



AGE-FRIENDLY MONTGOMERY

A LONGEVITY READY COMMUNITY

How the County Supports Long and Healthy Lives for All Residents



In 2015, Montgomery County vowed to meet the changing needs of residents throughout their lifetimes—making changes to the environment and providing new programs and services when needed. To support that effort, the County enrolled in the World Health Organization/AARP Age Friendly Communities Network. The County also works with State agencies on the Governor's new Longevity-Ready Maryland initiative.

Montgomery County's Age-Friendly workgroups coordinate with the County's Commission on Aging, which advises policy makers about the needs and interests of the County's older adults.

To understand the County's progress to date, please read below about some of the efforts taking place.

Civic and Social Involvement



- Montgomery County Volunteer Center's 50+ Volunteer Network connects volunteers with meaningful service opportunities.
- Montgomery Connects and Senior Planet Montgomery provide access to technology, training, and ongoing support.
- The County funds nonprofit organizations serving culturally diverse communities that engage residents in activities of shared interest.
- Volunteer-led organizations called Villages support neighbors who choose to age in place.
- Intergenerational programs enhance the lives of residents by bringing all ages together.

Communication and Outreach



- Monthly Age-Friendly pages in the Beacon Newspaper describe Age-Friendly activities and resources.
- The Senior Site on Montgomery County's website (montgomerycountymd.gov/senior) links to a wide range of resources.
- A monthly "Senior News" e-newsletter provides information about local events and resources.
- 50+ in Montgomery County, a monthly videotaped program of the Commission on Aging and County Cable Montgomery, highlights information useful to residents 50+.
- During community events, staff called "Connectors" provide information and referrals to the Aging and Disability Resource Unit ([240-777-3000](tel:240-777-3000)).

Elder Abuse Prevention



- The Elder and Vulnerable Adult Abuse Task Force coordinates efforts to prevent and investigate maltreatment. Members include the Police, the State's Attorney's office, Adult Protective Services, the Long-Term Care Ombudsman program, Emergency Medical Services, and the Office of the County Attorney.
- World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) is an annual event that educates on issues related to staying safe, elder abuse prevention, and available resources.
- Montgomery County State's Attorney's Crimes Against Seniors and Vulnerable Adults Unit (CASVA) prevents, investigates, and prosecutes cases of physical/sexual abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation.

Employment



- The Career Gateway offers training and mentoring for professionals 50+ seeking employment.
- Virtual 50+ Employment Expos educate job seekers and feature employers with current job openings.
- Senior Community Service Employment Service provides paid, on-the-job training for low-income residents 55+.
- Montgomery College and WorkSource Montgomery offer free job search, professional development and re-training programs, including more than 7000 online courses.

Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS)



- The Direct Care Work Force Task Force recently generated 26 recommendations to encourage training, recruitment, and retention of HCBS workers.
- Senior Nutrition Program provides both group and home-delivered meals including those that appeal to the unique tastes of different ethnic communities.
- The Respite Program provides short-term breaks for unpaid primary caregivers living in the same household as someone with functional disabilities.

Health and Wellness



- Active Aging Week inspires residents to stay active socially, mentally, and physically.
- Access HEARS provides hearing devices and support to eligible residents.
- Social programs for people with memory loss provide socialization and enriching activities such as singing, cooking, and painting.
- Fall Prevention Awareness and related exercise classes are offered by many local organizations.
- Creative and performing arts engage residents of group homes and assisted living.
- The pending PACE program, hosted by Holy Cross Hospital, will offer a holistic, community-based alternative to nursing home care.

Housing



- The Affordable Housing Workgroup is working to create a program offering moderately-priced options that include supportive services.
- Home Sharing enables two unrelated people to safely share a home, expenses, chores, and companionship. Home modification grants provide funding to help prepare homes for renting.
- Design for Life provides tax credits to help residents add accessibility features to their homes. Home Accessibility Rehabilitation Program provides eligible homeowners with rehabilitation and fall prevention items for their homes.
- Accessory Dwelling Units--small, independent units built on the same lots as single-family homes--were approved by the County Council.
- Property Tax Credits reduce financial burdens for income-eligible older residents.

Planning, Open Spaces, Parks, & Community Buildings



- Thrive 2050, the County's new Master Plan, acknowledges the need to provide more housing choice, enhance intergenerational interaction, and promote aging in place.
- The Pedestrian Master Plan proposes changes in street design to increase safety and comfort for older adults and people with disabilities.
- Department of Parks surveyed residents 55+ to learn how parks might be made more welcoming.
- Silver Spring Recreation and Aquatic Center includes a full-service senior center.

Public Safety



- Home-safety checks and smoke detector installation are offered for free by Fire and Rescue Services.
- The Mobile Integrated Health Program offers multi-disciplinary care to frequent 911 callers.
- The Police Department's Autism/Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, Alzheimer's and Dementia Outreach unit responds and provides follow-up to cases involving missing residents.
- Emergency preparedness outreach provides vital information to vulnerable residents.
- Office of Consumer Protection educates residents on how to avoid being victims of fraud.

Transportation & Mobility



- Ride On and most Metrobus service are free to residents 65+.
- Call-n-Ride provides discounted taxi service to income-eligible residents 63+.
- Connect-A-Ride provides older adults and residents with disabilities with information and referrals for transportation services.
- Grants to nonprofit organizations provide specialized transportation options for older adults and people with disabilities.
- AARP and community partners offer training courses for older drivers.

For more details about the mission and work of the 10 workgroups, visit the Age-Friendly website: montgomerycountymd.gov/senior/afag/.

For info about the Commission on Aging, go to: montgomerycountymd.gov/coa.