



Commission on People with Disabilities

Tonya Gilchrist, Chair

Montgomery County Council Public Hearing – January 27, 2026

Written Testimony: Support of Resolution to Approve a Special Appropriation to the FY26 Operating Budget, Montgomery County Government, Department of Health and Human Services: **Respite Care Program, \$250,000; Senior Nutrition Program, \$450,000; and Homecare Services - Social Services to Adults, \$300,000** (Source of Funds: General Fund Undesignated Reserves)

The Commission on People with Disabilities strongly applauds and supports the Resolution to Approve Special Appropriation to the FY26 Operating Budget. This major increase in funds for the Respite Care Program, \$250,000; Senior Nutrition Program, \$450,000; and Homecare Services - Social Services to Adults, \$300,000 will help more individuals with disabilities access respite care and home care services. There are also some younger adults with significant disabilities who have a need and are also served by the Senior Nutrition program on a case-by-case basis.

The County's Respite care program is a lifeline for families who have member who is an adult with a functional disability, children or adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, children with challenging behaviors, and frail seniors ages 60+ whose caregivers need an occasional, short-term temporary physical and emotional break from caregiving. Studies have proven that caregivers are at risk of mental or physical health challenges and being able to step away from their daily caregiving can help ease their stress, thus improving the entire family's ability to cope with daily caregiving as well as the individual with the disability continuing to receive needed care and assistance. People who have developmental disability and receive Developmental Disabilities Administration funding are eligible for 300+ hours of respite per year. Children and adults with developmental disabilities who are on state waiting lists for services funded by the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) do not receive any respite or other services funded by DDA. The County Respite Program serves people who are not eligible for state funded respite and the number of hours allowed is 140 per year. If a person does receive state services, then they may not also receive County respite services. So this County funding is a fund of last resort helping only those persons that are not receiving any other service. Also, with probable funding cuts to federal and state services, this additional County funding will be even more necessary for individuals with disabilities. For DDA services 418 people are on the waiting list in Montgomery County (fluctuates day by day), · 1 person is in the Crisis Resolution priority category, · 33 people are categorized as Crisis Prevention, which means the person is or will be in a health or safety crisis within the next year or so, · 384 people are categorized as Current Request, which means there are no immediate health or safety concerns

We look forward to seeing the positive impact these additional funds have on our community of persons with disabilities.