In Montgomery County, we focus on investing in people through innovative, high-quality services and programs. Experience has shown that we are most successful and have the greatest impact when we collaborate, learn from one another, and share resources. It is in that spirit that we thank you for your continued support and advocacy. Our combined efforts and strategic focus have allowed us and the County Commissioners Association of Ohio to accomplish far more than could have ever been achieved individually.

Looking back, we have seen marked success in the past few years. Our community has joined together to combat the opioid epidemic using a collective impact model, the Community Overdose Action Team (COAT), which has become a nationally recognized approach for how communities can turn the tide in this ongoing public health crisis.

We successfully advocated for the authority to pass an Additional Permissive License Fee to fund critical infrastructure improvements.

We also shared the meaningful impact of Montgomery County’s Preschool Promise initiative, which expanded to serve approximately 2,200 4-year-olds in the 2019-2020 school year at a funding level of $2 million. Restoration of state funding would allow for further expansion, so that all families are able to afford quality preschool.

In the coming years, our primary focus will be restoring the tide in this ongoing public health crisis.

We have been successful in our community by coming together to tackle our most pressing problems, but having support from our state government will be essential to continuing our economic growth, providing vital social services, and creating innovative programs that address the pressing issues and challenges faced by our communities.

We look forward to working with you to meet these challenges and find creative, collaborative solutions. Please feel free to contact us any time so that we can support each other for our common good.
**Infant Mortality**
*EveryOne Reach One*

EveryOne Reach One was established by Montgomery County Public Health and Montgomery County with the goal of reducing the infant mortality rate in Montgomery County by focusing on:

1. **Reduction of preterm births.**
2. **Reduction of substance misuse in pregnant women and mothers of infants.**
3. **Weaving social determinants of health into strategies to reduce racial/ethnic disparities.**

Infant Mortality is a key long-term indicator for birth outcomes, as well as for overall community health and well-being. We need more resources to target assistance to pregnant African-American women, and to increase awareness of the risks for infant mortality in the community. Montgomery County Public Health, nonprofits, service providers, and the region’s hospital systems are committed to working together with the State of Ohio to permanently reduce the rate of infant mortality in our community.

**Infrastructure Policy Recommendations**

We must invest approximately $750 million over the next 20 years to ensure our water and sewer infrastructure stays safe and reliable, and to continue protecting public health and the environment. We suggest:

- **Increasing grant funding to the Ohio Public Works Commission** for road and utility projects through the State Capital Improvement Plan would make a huge impact on our efforts. We collaborate with local communities to obtain grant funding, allowing us to save resources by combining projects and coordinating utility and street repairs.
- **Offering 0% interest loans to all water/sewer providers through the Ohio EPA Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance.** Making them open to all utilities, regardless of utility size and residents’ economic status, would allow us to complete necessary utility projects.

**Criminal Justice Reform**

We faced several challenges with managing our jail population in the past few years, primarily due to the mounting opioid crisis and a change in state policy that led to low-level, non-violent felony prisoners being sent to county jails instead of state prisons. Despite these hurdles, we have reduced our jail population through creative and innovative programs aimed at keeping non-violent offenders out of jail in the first place, and providing services to help offenders reenter society and become productive members of their communities. We support statewide bail reform, which would further assist in our efforts to reduce our jail population.

In addition, the costs have continued to rise to maintain facilities and provide adequate health and mental health services inside the jail. Restoration of state funding would allow us to provide a more humane and safe environment for our inmates.

**Policy Recommendations**

- **Restore $166 million annual Medicaid MCO revenue loss,** providing about $9.1 million per year to Montgomery County.
- **Assume financial responsibility for indigent defense,** which is the state’s legal obligation. Montgomery County currently spends approximately $1.7 million per year on indigent defense.
- **Restore the Local Government Fund (LGF) to its previous statutory level,** creating an additional $145 million annually for counties and $9.7 million annually for Montgomery County. Currently, the LGF receives 1.66% of the General Revenue Fund taxes, compared to 3.68% in 2008.

**A True Partnership: Restore Relationship between State & County Governments**

Counties are instruments of the state, implementing policies and programs at the local level. The state must dedicate adequate resources to ensure counties can accomplish the state’s mission:

- **Restore $166 million annual Medicaid MCO revenue loss,**
- **Assume financial responsibility for indigent defense,** which is the state’s legal obligation. Montgomery County currently spends approximately $1.7 million per year on indigent defense.
- **Support every Ohio county to permanently reduce the infant mortality in our community.**
- **Support EveryOne Reach One**

**Infrastructure**

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  - **Reduction of preterm births.**
  - **Reduction of substance misuse in pregnant women and mothers of infants.**
  - **Weaving social determinants of health into strategies to reduce racial/ethnic disparities.**

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**Policy Recommendations**

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  - **Increasing grant funding to the Ohio Public Works Commission** for road and utility projects through the State Capital Improvement Plan would make a huge impact on our efforts.
  - **Offering 0% interest loans to all water/sewer providers through the Ohio EPA Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance.**
- **We need more resources to target assistance to pregnant African-American women,** and to increase awareness of the risks for infant mortality in the community.
- **Montgomery County Public Health, nonprofits, service providers,** and the region’s hospital systems are committed to working together with the State of Ohio to permanently reduce the rate of infant mortality in our community.

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**Fighting an Opioid Epidemic**

Montgomery County’s collective impact approach to the opioid epidemic has earned national recognition. However, the state must do its part to help counties, especially those in rural areas, combat this devastating crisis. The state should consider creating a state budget line item to specifically address the opioid crisis.

**Food Policy: Tackling Food Insecurity and Food Deserts**

In our region, one out of six people don’t know where their next meal is coming from, which is a sobering statistic. The state must support the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which keeps many of our working families and children from going hungry in our community. It is our first line of defense against food insecurity.

In addition, many low-income neighborhoods exist in “food deserts,” where residents lack access to healthy food. To tackle this issue, Montgomery County approved the investment of more than $170,000 to support the Gem City Market, a co-op grocery store to serve one such area.

Additional funding from the state can allow counties to support creative and collaborative solutions to address the issues of hunger in our communities.