



MONTGOMERY COUNTY
Maryland

**BUSINESS
CENTER**

2025

ANNUAL REPORT

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🌐 www.montgomerycountymd.gov/business/



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MESSAGE FROM COUNTY EXECUTIVE

I am pleased to share the Montgomery County Business Center 2025 Annual Report. When we launched the Business Center, the objective was clear: businesses needed one reliable point of contact inside County government. Too many entrepreneurs were spending their time navigating multiple departments without clear direction. That approach wasn't working for them, and it wasn't working for us.

Today, the Business Center serves as the front door for our business community. The team provides proactive outreach, direct assistance, and coordinated support across agencies so business owners can focus on running their companies instead of chasing answers.

Over the past year, we have strengthened partnerships, supported federal contractors facing uncertainty, and increased engagement in every region of the County. The Business Center has helped businesses launch, grow, and adapt by connecting them with the right resources at the right time.

The Business Center now operates within a coordinated ecosystem that aligns chambers of commerce, nonprofit partners, technical assistance providers, and County departments around shared economic goals. That coordination makes our work more efficient and more responsive.

As I conclude my time as County Executive, I believe this foundation will continue to strengthen Montgomery County's economy and support a more inclusive and resilient business community for years to come.



Marc Elrich

Montgomery County Executive

MESSAGE FROM BUSINESS CENTER MANAGER

In 2025, the Montgomery County Business Center continued to strengthen its role as the County's central hub for business support. Through direct counseling, proactive outreach, and collaboration with our resource partners, thousands of businesses received guidance, training, and access to capital. These efforts translated into new business launches, job creation, and stronger local enterprises across Montgomery County.

This year also marked important milestones for our Innovation Centers, including the launch of the AI Innovation Center and the graduation of companies that have grown and were ready to expand into their own facilities within Montgomery County. These successes reflect the strength of Montgomery County's innovation ecosystem and the value of coordinated support.

Behind these outcomes is a dedicated team and a growing network of partners committed to helping entrepreneurs navigate challenges and seize opportunities. Together, we continue to improve how businesses access County resources and support programs.

Looking ahead to 2026, the Business Center will continue strengthening this ecosystem approach, expanding technical assistance programs, enhancing data-driven service delivery, and ensuring our Innovation Centers remain responsive to emerging industries and evolving business needs.

Our mission remains clear: to help businesses start, grow, and stay in Montgomery County.



Naddia Clute

Business Center Manager



WHO WE ARE

The Montgomery County Business Center, part of the Office of the County Executive, serves as the County's central hub for business assistance.

Helping businesses start, grow, and succeed in Montgomery County

One coordinated system

The Business Center supports businesses at every stage through three integrated service areas:



Business Support

Direct Business Assistance & Processes Navigation

✓ Business Liaisons

Frontline, personalized assistance that helps businesses navigate County processes and resources.

- One-on-one business assistance
- Connection to County resources
- Resource referrals
- Proactive outreach across all regions

✓ Small Business Navigator

Bridging the gap between business owners, County systems and policy makers, ensuring processes are clear, coordinated and accessible.

- Identifying recurring barriers and proposing improvements
- Building a more coordinated and equitable support ecosystem
- Elevating issues that may need longer-term solutions
- Strengthening data, CRM usage, and feedback loops

Guiding Businesses at Every Stage



Innovation Centers

Incubation, Innovation & Growth

The County's Innovation Centers are an economic development tool that supports high-growth and innovation-driven businesses by providing:

- Flexible office, lab, and co-working space in four different locations: Rockville, North Bethesda, Germantown and Silver Spring.
- Sector-specific programming and peer networking
- Access to funding programs to support business growth
- Support for international companies through the Maryland's Global Gateway Program

Key Industries Served

- Life sciences, medical devices and biotechnology
- Minority-owned high-tech businesses
- Artificial intelligence (AI)
- Clean technology and other emerging high-tech sectors

Fostering High-Growth and Innovation



Contracts, Grants and Program Administration

Resource Partner Programs and Grants

Through its Contracts, Grants and Program Administration area, the Business Center expands its reach by offering direct funding opportunities and leveraging external organizations that deliver specialized business assistance on the County's behalf:

- Aligning partner programs with County priorities and business needs
- Managing targeted County-funded grants and loans programs
- Leveraging partner expertise to serve diverse industries, business stages, and communities through different contracts

Expanding Access Through Trusted Experts

2025 AT A GLANCE

In 2025, the Business Center supported hundreds of businesses through direct assistance, innovation programming, outreach, and partnerships.



1.4K Businesses directly assisted by Business Center staff



82 Businesses supported by County Innovation Centers



\$1.9M Direct grants



3.8K Businesses assisted by County resource partners

Empowering Small Businesses Countywide

Supporting businesses, strengthening communities

Thanks to Marie Harvey, Liaison with the Montgomery County Business Center, for sharing valuable insights with SEEC entrepreneurs! Marie talked about the FREE resources and services available to local entrepreneurs and everyone came ready with great questions. We're excited that Marie has offered to return to SEEC for one-on-one sessions to help each entrepreneur explore how the Business Center can support their specific goals.

Jacqueline Neal, Seeking Employment, Equality and Community (SEEC)



BUSINESS COUNSELING

The Business Center team provided consistent business counseling to hundreds of businesses, with an average of 4 counseling sessions per business.

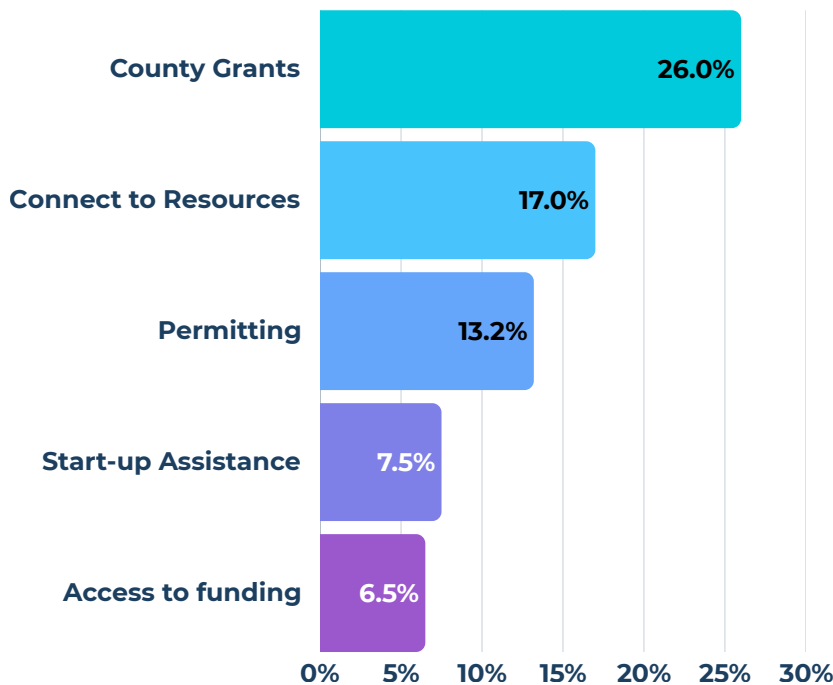


867 businesses received counseling



3,578 total counseling sessions

Top 5 counseling areas (70.3%)



Facilitating Resources

After 15 years with USAID, providing agricultural technology transfer to impoverished communities across Asia and Africa, I faced a turning point following my layoff in 2025. Ultimately, I chose to launch my own business, ODAWAC LLC to continue this important work. With guidance from Patrice Cheatham from the Montgomery County Business Center, I navigated the legal processes and connected with LEDC, which was instrumental in helping me register my LLC, obtain my EIN, and successfully launch. The support and encouragement I received made a meaningful difference in turning my experience into a new venture.

**Osagie Christopher Aimuwu,
ODAWAC LLC**



PROACTIVE BUSINESS OUTREACH

Proactive Business Outreach is a core mission of the Business Center. The team went to the communities and coordinated outreach events with different partners such as the Silver Spring Regional Services Center, the Mid-County Regional Services Center, and the Department of Environmental Protection.



744 businesses engaged and assisted

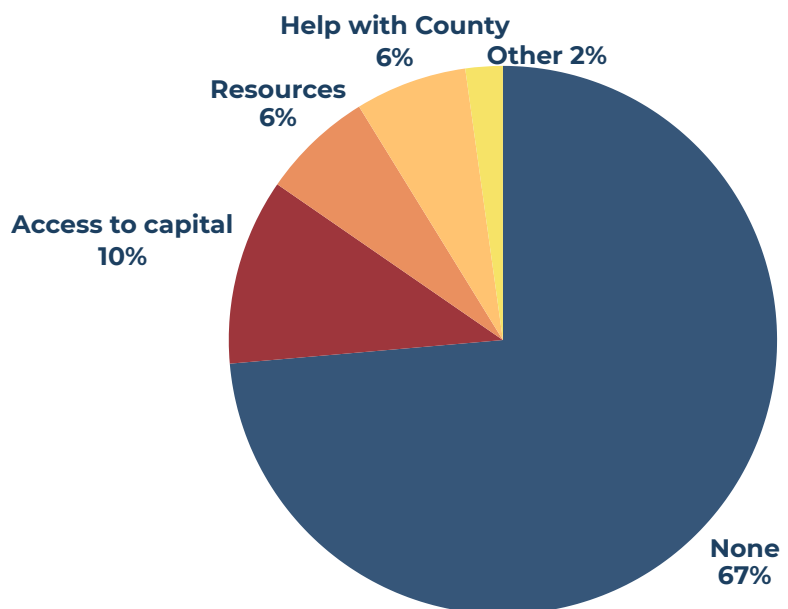


8 targeted outreach projects

Through outreach initiatives, staff connected with hundreds of businesses through face-to-face visits, focusing on listening to business owners and providing real-time guidance.

Notably, 67% of businesses reported having no immediate concerns. This positive signal suggests that many businesses are able to focus on growing their operations rather than resolving barriers, reflecting progress toward a more responsive and business-friendly ecosystem in Montgomery County.

Top 5 needs we heard (91%)



INNOVATION CENTERS

Montgomery County's Innovation Centers continued to grow in 2025, supporting companies across high-growth industries and strengthening the County's entrepreneurial pipeline.



82 member companies



36 new member companies joined



71% average global occupancy



255 jobs supported by member companies



27 events hosted or sponsored



13 companies assisted through the Global Gateway Program



Featured 2025 graduate: Trusted Science & Technology

Trusted Science and Technology, Inc. (Trusted ST) graduated in June 2025 after six years in the Innovation Center. The company, which provides cybersecurity solutions for software and embedded systems primarily serving DoD and DHS Science & Technology agencies, relocated to its own leased office in Derwood, Montgomery County. Access to resources and strategic support helped position the company for independent growth: *“Trusted Science and Technology, Inc. (Trusted ST) has enjoyed the flexibility and professional work environment offered by the Montgomery County Incubator program to build its foundation and capabilities. With the great support of the Incubator program at Rockville, Trusted ST has continuously grown to a mid-size company. Special thanks to Brenda, Alicia, and Richard! They made our stay very pleasant.”*

KJ Kwak



AI Innovation Center Launch

The Montgomery County Business Center recently opened a new AI Innovation Center as part of the County's Innovation Network. Located in North Bethesda near the University of Maryland Institute for Health Computing, This center was established in response to growing industry demand for artificial intelligence-focused innovation support. Technical assistance, educational programming, and networking opportunities for tenants at this new center—as well as at the Network's three existing locations in Germantown, Rockville, and Silver Spring—are expected to expand in the coming year. The County is engaging a third-party operator with experience in technology innovation development and facility management to support this growth. These expanded services will be available not only to Innovation Network tenants but also to entrepreneurs throughout Montgomery County.



Fostering innovation in Montgomery County

As a growing life sciences organization, Precision Medicine Care (PMC®) has greatly benefited from being located within Montgomery County's incubator lab and office space. The flexibility of the incubator environment has allowed us to scale efficiently. This model has enabled our team to focus on innovation, clinical impact, and operational growth. Montgomery County's commitment to fostering biotechnology and life sciences innovation is evident in the infrastructure, resources, and professional environment provided to emerging companies. We are proud to grow within a county that actively supports scientific innovation and entrepreneurship, and we value our partnership with Montgomery County as part of our continued journey.



Sherry Dadgar, CEO of Precision Medicine Care

COUNTY-FUNDED GRANTS AND LOANS

The Business Center plays a key role in administering and coordinating County-supported funding programs that help businesses start, stabilize, and grow.



4 programs directly managed by the team



More than \$1.9 million awarded to 96 businesses in 2025



Through County-supported partners, 62 businesses accessed \$1 million in loans in 2025

Tailored Guidance

It has been an amazing experience working with the Montgomery County Business Center. We, as small business owners, received the access to resources and connections that we were looking for to help us open doors. Naddia worked with us to help us gather all the information to make our case and get the MOVE grant. The grant was very helpful for us as a new business where we already made a significant investment in the County and the Grant was crucial for us.

Hyper Kidz Rockville/ MVP Enterprises LLC

COLLABORATIVE BUSINESS SUPPORT SYSTEM

The Business Center worked closely with resource partners to deliver coordinated support to businesses Countywide.



3,889

Businesses served



4,942

Total participants

Delivered through individualized advising, training, conferences and cohort-based programming.

Resource partners delivered a robust mix of services designed to support business formation, stabilization, and growth, including:

10,133
hours



One-on-one technical assistance

544
events



Trainings and workshops

138
cohorts programs



2,969 hours of structured support

20
conferences



Learning and networking

Through coordinated delivery, these resource partners met businesses where they were and provided sustained, high-impact support:

4,231

Jobs created or retained

254

Businesses launched

310

Businesses expanded or scaled

419

Businesses accessed funds

Resource Partners

Together, the Business Center and resource partners, form a collaborative ecosystem delivering trusted, on-the-ground support to entrepreneurs in every stage of their business. Here are some testimonials that support their work.

Coordinated Support, Shared Impact

Black Business Council, Inc



Black Business Council
Connecting *Black* to Opportunity

"The Advisory Board Program changed the trajectory of my business. As a solopreneur, I was missing strategic oversight. The BBC granted me access to leaders in sales, finance, marketing, and social justice who helped me systematize my operations and hire support. The result? We increased revenue by 24.4% and I evolved from 'wearing all the hats' to truly acting as the CEO. I am confident the next 12 months will bring even greater returns in revenue, personal growth, and social impact." **Julye Williams**



Latino Economic Development Center



Latino Economic Development Center

"I first connected with LEDC at a conference on food business licensing, where I met Antonio Crespo, who became a key coach in strengthening my business. Joining LEDC's Food Business Incubator was a turning point, providing weekly access to experts in compliance, finance, marketing, and licensing. As I prepared to scale, Ronal Castillo guided me through securing my first loan with LEDC. Today, I am expanding my sales points and pursuing commercial facility licensing. LEDC provided not just assistance, but a complete support system." **Fernando Hermoza, Artisan's Kitchen Garden**





Maryland Black Chamber of Commerce



"I have gained resources and knowledge on how to navigate QuickBooks online. The QuickBooks webinar provided practical steps in creating & managing data properly. Programs matter because they assist small business owners in designing a sound, structural base for their business, which enhances the quality and services it provides to the community. Additionally, it provides insight on how to create financial records that align with government standards". **Toni Maxwell, Refocus Renew Restore LLC**



Montgomery County Black Collective



"Thank you so much for your mentorship. Your guidance has helped me make real progress in my business especially with financial management and setting achievable goals. As we discussed, I've developed my updated list of goals for the remainder of 2025 and into 2026. You'll be glad to know that I've taken the next step with my website and social media by hiring another Black-owned small business. I'm excited to see that project come to life soon. I also want to express my appreciation to the Amber Ready Program for providing this opportunity. The one-on-one mentoring has been incredibly valuable." **Eleesha Lewis, Lewis Global Business Solutions LLC**



Maryland Small Business Development Center



"The CEO Accelerator program was a game-changer. It pushed me to think strategically and develop a five-year growth plan. I learned how to build stronger operational processes and became more organized and efficient. The program also inspired me to invest in my team through a rewards initiative to improve morale and retention. I now manage priorities with greater clarity and accountability. The instructor was insightful and engaging, and the program equipped me with the structure needed to move my business forward." **Rosa Cheatham, Biro Dominican Salon**



Maryland Women's Business Center



MARYLAND WOMEN'S BUSINESS CENTER

Kevin, a former USAID employee with 30 years of service transformed his passion for German street food into Maryland Brat & Butcher Co., building a loyal customer base following his food truck. As he pursued a brick-and-mortar expansion, access to capital became a challenge. With MWBC's technical assistance, including SBA loan guidance, business plan development, and connections to lenders, Kevin strengthened his growth strategy. He closed 2025 with high monthly revenues and an SBA loan application pending. **Kevin Gash, Maryland Brat & Butcher Co**



Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Montgomery County



"The support we received in 2025 was instrumental in the growth of our construction and commercial cleaning business. We received personalized technical assistance and guidance that helped us enhance our financial management, marketing strategy, and overall operations. Additionally, the networking events and the Contractor Summit played a crucial role in expanding our client base and diversifying our services." **Anonymous**



Foundation for the Asian Pacific American Chamber of Commerce, Inc



"The AI and Taxes seminar was extremely valuable. Before attending, I had little awareness of how AI is already being used in tax collection and compliance. The presentation clearly explained how AI can streamline processes, reduce manual work, and minimize error, while also addressing ethical risks and considerations. As a result, my organization is better equipped to engage in informed discussions about responsible AI use and sound public policy." **Anonymous**





Life Asset



Success story: As ‘Jane’s’ charcuterie business grew, access to capital became a major hurdle. “Getting loans is very hard—especially as an immigrant,” she says. Traditional financing was out of reach due to credit requirements and high interest rates. Through Life Asset, ‘Jane’ found accessible financing and guidance on marketing, credit, and long-term planning. The reasonable loan terms allowed her to expand her business and build credit. “Life Asset gave me the chance to grow at my own pace,” she says. “That matters.”

The Purple Line Corridor Coalition, UMD



Success story: PLCC published place-specific recommendations for Long Branch Main Street and the Takoma–Langley Crossroads Development Authority. Informed by Main Street America and the Maryland Main Street Program, the report supports these Purple Line-adjacent districts in strengthening their commercial corridors and maximizing County investment. Following a multi-year campaign led by PLCC, Long Branch recently achieved Maryland Main Street designation, reflecting significant collaboration and local capacity-building efforts.

Crossroads Community Food Network



Success story: ‘John’ reached out to Crossroads for guidance to stabilize his restaurant operations. He operates an Italian Sandwiches restaurant that had been operating at a loss. Despite being a long-standing community gathering place in Montgomery County, the business still faces financial strain. Our session focused on improving revenue without increasing overhead, exploring how to strengthen the sandwich concept within the existing space and staffing. John is motivated to make strategic adjustments to sustain and grow the business.

Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation



MONTGOMERY COUNTY
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION **MARYLAND**



*"I am very proud and happy to let you know that our business recently moved into a new office space at Seneca Meadows in Germantown. Our first day in the new space was Monday, March 17. The State of Maryland and Montgomery County (MCEDC) played a vital role in helping us achieve this feat, and rightfully we would like to celebrate this milestone collectively." - **Anonymous***

Visit Montgomery, MD

*"Partnering with Visit Montgomery was crucial to the success of our opening at Crossvines Winery and Event Center in 2023. Their support during our Grand Opening and connection with visiting European wine editors were extraordinary. I highly recommend a partnership with Visit Montgomery due to their unwavering support and the tangible results we have seen, such as increased foot traffic and business growth." **Keith Miller, CEO, MCRA***



OTHER 2025 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- **Inter-Agency Collaboration:** The team started working with different departments and partners around shared goals to foster collaboration, avoid duplication, and build a unified ecosystem.
- **Federal Contractor RFP:** Developed and released an RFP to strengthen support for federal contractors, expanding access to specialized technical assistance and enhancing competitiveness for federal opportunities.
- **Incubator RFP:** Issued an RFP to enhance incubator services, ensuring innovation centers remain responsive to evolving business needs and better support startup growth and graduation.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2026

- **Innovation Centers Transition:** Expand programming and sector-focused support across the Innovation Network.
- **Website Improvements:** Continue refining and updating the website to make it easier for businesses to find and access resources.
- **Compliance & Regulatory Navigation:** Strengthen connections between businesses and County systems to improve transparency and predictability.
- **Improved Data & Engagement:** Leverage Client Relationship Management tools to better track services, capture feedback, and inform continuous improvement.
- **Business Cohort Training Programs RFP:** Release an open solicitation to expand cohort-based training programs for entrepreneurs, strengthening access to structured, multi-session business education and mentorship.
- **Regional Services Centers Partnership:** Strengthen collaboration with Regional Services Centers to expand outreach, improve local engagement, and better connect businesses to County resources.
- **LinkedIn Engagement:** Enhance the Business Center's presence on LinkedIn to improve communication, share resources, and increase engagement with the business community.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The impact of the Montgomery County Business Center in 2025 reflects the collective efforts of many partners, colleagues, and members of the business community.

We acknowledge the continued leadership and support of Montgomery County government, including the Office of the County Executive, the County Council, and the Economic Development (ECON) Committee, whose commitment helps advance a strong and inclusive local economy.

We also recognize the collaboration of County departments and agencies whose work helps businesses navigate complex systems and access critical resources. Their partnership strengthens coordination and improves service delivery across the County.

We further recognize the strong and growing partnership with the Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation (MCEDC), working in closer alignment to support and strengthen the County's business community.

The Business Center further acknowledges the contributions of our resource partners, chambers of commerce, lenders, educational institutions, and nonprofit organizations. Through their expertise and collaboration, businesses across the County gain access to capital, technical assistance, and training opportunities at every stage of growth.

Finally, we recognize Montgomery County's entrepreneurs and small business owners. Their resilience, innovation, and commitment to their communities continue to shape the strength of our local economy.

Together, we are building a more connected, resilient, and equitable business ecosystem for Montgomery County.

The Montgomery County Business Center team

