHHS
Community Action Agency
2424 Reedie Drive, Suite 238
Wheaton MD 20902
240.777.1697



The Montgomery County Community Action Board is the governing body for the Montgomery County Head Start Program and the Community Action Agency. The 2009 Annual Report is printed and funded through the Community Service Block Grant. 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].



Alternative formats of the Community Action Board Annual Report 2009-2010 are available upon request. To request a copy, or if you need other services or accommodations to participate in the Community Action Board, please call 240-777-1697 (voice); 240-773-3556(TTY); MD RELAY@711; or 240-777-3295 (FAX). To request by email, please contact staff: SharonStrauss@montgomerycountymd.gov. Sign language interpreter services will be provided upon request with advance notice of at least 3 full business days prior to the activity. Taking these steps will help us have sufficient time to best meet your needs

**Montgomery County Maryland
COMMUNITY ACTION BOARD
2009-2010**

**Chairperson: Pamela Luckett,
Vice Chairperson: Steve Galen
Secretary: Melpi Jeffries**

Lisa Conlon, *Board of Education*
Lillian Durham, *Housing Opportunities Commission*
William L. England, Jr., *Human Rights Commission*
Steven M. Galen, *Primary Care Coalition*
Lauren Harper, *Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless*
Tonya M. Hughes, *Rockville (former Head Start Policy Council member)*
Carolyn Jones, *Department of Transportation*
Luann Korona, *Department of Housing & Community Affairs*
Pamela Luckett, *County Council Designee*
Julieta Machado, *Spanish Catholic Center, Catholic Charities*
Corky McCorkle, *Department of Recreation*
Keith Melbourne, *Maryland Child Care Services*
Lauren Newman, *Department of Health & Human Services*
Melpi K. Jeffries, *League of Women Voters*
Trica Young-Williams, *County Executive Designee (former Head Start Representative)*
Walter Woods, *Takoma Park (Head Start Policy Council Representative)*

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:

- *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.*

Want to become involved?

The Community Action Board meets on the Fourth Tuesday each month at 7 pm, except in July, August and December. Meetings are held at 401 Hungerford Drive, Rockville, in the Tan Conference Room. The Executive Committee meets on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 4 pm, at 2424 Reedy Drive Wheaton MD, Suite "238."

*For more info, or accommodations,
please contact the staff liaison, Sharon Strauss, 240-777-1462
Sharon.strauss@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, public resources. Staff of the CAA provide technical support to strengthen these services and to monitor that public funding is spent as intended.

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's 2009-2010 Advocacy Priorities & Work



Our Mission:

To conduct and promote programs that create an awareness of poverty, to promote coordination among agencies and better use of resources, to develop leadership among low-income residents of the County, and to develop community strategies to attack the basic causes of poverty.



Protecting the Safety Net for Low-Income Residents & Building Assets through Free Tax Help and Financial Education

In tough times, more residents turned to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and its community partners for help. The Community Action Board ("CAB") testified about the growing needs of the County's economically challenged families and joined in advocacy efforts to keep them safe and stable, helping to assure their access to sufficient food, fuel, transportation, child care, health and housing resources. Furthermore, the CAB shared concerns that as vulnerable families experience increased economic stressors, they require protective and prevention services to remain safe in the community, including behavioral health and substance abuse services. The Board continued presenting the Self-Sufficiency Standard as a tool for understanding the challenges facing Montgomery's working families in our high-cost region, and promoted the Earned Income Tax Credit to reduce poverty. As the recession peaked and the number of homeless families continued to rise, the Board supported Community Action's CSBG and American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) grant to house vulnerable families at a community-based homeless shelter. The initiative integrated expansion of VITA and financial education with homelessness prevention, employment and training, thereby serving County residents most impacted by the recession—those who've recently lost employment and are homeless, and those at-risk of losing their homes. Community Action Board's support of Community Action Agency's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance and financial education programs used blended resources from the County, the federal government, the Cities of Rockville and Gaithersburg, Family Services Inc. and other partners to expand free tax services to four sites and financial education services County-wide. The Board urged MCPS' to enhance its personal finance curriculum, noting the consequences for graduates who lack financial skills, and continued advocating for a required course in financial education for all Maryland high school students.

Strengthening Head Start

The Community Action Board testified about its support of comprehensive, early childhood education for young children and their low-income families, promoting learning and assuring their health, safety and well-being. Head Start and prekindergarten services for four year olds provide a critical gateway to kindergarten, and CAB expressed its gratitude to the Board of Education for using Title I and ARRA funding to expand full day Head Start from 13 to 21 classrooms. MCPS' research found that the four year olds enrolled in full-day Head Start classes made significant gains when compared with children enrolled in part-day classes, with the full-day group experiencing improvements in reading outcomes and a reduction in the need for special education services. ESOL children in the full day classes made significant improvements in school readiness. To solidify early learning gains and family stability, the Board continued to voice its concern that a continuum of care is necessary for 3-year olds "aging out" of Early Head Start, as well as for those three year olds from income eligible families who are unable to be served by Head Start due to its very limited supply of funded slots. CAB participated in Head Start's Triennial Federal Review, fulfilling its governance responsibilities.

Head Start in Montgomery County is a comprehensive program to prepare young children, ages 3-5, for success in school. Grant funded services are provided for low-income children and 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 the past year, 648 three and four-year-old children were served in 35 classes in 28 schools and 2 private child care centers. Children in the private child care center sites were able to receive full day services in one location, a boon for working families. The program is measured annually using MSDE definitions of readiness; full readiness is defined as consistently demonstrating skills, behaviors, and abilities needed to meet kindergarten expectations successfully. Demand for the program far exceeds the enrollment capacity. Given priorities for limited federal funding, Head Start funded wraparound services were discontinued in favor of assisting Head Start families access state and local child care subsidy programs.

Head Start Services	Total # Served FY07	Total # Served FY08	Total # Served FY09	Total # Planned FY11
<i>Funded Enrollment</i>	648	648	648	648
MCPS Head Start Enrollment	599	618	618	618
Community-Based Head Start in Child Care Centers	35	30	30	30
Total Actual Enrollment	738	735	724	n/a
Full Day Head Start classes	14	14	21	21
Wrap around Child Care- before & after "school"	43	0	0	0

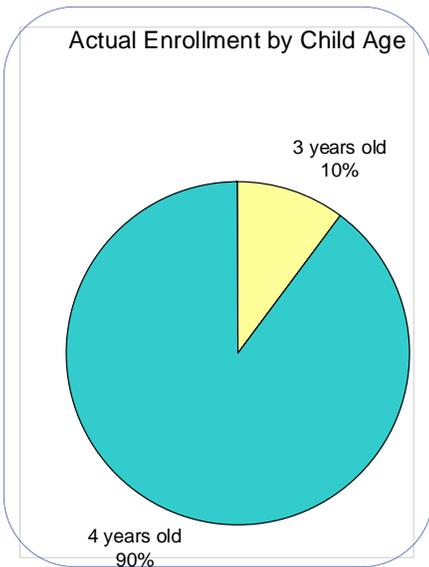
Services received by Head Start Families SY09-10

emergency/ crisis intervention (immediate needs for food, clothing or shelter)	100%
housing assistance (subsidies, utilities, repairs)	13%
mental health services	4%
ESL	28%
adult ed (incl GED)	23%
job training	12%
substance abuse	0%
child abuse and neglect	1%
domestic violence	0%
child support assistance	2%
health education	100%
assistance to families of incarcerated individuals	1%
parenting education	100%
marriage education	1%
families that received at least one service	100%

Montgomery County's 2009-2010 Head Start Program: TRENDS

Percentage of enrolled children that received medical exams in SY 09-10: 97%

Head Start Health Services	Total # Served FY07	Total # Served FY08	Total # Served FY09	Total # Served FY10
Medical exams	94%	88%	95%	97%
Health insurance at end of enrollment	90%	88%	95%	96%
Dental Exams/ preventive care	89%	85%	90%	90%



Increasing numbers of eligible applicants for Head Start services for children who cannot gain Head Start enrollment are currently available for four year olds through the MCPS prekindergarten program. National economic factors are increasing the number of families below the federal poverty level.

Experiencing shortages in Head Start spaces for eligible three year olds. With the implementation of the Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act, a Maryland State education act that required prekindergarten for all economically disadvantaged and at-risk 4-year-old children, there is high demand for services for all four years olds to prepare for kindergarten. There is extreme shortage of spaces for 3 year olds: While over 300 eligible children have registered for 30 dedicated slots in the past several years, currently we hold the waiting list to 195 since there is little chance of enrollment after the beginning of the school year.

Increased numbers of full day classes will begin to wane. MCPS Title I funds have been used for the past two years to dramatically increase the number of full-day Head Start seats to 21 of the 35 classrooms or 60%. Unfortunately, MCPS Title I funding will be used for other purposes in FY12; there will be a reduction in the number of full day Head Start classes, yet to be determined.



Parent Involvement for Montgomery County's Head Start Families:

During the 2009-2010 school year, family service workers (FSW's) made a total of 815 home visits and 3,170 phone calls to Head Start families, and had 1,999 direct contacts with Head Start families at school or in the community. FSW's made 2,304 referrals for community resources, including 1,152 referrals for emergency food and clothing. In addition, FSW's continued to take applications for the program throughout the year: 347 applications for Head Start income eligible 3-year olds and 1,287 applications for Head Start income eligible four-year olds. Throughout the year, 228 parent center meetings were held.

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. The Pre-K/Head Start curriculum is aligned with the *Maryland State Department of Education's Voluntary State Curriculum* and the *Montgomery County Public Schools K-8 Curriculum Framework*. The curriculum provides a strong emphasis on literacy and mathematics foundational concepts and skills, with age-appropriate science, social studies, art, music, movement and technology experiences. Head Start teachers utilize research-based instructional strategies in whole-group, small-group, and one-on-one settings. Information gathered from ongoing assessments and parent contacts are used to individualize instruction to promote optimal learning and development.

Parents are provided with information and materials to support their children's learning at home and they are encouraged to participate in all school experiences. Before leaving the Head Start program, Head Start staff provides a variety of transition activities to help children and families make successful transitions into kindergarten. As a result, Head Start children enter kindergarten fully ready to succeed in school. **The Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR)** is a body of standards and an assessment tool that teachers use at the start of each school year to assess and observe the school readiness of entering kindergartners in Maryland public schools. The MMSR measures what each child knows and is able to do in the seven "Domains of Learning."

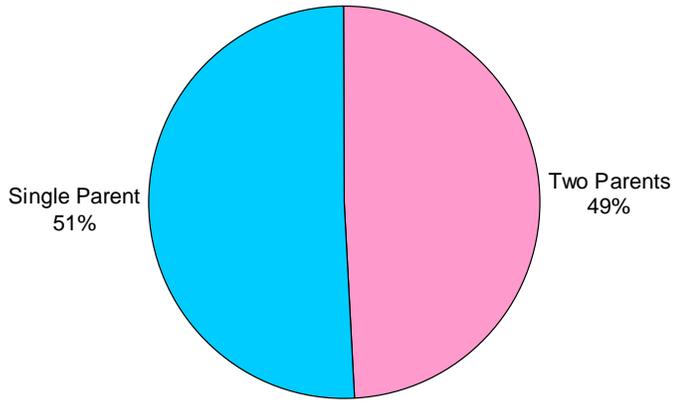


Children at Family Literacy Night

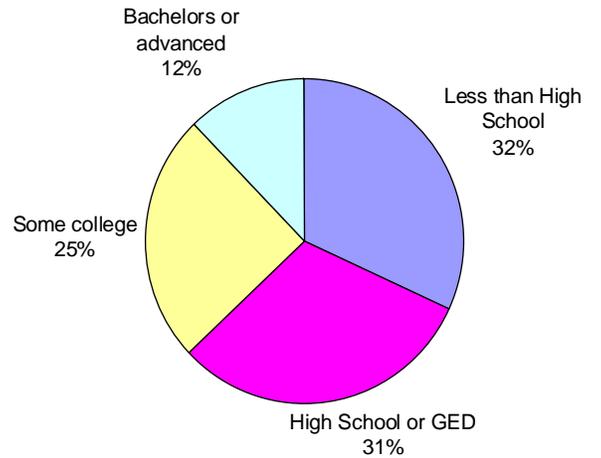
Head Start Performance Measure	SY01-02	SY06-07	SY09-10	Planned
Percentage of Head Start students who demonstrate "full readiness" upon entering kindergarten	52%	59%	68%	70%
Percentage of Head Start students who are "approaching readiness" upon entering kindergarten	42%	36%	29%	27%
Percentage of Head Start students who are "developing readiness" upon entering kindergarten	6%	5%	3%	3%

Facts about Montgomery County Head Start Children and Families:
 Selected statistics from the 2009-10 Head Start Program Information Report (PIR)

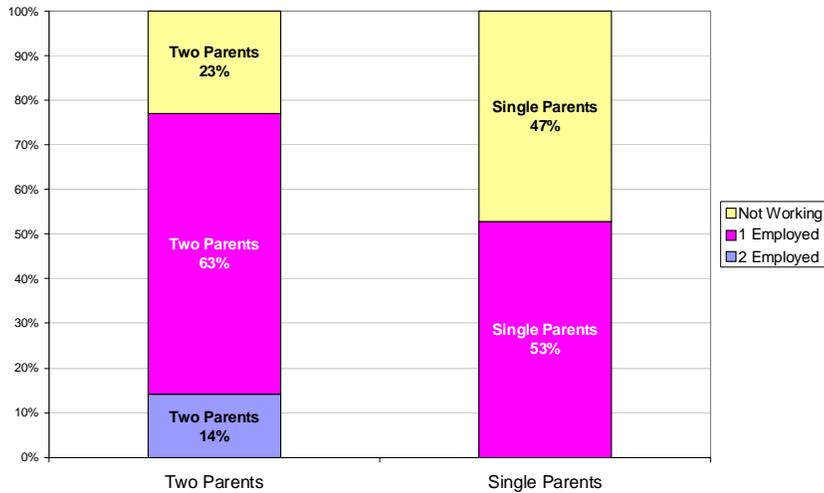
Head Start Family Structures



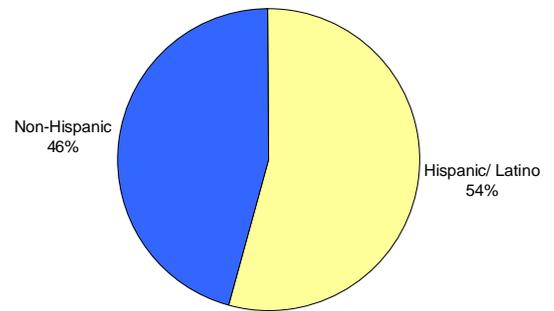
Highest Level of Education of Head Start Families



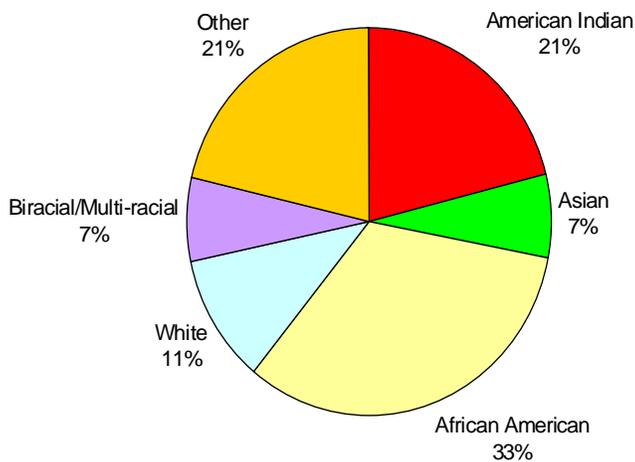
Employment Status of Parents



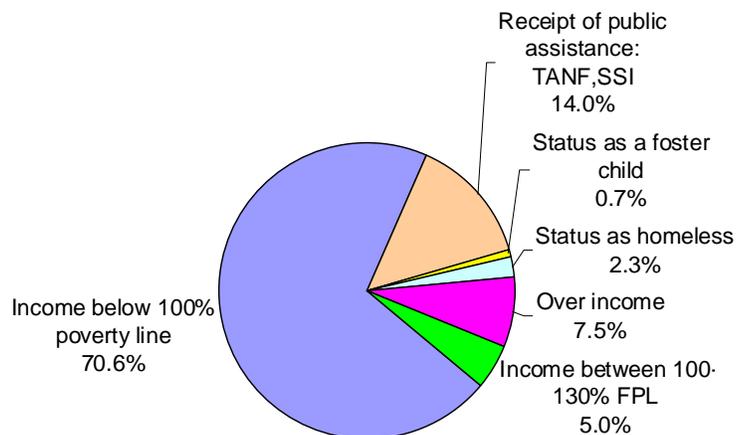
Head Start Children By Ethnicity



Head Start Children by Race



Type of Eligibility



Head Start Budget Basics:

Program Year (PY) 44 = School Year (SY) 2009-10 = Fiscal Year (FY) 2010

PY 44 COMPARISON OF BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES FOR HEAD START & PY 45 PROPOSED

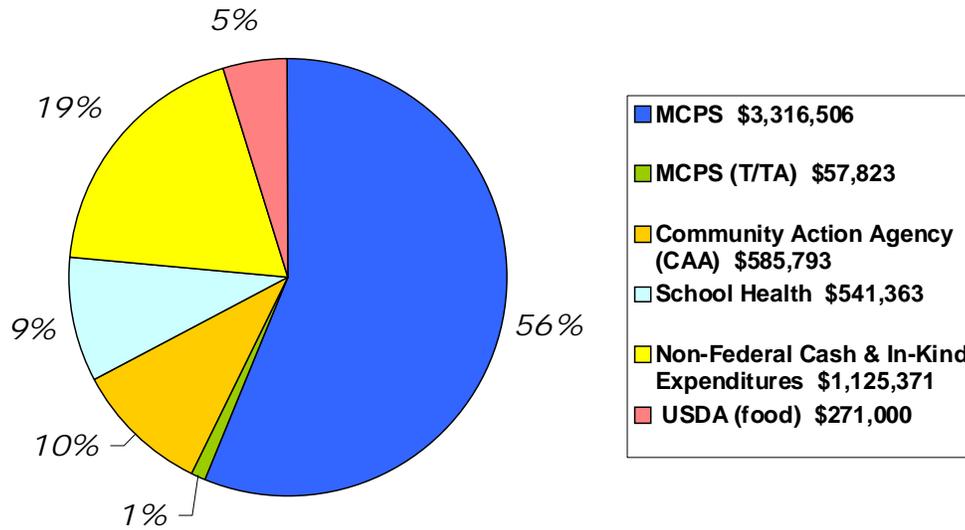
CATEGORY	FY10 BUDGET	EXPENDITURES	FY11 AWARD
Personnel	\$3,801,026	\$3,794,095	\$46,695
Travel	\$14,673	\$24,816	\$6,413
Duplicating		\$643	
Equipment		\$18,285	
Supplies	\$75,740	\$117,153	\$12,244
Contractual	\$530,487	\$480,771	\$3,925,019
Other	\$79,559	\$65,480	\$26,470
Subtotal Federal Head Start	\$4,501,485	\$4,501,243	\$4,576,115
Non Federal	\$1,125,371	\$1,125,371	\$1,726,213
Total	\$5,626,856	\$5,626,614	\$6,301,328

Personnel includes teachers, para-educators, speech pathologists, psychologists, social workers, social service assistants, community health nurses, school health room aides, dental hygienist, nurse administrator, community services aide, program manager, and administrative specialist. *Fringe benefits* are included in the personnel costs category. *Travel* includes all 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 include delegate costs for the required audit (A133), 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. Under Community Action Agency (CAA) contractual services includes funding for Community- Based Head Start child care center sites 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, program recruitment and registration materials such as printing advertising posters for local buses, 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 monitoring and other 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.

Head Start Budget FY 2010 - Program Year 44



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

As its **2010 Triennial Federal Monitoring Review**, the Administration for Children and Families conducted an on-site monitoring review in November 09, with a follow-up in June 10 to determine whether an identified finding from the 2010 triennial review had been corrected. The on-site follow-up Head Start review identified that the program was in compliance with federal Head Start regulations and that the review was closed with no corrective action required. The next triennial Head Start review will be in SY 12-13 or FY13.

Highlights of the review include that the "Montgomery County Head Start Program's emphasis on quality in Early Childhood Education services was a strength of the grantee and its delegate. The grantee's partnership with the delegate, Montgomery County Public Schools, successfully aligned the pre-kindergarten curriculum of the State of Maryland with the Head Start program curriculum. Visits to [selected] classrooms found they provided warm and inviting environments conducive to the cognitive and physical development of preschool-age children. Interactions between staff and children substantiated the trusting and supportive relationships developed. ... Instructional materials were in excellent condition and supported activities fostering overall physical and cognitive development to prepare each child for kindergarten." In summary, the review report concluded that "Montgomery County Head Start provided outstanding Early Childhood Development services and included a strong partnership with the delegate, Montgomery County Public Schools; high-quality, supportive classrooms; and highly qualified staff providing a sound foundation for Head Start children's future academic, social, and physical endeavors."

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, 2009, is available at the County's website: http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/finance/pdf_FINReports/FY09_Single_Audit.pdf. The most current Montgomery County MD Report on Expenditures of Federal Awards for Fiscal Year 2009 was performed for the County Council and County Executive by Clifton Gunderson LLP, Certified Public Accountants and Consultants.



VITA Expands to Serve Families at Four County Sites

Montgomery County Community Action Agency believes addressing the basic causes of poverty helps low-income people to become more economically self-sufficient. Among its strategies, the Agency seeks to improve the lives of poor and low-income residents by linking them to Voluntary Income Tax Assistance (VITA) services to maximize their financial assets. VITA's free tax preparation assistance targets low to moderate income residents including persons with disabilities, limited-English proficiency and older taxpayers. Trained volunteers help taxpayers access the Earned Income Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, and other refunds, while connecting them to financial counseling and community resources. VITA generates revenue back to the community, as residents use their hard-earned refunds to pay for basic costs of living, bills and to invest in larger household purchases. An outreach campaign engaging community partners educated Montgomery residents, through formal and informal communication and educational presentations about VITA, the Earned Income Tax Credits (EITC) and financial education. In 2009-2010 Community Action Agency opened its fourth VITA site in partnership with the City of Gaithersburg at Family Services, continuing its services in partnership with the City of Rockville at its Courthouse Square location, at Progress Place in Silver Spring, and at the TESS Services Center in Takoma Park. After Community Agency relocated from Progress Place in Silver Spring to Wheaton (October 2010), VITA's year-round services continued to be offered at the Agency's new home at the MidCounty Services Center, at 2424 Reedie Drive in Wheaton.

SUCSESSES:

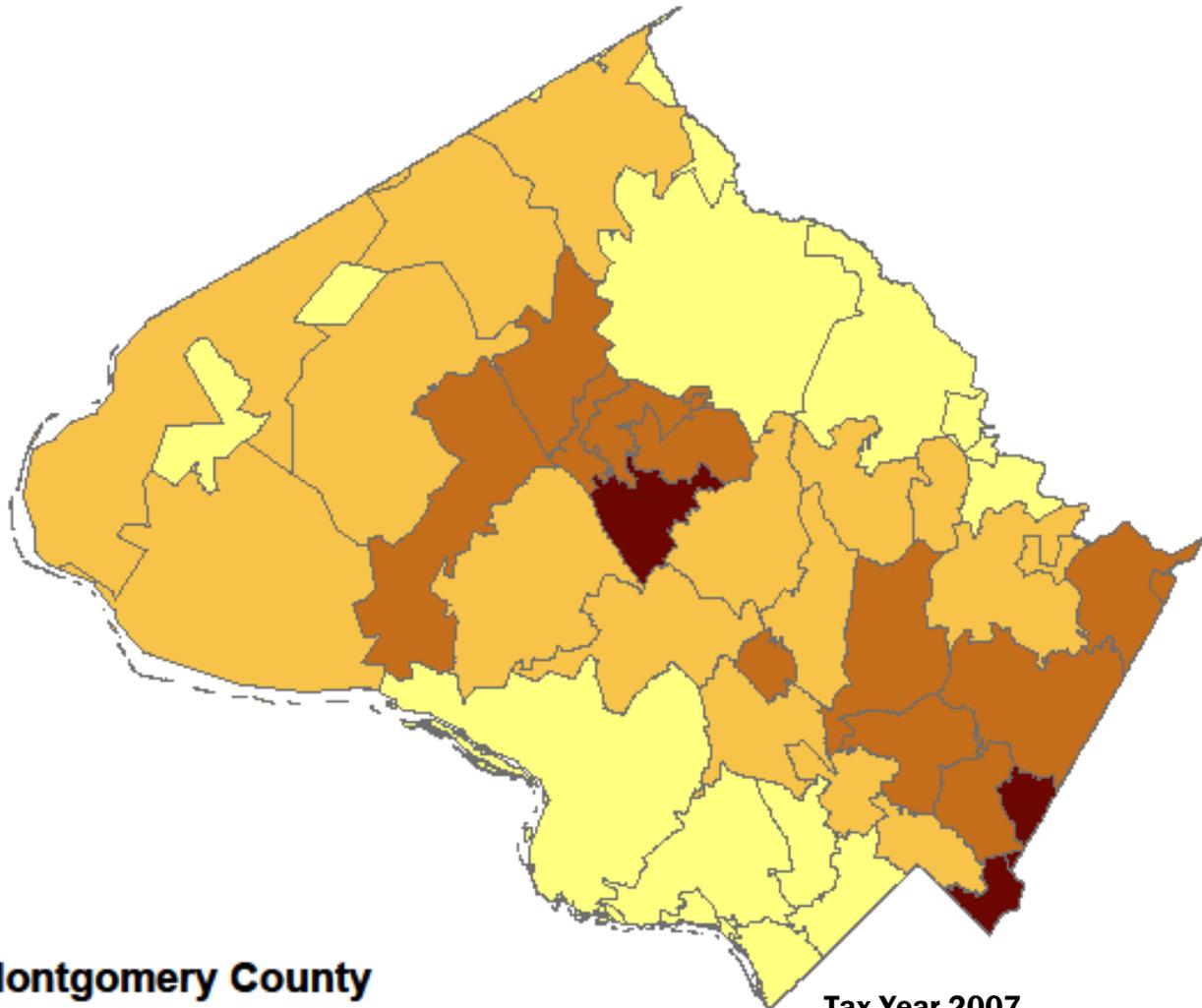
With additional staffing and resources through ARRA funding, in tax year 2010, Community Action's VITA sites expanded to serve 2,749 customers, returning \$8,292,236 million (*includes federal and state refunds and EITC).

- VITA customers were expected to return \$1,075,370 owed to state and federal governments.
- All VITA customers receive some financial education as their free tax services were delivered.
- **72%** of customers received a total of \$3,121,217 in EITC.
- **664 ITIN returns** (Individual Taxpayer Identification Number) were prepared.
- VITA volunteers contributed 3,364 hours.
- **3** graduate social work interns received training, and contributed their time through a 2 day a week practicum on VITA and EITC outreach.

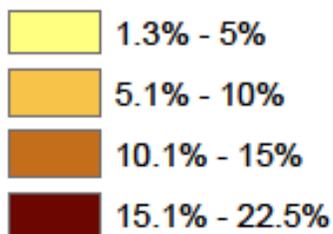
FINANCIAL EDUCATION

- Through the ARRA funded financial education pilot, offered from May 2010 through December 2010, **339** customers attended 1 or more of **69** free, financial education classes (*English/Spanish*) at public agencies and nonprofits, with six topics: *The Wise Use of Credit; Building a Basic Budget; Savings and Checking Accounts; Identify Theft Prevention; Avoiding Bankruptcy; and, Tax Tips*.
- Developed **referral form and tracking process** for case managers from public agencies and nonprofits.
- Posted classes on **Maryland CASH Academy's** website so community members could self-refer: www.mdcashacademy.org
- Individual (1:1) consultation was provided to **106** customers with intensive needs, referred by VITA, TESS, Special Needs Housing, Income Supports, Arbor Employment & Training, homeless shelters, and other partners. Ninety-nine percent of attendees felt confident they would use the information they learned, and would recommend the workshop to others.
- **Approximately 4,000** customers and providers received EITC, tax, financial education information through community presentations/events.
- **95,000** pieces of literature were distributed to partners and community members regarding EITC, free tax services and financial education.
- Community Action co-sponsored a **Financial Educators Forum** with the City of Rockville and Maryland CASH Academy.

Rate of EITC Receipt by ZIP Code Montgomery County, Maryland



Montgomery County Share of Taxpayers Receiving EITC



Source: Brookings Institution analysis of IRS data

A Salute to Community Partners Through Community Action Agency's early history, it provided or developed direct services for low-income people living in the County. Today, through the Montgomery County Community Action Agency, federal CSBG funding partially supports oversight of contracts and agreements with Community Based nonprofit agencies serving County's low-income community. These services address many consequences of poverty, while keeping pace with emerging needs by developing or adapting local services. Together with the Community Action Board, the Agency's partners promote the development of leadership skills among existing and emerging populations most affected by poverty, helping all residents to maximize their potential, while joining together to end poverty.

CAA's partners, with service highlights, FY10:

African Immigrant and Refugee Foundation - Provides the expertise and staff time for diversity training among service providers in Montgomery County

C-4 Clothes Closet – Provides clothing, children's backpacks & holiday-giving for low-income residents.

Caribbean Help Center - Provides ESOL classes and human service referral for Caribbean immigrants. In FY10, 422 customers were served; 62 emergency referrals were delivered; 5 individuals became U.S. citizens with support through their Immigration program.

CASA de Maryland- Provision of Employment, Training and supportive services to multicultural, low-income residents with limited English proficiency Provides employment, training and supportive services to multicultural residents. In FY10 4,034 customers were placed daily, 149 had temporary placement and 24 found permanent work. CASA provided social services, case management, information, and referral for approximately 600 individuals, of which 196 was for immigration consultation.

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington, Inc - Provides Emergency Services, Outreach, and case management to low income residents in the County, and funds the center's bilingual receptionist position. **Catholic Charities' Pro bono Immigration Legal Services** - In FY10, Pro Bono conducted fifteen educational seminars, trainings, and workshops in Montgomery County. It focused on immigration issues, fiancé visas, and temporary protected status for Haitians. Trainings served 789 participants.

Circle of Rights, Inc. - Provides increased public awareness and outreach about stroke to minority populations. They held 7 workshop events in FY10; the training reached 447 participants. Circle of Rights conducted a three-hour Spanish "Know Your Heart" Ambassador program at CASA de Maryland and at Catholic Charities. The Ambassador programs were done in Spanish, with a special emphasis on stroke.

CTS Language Link - Provision of Interpreting and translation services.

Educational Video in Spanish - Provides Spanish-language television series broadcast with 4 social service agencies addressing issues to a diverse population. The vendor produced five DVD's aired on the television series *Linea Directa*, profiling Catholic Charities, Identity, Mary's Center and CASA de Maryland.

Family Services, Inc. - Provides for case management and partial office expenses for the Gaithersburg Neighborhood Service Center.

Interfaith Works Clothing Closet– Operates a clothing centers in the Rockville area which receives donated clothing and housewares distributed free of charge to referred residents of the county. They served 15,738 customers in FY10; 34,856 volunteer hours were donated.

IMPACT Silver Spring – Provides Community involvement and leadership development for Silver Spring residents through its **Networking Programs**. In partnership with the Department of Health and Human Services, IMPACT operates the **Neighbors Supporting Neighbors** campaign. In FY10, 35 Neighbor Circle/ Mutual Support Group meetings were held in Wheaton, 39 meetings were held in Long Branch, and 23 were held in Gaithersburg. As well, IMPACT provided 24 door-knocking sessions (with a total of 1,709 door-knocks) and continued its engagement of community members through one-on-one conversations.

FY10 CAA Service Partner Funding: \$2,336,029

Korean Association of the State of Maryland Metro Area Inc. - Provides Social Services for Korean immigrants in the County. Services include translation, transportation, advocacy and referrals.

Language Learning Enterprise - (LLE)Telephone language Interpreting services.

Manna Food Center - Manna distributes food, free of charge, to hungry and low income residents of Montgomery County -- individuals, families, pantries, shelters, soup kitchens, emergency organizations, and group homes. Manna also receives funding for the Smart Sacks weekend food program for low-income school children. They are also the County's designee for Temporary Emergency Food Assistance (TEFAP) federal program. Funding to Manna assisted them in moving from their previous location to an expanded facility in Gaithersburg. 35,868 Client Households were served in FY10; 34,046 volunteer hours were donated.

North Virginia Health Education Center - Provision of Interpreting and translation services.

Montgomery County Bar Foundation - Provides Pro Bono Legal Services Program that serves low-income citizens of the County who do not have the financial means to hire an attorney. 2,466 new cases were opened in FY10.

Silver Spring Team for Children and Families, Inc. *Benchmarks Program* - The Silver Spring Team for Children and Families' Benchmarks Program, provides after school programs for middle and elementary school youth in the Rosemary Hills community.

The Community Foundation for the National Capital Region - Provides contribution to the Nonprofit advancement fund. In FY10 they provided coaching to six emerging nonprofits. The sessions included topics fundraising, developing collaborative relationships, donor relations, board development, and long range planning.

Translation International Inc - Provision of Interpreting and translation services.

Women Who Care Ministries, Inc. - Agency provides a food pantry and school backpack program in the up County area of the County. In FY 10 They carried out 137 food drives and collected and distributed 12,927lbs of food, they served 250 kids weekly under the 'Helping Kids Eat" program.

Our Partners Work Makes a Difference:

PROMOTING FAMILY PRESERVATION: *Catholic Charities' Pro Bono Program* helped grandparents obtain custody of their grandchildren, preventing them from becoming wards of the courts, after their parents' criminal and mental health issues prevented them from providing care.

PROMOTING SELF-SUFFICIENCY: A Haitian mother of a large family had several children living in the US before the January 2010 earthquake, and since 2000, was awaiting green cards from the INS for her other children and family members. Following the earthquake, the extended family arrived in the county and needed housing, food, medical care, and job placement. *Caribbean Help* linked the family with services and worked with community members to find employment for the heads of households. With growing income, the families left an overcrowded housing situation to rent a more spacious home, improving living conditions for them and their children.



IMPACT' Silver Spring's "Door-Knockers" (above) and *Neighbors Supporting Neighbors* (below).



County and Community Providers Kickoff VITA at 2010 EITC Awareness Day

Working with the City of Gaithersburg, Community Action Agency kicked off Montgomery County's EITC Awareness Day at Family Services, Inc. in January of 2010 to celebrate the opening of Community Action's fourth VITA partnership. With added resources from Community Action's federal ARRA funding, the site is the second partnership with a local city, following the City of Rockville's site, which opened in 2009, broadening Community Action's geographic access from its Progress Place and Takoma East Silver Spring locations. At each site, volunteer preparers work with families and individuals to help file their tax returns, ensuring they receive all qualifying tax credits, including EITC and the Child Tax Credit.

The Montgomery County Community Action Board ("CAB"), the County's federal-designated antipoverty group, had previously prioritized expansion of VITA and EITC as a policy priority, and approved the County's Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding to be used to expand tax assistance and financial literacy, along with homeless prevention and employment services. CAB members Walter Woods and Jullieta Machado participated at the event.

Gaithersburg's Mayor Sidney Katz, Councilmember Vice President Cathy Drzyzgula, Councilmember's Michael Sesma and Ryan Spiegel attended and were joined by Department of Health and Human Services officials, local banks, local nonprofits and residents at the event, which also highlighted the expanded EITC credit, and new services of Gaithersburg's BankOn initiative.

"We're proud to be hosting Community Action's fourth VITA site," said Thom Harr, executive director of Family Services, Inc., a leading social service provider in the county. "Through the hard work of Montgomery County's Community Action Board and its volunteer tax experts, and the outreach provided by the City of Gaithersburg through its strong provider network, we hope many more families will take advantage of the free tax services, avoiding costly tax preparation services."

Community Action's VITA programs link with the City of Gaithersburg's new BankOn initiative, offering residents an opportunity to open free checking and savings accounts, regardless of income or credit history. Participants include Chevy Chase Bank, PNC Bank, Sovereign Bank, and Mid-Atlantic Credit Union. "VITA complements the BankOn initiative, providing a path to mainstream banking for every resident," said Mayor Sidney Katz. Participating banks work with

Community Action, as well as the Montgomery County Coalition for Financial Literacy, Maryland CASH, local nonprofits, faith and community groups to increase financial literacy opportunities.

"It's so important to raise the awareness of these volunteer income tax assistance sites," concluded Mayor Katz. "Too many families are taken advantage of by high cost tax preparation firms, and by uncertified preparers."

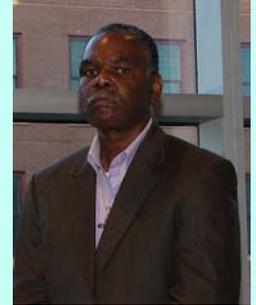


L to R: Mayor Sidney Katz., Thom Harr, and Council-members Ryan Spiegel, Cathy Drzyzgula, & Michael Sesma

Mayor Katz said "Products such as refund anticipation loans are pressed on them, with high interest rates that virtually erase and tax refund they would have received. In this very challenging economy, free tax assistance and banking services, coupled with education in personal finance helps families make ends meet as a result of the EITC and other important tax credits."

Betty Lam, chief of the Department of Health and Human Services' Community Affairs, observed "Increases to the EITC protect our County's low and moderate wage earners during the recession. VITA's free tax services are a key to with poverty reduction." She noted "although EITC is a powerful tool to lift families out of poverty, 20-25% of eligible families don't apply. Strengthening volunteer-supported services is greatly needed, evidenced by VITA's growth."

Community Action's VITA programs are part of a national network of nearly 12,000 free tax preparation sites operated by local governments and nonprofits, working in partnership with the Internal Revenue Service, which trains and certifies sites, staff and volunteers. "VITA" serves people earning less than \$49,000 annually.



Clockwise: interpreter, Uma Ahluwalia, and Betty Lam; Walter Woods; Cedar Lane Church representatives; City of Rockville's partners Alfred Thompson and Mary Lou Jacobs, with Lizzie James; Dave Montgomery with his wife; Gaithersburg VITA volunteers with Wendy Enderson, Maureen Herndon and Cindy Hines; County Executive Isiah Leggett and guests.



Community Action Board and Partners Celebrate Community Action Month!

On May 25, over one hundred guests joined County Executive Isiah Leggett and Health and Human Services director Uma Ahluwalia at the at VisArts Center to participate in the Board's annual awards event, which recognizes individuals and organizations in the community that uplift the promise of Community Action, "to change people's lives, embody the spirit of hope, improve communities, and make America a better place to live."

Dave Montgomery received The Marcia Plater Community Action Service Award for Individual Achievement for volunteering with HOC's Family Self-Sufficiency program as a mentor, and developing HOC's website to attract community volunteers and help its residents to access services. Bob Saunders, a volunteer at HOC's Magruder's Discovery in Bethesda, was recognized for developing a women's fitness program and bike program for children. The Board selected Mehran Hossaini as the Marcia Plater Community Action Service Award youth recipient for organizing a Poetry Slam event at Kennedy HS to benefit First Book Montgomery, which distributes new books to low-income children. A member of his school's Leadership Training Institute, Mehran's Poetry Slam project engaged students and teachers, highlighting themes of struggle, racism, and change.

The Henry L. Dixon, Jr. Community Action Service Award for Organizational Achievement was awarded to Cedarbrook Community Church for volunteer efforts bringing employment training, computer classes, and basic adult education training to the residents of Seneca Ridge in Germantown through the Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC). Mercy Health Clinic was an honoree for delivering health care to thousands of uninsured residents in the County.

The event recognized 39 volunteers serving the County's Voluntary Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program and its partners from the City of Rockville, the City of Gaithersburg and Family Services, and at the County's Community Action sites at Progress Place and Takoma Park East Silver Spring (TESS). Community members volunteering with social services at TESS were honored, along with 14 attorneys volunteering with the Pro-Bono Program there. Volunteer members of the Board received recognition, including Carolyn Jones, who served the Community Action Board from 1999 to 2010, as well as Pamela Lockett, the Board's chair from 2008 to 2009. The Community Action Awards Celebration is held conjunction with the National Community Action Month, reinforcing Community Action Agencies' role helping low-income families achieve economic stability nationwide.

Department of Health and Human Services– TESS Center

Located in the Long Branch/Takoma Park community, the Community Action Agency (CAA) oversees and staffs the Department of Health and Human Services "TESS Center" (Takoma East Silver Spring Community Service Center). "TESS" reaches a predominately low income immigrant population, bringing culturally-friendly information, assessment and referrals about public and community programs, as well as resources and assistance to help residents access services. The program manager and community services aides help customers to prepare the documentation required to access a range of services, such as Income Support, Food Stamps, Medicaid, HOC, Rental and Utility Assistance. Customers seek the hands-on support of trusted TESS Bilingual professionals as they address landlord-tenant and housing problems, consumer issues and in completing social security forms and job applications. TESS provides free notary public services, corrects birth certificates records, provides paternity affidavits, and provides certified translation (Spanish/English) of vital documents, such as birth, baptismal, marriage and death certificates. In addition, customers may receive eligibility screening for Dental and Eye Clinics, and referrals to Manna and Clothing Closets. Besides providing direct services, TESS offers a variety of community health, prevention and early intervention partnerships and is a site for Pro-Bono Legal Services, the Silver Spring Judy Center, and Community Action's VITA program.

Community Action: Helping People, Changing Lives!

(photos taken at one of Head Start's Family Literacy Nights)



COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY

Montgomery County Department of
Health and Human Services

2424 Reedie Drive, Room 238
Wheaton, MD 20902
(240) 777-1697



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.

Lizzie James, Executive Director
Sharon Strauss, Program Manager; Assistant Director, Community Action Board
Diana Day, Office Services Coordinator
Patsy Evans, Program Manager, Head Start
Denall Fowler, Administrative Specialist
Karen Fisher, Community Services Aide, East County and Progress Place
Kemeka Henry, Community Services Aide, TESS Center
Gladys Hernandez, Community Services Aide, TESS Center
Maureen Larenas, Program Specialist, TESS Center
Aizat Oladapo, Program Manager, Contract Monitor
Elvie Johnson, Program Specialist for Financial Education
Taunya Johnson, VITA Coordinator
Brenda Glenn, (VITA Consultant)
Janet Lee (Consultant)

