

Hello, my name is Anahí Malig, and I'm a Montgomery County resident that lives in Silver Spring who's been volunteering with migrants arriving in DC since June 2022.

As you know, since the first bus arrived in April, a considerable number of migrants have chosen to make the DMV, and most specifically Montgomery County, their home.

In that process, many have required shelter/food assistance, and many have been able to enter stable housing and work situation thanks to the collaboration and support of a committed network of volunteers.

This would have been impossible if they had had to rely on our county's services. In the past months I have repeatedly tried to help some of our new neighbors get access to basic county services such as emergency shelter and food aid, without much success.

What I learn is that there are insurmountable barriers for any newcomer to access these services, such as an overabundance of hotlines and a confusing network of providers, out of the way intake centers, requirement to show ID or other residency proofs unavailable for people in informal housing arrangements.

I truly hope the county does not consider this as merely a one-off situation requiring only "emergency" (and as proposed here, insufficient) funding but thinks to provide more long-term support for all newcomers.

I also urge the council to consider providing as much direct assistance as possible (such as housing/childcare vouchers).

We are one of the richest counties in the richest country in the world, we cannot claim lack of resources with a straight face.

Let's be generous and welcoming, let's prove Abbott and Ducey wrong.

I am submitting my testimony in English and Spanish.

**English:**

Hello, my name is Anahí Malig, and I'm a Montgomery County resident that lives in Silver Spring who's been volunteering with migrants arriving in DC since June 2022. I ask that the Council vote yes for SA #23-17 with changes.

As you know, since the first bus arrived in April, around 1,000 migrants have chosen to make the DMV, and most specifically Montgomery County, their home.

In that process, many have required shelter/food assistance, and many have been able to enter stable housing and work situation thanks to the collaboration and support of a committed network of volunteers.

This would have been impossible if they had had to rely on our county's services. In the past months I have repeatedly tried to help some of our new neighbors get access to basic county services such as emergency shelter and food aid, without much success.

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**I truly hope the county does not consider this as merely a one-off situation requiring only "emergency" (and as proposed here, insufficient) funding but thinks to provide more long-term support for all newcomers.**

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**Español:**

Hola, mi nombre es Anahí Malig y soy una residente del condado de Montgomery que vive en Silver Spring. Desde Junio de este año he sido voluntaria con el grupo de ayuda mutua que ha recibido a los migrantes llegados desde Texas en los buses de Abbott. Insto al Consejo del Condado de Montgomery a votar a favor de SA #23-17 con modificaciones.

Desde la llegada del primer bus en abril, cerca de 1,000 migrantes han elegido asentarse en esta área. Muchos han requerido refugio de emergencia y asistencia alimentaria, y muchos han podido alcanzar una situación estable de vivienda y trabajo gracias a la colaboración y el apoyo de nuestra comprometida red de voluntarios.

Desafortunadamente nada de esto hubiera sido posible si hubieran tenido que depender exclusivamente de los servicios sociales de nuestro condado. En los últimos meses, he intentado repetidamente ayudar sin éxito a algunos de nuestros nuevos vecinos a acceder servicios básicos del condado, como refugios de emergencia y ayuda alimentaria,.

Descubrí que existen barreras insuperables para que cualquier recién llegado acceda a estos servicios: una sobreabundancia de líneas telefónicas directas, una red confusa de proveedores, centros de admisión de difícil acceso, requisitos de identificación u otras pruebas de residencia que personas en situaciones de vivienda informal no son capaces de proveer.

**Espero que el condado no considere esta situación como una circunstancia excepcional que solo requiere la aprobación de insuficientes fondos de "emergencia", sino que piense en brindar un apoyo sostenido y a largo plazo para todos los nuevos inmigrantes.**

También insto al consejo a que considere brindar **asistencia directa** a todos los recién llegados (como vales de vivienda/cuidado de niños).

Somos uno de los condados más ricos en el país más rico del mundo, no podemos pretender que no tenemos suficientes recursos.

Seamos generosos y hospitalarios, no le demos la razón a Abbott y Ducey.