



Rainbow Place Shelter

A home for tonight and hope for tomorrow

**Testimony for the Record
Submitted to the
Montgomery County Council
Legislative Branch for the Hearing
“FY26 Operating Budget”
04/08/2025**

**Olusina Adebayo, MPA
Executive Director, Rainbow Place Shelter**

To the members of the Montgomery County Council-Thank you for allowing me to participate in today's hearing and thank you for your attention to the FY26 Operating Budget. Humanitarian aid has been the focus of my professional career and housing instability is of critical local and national importance.

My name is Olusina Adebayo. I am the Executive Director at Rainbow Place Shelter and have spent close to 3 years with the organization.

Rainbow Place has served women experiencing homelessness in Montgomery County for 43 years. We have operated during hypothermia season and provided respite from the unforgiving winter weather for over 3000 women in that time. We are currently at a crossroad.

Rockville Presbyterian Church, the institution that we are born out of, is looking to sell the building where our facility is housed. This places the future of our organization in jeopardy.

As I am certain you are aware, we are witnessing an unprecedented growth in County residents experiencing homelessness. The amount of people experiencing homelessness increased 28% from 2023 to 2024, and has risen 71% since 2020.

The cost of living and inflation are untenable for many. This growth will only be exacerbated by the sweeping federal job cuts being made by our federal government. This reform has, and will, disproportionately affect those living around the beltway.

Rainbow Place has made a formal offer to acquire this 18,000 square foot building with the intent to extend our services to women experiencing homelessness; offering 24-7 year round support. This new incarnation of Rainbow would provide 75 beds to guests experiencing homelessness. Historically, we have offered 28.



Rainbow Place Shelter

A home for tonight and hope for tomorrow

This opportunity comes at a decidedly crucial time for Montgomery County residents facing housing instability. We are in the midst of a Nation wide affordable housing crisis and a collective existential dread looms due to political instability.

This acquisition is where necessity meets opportunity.

There are a number of competing unsolicited bids for this property including an investor who has interest in developing affordable housing.

I understand how this proposition would be appealing and am familiar with the County's desire to create more affordable/attainable housing opportunities. But, I am intimately familiar with the exponential growth of homelessness in our community and the need to address it head on. Furthermore, I laud you for recognizing this reality verbally and practically via your recent 3.6 Million dollar special funding appropriation to address the growing trend of homeless families.

With our shelter expansion we intend to not only serve women but young adults, predominantly of the LGBTQIA+ community, and families experiencing homelessness as well.

Short term, the opportunity is for a homeless shelter, but long term Rainbow would be a proponent for affordable housing and would partner with a developer to do the feasibility and undertaking in the foreseeable future of building affordable housing for the redevelopment of the site.

This homeless boom and dearth of affordable housing are inextricably linked. We intend to address this in a progressive fashion that develops an ecosystem for those facing housing instability and those that have been priced out of the market.

Rainbow is seeking support in the way of funding for operations, renovation and acquisition of the building.

An amendment to the FY26 budget in the way of homeless services could be instrumental in helping us achieve this.