

PUBLIC SAFETY

Police Department

- The Department's authorized sworn strength will remain at 1,420 in FY2004. Due to a projected attrition rate of seven per month, Police recruit classes are scheduled in November 2003 and May 2004 to offset the loss of officers through retirement and resignation.
- A Police Reform Office has been established to review the operations of the Department and make recommendations on methods to improve community policing and shift staffing to better serve the citizens.

Fire/EMS Department

- The Department will continue in their efforts to have highly trained personnel ready and able to deal with any challenges regarding Homeland Security. There are also plans to implement cross-training strategies, there by increasing the Department's ability to respond to terrorist emergencies.

EDUCATION AND LIBRARY

Board of Education

- The proposed FY2004 budget for the Board of Education is just over \$1.17 billion. This is an increase in funding of \$70.4 million, or 6.4% above the Board's FY2003 budget.
- The County's contribution to the Board of Education increases by \$24.3 million, or 2.2% in FY2004. This increase includes \$15 million projected to be generated by the new State-mandated 8% telephone tax.
- Outside aid increased by \$46.2 million, or 6.9% in FY2004. Of this increase \$875,000 reflected new Federal aid, \$43.7 million represents state aid increases and \$1.6 million is generated by the Board through its tuition and fees. State revenues for FY2004 generally reflect amounts that result from formulae and funding provisions existing in State law. This aid includes funding under the formulas for the Foundation Program, State Compensatory Education, Student Transportation Aid and Students with Disabilities aid. Most of the State increase is attributable to changes in State law made under the Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act of 2002 (SB 856-2002).
- Based on the current schedule, the County will open one elementary school in August 2003 (Samuel P. Massie Elementary) and two schools in January 2004 (Colmar Manor Elementary and Oxon Hill Area Elementary). This raises to fifteen the number of schools that have been built by the County school system in the last five years. Eleven of the thirteen schools required under the Memorandum of Understanding will be completed by the close of FY2004.
- Funds are set aside for cost of living adjustments for all school employees.
- \$13.1 million in funding is provided for enhancements to the staffing formula for grades 4-6, bringing the student/teacher ratio down in those grades to 25 to 1. This enhancement to the staffing formula is estimated to result in the hiring of 229 additional full-time employees.
- \$3 million in funding is provided for the tutoring of high school students in an effort to improve performance on the State's standardized assessment test.

Memorial Library System

- The new Accokeek Branch is scheduled to open during FY2004 as a full-service branch library with hours comparable to the Upper Marlboro Branch.
- The newly enlarged Sojourner Truth Room will focus not only on its unique collection of materials, but also on programs, seminars, lectures and exhibits that highlight African-American culture and history.
- The Library will continue a three-year plan to improve services to the foreign-born residents of the County. Strategies will include purchasing additional bilingual materials, improving directional signs in the branches, providing additional staff training and increasing the efforts to promote existing collections and services.

Community College

- The Community College will continue to increase enrollment in college classes in all areas of the County by using on-line courses, the Laurel College Center, the Metro Center, and Andrews Air Force Base.

HUMAN SERVICES

Housing and Community Development

- The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) will continue to provide financial and technical assistance to Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs) for the acquisition and/or rehabilitation of rental housing, acquisition and/or habilitation of homebuyer properties, new construction of rental housing, and new construction of homebuyer properties. DHCD will continue to provide direct financial assistance to purchasers of HOME-assisted housing sponsored or developed by a CHDO with HOME funds.
- The Housing Authority will continue to administer the Single Family Mortgage Purchase Program. Revenue bonds in the amount of \$25 million were sold in FY 2002 and will be used to make long-term mortgage loans, to purchase mortgages to finance housing, housing rehabilitation or housing project (s), and to pay or retire bonds previously issued by the Housing Authority.
- The Housing Authority will continue to administer the Down Payment Closing Cost Assistance Program, which seeks to increase homeownership opportunities in the County. In conjunction with the Single Family Mortgage Purchase Program, this program will provide a maximum of \$20,000 in down payment and closing cost assistance to homebuyers purchasing a home in a targeted area of the County.

Health Department

- The Department's Women's Wellness Center will be fully operational providing an array of preventive health services including stress, anger management, self-esteem, parenting, family planning and financial planning workshops and health screenings. In addition, the Department will initiate the second phase of its media campaign to reduce infant mortality and low birth weight. This year's campaign will be focused on educating men and women on the importance of abstinence and responsible sexual activity.
- The Department will expand its network of private substance abuse treatment providers to include at least one in-county provider of non-hospital detoxification services. This expansion will allow for an increase in the number of county residents able to access detoxification services.