

MC/Council members:

**The NAACP of Montgomery County submits the following statement regarding the proposed Special Appropriation of ARPA funds:**

The U.S. Treasury final rule for American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA ) funding states that ARPA funds may be used to respond to an increase in gun violence associated with the pandemic. Specifically, funding may be used for “evidence-based practices like focused deterrence, street outreach, violence interrupters, and hospital-based violence intervention models, complete with wraparound services such as behavioral therapy, trauma recovery, job training, education, housing and relocation services, and financial assistance.

Special Appropriation #22-X to the FY22 Operating Budget Department of Police, COVID-19 ARPA Relief Funds (\$731,125) (Source of Funds: Federal Aid) EXPECTED ATTENDEES None. DESCRIPTION/ISSUE • The Council reviewed the proposed funding options for the remaining \$27.5 million in unallocated American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding on April 19, 2022. The Council supported these proposals with some amendments. The subject resolution appropriates the tranche identified for violence reduction/public safety programs. • This supplemental appropriation to the FY22 Operating Budget of the Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD) will provide a targeted emergency response to address an increase in gun violence associated with the pandemic. The total appropriation is \$731,125.

The proposed spending under the supplemental is as follows:

♣ **\$471,875 will be used to create a Violent Crime Information Center**, with four crime analysts that conduct link analysis, track weapons data, and generate violent crime statistical reports for Command Staff. It includes funding for training and supplies. These efforts will help identify individuals who can participate in group violence prevention initiatives.

**The NAACP expresses its grave concerns about this measure.** It is not clear that this use of funding is in accord with the spirit of ARPA, which seeks to promote evidence based practices which directly respond to the increase in gun violence associated with the pandemic. This proposed effort seems to be a part of a general violent crime reduction strategy which while important and necessary, does not appear to meet the requirement that the focus of such funding be gun violence associated with the pandemic and should therefore be used from funding currently available to the MCPD. Additionally, while the description of the data collection necessary for the development of the analysis is not described, it should be determined that such data collection would not involve actions that would result in racial profiling and other discriminatory law enforcement practices. We have been made aware that these kind of crime linkage analysis algorithms often depend upon gathering data about not only person who has committed a crime of violence, but also the community in which they live and the friends and family with whom they may associate. Needless to say, the collection of information about individuals who have no connection to gun violence potentially undermines the civil rights and civil liberties of everyone in the community.

♣ **\$156,250 for a Gun violence Intervention Initiative.** This violence prevention best practice requires partnerships with Street Outreach Network in HHS. A portion of this funding is to hire two hospital navigator positions at Suburban Hospital that will help mediate conflicts during gang and violent situations.

**The NAACP has many concerns about this funding.** On its face, this initiative seems to fall within the clear directive from ARPA, however, it lacks the kind of support services specifically outlined in ARPA which indicates that such hospital-based violence intervention models, should include wraparound services such as behavioral therapy, trauma recovery, job training, education, housing and relocation services, and financial assistance. Additionally, it is unclear why a specific hospital would be selected in the appropriations language. The selection of any hospital for this program should be based on a number of factors, including the likelihood that the hospital routinely comes in contact with people who may need the outlined services. Before the county funds this initiative, there should be data supporting the location of such an initiative.

♣ **\$37,500 for Youth and Family Violence Prevention.** This initiative will allow for much broader advertising and outreach regarding the County's domestic violence prevention programs. MCPD will coordinate with the Family Justice Center and the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council.

**The NAACP supports this funding with caveats.** The prevention of youth and family violence associated with the uncertainty and stress experienced by many families during the pandemic is a worthy goal. However, this initiative should be led by the Department of Health and Human Services, the agency with established expertise in funding and supporting these kinds of programs and would encourage a much larger share of the proposed appropriation for these kinds of programs designed to address the root causes of violence, individual responsibility, and community support.

♣ **\$65,500 for the Midnight Madness Activities Program Pilot.** The Police Department is attempting to launch a Midnight Madness basketball league with the Montgomery County Recreation Department and Police Foundation to provide a 3 on 3 basketball league at one recreation center. This program will provide a free basketball league to youths ages 14 through 17 on Friday evenings. The participants will have access to other activities available at the recreation center.

**The NAACP supports this proposed initiative but would suggest that the division of funding and the lines of authority to be shared by these three entities,** MCPD, Department of Rec, and the Police Foundation, be clearly delineated. Additionally, the selection of the Recreation Center to be used as the site for this effort should be based on information regarding the risk faced by young people in the community served by the center.

Thank you.

**MC/NAACP/7022**

**1-888-649-5991 - contact**