



**Public Hearing
Fiscal Year 2025 Operating Budget
April 9, 2024**

On behalf of the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce's (MCCC), the voice of business in Metro Maryland, thank you for the opportunity to share MCCC's priorities regarding the Fiscal Year 2025 Recommended Operating Budget. MCCC supports funding investments in areas that grow jobs, spur economic activity, and make the County a great place to live and work.

MCCC advocates the adoption of a budget that allows the flexibility to address the County's challenges appropriately while maintaining fiscal restraint. Keeping the County's tax structure competitive is paramount, and MCCC is appreciative that this year's budget submission does not include any proposed tax increases.

Education and Workforce

For the County to have a competitive business climate, it must grow the ability to attract and retain a talented workforce. MCCC members continue to report that addressing workforce challenges is their number one priority and most significant impediment to growth. For this reason, MCCC urges the Council to prioritize education and the workforce when deliberating over the Fiscal Year 2025 budget.

For these reasons, MCCC supports appropriate funding Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS). MCPS plays a significant role in creating a talent pipeline that meets the needs of the market both today and in the future. This starts with robust early care and education, which increases equity and helps children get a head start in their learning. Investments in MCPS will improve the learning environment for County students and help create a better prepared workforce.

MCCC also supports Montgomery College and their budget request so that they can continue to prepare and create a local workforce that meets the needs of employers and the overall economy. Montgomery College does this through numerous innovative programs aimed at the County's workforce needs, such as TechMap. It is imperative that Montgomery College has the resources to offer such programs while carrying out their mission and keeping tuition and fees affordable.

Economic Development

MCCC is alarmed by the proposed \$2M funding reduction for the Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation (MCEDC). MCCC strongly believes in MCEDC's mission and contends that their funding is an investment in Montgomery County's ability to grow jobs and economic activity.

*Brian Levine | Vice President of Government Affairs
Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce
51 Monroe Street | Suite 1800
Rockville, Maryland 20850
301-738-0015 | www.mcccmd.com*

The cuts are especially concerning considering the recently proposed J.O.B.S. (Jobs, Opportunities & Business Support) Initiative. This special appropriation of \$20M, which MCCC strongly supports, provides one-time funding for the creation of three economic development programs that, if approved, would be administered by MCEDC. It is inconceivable that MCEDC could properly run these important funds, which are focused on priority areas such as job creation, innovation, and equity-focused economic development, without necessary financial resources.

MCCC requests that the Council support MCEDC's \$7.125M funding request in the Fiscal Year 2025 budget. Without appropriate funding for MCEDC, the County will become less competitive and future economic growth and job creation efforts will falter.

As always, MCCC looks forward to partnering on ways to move Montgomery County forward. As you continue your important work, please do not hesitate to reach out to us if we can be of assistance.

The Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce, on behalf of our nearly 500 members, advocates for growth in business opportunities, strategic investment in infrastructure, and balanced tax reform to advance Metro Maryland as a regional, national, and global location for business success. Established in 1959, MCCC is an independent non-profit membership organization and a proud Montgomery County Green Certified Business.

*Brian Levine | Vice President of Government Affairs
Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce
51 Monroe Street | Suite 1800
Rockville, Maryland 20850
301-738-0015 | www.mcccmd.com*