

**Statement by Commissioner Josh Shapiro**  
**2015 Proposed Operating Budget for Montgomery County**  
**November 20, 2014**

The budget we unveil today furthers the commitment of this Administration to a fiscally responsible, effective and efficient government in Montgomery County. For the third consecutive year, we offer a balanced budget that makes critical investments in our people and our future.

This proposed 2015 operating budget holds the line on taxes, as we've done in each of our prior budgets. It spends less overall than we will spend in 2014, reduces overall debt, ensures a fully funded reserve fund and makes a significant payment to the county pension fund. At the same time, through years of reform and innovative work, this fiscally responsible path paves the way for critical investments in human services, public safety and the judiciary, infrastructure and our county workforce.

Here are a few highlights of the operating budget:

- No tax increase.
- Reduces overall spending by \$9 million from 2014.
- Debt will be reduced from \$427 million in 2013 to \$363 by the end of 2015.
- Reserve fund will be 11 percent of the overall operating budget (the recommended level is 10 percent).
- Increases county funding for human services by \$1 million which will allow us to leverage an additional \$2.9 million in state funding. It also calls for the expansion of the successful Community Connections program begun under this Administration to include new sites in Lower Merion, the Upper Perk Valley and the Ambler area.
- Fully funds the budget request from the Montgomery County Community College which represents a 4.6 percent increase over the 2014 budget.
- Invests in critical public safety functions by increasing funding for Adult Probation and Parole to allow for the hiring of seven new probation officers, the District Attorney and the Public Defender.
- Again demonstrates our commitment to our “county family”—the workforce—by providing a 1 percent salary increase for all non-represented employees and holding the line on their health care costs despite the overall rising cost of health insurance to Montgomery County and the offering of additional services. Further, due to an anomaly every employee will receive an extra paycheck equivalent to an additional 3.9 percent in calendar year 2015 at a total cost to the county of \$5.2 million. What businesses typically do is reduce employee paychecks by a percentage so there is no change in annual salary. Instead, our way will result in more take home pay for our employees in 2015. We believe in our county employees and appreciate the critical role they play in serving our constituents.

In addition to the operating budget, today we propose a \$71 million capital budget that again focuses investment on county-owned infrastructure like parks, trails, open spaces, historic sites, roads, bridges and buildings. In fact 95.5 cents of every capital dollar goes to county assets.

We manage to make these critical investments while actually reducing our county debt.

We've proven together that sensible, responsible fiscal policy which spends tax dollars carefully and wisely without asking taxpayers for more of their hard earned money to operate the government does not undermine our ability to help those who depend on us. It's actually quite the contrary. Thanks to innovative policies and meaningful reform, Montgomery County's success story demonstrates that it is a false choice between fiscal responsibility and meeting the needs of constituents. Call it pragmatic progressivism. Call it Montgomery County government under this administration. While Washington and Harrisburg deliver rhetoric, we deliver results.