

## **Operating Budget Hearing**

April 7, 2025

Dear Council President Stewart and Council Members,

I have been a White Oak (primarily), Wheaton, and Noyes library customer since moving to Silver Spring with a toddler and preschooler. I helped my children apply for library cards as soon as they learned to read. My daughter served on the Teen Advisory Council and was so favorably influenced by her library experiences that she became a librarian. Libraries have always been a big part of our lives. We have the luxury of having access to a university library, are able to drive to other municipalities to access their libraries, and can afford to subscribe to video streaming services. This is not the case for most Montgomery County Library users. As a resident of the Hillandale neighborhood since 1997, former co-president of the Cresthaven Elementary School, current member of the Cresthaven Steering Committee, and former board member of the Hillandale Citizens Association, these are my concerns:

Our county had, at the end of last year, some 80,000 federal workers. The huge numbers of federal lay-offs are affecting our county negatively. Just in my block, the neighbor directly across from us was laid off from the US Agency for International Development and our next-door neighbors just put their house on the market out of fear of their long-term career prospects. Job seekers depend on library access. Many immigrants in our area have closed their small businesses out of fear of detention. We hope job seekers and those staying away from work out of fear can continue to access free library services for themselves and their children.

I ask that the Council support the following in the FY 2026 operating budget for Montgomery County Public Libraries:

- An additional \$121,000 to increase the collection acquisitions budget, ensuring that the library can continue meeting the rise in demand for digital materials, including maintaining five Hoopla checkouts per month.
- An additional \$153,000 to increase the world languages collection. This will better serve the communities that speak many different languages in Montgomery County.

Please fully support the County Executive's proposed operating budget for Montgomery County Public Libraries.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Hopps  
Silver Spring