



**Public Hearing  
Fiscal Year 2023 Operating Budget  
April 20, 2022**

On behalf of the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce's (MCCC) and our nearly 500 members, thank you for the opportunity to testify regarding the Fiscal Year 2023 Recommended Operating Budget. MCCC supports numerous requests in the County Executive's \$6.3 billion Fiscal Year 2023 Recommended Operating Budget. We support growing targeted spending priorities and urge the County Council to approve a budget that focuses on the preparedness needed to weather any future economic shocks precipitated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The approved Fiscal Year 2023 budget must be able to meet the new realities shaping the County's economic development and job creation efforts.

While MCCC is cautiously optimistic that the County is emerging well from the pandemic, the reality is that future is difficult to predict. The County's budget should allow flexibility to address unexpected challenges appropriately. The pandemic itself may be over, but effects of the pandemic are not. With an eye toward fiscal restraint needed to address future economic disruptions, MCCC urges continued investments in areas that improve our economic outlook and make the County as a great place to live and work.

MCCC prioritizes investments that grow the County's competitiveness and ability to attract and retain talent. Our members continue to report that addressing workforce challenges is their number one priority. Labor shortages existed prior to the pandemic, but now this issue calls for ever-increasing attention from policymakers. Labor market concerns create a potential liability for future economic growth in the County so these issues must be top of mind during budget deliberations. MCCC, with a focus on talent attraction and retention, supports recommendations for funding in the following areas:

**Montgomery County Public Schools**

MCCC supports the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) \$2.9 billion request. 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 a 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.

**Montgomery College**

MCCC supports Montgomery College's request and specifically prioritizes the \$3.3 million request for an East County Education Center to expand access in this underserved region and enhance the County's ability to address workforce needs. The East County Education Center project will be key to unlocking the untapped talent potential in East County and growing the ability to find labor market solutions that meet the needs of employers. This is especially important in high-demand industries like life sciences, technology, and innovative federal government contracting.

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### **Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation**

MCCC supports fully funding the \$6.2 million budget request for the Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation (MCEDC). MCEDC's success is Montgomery County's success. MCCC strongly believes in MCEDC's mission and contends that this funding invests in our future. Economic development efforts, including the attraction and retention of jobs and a talented workforce, are imperative during this challenging economy. While the workforce and business community continue to adapt to the pandemic economy, it is vital that Montgomery County has a robust and aggressive economic development infrastructure to provide a roadmap for business activity.

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.*

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