



April 2, 2025

Dear Council President Stewart and Councilmembers:

I am the Executive Director of Mid-County United Ministries (MUM), which is based in Wheaton and serves residents of Wheaton, Aspen Hill, Silver Spring, Kensington, Rockville, and Takoma Park. We continue to see record numbers of county residents seeking emergency financial assistance to prevent evictions and to keep their utilities on, visiting our full-choice food pantry, and seeking other resources to address their challenging situations. Given the uncertainty, inflation and the massive cuts to the federal government affecting our community, we ask the Council to **prioritize programs that support the most vulnerable in the FY2026 budget.**

No one should be left without a home because they can't afford skyrocketing rents. The council must fully fund the \$61.81 million Services to Prevent and End Homelessness Budget request and the Emergency Rental Assistance Program with at least \$50 million. In order to prevent homelessness and housing insecurity, we must also address the housing shortage. I ask that the Council fully fund affordable housing development with at least \$121.3 million.

More and more residents across our county are also accessing food assistance providers like MUM while they struggle to make ends meet. I urge the Council to fund at least a 10% increase to food assistance grants to help providers address rising food costs and increasing needs. However, while we provide essential support, it is clear that food insecurity is only a symptom of deeper economic problems that cannot be solved by food alone. We encourage the County Council to continue robust investments in food assistance and food system resiliency, while recognizing that long-term progress requires addressing the root causes of poverty, including affordable housing, equitable healthcare, and livable wages.

I believe in a county where both housing and food is safe, healthy, affordable, and available to everyone. I'd like to thank the Council for your time, consideration, and your leadership in supporting our most vulnerable neighbors.

Respectfully,

Dayna Brown

Dayna Brown
Executive Director