

County Executive Ball Presents: The Ball Bulletin



September 28, 2026

Dear Friends,

Free, professional financial counseling is now available to people who live, work, or attend school in Howard County through our new Financial Empowerment Center!

I was pleased to celebrate its opening with Comptroller of Maryland, our Howard County Office of Consumer Protection, United Way of Central Maryland, and our community partners. Located at 9820 Patuxent Woods Drive, the new Center offers one-on-one counseling to help people reduce debt, build credit, save for the future, and connect with safe, affordable financial products.



This transformational work builds on the financial education efforts I began through Money Matters as a Councilmember. The Center will connect counseling with County and nonprofit services, including support for housing applicants, Howard Community College students, and people returning from incarceration.

Our Office of Consumer Protection began planning this initiative in 2023 through the Cities for Financial Empowerment Fund's FEC Academy. A \$150,000 implementation grant and an additional \$100,000 from Wells Fargo provided \$250,000 to help launch the program, with additional local support from APL Credit Union.



Thank you to Office of Consumer Protection Administrator Tracy Rezvani and her

team, United Way of Central Maryland and Laura Johnson, Community Action Council Executive Director Tracy Broccolino, MakingChange, The CASH Campaign of Maryland, and our FEC Advisory Group for helping bring this resource to our community. I also appreciate Deputy County Administrator Jamar Herry for guiding the celebration and our new counselors for helping residents take practical steps toward greater financial stability.

Sincerely,



Community Updates



The State of the County

During the last eight years, we have, together, transformed challenges into chances, obstacles into opportunities, and bold ideas into lasting results for Howard County.

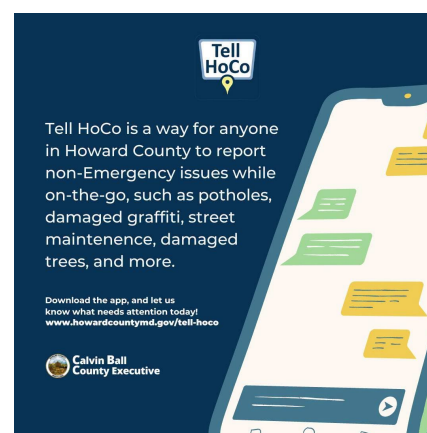
This Wednesday, September 30th, I will deliver my final State of the County address at Howard Community College's Smith Theatre. We will reflect on how far we have come, recognize the people and partnerships behind our progress, and look ahead to the future we continue building together.

Join us for this meaningful moment and reserve your seat today by visiting my ["2026 State of The County" Eventbrite webpage](https://2026HoCoSOTC.eventbrite.com).

See Something? Tell HoCo

Did you know that you can help keep our streets safe and smooth by reporting potholes? It's quick and easy to do through Tell HoCo.

If you spot potholes, damaged street signs, graffiti, street light issues, damaged trees, or anything else in your neighborhood or while driving around, simply visit howardcountymd.gov/report-pothole or use the Tell HoCo app to submit your report. Your vigilance helps us maintain safer roads for everyone.



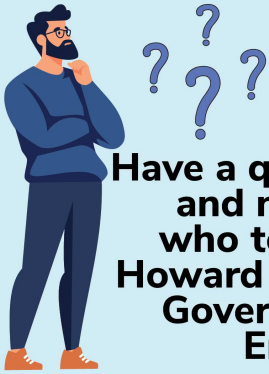
Together, we can ensure that our streets are in the best condition possible. Thank you for doing your part to keep Howard County safe and well-maintained!

A Space for Teens, By Teens

A space for teens should reflect their ideas. More than 190 young people have worked with our Howard County Library System to help design the planned 9,000-

square-foot expansion of the ElkrIDGE Branch.

Our plans for a new ElkrIDGE Community and 50+ Center will make room for this dedicated teen space. Hearing our teen interns share their vision was a reminder of what becomes possible when we give young people a meaningful role in shaping their community.



**Have a question
and not sure
who to ask in
Howard County
Government?
Email us!**

ask@howardcountymd.gov

Calvin Ball
County Executive

Got Questions? We've Got Answers

Not sure where to turn with a County question?
Start with AskHoCo.

Whether you're looking for a program, details about
a local event, or help finding a County service, our
team can point you in the right direction.

Email ask@howardcountymd.gov, and let us help
you find what you need.

Helping Neighbors Harvest Hope

A few extra items in your grocery cart can help a
Howard County neighbor put a meal on the table.
Our Board of Elections is hosting the Harvest of
Hope Food Drive during early voting, in partnership
with the Howard County Food Bank and Community
Action Council of Howard County.

From October 22 through October 29, 2026,
donations will be accepted daily from 7 a.m. to 8
p.m. at these five locations:

- Gary J. Arthur Community Center: 2400 MD-97, Cooksville
- Meadowbrook Athletic Complex: 5001 Meadowbrook Lane, Ellicott City
- Bain 50+ Center: 5470 Ruth Keeton Way, Columbia
- St. John Baptist Church: 9055 Tamar Drive, Columbia
- North Laurel Community Center: 9411 Whiskey Bottom Road, Laurel

Most-needed items include canned vegetables and fruit, canned tuna or chicken,
soup, beans, pasta and sauce, rice, peanut butter, jelly, cereal, macaroni and
cheese, and shelf-stable milk. Baby food, diapers in sizes 4 and larger, and

**HARVEST OF HOPE
FOOD DRIVE**

**THIS FOOD DRIVE TAKES
PLACE DURING EARLY VOTING
IN HOWARD COUNTY**

October 22 – 29, 2026

7:00AM – 8:00PM
All drop-off locations during operating hours

**Gary J. Arthur
Community Center**
2400 MD-97, Cooksville MD 21723

Bain 50+ Center
5470 Ruth Keeton Way, Columbia
MD 21044

**Meadowbrook Athletic
Complex**
5001 Meadowbrook Ln,
Ellicott City MD 21043

St. John Baptist Church
9055 Tamar Dr, Columbia MD 21045

**North Laurel
Community Center**
9411 Whiskey Bottom Rd,
Laurel MD 20723

personal hygiene products are also requested. Please do not donate expired or spoiled items.

If you're able, consider bringing a donation when you head out to vote. Thank you to our Board of Elections and food assistance partners for organizing this effort, and to everyone helping keep our neighbors' shelves stocked.

For questions, email hocovoteroutreach@howardcountymd.gov.



Maryland Strong

Strong partnerships between county governments and local businesses matter as we navigate difficult budget decisions and plan for Maryland's future.

At the Maryland Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives' 75th Anniversary Conference in Gaithersburg, I joined Frederick County Executive

Jessica Fitzwater, Baltimore County Executive Kathy Klausmeier, and Anne Arundel County Executive Stuart Pittman for a discussion about the fiscal challenges facing our counties.

Our panel explored what those challenges mean for economic development and public services, and how local leaders are preparing for the years ahead. For Howard County, these conversations are an opportunity to share perspectives with our regional partners and hear from the chamber leaders who work directly with businesses across Maryland.

Chambers help business owners navigate challenges, connect with resources, and make their priorities heard. That relationship is especially valuable when communities are making decisions about where to invest limited resources. Thank you to Andrew Griffin and MACCE for bringing us together, and to the chamber executives who support Maryland's business community every day.

Congratulations on 75 years of service and collaboration!

Empowering Residents with Financial Literacy

Earlier this week, Howard County became the first county in Maryland to launch a Financial Empowerment Center program, joining the State of Maryland, and the Cities of Baltimore and Gaithersburg.



At the Howard County Financial Empowerment Center (FEC), professionally trained counselors will help anyone who lives, works, or goes to school in Howard County, including those with low and moderate incomes, manage their finances, pay down debt, increase savings, establish and build credit, protect assets, prepare for legacy planning, and access safe and affordable mainstream banking products.

At the core of the FEC model is the integration of counseling into other social services, such as housing and foreclosure prevention, workforce development,

prisoner reentry, benefits access, domestic violence services, and more. Learn more about the FEC [here](#).



Forty-Five Years of Visit Howard County

Howard County welcomed more than 3.2 million visitors in 2024, generating more than \$830 million in visitor spending. That is nearly 25% more than in 2019, supporting our restaurants, hotels, shops, and attractions.

It was a pleasure to celebrate this progress at Visit Howard County's annual meeting and 45th anniversary celebration at the Capitoline Center in Historic Ellicott City. For nearly five decades, this organization has helped people discover our community while helping local businesses reach new customers.

From FY2020 to FY2027, we increased County investment in tourism by more than 30%. Our partnership also helped restore the Howard County Welcome Center, which reopened in July 2025, and launch Local HoCo Open Rewards the following month. According to Visit Howard County, every dollar invested in that rewards program has generated \$25 in verified local spending.

Behind these numbers are people building businesses, welcoming guests, and giving visitors a reason to return. Thank you to Executive Director Amanda Hof, Board President Tricia Hudson, the Visit Howard County team and board, our tourism ambassadors, and the many partner businesses that make this work possible.

Congratulations on 45 years of sharing Howard County with the world!

Award Winning Investment in Our County's Workforce

Our Office of Workforce Development team has earned 14 National Association of Counties (NACo) Achievement Awards since 2019, recognizing innovative programs and services that expand opportunity for Howard County residents and support our employers. These national honors reflect our team's work to help people build skills, navigate career changes, and connect with employment.



The results of our broader workforce investments show why this work matters. Our Summer Youth Employment Program grew from about 13 participants in the summer of 2018 to approximately 360 in 2026. Howard County residents participating in registered apprenticeships increased from 215 to 394 during that same period. Since 2021, our partnership with Fort Meade and the Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation has also provided career counseling and employment support to more than 1,200 veterans and military family members.

Congratulations to our Office of Workforce Development team, and thank you to the employers, educators, and community partners who help make these

opportunities possible. Behind this recognition are people gaining their first work experience, preparing for a new career, and building greater stability for their families.



Congrats to Our 2026 Employee Awards Winners!

Our County employees make public service personal, helping residents solve problems and keeping the services we depend on running every day. It was a pleasure to celebrate their dedication at our [2026 Howard County Employee Awards ceremony](#).

Special congratulations to our Contingent of the Year, Mackenzie Fisher from our Department of Recreation & Parks; Manager of the Year, Catherine Wellman from our Department of Housing and Community Development; and Employee of the Year, Erica Carpio from the Howard County Police Department. Thank you for the care and commitment you bring to your work and our community.

We also recognized 347 employees who reached milestones of 10 or more years of service, including Gary Miller, who celebrated an extraordinary 50 years of service. Since 1979, this awards program has honored the people whose experience and dedication strengthen County government.

Congratulations to all our honorees, including those recognized for customer service, leadership, mentoring, innovation, and environmental stewardship. Thank you to our Employee Recognition Committee and Office of Human Resources for bringing this celebration together, and to every County employee for serving our residents with pride.

Come Step Inside and Take a Look Around

Step inside Howard Community College's new 50,000-square-foot Trades and Workforce Development Building, where students will prepare for careers in skilled trades and emerging technologies.

During a recent walkthrough, as they were putting on some of the finishing touches, we explored 28 welding booths, automotive labs with seven bays and four lifts, and spaces for electrical, plumbing, and HVAC training. Students will also work with robotics, advanced manufacturing equipment, and connected home systems that teach cybersecurity awareness alongside trade skills.



Just three years from concept to completion, this impactful investment will give learners hands-on experience with equipment they will encounter on the job. As an educator who recognizes how empowering community colleges can be, I'm grateful to our HCC partners for helping more residents build the skills to pursue a new career, especially HCC President Dr. Daria Willis whose vision and partnership made this a reality for current and future generations.



Not Sure Who? Just Ask!

If you have a question and/or concern and you are not exactly sure who in Howard County Government to contact, email our Office of Public Information (PIO) at ask@howardcountymd.gov and its staff will help direct you to who you'll want to contact for further assistance. Whether it's a question about a tree, roadway, park, transportation, housing, or health, our PIO team has you covered and is ready to point you in the right direction.

Tell HoCo

Our "Tell HoCo" mobile and web-based application allows residents and visitors to report non-emergency neighborhood problems to the County 24/7.

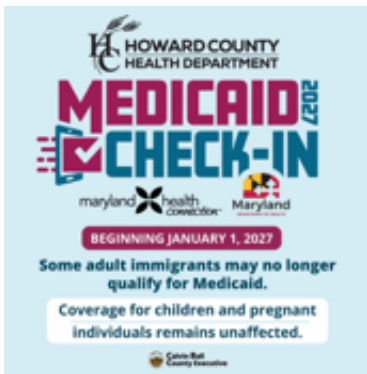
It's easy! From your smartphone, tablet, or desktop computer, simply visit our ["Tell HoCo" webpage](#) or download the app for FREE from the [Apple Store](#) or [Google Play](#), snap a photo, send a report, and track the progress on things such as potholes on a County maintained (named) roadway, graffiti, sidewalk issue, cable (utility) box issue, dead deer, cat, or dog carcass, etc.



New Rules for Medicaid Coming Soon

Important News for Immigrant Medicaid Holders:

Starting Oct. 1, 2026, some adult immigrants may no



longer qualify for Medicaid, while coverage for children and pregnant individuals remains unaffected. To get all eligibility updates, ensure your contact info is current by calling 410-313-5845 or emailing medicaid@howardcountymd.gov.

Visit [Howard County Health Department's "Medicaid & Health Insurance" webpage](#) to learn more.

Number One City for Women

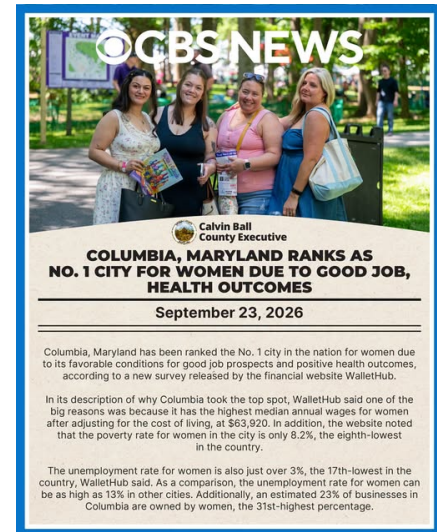
Strong career opportunities and access to healthcare helped put Columbia at the top of the best cities for women, as CBS News reports.

Columbia ranked No. 2 for women's economic and social well-being and No. 3 for women's healthcare and safety, earning the No. 1 spot overall. Women's median annual wages, adjusted for cost of living, led the nation at \$63,920, and approximately 23% of Columbia businesses are owned by women.

The study also ranked Columbia among the top 10 for women's life expectancy and physical activity.

Women contribute to every part of Howard County, as business owners, educators, caregivers, public servants, and community leaders. This recognition gives us reason to celebrate and keep working to ensure more women can find opportunity, financial stability, and the care they need here.

To read more, check out [CBS Baltimore's news story, "Columbia, Maryland ranks as No. 1 city for women due to good job, health outcomes", online](#).



Improving Access and Safety Along US 1

We partnered closely with the Maryland Department of Transportation's Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) to advance key intersection improvements along the Route One Corridor in Elkridge. At Doctor Patel Drive, a new traffic signal with pedestrian crosswalks was installed across US1, along with lighted sidewalk running from

Doctor Patel Drive to Montgomery Road. At Rowanberry Drive, a pedestrian crossing and signal were installed at US1, with new sidewalk added on the east side of US1 to Old Washington Road.

Further south along the US1 corridor, we are continuing to work with SHA to make important intersection upgrades at MD103 and US1 in Elkridge. This project will deliver new sidewalks, bike lanes, and crossing improvements at the intersection, improving connectivity and safety in the area. Utility relocations are underway for

this project.

By making targeted intersection and safety improvements along the US1 corridor in Elkridge, we are improving access and promoting safety for drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists, and all road users.

A Place to Continue Learning and Growing

Opportunity to learn should continue at every age.

Our Quality of Life Survey found that 75.4% of respondents answering the community college accessibility question were satisfied or very satisfied.

These opportunities can help residents explore a new subject, prepare for their next step, and stay connected with others. As an educator, I value the role that learning plays throughout our lives.

Thank you to Howard Community College and our partners serving older adults for helping residents continue to learn and grow. The survey offers useful feedback as we consider how more people can access these opportunities.

Explore the education findings by checking out our [“Quality of Life Survey” webpage](#).



Assistive Technology and Resources for All Ages

If you or someone you care for needs a wheelchair, walker, crutches, or other medical equipment, our Howard County Loan Closet can help at no cost. The program supports recovery and independence for residents of all ages.



Start by asking your healthcare provider, such as your physician, physical therapist, or occupational therapist, to complete the [Healthcare Referral Form](#). The form requires the equipment user or their caregiver to be a Howard County resident.

You or your provider can submit the completed form to loancloset@howardcountymd.gov or fax it to 410-313-0369. Include contact information for the person who will pick up the equipment if that is someone other than the user.

Once staff receive the referral, they will contact you or your caregiver. If the requested equipment is available, they will schedule a pickup appointment at 7125 Riverwood Drive, Suite D1, Columbia. Pickup appointments are required, and you should arrange help loading and unloading equipment if needed.

You can also browse inventory online before your appointment. Availability varies, and certain equipment, including manual and transport wheelchairs, has a 90-day loan limit.

Find the referral form and online inventory on our [Office of Disability Services' "Loan Closet Equipment" website](#).

For general questions, call 410-313-0356 or email loancloset@howardcountymd.gov. For help viewing inventory online, call 410-313-0363.

Ensuring a Responsive Government

As your County Executive, I am committed to ensuring we are a responsive government. Since taking office in December 2018, my Constituent Services team has responded to more than 10,000 constituent cases from calls, emails, and letters, helping community members navigate County bureaucracy, answering questions and concerns, and providing guidance and assistance when it comes to accessing County services.

In addition, my Constituent Services team also regularly attends community and association meetings (or arranges for the appropriate County staff to attend to provide updates and listen to concerns). The team also works collaboratively with community leaders to identify priorities and proactively work on solutions.

To learn more about the team and available resources, visit our ["Constituent Services" website](#) today. For questions, assistance, and/or to request that a member of my Constituent Services team join you at your next meeting, call my office at 410-313-2013 or email constituentservices@howardcountymd.gov.



Home to the Best City for Women

Columbia has been ranked the best city for women in our nation for 2026!

The Baltimore Sun highlighted WalletHub's comparison of 182 cities across 15 measures of women's economic well-being, healthcare, and safety. Columbia led the nation in median annual wages for women after adjusting for cost of living, at \$63,920, and had the eighth-lowest poverty rate for women.

The study also recognized Columbia's access to preventive care, ranking our community third for the share of women receiving a mammogram within

the past two years. Nearly 86% of women in Columbia are physically active.

This recognition reflects the community our residents, employers, and healthcare partners help build. We must keep working to ensure even more women can earn a good living, access the care they need, and build their future here in Howard County.

To read more, check out [***The Baltimore Sun's "Columbia tops national ranking of best cities for women; Baltimore lands at 53" news article online.***](#)

Impactful Arts Grant Awards

More than \$650,000 in arts grants will help bring performances, exhibitions, artist residencies, and creative opportunities to our community. It was a pleasure to celebrate this year's recipients at the Howard County Arts Council's first Grant Awards Presentation in its new home at the Capitoline Center in Historic Ellicott City.



The awards include \$641,089 for arts organizations, school programs, outreach, and theater access, plus \$16,800 for seven individual artists. Among the projects supported are instrument making at Bollman Bridge Elementary, songwriting at Clarksville Elementary, and creative writing at Talbott Springs Elementary, connecting students directly with professional artists.

Since I took office in December 2018, we have increased County funding for the arts by more than 62%. Our FY27 budget provides approximately \$1.4 million to the Arts Council to support its operations and programs, including these grants.

As I attended my final Arts Grant Awards ceremony as County Executive, I reflected on what we have accomplished together: launching our Poet Laureate programs, developing a new Arts and Culture Plan, establishing our first permanent County-sponsored public art program, and creating a new home for the Arts Council.

Thank you to Executive Director Coleen West, Deputy Director Mary K. Baxter, Board President Andrea Magers, and the Arts Council's staff and board for supporting our creative community. Thank you also to Poet Laureate Truth Thomas and the Columbia Orchestra Quartet for sharing your talents during the celebration. Congratulations to all our grantees, whose work gives residents more opportunities to experience and participate in the arts.

Raising Awareness About Sign Language

Being able to follow a conversation, ask a question, or share an idea matters in every part of daily life. On International Day of Sign Languages, September 23rd, we celebrated sign languages and their place in Deaf communities, culture, and identity.

Thank you to the interpreters, educators, and advocates who help expand that access in Howard



County. We must continue listening to our Deaf and hard-of-hearing community and working together so more residents can participate fully in the decisions and opportunities that affect their lives.

Freedom to Be Yourself

This past Bi Visibility Day, September 23rd, we recognized our bisexual neighbors and their contributions to Howard County, Maryland, America, and our world.

Bisexual people can face harmful stereotypes and have their identities questioned or dismissed. A person's value does not depend on whom they are dating, and no one should have to prove that they belong, based upon how they love.



We can each help build a more welcoming community by listening, respecting how people describe themselves, and speaking up against discrimination. To our bisexual residents: you are a valued part of Howard County, and you deserve dignity, support, and the freedom to be yourself.

MARYLAND ACCESS POINT (MAP)

Maryland Access Point, a free aging and disability resource center, is your link to health and support services in Howard County.



Call MAP at **410-313-1234** or email us at map@howardcountymd.gov

The Service MAP

A free aging and disability resource center, Maryland Access Point of Howard County (MAP) is a trusted source of information and assistance for our county residents who need or want to plan for their immediate and future needs. Serving adults 50 years and older, adults 18 years and older with a disability, family members and other caregivers, and health or business professionals, our MAP experts are here to help you with:

- Understanding and navigating various assistance programs and benefits available to you, including financial benefits, healthcare programs, housing, or other types of supportive services;
- Connecting you with the right resources, including finding local community services, specialized care, or other necessary support; and
- Offering guidance on planning for future needs, including exploring long-term care options, making informed decisions, or other strategies to ensure you're prepared for what's ahead.

MAP Resource Specialists are available by appointment and are located at our Office on Aging Independence's office at 9830 Patuxent Woods Drive in Columbia, the [Loan Closet of Howard County](#), and across our [50+ centers](#). To schedule an in-person appointment or to speak with member of our MAP team today, contact the office at 410-313-1234 (voice/relay) or email map@howardcountymd.gov.

To learn more about MAP, visit our ["Maryland Access Point \(MAP\)" website](#).

Providing Quality Public Service

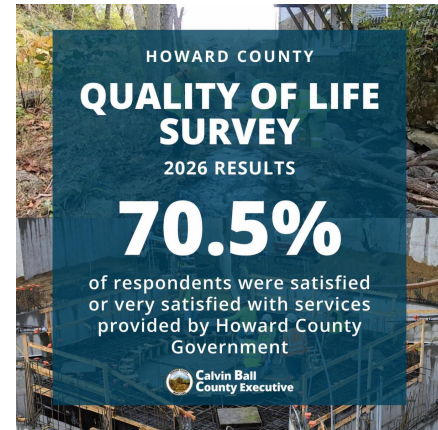
Residents depend on County government to deliver services that make daily life work.

Our Quality of Life Survey found that 70.5% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with services provided by Howard County Government. Separately, 63.1% expressed satisfaction with the performance of County agencies.

I appreciate our public servants who bring their knowledge, care, and dedication to this work. Their efforts touch neighborhoods and families throughout Howard County.

These results also give us a reason to look more closely at residents' experiences. Understanding what is working and where people encounter difficulties helps us focus on making services more useful, accessible, and responsive.

Explore the County government findings by checking out our ["Quality of Life Survey" webpage](#).



50 Years of Blu Excellence

Congratulations to the Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc., Zeta Alpha Sigma Alumni Chapter on 50 years of brotherhood, scholarship, and service! Chartered in Howard County in 1976 by five visionary men, the chapter has carried their commitment to community through five decades of service.

It was a pleasure to celebrate this milestone with the chapter's charter members, past presidents, members, families, and friends at its 50th Anniversary Gala. The theme, "50 Years of Blu Excellence: Culture, Service, Humanity," honors the people who built this legacy and those continuing it.

I was humbled to receive the inaugural Zeta Alpha Sigma Trailblazer Award alongside fellow honorees working to strengthen our community. This recognition is especially meaningful coming from an organization guided by "Culture for Service and Service for Humanity," a reminder of the responsibility we share to turn our values into action.

Thank you to Chapter President Shannon O. Hayes, Gala Co-Chairs Arthur Blair and Bernard Nelson, and all the brothers of Zeta Alpha Sigma for this honor and your

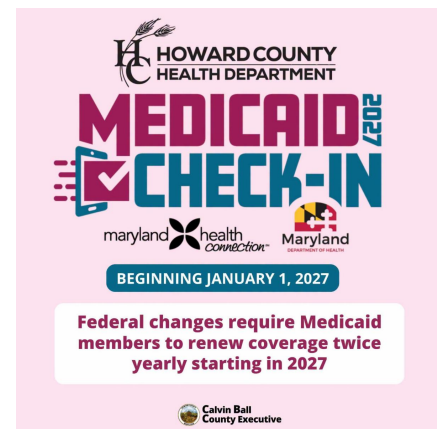
continued commitment to Howard County. Congratulations to every Trailblazer Award recipient, and best wishes to the chapter as you begin your next 50 years of service!

Medicaid Check-In

Reminder: Renewal Every 6 Months Coming in 2027

Federal changes require Medicaid members to renew coverage twice yearly starting in 2027. Has your mailing address, phone number, or email changed? Call 410-313-5845 or email medicaid@howardcountymd.gov now to ensure smooth renewals.

Visit [Howard County Health Department's "Medicaid & Health Insurance" webpage](#) to learn more.



Creating a Dedicated Space for Our Young People

Nearly 200 of our Howard County teens are helping design a library space of their own. Their impactful ideas are shaping a planned 9,000-square-foot expansion of our ElkrIDGE Branch, creating dedicated space for young people to learn, connect, and explore their interests.

I was pleased to hear our teen interns present their research and recommendations alongside Howard County Library System President and CEO Tonya Aikens. From accessibility and safety to furniture, technology, collections, and programming, these students have spent more than a year considering what would make this space welcoming and useful to their peers.

Their participation is already making a difference. In the Library System's evaluation, 83.5% of teen interns said the experience helped them connect with other teens, and 80.6% said their ideas and suggestions were taken seriously.

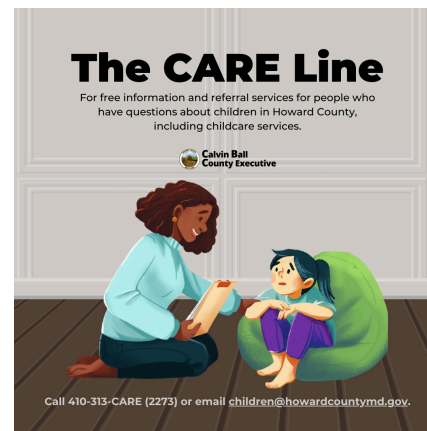
The expansion will repurpose the existing 50+ Center space once those services move to our planned ElkrIDGE Community and 50+ Center on Old Washington Road. It will bring the library to approximately 45,000 square feet.

Because We CARE

Offered by our Office of Children and Families, our CARE (Child and Adolescent Resources and Education) Line is a FREE information, resource, and referral service geared towards helping Howard County families navigate a wide range of family and parenting issues. Whether you are looking for

childcare, parenting support, or other essential services, our CARE Line team is ready to help you find the solutions that work best for you and your family.

For help, contact our CARE Line team today at 410-313-CARE (2273) or email children@howardcountymd.gov, or visit our "[The CARE Line](#)" website.



Turning Outreach into Opportunity

The Grassroots employees who have helped people through some of their most difficult moments are getting support as they navigate their own next steps.

At our Howard County Office of Workforce Development's hiring event with CarePoint

Response, I had the opportunity to thank these dedicated professionals and welcome them as they explored new employment opportunities. CarePoint is working to fill more than 90 positions supporting 988 crisis services, including counselor, supervisor, manager, quality assurance, and training roles.

The September session, offered information about available positions and opportunities to interview. This partnership connects experienced crisis services professionals with an employer seeking the skills they have spent years developing.

Thank you to the CarePoint Response, and our workforce team for turning that outreach into a hiring opportunity.

We will continue supporting affected employees with job assistance and career counseling as they work toward their next chapter.

A National Model of Public Works Excellence

From maintaining our roadways, water and sewer mains, and stormwater management to our Alpha Ridge Landfill and curbside trash, recycling, food scrap, and yard trim collection programs, our Department of Public Works (DPW) aims to advance the quality of life for our community by providing exceptional levels of public service. If you ever have questions and/or concerns about a DPW construction project happening in your community, whether an emergency repair, regular maintenance work, or new construction, or general curbside collection questions, be sure to reach out to our DPW Customer Service team at 410-313-3440 or email publicworks@howardcountymd.gov for assistance.

You can also visit our "[Public Works](#)" website to learn more about the department and its various Bureaus.

Three Secure Ways to Vote and Deadlines for the 2026 General Election

As Election Day fast approaches, the Maryland State Board of Elections (SBE) has released a [comprehensive guide on its "VOTE!MD" website](#) – featuring key dates and deadlines and information on the three secure ways to cast a ballot in Maryland, to help Maryland voters navigate this year's election.

First up are those important dates and deadlines:

- Tuesday, October 13th – DEADLINE to [register to vote online](#) or [register to vote by mail](#);
- Thursday, October 22nd to Thursday, October 29th – Early Voting. Polls are open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. these days; to find your early voting location, visit [SBE's Voter Services' "Voting Location Lookup" website](#).
- Tuesday, October 27th – DEADLINE to [request a mail-in ballot delivered by max or fax](#).
- Friday, October 30th – DEADLINE to [request a mail-in ballot online](#).
- Tuesday, November 3rd – Election Day. Final day to vote; polls are open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. To find your voting location, visit [SBE's Voter Services' "Voting Location Lookup" website](#).
- By or Before Tuesday, November 3rd – DEADLINE to return a mail-in ballot, either by mail ([postmarked](#) by or before the 3rd) or you can [hand-deliver your ballot to an approved dropbox or local board of elections](#) by 8:00 p.m. on Election Day.

Second, here are three ways to cast your ballot for the upcoming General Election:

1. Vote Early – Skip the crowds and [vote early at select locations](#) in your county from Thursday, October 22nd through Thursday, October 29th, 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. daily.
2. Vote by Mail – Any registered voter can vote by mail. It's easy and secure, simply [request your mail-in ballot](#) and then once you've completed your ballot, take it to an [official dropbox or local board of elections](#) by Election Day or mail it back (postmarked) on or before Tuesday, November 3rd.
3. Vote on Election Day – Vote in person at your [local polling place](#) on General Election Day, Tuesday, November 3rd; polls will be open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

With the preliminary deadline to register to vote or update your registration information fast approaching (Tuesday, October 13th), SBE is encouraging Maryland residents to verify their status early to ensure a seamless experience at the polls. Residents who are not registered to vote can do so using the online registration system at [SBE's Voter Services' "Voter Registration and Mail-in Ballot Request" webpage](#). Those who prefer not to register online may print the registration form ([English version](#) and [Spanish version](#)) and submit it to SBE's local board of elections office in Howard County at 9770 Patuxent Woods Drive, Suite 200 in Columbia.

Please note, per SBE, if you miss this deadline, you can register or update your residential address the same day you vote. To do so, make sure you bring a document that proves where you live when you attempt to vote at your local polling place or early voting center.

Finally, for more information about Maryland's General Election, visit [SBE's "VOTE!MD" webpage](#) or download SBE's FREE "Go Vote MD" app from the [Google Play store](#) or the [Apple store](#).

Free Bikes 4 Kidz Collection Day on October 3rd

Free Bikes 4 Kidz (FB4K) is a Howard County-based nonprofit geared toward helping all children ride into a happier, healthier, more independent life by giving away bikes to those in need. Each year, the organization collects thousands of bikes from the public, refurbishes them with help from hundreds of volunteers, and gives them away before the holidays to children referred to FB4K by schools, nonprofits, community associations, and government agencies. If you have a bicycle that is no longer needed, please consider stopping by any of our [Department of Fire and Rescue Services' fire stations](#) this Saturday, October 3rd between 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. to donate your bike at FB4K's donation spot.



Since 2019, FB4K has given away more than 15,400 bicycles and this year's goal is to give away 4,000 more! To learn more about FB4K, visit its website at <https://fb4kmaryland.org/>.

Meal Delivery and More

Since 1960, Meals on Wheels of Central Maryland (MOWCM) has been helping people live independently at home through the provision of nutritious meals, personal contact, and support services. As one of the largest Meals on Wheels programs in the country, MOWCM serves thousands of aging, homebound and disabled adults throughout Central Maryland daily. In addition to delivering nutritious meals, MOWCM also provides support and safety-net services that help sustain health, promote independence, and improve overall quality of life.

If you need help or know a family member or neighbor who might benefit from MOWCM's services, I encourage you to visit [its website](#) to learn more about its programs and how to apply or call 410-558-0923.

Government Updates

Office of Agriculture

New & Beginning Farmers Program Applications Coming Soon

Starting this October, our Office of Agriculture (OoA) will begin accepting applications for its 2027 New & Beginning Farmer (NBF) Program at the County's H. Mitchell "Mickey" Day NBF Complex in West Friendship.

Launched in 2025, the County's NBF Program aims to support aspiring farmers as they build profitable and sustainable farm businesses in Howard County. Designed to address some of the biggest barriers facing new farmers, including access to affordable land, equipment, infrastructure, and technical knowledge, the program

provides participants with:

- Access to farmland;
- Shared equipment and a shared greenhouse;
- Hands-on production experience; and
- Business development support.

For its 2027 NBF Program application, interested applicants will have the option to choose from two program pathways, the **New & Beginning Farmer Direct Pathway** OR the **Emerging Farmer Pathway**. The **New & Beginning Farmer Direct Pathway** is geared towards beginning farmers who already have some hands-on farming experience, such as completing a farmer training course or working on a farm for a period of time. Direct Pathway participants will receive their own plot and operate their own farm businesses while receiving mentorship, education, and access to resources designed to help them strengthen their skills and grow their businesses. Whereas, the **Emerging Farmer Pathway** is geared towards individuals who require additional hands-on experience before taking on a plot of their own. This pathway provides participants with apprentice training with a current farmer in the program, learning opportunities at OoA's Teaching & Learning Farm, and mentorship. Emerging Pathway participants will gain the skills, confidence, and experience needed to establish and grow their own farm business and, once complete, will be able to transition into the New & Beginning Farmer Direct Pathway and obtain a plot of their own.

If you are interested in participating in the 2027 NBF Program, email OoA's Natural Resource Program Manager Jasmine Simon at jsimon@howardcountymd.gov, with the subject line "Farmer Program 2027", to sign-up to be notified when the application window opens. Applications will be due by December 2026, and all approved applicants will be notified of their acceptance in January 2027.

For questions and/or more information about the NBF Program, email OoA at officeofag@howardcountymd.gov or Jasmine Simon directly at jsimon@howardcountymd.gov.

Department of Community Resources and Services

Supporting Families

Our Department of Community Resources and Service's (DCRS) Office of Children and Families (OCF) supports Howard County families with opportunities to learn, grow and thrive through their family workshops, local resources, events, educational programs, and more all year long.

For instance, this Wednesday, September 30th at 7:00 p.m., OFC will be hosting a FREE virtual "Sibling Rivalry" workshop to help parents/caregivers explore why sibling rivalry occurs and provide practical strategies to reduce conflict, respond to challenging moments, and foster stronger, more positive sibling relationships over time. To sign-up to participate in this event, visit the [County's Active Network "Sibling Rivalry" registration webpage](#).

To learn more about the latest happenings, workshops, activities, and programs for children and families being offered by OCF each month, visit its [Parent Pages Sign-Up website](#) to subscribe to its latest [Parent Pages online newsletter](#). In addition to its Parents Pages, OCF's ["Parent's Guide to Howard County"](#) for 2026 is also a great resource for parents, caregivers, and others looking to learn more about and find services in our community to help children grow and thrive.

If you need individual assistance, such as finding childcare, guidance with parenting issues, mental and emotional health support, special needs resources, food access, housing, and more, contact OCF's free CARE line at 410-313-CARE (2273) to learn more about what's available.

It's National Senior Center Month

As we wrap up National Senior Center Month, I encourage our older residents to stop by one of DCRS's Office on Aging and Independence's (OAI's) [50+ centers](#) this week to learn more about all the great programming options and special events these facilities offer to keep you active and connected as you age in place. Whether your interests lean toward arts and culture or fitness and healthy aging activities, our six 50+ centers offer a wide range of classes to spark your creativity and boost your health, stay informed about healthy aging programs and make new friends.

To find a 50+ center near you, visit [OAI's "Howard County 50+ Centers" webpage](#), OR for a full list of activities happening this month at OAI's 50+ centers, check out the [County's Active Network website](#). You can also learn more about OAI's ongoing programs, special events, and lifelong learning opportunities, by checking out its latest [News & Events for Howard County Older Adult digital newsletter](#), or this month's issue of its monthly publication, [The 50+ Connection](#).



Age-Friendly Transit 101

If you are 50 and older living in Howard County and want to learn more about what public transportation options are available to you in county, be sure to swing by our [Bain 50+ Center](#) this Wednesday, September 30th for "[Transit 101](#)."

Stop in anytime between 10:00 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to learn more about Howard County transportation options and plans from the Regional Transit Authority of Central Maryland (RTA), our Office on Transportation, and Age-Friendly Howard County team. Participants will also have an opportunity to explore an RTA bus, discover other car-free travel alternatives, and connect with experts at resource tables.

For questions and/or more information about this FREE event, or to register over-the-phone, contact the Bain 50+ Center's front desk at 410-313-7213 for assistance; to register online, visit the [County's Active Network registration webpage for this event](#).

Thriving Through Midlife

For women, midlife means perimenopause, menopause, and post-menopause. If you are currently in or approaching this stage of your life, I invite you to join DCRS's OAI and Commission for Women on Thursday October 22nd for its "Thriving Through Midlife: A Community Conversation about Women's Health" event. Set to



take place on the 22nd from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at St. John Baptist Church at 9055 Tamar Drive in Columbia, the event will feature a medical and wellness panel discussion, roundtable conversations, and resource stations to help participants learn more about navigating perimenopause, menopause, post-menopause, and midlife health decisions. This event aims to dismantle midlife health taboos and empower attendees through straightforward, evidence-based guidance, and peer support.

To reserve your spot for this FREE event, visit [OAI's "Thriving Through Midlife: A Community Conversation about Women's Health" Eventbrite registration website](#) today. To request a sign language interpreter or other accommodations to participate in this event, please contact Danielle Clifford-Earles at dcliffordearles@howardcountymd.gov or call 410-313-3506 (voice/relay) at least one week in advance.

Office of Community Sustainability



An Electrifying Drive Electric Month

In celebration of National Drive Electric Month – which runs from September 11th to October 12th, I invite you to join our Office of Community Sustainability (OCS) this Friday, October 2nd for an “EV Show & Clean Miles Club Meetup” event, hosted in partnership with the Clean Miles Club. Stop by the pavilion in [Blandair Regional Park – West](#) area anytime between 5:00 and 7:00 p.m. on the 2nd, to learn from local EV owners more about electric vehicles (EV), what it's like to own, drive, and maintain an EV, the best local dealerships, charging options, and new EV technology. With nearly 17,000 fully electric or plug-in hybrid vehicles calling Howard County home, our county boasts one of the highest EV adoption rates in Maryland, meaning our community members are helping reduce our county's carbon footprint, fossil fuel dependence, and improve air quality.

If you are looking to be part of the movement to help reduce tailpipe emissions and save money at the pump, I encourage you to visit [OCS's "EV Show & Clean Miles Club Meetup" Eventbrite registration website](#) today to sign-up to attend this Friday's event.

Office of Consumer Protection

Financial Counseling Now Available

Our Office of Consumer Protection's (OCP) Financial Empowerment Center (FEC) is now open! Offered in partnership with United Way of Central Maryland, the FEC provides free professional, one-on-one financial counseling to people who live, work, or go to school in Howard County as a free public service of the County. FEC participants receive help with learning how to manage their finances, pay down debt, increase savings, establish and build credit, prepare for legacy planning, and access safe and affordable mainstream banking products.



To learn more about this service and/or to book your appointment, visit [OCP's "Howard County Financial Empowerment Center" website](#). Services will be offered in-person at OCP's office at 9820 Patuxent Woods Drive in Columbia and several other locations across the county, as well as virtually.

Office of Emergency Management



National Preparedness Month

September is National Preparedness Month, a time to raise awareness about the importance of preparing for disasters and emergencies that could happen at any time. All month long our Office of Emergency Management (OEM) has been providing helpful tips, tricks, and facts on its [Facebook](#) and [X](#) social media pages to make sure you, your family, your business, and more are prepared in case disaster strikes.

You can also find helpful information on [OEM's "ReadyHoCo" website](#) about being and staying prepared all year long.

The Great ShakeOut

As OEM reminds us this National Preparedness Month, "preparedness begins with knowledge." When thinking about earthquakes, most folks don't think about Howard County. But did you know that Howard County is home to small, ancient fault zones and underground weaknesses that exist deep within the Earth's crust causing community members to occasionally feel a low intensity quake? In fact, the [last recorded 2.5 magnitude earthquake recorded in Howard County by the U.S. Geological Survey](#) was less than a year ago on October 27, 2025 by Hopewell Park in Columbia.

Like hurricanes, floods, severe winter weather, and more, earthquakes are one of the natural hazards that pose a threat to Howard County and Maryland. To learn more about how to prepare your home and family for an earthquake, visit [OEM's "ReadyHoCo" website](#). Also, be sure to mark your calendar for Thursday, October 15th at 10:15 a.m. to take part in this year's Great ShakeOut Earthquake Drills to practice what to do when the ground begins to shake; visit www.shakeout.org to learn more about this drill.

If You Feel Shaking or Get an Alert:



EarthquakeCountry.org/step5



Department of Fire and Rescue Services

Fire Pit Safety Tips



With a crisp fall chill in the air these days, our Department of Fire and Rescue Services (DFRS) is reminding residents when using a fire pit, to be sure to place it at least 10 feet away from anything that can burn, i.e., your home, deck, tree, and any other flammable material in your yard. Also, never leave a lit fire unattended; before heading inside, always make sure the fire is completely out. Once finished using, be sure to always allow ashes to cool for at least 48 hours. When it's time to dispose of the ashes, transfer them to a metal container

with a tight-fitting lid and place the container away from anything that can burn.

For additional fire pit safety tips, check out the [National Fire Protection Association's September 2025 blog post titled, "Wildfire Prevention Tips for Fire Pits and Outdoor Fires"](#).

National Fire Prevention Month

October is National Fire Prevention Month, a time to raise awareness about fire safety and educating communities on how to prevent devastating home and workplace fires. The observance stems from the tragic Great Chicago Fire of October 8-9, 1871 that killed more than 250 people, left 100,000 homeless, and destroyed thousands of buildings.

This October, DFRS will be providing helpful tips and facts on its [Facebook](#), [X](#), and [Instagram](#) social media pages to make sure you, your family, and business know what to do to prevent, prepare, and what do should a fire occur. You can also find helpful information about fire prevention and safety on [DFRS's website](#) all year long.

Howard County Health Department

Enjoy the Beauty of the Great Outdoors this Walktober

Did you know walking is Maryland's official exercise? To help get you moving and grooving this October and in the spirit of embracing walking, Howard County Health Department's (HCHD) Local Health Improvement Coalition (LHIC) and local partners have come together this October to host a wide range of walking and moving called Howard County Walktober. To find a full schedule of Walktober events, including one-mile walking and moving maps of Recreation & Parks' facilities and parks and Columbia Association parks and pathways, be sure to check out [HCHD's "Walktober" website](#).



Together, let's walk, roll, or ride to a healthier you this October.

Community Flu Vaccine Clinics

It's fall and that means it's respiratory virus season.



To help, the HCHD will once again be offering its free seasonal flu shot clinics. For a list of upcoming flu clinic dates, times and locations, visit [HCHD's HCHD's "Flu & Respiratory Illness" webpage](#) today.

For the 2026–2027 flu season, HCHD will offer both the Flulaval 2026–27 Formula vaccine (recommended for ages six months and older) and the Sanofi Fluzone High-Dose 2026–2027 Formula vaccine, while supplies last (recommended for age 65 and older.)

Walk-ups are accepted at all HCHD flu clinic events; no pre-registration is required.

Office of Human Rights and Equity

Let's Celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month

Hispanic Heritage Month runs annually from September 15th to October 15th and, in its honor, I invite you to join our Office of Human Rights and Equity (OHRE) and our La Alianza Latina Commission for this year's "[Howard County Hispanic Heritage Festival](#)" on Saturday, October 17th from 12:00 to 4:30 p.m. at [Merriweather Park at Symphony Woods](#) in Columbia. This family-friendly, vibrant community event celebrates Hispanic and Latino heritage, community, and culture. Come enjoy an afternoon of live music performances, vendors, delicious food trucks, fun activities for all ages, and more as we recognize the rich diversity of Hispanic and Latino heritage.



To register to attend this FREE event, visit the "[Howard County Hispanic Heritage Festival](#)" [Eventbrite webpage](#). For questions and/or more information about this event, contact the OHRE at 410-313-6430 or email ohreoutreach@howardcountymd.gov.

Department of Planning and Zoning



Planning Board Meeting

This Thursday, October 1st, the County's [Planning Board](#) will host a virtual worksession starting at 7:00 p.m. via WebEx, to discuss proposed changes to its [Rules of Procedure](#). This worksession will provide Board members with an opportunity to review and discuss the proposed changes and

determine whether any additional revisions are needed. To watch the meeting, visit the [Howard County Council's "Watch Us" website](#); please note, there will be no opportunity for public comment during this worksession.

However, once the Board has finalized its proposed changes, a public hearing date will be scheduled and advertised at least 30 days in advance. This 30-day notice period will provide community members with time to review the proposed changes prior to the hearing. At the public hearing, the public will have an opportunity to

provide testimony on the proposed changes.

Historic Preservation Commission Meeting

Also, this Thursday, October 1st, the County's Department of Planning and Zoning's (DPZ) [Historic Preservation Commission](#) will hold a virtual meeting via WebEx, starting at 7:00 p.m.

For a copy of the meeting's agenda, as well as instructions on how to watch and/or participate in the meeting, visit the County's ["Historic Preservation Commission" website](#).



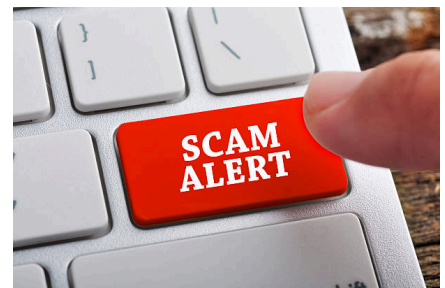
Route 1 Tax Credit Program

DPZ continues to accept applications for its [Route 1 Tax Credit Program](#). If you own a commercial, industrial, or mixed-use property along the Route 1 Corridor or Elkridge's Main Street area, you may be eligible to receive tax credits for qualified façade and landscape improvements visible from the roadway. Eligible improvements include building façade upgrades, new signage, exterior painting and lighting, screening and landscaping, and other options.

For more information about this program, to apply and/or to hear what others have to say who have benefited from the tax credit, visit [DPZ's "Route 1 Tax Credit Program" website](#).

Planning and Zoning Email Phishing Scam

SCAM ALERT, PLEASE SHARE: The County's Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ) is warning residents of an ongoing email scam in which the scammer impersonates a member of DPZ's staff, sometimes using the name of the current DPZ Director Lynda Eisenberg, and demands payment for planning and zoning related forms. **THIS IS A SCAM! DPZ will NEVER email demanding payment via wire transfer, peer-to-peer payment, or cryptocurrency.** Additionally, the email address PlanningCom.HowardCountyMD.gov@usa.com is **NOT a Howard County Government email address**.



If you receive this email, DPZ advises community members to NOT click on any links or provide any information and to NOT forward or reply to the email. Instead, mark it as junk/spam and delete it immediately and contact DPZ directly by calling 410-313-2350 or by clicking on the "Email Us" button on [DPZ's website](#) if you have questions. For additional information about planning and zoning related phishing emails, please check out the [FBI's online alert issued](#) earlier this year.

If you believe you may have been a victim of an email scam in which you have provided payment and/or personal or financial information, please call Howard County Police Department's non-emergency number at 410-313-2200 (select option #2) or visit its ["File an Online Report" webpage](#) to file a police report.

Department of Public Works

Bureau of Environmental Services

Feed the Green Bin is Expanding!

JUST ANNOUNCED! Our Department of Public Works' (DPW) Bureau of Environmental Services "Feed the Green Bin" curbside food scrap collection program is expanding! Starting next week, eligible households in Ellicott City and Marriottsville will receive a trifold postcard in the mail with more information about the program and how to sign up. Interested households will have until Friday, October 16th to register for the program to receive their green bin by late October.

To find out if your home is in the newly expanded zone and to sign-up, or to learn more about the Bureau's curbside food scrap program, visit its ["Feed The Green Bin" webpage](#). For questions and/or more information, contact the Bureau at 410-313-6444 or email help@howardcountyclecycling.org.



The BIG SHRED

Mark your calendars Howard County, for the Bureau of Environmental Services' fall document shredding event, The BIG Shred, returns Saturday, October 17th. From 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. (OR UNTIL the trucks are full) on the 17th, county residents can bring up to three bags or boxes of vital documents to be shredded securely onsite at one of the

following locations:

- North Laurel Community Center, 9411 Whiskey Bottom Road, Laurel
- Gary J. Arthur Community Center, 2400 MD-97, Cooksville
- Elkridge Landing Middle School, 7085 Montgomery Road, Elkridge
- Long Gate Park & Ride, 4951 Meadowbrook Lane, Ellicott City

To learn more about The BIG Shred, including what items are and are not accepted, please visit the [Bureau's "Document Shredding" website](#).

Student Coloring Book Contest

Calling all Howard County students in grades third through fifth, our Bureau of Environmental Services invites you to participate in its annual Coloring Book Contest promoting the importance of the three R's: "Reduce, Reuse and Recycle." This annual contest allows students to demonstrate their awareness and appreciation for our environment.

Coloring Book Contest!

How do you practice the 3 R's - Reduce, Reuse, Recycle? Show us!



Drawings should be done on white, unlined 8.5 by 11-inch paper in black marker or ink – no color and should show how each artist practices at least one of the three R's. Designs will be judged on creativity and originality. For complete contest rules, visit the [Bureau's "Coloring Book Contest!" website](#) or contact your child's school art teacher.

Completed drawings and [contest entry forms](#) are due by 5:00 p.m., January 15, 2027, and can be hand delivered or mailed to: Tim Kerr, Recycling Division, 9801 Broken Land Parkway, Columbia, MD 21046. For questions about this year's contest, call 410-313-6434 or email tkerr@howardcountymd.gov.

For additional information, check out our ["Howard County Seeks Entries for Student Coloring Book Contest" news release online](#).

Bureau of Environmental Services' Stormwater Management Division

Updated FEMA Floodplain Maps Public Information Session

DPW's Bureau of Environmental Services' Stormwater Management Division will hold a public information session next Wednesday, October 7th from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at The Capitoline Center, located at 8360 Court Avenue in Ellicott City, to discuss the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) new flood maps and County floodplain maps.

In August 2025, FEMA's Region 3 team issued preliminary updates to Howard County's November 2013 Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) for areas greater than one square-mile drainage area. These Preliminary FIRMs and the corresponding Flood Insurance Study, provide the basis for flood risk education and floodplain management measures. The County is required to adopt the updated FIRMs to continue participating in the National Flood Insurance Program, which makes flood insurance available to the community. With these map updates, properties in Howard County that were once not in a high-risk flood zone, also known as a Special Flood Hazard Area, may now be, requiring that they now purchase flood insurance.

In addition to FEMA's Preliminary FIRMs, the County also recently released new floodplain maps for drainage areas between 30 acres and one square-mile in the Little Patuxent Watershed and the Patapsco River Lower North Branch Watershed. This public information session will allow Howard County residents and property owners to learn more about these updated and new maps, their flood risk, and their flood insurance requirements.

To learn more about this public information session, please check out our ["Howard County Department of Public Works to Host Public Information Session on Updated FEMA Floodplain Maps" news release online](#).

Bureau of Utilities

Is Your Service Line Material Still Unknown?

Back in 2024, DPW launched its [Service Line Stewardship Program](#) (SLSP) in compliance with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) latest Lead and Copper Rule Revisions (LCRR). The LCRR strives to mitigate health risks stemming from



lead exposure in drinking water through a complete service line material inventory.

While DPW maintains an inventory of its service lines and most residential properties, the SLSP seeks assistance from county residents whose customer-owned service line (pipe) material is unknown to establish a complete inventory. In 2024, customers whose service line material was not known by the County began receiving

notifications in the mail with [details on how to identify their service line material and report it back to the County](#). As of DPW's most recent inventory update this past March, the material of approximately 10,000 customer-side service lines remains unknown.

To ensure we meet the EPA's November 2027 deadline, if you have recently received a mailer in your mail, or know you have not yet tested and reported back your results, DPW is asking residents to please visit its [interactive "Howard County Service Line Stewardship Program Inventory Map" webpage](#) to search your address and then complete the available online self-reporting survey. To complete the survey, you will need a:

- Magnet;
- Penny or key;
- Smart phone or digital camera; and
- Internet access to upload information.

If you are unable to access your pipe(s) and/or need assistance, please contact DPW's SLSP team at 410-313-6118 as the department does offer FREE service line inspections by appointment.

To learn more about the SLSP, visit [DPW's "Service Line Stewardship Program" website](#).

Voluntary Water Restriction Remains in Effect

Just a quick update, the VOLUNTARY WATER RESTRICTION Baltimore City Department of Public Works' (DPW) placed in effect for its public water customers, including those Howard County, back in May, REMAINS IN EFFECT at this time.

According to [National Integrated Drought Information System's website for Maryland](#), Baltimore City and most of Howard County are currently experiencing an "Abnormally Dry" drought rating, meaning we are on the cusp of a drought or recovering from one. While our area has experienced recent rainfall, water levels at the City's reservoirs remain negatively impacted due to dry conditions, low stream flows, and continued water demand limiting how much water reaches these reservoirs. As such, Baltimore City's DPW continues to ask residential and commercial public water customers regionally to voluntarily reduce their non-essential water use to help protect our regional water supply, by:

- Postponing lawn and garden watering;

Baltimore City and surrounding counties **remain under voluntary water restrictions.**

- 📍 Baltimore City
- 📍 Baltimore County
- 📍 Harford County
- 📍 Howard County
- 📍 Carroll County

- Repairing or replacing leaking faucets, hoses, and sprinklers;
- Running only full loads in dishwashers and washing machines; and
- Turning off taps while brushing teeth or shaving and minimizing shower time.

Additionally, as water leaks are one of the largest sources of water waste, if you see any signs of running water outdoors that may indicate a leak or break in the County's watermain, please contact our Bureau of Utilities at 410-313-4900 (Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) or 410-313-2200, select option #5 (after hours).

Please remember, this VOLUNTARY water restriction applies only to Howard County residents who receive public water supply, i.e., a water bill from the County's Department of Finance. It does not apply to properties on private wells.

For updates and/or more information about this voluntary water restriction, please follow [Baltimore City's DPW Facebook page](#) or visit [its website](#) for contact information.

Construction Report

To learn about our DPW projects currently underway, check out [DPW's website](#). Searchable by project category and street name, from this site you'll find additional project details, including news releases about the project. You can also contact DPW's Customer Service Office at 410-313-3440 or email publicworks@howardcountymd.gov for further assistance.

If you have questions or are interested in finding out about a State road (numbered roadway) project in your area, visit the Maryland State Highway Administration's (SHA) ["Project Portal" website](#).

Department of Recreation & Parks



Waverly Mansion Open House

Built circa 1756, Historic Waverly Mansion is a charming early 18th century home featuring a barn, gated garden, patio, and seasonal tent on four pristine acres. It is the sole surviving property of Maryland's only father/son governors: Colonel John Eager Howard and George Howard. Today the property is owned by the County and maintained by

our Department of Recreation & Parks, who rents out the facility as a wedding and special events venue.

This Sunday, October 4th, I invite you to come peruse the property and tour the mansion during the department's ["Waverly Open House and Venue Showcase"](#) event from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. If you are looking for a venue to host your next special occasion, corporate retreat, fundraising gala, wedding, or milestone celebration, this is the perfect time to see the property and speak with our Recreation & Parks staff and local vendors.

While this event is FREE, [pre-registration online on Recreation & Parks' Active Network website](#) is requested. Also, as there is limited parking on site, Recreation & Parks will be offering a shuttle bus to and from the venue from its Alpha Ridge

Park at 11685 MD 99 in Marriottsville. For questions and/or more information about this open house event, please call 410-313-0200.

Become a Certified Tree Saver

Recreation & Parks' Natural Resources Division has teamed up with the Columbia Association (CA) to offer a hands-on volunteer training opportunity this Saturday, October 3rd from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at its Robinson Nature Center in Columbia, to teach community members how to identify and manage invasive plants. Part of [Recreation & Parks' Tree Savers](#) and [CA's Weed Warrior](#) programs, during the training participants will learn about hand tool safety, personal protection against insects and toxic plants, non-native invasive plant identification and removal techniques, and native plant replacements. Once complete, participants will earn their Tree Saver and Weed Warrior certifications and be eligible to volunteer to help save native trees on Recreation & Parks and CA properties throughout the county.



To sign-up to participate in this training opportunity, be sure to fill out the ["Weed Warrior and Tree Savers Training Class - Fall 2026" online form](#) today. To learn more about Recreation & Parks' Tree Savers program, visit the [department's "Forestry" website](#).



Let's Latin Dance

September 15th to October 15th is National Hispanic Heritage Month. In celebration of the contributions, influence, culture, achievements, and history of our Hispanic and Latino communities, I invite you to join our Recreation & Parks' [Harriet Tubman Cultural Center](#) team from 7:00 to 9:30 p.m. [this Wednesday, September 30th](#) and [Wednesday, October 14th](#) for its Salsa Sensations. Come immerse yourself in the energetic and fun world of Latin dance, where all experience levels and ages are welcome to participate in this FREE event.

To learn more, check out [Recreation & Parks' Salsa Sensations event webpage](#) or call 410-313-0860.

Fall Activity Guide Registration Now Open

[Online](#), in-person, over-the-phone, and mail-in registration is NOW OPEN for Howard County and non-county residents for Recreation & Parks' [Fall 2026 Activity Guide](#)! From sports, dance and cooking classes, to a plethora of seasonal events and activities to do when school's out, there is something for everyone in this Activity Guide.



Annual Encore Showcase Returns!



Come celebrate Active Aging (50+) Week with Recreation & Parks at its [Encore Showcase](#) next Tuesday, October 6th. Set to take place from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on the croquet lawn at [Blandair Regional Park – North](#), this year's event will feature mini fitness sessions, quick art projects, bocce and archery games, and giveaways.

While pre-registration is not required, it is recommended, especially if you are looking to receive event updates; to register, visit [Recreation & Parks' "Encore Showcase" SignUpGenius website](#).

You can also stay in the know about this year's event by checking [Recreation & Parks' "Encore Showcase" events webpage](#) for additional event information and a list of this year's vendors.

Office of Transportation

Get Your Steps In and Your Snack On this October

In addition to Howard County Health Department celebrating Walktober, our Office of Transportation (OoT) is also stepping up its walking game this coming month with its annual Culinary Walking Tour of Downtown Columbia. Hosted in partnership with the Downtown Columbia Partnership, from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. this Sunday, October 4th, I invite community members to lace up their walking shoes and head on down to Downtown Columbia for an event that is sure to get your heart pumping and mouth watering.



Held rain or shine, participants will move from restaurant to restaurant (this year's participating restaurants include Blackwall Barn & Lodge, Busboys and Poets, Cured, Dat Jerk, Charmery, Seasons 52, and Smashing Grapes) nibbling on delectable bites and drinks (depending on what ticket package you purchase), while covering more than two miles walking depending on what route you take.

For more information about this event and/or to purchase your ticket(s) to participate, visit [OoT's "Downtown Columbia Culinary Walking Tour" Eventbrite webpage](#).

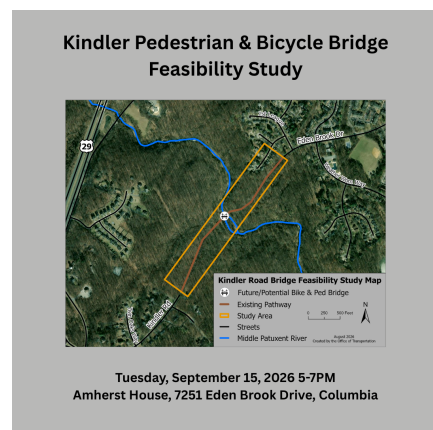
Flash Blue Now in Service

Montgomery County Department of Transportation's (MCDOT) Flash Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Service extension to Howard County's US 29 corridor is now in service! Community members can now hop on MCDOT's Flash Blue weekdays during rush-hour service, 5:00 to 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 to 8:00 p.m., to catch a ride from Silver Spring to stops in Maple Lawn, Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory, and Downtown Columbia. For a complete service timetable, check out [Montgomery County's "Flash Blue Route" schedule guide online](#). Flash is fare-FREE for all riders.

In addition, Downtown Columbia Flash BRT riders will be able to connect to the [Regional Transportation Agency of Central Maryland bus stops](#) for transport to

destinations in Anne Arundel, Howard, and Prince George's Counties and the City of Laurel, as well as the [Maryland Transit Administration commuter buses](#).

To learn more about this service extension, check out our [OoT's "Flash Bus Rapid Transit" website](#).



Public Meeting Planned for Kindler Pedestrian and Bicycle Bridge Feasibility Study

Earlier this month, OoT held an open house-style public meeting to discuss a study the office is conducting to evaluate the feasibility of constructing a pedestrian and bicycle bridge over the Middle Patuxent River. This bridge would create a multimodal transportation connection between Kindler Road and Eden Brook Drive. A roadway and vehicle bridge had previously existed in this location; however, the bridge was destroyed by Hurricane Agnes in 1972 and never rebuilt.

The study will present a high-level evaluation of crossing locations and bridge concepts that are feasible based on documentation and field run topographic surveys. Moreover, the purpose of this phase of the study is to identify a preferred crossing location and bridge concepts that will lay the foundation for future phases as the project moves into design alternatives.

For those who were unable to attend the meeting, details about the project are available on [OoT's "Kindler Pedestrian & Bicycle Bridge Feasibility Study" website](#). From this same site, residents can also find a feedback survey – open until this Friday, October 2nd, to share their thoughts.



Howard County Government | 3430 Court House Drive | Ellicott City, Maryland, MD 21043 US

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