



# A Community Roundtable for Organizing

Recommendations from the Nonprofit Sector

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Prepared by:



In partnership with Nonprofit Montgomery  
& the Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy

# Introduction

Proposed policy changes on the national stage have significant implications for culturally diverse, under resourced residents of Montgomery County and the organizations that compose our local safety-net. The Community Roundtable for Organizing on April 26<sup>th</sup> convened nonprofit leaders, local agency heads, and elected officials to discuss shared challenges and opportunities and arrive at a common understanding of how to harness the collective power of nonprofit and community-based organizations serving the Montgomery County community.

More than 80 nonprofit and community leaders participated in the event. This document highlights the common themes that emerged during the roundtable discussion and recommends opportunities for ongoing collaborative action.

## Key findings and Recommendations

**1) Increasing fear and anxiety deter consumers from accessing services.** Nonprofit organizations providing safety-net services have observed considerable increases in fear and anxiety among their constituents leading to a noticeable decrease in accessing services. The number of hate incidents reported in Montgomery County rose 42 percent in 2016 compared to 2015, and the majority of the increase was at the end of the year.<sup>1</sup> While there are no published data as yet, this alarming trend appears to have continued in the first half of 2017. Although the local government have made considerable effort to re-assure immigrant community members and those from racial and religious minorities; hateful rhetoric on the national stage and a marked increase in hate crimes locally are causing residents to withdraw from public life. From health services to food security to housing, service providers have seen clients drop out of programs for which they are eligible because they fear participation in these programs could put them or a family member at risk.

### Recommended Actions

- Develop a common vernacular for service providers and community leaders to reassure consumers of their right to services and safety in accessing services.
- Compile data demonstrating the positive economic impact of Montgomery County's policies that are welcoming of immigrants and inclusive of people of all backgrounds.
- Develop messages—supported by data—that highlight the positive economic and cultural impact of immigrants on Montgomery County. Provide these messages to elected officials, agency heads, faith leaders, and nonprofit and community leaders.
- Engage with state agencies (DHMH and DHR) to understand how Maryland will respond to national policy changes affecting funding and regulation of safety-net programs.
- Continue to empower diverse community members, especially immigrants and members of minority groups by providing education and “Know Your Rights” resources.

**2) Lack of culturally and linguistically competent providers is a significant barrier to services.** Montgomery County is increasingly diverse. More than 50 percent of residents identify as a racial minority and more than 33 percent born in a country other than the United States. The dearth of multi-cultural, multi-lingual service providers to meet the needs of our diverse community is a common pain

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<sup>1</sup> 2016 Annual Report in Bias Incidents

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/POL/Resources/Files/crime/2016/MCPD2016AnnualBiasReportFinal.pdf>

point among organizations. Particularly acute areas of need are legal services providers, health care providers, social workers, and teachers. Concerted efforts are underway to develop a more culturally and linguistically diverse workforce. The Department of Health and Human Services actively recruits for bi-lingual providers as do many nonprofit organizations, a pilot program funded by the Health Care Initiative Foundation in partnership with Montgomery College and the Universities at Shady Grove have established a workforce development pipeline to train multi-lingual nursing professionals. Community roundtable participants applauded these efforts; but also recognized that a systemic and multi-faceted approach is necessary to meet the pressing demand for culturally and linguistically competent service providers now and into the future.

### **Recommended Actions**

- Scale up nursing workforce development model developed by Montgomery College, Universities at Shady Grove, and Healthcare Initiative Foundation and explore opportunities to apply this model to other sectors (e.g. legal services, teaching, social work).
- Engage with regulating agencies to identify and develop fast-track pathways to certification for providers educated overseas.
- Advocate for funding and other incentives to attract and retain multi-cultural, multi-lingual service providers in service to this community.
- Promote language interpretation certification among community health workers and health promoters already serving the community and create structures for professional service providers to access interpretation resources.

**3) Nonprofits and local government agencies can leverage the power of data to plan ahead to meet service needs.** Most nonprofits currently use historic data such as the American Community Survey to plan programs. This historic data does not provide rich insight into the needs of our rapidly changing community. At the same time, we collect considerable data to facilitate program operations. Nonprofits and local government agencies can work together to provide better real-time data in order to analyze current trends and needs, and do data forecasting to anticipate future needs. County stat is a valuable resource that can support this but few organizations know how to access this support and as more organizations partner with County Stat, there will be increased pressure on their resources (human and infrastructure.)

### **Recommended Actions**

- Identify opportunities to share data to avoid duplication of work across organizations.
- Determine feasibility of sharing real-time program data to conduct thorough population based analysis of needs across sectors (health, housing, food-security, etc.). This will not be easy but may be possible if participating organizations are willing to think creatively.
- Collaborate with MCPS, County Stat, and Montgomery County Parks and Planning, as well as other organizations that do data forecasting to support their operations. Leverage those data sets to inform program planning.

**4) Incentivize collaborations to reduce redundancy and better serve the community.** The spirit of collaboration is strong in Montgomery County but our current infrastructure neither incentivizes nor supports collaboration. As a community, we need to be deliberate in incentivizing cross-sector collaboration and provide opportunities for focused conversation on topics of mutual interest.

### **Recommended Actions**

- Advocate for multi-year funding opportunities that incentivize multi-sector collaborative initiatives.
- Engage County Policy Boards and Commissions to hold service providers accountable for developing more collaborative initiatives.
- Develop common advocacy infrastructure to help providers engage with County and State agencies to understand Maryland's vision for safety-net programs.
- Continue to host convening's and facilitate multi-sector conversations about how to work together to address common concerns; especially in the face of uncertain and rapidly changing policy and regulatory environment.
- Conduct learning journeys or host delegations from other communities that have successfully implemented multi-sector collaborations.

## Conclusion

There are four ways to affect social change: raising awareness about the issue, creating a legislative or regulatory foundation to reward positive actions, using new technologies to engage stakeholders, compile data, and report on progress, and providing economic incentives that drive individuals and institutions toward change. Movement in all four of these domains is required for change to occur. The nonprofit sector in Montgomery County possesses the skills required to affect change through all of these dimensions but to be effective we must work collectively leveraging the strengths of all to address our shared goals.

# Appendix A: Event Agenda

## A Community Roundtable for Organizing

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8:00 – 8:30	Registration and continental breakfast
8:30 – 9:30	Town Hall with Elected Officials
9:30 – 9:45	Remarks: Roger Berliner, Montgomery County Council President
9:45 – 10:00	Break
10:00 – 10:50	Break out groups by sector <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>What are the most important 2 to 3 actions the community needs to take in this area?</i></li></ul>
10:50 – 11:00	Break
11:00 – 11:45	Cross-sector break out groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>How can organizations from different sectors collaborate to serve the community?</i></li><li><i>Are there unique cross sector partnerships that can advance shared goals?</i></li></ul>
11:45 – 12:15	General Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>Report out from cross-sector groups</i></li><li><i>Commitments and next steps</i></li></ul>

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## Appendix B: Participating Organizations

- Alexandria Council of Human Service Organizations
- Amercian Diversity Group
- Avocate for Community
- Capacity Partners
- CASA
- Catholic Charities of Archdiocese of Washington DC
- Center for Adoption Support and Education
- Chinese Culture and Community Service, Inc.
- Community Ministries of Rockville
- CollegeTracks
- Community Bridges
- Community Ministries of Rockville/Kaseman Health Clinic
- Consumer Health First
- Crossroads Community Food Network
- Crossway Community
- EveryMind
- Family learning solutions Inc
- Gandhi Brigade Youth Media
- Gilchrist Immigrant Resource Center
- Graceful Growing Together
- HavServe Volunteer Service Network (HavServe)
- Healthcare Initiative Foundation
- Hospice Caring, Inc.
- Housing Initiative Partnership, HIP
- Identity
- JCA Heyman Interages Center
- Jews United for Justice
- Link Generations
- Literacy Council of Montgomery County
- Madison House Autism Foundation
- Manna Food Center
- MCAEL
- MCC Medical Clinic
- MCPD
- MdBio Foundation
- MobileMed
- Montgomery County Aging and Disability Services
- Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless
- Montgomery County Collaboration Council
- Montgomery County Community Action Agency
- Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
- Montgomery County Department of Housing and Community Affairs
- Montgomery County Department of Recreation
- Montgomery County Language Minority Health Project Inc. Dba Proyecto Salud Clinic
- Montgomery County Office of Community Partnerships
- Montgomery County Public Schools
- Montgomery Housing Partnership
- Montgomerys Kids
- Nonprofit Montgomery
- Nonprofit Montgomery - Montgomery Moving Forward
- Office of Cengressman John Sarbanes
- Office of Community Partnership
- Our Voices Matter
- Primary Care Coalition
- Proyecto Salud Clinic
- Rainbow Place Shelter for Women Inc
- Rebuilding Together Montgomery County
- Regional Primary Care Coalition
- Office of the County Executive
- State's Attorney's Office Truancy Prevention Program
- Wonders Early Learning + Extended Day