

Montgomery County 2025 Federal Priorities

Federal Agencies and Federal Workforce

The Supreme Court's decision earlier this month in *Trump v. American Federation of Government Employees* effectively gave a greenlight for the Administration to move forward with its mass firings of federal employees. As a result, the livelihood of thousands of Montgomery County residents – both public sector and associated private sector employees – have been harmed and will be harmed, and critical research and core government services will be jeopardized. The County appreciates our Congressional delegation's leadership in standing up against policies that violate civil service protections and labor laws, and we ask that we continue to work with you to address the economic impact of these actions on our residents.

Affordable Housing and Health & Human Services

The Trump Administration's FY26 budget recommendation for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) threatens housing stability for thousands of low-income families, seniors, and individuals with disabilities in Montgomery County, and it should be rejected. The County urges our Delegation to support funding for essential housing programs including the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), the HOME Investment Partnership Program, and the Emergency Housing Voucher program. Montgomery County uses federal funding for rental and homelessness assistance as well as for community development programs. As an example, 113 vulnerable households in Montgomery County would lose their housing benefit and likely end up on the streets without access to HUD's Emergency Housing Voucher program.

Montgomery County supports continued funding for social safety net programs that are used to fund childcare, child welfare, nutrition assistance, and services for low-income children, adults, and families across our communities. The recently enacted Bill significantly impacts many of those programs including SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) and Medicaid.

As the largest federal nutrition program combatting hunger and poverty for low-income households, SNAP benefits will be negatively impacted under the Bill. Increased enrollment verification addressing enhanced work requirements – with initial intake performed at the local level – will likely result in reduced SNAP benefits for many vulnerable residents and increased administrative costs for the County.

Medicaid functions as an intergovernmental partnership that is jointly financed and managed. Montgomery County provides Medicaid-eligible services, and residents maintain their health through public health programs, which include medical care benefits like Medicare, public assistance medical care, military medical insurance, Medicaid, and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). As frontline healthcare providers, the County acts as a social resource by funding and managing behavioral health authorities and local health departments.

When Medicaid coverage is reduced, residents often still seek care – frequently in clinics funded by Montgomery County – leading to increased levels of uncompensated and indigent care.

Montgomery County supports the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act (OAA), as well as continued appropriations in FY26 for programs and services including home and community-based supportive services, nutrition programs, and caregiver and family support. The OAA provides funding to help Montgomery County meet the growing needs of an estimated 315,000 older adult residents representing nearly 18 percent of the County’s population.

The Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) is a vital funding source for an effective service delivery system that helps keep Montgomery County’s at-risk children, adults with disabilities, and seniors safe. The Bill will trigger spending cuts through sequestration of mandatory funding, putting the SSBG funds, among others, at risk of elimination. SSBG funding is critical to support programs that assist families in crisis, particularly those with children at risk of out-of-home placements and provides preventive and intervention services for issues such as abuse, neglect, self-neglect, and financial exploitation of vulnerable adults and seniors. The County urges the Delegation to increase the funding cap in FY26 for SSBG to adequately resource our shared partnership in serving vulnerable residents

Transportation

Montgomery County looks forward to working with our Congressional delegation over the next year to reauthorize surface transportation programs that are used to advance the County’s infrastructure and bolster the region’s economy.

Bus infrastructure investment. Urge the Administration to fully distribute Congressionally appropriated funds for transit programs including the Capital Investment Grants (CIG) Program, the Low or No Emission Vehicle Program, and the Bus and Bus Facilities Program. These programs are critical to advancing transit projects across the County that reflect prioritizing climate change, resilience, equity, and safety goals under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)/ Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). The CIG program is of particular interest to the County, as we plan for it to be a key funding source for the Veirs Mill Road and MD 355 bus rapid transit projects.

CIG project guidelines. In emerging discussions on an upcoming surface transportation reauthorization bill, maximize investment in the CIG program and include criteria that are favorable to bus rapid transit. The new CIG Guidance released for comment in 2024 contains measures that better reflect the performance of transit outside of urban cores. Ridership in Montgomery County increasingly reflects non-work and non-peak-hour trips, and new CIG ridership warrants that other criteria reflect these changing demands and the costs of implementing projects today.

Federal discretionary grant requests for transportation improvement projects. Support the County’s requests for certain highly competitive grants through the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) including:

- Project Connect at the North Bethesda Transit Oriented Development – funding through the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) discretionary grant program
- MD 586 (Veirs Mill Road) Bus Rapid Transit Small Starts Grant through the CIG program
- MD 355 Flash Bus Rapid Transit New Starts Grant through the CIG program
- Bus and Bus Facilities, Low Emissions/No Emissions Grant to defray the incremental cost of zero-emissions bus purchases (§ 5339(b) and § 5339(c))
- Reconnecting Communities – Georgia Avenue / Wheaton Planning Study
- American Legion Bridge (Bridge Investment Program)

Zero emission vehicles (ZEVs). Require that the Administration obligate prior appropriations accelerating the use of ZEVs (including zero emissions charging and alternative refueling networks). Funding should include an equity focus to ensure that low- and moderate-income households benefit from new technologies through enhanced federal tax credits and other incentives, as well as supporting federal tax credit and rebate programs for micromobility devices (i.e., electric bikes).

Increase federal role in supporting the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA). Regional leaders convened a 2024/2025 work group to secure a long-term funding source for WMATA, which recognized WMATA’s decreased purchasing power due to unusually high inflation. Urge Congress to index the Passenger Rail Reinvestment and Improvement Act (PRIIA) funding to inflation, which will increase purchasing power and avoid future state of good repair failures. Support increased federal participation in supporting WMATA’s transit operations which are essential for the proper functioning of the National Capital region. Encourage efforts to provide a balanced combination of remote and in-person work for the region’s federal workforce.

Fund transit operations to achieve economic prosperity and equity. Urge Congress to support competitive funding opportunities open to local governments to implement transit service enhancements and explore transit pilot programs. Transit provides critical access to jobs, healthcare, and education for Montgomery County residents, while also unlocking economic development potential in transit-rich locations.

Federal Highway Trust Fund modernization. The Highway Trust Fund (HTF) no longer provides adequate support for the investments needed to sustain and improve the nation’s transportation system. Urge Congress to respond to inflationary pressures, improved fuel efficiency, and electrification of the fleet by modernizing the HTF, so it’s better equipped to supplement and eventually replace revenues from motor vehicle fuel taxes.

Safety. With traffic related deaths rising nationally and locally, Vision Zero initiatives and pedestrian safety should be an explicit priority in funding and infrastructure policy. Support legislation to address safety across all modes of transportation, including driver behavior and the rising trend of distracted driving. Require stricter vehicle safety standards, including intelligent speed assistance, pedestrian and cyclist detection, and advanced driver assistance systems.

Environment

Montgomery County appreciates that our Congressional delegation shares our concerns over the Trump Administration's view of climate change, its efforts to scale-back environmental regulations, and its determination to reduce federal investments in renewable energy and electric vehicle deployment. The environmental provisions contained in the Bill, as well as the recommended cuts to environmental programs in President Trump's FY26 budget proposal, will challenge the County's ambitious climate action goals and our investments in renewable energy sustainability. We urge the Delegation to continue its support for critical environmental programs.

Energy and climate change. Uphold the roles of federal agencies including the Department of Energy, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to direct and invest in planning, research and development, standards, and programs to support a clean, efficient, low-carbon, and resilient energy system. Leverage U.S. leadership to forge international collaboration to mitigate the climate crisis. Recognizing the constraints imposed under the Bill, the County urges that the Delegation continue to advocate for the implementation of critical and unprecedented energy use and climate action goals established under the IJJA/BIL, the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), and the CHIPS and Science Act. Specifically, encourage federal agencies to advance:

- Power plant emissions standards
- Vehicle fuel efficiency and emissions standards
- Energy-using equipment efficiency standards (e.g., furnaces, water heaters)
- Investment in federal resilience programs (e.g., National Flood Insurance Program)
- Federal investment and reforms to accelerate the just and equitable development of interstate electricity transmission infrastructure and utility-scale energy storage development

Pesticide use preemption. While many provisions of the farm bill reauthorization were adopted as part of the Bill, Montgomery County would urge the Delegation to be mindful of legislative efforts to preempt state and local pesticide laws that could weaken pesticide safety regulations impacting environmental protections, consumer safety, and agricultural workers' health. Montgomery County passed a pesticide law in 2015 – upheld in 2019 by Maryland's Court of Special Appeals – that prohibits the use of synthetic pesticides on lawns, playgrounds, mulched recreation areas, and private childcare facilities.

Telecommunications

Advanced Cybersecurity Implementation Grants for local governments. Congress authorized the State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program (SLCGP) in 2021 under the IJJA/BIL. However, while almost all facets of local government cybersecurity activities are eligible for SLCGP funding, SLCGP funding is being directed to support basic cybersecurity planning or creation of initial cybersecurity, leaving no funding for cybersecurity resources for entities that have already implemented cybersecurity plans. In addition, cybersecurity job

training funding often has the unintended consequence of local governments training cybersecurity workers that they then cannot afford to hire. Montgomery County urges Congressional support for additional SLCGP grants to support cybersecurity staff augmentation.

Affordable Connectivity Program. The Federal Communication Commission's (FCC) Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) provided over 270,000 low-income Maryland families - including over 25,000 living in Montgomery County – with a monthly \$30 discount on home broadband service from participating internet service providers. The program expired last summer due to a lack of federal funding. Should the opportunity arise to revisit funding for this program, the County urges the delegation to support it as a successful example of empowering low-income families to participate in the workforce and access online educational resources.

Public, Educational, and Governmental Access (PEG) funding. Under the first Trump Administration, the FCC issued a ruling that jeopardizes the ability of the County to continue to rely on PEG support and other in-kind benefits that may require an offset against franchise fees. Montgomery County requests that the Delegation consider cosponsoring legislation introduced in June, the Protecting Community Television Act (S. 1994/H.R. 3805) that would amend the Communications Act of 1934 to reverse the FCC's 2019 order requiring that cable-related, in-kind contributions be subjected to the statutory five percent franchise fee cap.

Tax-Exempt Municipal Bonds

The Bill leaves municipal bonds untouched, preserving the tax-exempt status for all bonds and protecting the County's ability to finance critical infrastructure at lower costs. Thank you for this positive provision in an otherwise bad bill. Its importance to Montgomery County cannot be overstated. The County issues over \$300 million of new tax-exempt municipal bonds annually to finance capital projects including paying for schools, roads, police and fire stations, parks, libraries, and affordable housing.

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Montgomery County's Fiscal Year 2026 Congressionally Directed Spending/ Community Project Funding/Earmark Requests

• Strategic Reforestation & Habitat Restoration	\$ 680,000 request
• Real Time Crime Center (RTCC) Enhancement	\$2,100,000 request
• Montgomery County Sheriff's Office Gun Violence Prevention	\$ 70,000 request
• Public Safety Youth Educational Immersive Experience	\$ 200,000 request
• Public Safety Joint Operations Center	\$3,200,000 request
• Wheaton Branch Flood Mitigation	\$1,150,791 request
• Flex On-Demand Microtransit Vehicles	\$ 850,000 request
• Georgia Avenue Rapid Bus Lanes	\$6,400,000 request
• Workforce Development & Tech Training Center	\$2,500,000 request
• Zero Emission Bus Purchases	\$2,706,000 request
• Security Cameras for Parking Garages	\$2,757,000 request
• US 29 Critical Bike & Pedestrian Safety Improvements	\$ 400,000 request
• Low-Income Home Weatherization Project	\$1,500,000 request
• Mobile Crisis Outreach Team Vehicles	\$ 285,000 request
• Noyes Children's Library Renovation Project	\$1,000,000 request
• Rooftop Solar for Parking Garages	\$ 850,000 request
• Healthy, Efficient, Electrified, Climate-Adopted Pilot	\$ 250,000 request
• Public Safety Technical Operations Office Perimeter Fence and Gate	\$ 975,000 request
• Public Health Service HIV/STI Services	\$776,138,000 request
• Office of Youth Resiliency - Out of School Time Network	\$1,000,000 request
• Lighting for Safe and Secure Streets	\$2,400,000 request
• Insight: AI-Based Predictive Policing & Community Engagement Project with UMD	\$3,984,000 request
• Energy Efficiency Retrofit for Under-Resourced Buildings	\$ 850,000 request

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