

2022 ANNUAL REPORT



CHARLES COUNTY
GOVERNMENT

CHARLES COUNTY is a code home rule county governed by a five-member Board of Commissioners. The five Commissioners are elected at large to four-year terms of office. The Commissioner President is the presiding officer of the board at meetings and hearings. The Commissioner President may reside anywhere in the county. The other four Commissioners must each reside in a Commissioner district.

BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES

- Generating revenues to fund the county's capital and operating budgets, as well as other county departments and agencies.
- Providing for the public health, safety, and welfare of Charles County residents and visitors.
- Adopting and updating the Charles County Comprehensive Plan, Land Use Plan, and Zoning Ordinance.
- Overseeing the development process.
- Establishing, promulgating, and enforcing county rules, regulations, ordinances, policies, and procedures.
- Appointing boards, commissions, and task forces.
- Fulfilling the mission of Charles County Government.

COMMISSIONER MEETINGS

BOARD MEETINGS — The Board of Commissioners meetings are scheduled regularly and held virtually and/or in the County Government Building at 200 Baltimore Street in La Plata. The public can watch meetings on Comcast 95, Verizon Fios 10, Roku, or Apple TV streaming devices (Charles County Government), and online at: www.CharlesCountyMD.gov/services/media-services/charles-county-government-television. For virtual meetings, residents without internet service or cable access can listen to the meeting at 301-645-0500. Meetings are advertised in advance at www.CharlesCountyMD.gov.

COMMUNITY MEETINGS — The Commissioners hold community meetings virtually and at convenient locations throughout Charles County. These meetings are open to the public and provide an opportunity for attendees to ask questions and discuss items that are important to the community.

CHARLES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner President **Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq.** is a lifelong resident of Charles County, raised in Bryans Road. He is a graduate of Charles County Public Schools. For more than 20 years, he has practiced law for R.B. Collins Law, LLC. He served four previous terms as County Commissioner for District 3. This is his second term serving as Commissioner President. He is the first African American elected to this Charles County position.



Commissioner Vice President

Ralph E. Patterson, II, M.A.

(**District 4**) Commissioner Patterson enjoys giving back to his community through coaching youth in soccer and volleyball. He has a strong family background of service. Currently, he is a high school Special Education teacher in Prince George's County.



Commissioner Gilbert "BJ" Bowling, III

(**District 1**) is a lifelong resident of Charles County and lives in Dentsville. He owns and operates a fifth-generation family farm with his grandfather and father and has worked professionally in public safety for more than 20 years.



Commissioner Thomasina O. Coates, M.S. (**District 2**) is a native of Charles County, proud graduate of Charles County Public Schools, and lives in White Plains. She owns a small business in Charles County and worked in information technology for the federal government for 30 years.



Commissioner Amanda M. Stewart, M.Ed.

(**District 3**) is a 30-year resident of Charles County, proud graduate of Charles County Public Schools, and is serving her third term as a County Commissioner. She has more than 15 years of experience in public education and co-owns a small business with her husband.





WELCOME

Commissioner President Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq.

Greetings to our community. I am proud to live in and work for Charles County, a place where we strive to work unified towards a great future for all. As I reflect upon the previous year, and begin my second term as Commissioner President, we have much to celebrate and new opportunities to explore. I am excited for the future ahead of us, and the groundwork we have laid to continue our progress.

Charles County is uniquely positioned as a diverse, growing county with the advantages of suburban vitality to shop, dine, and live, while being close to parks, recreation, and outdoor activities for all ages. As our county grows, we want to take advantage of our unique position for growth and leverage our assets to ensure our whole community can enjoy the opportunities around us.

Our community is also shifting demographically. We have recently surpassed Prince George's County as the wealthiest majority African American county in the state of Maryland. As we experience demographic changes, it's important to make sure that we integrate an equitable approach into all of our policy decisions. From job growth to transportation, affordable housing, and public education, we must make sure that everyone who lives and works in our community has the opportunity to thrive and prosper.

We are continuing to work to provide affordable housing options for our residents and those who would love to call Charles County their home. The county continues to work to eliminate disparities and provide more opportunities for homeownership and housing preservation.

Our county continues to work with federal, state, and private partners to help our local businesses flourish and grow. When our local businesses thrive, our entire community thrives. By building up our local economy and expanding the commercial tax base, it allows the county to fund a variety of growing needs, such as funding the Blueprint for Maryland's Future investment in public schools, public safety, and more. I am also proud Charles County was reaffirmed of its triple-A credit rating, which reflects that we are responsibly managing our resources, maintaining the property tax rate, and making capital improvements that will sustain our county's growth moving forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "RC".

Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq.

Commissioner President

YOUR CHARLES COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



Commissioner President Reuben Collins, II, Esq. was honored to host Senator Chris Van Hollen's press conference on **Southern Maryland Rapid Transit (SMRT) Project**. This event highlighted the \$5M in federal earmark funding allocated for the SMRT Project. Also in attendance were Congressman Steny Hoyer and Senator Ben Cardin in making this exciting transportation improvement for Charles County.

Youth Programs — Commissioner President Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq. has been a long-standing advocate for the youth of Charles County. He revitalized the summer youth internship program through the Tri-County Council when he re-entered office in 2018. He held a youth forum with several nonprofit and community providers in March 2021. Then in 2022, he spearheaded, in partnership with the Charles County Board of Education, a joint meeting with local partners to "Support Youth in Charles County." The discussion centered on identifying issues and needs and how to create a plan that will have a positive impact on the youth in the county. This included the Department of Health; Department of Social Services; Charles County Public Library; College of Southern Maryland; and Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism. Three work groups were established focused on how to work and support struggling parents; how to centralize information, support services, resources for use by agencies and partner organizations in the county; and how to offer opportunities for youth and at-risk youth.

Commissioner Amanda M. Stewart, M.Ed. (District 3) was honored to participate in the historic ceremony on opening day of the New Nice-Middleton Bridge with then Governor Larry Hogan. She most enjoyed making connections for our residents and beyond.

Back-to-School Fiesta — Commissioner Stewart was proud to host her 8th Annual Back-to-School Community Fiesta and it was a great success. The fun-filled event was held as a drive-through at the Regency Furniture Stadium. Thanks to more than 20 hardworking volunteers, there were 356 backpacks stuffed with school supplies and goodies given to families for the 2022-2023 school year. Along with the backpacks, there were blood pressure monitors, masks, COVID-19 testing kits, diapers, baby wipes, and tickets to the Blue Crab game were handed out. The event felt more like a "fiesta" celebration and got students excited with a live DJ, Pinch from the Blue Crabs, McGruff, and Paw Patrol's Chase from the Charles County Sheriff's Office's Explorers Post. She is extremely grateful to serve the local students and families once again.



Commissioner Gilbert “BJ” O. Bowling, III (District 1) speaking at the Nanjemoy/Cobb Neck Broadband Groundbreaking ceremony on April 28, 2021. He’s an advocate for connecting our residents to an internet service provider and it is his top priority.

Food Giveaways — The last four years have shed light on food insecurity and the Farmers Feeding Charles County initiative has seen an increased demand, with the lines getting longer with each giveaway. Farmers Feeding Charles County is grateful to be able to provide fresh fruits, vegetables, and cuts of meat at these distributions over the last four years. Healthy Food + Healthy Lifestyles = A Healthy Charles County.



Commissioner Thomasina O. Coates, M.S. (District 2) seated (center) with graduates of the Economic Development's Business Growth Advantage Program (BGAP) on July 14, 2022. As a small business operator, Commissioner Coates understands the importance of having the tools and strategies for a successful business and truly supports this valuable economic development program.



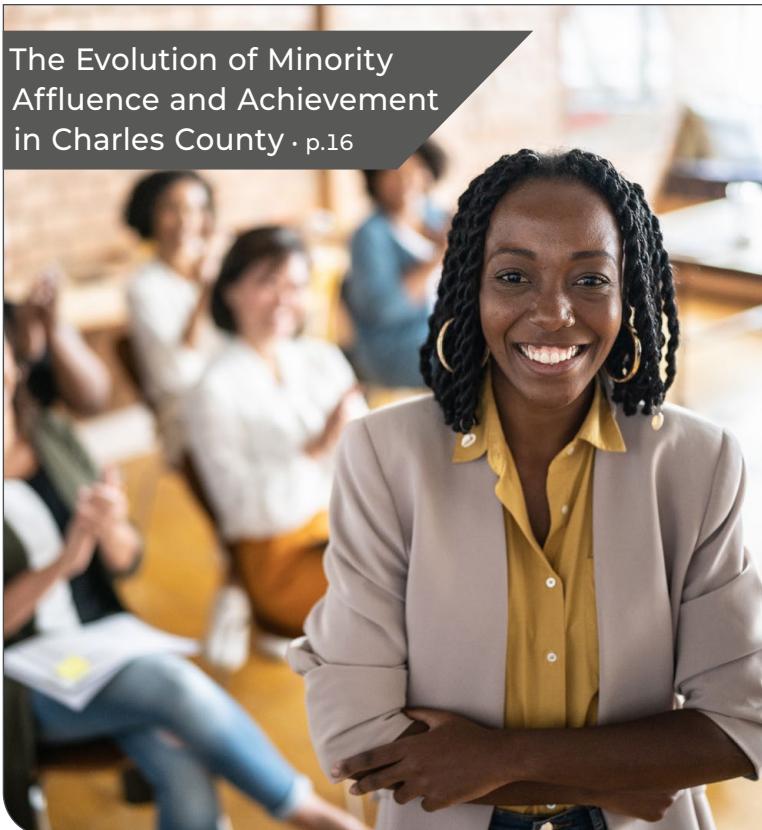
Commissioner Ralph E. Patterson, II (District 4) is taking his Oath of Office to begin his first term as a district commissioner. He was honored to include his daughters as he took office with the motto, “Family and community is why I serve.”

Economic Development — Improving the quality of life for all Charles County residents is Commissioner Patterson’s goal for his upcoming term. Charles County is at the forefront of innovation and development for the Southern Maryland region, as well as uniquely positioned to take advantage of the proximity to Washington D.C., while maintaining our signature southern charm.



CHARLES COUNTY GOVERNMENT

2022 ANNUAL REPORT



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Charles County Gateways
— The Approach to a
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Popes
Creek
Park
p.42

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CHARLES COUNTY GOVERNMENT

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www.CharlesCountyMD.gov

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Media Services Division • Internal Audit Office
Administration • Clerk to the Commissioners

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www.CharlesCountyMD.gov/government/departments/community-services

Housing Authority • Aging and Human Services
Local Management Board (CCACCYF) • Child Care
Nanjemoy Community Center

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

www.MeetCharlesCounty.com

Commercial Development/Redevelopment
Business Services • Agriculture Business Development
Economic Research and Special Projects
Economic Development Marketing

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EMERGENCY SERVICES

www.CharlesCountyMD.gov/services/emergency-services

9-1-1 Public Safety Communications • EMS
Emergency Management • False Alarm Reduction Unit
Animal Control • Tri-County Animal Shelter

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FISCAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

www.CharlesCountyMD.gov/government/departments/fiscal-and-administrative-services

Accounting • Budget • Information Technology • Payroll
Purchasing • Treasury • Water and Sewer Billing

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Retirees • Recruitment • Training • Wellness
Employee/Labor Relations • Compensation

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PLANNING AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT

www.CharlesCountyMD.gov/government/planning-and-growth-management

Planning • Codes, Permits, and Inspection Services •
Transit

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PUBLIC WORKS

www.CharlesCountyMD.gov/government/public-works-facilities
www.CharlesCountyMD.gov/services/public-works-utilities

Facilities: Buildings and Trades • Environmental Resources
Fleet and Inventory Management • Roads

Utilities: Water and Sewer Operations and Maintenance
Capital Services • Operations Support • Technical Support

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www.CharlesCountyParks.com • www.ExploreCharlesCounty.com

Recreation • Parks and Grounds • Tourism

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Learn more about Charles County Government and
the programs and services we provide.

www.CharlesCountyMD.gov



CHARLES COUNTY GOVERNMENT Executive Leadership Team

Our Executive Leadership Team (ELT) is comprised of 15 members from diverse backgrounds, education, and experiences. Within one organization, we comprise everything from emergency services to economic development to serve the Charles County community. With so many differing services, as well as employee specializations and niches, it creates unique opportunities to work together for the needs of the residents. The ELT meets as a group each week.

Over the past few years, the ELT has benefited from the leadership experience of knowledgeable experts from highly respected organizations such as: Adrienne Jones, MD House of Delegates Speaker, Kelly Schulz, MD Secretary of Commerce, Margaret Kibben, Chaplain, US House of Representatives, Linda Singh, Major General, US Army (Ret), CEO Kaleidoscope Affect LLC, fellow County Administrators Stacy Rodgers and Matt Power, to name a few. Other organizations represented during retreats were, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Maryland Department of Health, Maryland Department of the Environment, Charles County Human Resources, Department of the Navy, National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration, University of Maryland Medical System, Chesapeake Conservancy, and Maryland Association of Counties.

The value of highly functioning teams cannot be underestimated, and a foundation of trust must be at the center.

Meet the ELT Group



Mark Belton, County Administrator, is a graduate of the United States Naval Academy with a degree in political science and a MBA degree from Regis University. He served on the Board of Directors of the Chesapeake Conservancy and is the Maryland Association of Counties representative on the Maryland Climate Change Commission. He retired from the U.S. Navy at the rank of Rear Admiral and has more than 20 years in local and state government management experience.



Deborah E. Hall, CPA, Deputy County Administrator, holds a Master of Business Administration and a Bachelor of Science. She has more than 25 years of experience working in county government and a combined 34 years of finance and county administrative experience.



Wes Adams, Esq., County Attorney, holds a Juris Doctorate from The Catholic University of America Columbus School of Law. He has been an attorney for 22 years and has spent most of his career working in the public sector as a prosecutor and most recently working for local county governments.



Dina Barclay, Director of Community Services, holds a double major in psychology and criminology, followed by a Graduate Fellowship in the Marriage and Family Therapy Program from the University of Maryland, College Park. She has been employed by the Charles County Government for more than 21 years.



Michelle Lilly, Director of Emergency Services earned a Master of Public Health from West Virginia University in Morgantown, West Virginia, and a Bachelor of Science degree in health sciences from Mountain State University, in Beckley, West Virginia. Lilly is certified through the International Association of Emergency Managers as a certified emergency manager and holds a Maryland Professional Emergency Management Program Certification issued by the Maryland Emergency Management Association. She has 18 years of experience in emergency services.



Jenifer Ellin, Director of Fiscal and Administrative Services, holds a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Baltimore with a concentration in finance and a Master of Accountancy degree from George Washington University. She has been employed by the Charles County Government for more than 25 years with progressive advancements through the years.



Kelly Robertson-Slagle, Director of Economic Development, earned her A.S. Degree in Business Administration and Management Development from the College of Southern Maryland and B.S. degree in Marketing from the University of Maryland, College Park. She is a certified Master Economic Development Practitioner (MEDP). A graduate of both Leadership Maryland and Leadership Southern Maryland, she is a strategic leader with over 27 years of experience in planning, organizing, and implementing economic development functions from conception to completion.



Alexis Blackwell, Director of Human Resources, holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Business Management. She has 10 years of professional experience working for city and county governments with a total of 27 years in human resources.



Deborah Carpenter, Director of Planning and Growth Management, holds a master's degree in geography and a bachelor's degree in environmental analysis and planning, is certified by the American Institute of Certified Planners and is a Leadership Maryland graduate. Carpenter has served on the Maryland Sustainable Growth Commission and currently serves as Chairperson of the Board for Charles County Resilience Authority and has 26 years of experience in the planning industry.



Martin Harris, Director of Public Works, has more than 25 years of state and local government management experience within the field of public works and transportation. He formerly served as the acting director of Public Works and Transportation for Prince George's County, and as state legislative officer for the Maryland Department of Transportation. He holds a bachelor's degree in government from Harvard University.



Kelli Beavers, Director of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism, is a certified parks and recreation professional and holds a performance measurement certification from Rutgers University. She is a graduate of Leadership Arlington, Metropolitan Washington Council of Government's Institute for Regional Excellence, National Forum for Black Public Administrator's Executive Leadership Institute and Leadership Prince George's. She has 25 years of innovative leadership in the parks and recreation industry.



Renesha Miles, Chief Equity Officer, holds a masters degree in communication and leadership studies from Gonzaga University, and a bachelor's degree in English from North Carolina State University. She is a proud member of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc., actively serving her community. Miles began her career in the county's Recreation Division and has worked for the county for more than ten years.



Jennifer Harris, Chief of Media Services, holds a master's degree in public administration from George Mason University and a bachelor's degree in environmental systems technology from Cornell University, and is accredited in public relations through the Public Relations Society of America. Harris has 16 years of experience in strategic communications, media relations, executive counsel, and community engagement in the public sector, serving in a variety of senior communication roles in local government and public schools.



Crystal Hunt, Chief of Staff, holds a master's degree in journalism from The Ohio State University, a bachelor's degree in communications from Morgan State University, and Master Public Information Officer certification. A graduate of Leadership Southern Maryland, Hunt has 20 years of experience in local government, nonprofit, and health care sectors.

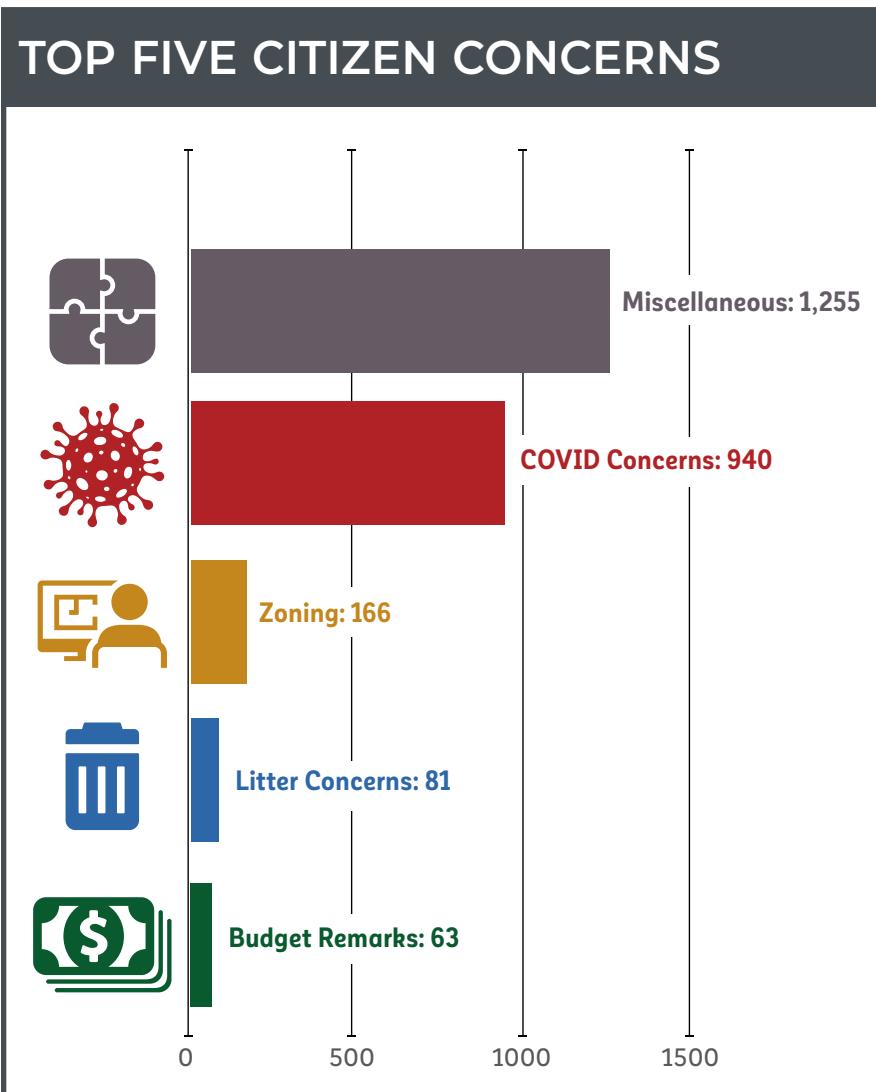


Carol DeSoto, Clerk to the Commissioners, holds a bachelors degree from Catholic University of America. She has 12 years of experience with county government and more than 20 years in business administration.

Responding to Resident Concerns

The county handles resident input, questions, and concerns through its **Citizen Response Office**. Residents can contact the office for streamlined communication and for timely responses by calling 301-645-0699 or completing the online contact form on the county's website at www.CharlesCountyMD.gov.

The Citizens Response Office is currently in the middle of implementing a commercial software platform, which updates the current 13-year-old, in-house database, to more efficiently coordinate the cases. This new software will offer residents more options to communicate with their County Government. It will provide a mobile app, case tracking, and more comprehensive and streamlined responses to their inquiries.



Satisfied Cases: 1,717
Inquiries completed, closed, or resolved

3,927 Fiscal 2022 inquiries

940 related to COVID

The **Department of Planning and Growth Management's administration staff** has experienced a consistent increase in customer inquiries directly related to both Public Information Act (PIA) requests and Citizen Response Office (CRO) referrals in 2022.

PIAs are customer requests for county documents, which are required to be processed within 30 days of receipt. Over the past three years, the department has seen a year-to-year increase of approximately 30 percent. This past calendar year, the department processed 548 PIA requests. Customers typically request site development plans or construction drawings. The department has been actively working to digitize our physical files and construction drawings that are in both on- and off-site storage facilities, to make them more accessible to the public.

CRO referrals are inquiries that are made directly to the County Commissioners' Office by citizens. These referrals require either technical expertise and/or significant staff research, including regular follow-up by staff. Over the past three years, the department has averaged approximately 190 CRO referrals per year and some can take several months to close out. Typically, most CROs sent to the department are complaints about possible code violations, which take significant time to investigate, address, and complete. To help reduce administrative staff time and improve the overall resident experience, the County Commissioners' Office is in the process of implementing an online citizen portal, SeeClickFix. Implementation of this service is anticipated in 2023.

Fiduciary Responsibility

Did you know? Charles County Government is responsible for collecting payments and fees, and administering funds for these public programs and services.



Emergency Services

9-1-1 Calls and Emergency Response

Public Works

Water/Sewer, Landfill, Recycling, Stormwater Management, and Maintenance

Economic Development

Business Attraction and Retention

Infrastructure

Broadband Expansion, Wastewater Treatment, and Supplying Potable Water

Community Services

Programs and Support for Seniors, Families, and Children

Planning and Growth

Permits, Inspections, Development Process, and Historic Preservation

Transportation

County Road Maintenance and Public Transit

Housing Authority

Housing Assistance for Low- and Moderate-Income Households

Parks and Recreation

Sports, Camps, Recreation Centers, and Public Parks

Animal Care Center

Temporary Housing, Care, and Adoption of Pets

Tourism

Promoting Local Attractions and Travel to Charles County

Charles County's Budget

Charles County Government's budget represents the allocation of resources based upon the delivery of essential programs and services. Each year, the County Administrator and fiscal leaders develop the budget process by:

- Estimating revenues from state and local taxes, federal and state grants, and user fees and charges;
- Evaluating budget requests from Charles County's Board of Education, the Sheriff, Public Libraries, States' Attorney, Courts, College of Southern Maryland, and other local agencies; and the county's Executive Leadership Team (ELT); and
- Proposing a balanced budget for the board to review.

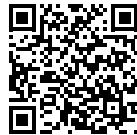
The Capital Improvement Program (CIP) funds one-time expenditures that pay for community assets. The Board of Commissioners reviews the CIP annually to designate funds for land preservation and construction and/or renovations of infrastructure. Government projects are supported by general fund revenues and bonds and cover schools, transportation, land preservation, and parks.

Enterprise projects are supported by user fees and cover stormwater, water and sewer, landfill, and environmental services related projects.

The Board of County Commissioners receives public comments, makes changes based upon community input, and approves the final budget by the end of May.

OUR BUDGET APPROACH

- ✓ Building a fiscally responsible budget
- ✓ Discussions with departments and agencies to set priorities
- ✓ Balance budget through internal reallocation of resources; no tax rate increases
- ✓ Planning for a sustainable budget to meet future needs

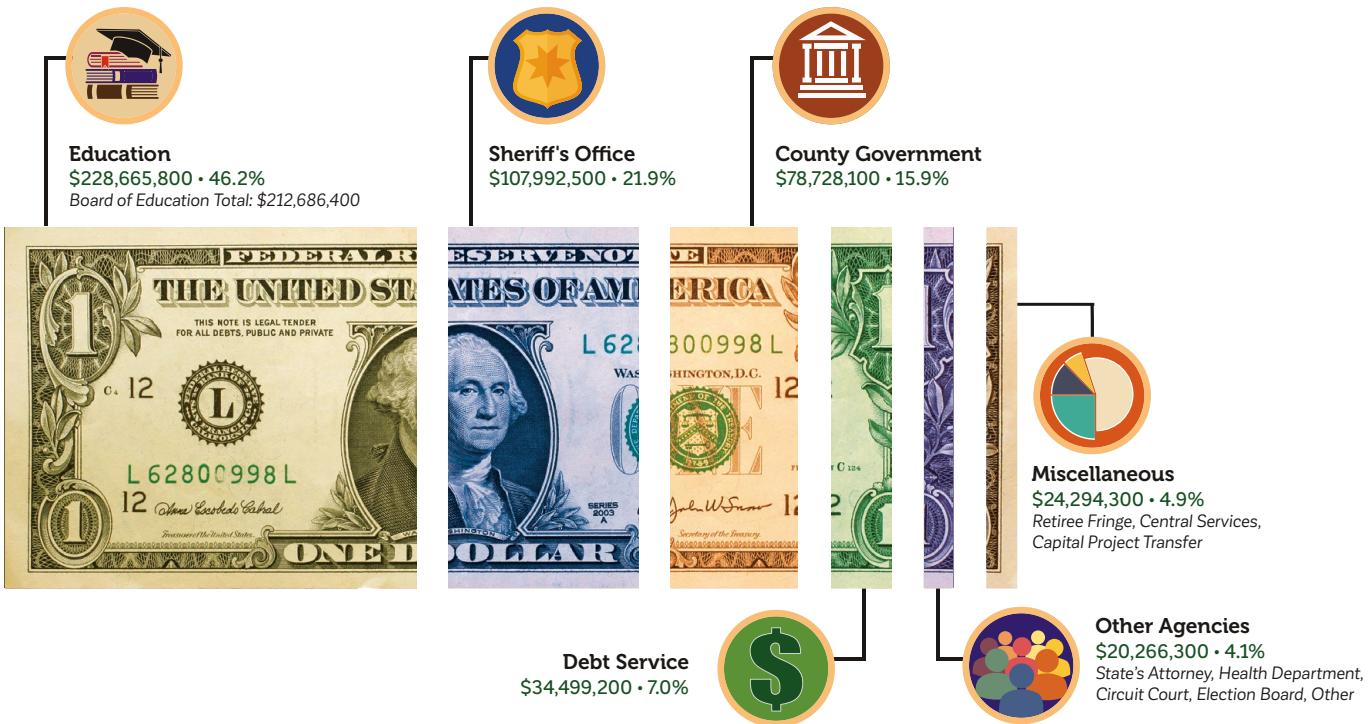


Learn more:

www.CharlesCountyMD.gov/BudgetProcess

The fiscal 2024 budget timeline is available online. Approval is expected on May 16, 2023.

Fiscal 2023 • July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023 Approved General Fund Budget: \$494,446,200



Fiscal 2023 Budget Highlights

July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023

The fiscal year 2023 budget runs from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023. The general fund is the largest operating fund of Charles County Government, and is used to account for financial transactions associated with government services, which are not legally required to be accounted for in a special fund, or are not part of self-supporting operations, which are called enterprise funds.

The Board of Commissioners approved new investments within the budget to support the county's need for increased services as the population grows.



County Government

A \$7 million increase was approved for operations to support county road maintenance, recreation services, information technology, and planning, and community resources coordination. The fiscal 2023 budget also included new positions for the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion office.

Additional funding highlights:

- Public Works – Utilities:** Improvements to the county's water and sewer infrastructure, as well as stormwater infrastructure improvements
- Emergency Medical Services:** Ten new emergency medical technicians, two dedicated for hazmat related support, and eight will support ambulance service in the Waldorf area
- Capital Improvements:** \$842.8 million capital improvements funding in fiscal 2023 to fiscal 2027 for county infrastructure to support schools, county buildings, roads, parks, water and sewer facilities, and stormwater management.



Board of Education

A \$12 million increase for Public Schools (exceeds maintenance of effort funding), which increases per pupil spending by 6 percent. The budget provided record funding of \$212,686,400 to help support the Blueprint Implementation costs. The Board of Education is an elected body that prioritizes funds based upon the superintendent's proposed budget. The Board of Commissioners receives a briefing on the Board of Education's budget and approves spending by category in June each year. For details, visit www.ccboe.com.



Sheriff's Office

The Board of Commissioners increased the allocation of funds to the Sheriff's Office by \$7.13 million. The Board of Commissioners approves the total budget, new positions, and capital purchases. It also provides for mandated increases per county code in employee compensation for sworn deputies. Funding for fiscal 2023 included 10 new positions: station clerks, forensic science technicians, court security officers, fleet specialist, automated enforcement supervisor, and teen court specialist. The BusPatrol School Bus Safety Program was also funded. The sheriff is the chief elected official responsible for the county's law enforcement and corrections and determines how to spend all funds within the department's operating budget. For details, visit www.ccsos.us.

Other Local Agency Operations

\$4.06 million increase for other local government functions, including funding for the State's Attorney's Office, Department of Health, Circuit Court, Election Board, and other government agencies' support.

REAL PROPERTY TAX RATE

The real property tax rate remained the same at \$1.141 for County Government and \$0.064 for Fire and Rescue per \$100 of assessed value. The income tax rate of 3.03 percent also remained unchanged.

The Fire and Rescue funds are used to pay for facilities and capital assets used by the Charles County Volunteer Fire and EMS Associations and are governed by the Board of Fire and Rescue. The board reviews the financing of the fire departments and rescue squads in Charles County and makes appropriate recommendations on the formula for distribution of fire tax

revenues, purchase of equipment, and facility needs. One cent of the Fire and Rescue Tax pays for a Length of Service Awards Program (LOSAP) for the volunteers. The Fire Department is an all-volunteer service and EMS volunteers supplement paid EMS staff in Charles County. For more information on its operations, visit www.ccvfireems.org.

A Refocus On Broadband

Since its creation in 2019, the Rural Broadband Task Force has made significant strides to bring high-speed internet access to residents in previously unserved rural areas.

In 2022, progress was made on the Nanjemoy/Cobb Neck Broadband Buildout and the Neighborhood Broadband Expansion project was fully completed.

The task force again partnered with two of our internet service providers, Comcast and ThinkBig Networks, LLC, to apply for the **Fiscal 2022 Broadband Infrastructure Grant Program** through the Maryland Office of Statewide Broadband. Both applications were successful and construction is expected to begin in 2023.

With the addition of these new projects, the task force will bring broadband **access to almost 3,000 Category 1 and Category 2 properties** across Charles County. These properties are unserved because there is no existing infrastructure in the area (Category 1), or they are located in unserved “pockets” in otherwise served areas (Category 2).

Long Driveway Grant Program

In 2022, the task force launched the Long Driveway Grant Program (LD-Cat3) to address Category 3, which includes **properties with long driveways**. This program will provide financial assistance for service drop construction to connect homes at the end of long, private driveways to the existing broadband network on the road. Residents are eligible to participate in the program if their service drop is constructed from July 1, 2021 to December 30, 2024.

This program is unique, and one of the first of its kind. The county will pay **90 percent of the cost** of the service drop down the long driveway, up to \$15,000. The resident is responsible for the remaining cost. An important feature of the LD-Cat3 is the hardship waiver. Program participants that qualify for the Affordable Connectivity Program through the Federal Communications Commission may receive a hardship waiver to cover the resident's 10 percent contribution. Residents can apply for the grant on the county's website (link below).

While the task force has been hard at work over the past several years and made substantial inroads, the process — by its very nature — takes significant time. The projects have been affected by inclement weather, labor and material shortages, and the inability to get necessary easements to install the underground infrastructure. Despite these setbacks, the task force is proud of the progress made and is committed to meeting our mission of “bringing broadband to unserved areas of Charles County.”



Visit our website to apply for a long driveway grant, follow our progress, easement info, etc.:
www.CharlesCountyMD.gov/our-county/rural-broadband-in-charles-county

NORTHERN NANJEMOY

ISP: ThinkBig Networks, LLC

\$884,643 Amount Awarded

\$1,263,769 Total Project Cost

350 Properties

DENTSVILLE & CHARLOTTE HALL

ISP: Comcast

\$9,664,808 Amount Awarded

\$11,466,883 Total Project Cost

996 Properties

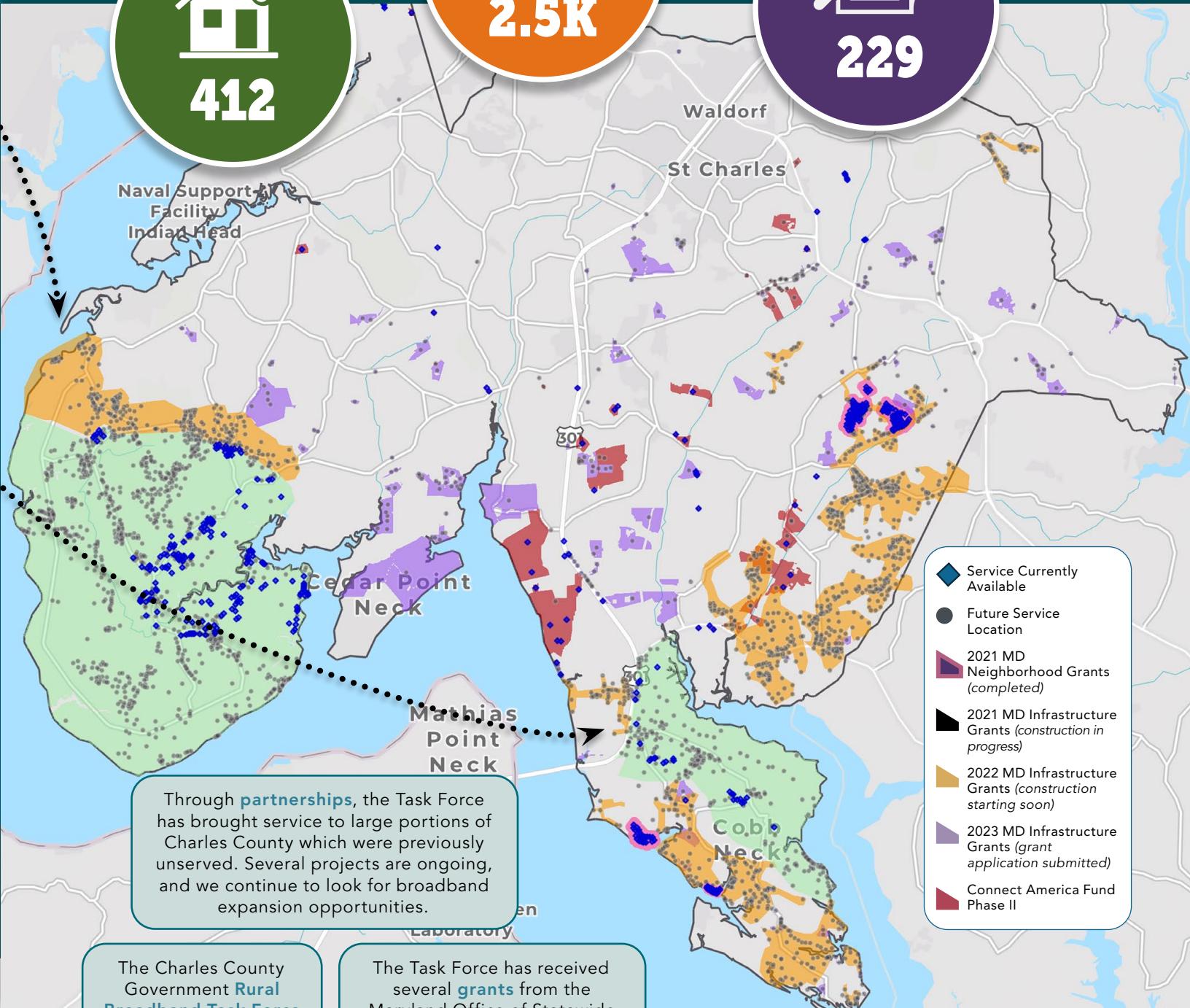
Grant made available through the County!

Grant could pay up to 15 thousand dollars for the construction to connect homes at the end of long private driveways!



Watch our video "Charles County Long Driveway(CAT3) Grant Program" to learn more: youtu.be/6eU2gCTBR2A

RURAL BROADBAND PROJECTS



Through **partnerships**, the Task Force has brought service to large portions of Charles County which were previously unserved. Several projects are ongoing, and we continue to look for broadband expansion opportunities.

The Charles County Government **Rural Broadband Task Force** was created in 2019 to expand high speed broadband access to unserved areas in Charles County.

The Task Force has received several **grants** from the Maryland Office of Statewide Broadband, which has been an invaluable resource and partner. We also worked closely with ISPs and local utilities.

The Evolution of Minority Affluence and Achievement in Charles County

IN SUMMER 2022, Charles County was named the most affluent Black-majority county in the United States. The U.S. Census American Community Survey recently reported that the Black population climbed above 50 percent, making Charles County a Black-majority county.¹





According to a data analysis completed by *The Washington Post*, between 2009-2020, the number of Black families earning more than \$200,000 in Charles County quadrupled². While these data points drive the narrative, the Charles County Economic Development Department (EDD) plays a lead role in the story.

Washington, D.C. was once a majority-Black city, but that trend has shifted in recent years³. Charles County's proximity, affordable real estate, and attractive lifestyle made it a smart choice for Black professionals and families seeking water views and wide open spaces.

Ample amenities, convenience, quality schools, and the prospect of homeownership drove population growth in suburban Charles County.

Evolving from a rural farming economy to an economy with broad-based strengths, the development of new industries is a key aspect of the story. Today's lead industries include health care, manufacturing, energetics, craft beverage, federal contracting, and retail. Industry diversification expands the professional opportunities available, creating new jobs and eliminating the need for residents and entrepreneurs to commute further.



Charles County's minority entrepreneurs keep innovation robust, and the Economic Development Department fuels this momentum. Today, a growing number of minority-owned businesses and entrepreneurs make their mark on health care, manufacturing, energetics, craft beverage, federal contracting, and retail. The department's Circle of Services, an ecosystem of local, regional, and state partners, provides minority-owned businesses with the resources

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1. U.S. Census Bureau, "Population Estimates, July 1, 2022 (V 2022) - Charles County, MD" Quick Facts, accessed January 12, 2023
 2. Van Dam, Andrew. "Is Prince George's still the richest majority-Black county in America?" *The Washington Post*, June 29, 2022, [washingtonpost.com](https://www.washingtonpost.com)
 3. U.S. Census Bureau, "Population Estimates, July 1, 2022 (V 2022) - District of Columbia" Quick Facts, accessed January 12, 2023

Evolution of Minority Affluence — CONTINUED

to make connections, access capital, and grow. Diversity—of industry, culture, and support—helps the department build an economy that is dynamic.

The COVID-19 pandemic posed unprecedented challenges to the local economy, including small, minority, and women-owned enterprises. The Economic Development Department was on the front line, providing essential support to local businesses. During the crisis, the department awarded \$5,939,932 in Charles County business relief grants to local businesses. As an added boost, \$40,000 in Charles County COVID-19 Business Loans were distributed to eight minority and women-owned businesses. Putting businesses impacted by COVID-19 on a growth trajectory was a top priority. To address this, the department established the Business Growth Advantage (BGAP) Program to keep businesses moving ahead. BGAP provides businesses impacted by COVID-19 with complementary, targeted support to grow. By the end of March 2023, BGAP will have accelerated the pathways of 52 local businesses, many of whom are minority-owned.

The systemic barriers faced by minority-owned businesses catalyzed an important conversation across the United States and within Charles County. In 2018, only 18.3 percent of small businesses in the U.S. were owned by minorities and only 2.2 percent were Black-owned⁴. Compounding the problem, only 3 percent of U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) loans went to Black-owned small businesses in 2019⁵. People of color in the U.S. are more likely to face bankruptcy and foreclosures in the wake of economic downturns, so the structural hurdles come into focus⁶. Equipped with the context, Charles County evaluated the equity of



opportunity available to local businesses. In 2020, the Economic Development Department commissioned a disparity study to determine whether the county engaged in exclusionary practices in the solicitation and awarding of contracts to minority, women-owned, and disadvantaged business enterprises. The study revealed that a gap existed between the number of minority and women-owned business enterprises (MWBE) that were willing and qualified to participate in Charles County contract opportunities and those businesses awarded contracts. After the findings were revealed, county staff took steps to create a more inclusive purchasing environment for diverse businesses. From heightening the visibility of its MWBE and small local business enterprise (SLBE) programs to outreach and technical assistance training, the department puts equity initiatives front and center. By closing the gaps and making participation more equitable, the Economic Development Department hopes to eliminate the challenges experienced by minority-owned businesses.

The cultural diversity within the department helps the team view challenges with a broader lens, delivering solutions that are responsive to community needs. Within the team, 54 percent identify as a minority. The department honors the diversity within the team, ensuring that every perspective and voice counts. From the department's open-door policy to its depth of business support, advertising to communications touch points, the Economic Development Department wants all minority businesses to see the team as a partner in their ongoing success. The Economic Development Department will continue to shape this process by improving access, providing new entrepreneurial resources, and listening with intention.



- 4. Frequently Asked Questions, U.S. Small Business Administration Office of Advocacy, December 2021
- 5. SBA Lending Statistics for Major Programs, U.S. Small Business Administration, December 2019
- 6. How economic crises and sudden disasters increase racial disparities in homeownership, Urban Institute, June 2020 Gateways



CHARLES COUNTY GOVERNMENT BUYS LOCAL

The **Small Local Business Enterprise Program (SLBE) Program** allows all local, small businesses — regardless of race and gender — to gain exclusive access to certain county government procurements and preferential consideration for others via the SLBE Vendor List.

The **Minority & Women Business Enterprise (MWBE) Program** ensures that minority and women-owned businesses are properly represented in the government procurement marketplace. Charles County Government relies on the MWBE Program and MWBE Vendor List.



**Businesses Registered for
Charles County's Local Business
Support Programs:**

MWBE Program: 592 • SLBE Program: 238

For information on these programs and how to apply, contact the EDD Outreach Administrator at 301-885-1340.

Affordable and Workforce Housing

In 2022, more than \$9 million was spent on monthly rental assistance for more than 700 eligible households through U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's **Housing Choice Voucher Program** (HCVP). Housing Authority employees processed 266 new applications from the wait list and successfully enrolled 97 new households onto the program. Some of the new voucher recipients were families experiencing homelessness and referred through a special partnership with local homeless service providers.

Homeownership and housing preservation are key quality of life indicators for low-income residents. In 2022, seven families became first-time homeowners through the **Settlement Expense Loan Program**. An additional 11 households received grants and loans totaling nearly \$863,000 to complete essential home repairs, allowing them to live safely in their own homes. The Housing Authority provided information to 677 HCVP participants in 2022 about supported homeownership opportunities. As a result, three HCVP participants applied to the HCVP Home Ownership Program. By the end of 2022, one family had successfully moved into a home, and the other two families were issued home ownership vouchers to begin a home purchase. Homeownership and preservation initiatives are part of the department's commitment to advancing equity. Persons of color represent 86 percent of SELP beneficiaries and 55 percent of housing preservation beneficiaries.

More than 1,000 housing inspections were performed by HCVP inspectors in accordance with federal **Housing Quality Standards** (HQS) requirements. HQS inspections assure that all HCVP participants will have safe, quality housing conditions before they move into a rental unit and throughout the duration of their tenancy. Any findings are reported to the landlord and tenant, and a schedule for prompt remediation and re-inspection of the unit is provided to assure corrective actions are taken.

More than \$4.4 million in additional emergency rental assistance grant funds were awarded to the Housing Authority in 2022. These grant funds were passed through local non-profits for distribution to eligible county residents. These funds provided tenants with rent payments, utility arrearages, re-location costs, housing counseling, and legal assistance to prevent evictions during the pandemic period. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Housing Authority has secured and distributed nearly \$11 million in COVID-related **Emergency Rental Assistance program and Community Development Block Grant funds** to assist residents at risk of eviction.



700 households received monthly rental assistance through the HCV Program totaling **\$9 million**

7 families became first-time homeowners through the Settlement Expense Loan Program

11 households received grants and loans totaling nearly **\$863,000** to complete essential home repairs

3 families applied to the HCVP Home Ownership Program. **1** family successfully moved into a home, and **2** families were issued vouchers to begin a home purchase.

1,000 housing inspections were performed by **HCVP** inspectors.

\$11 million in emergency rental assistance grant funds – passed through local non-profits for distribution to county residents for rent, utility arrearages, re-locations, housing counseling, and legal assistance to prevent evictions during the pandemic period.

CHARLES COUNTY LOCAL CARE TEAM

In 2022, the Charles County Advocacy Council for Children, Youth, and Families (CCACCYF) implemented a **new youth mentoring program**. Grant funds were provided to a local non-profit with expertise in administering youth mentoring services. In the first year, the mentoring program successfully matched **59 mentors** with local youth. A total of **69** adult mentors were thoroughly vetted and trained, and **127** youth were served in the first year of the program.

The CCACCYF continues to provide quality support services to improve their quality of life.

In addition to the multitude of grant-funded programs administered year-round by the CCACCYF, it hosted the first **Children and Families Resource Day in Charles County** (pictured). This free community outreach event

was an expansion of the previous Early Childhood Day event, which had been hosted annually for more than a decade. The decision to expand the annual event beyond its early childhood focus was based on recognizing that families with children of all ages need support and information about local resources.

In addition to fun and engaging activities, event attendees were able to meet and obtain information from dozens of local public and private service providers specializing in child and family services.

“Our ultimate goal is family preservation.”



Improving 9-1-1 Services for Residents



Charles County Government continues to work to provide timely service to our residents facing emergency situations. The county utilizes **NextGen 9-1-1**, which routes 9-1-1 calls based on GPS coordinates. This service helps route calls to the correct 9-1-1 center and provides the option for callers to text 9-1-1 when they cannot call.

Resuscitation Quality Improvement-Telecommunicator (RQI-T)

Every time a 9-1-1 specialist in Charles County answers a 9-1-1 call for cardiac arrest, it is an opportunity to make a difference by providing life-saving telephone cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) instructions. The county's leaders recognized that taking a CPR recertification course every two years was not preparing its 9-1-1 specialists to confidently, consistently, and quickly recognize every cardiac arrest and immediately coach callers to start chest compressions. Therefore, the county began utilizing a quality improvement program called the Resuscitation Quality Improvement-Telecommunicator (RQI-T), designed to measure and improve 9-1-1 specialist competency and performance.

With RQI-T, 9-1-1 specialists participated in quarterly cognitive learning activities online. RQI-T also helps Charles County measure and evaluate its performance on actual cardiac arrest calls.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on what questions 9-1-1 specialists asked, they continued to make progress in more quickly recognizing cardiac arrest calls.

In 2022, they averaged just **75.5 seconds** from the start of the call to the recognition of arrest — a **5.6 percent decrease** since the previous year.

Since the start of the RQI program, our 9-1-1 Specialists have improved their recognition of the need for CPR by 96 percent.



166,617
Population of
Charles County
(2020 Census)



76,043
Annual
9-1-1 Calls
(2020)



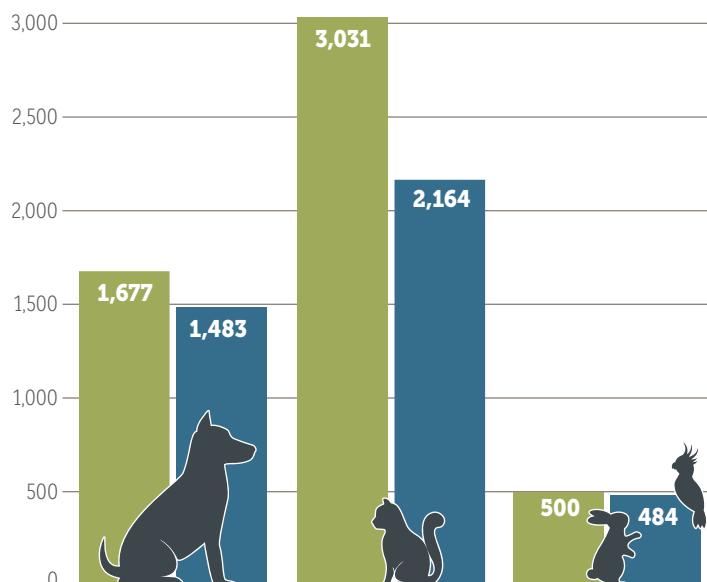
195
Annual
Non-Traumatic
Cardiac Arrests
(2022)



In fiscal 2022, the county responded to more than 5,800 calls for animal control service. Most of those calls were for public nuisance complaints—animals at-large, barking dogs, chickens in neighborhoods, and stray animal impoundments. More than 500 of these calls were for animals in distress and cruelty complaints with an additional 300 calls for vicious animal and bite complaints that generated more than 400 follow-up responses.

The Charles County Animal Care Center (ACC) provides temporary shelter for the animals from Charles County. Lost, stray, and unwanted animals are housed there waiting to be reclaimed by their owners or placed for adoption and rescue. The ACC strives to provide low-cost adoption programs for the adoptable animals and promotes the importance of spaying and neutering dogs and cats to reduce the number of homeless and unwanted animals in the community. The ACC promotes responsible pet ownership throughout the communities it serves. Residents can visit the center at 6707 Animal Shelter Road in Hughesville or view animals available for adoption online on our website at www.CharlesCountyMD.gov.

FISCAL 2022 ANIMAL CARE CENTER LIVE RELEASE RATES



	Intake	Live Release	% Released
Dogs	1,814	1,422	78%
Cats	3,035	1,930	64%
Other	704	618	88%
Total:	5,553	3,970	71%

Snake Seizure and Transfer to Approved Out-of-State Handlers

Animal Control officers were dispatched on January 25 to a home in Pomfret to discover 123 live snakes. This included 28 legal non-venomous and 95 illegal venomous snakes. The venomous collection included such species as puff adders, green mambas, several types of vipers (Gaboon, Chinese mountain, pointed scale, horned, African bush, and sawscale), and a host of rattlesnake species (western diamondback, Mohave, western massasauga, banded-rock, and more). There were 30 cobras identified, including Egyptian, spitting, and forest varieties. Rat snakes, pythons, and boas were among the nonvenomous species listed. Snakes were found in the home's living room, basement, and two other rooms. The home was set up meticulously for the care of the snakes.

Tanks were on racks in rooms set up with different temperature controls for the various species of snakes.

Through teamwork with the Emergency Services' Health and Safety Officer, stand-by Emergency Medical Services crew, and subject matter experts in venomous snakes, the Animal Control officer team was able to have all of the snakes removed from the home. The snakes were legally transferred to permitted handlers and facilities to other states where they are legal to possess.

Other Public Safety Functions

The Sheriff is the chief elected official who is responsible for the county's law enforcement and corrections. Learn more at: www.ccsco.us.

The Fire Department is an all-volunteer service and EMS volunteers supplement paid EMS staff in Charles County. Learn more at: www.ccvfireems.org.



Improving the way Charles County does business

In July 2022, the county implemented a new financial software suite, encompassing several critical accounting processes including general ledger, accounts payable, accounts receivable, requisition and purchase orders, project and grant accounting, and budgeting. The new financial software, Munis from Tyler Technologies, replaced the previous software which had been in use since the early 1990s.

The new software has greatly improved the way that the county does business. Prior to implementing the software, the county worked with external consultants to analyze and streamline financial business processes. When the system went live, automated workflows were established for many of these processes. These workflows have minimized errors, provided better financial and audit control, streamlined processes, increased turnaround time, and improved efficiency.

County department users now have access to real-time information regarding their purchase requests and can request changes as needed, which was functionality not available in the previous system. Among other items, the new software electronically delivers invoices to customers and provides the tools to easily import data from external applications such as property taxes and utility billing.

The new software allowed the county to retire various home-grown and acquired software solutions by incorporating the functionality of those applications into the new system. Additionally, the new system resides in the cloud, eliminating the need to purchase and maintain hardware, provides state-of-the-art security, and gives employees necessary access to work in a mobile environment.

PROTECTING THE CHARLES COUNTY GOVERNMENT'S INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY ASSETS IS ESSENTIAL.



CYBERSECURITY In Charles County Government



The county's cybersecurity program is constantly evolving and improving to help protect the organization from continuously emerging threats.

Managing Charles County Government's Cybersecurity

Identity and Access Management — Ensuring active accounts have valid owners, activity can be audited, credentials and access are managed, and federated authentication is implemented when appropriate.

Vulnerability Management — Undergoing an annual third-party vulnerability assessment and utilizing internal vulnerability scanning software to identify potential weaknesses in technology systems.

Asset Management — Maintaining a complete hardware/software inventory with automated tools to track current operating system levels and versions. Our patch management program ensures that appropriate and critical patches are applied in a timely manner.

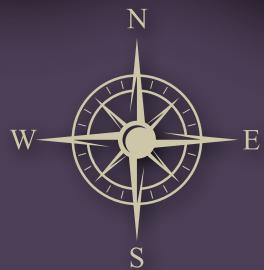
Security Operations — Having a Security Incident and Event Management System, which helps detect, analyze, and respond to security threats. There is also a remote Security Operations Center for real-time network monitoring and notification, cyber threat warnings and advisories, and vulnerability identification and mitigation.

Cybersecurity Training — Requiring all users of county technology to take a monthly training lesson provided by an external security awareness organization and conducting internal phishing campaigns to help our employees detect suspicious emails.

Security Policies — Requiring users of county technology to review and acknowledge the county's security policies on an annual basis to continue accessing county technology assets.

Building Partner Relationships — Coordinating with other jurisdictions, including Federal Bureau of Investigation; U.S. Department of Homeland Security Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency; State of Maryland; and Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center; regarding security incidents, information sharing, and policy development.

Cybersecurity Controls — Utilizing a variety of security tools such as, but not limited to, firewalls and intrusion prevention systems, end-point security software, email security tools, web access security controls, online and offline backups stored at geographically separate locations, separate datacenters which are geographically separated, and multi-factor authentication software.



CHARLES COUNTY GATEWAYS

The Approach
to a Destination

THE 3 GATEWAYS

into Charles County are in various phases of transformation that will ultimately improve and enhance the sense of arrival and create a more positive image of the county.



THE NORTHERN GATEWAY

Where US Route 301 enters Waldorf. Until relatively recently, the western side of the Northern Gateway was characterized by disinvestment and blight, comprising an out-of-commission milk processing plant, an obsolete and mostly vacant office building, and a 1960s era motel serving as housing. In 2016, just over 145 acres on the east and west sides of US Route 301 were purchased by the Greenberg Gibbons, a real estate development company, with the intention of building a mixed-use town center development that will encompass lands on the east and west sides of the highway. The company's plan is to create a pedestrian-friendly environment to include retail, entertainment, office, and residential elements. Vacant and underutilized buildings have been demolished and removed, and the development is projected to be completed in 2028.

On completion, this transformative project will announce to visitors and residents that Charles County is open for investment, and will set the tone for quality development in areas such as the Waldorf Urban Redevelopment Corridor. The project will create a destination attraction with a sense of place at the Northern Gateway with a mix of retail, services, and residences.

THE SOUTHERN GATEWAY

Where US Route 301 enters Charles County from Virginia. Charles County's Southern Gateway begins on the Virginia, or the southern, end of the Nice-Middleton Bridge, and passes by the decommissioned Morgantown electrical generating power plant on the east side of US Route 301 and proceeds north to Newburg. Construction on a new, four-lane Nice Middleton Bridge was completed and opened in late 2022. Removal of the old bridge has begun and is slated to be completed within the next two years. In December 2020, GenOn, owner of the Morgantown plant, announced that it would cease operations and decommission the facility by June 2022, which it did.

The property is currently on the market, with most prospective buyers looking to retain industrial uses at the site. The 450-foot stacks and 30-story turbine building are slated to be removed to make way for cleaner, greener, and more aesthetically pleasing industrial development. Depending on how that redevelopment takes shape in the years to come, the Morgantown property could conceivably support more than 2,000 jobs.

The decommissioning of the plant and sale of the property presents a unique opportunity for Charles County to transform the Southern Gateway's archaic skyline into a sleek and modern vista that announces arrival into a county with a 21st century outlook. Tangible benefits will accrue to the county from an enhanced industrial base and increased employment, establishing the gateway as a sustainable industrial/logistics hub.

CONTINUED

Charles County Gateways

— CONTINUED

THE WESTERN GATEWAY

Where Indian Head Highway (MD Route 210) passes through Bryans Road to its terminus at the Naval Surface Warfare Station in the Town of Indian Head. The most distinguishing features of the Western Gateway, otherwise known as the Western Charles County Technology Corridor, are the Velocity Center and Maryland Technology Center. These two repurposed buildings are located across from each other on Indian Head Highway and signify the revitalization of a place that experienced disinvestment for decades.

Serving as an education center, research site, technology incubator, and a meeting and events facility, the College of Southern Maryland's Velocity Center is the culmination of a focused, collaborative effort that included the Naval Surface Warfare Center, Charles County Economic Development Department, Military Alliance Council, College of Southern Maryland, the county's state and federal delegations, and private sector investors. Utilization of the facility has exceeded expectations and catalyzed the development of the Maryland Technology Center (MTC), which is the headquarters of the U.S. Bomb Technician's Association. Building on the momentum of the Velocity Center and MTC, other vacant and underutilized buildings on the corridor have been repurposed or are undergoing rehabilitation to an executive suites hotel and boutique grocery.



The county has enjoyed success in establishing a foothold for technology businesses and research and development in the Western Gateway and will need to maintain its forward momentum to create opportunities for similar development in the future. As the county moves closer to creating an Airport Business Park Zone, it can leverage the 50 acres that it owns near the airport to attract target industries and firmly establish its technology corridor.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOR CHARLES COUNTY

charles
CHARLES COUNTY, MARYLAND
CLOSE TO THE CAPITAL. FAR FROM ORDINARY.

Business Support & BGAP Statistics

208 Business Visits

932 Businesses Supported (engagement hours)

1,183 Engagement hours

12 Workshops hosted

175 Business Welcome Letters

5 BGAP Cohorts

65 Total Participants/Graduates

52 Minority Businesses

\$450,000 Total BGAP Grants Disbursed

\$200,000 Pending Grant Disbursements

\$4.5m

IN INVESTMENTS

The Economic Development Department (EDD) is engaged with a number of major projects that impact the County's commercial tax base expansion. These investments represent an estimated \$450 million upon project completion.

CAPITAL INFUSION EDD Loan Programs, and Federal & State COVID Relief Grant Programs

10 COVID-19 Loans totaling **\$50,000** to **8** minority-owned businesses

\$149,222.84 in Business Development Loans to **7** businesses, of which **5** are minority businesses

\$235,962.42 in Target Industry Loans to **3** businesses, of which **2** are minority businesses

ATTRACTING BUSINESSES TO CHARLES COUNTY

Digital ad campaign visibility

4,807,829 ...Ad Impressions

10,092 ...Clicks

= 22% ...Click through Rate

Human Resources

DIVERSITY AND CULTURAL COMPETENCY

Charles County is one of the most diverse jurisdictions in Maryland. The Charles County **Whole of Government Equity** initiative ensures that all employees and residents are included, heard, valued, and afforded an equitable opportunity to thrive in our community. Creating a sound diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) infrastructure requires a shared understanding. Our County Government continues to progress toward its goal of prioritizing DEI as we establish new policies and review existing policies.



DEI enhanced its training program to help all employees heighten their awareness of implicit bias and intentionally incorporate equity in decision-making. Staff continue to normalize conversations about race and equity. The monthly **Dialogue and Donuts program** expanded, offering additional opportunities for staff to discuss and learn more about DEI and how to apply important concepts to their tasks. Continuing conversation helps to create an environment where individuals move beyond tolerance towards acceptance and belonging. The internal DEI initiatives impact our organization's culture positively.

Equity Emphasis Areas In 2022

- **Data Collection** – Collecting and analyzing demographic data associated with major programs and projects to help chart impact.
- **Inclusive Leadership Training** – Equipping our leaders to effectively navigate the diverse culture of our workforce and community.
- **Strategic Community Engagement** – Bringing more voices to the table and moving beyond outreach to ensure two-way communication.
- **Racial Equity Action Coalition Launch** – Dedicating staff workgroups to identifying areas in need of enhanced equity.
- **Equity Assessment Tool Development** – Designing the process and tool to perform equity reviews for budget and planning and growth management.

WE ARE HIRING

JOIN CHARLES COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Charles County Government is committed to **recruiting and retaining the best** and brightest employees. A career with Charles County Government means you will work in a high performing organization with a team of more than 800 talented, skilled, and dedicated professionals who are invested in serving our residents and our community. We offer competitive benefits such as paid leave, tuition reimbursement, defined benefit retirement plans, and deferred compensation. We provide professional development opportunities and award-winning wellness initiatives.

Human Resources has also embedded **succession planning** discussions with directors and hiring managers during the recruitment process and will continue to further refine the plan.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

As the county continues its focus on being a High Performance Organization, the Department of Human Resources continued its focus on leadership development. **The Leadership Academy** provides future leaders with professional development in a number of disciplines including management skills and communication. The Leadership Academy currently has 165 participants, and 167 employees have completed the program since its inception in 2016.

In January 2022, Human Resources implemented **LEARN** – an **online training platform**. The platform is available for training anytime of day, so it accommodates all schedules. During the year, 608 courses were either self-registered or assigned by managers. Additionally, funding was approved for Human Resources to offer training to our part-time employees.

County employees continued with the **National Association of Counties' High Performance Leadership Academy** cohort. There are 30 employees who have graduated from the program.

WELLNESS ENGAGEMENT

In August 2022, the Wellness team implemented **Burnalong**, a web/app-based wellness platform free of charge for county employees. Burnalong has more than 23,000 live and on-demand courses in 60 categories including cardio and strength training, nutrition, chronic illness management, and financial management.

Wellness team sponsored two **walking challenges** in the spring and fall with 368 participants overall completing 142,125,107 total steps, and 63,333 miles.

Farmland Preservation



Charles County has preserved more than 1,400 acres of forest and farmland

through the Rural Legacy Program, Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Program, and the Purchase/Transfer of Development Rights. These conservation easement acquisitions represent a \$4 million investment in the conservation of our most valuable landscapes. To preserve priority lands, a second Rural Legacy Area has been approved by the Maryland Rural Legacy Board encompassing 64,720 acres in western Charles County. This new Rural Legacy Area will enable further protections for the sensitive environments of the Nanjemoy and Mattawoman Creek watersheds.

Charles County farmers continue to provide leadership at the intersection of agriculture and environmental stewardship. In 2022, Persistence Creek Farm in Faulkner owned by the Warring family, received national recognition through the Leopold Conservation Award, which recognizes agricultural land-owners actively committed to a land ethic. The Warring family is an important example of how farming, fishing, and forestry businesses can benefit natural resources. To learn more about the many initiatives undertaken by the Warring family at Persistence Creek Farm, including their participation in the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Program, visit www.SandCountyFoundation.org/our-work/leopold-conservation-award-program/persistence-creek-farm



Natural Resource Management

As part of public outreach for the Watershed Protection and Restoration Program, partnerships within the community were built that increased awareness of water pollution.

The watershed model was used at the Charles County Fair, schools, and Citizens Academy to provide hands-on learning of how a watershed functions and how activities on land can cause water pollution downstream. The **Watershed Outreach and Restoration Grant** continued awarding funds for on-the-ground, community-based restoration projects that engage residents and benefit Charles County's rivers, streams, and the Chesapeake Bay. In 2022, the following grant projects were completed or are underway:

- Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake trained congregations to become Faithful Green Team Leaders by hosting **Learning Labs** on finding the congregation's Green Team vision and developing action plans for the eventual installation of restoration projects.
- University of Maryland's Environmental Finance Center started a project to educate homeowners about proper care and maintenance of **raingardens and porous pavement**.
- The Neighborhood Creative Arts Center held **Nature Fest** on April 30 at Tilghman Lake Park in the town of La Plata to educate children on the importance of watershed resources such as locally native wildlife and fauna.



The Cobb Island Citizens Association worked towards **eradicating invasive plants** on community-owned property while teaching the residents of Cobb Island about the environmental harm caused by invasive plants and the benefits of using goats to remove invasive plants.

Climate Competency

A nearly two-year long **climate and infrastructure resilience study** was completed in November 2022 for Naval Support Facility Indian Head (NSFIH) and the surrounding community. Charles County Government received a grant in 2021 from the Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation and partnered with the Center for Global Sustainability at the University of Maryland to facilitate this effort, which included a multi-layer stakeholder engagement process, a climate risk and vulnerability assessment, and the identification of key assets and resources that are important to the long-term resilience of the community. The final report recommends a collaborative process between the county, the Town of Indian Head, and NSFIH to continue to engage specifically on climate hazards and threats. The report also provides a pathway forward to develop a project portfolio and ensure resiliency to these future hazards and threats.

Charles County Government partnered with the Association of Climate Change Officers to develop a series of training modules for the county's new **Climate Ambassador Program**. Approximately 83 full-time positions at Charles County have a requirement to take climate competency training. The training modules are in the final stages of development and will be rolled out to staff in early 2023. Charles County continues to take active steps to train our workforce on climate change, while also incorporating this knowledge into the decision-making process at all levels of County Government.

In early 2022, the Resilience Authority of Charles County hired a contractor, Biohabitats, to assess and prioritize more than 100 neighborhoods that are experiencing varying degrees of **stormwater drainage issues** on private property due to the increase in precipitation and extreme weather events that the county has been experiencing. The contractor has developed an online dashboard, to be posted to the county's website in early 2023, that will allow residents to view the assessment and prioritization information. Upon completion of this project, Charles County Government will be working towards beginning the process of making the necessary repairs to privately-owned stormwater drainage conveyance systems in priority order, thereby improving the resilience of these neighborhoods. The county has devoted approximately a third of the American Rescue Plan Act funds to this effort.



In 2022, Charles County Government continued its partnership with the Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative (SMECO) to expand electric vehicle (EV) charging station infrastructure in the county as part of their Recharge Program.

Through this effort, SMECO installs, owns, and operates EV charging stations on publicly owned property. Three more charging stations were installed in 2022 at the Regency Furniture Stadium, Oak Ridge Park, and Elite Gymnastics. A total of 12 charging stations have been installed in Charles County through the Recharge Program, and five more locations are currently in the works.



Did you know?

A Community Development Block Grant project of \$800,000 awarded to the Housing Authority began construction in 2022 to relocate a stream in the Waldorf area that threatened residents' homes due to continued flooding and erosion. This innovative climate resiliency project is scheduled to be completed in the first quarter of 2023.

Energov

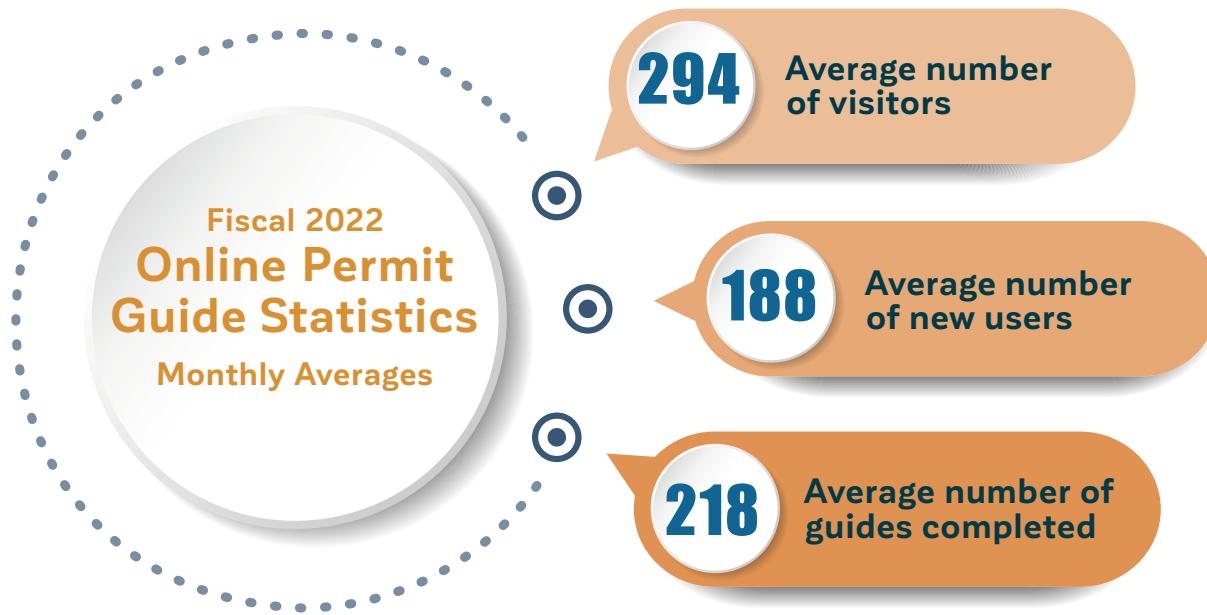
Online Permitting System

The Operations Division spent much of fiscal 2022 preparing for the first major upgrade of the online permitting system, Energov. This work included reviewing work processes across the entire division to update workflows, applications, and other planning and permitting processes. Staff also focused on the customer-facing Citizens Self Service Portal, to make the application process more user-friendly.

The Online Permit Guide system continues to be a key resource that customers can use to navigate the building and trade permit process. These guides detail the permitting process and set the customers' expectations by outlining the steps needed to obtain a building permit based on the project's location and specific project details. The software generates a customized guide that lists the requirements for that permit type and the documents that must be submitted throughout the permitting process.

Most Commonly Run Online Permit Guides

- Residential Decks
- Residential Shed/Pole Barn
- Commercial Alterations



In fiscal 2022, the Permits Office continued to see an increase in the

Number of Overall Permit Applications

received by the department. Fiscal 2022 showed an

8 percent

increase in permit applications from fiscal 2021.





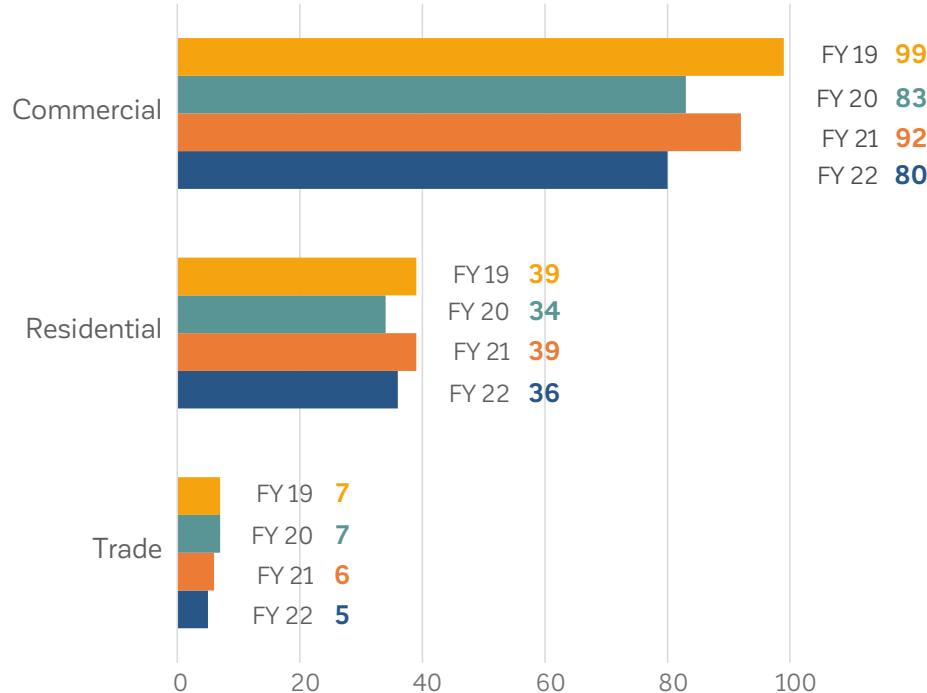
Analyzing Permit Processing Turn-Around

The speed in which a permit can be issued relies heavily on the quality of the permit application and associated documents. The Permits Office has made a concentrated effort over the past few years to help the customer submit better applications. The online permit guide and the enhanced Citizens Self Service Portal play a big role in this effort.

In fiscal 2022, the Permits Office began tracking the average **number of days** to issue a permit to analyze if reviewing processes, online permit guides, and more customer-friendly applications are producing better permit applications and better processing times. Despite the

Permits Office having multiple staff vacancies throughout fiscal 2022, they were able to keep the increased number of permit applications moving and continue to improve the number of days it takes to issue a permit. The Permits Office plans to continue their evaluation of processes, the online permitting system, and the online permit guide to issue permits faster.

Fiscal Comparison for Average Number of Days to Issue Commercial Building Permits





2021 RECYCLED MATERIALS

Residential and commercial materials
generated in Charles County:

27,457 tons

Single stream recycling, metals,
plastics, electronics, tires,
HHW, and textiles

14,324 tons

Yard waste materials

39.77% tons

Maryland Recycling Act (MRA)
Recycling Rate Requirement: 35%

Recycling In Charles County

The Environmental Resources Division started a new recycling program in 2022, which encourages residents to **reuse or recycle gently used books, DVDs, and CDs** at two locations, the Charles County Landfill and the Pisgah Recycling Center.

Curbside recycling was expanded to Nanjemoy in February 2022. With this long-awaited expansion, curbside recycling is now offered throughout the county.

The state-funded **Scrap Tire Drop-Off Day** in Charles County generated 33.25 tons of scrap tires. If residents missed the event, scrap tires are accepted at all four of the county's recycling centers. Residents may bring two tires per day to be properly recycled.

A drop off location was added at Pisgah Recycling Center for **durable medical equipment (DME)**. The Maryland Department of Aging accepts donations of DME, which include wheelchairs, power wheelchairs, power scooters, rollators, walkers, crutches, canes, shower chairs, tub transfer benches, bedside commodes, toilet safety rails, pediatric equipment, home hospital beds, bed rails,

and mechanical lifts. The items are transferred to a central location in Maryland for repair and sanitation prior to distribution to Maryland residents in need of mobility assistance.

The **landfill** experienced a record high for landfill tonnage in 2022. The county remains committed to proactively reducing the amount of waste deposited at the landfill. The commitment is balanced with the realization that the landfill will eventually meet its capacity. Appropriate planning, design, operation, and maintenance are essential to solid waste processing, recovery, and disposal. The county's **Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plan** addresses solid waste needs and trends at the landfill. As part of the plan, construction of landfill cell 4A was completed in 2022.

Keep Charles County Beautiful



22 tons

DEBRIS
REMOVED



Potomac River
Watershed Cleanup
(April)



Community
Cleanup
(May)

151 • 104

RAIN BARRELS
AND GEOBIN
BINS SOLD



Rain Barrel
Workshops
& Composting
Workshops
(3 events)

156

COUNTY
ROAD
CLEAN-UPS



Adopt-A-Road
Program

33.25 tons

TIRES DISPOSED



State-Funded
Scrap Tire
Drop-Off Day

The Environmental Resources Division sends a
shout out to all volunteers and organizations that
participated in cleanup events in 2022.



Environmental Resources Litter Control Programs

CLEAN IS COOL

We can't do it alone. Get your business involved in taking action for clean land, safe water and healthy lives today!



SET THE TREND

Show your commitment to trash-free waters by leading a cleanup for your employees and the local community to participate.



KEEP IT CLOSED

Every time trash is taken to the dumpster, remember to close the lid to prevent harm to our environment.



A partnership program between Charles County Government and the Alice Ferguson Foundation



CHARLES COUNTY
**Adopt-A-Road
Program**



CHARLES COUNTY
**Adopt-A-Spot
Program**

ADOPT-A-ROAD and ADOPT-A-SPOT PROGRAMS

Charles County encourages residents and businesses to help combat littering by "adopting" a Charles County road or spot. The Adopt-A-Spot program is new. It's a great opportunity to assist in keeping our natural resource areas clean and litter free.

Volunteers receive sign recognition in exchange for cleaning their designated road or spot at least three times in a calendar year (cleaning must be reported for credit). Gloves and bags are provided free of charge as well as trash disposal (upon notification). Safety vests and caution signs are also available upon request.



Visit our website:

www.CharlesCountyMD.gov/Litterbug
or call: 301-932-3599

Learn more about the many programs offered by
Environmental Resources, and how you can help.

Buildings & Trades

6,348
Fiscal 2022
Work Requests



PREVENTATIVE
Work Requests:

6,319 • 99%



CORRECTIVE
Work Requests:

29 (1%)



Building
Services
**SQUARE
FOOT COST**
\$0.08

County Government Commissioner Wing Renovation

A renovation was required in the Commissioners' Wing of the Charles County Government building to increase the office space in the Commissioners' office and county attorney's office.

The project required careful planning as the renovations were limited to the existing space. Buildings and Trades staff reconfigured the space to build seven new offices.



Roof Replacements for County Buildings

Buildings and Trades staff replaced the roof system at the following locations:

Bryantown Sports Complex

**Elite Gymnastics and
Recreation Center**

County Government Building

**Mattawoman Wastewater Treatment
Plant Administration Building**

United Way of Southern Maryland

Charles County's Utilities



500 Miles of sanitary **sewer mains** and more than 450 miles of **potable water mains** are maintained by the Line Maintenance group.

1,440+ Assets captured or corrected with the **Geographic Information System** utilizing survey grade GPS equipment, increasing accuracy of our geographical information system, allowing efficient locating of assets in the future. The Utilities Division has deployed state-of-the-art, high-resolution, survey-grade, GPS equipment to capture accurate GPS location coordinates of county infrastructure.

28,000+ Samples of analytical data from individual analysis that supported operations in both wastewater and drinking water, as well as county landfill operations was provided by the Mattawoman **Water Quality Lab**. Approximately 2 percent of the tests support wastewater and 28 percent support drinking water.

15,700+ Miss Utility **water and sewer main location requests** in fiscal 2022. These requests were for excavations occurring throughout the county.

28,000+ Average number of **dual-check valves** overhauled annually, meeting the maintenance requirements of the manufacturers. Dual-check valves are devices to prevent water that has flowed into a customer's residence from flowing backwards into the county water supply.

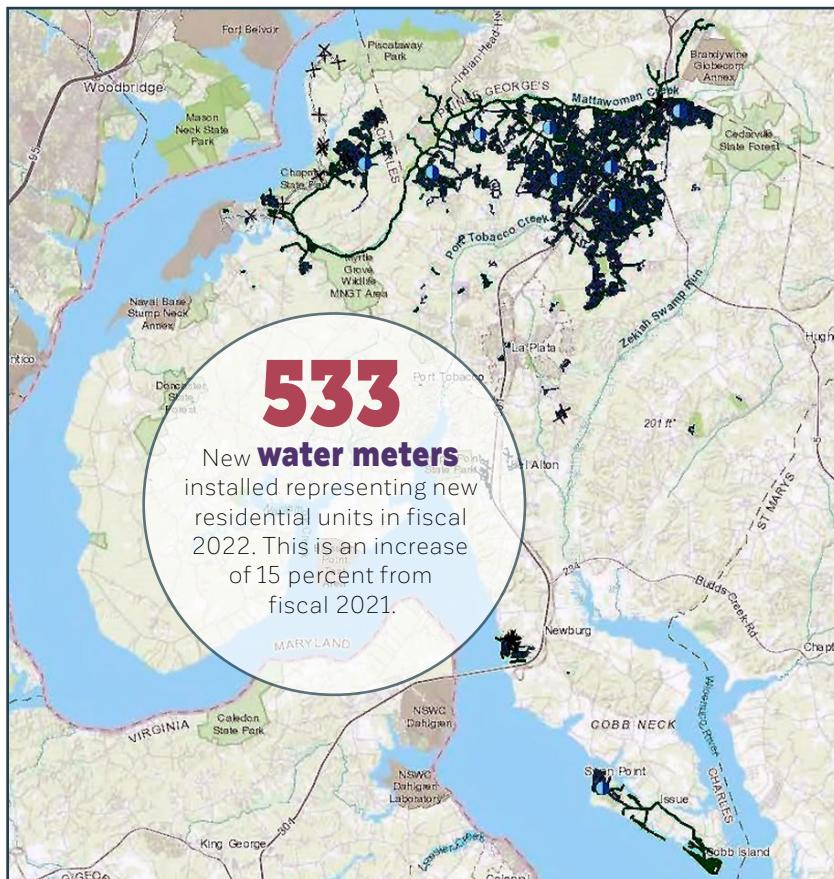
182 Commercial inspections conducted through the **Pretreatment Program**, which ensure the proper equipment is installed at restaurants, food handlers, and automotive business to protect the county's sewer infrastructure and wastewater treatment plants.

223 **Grease interceptors and 43 oil separators** were monitored by the pretreatment specialist for proper periodic maintenance to ensure the county's sewer assets are protected.



65 Businesses participating in the **Hydrant Meters Use program**, which provides safe and metered access to large volumes of water to support business needs.

Charles County hydrant meters are painted orange to make them easy to identify. A hydrant meter of any other color, or not painted at all, is an illegal connection. In addition to a county-issued hydrant meter, all connections to a fire hydrant must include a backflow preventer. For additional information, please call 301-609-5606.



261 **Cross connection control inspections** conducted for residential and commercial in fiscal 2022. These inspections ensure backflow devices/assemblies are properly installed to protect the county's drinking water system. Water is contaminated by "Cross Connections." Cross Connections occur when a foreign substance is introduced into the potable (drinkable) water supply by an illegal or incorrect connection.

2,240 Test reports received for **backflow devices** indicating compliance with requirements. The backflow devices prevent cross connections from contaminating the drinking water supply. Annual testing of assemblies is required by specially trained plumbers. The county has modernized test reporting, and more than 90 percent of the test reports were submitted online.

Our Roadways and Stormwater Management

Watershed Restoration and Protection Fund

In fiscal 2022, Charles County Roads Division staff and contractors repaired dozens of failing stormwater pipes and sinkholes throughout the county. During fiscal 2022, Roads Division staff, contract inspectors, and maintenance contractors performed the following stormwater related repairs and maintenance:



5,084 Stormwater basins/inlets inspected and **398** Stormwater management ponds inspected, cleaned, and repaired



36 Stormwater basins repaired (average annual repairs: 112)



31 Basins vacuumed



59 Stormwater pipes cleaned



60.37 Tons of trash/debris removed



1,156 Miles of roadway swept



157 Tons of trash/debris removed with mechanical sweeper



562 Feet of deteriorating corrugated metal stormwater pipes re-lined to extend life expectancy



126 Failed joints mechanically grouted, and 20 lift holes in reinforced concrete pipes to extend life expectancy



647 "No Dumping" and "Only Rain in the Drain" basin markers applied on curb inlet storm drains



The basins, inlets, and roads repaired each year are a direct result of our ongoing and proactive stormwater maintenance and inspection program via the Watershed Restoration and Protection funding.

Over the past nine years this program has grown to ensure Charles County stormwater infrastructure is properly maintained and in excellent working condition. By proactively inspecting stormwater infrastructure yearly, money is saved, and we significantly reduce the risk of emergencies or catastrophic failures.

Improving County Roads



24 New Roads

4.75 lane miles
added to county
inventory

35 Miles of
roadway line
striped

(Approximate)

36 Miles of
Resurfaced
Roadway

No. of roads
repaired:
26 Overlay
14 Slurry Seal
11 Modified Seal
15 Crack Seal
40 Deep Patch

40 Potholes repaired
monthly

Within 40 hours of
receiving a report (average)

186 Animals
Removed

136 deer

Surface Treatment Program



Major roads that were paved with asphalt were:

- Mount St. Stevens Drive
- Teagues Point Road
- Hampshire Circle
- All main Cobb Island roads

Slurry seal to improve skid resistance which reduces vehicle accidents was applied to:

- Western Parkway (Acton Lane/Westdale Drive)

To assist motorists at night, raised reflective pavement markers were installed on:

- St. Marys Avenue
- Covington Road
- Teagues Point Road
- Poplar Hill Road

Winter Weather Events

County staff and
contract forces
mobilized for
the 2022 winter
season.

7

Weather events

27

Inches of
snow and ice

3,800

Tons of salt used to
treat road surfaces

50 percent reduction in salt
used compared to just a
few years ago.



POPES CREEK PARK

This site is nestled along Popes Creek at its confluence with the Potomac River. The site comprises four properties approximately 180 acres in size and is located adjacent to the Popes Creek Rail Trail currently in design.

This park presents a unique opportunity for direct access to both Popes Creek and the Potomac River, expanding the county's water trail network and creating the first public beach in Charles County.

Popes Creek Waterfront Park (formerly Gilligan's Pier) was acquired through Program Open Space funds. This park will eventually connect to Popes Creek Rail Trail and water access on the Potomac River.

The Popes Creek Park master plan will consider the following:

- A range of recreation activities
- Integrated opportunities for programmed events and education
- Pedestrian and bike connection to the rail trail
- Locations for permanent and overflow parking
- Best use of existing building
- Location and typology of existing ecosystems, environmental resources, and priority conservation areas
- Resilience needs relative to sea level rise and severe weather



A Master Plan for Outdoor Fun

The Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism is working with a consultant on **master plan for new parks** — **Popes Creek Waterfront Park, La Plata Farm Park, and Waldorf Park**. The purpose of the master plan is to set goals and objectives that could enhance park and recreation opportunities for residents by seeking the input and recommendations of the public, county staff, and professionals.

IMPROVING CURRENT PARKS

Bensenville Park

A new outdoor **painted basketball court** was completed at Bensenville Park in June 2022. The basketball court artwork, painted by a St. Charles High School art teacher and designed by a St. Charles High School student, features a design that represents the colors of the seven local high schools.

Gilbert Run Park

The new 815-foot, elevated **boardwalk** along the trail at Gilbert Run Park was completed in March 2022. This boardwalk replaced the previous boardwalk that was damaged in 2020 due to flooding in the park. The boardwalk was designed by Vista Engineering and constructed by SE Davis using Program Open Space funds.

Laurel Springs Regional Park and White Plains Regional Park

The Parks Division is in the final stages of the permitting process and plans to begin construction of two **synthetic multi-purpose athletic fields** at Laurel Springs Regional Park and White Plains Regional Park in spring 2023; this provides fields to be used for football, regulation soccer, intermediate soccer, boys lacrosse, girls lacrosse, and field hockey.

Charles County's 2022 Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan

was approved by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and Maryland Department of Planning on Nov. 4. This plan provides insight into areas where the state and local governments can work together on open space, natural resource conservation, and recreation planning, and is integral to the development of the State Land Preservation and Recreation Plan.



AMAZING FACT!

Our community and visitors alike are always interested in **Mallows Bay Park** — in 2022, attendance by vehicle was...

22,261



Charles County

Legends, Lore and Room to Explore



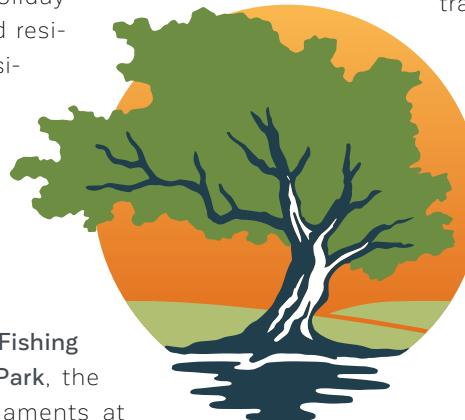
Charles County

encourages our visitors to enjoy the unique amenities and support local businesses. Staff support the hospitality industry sector by using buy local campaigns including: Maryland Restaurant Week, Maryland Food Truck Week, Charles County Restaurant Week, With Love From Charles County (a holiday campaign encouraging visitors and residents to shop local and support businesses during the holiday season), Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission's Maryland Buy Local Challenge, and Business Appreciation Week.

Fishing Tournaments

In partnership with **Major League Fishing Worldwide** and **Smallwood State Park**, the county hosted four fishing tournaments at Smallwood State Park. The tournaments brought more than 1,100 anglers and their families to the region.

The fishing tournaments have a significant economic impact to Charles County and contribute to increasing sales and use taxes attributable to tourism. In fact, visitor spending grew 26 percent in Charles County in 2021 to surpass pre-pandemic levels. Growth to the Charles County economy, sport tourism and group travel initiatives will continue to attract new businesses, support the retention of all businesses, and increase visitor spending in Charles County.



Promoting Charles County

The Tourism Division continues to execute advertising campaigns and pursue public relation initiatives to strengthen the Charles County brand. The county partnered with Maryland Office of Tourism to feature hospitality businesses and community organizations in **Fox5DC Zip Trip**. In June, the office geared up for the Fox5DC Zip Trip: 5 Must Stops in La Plata. This segment included a combination of live and pre-recorded segments highlighting local community partners and businesses. This news segment aired June 2022 live from the town square in La Plata.

ExploreCharlesCounty.com

Since the launch of the standalone **tourism website** in June 2020, staff has worked with industry professionals on advertising campaigns to increase website traffic. As a result of this advertising, a foot tracking campaign identified 35,000 visitors that were targeted in advertising campaigns who came to Charles County for two hours or more. Staff continues to modify the website to feature fresh content and meet tourism marketing objectives. All other collateral materials, marketing profile sheets, flyers, and trade show displays have been redesigned to reflect the current brand. Staff assist visitors and residents with creating legendary memories while exploring Charles County.

Port Tobacco Historic Village

Staff at the Port Tobacco Historic Village "**Historic Stagg Hall**" continue to partner with the Society for the Restoration of Port Tobacco to provide engaging, guided tours of the Historic Village to youth, senior groups, visitors, and residents with an ideal location for retreats, weddings, and trainings. In partnership with Charles County Public Schools, staff will offer regular immersive tours at the Port Tobacco Village for second graders during the 2022-2023 school year. The collaboration continues to facilitate increased visitor attendance at the Historic Village.

111,421

No. of travelers
to visit the Crain
Memorial Welcome
Center in 2022



FISCAL 2022 REPORTING Tourism & Entertainment Industry

Charles County's economy, through the development of tourism and related industries, contributes to increasing tax revenues and investment attractiveness. Tourism facilitates innovation and the expansion of industries that strengthen the tax base, support job growth, and attract visitors.

Lodging Tax
\$1,626,671

Amusement Tax
\$74,835

TOTAL Tourism Tax
\$124,133,094



948,500 Vacationers!

No. of people that visited Charles County in 2021

542.1 thousand
Day Visits

406.5 thousand
Overnight Stays

Charles County's
2021 visitor volume
rebounded to
89%
of 2019 levels

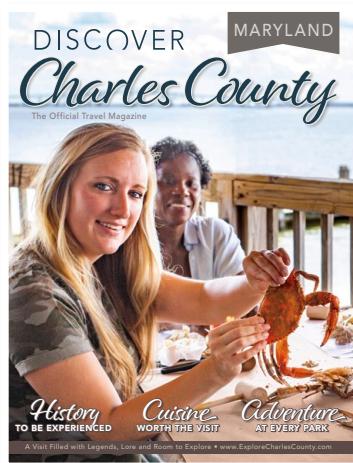
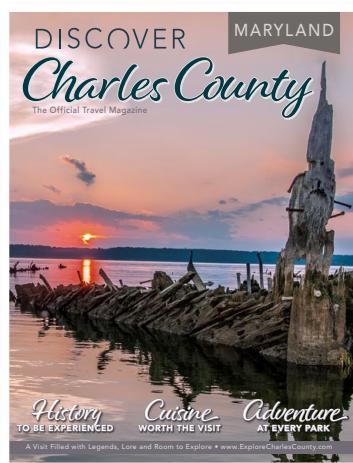
Source:
D.K. Shifflet, Tourism
Economics



OFFICIAL TOURISM TRAVEL GUIDE

This Tourism travel guide received the "Best Printed Promotional Material" award at the 41st Annual Maryland Travel & Tourism Summit held Nov. 14-16, 2022 in Ocean City, Maryland.

The magazine is designed to inspire visitors to travel throughout the county. It is printed with two cover options. One cover is an image of Mallows Bay Potomac River National Marine Sanctuary taken by local Maryland photographer Peter Turick at sunset. The second cover depicts the iconic symbol of the Maryland Blue Crab. Jay Fleming captured photography images that are displayed throughout the magazine. QR codes are provided to link readers to the tourism website for more information.



See the magazine online at: ExploreCharlesCounty.com

Printed versions are available at the Crain Memorial Welcome Center (12480 Crain Highway, Newburg), Port Tobacco Recreation Center (8190 Port Tobacco Road, Port Tobacco), and visitor centers and rest stops throughout Maryland, Washington D.C., Pennsylvania, and Virginia.



What is RecPASS?

It's an annual membership that gives you unlimited visits to drop-in programs, and certain pool programs. A variety of membership options are available for all ages, youth to seniors, as well as family packages. Financial assistance is available for qualifying applicants. See below.

www.CharlesCountyParks.com/
Recreation/RecPASS

Look for the **RecPASS** in *The GUIDE* for eligible programs!

RecAssist

RecPASS financial assistance is available for individuals who receive assistance from low or limited-income programs. RecAssist provides eligible recipients with an annual RecPASS to use for drop-in activities or daily admissions at community centers, the Waldorf Senior and Recreation Center, and pools. Additionally, recipients receive a \$150 program credit for recreation programs.

www.CharlesCountyParks.com/
Recreation/RecAssist

Eligibility restrictions apply.

2022 Recreation Division



Have you seen our GUIDE?

The magazine is published four times per year and features classes, sports, special events, swim lessons, kayak tours, amusement park discount tickets, historic sites and places to visit within the county, as well as opportunities to experience the outdoors. Printed copies are available at our local centers and facilities.

Recreation In Charles County

The Recreation Division offered more than 1,700 different programs and activities throughout the year including leisure programs, sports, aquatics, therapeutics, fitness, dance, arts and crafts, gymnastics, and summer camp programs. Recreation activities had record attendance including summer camps with 2,168 participants.

Partnering with Charles County Public Libraries, a pilot program was offered for residents to "check-out" a **RecPass**, which provided free access to swimming pools and drop-in programs at community centers. Due to the program's success, it will be expanded further for the upcoming year. See p.41.

Another pilot program, which was through the Charles County Public Schools, provided additional programming and support for at-risk students at **Smallwood and Stoddert Middle Schools**. In both programs, the Recreation Division provides recreational instruction and opportunities after school within each of these community centers.

Elite Gymnastics and Recreation Center was renovated to include a new roof and exterior walls. Interior work included updated space in the gym, lobby, social areas, multi-purpose areas, and design of a therapeutic sensory room. This new sensory room will provide a new space to provide therapeutic and inclusive recreational program specific to individuals with special needs.

Visit www.CharlesCountyParks.com to learn more about our Recreation Division, community centers, pools, and more.



1,700
Programs and
Activities

19,202
Paid Program
Registrations

229
RecAssist
Participants

**CHARLES COUNTY
RECREATION**
fun happens here!

CHARLES COUNTY GOVERNMENT PARTNER AGENCIES

Department of Health



The Charles County Department of Health is a state agency that operates locally under the direction of a public health officer. The Board of Commissioners convenes as the Board of Health twice annually, and at other times as needed, to administer public health policy directives. The public health officer oversees services and programs, administers state benefits, and ensures public health guidance is followed. For more information on public health programs and services, visit www.charlescountyhealth.org.

Public Schools & Board of Education



The Charles County Board of Commissioners authorizes the county budget transfer of nearly half of annual General Fund revenues to the Charles County Public School System annually. The Board of Education is an elected body of nine members that establishes educational policy, guides fiscal policy, provides overall direction, and governs the work of Charles County Public Schools. The superintendent is appointed by the Board of Education to manage the day-to-day operations of the school system, including student instruction and support, staffing, transportation, food service, and school facilities. Brief highlights about public education start on page 40. For comprehensive information about Charles County Public Schools, visit the website at www.ccboe.com.

Sheriff's Office



The sheriff is an independently elected official who is responsible for all law enforcement operations and corrections, including the county's Detention Center. The Charles County Board of Commissioners authorizes the county budget transfer of nearly one-quarter of its annual budget to the Sheriff's Office, which oversees the fiscal and policy decisions regarding law enforcement priorities, programs, and services provided to county residents and businesses. For more information on how law enforcement and corrections operate in Charles County, visit the Charles County Sheriff's Office website at www.ccsco.us.

State's Attorney's Office



The State's Attorney's Office (SAO) is led by its chief elected official, the state's attorney, who enforces criminal laws through prosecution within Charles County. The SAO reviews cases, determines applicable charges, and presents cases in District and Circuit Court. The Board of Commissioners determines and provides funding for the SAO. For more information, visit www.ccsao.us.

Volunteer Fire and Emergency Medical Services



Charles County provides for emergency services in a variety of ways. Fire services are 100 percent volunteer through 14 independently operated fire departments and one dive rescue department located strategically in the county. Emergency Medical Services (EMS) are provided through a combination of volunteer and career EMS organizations. There are three EMS-only volunteer stations in addition to 11 others housed within fire stations to provide volunteer EMS services. Charles County Government provides for career EMS staffing as a division of the Department of Emergency Services (DES). The Charles County Hazardous Materials Team is also housed within DES. For additional information on volunteer operations, visit www.ccvfireems.org.

Promoting Healthy Living

The Charles County Department of Health is implementing many free programs to the community. These programs help residents prevent or manage chronic conditions. Programs include Chronic Disease Self-Management, Diabetes Self-Management, Healthy Hearts Start at Home (a blood pressure self-monitoring program), and the Diabetes Prevention Program. Building Better Caregivers is a program that helps caregivers be the best version of themselves while caring for others. All events are advertised on the Healthy Charles County social media platforms (Facebook and Instagram).



Supporting Health & Fitness in Our County



Assistance for Opioid Epidemic

The county participates in the Opioid Fatality Review Team bi-monthly meetings with other local partner organizations and High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Program with federal partners for collaboration and assistance with the opioid epidemic. The county has Narcan kits in county ambulances and county-maintained automated external defibrillators.

The county-wide Drug Take Back Program provides drop-off locations at local pharmacies for unwanted or expired prescriptions and over-the-counter medications. In its fifth year of collections, the program collected 1,859.85 pounds for fiscal 2021. The program provides a safe alternative to keeping medications away from children, potential addicts, and county wastewater systems.

2022 COVID-19 Updates

- Provided 317 COVID-19 clinics in the county
- Administered 7,489 COVID-19 vaccines, held 292 testing events, and 4,569 COVID-19 test were administered
- Continues to distribute COVID-19 self-test kits and face masks to libraries, senior centers, churches, and community centers weekly.

Dental Services

The Department offers the dental services: examinations, digital x-rays, dental cleaning, oral cancer screening, restorative (fillings), and extractions. In 2022, root canal treatments were added to the dental services. The staff provides the patients with a safe and least invasive treatment. The dentists determine treatment plans based on patient needs, diagnosis, and medical history. The department accepts Children's Maryland Healthy Smiles, Adult Medicaid, uninsured, under-insured, Medicare, and private insurances.

Inspections & Testing

The Department licenses food service facilities, public swimming pools, septage haulers, refuse haulers, large outdoor music festivals, campgrounds, and pet stores that sell exotic birds. In addition to these duties, staff conduct percolation testing, building permit review, site plan review, record plat review, inspections of department licensed facilities, issues well permits, conducts water testing and beach testing, investigates animal bites for rabies risk mitigation, and permits and inspects the installation of onsite septic systems. The department also administers local grant funding through the Bay Restoration Fund for the installation of nitrogen reduction technology on septic systems. **In fiscal 2022, the department completed:**

- 912** food service facility inspections completed, and **133** temporary food service facilities licensed and inspected
- 215** environmental health complaints investigated, and **546** animal bite reports investigated
- 249** percolation tests completed
- 253** well construction permits and **329** septic permits



Charles County Sheriff's Office

Sheriff Troy D. Berry leads the Charles County Sheriff's Office (CCSO), one of the largest employers in Charles County, with more than 650 personnel including police officers, corrections officers, and civilians. Re-elected in 2022 and serving his third term, Sheriff Berry is the first African American to serve as sheriff in the agency's 365-year history. As a full-service law enforcement agency, the CCSO provides police protection and other law enforcement services for the entire county and operates the Charles County Detention Center.

The men and women of the CCSO are dedicated to service through superior performance and respect. The protection of life is the agency's highest priority. Sworn officers are committed to responding to calls for service quickly, investigating crimes thoroughly, and participating in the judicial process responsibly. In 2022, the CCSO continued focusing on the importance of a strong community partnership, crime prevention, and crime fighting. Partnering with our law enforcement allies, the CCSO handled more than 295,768 calls for service. In addition, all sworn employees received training on handling and de-escalating critical incidents, a priority for Sheriff Berry. The agency also partners with neighborhood, community, and business members to raise awareness about crime and work collaboratively on prevention.

The CCSO has long been recognized as having outstanding relationships with the communities they serve. The agency continues to join forces with organizations such as the

Center for Abused Persons, Charles County Crime Solvers, Parents Affected by Addiction, and Lifestyles of Maryland, Inc. Residents continuously show their support by participating in events such as the Crime Watch Kickoff, Citizens Advisory Council Meetings, and National Night Out. During the summer months, the agency hosts Friday Night Lights and Sirens block party events where staff and neighbors can mingle and share conversations in their communities and ways that the CCSO can help.

The CCSO is committed to enhancing relations with communities one person at a time. Through school visits, to high school graduations, to community events and senior housing visits, the CCSO looks for ways to connect with the people they serve. Further, the CCSO is active in all schools and hosts numerous camps throughout the summer to continue mentoring students. The agency helps fill voids to assist communities through programs such as End Hunger Charles County, Shop with a Cop, Christmas Connection, after-school mentoring, Teen Court, and the Annual Corrections' Toy Drive among others.

The agency also supports the United Way, American Cancer Association, Special Olympics Maryland, and the Corrections Reentry Fair for inmates preparing for release.

“Protecting our community is our priority and an obligation we fulfill through traditional police work, innovative community programs and a strong alliance with citizens, businesses, community organizations, and government leaders. Our achievements in 2022 reflect not only our hard work but also the effort our community has invested in public safety.”

—Sheriff Berry



Visit CCSO.us to learn more about the Charles County Sheriff's Office.



Public Schools

Strategic plan

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) has a strategic plan in place that guides the work of the school system. Developed by Superintendent of Schools Maria Navarro, Ed.D., in collaboration with other school system leaders, the strategic plan outlines the guiding work in place to enhance learning experiences for all students. The plan includes **three priority areas**: student learning and achievement; access and opportunities; and culture and climate. Each priority area includes goals and strategies with measurement metrics identified to evaluate progress.

Blueprint for Maryland's Future

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future is a landmark piece of legislation passed in 2021. It was created to enhance Maryland's schools and prepare each **student for life after graduation**. The landmark educational plan seeks to make Maryland's public schools the best in the world by focusing on five policy areas. The Accountability and Implementation Board was established to oversee funding and make sure districts are meeting the Blueprint's standards and goals. The Blueprint contains policy areas including early childhood education, high quality and diverse teachers and leaders, college and career ready pathways, more resources and programs to support overall needs of students, and governance and accountability. CCPS is committed to the implementation of the Blueprint and outlines the school system's progress in the policy areas.

School Safety

The CCPS Office of School Safety and Security continues to encourage students, staff and families to use the online reporting tool (www.ccboe.com/community/see-something-say-something). The site allows users to anonymously submit reports of bullying and harassment, threats, misconduct, and general tips related to the school system. The office has increased security camera coverage in and around buildings and is in the process of installing hardwired alert buttons in each main office. The buttons can be used by staff to summon help in emergencies.

Additional trauma kits have been delivered to schools and offices. Each kit contains supplies to address an injury or wound that could occur during an emergency with staff members versed in Stop the Bleed training.

Safety and security staff secured a grant to purchase drones used as a security tool during large gatherings such as high school graduations and other incidents where a broader view of a location is beneficial.



Early College Program

CCPS continues its partnership with CSM in the 2023-2024 academic year by offering the Early College Program to high school students. The pilot program launched in Fall 2022 providing **150 students** from Henry E. Lackey, St. Charles, Thomas Stone, and Westlake high schools with a tuition-free early start to college courses. For the 2023-2024 academic year, the program will accept 200 students and has been expanded to rising high school juniors and seniors at the seven CCPS high schools who want to complete college credits while attending high school. All college classes will take place on the La Plata campus of CSM with the cost of tuition and books covered by CCPS. Boxed lunches provided by the school system will be available daily for students in the Early College Program and transportation will be provided to CCPS students through CCPS.

Early Childhood Education

The College of Southern Maryland (CSM) leased a building to CCPS in January 2023. The school system will soon use CSM's former St. Charles Children's Learning Center (CLC) to expand **prekindergarten program offerings**. Use of the facility by CCPS will begin with the start of the 2023-2024 school year. The lease is set to span two consecutive years with an option for an additional lease after June 2026. The building will be used by CCPS as part of the school system's focus to fulfill the early childhood education requirement found in the Blueprint for Maryland's Future legislation. CCPS currently offers a full-day prekindergarten program at each of the 22 elementary schools. Currently, there are 847 children enrolled, and nearly 220 children are on a waiting list for placement. CCPS's use of the former CLC space will provide additional space for prekindergarten students.



CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES

A record number of scholarship offers were earned in 2022 — totaling nearly \$167 million!

CCPS's graduation rate in 2021 was 93% Exceeded the state rate of 87.2% that year

2021 CCPS four-year cohort dropout rate decreased from 4.31% in 2020 to 4.21% in 2021 and is more than 3% lower than the statewide average of 7.36% for 2021.

Black or African American student graduation rates increased from 93.47% in 2020 to 93.97% in 2021.

Graduation rates for students who qualify for free/reduced-price meals increased to 92.98% in 2021, up from 89.09% in 2020.

Health Resources

Indian Head Elementary School is a newly designated Community School as of the 2022-2023 school year. Community schools — Dr. Samuel A. Mudd Elementary School in Waldorf is also one — are public schools that provide services and support to fit a community's needs. Indian Head Elementary also houses the county's third Judy Center which provides information and resources to parents and caregivers making them and the school system partners in a child's education and development. Representatives from CCPS and the Charles County Department of Health presented at the County Commissioners' Jan. 31 meeting requesting \$1,135,000 in CIP funding for a **modular medical clinic** on the grounds of Indian Head Elementary School. The Charles County Department of Health has submitted a grant request to Maryland Community Health Resources Commission to implement a school-based health center. The clinic is due to open by August 2024.



Full-Day Kindergarten

Since 2007, all kindergarten programs in Maryland public schools have been full-day programs operating for 6.5 hours a day to support the academic, social, physical, and emotional development of kindergarten students. Existing CCPS elementary schools built before 2007 have received or will receive full-day kindergarten additions at a pace of about two per year. Malcolm and J.P. Ryon elementary schools are receiving additions to house full-day kindergarten programs. At Malcolm, the addition will add 7,170 square feet of space to the existing 51,328-square-foot building. The Ryon addition will bring 9,375 more square feet of space to the existing school building that now stands at 73,748 square feet. The projects are due to be completed by July 2023. The remaining schools that will receive kindergarten additions in the future include Dr. Thomas L. Higdon, Walter J. Mitchell, J.C. Parks, and William B. Wade elementary schools.

Plans for the construction of Elementary School 23 are underway as of February 2023. The project will create a new elementary school with 778 student capacity on property dedicated by the developers of St. Charles. CCPS is now moving forward with contract approvals, and the estimated construction start in April 2023.



Visit www.CCBOE.com to learn more about our public schools.



PRIDE IN EXCELLENCE

The College of Southern Maryland (CSM) is proud to serve the state's unique region and promote social and economic mobility for its students through high-quality, accessible, affordable, inclusive and innovative instructional programs. CSM meets this task everyday by collaborating with governments, businesses, community partners, CSM alumni and citizens to build coalitions and meaningful partnerships that benefit students and the region's workforce.

The staff and faculty at CSM are proud that Southern Maryland Newspapers readers voted the college the "Best of the Best" in the college/university category in 2022! Here are just a few of our other points of pride:

- **CSM President Dr. Yolanda Wilson**

Wilson began her tenure as CSM's sixth president January 1, 2023 and in doing so, became the first African-American president to lead the college in its 64-year-history.



- CSM was designated as **Best Online College** in Maryland for 2023 by Intelligent.com.
- CSM was recognized for having **Best Faculty** among Maryland's community colleges by Intelligent.com; December 2022.
- CSM earned the 2022 Leadership Award from the Maryland Association for **Adult, Community, and Continuing Education**; September, 2022.
- CSM was named the 36th best community college in the nation out of 677 and 77th best college in the nation when it comes to career outcomes for its students by WalletHub; September, 2022.
- CSM named a **Military Friendly® school** designation for 7th consecutive year (2022-2023) and ranked in the top 10 for community colleges as a top post-secondary school for veterans and their spouses.
- In 2022, CSM was accepted into the **U.S. Military's Cyber Command** (CYBERCOM) Academic Engagement Network.

Workforce development

As the only community college in Calvert, Charles and St. Mary's counties, CSM serves more than 14,100 credit and continuing education students at its locations in Hughesville, Indian Head, Leonardtown, La Plata, Prince Frederick, and the Center for Transportation Training in La Plata.

The Regional Hughesville Campus is located on 74 acres and also hosts the college's **Center for Trades and Energy Training** (CTET) and the new Center for Health Sciences. CTET is home to the region's premier skilled craft and training center providing specialized credentialing and certifications for a of trades. CSM is proud to also partner with local businesses to connect the dots between students, employees and employers by providing highly specialized training through certifications, micro-credentials, and digital badges that align with desired competencies.

The **Velocity Center** in Indian Head is a catalyst for economic development and innovation. It is approximately 13,000 square feet located outside of the Naval Surface Warfare Center. At the Velocity Center, Navy scientists and industry leaders interact with students, have a place to tinker or conduct unclassified research – and the community has access to CSM courses, Kids' and Teen College and STEM students and clubs can explore possibilities in the state-of-the-art Makerspace. The Makerspace is equipped with a variety of maker equipment including 3D printers, laser cutters, subtractive machines, soldering irons and open-air space for robotics and prototyping.

CSM's **Center for Health Sciences Building** opened in 2023 at the Hughesville Campus. The state-of-the art center is the continuation of the college's commitment to provide local communities with highly-trained, responsive, and patient-centered healthcare professionals. This cutting-edge, 50,000 square foot facility is fully equipped for turning theory into practice and exceptional training into standard-setting patient care.



Transforming Lives and Student Success

When you enroll at CSM, you don't just get an education; you get the support of a caring community of faculty, staff, and fellow students committed to helping everyone in the CSM family succeed. With tuition and fees at about half the cost of that of a state four-year public university, CSM offers a range of associate degree programs, certificate programs, letters of recognition and continuing education courses for professional and career development.

- CSM now offers more than 280 transfer agreements with more than 70 partnering universities nationwide.
- CSM offers interactive personal enrichment classes, driver education, motorcycle training, Kids' and Teen College, cooking, wellness and homeschool classes – to name a few.
- High school students can extend their learning opportunities by enrolling at CSM through dual enrollment allowing them to simultaneously earn college credit while in high school — with up to a 50 percent tuition reduction.
- Charles County and CSM have partnered to offer an Early College program for 11th and 12th graders.
- In the past five years, the CSM Foundation (www.CSMD.edu/foundation/about/index.html) has awarded more than \$3 million to more than 3,000 students in support of credit and workforce development scholarships.
- CSM believes that no one should have to choose between being hungry and getting their education: That is why the CSM Foundation and Student Life partner with churches and the Maryland Food Bank to distribute thousands of pounds of free food to students from our well-stocked, walk-in Hawk Food Pantries at three of its campuses.

At CSM, you can choose from a wide array of quality programs designed to help meet professional and personal goals – be it a new career, expanding a knowledge base or exploring a new hobby. Don't wait for someday. Start a new future at CSM today.



Visit www.CSMD.edu to learn more about Charles County's community college.



CSM offers 20 student clubs including the National Society of Black Engineers, the Men of Excellence, the Women of Excellence, SAGE, E.X.I.T.O International and the world-ranked robotics team — the TALONS.





The Charles County Public Library (CCPL) creates opportunities for our community to engage, discover, and learn. CCPL consists of four library branch buildings, as well as a Mobile Library that is deployed throughout the community.

The CCPL was originally formed in 1922 by the Homemaker's Clubs of Charles County with the help of Extension Agent Paul Dennis "PD" Brown, who is the namesake of one of our branches.

Our branches house more than **250,000 volumes** of printed material, audio books, film, and other documents. We also have a wide variety of online and digital resources available to our patrons, including various research databases, online tools to assist in your job search and for skill building, free homework help and tutoring, digital content including eBooks, audiobooks, movies, music and more. CCPL also offers a full schedule of programming for all ages, ranging from story time to crafts, computer assistance, free educational courses, and presentations from local organizations.

This past year was a busy one at the library. CCPL celebrated turning a century old with a year filled with special events and programming. The library also launched several new partnerships and initiatives:

- Partnership with the Charles County Health Department to distribute **at home COVID-19 test kits and face masks** at the branches: To date, more than 30,000 test kits and more than 55,000 face masks have been distributed.
- Charles County Recreation and Parks Divisions' **RecPASS Partnership**: This special project added 10 RecPASSES for free for circulation in library locations. This program launched in June 2022 with 10 passes in collection at the start, and has now expanded to 25 total.
- **CCPS virtual student cards** for anyone enrolled in Charles County Public Schools: All students now have a virtual library card available while they are enrolled in a CCPS school.



Visit CCPLonline.org to learn more about the Charles County Public Library and the full list of available services.

Did you know?

There are more than **75,000** Charles County residents who have library cards... and that number grows every day.

Imagination Library of Charles County

CCPL is proud to announce that we have partnered with **Dolly Parton's Imagination Library** and the **Southern Maryland Regional Library Association (SMRLA)** to bring this special program to our county. This free program delivers one book each month to children (children younger than 5) in Charles County. The program launched in October 2021. There is no cost or obligation to the participating families.

• • • • •
"You can never get enough BOOKS into the hands of enough CHILDREN."

— Dolly Parton
• • • • •

As of June 2022:

1,613 Children registered for the program

15,140 Books mailed to registered children

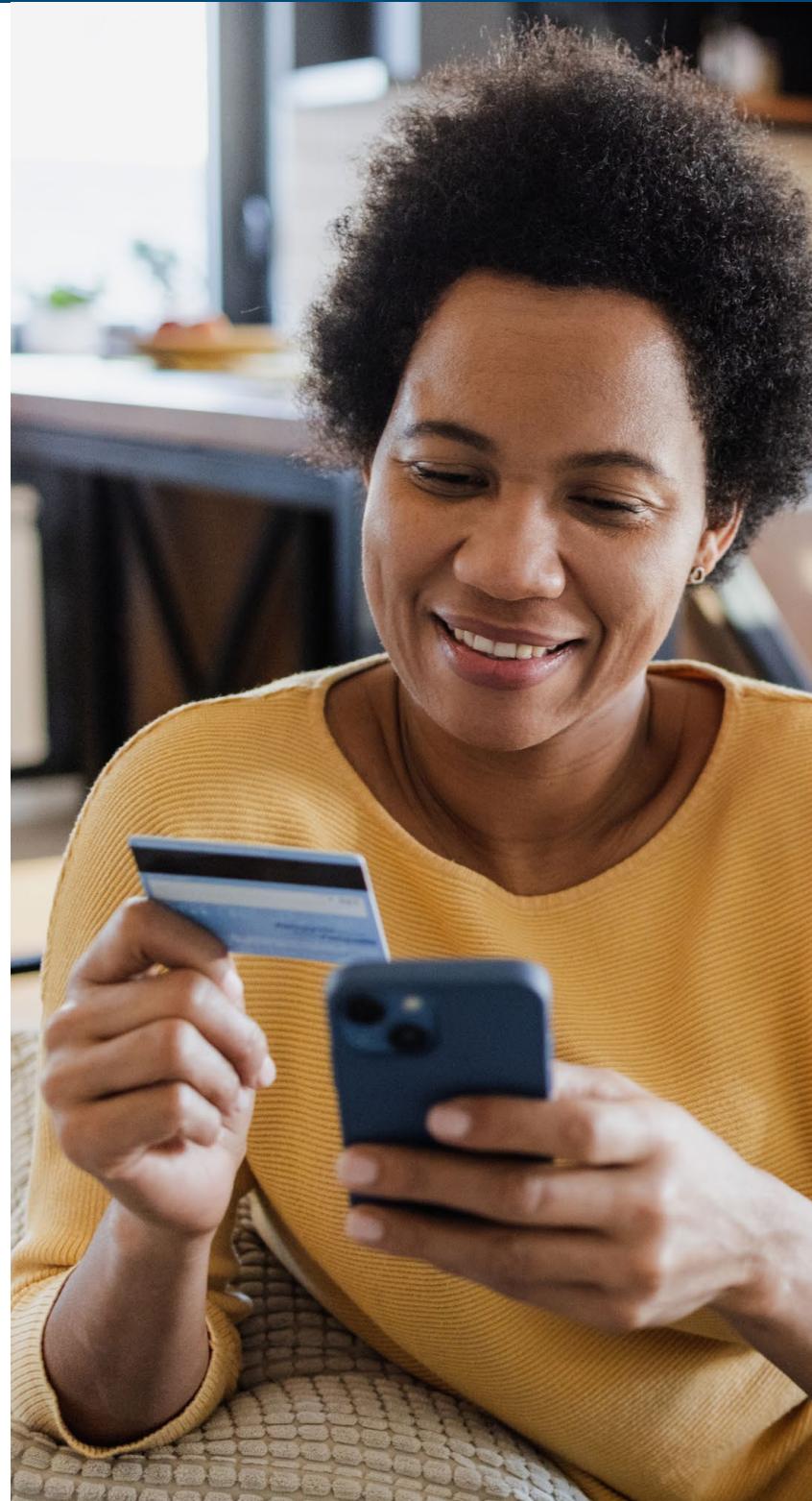
324 Children graduated since program start

This program was made possible in part by a generous donation from the Citizens for the Charles County Public Library, Inc. (C4CCPL). The Imagination Library of Charles County is supported by our community — by local businesses, grants, and individual donors.

PAYING YOUR CHARLES COUNTY UTILITY BILL HAS NEVER BEEN EASIER!

Bill payments should be as simple and convenient as possible, which is why we want you to know that you can manage and pay your bills online via our all new payment system.

- Services are **FREE**
- Registering is easy and hassle-free
- View your billing statement digitally
- Pay using credit or debit
- One time payments available with no registration



Pay Online: ipn.paymentus.com/cp/cco

Pay By Phone: 866-477-8742

Remember to have your account number ready.



GET CONNECTED TO CHARLES COUNTY GOVERNMENT

CharlesCountyMD.gov



About Charles County Government

The mission of Charles County Government is to provide our citizens the highest quality service possible in a timely, efficient and courteous manner. To achieve this goal, our government must be operated in an open and accessible atmosphere, be based on comprehensive long- and short-term planning and have an appropriate managerial organization tempered by fiscal responsibility. We support and encourage efforts to grow a diverse workplace. Charles County is a place where all people thrive and businesses grow and prosper; where the preservation of our heritage and environment is paramount; where government services to its citizens are provided at the highest level of excellence; and where the quality of life is the best in the nation.

It is the policy of Charles County to provide equal employment opportunity to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, age, national origin, religious or political affiliation or opinion, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, genetic information, gender identity or expression, or any other status protected by law.

CHARLES COUNTY GOVERNMENT

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