

"Dear Council President Glass and Councilmembers,

My name is Jenna Umbriac and I am a constituent from County Council District 4. I am using my voice today to support investment in behavioral health support, affordable housing and homelessness programs in fiscal year 2024.

I believe that everyone deserves a safe, affordable and stable place to call home. In order to end homelessness by 2025, there are some key programs that need increased funding to add more services rather than a reduction in programming. These include the permanent supportive housing, the housing initiative program and the rapid rehousing program.

We should also be combatting housing insecurity before anyone ever has to use these programs. **Investing more in affordable housing for the lowest-income renters is vital to stopping the shortage that affects our community, especially the shortage of housing accessible to our neighbors that make 0-30% of the area median income.** Homelessness is a housing problem.

I also support the increased funding for emergency rental assistance as a safety net for families so they never have to face the trauma of eviction.

Finally, I support increased funding for the crisis center so that it can be staffed 24/7 for all three sites in Rockville, Germantown and Silver Spring. Complex behavioral health emergencies require trained behavioral health experts county-wide. We must ensure that our crisis center is fully equipped with staff and resources to handle these emergencies.

Thank you so much for this opportunity.

Sincerely,

Jenna Umbriac