



NEWS

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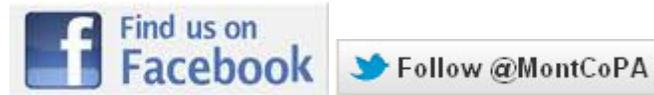
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Montco Commissioners Vote to Participate in PA's Human Services Block Grant Program

Norristown, PA (June 10, 2013) – The Montgomery County Commissioners last week voted to have the county participate in Pennsylvania's Human Services Block Grant Program should the program be expanded to allow more counties to participate.

The pilot program established in the 2012 fiscal year by the Corbett Administration provided funding from the Department of Public Welfare to the counties in the form of block grants, instead of providing it in specific categories. The program, which initially had a limit of 20 counties participating, was designed to give counties more flexibility on how to allocate human services funding.

After observing the program for a year, Montgomery County officials decided that the program does, in fact, provide greater flexibility to allocate funds, something that is important to the county because of the new Community Connections outreach program it is about to launch. While the block grant program is now capped at 20 county participants, pending legislation in Harrisburg, supported by Gov. Corbett, would open the program up to all counties.

The county's Community Connections program will bring county services to one-stop centers throughout the county, eliminating, in most cases, the need for residents to travel to Norristown to secure help. These regional centers will be staffed by so called "navigators", personnel that would serve as navigators and advocates for residents needing services from a variety of county departments. The block grant system will allow greater flexibility in funding the county's Community Connections program.

"As we sought to bring this cutting edge delivery of services to our residents that would break down the silo model of service delivery, we realized we needed great flexibility from the state," said Josh Shapiro, chairman of the county commissioners and the main champion of the Community

Connections program. “We found a willing partner in the Governor’s office. They are enthusiastic about our idea and believe it could become a model for counties around the state. Joining the block grant program, therefore, is the next logical step.”

“We appreciate and welcome Montgomery County's support of the block grant concept and its' expansion to more counties,” said Governor Tom Corbett. “We must all work together to better serve our citizens and the block grant and the Community Connections concept are positive steps in this direction. I applaud the efforts of the Montgomery County Commissioners.”

Shapiro added that he hoped the legislature would pass the expansion of the block grant program as soon as possible.