

Montgomery County CULTURAL PLAN

Create. Inspire. Connect. Belong.

Montgomery County
**CULTURAL
PLAN** Create. Inspire.
Connect. Belong.



Framing Question



How can Montgomery County help its residents lead culturally rich lives and best support community-backed priorities through arts, culture, and the humanities?

Photo courtesy of AHCMC (2023), "Where Dreams Live/Donde Viven los Sueños" by Osbel Susman-Peña

A low-angle photograph of a person painting a mural on a wall. The person is wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt and sunglasses, and is holding a paintbrush to a section of the mural. The mural features large, stylized shapes in yellow, orange, blue, and purple. The background is a clear blue sky.

Belonging | Cultural Resilience | Intersectionality

*Photo courtesy of M-NCPPC, 2020
Dewey Park Mural Project by Juan Pineda*

Values

Belonging:

How can arts, culture, and humanities investments and policies:

- Respond to Montgomery County's rapid and diverse population growth
- Expand access to arts and culture resources for all residents
- Advance racial equity

Cultural Sector Resilience:

How can the County's arts and culture investments and policies best support the arts, culture, and humanities sector to:

- Strengthen capacity
- Address structural gaps
- Effectively respond to continued impacts of the pandemic and economic and political instability

Intersectionality:

How can the cultural sector/creative economy intersect with the government and local NGOs in innovative ways to add value to:

- Housing
- Economic development
- Well-being/health
- Education
- Community building
- Environmental stewardship

A low-angle photograph of a person painting a mural on a wall. The person is wearing a grey hoodie and sunglasses, and is holding a paintbrush. The mural features large, stylized shapes in yellow, orange, and blue. The background is a clear blue sky.

BELONGING

Creating a community where everyone belongs
and can lead culturally rich lives

*Photo courtesy of M-NCPPC (2020)
Dewey Park Mural Project by Juan Pineda*

Belonging:

How can arts, culture, and humanities investments and policies:

- Respond to Montgomery County's rapid and diverse population growth
- Expand access to arts and culture resources for all residents
- Advance racial equity



*Photo courtesy of Dinah Schroeder (2024)
"Harmonic Hands for Change"*

A low-angle photograph of a person painting a mural on a wall. The person is wearing a grey hoodie and sunglasses, and is holding a paintbrush. The mural features large, stylized shapes in yellow, orange, and blue. The background is a clear blue sky.

CULTURAL SECTOR RESILIENCE

Helping our artists and our cultural communities thrive

*Photo courtesy of M-NCPPC (2020)
Dewey Park Mural Project by Juan Pineda*

Cultural Sector Resilience:

How can the County's arts and culture investments and policies best support the arts, culture, and humanities sector to:

- Strengthen capacity
- Address structural gaps
- Effectively respond to continued impacts of the pandemic and economic and political instability



Photo courtesy of AHCMC (2023), "Where Dreams Live/Donde Viven los Sueños" by Osbel Susman-Peña

A low-angle photograph of a person painting a mural on a wall. The person is wearing a grey hoodie and sunglasses, and is holding a paintbrush. The mural features large, colorful geometric shapes in shades of yellow, orange, blue, and purple. The background is a clear blue sky.

INTERSECTIONALITY

Using arts, culture, and the humanities
to help solve community challenges

*Photo courtesy of M-NCPPC (2020)
Dewey Park Mural Project by Juan Pineda*

Intersectionality:

How can the cultural sector/creative economy intersect with the government and local NGOs in innovative ways to add value to:

- Housing
- Economic development
- Well-being/health
- Education
- Community building
- Environmental stewardship



*Photo courtesy of André Chung (2021)
"Certain Party or Parties Unknown"*

Community Engagement Opportunities

**Presentations to
boards/classes**

**Community
Survey**

Youth Town Hall

**Cultural Preserves
pop ups**

**Community
Conversations**

**Cultural Sector
Focus Groups**

Photo courtesy of Holly Bass, Cultural Preserves Project

Our engagement activities



Reached **2,000+** people
with **86** engagements
over **7** months

Top: Photos by Sed Gary, Dream Story Productions (2025), Youth Town Hall
Bottom: "Cultural Preserves" by Holly Bass. Photos by Sed Gary, Dream Story Productions (2025),

Presentations

- Brief presentations to boards, commissions, and classes across the county
- Build awareness about the plan and engage their help to reach diverse constituencies
- Met with 37 groups to date
- Presented live and via recorded video



Montgomery Planning Board Live Stream, April 10, 2025

Cultural Preserves

- Pop-up creative engagement events at festivals, markets, and gatherings
- Meet people where they are and get “regular” residents’ point of view
- Nine events, one in every council district, plus two extras
- More than 250 responses across all events



"Cultural Preserves" by Holly Bass. Photos by Sed Gary, Dream Story Productions, (2025)

Survey

- Offered in 7 languages: Amharic, Chinese, French, Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese, English
- Postcard mailing to 82,000 households in priority stakeholder groups
- Lottery for 10 \$100 gift cards

How can the County support your culture, community, and creativity?

Tell us and be entered to win \$100!

Comment le comité peut-il
soutenir votre culture,
votre communauté et
votre créativité ?

Dites-le-nous et vous
pourriez gagner 100 \$!

카운티가 귀하의 문화나 공동체, 그리고
창의성을 어떻게 지원할 수 있을까요?

의견을 내고 \$100를 얻을 기회에 참여하세요!

郡政府可以如何支持您的文化、社區和創意？

告訴我們即可有機會贏得100美元抽獎！

¿De qué manera puede el Gobierno del condado
respaldar su cultura, comunidad y creatividad?

¡Denos su opinión y participe en un sorteo
en el que podría ganarse 100 dólares!

Quận có thể hỗ trợ văn hóa,
cộng đồng và sự sáng tạo
của quý vị như thế nào?

Chia sẻ ý kiến với
chúng tôi và có cơ
hội trúng thưởng \$100!

ካውንቲው የእርስዎን ባህል፣
ግንባረሰብ እና የፈጠራ ችሎታዎን
እንዴት ሊደግፍ ይችላል?

ምላሽዎን በግንጋራት 100 ዶላር
ለማሸነፍ በውድድሩ ይሳተፉ!



www.creativemoco.com/cultural-plan/

Survey

- Transit advertising
- Advertisements in ethnic media
- Social media ads, toolkit and sample e-newsletter blurbs
- Intercept (ipad) surveys



Survey

How representative?

- 1,345 responses
- Exceeds 95% confidence level
- Broad demographic representation
- Robust cultural sector participation



Community Survey

Dear neighbor,

We L♥VE our multicultural, multi-generational county and wonder, **How can the County support your culture, community, and creativity?** We invite you to **share your views** in this brief, online survey. Each person who completes the survey will have a chance to **win a \$100 gift card!!**

Your responses will help shape the [Montgomery County Cultural Plan](#), which will focus on:

- Creating a community where everyone belongs and can lead culturally rich lives
- Helping our artists and our cultural communities thrive
- Using arts, culture, and the humanities to help solve community challenges

THANK YOU!

Two handwritten signatures are shown. The first signature is in dark ink and appears to be "Suzan". The second signature is in a lighter ink and appears to be "Anne J. Nicodemus".

Suzan Jenkins, CEO, AHCMC

Anne Gadwa Nicodemus, cultural plan project director, Metris

Community Conversations

- Engaged grassroots community connectors to lead small-group conversations
- Provided facilitation training and written guidance, a list of discussion questions
- 17 conversations to date, up to 14 participants per group



Photo courtesy of Heruy Aregawi (2025), Ethiopian Artists Community Conversation

Community Conversations

To date:

- Artists
- BIPOC artists
- East Asian community/leaders (Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Filipino)
- Ethiopian artists
- Ethiopian community
- El Salvadoran community
- LGBTQIA+ artists and community
- Disability communities
- Francophone Black diaspora
- Spanish speaking
- Middle Eastern community
- Older adults
- Regional Service Centers (Bethesda, Mid-County, Silver Spring, Up-County)
- South Asian community/leaders (Indian, Pakistani, Nepalese, Sri Lankan)



Top: Photo by Sed Gary, Dream Story Productions (2025), Youth Town Hall
Bottom: Photo courtesy of Dinah Schroeder (2024), Climate Crisis Center Public Art Residency

Interviews

- County agencies and departments most closely tied to art and culture
- 11 county agency/department interviews with a total of 17 people
- 4 high-influence stakeholder interviews



Youth Town Hall



- Youth are a priority engagement group
- In partnership with Councilmember Natali Fani-González
- More than 100 students from middle and high schools in Rockville, Silver Spring, and Bethesda

Photos by Sed Gary, Dream Story Productions (2025), Youth Town Hall

Focus Groups

- Six focus groups
 - Arts and cultural org budgets over \$1M
 - Arts and cultural org budgets under \$1M
 - BIPOC and culturally-specific organizations
 - Arts educators
 - Creative businesses
 - Individual artists/cultural practitioners
- 57 participants across all groups



Photo by Metris Art Consulting (2025), Zoom Still from Virtual Focus Group

TAKEAWAYS



Intersectionality

Themes:

- Conceptual but not practical understanding
- Decentralized

Takeaway:

- Institutionalize art and culture within county government and give it “teeth”



Photo by Ashley Alvarez (2024) Community Advisory Group Workshop

Belonging

Themes:

- Social connections
- Equitable access

Takeaway:

- Support community events and classes across a broader range of ages, geographies, cultures, disciplines, and modalities



Photo from Wikimedia Creative Commons, Spring for Poetry in Takoma Park

Cultural Sector Resilience

Themes:

- Validation
- Funding
- Space
- Professional development

Takeaway:

- Connect cultural sector to resources and one another



Photo courtesy of AHCMC, "Meet Me at the Triangles", (2020) by Norie Sato in collaboration with Adrienne Moumin, Eric B. Ricks, Maritza Rivera, and Achamyelah Debela

A close-up, slightly blurred photograph of a person's hands writing on a piece of paper. The person is wearing a dark jacket. Their right hand holds a black pen, and their left hand rests on the paper. The paper has handwritten text in black ink. In the foreground, another person's hand is visible, wearing a light blue shirt, with a yellow highlighter resting on the paper. The background is out of focus, showing a desk and some papers.

NEXT STEPS

Plan Phases



DESIGN

Sep 2024 - Jan 2025



DISCOVER

Feb - Sep 2025



ENVISION

Sep - Dec 2025



CONFIRM

Jan - Feb 2026



CELEBRATE

Mar - Apr 2026



Photo courtesy of Dinah Schroeder (2024), Climate Crisis Center Public Art Residency

THANK YOU!

Montgomery County
**CULTURAL
PLAN**
Create. Inspire.
Connect. Belong.



*Subscribe for updates to
the Cultural Plan*

Arts & Humanities Council of Montgomery County

Suzan Jenkins, CEO

Joe Frandoni, Deputy Director

Joe.Frandoni@creativemoco.com

Metris Arts Consulting

Anne Gadwa Nicodemus, Project Director

gadwa@metrisarts.com

Maame (May) Amoyaw, Community Engagement Coordinator

amoyaw@metrisarts.com