



SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2025.** Please include this submission form as the first page of your electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Montgomery County

Program Title: Website Refresh

Program Category: Communications

CONTACT INFORMATION

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SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Angela M. Hill

Title: County Administrator

Signature: Angela M Hill

VACo Achievement Award Submission: Website Refresh

Award Category: Communication

Executive Summary (1 page):

The overarching goal for revamping Montgomery County's public website (montva.com) was to put citizens' needs first by enhancing the user experience. Months of evaluation and planning resulted in the creation of a mobile-friendly website, featuring an icon-based navigation on the home page; links to statistically popular topics; a topic-based page for departments and services; an audience-based navigation for businesses, residents, and visitors; a general inquiries form; and a reduction of documents housed on the site.

The Public Relations and Community Engagement (PRCE) office formed a cross-departmental Web Evaluation Team to review the existing website and plan for the refreshed website. Following the planning stages, the PRCE office worked with a vendor to create new a home page design, as well as templates for other pages. Additional work was completed by three members of the PRCE team and one individual from the County's Information Technology (IT) Department. This included organizing the site; editing and transferring content; condensing information; producing visuals (videos, photos, graphics); and testing functionality.

Visitation numbers for the website have not changed drastically; however, customer service inquiries are now more accurately monitored. Since the launch of the new site, over 1,300 inquiries have been received via the web form alone. Some of these comments and inquiries have led to additional content updates to the website. Anecdotally, employees have mentioned the ease in helping citizens find what they need on the website. Content is no longer buried by long URLs, too much information, and multiple clicks.

Brief Overview (2-3 paragraphs):

The overarching goal for revamping Montgomery County's public website (montva.com) was to put citizens' needs first by enhancing the user experience. Months of evaluation and planning resulted in the creation of a mobile-friendly website, featuring an icon-based navigation on the home page; links to statistically popular topics; a topic-based page for departments and services; an audience-based navigation for businesses, residents, and visitors; a general inquiries form; and a reduction of documents housed on the site. In addition the site needed to be ADA compliant.

The bulk of this project was completed internally, saving the County a significant amount of money. The revamped website was designed based on current web analytics and feedback from all County departments and offices with a citizen-first mindset.

The Challenge:

Montgomery County's website prior to May 2024 was outdated and not ADA compliant. It was challenging for citizens, employees and even elected officials to find what they needed on the existing website. In fact, both internal and external users consistently used the search feature to try to find things on the site. Visitors to the website needed a civics lesson and an organizational chart to understand the structure of it, let alone find what they wanted or needed. Since the website is often the first thing individuals encounter when exploring Montgomery County, staff decided improvements were necessary to the website.

The Solution:

Initial stages of this project began in July 2021. Representatives from more than 10 county departments formed the Web Evaluation Team and began meeting regularly to discuss customer service expectations, perceived needs, design ideas, statistical information, and more. This information gathering and planning phase lasted 12 months.

These discussions resulted in the creation of a mobile-friendly website featuring an icon-based navigation on the home page, linking to statistically popular topics on the website; a topic-based (versus department) page for departments and services; an audience-based navigation for businesses, residents, and visitors; a form for general inquiries and contact information on every page; an implementation of expandable lists; and a reduction of documents housed on the site.

Beyond the aforementioned features, multimedia items were also added to the site. This included photo galleries throughout Parks and Recreation pages, video banners, and embedded podcasts. Document repositories were developed to organize content and improve search results. Strides toward a more accessible and quality-assured website continue to be made.

After an agreed upon design incorporating the new brand and logo, the Public Relations and Community Engagement office worked with a vendor to create a home page as well as templates for other pages. Additional work was completed by three members of the PRCE team and one individual from Information Technology (IT) department. This included organizing the site; editing and transferring content; condensing information; producing visuals (videos, photos, graphics); and testing functionality. The existing site and “refresh” site were maintained simultaneously for a period of about six months. The hours worked for these stages of the project are unknown. The new website was launched May 2024.

Program Cost:

The Public Relations and Community Engagement office worked with a vendor who would craft the home page as well as templates for other pages. This stage of the project had a budget of \$5,000. Additional work would be completed by three members of the PRCE team and one from Information Technology (IT). This included organizing the site; editing and transferring content; condensing information; producing visuals (videos, photos, graphics); and testing functionality. The existing site and “refresh” site were maintained simultaneously for a period of about six months. The hours worked for these stages of the project are unknown.

The Results:

Visitation numbers for the website have not changed drastically; however, customer service inquiries are now more accurately monitored. Since the launch of the new site, over 1,300 inquiries have been received via the web form alone. Some of these comments and inquiries have led to additional content updates to the website.

Anecdotally, employees have mentioned the ease in helping citizens find what they need on the website. Content is no longer buried by long URLs, too much information, and multiple clicks.

Website – Refresh of montva.com

NOTE TO EVALUATORS

The previous iteration of the montva.com website is no longer available. Here is a link to video of that site's design, using a few key pages. <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1-r0V0JfJkwVS57nh2lOXPrTEYSnqpcBy?usp=sharing>

- Home page
- Topic page
- Condensed page
- Department page
- Department subpage

The video will also provide the new site's URL for comparison. For convenience, they are provided here as well.

NEW PAGES

- Home page - <https://montva.com>
- Topic page – <https://montva.com/citizensacademy>
- Condensed pages – <https://montva.com/recycle>
- Department page – <https://montva.com/parks>
- Department subpage – <https://montva.com/parks-facilities>
 - Evaluators are encouraged to browse individual parks/facilities pages to experience the new features on these pages.