



## Advocacy Statement

Good evening, my name is Brigid Howe and I am testifying tonight on behalf of Nonprofit Montgomery.

Nonprofit Montgomery is an alliance of nonprofits that serve Montgomery County residents. As an organization, we provide capacity-building support to strengthen operational excellence, as well as advocacy and education about the nonprofit sector and its important role.

For the past eight months, we have been hard at work on our 2025 State of Nonprofits in Montgomery County report. The research for the report includes a needs assessment, deep dives into the data around nonprofits, as well as an active engagement process to identify key recommendations for the community to ensure a sustainable and thriving local nonprofit sector.

We launch our report next week on Thursday, March 20 at our Tools to Thrive Nonprofit Expo at the Silver Spring Civic Center – you can get information on our website [Nonprofitmoco.org](https://Nonprofitmoco.org).

Our full report is embargoed until the launch, but showing our support of this legislation was important enough for me to lift the embargo on one particular recommendation.

When we received the results from the needs assessment, I was surprised by the number of comments that mentioned affordable housing as a challenge to nonprofits. Not for clients...though their needs were certainly mentioned...but for the workforce.

One of our survey participants said “[It’s a challenge]...finding young skilled people to work in the field, who can find affordable housing to live in Montgomery County and serve the community.”

Our report shows that while wages paid by nonprofits have increased, providing competitive salaries for employees so they can support the high costs of living in Montgomery County remains a considerable challenge for local nonprofits. As one nonprofit representative shared in the survey, the greatest challenge facing the nonprofit sector is “affordable housing and resources,” while another described the sector’s greatest challenge as “the inability to recruit and retain staff if funding doesn’t keep pace with the rising costs in Montgomery County.”

Given what we learned in the needs assessment, and based on a months-long engagement process, we included a housing recommendation in our report. to Advance Economic Policy That Benefits Middle-Income Residents.

It reads: to offset the high cost of living and challenging real estate market in Montgomery County, the following recommendation is proposed, specifically focused on affordable housing. This recommendation would benefit all residents, including many nonprofit employees who face economic hardship residing in the County:

Advocate for federal, state, and local investment in, and zoning adjustments for, affordable housing production in the County. As previously highlighted, the high cost of living in the County impacts many factors, including the ability for nonprofit employees to live in or near the communities in which they work. Amended zoning codes (“upzoning”) and increased investment in support of market-rate (“missing middle”) and subsidized affordable housing will help meet the important market demand from nonprofit employees, as well as the clients they support each day.

While there is a lot more work to do, this ZTA is a step in the right direction.