

Testimony of
Angela Robertson
Resident Montgomery County – Lived Experience
Montgomery County Council
Special Approp. #25-42, DHHS, Services to End & Prevent Homelessness
Council President: Kate Stewart

Council President Stewart and all Council Members present, thank you for the opportunity to speak. My name is Angela Robertson, and I am resident of Montgomery County and also a person with lived experience in homelessness. I am here today to ask you to support special funding for Services to End and Prevent Homelessness, particularly the Rental Assistance Program or RAP.

Two years ago, I lived with my children for almost 3 months at NCCF's Greentree Shelter in Bethesda, MD. I came to the shelter because I had absolutely no place else to go. I have 4 children total but only my 2 school-aged children were with me at the shelter. My older children were out on their own.

I would like you to know that the shelter is not a nice place to live. It is not a healthy environment for children to grow up in. My youngest stayed with me the whole time but my older child, ended up staying with their father temporarily because they could not be comfortable or feel safe. After this experience, I can understand why some people choose to stay on the street and I never want to be in that position with my kids again. A shelter is an unacceptable place for a family. I did not want to stay there and did everything in my power to get out as quickly as I could.

There are many barriers for people who are trying to exit shelter. You must work hard with your case manager if you want to leave quickly, and I did that with my Case Manager, Leslie Rivera. She was an enormous help. I had a part-time job and a very young child (5 years old), and I needed the money provided by the RAP program. The rental prices in this area are ridiculous. Even the smallest apartment was too expensive without assistance. RAP was the little help I had to have to meet my rent every month. I would not have been able to rush out of the shelter without that support.

I urge you to fund RAP so that other mothers can get their kids out of the shelter quickly and into their own homes. Thank you.