



# Age-Friendly Montgomery

A Community for a Lifetime

"I'm inviting you to enjoy our County's resources and programs."

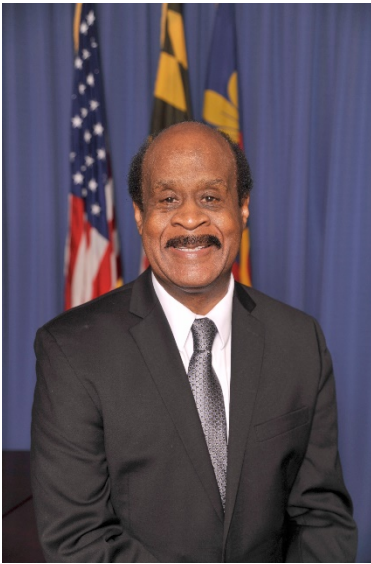
County Executive Ike Leggett

## **AGE-FRIENDLY PROGRESS REPORT AT THREE-YEAR MARK (2015-2018)**

MONTGOMERY COUNTY MD • NOV 2018



## LETTER FROM COUNTY EXECUTIVE ISIAH LEGGETT



On behalf of all residents of Montgomery County, Maryland, I am pleased to present this Age-Friendly Progress Report at the three-year mark for FY17 through FY19. This report highlights some of the County's impressive accomplishments since our enrollment in AARP's Age-Friendly Communities Program in 2015 as well as potential future initiatives. This work is a testimony to our long and continuing commitment to our older residents and reflects our vision of Montgomery County as a safe community where people can age, remain, and thrive with dignity and respect—A Community for a Lifetime.

We are fortunate to have a population with many diverse backgrounds, cultures, and faiths contributing to the richness of life in this community. Our older residents make up a large segment of that population. Since joining the Age-Friendly program, the County has added 22,000 residents aged 60 or older—the equivalent of growing by 20 residents aged 60+ every day, and we expect that trend to grow. In addition, in partnership with BrightFocus® Foundation, we participate in the Dementia Friendly America program to help those living with dementia and their caregivers. The two programs collaborate closely to benefit all County residents.

As County Executive for the past 12 years I have been privileged to help guide policies, programs, and services in support of our older residents. This was made possible through the support, advice, time and effort of the Montgomery County Commission on Aging, our County Council, department directors and staff, and our many community partners—Age-Friendly advisors and members of the workgroups from business, nonprofit, education, faith and health care. Over these years they have contributed to successful outcomes of two Summits on Aging, the development of our initial Three-Year Age-Friendly Strategic Plan, and the resulting planning and implementation of efforts outlined in this report.

The County's Age-Friendly work will evolve over time to meet changing needs, challenges and circumstances. I am confident of our unflinching commitment to residents of all ages and know that Montgomery County will continue to be a vibrant, livable, Age-Friendly community for all.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Isiah Leggett". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Montgomery County Executive

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## MONTGOMERY COUNTY

**The Honorable Isiah Leggett**, County Executive

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## THANK YOU TO THE ORGANIZATIONS AND PARTNERS PARTICIPATING IN THE AGE-FRIENDLY MONTGOMERY INITIATIVE

We gratefully acknowledge all those who participated in the many Age-Friendly Montgomery successes achieved over the initial 3 years of the effort. We especially want to recognize:

- **Uma Ahluwalia**, Director of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), and **Gabriel Albornoz**, Director of the Department of Recreation, for their leadership of the Montgomery Age-Friendly Advisory Group.
- Drs. **Jay Kenney**, Jewish Social Services Agency (formerly with the DHHS's Aging and Disability Services), and **Odile Brunetto** of DHHS's Aging and Disability Services for their leadership and guidance for the domain work groups.
- **Marcia Pruzan**, DHHS Senior Fellow and Age-Friendly Montgomery Program Manager.
- **Dennis Linders**, DHHS (formerly with CountyStat), who has provided the statistical data and interpretation necessary for conducting this effort.
- **All members of the Montgomery County Age-Friendly Advisory Group** and the ten domain work groups for their significant contributions.
- **The Montgomery County Commission on Aging**, whose members continue to help shape the County's approach to supporting its older residents and the Age-Friendly program.

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## OVERVIEW

### THREE YEAR ACTION PLAN

Montgomery County, Maryland, is home to a large, diverse, and rapidly growing older population that makes enormous contributions to the community. The County Government has a long record of commitment to supporting its older residents. As part of that record of commitment, in December 2015 the County enrolled in the AARP Network of Age Friendly States and Communities. The AARP approved the County's detailed [Age-Friendly Three-Year Action Plan](#) in 2017 and recertified Montgomery County's participation through 2020.

### AGE-FRIENDLY COUNTY STATISTICS

Over the past three years since joining Age-Friendly, statistics from US Census Bureau show that the County has added an additional 22,000 residents aged 60 or older through both aging and migration—this is the equivalent of growing by 20 residents aged 60+ every single day. In fact, the number of residents in this age group grew almost four times faster than the number of residents overall (11% vs. 3%), with residents aged 60+ accounting for more than 60% of the growth in County population during this period.

Past CountyStat analysis of the County's demographic and socio-economic trends shows that the residents driving this growth are more diverse, more geographically spread out across the County, and more likely to live in a low-income household, with important implications for delivering public services, social opportunities, and a high quality of life. (See the *Three-Year Action Plan* for additional information).

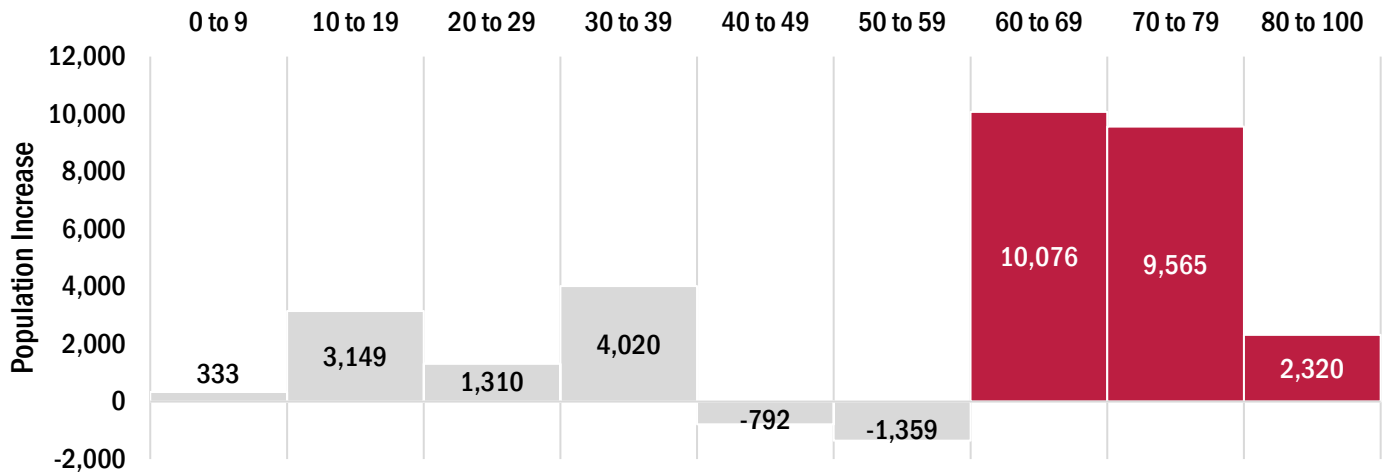
The Maryland Department of Planning expects these trends to continue, with the share of residents aged 60+ projected to grow from 21% of the County's population today to 27% by 2045. Over this time, County residents aged 60 and over are projected to grow at more than seven times the rate of the rest of the population, with those aged 85 and over growing fastest of all. Minority residents will account for a growing share of this age group, with a projected rise from 36% in 2015 (the start of Age-Friendly Montgomery) to 66% by 2045—with minority residents making up more than half of the County's 60+ population before 2030. The charts below show these trends in more detail.

To meet its commitment to both AARP and the growing and changing needs of our residents, County staff, community advisors, and work group members have been working in ten areas of focus, or domains, to implement the Action Plan. As a result, in the past three years many exciting, new Age-Friendly initiatives have been developed and implemented; already-existing programs and services have been continued and enhanced to the degree feasible, and planning is underway for future initiatives. (Initiative details begin on page 7.)

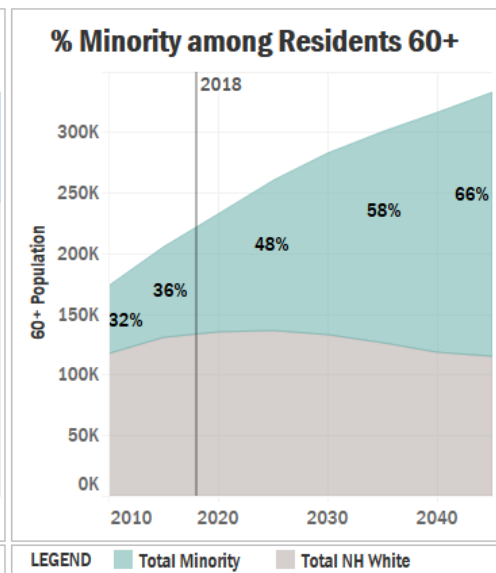
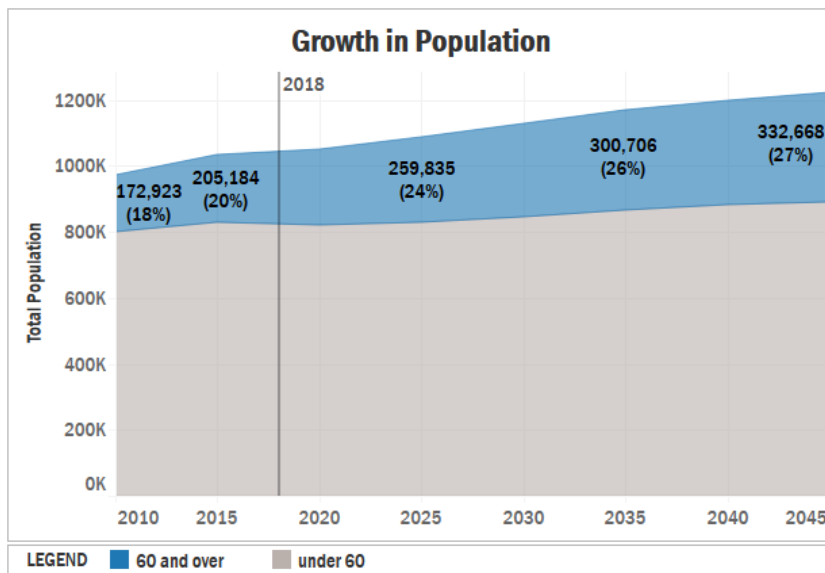
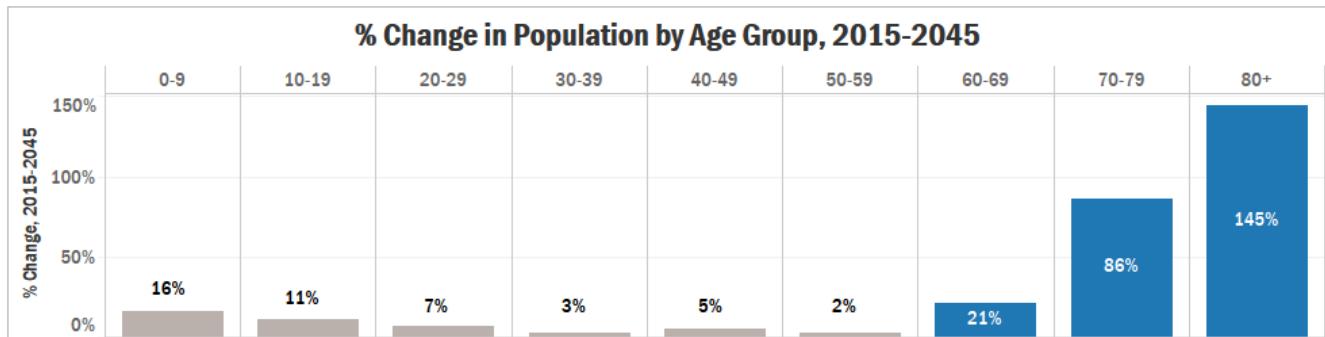
#### THE VISION

*Together with our community partners, the Montgomery County Age-Friendly Advisory Group envisions a Montgomery County as a wonderfully diverse Community for a Lifetime, where all residents can remain and thrive as they age and be a powerful resource in making our County a better, stronger, more inclusive community for everyone.*

## Increase in Population by Age Ranges - Last Three Years



Source: 2014-2017 annual population estimates from US Census Bureau.

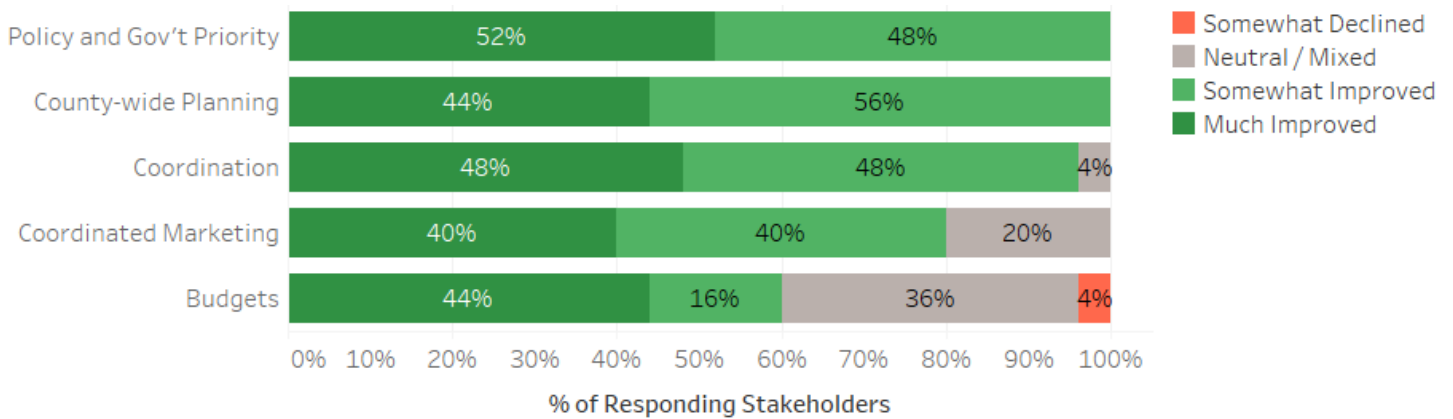


Source: 2017 County population projections from the Maryland Planning Department's State Data Center (Jan 2018).



## FEEDBACK FROM STAKEHOLDERS

CountyStat surveyed the members of the Age Friendly Montgomery Advisory Board and frequent participants of the domain workgroups to examine the impact of the initiative on the County’s efforts with and for older adults. The survey received responses from 25 of these key stakeholders, representing a 1 in 3 response rate. All respondents agreed that Age-Friendly Montgomery has elevated programs and services for older adults as a policy and government priority. 100% of respondents also agreed that the initiative has improved County-wide planning, while a similarly high 96% observed that the initiative had helped improve coordination across the many different County departments, agencies, and community partners that provide programs and services offered to older adults. 80% of respondents also agreed that the initiative had led to more coordinated marketing of programs and services for older adults, while 60% observed improvements in budgeting for age-friendly priorities. These results demonstrate the continued impact of the Age-Friendly Initiative in coordinating and elevating the County’s efforts for and with older adults.



Source: Survey results from the Age-Friendly Montgomery Stakeholder Survey (Sep-Oct 2018)

Respondents were also asked to rank their top three priority focus areas (using the ten domains) as the initiative moves forward. “Transportation and Mobility” together with “Communication and Outreach” received the highest number of priority rankings, in part because these concerns and focus areas touch virtually every other domain. “Transportation and Mobility” received the most priority votes overall, while “Communication and Outreach” received the most #1 priorities. These two cross-cutting concerns were followed by the policy-oriented concerns of “Housing” (particularly affordable housing) and “Elder Abuse and Prevention,” two areas that pose significant and growing challenges to the County’s aging population. Overall, all domains were ranked in the top three by at least some respondents, including by respondents who did not directly participate in the domain workgroup—demonstrating the importance for continued effort across all ten domains.

Elaborating on the benefits of the initiative, respondents emphasized how Age-Friendly Montgomery has improved and enhanced communication and collaboration among the stakeholders, including by better drawing in non-governmental partners. By better understanding what everyone else is working on and by planning and implementing initiatives together, participants noted that they were able to break down

organizational silos and utilize their resources in a more effective, coordinated manner. Respondents also appreciated the increased opportunities for networking, knowledge sharing, and collaborative problem solving. Respondents also noted that Age-Friendly Montgomery has boosted awareness of the needs of the County's aging population and improved the public's knowledge of services provided by the government and community partners, including through joint marketing efforts such as the monthly full-page Age-Friendly *Beacon* ads. Lastly, respondents noted that the initiative has brought a renewed commitment to providing effective programs and services for older adults, while providing a new mechanism for holding the involved parties accountable.

A number of respondents expressed an interest in utilizing the national and global Age-Friendly network to gather knowledge of best practices, learn how others have successfully solved similar problems, and highlight the County's own successes. This ability to build from lessons learned elsewhere was seen as a way of shortening the County's own time frame to bring ideas to realization. While these national and global connections have not been significantly explored to date, respondents intend to leverage these networks to build more direct contact with other Age-Friendly communities moving forward.

Regarding future priorities, respondents' written comments frequently mentioned the current and growing need for affordable housing and assisted living. Multiple respondents also described the importance of continuing to make it easier for older adults to find information on programs and services, while other participants see significant scope for further engaging the business sector and more non-profits. Finally, a number of respondents stressed the importance of continuing efforts of all Age-Friendly domains, given that there is still much work left to do. This will require a continued commitment from the new administration and County Council following the 2018 elections.

## SUMMARY OF PROGRESS REPORT FINDINGS

During the summer 2018, the ten domain workgroups reported on their progress to date, the challenges encountered and lessons learned over the past three years, and potential follow-on activities.

### **Common findings and cross-cutting issues observed among the domains include:**

- **STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT.** Satisfaction with the domain plans in place, along with recommendations for new activities going forward that largely build from and expand ongoing efforts.
- **PUBLIC AWARENESS.** Need to continually improve communication so that older residents and their families increasingly are aware of County services and programs and know how to easily access information about them.
- **DIVERSITY.** Recognition of need for additional efforts to reach, communicate with, and involve members of the many diverse communities that make up Montgomery County, including consideration of additional language translation capabilities.
- **COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION.** Ongoing support and contribution from participating community partners as a critical element of success and the need for support, buy-in, and participation from additional community partners, especially from the for-profit community.
- **BUDGET CONSTRAINTS.** Ongoing constraints imposed by the static or reduced budgets on expanding programs and needed support staff.

For additional details, see individual domain reports at the back of this document.

## DOMAINS AND THEIR MISSIONS

The 10 Age-Friendly Montgomery domains have adopted the following missions:

- 1. CIVIC AND SOCIAL INVOLVEMENT:** to encourage and support vital living for all older adults in Montgomery County by providing opportunities for physical, mental, and social interaction.
- 2. COMMUNICATIONS:** to distribute and publicize recognizable, understandable, timely, and accessible information on County and public resources and services for older adults.
- 3. ELDER ABUSE PREVENTION:** to protect elderly adults from maltreatment, physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation of every type through education, intervention, and prosecution.
- 4. EMPLOYMENT:** to promote and equitable recruitment and training of workers age 50 and older to enhance their employability and to benefit employers.
- 5. HEALTH AND WELLNESS:** to bring together government and community partners to expand and promote health and wellness awareness, resources, and activities for adults 55+ that help maintain or improve physical, cognitive, and emotional health.
- 6. HOME AND COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES:** to provide Montgomery County residents with coordinated, personalized community-based support allowing them to age safely and with dignity in their communities.
- 7. HOUSING:** to ensure that Montgomery County older adults will have choices of dwelling types to meet the changing needs and preferences of this population. The County will support initiatives to assist older adults to age in place, downsize, choose rental housing or some ownership. Further, the County will support housing with supportive services so that older adults can remain in their communities.
- 8. PLANNING, OPEN SPACES, AND BUILDINGS:** to “change the way we age” by enabling older adults to stay active to the fullest extent possible, within all areas of life: physical, spiritual, emotional, intellectual, vocational, social, and environmental. Aging within these dimensions of wellness keeps us alert and enabling a productive life.” (Adopted from the International Committee on Active Ageing.)
- 9. SENIOR PUBLIC SAFETY:** to provide physical, financial, technological protections and safety for older adults.
- 10. TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY:** to provide public and private transportation and mobility systems that enable older adults to go safely where they want to go, when they want to go.

## SELECT ACHIEVEMENTS AND PLANNED ACTIVITIES BY DOMAIN

At the 3-year mark, Age-Friendly Montgomery has made progress in each of its 10 domains (FY2015-2018). This section highlights select accomplishments within each domain and their planned proposed activities looking ahead.

### CIVIC AND SOCIAL INVOLVEMENT

#### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Created and launched 50+ network to increase volunteer opportunities for residents 50+.
- Launched Senior Planet, digital technology training for older residents.
- Expanded growth and capacity of villages across the County.
- Used "Let's Share" volunteer-led program at North Potomac Community Center as a model for engaging seniors from diverse communities.
- Increased leadership among diverse communities through work with Villages.

#### PLANNED AND PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

- Look for ways to promote and expand unique senior fellow program.
- Consider a forum of diverse community volunteers to discuss best practices and lessons learned.
- Work to expand the Let's Share" program to engage more seniors and leaders from diverse communities throughout the County.
- Explore greater corporate partnerships for funding for technology devices.
- Collect statistics on digital literacy and lifelong learning.

### COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH

#### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Launched new monthly article in The Beacon, a widely read free newspaper for those 50+, as well as newsletters in other languages, highlighting key resources and programs for seniors. The information also is available online.
- Raised awareness of County communication channels via accessible print and electronic promotions.
- Raised awareness of County programs, services and resources by strengthening content on County website.
- Leveraged the website, the 311 system, the Senior Resource Line (240-777-3000) Montgomery al Dia, My MC Media, Paperless Airplane, social media, Seniors Today cable television show, and other communication channels.
- Made content available in Spanish and Chinese as capacity allowed.

#### PLANNED AND PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

- Continue promoting County programs and services through advertising, web, and print materials and in different languages, in collaboration with all Age Friendly workgroups

## ELDER ABUSE PREVENTION

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Improved communication across agencies and the Elder and Vulnerable Adult Abuse Task Force.
- Updated MOU to add Fire and Rescue to its effort to improve information sharing among County agencies.
- Added new staffing to meet needs of increased number of APS intakes.
- Coordinated with County agencies (State's Attorney's Office, Adult Protective Services, Office of Consumer Protection, Fire and Rescue) in making joint presentations to various senior groups reaching all segments across the County.
- Added outreach capability in two languages (Chinese and Korean).
- Increased staffing capacity of the CASVA unit of the State's Attorney's Office to investigate and successfully prosecute perpetrators of elder/vulnerable adult abuse.

### PLANNED AND PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

- Decrease incidence of elder abuse by increased outreach in multiple languages to new communities and diverse populations.
- Establish an elder fatality review process to monitor and learn from elder deaths in our community.
- Hire forensic accountant as financial exploitation cases grow.
- Engage medical community in efforts to help identify and combat elder abuse.

## EMPLOYMENT

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Created directory of County organizations with resources and workshops for older workers launched on 50+ section of WorkSource Montgomery website.
- Worked with Alliance for Workplace Excellence in initiating first-ever certification honoring employers with age-positive programs. Among the eight winners were seven in Montgomery County, including the County's Office of Human Resources.
- Worked with international retirees' group, the 1818 Society, to introduce the concept of Age-Friendly and ways that retirees could help themselves and colleagues find paid and volunteer work.
- Worked with County Office of Human Resources resulted in County's first workshop on age-discrimination in employment.
- Partner Jewish Council for the Aging expanded its Career Gateway courses, its annual 50+ employment Expo, and continue its on-the-job-training Senior Community Service Employment Program.

### PLANNED AND PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

- To improve the employability of 50+ job seekers: (a) Encourage community organizations and media outlets to communicate information about available programs and resources; and (b) Identify programmatic and other needed resources and advocate for developing them.
- To increase the number of age-friendly employers, develop a communications

strategy and talking points aimed at employers to promote the benefits of recruiting, engaging and retaining workers 50+.

- To combat age discrimination, work with the Montgomery County Office of Human Rights to include information about the legal protections from age discrimination as a regular part of its briefings and outreach to employers, employees and job seekers.

## HEALTH AND WELLNESS

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Conducted Medication Management Days at local senior centers; developed and distributed widely new Medication Management fact sheet.
- Partnered with Fire and Rescue to train emergency medical personnel about medication management issues with repeat emergency customers.
- With Jewish Council for the Aging and County Recreation Department, opened a social day club for persons with early-stage memory loss.
- Conducted fall prevention “Stepping On” classes in County-run senior residences and community recreation centers. In addition, partner Washington Area Oasis promoted 34 fall prevention exercise and classes and held its first fall prevention event during September’s Fall Prevention Month.
- Continued “Bone Builder” classes. In addition, partner Holy Cross Hospital implemented a “Better Bones” class.

## PLANNED AND PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

- Increase efforts to reduce isolation for at-risk seniors, including those with limited English proficiency.
- Integrate health and wellness programs through the County; help residents become aware of programs; increase translations of information about County classes and programs to ensure a good representation of languages for speakers of other languages.
- Partner with the Dementia Friendly initiative to expand Medication Management program.
- Translate the Medication Fact sheet into multiple languages.
- Participate in Dental Care Pilot Project for Medicaid recipients with State Department of Health.

## HOME & COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Initiated a monthly caregiver support newsletter.
- Established the Montgomery County Caregiver Coalition.
- With County Council President, convened a caregiver advisory group to help determine needs of caregivers and outline roles of care managers.
- Developed a print brochure “Hire Elder Care Support” and online Resource Guide.
- Educated readers about caregiving services via advertisement in Beacon Newspaper.
- Organized meeting with local geriatric care management organizations to gather information about services, gaps, challenges.

## PLANNED AND PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

- Plan a follow up to 2018 conference of care managers.
- Explore how to reach younger audiences facing caregiving questions—adult children of aging parents.
- Continue exploring feasibility of creating a Home Share program in the County.
- Refocus on collaboration between for-profit and nonprofit entities.
- Repeat or create new Beacon follow-up advertisement.
- Pursue ability to print public service ads in English, Spanish, and/or other languages.

## HOUSING

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Initiated Round Table programs providing education to managers and service coordinators of affordable senior living communities in which the County has invested.
- Began exploring feasibility of creating a Home Share Model in County similar to the Saint Ambrose project in Baltimore.
- Launched an energy Efficiency Program in partnership with Habitat for Humanity open to all income qualified homeowners with a priority to seniors.
- Collaborated on WISH—a free, County-wide program that connects seniors to community-based health care and other support services to promote wellness independence at home—to enroll residents

of affordable senior communities in the program providing wrap-around services.

- Provided financing to protect 9 of 13 affordable living units from being lost.
- In Collaboration with Montgomery College, DHA launched a 12 Session Certificate Class, Understanding Aging. The class is being offered to managers and service coordinators of affordable senior living communities in Montgomery County.

### PLANNED AND PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

- Coordinate with Police Department to Promote Security Inspections at all tax credit affordable senior living buildings.
- In collaboration with Montgomery College, initiate and expand training and certification. program for all service coordinators and managers of low-income, independent senior housing.
- The Department of Housing & Community Affairs will continue to explore opportunities for public/private partnerships to increase the number of affordable senior living units and communities.
- Secure funding for implementation of a Home Share Model.

## PLANNING, OPEN SPACES, AND PARKS AND COMMUNITY BUILDINGS

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Completed co-location study for sharing of real estate and services by two or more organizations.
- Selected site for new senior friendly therapeutic play area.



- Completed planning for construction of co-located aquatic, community, and senior center.
- Planning for partnership with ParkRx program in which physicians issue prescriptions for patients to go to nearby parks for health and enjoyment benefits.
- Montgomery County Department of Parks' removal of more than 1400 barriers as part of the ADA Transition Plan.

## PLANNED AND PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

- Explore expanding partnerships with other County agencies and/or private companies, essential for delivering new facilities and programs.
- Expand efforts for inclusiveness for all ages and abilities.
- Explore co-location opportunities with schools, parks, recreation facilities.
- Develop talking points for educating staff about senior issues.
- Recommend line-item budget for Age-Friendly activities.

## SENIOR PUBLIC SAFETY

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Initiated a Public Safety Senior forum for networking and identifying outreach opportunities across departments and office lines for outreach to the senior community.
- Fire and Rescue initiated program to provide a full day of education training in Community Risk Reduction, with an emphasis on fire and injury prevention for seniors to every recruit class.

- Fire and Rescue initiated an effort to reduce number of frequent users of 911 emergency system with a multidisciplinary team working to reduce the impact of frequent users for nonemergency services.
- Fire and Rescue instituted an "Every Call/Every Alarm" initiative resulting in first responders checking a home's smoke alarms to ensure they are working and up to date following the medical call.
- Fire and Rescue expanded the robust Senior Outreach and Education program to provide fire safety education to more than 5000 seniors per year on average, and to complete more than 1000 home safety checks per year, ensuring that all homes visited are up-to-date with smoke alarm protection.
- Using "Language Friendly Hours," the Office of Consumer Protection was able to address seniors in Mandarin and Korean at the Chinese and Korean Senior centers.
- Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security performed outreach on personal preparedness at various events for seniors (and other populations) and has participated in other events such as the 50+ Expo and World elder Abuse Awareness Day.

### PLANNED AND PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

- Gain a better understanding of how people hear our messages and information, perhaps through a County survey.
- Sustain and expand ability for all departments involved with Senior Public Safety to provide a "crossover" of information and resources for those seeking

or in need of services or information, including by developing (a) a public safety master checklist of all educational materials that can be used in outreach events; and (b) a master calendar for coordinating all outreach events.

- Expand the home safety check program to reach more homes and identify other types services that might be performed while in the home.

## TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Increased public awareness of transportation options for seniors via wide range of advertisements, community outreach, events, and presentations. The outreach team goes to residential facilities upon request. Most questions relate to RideOn, how to navigate the bus system, how to use the Metro map. JCA's Ride Smart travel training educates older residents on how to use public transportation during two-day workshops.
- Publicized wide use of Connect-A-Ride program providing information and referral for residents over age 50.
- Increased and expanded affordable transportation options by extending hours of free RideOn and Metro bus service for older adults, and encouraging development of aging-in-place villages.
- Received grant to lower co-payments for lowest income Call-n-ride taxi service participants.
- Achieved passage of legislation requiring a 100% accessible taxi fleet by 2025.

- Enhanced pedestrian safety through changes and improvements in build environment of bus stops, sidewalks, and traffic signals.

### PLANNED AND PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

- Support organizations providing much-needed volunteer transportation.
- Ensure that taxicab and other driver services are held accountable for safety and quality customer service.
- As most older drivers are reluctant to give up their driving licenses, enhance older driver safety, especially by educating older drivers and making roads as safe as possible for older drivers.
- Ensure app-based transportation options are also available by phone call.
- Continue promoting public awareness through advertising, education, and outreach. In addition to an ad about free RideOn bus service that recently went into tax bills for all County homeowners, there will be continuing outreach to raise awareness about transportation resources in the County, including through ads on interior and exterior of RideOn buses and in bus shelters. The Transportation Department (DOT) and DHHS also are placing ads in publications, on WAMU radio, and in the Beacon. There have been short videos about transportation options in movie theaters in the past. Connect-A-Ride Information and Referral (301-438-3252) should be the main point of contact for individualized transportation information.
- Additional efforts will be given to recruiting volunteers willing to drive for volunteer driving organizations.

