

MEMORANDUM

November 8, 2022

TO: Health and Human Services Committee

FROM: Tara Clemons Johnson, Legislative Analyst

SUBJECT: Special Appropriation #23-17 to the FY23 Operating Budget Montgomery County Government Department of Health and Human Services Newcomers Enhancements and Assistance \$1,593,442

PURPOSE: Worksession, vote expected

Expected Participants:

Dira Treadvance, Chief, Children, Youth, and Family Services, DHHS

The Council introduced proposed Special Appropriation #23-17 on November 1, 2022. The County Executive's October 27, 2022, transmittal stated this special appropriation is needed to support the ongoing unanticipated influx of migrant families and unaccompanied youth in Montgomery County. This funding will support a network of stakeholders and community partners who continue to provide culturally and linguistically interdisciplinary services and supports. The source of funds for this appropriation is Undesignated General Funds. The Council is tentatively scheduled to hold a public hearing and consider action on this requested appropriation on November 15, 2022.

On November 3, 2022, the County Council received a memo from the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) recommending an amendment to the FY23 Operating Budget Resolution 19-1285, Designation of Entities for Non-Competitive Contract Award Status for modifying three contracts and establishing a new contract: Family Services, Inc., Identity, Inc., Manna Food Center, Inc. and Flores Consulting, LLC. The contractors will provide direct services to the newcomer children and families. The Council is tentatively scheduled to consider action on the Non-Competitive Award Status on November 29, 2022.

Councilmember Navarro wrote to the Health and Human Services Committee in a memorandum attached on circles 5-6. Councilmember Navarro proposes that the Committee consider additional funding of \$200,000 to support and strengthen service delivery through competitive grants to focus on cultural and linguistic proficiency in service delivery, technical assistance and training, and bolstering the systemic response to these needs. Councilmember Navarro's memorandum outlines context and details of this proposal.

Coordinated efforts to increase funding and align programs and services came together as the Newcomers initiative and were driven by the unprecedented increase in the number of unaccompanied and asylum-seeking children, youth and families from the southern U.S. border and arriving in Montgomery County. Between 2014 - 2022, Montgomery County was the 11th highest receiving County in the nation of unaccompanied children seeking to unify with families/sponsors.¹ In addition, there are unaccompanied children and families who arrive to the County by independent means and the numbers are not fully known. With the growing numbers of migrant families coming to the County, the Newcomers initiative has focused on a comprehensive response system of support and assistance to address the unique needs of all newcomer population.

Highlights of DHHS Responses

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) provided a detailed response to questions posed by Council staff regarding programmatic updates and implementation of the additional funding. This information is at ©7-11. The update from DHHS will not review all the questions/responses posed, however, the panelist is prepared to discuss the responses. **Council staff notes this is not a comprehensive update on the Newcomers initiative but prioritizing this appropriation to not delay or impact services. Council staff will work with DHHS for further discussion early in 2023.**

Below is a chart on numbers served from the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) International Admissions and Enrollment (IAE), and Bienvenidos program partners delivering services to newcomers. The data does not include children who arrive by other means to the County with parents or caregivers or to live with family members and are not tracked through ORR.

	FY21	FY22	FY23 <i>thru Sept</i>
Unaccompanied Children Released to Montgomery County By ORR	666	1484* <i>(Includes July & Aug 2022)</i>	111* <i>(Sept 2022 only)</i>
International students enrolled by MCPS	1,086	4,068	2,051
International Students enrolled by MCPS presenting paperwork from ORR	58	1,482	659
Newcomers Served by Bienvenidos Community Partners	N/A***	5,667	1,700

*ORR federal fiscal year reporting does not include monthly breakdown from Dec 2021 – Aug 2022

**Children and adults in households with one or more migrant/asylum-seeking individual that arrived in the County since Jan 2021

***Bienvenidos was initially funded in FY22

The DHHS responses included an update on the five program areas of Bienvenidos:

¹ [Unaccompanied Children Released to Sponsors](#)

- *Communications* – information is at ©7 highlights the program outreach of Bienvenidos– ¡Aqui para Ti! to Spanish language radio stations and the creation of public service announcements.
- *Navigation and Case Management*– detailed information is at ©7 including there have been over 6,800 individuals served since the inception of Bienvenidos. The providers are meeting monthly to discuss best practices and discuss complex cases.
- *Legal Services* – detailed information is at ©7-8. Four legal providers have a contract and are providing services to newcomers. The new Legal Service Coordinator has been hired and helps ensure culturally competent access to legal and other Bienvenidos services
- *Education and School-Based Services* – detail information is a ©8. The MCPS IAE office streamlined their enrollment process to enable families to enroll their children online.
- *Positive Youth Development & Recreation* - detail information is a ©8. The program has hosted two Youth Leadership Summits targeting newcomers with over 155 students in attendance. In addition, 50 newcomers have been provided family reunification services.

Emergency Assistance - Migrants Arriving from Texas and Arizona

Beginning April 2022, Texas and Arizona began bussing migrant individuals and families to the Washington Metropolitan region in protest of the Federal administration policy decisions. Over 9,500 individuals have arrived on these buses to date (©7); most received assistance to proceed to destinations outside the DC metropolitan area. Of these, 329 individuals, including children, were referred to *Bienvenidos* with needs as reflected in the chart (©7):

		Bus Passengers Served
Shelter & Food	Temporary Hotel Lodging	283
	Quarantine Hotel	19
	Emergency Shelter (<i>HHS overnight respite – pre SAMU</i>)	27
Sub-Total		329
Transportation	Emergency local transportation	297
	Non-local transportation	54
Sub-total		351

The County contracted with SAMU First Response to provide the centralized respite support services. Immediate respite services include food, space to sleep 3-5 nights, clothing, hygiene items and support for travel arrangements. Since its opening in early June 2022 to September 30, 2022, the respite center has served 1,268 migrants. Migrants who choose to

remain in Montgomery County are referred by SAMU to the Bienvenidos Initiative (©10). DHHS noted volunteer support is an essential component of the Bienvenidos initiative. Staff and SAMU attend the Montgomery County monthly Resettlement Committee meeting where information is shared with faith-based institutions and other community organizations, to support collaboration.

County Executive staff shared that since September 2022, the Washington Metropolitan area has seen a decrease in the number of buses due to them being routed to other major cities. In addition, a new trend is emerging for migrant arrivals, who are choosing to come to the area utilizing their own funding or sponsored by organizations in Texas/Arizona.

Program Enhancements

The Council appropriated funds in July 2022 to support this effort; however, DHHS found that additional funding is needed to address behavioral health and crisis services, case management and emergency assistance needs. The requested appropriation will support the following new and existing programs (©3-4)-

- Increased crisis stabilization and therapeutic services to refugee children and adolescents from international countries as well as those from South American countries crossing our borders;
- Increased case management services to low-income youth and families, primarily within the Latino community, to connect them with resources and safety-net services to include services for recently arrived migrant and asylum-seeking youth and families;
- Increase the distribution of food to hungry and low-income residents supported through the Newcomers initiative; and
- Establish a new contract for the creation of a public service campaign to promote and educate the community on Bienvenidos Initiative's resources and services.

The County's Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice found that this special appropriation is "likely to advance racial equity and social justice in the County, as it addresses the acute needs of recently arrived migrant families (many of whom are seeking asylum) and supports strategic planning for ongoing response coordination."

Discussion Questions

- How does the Executive anticipate trends in these services changing going forward, given that other jurisdictions such as DC have increased participation in service delivery and given other changes in national and regional immigration trends?

Council staff recommendation: approve the special appropriation as recommended by the Executive.

This report contains:

County Executive transmittal memo	©1-2
Proposed Special Appropriation Resolution	©3-4
Councilmember Navarro Memo – November 3, 2022	©5-6
DHHS Response to Council Staff questions	©7-11
Racial Equity Impact Assessment	©12-14



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Marc Elrich
County Executive

MEMORANDUM

October 27, 2022

TO: Gabe Albornoz, President
Montgomery County Council

FROM: Marc Elrich, County Executive *Marc Elrich*

SUBJECT: Special Appropriation #23-17 to the FY23 Operating Budget
Montgomery County Government
Department of Health and Human Services
\$1,593,442 (Source of Funds: General Fund: Undesignated Reserves)
Newcomers Enhancements and Assistance

I am recommending a special appropriation to the FY23 Operating Budget for the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) in the amount of \$1,593,442 for Newcomers Enhancements and Assistance. This special appropriation is needed to support the ongoing unanticipated influx of migrant families and unaccompanied youth and to build a system to provide the necessary structure and emergency assistance for newcomers who plan to remain in Montgomery County.

As work continues with the newcomers, it is evident that there is a need for investment in strategic planning, expanded multilingual and multicultural case management, increased in-home and community-based behavioral health and crisis stabilization services, emergency assistance, and food security. This request addresses the immediate needs of newcomers and helps to strategically develop long-term processes and align resources to support newly arriving migrant youth and families.

I recommend this special appropriation in the amount of \$1,593,442 and specify the source of funds as General Fund: Undesignated Reserves.

ME:dl

Supplemental Appropriation #23-17

October 27, 2022

Page 2 of 2

Enclosures: Special Appropriation #23-17

cc: Earl Stoddard, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer, Office of the County Executive
Jennifer R. Bryant, Director, Office of Management and Budget
Raymond L. Crowel, Psy.D., Director, Department of Health and Human Services

Resolution No: _____
Introduced: _____
Adopted: _____

COUNTY COUNCIL
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

By: Council President at the Request of the County Executive

SUBJECT: Special Appropriation #23-17 to the FY23 Operating Budget
Montgomery County Government
Department of Health and Human Services
\$1,593,442 (Source of Funds: General Fund: Undesignated Reserves)
Newcomers Enhancements and Assistance

Background

1. Section 308 of the Montgomery County Charter provides that a special appropriation is an appropriation which states that it is necessary to meet an unforeseen disaster or other emergency, or to act without delay in the public interest. Each special appropriation shall be approved by not less than six Councilmembers. The Council may approve a special appropriation at any time after public notice by news release. Each special appropriation shall specify the source of funds to finance it.
2. The County Executive has requested the following FY23 Operating Budget appropriation increase for the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

<u>Personal Services</u>	<u>Operating Expenses</u>	<u>Capital Outlay</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Source of Funds</u>
\$0	\$1,593,442	\$0	\$1,593,442	General Fund: Undesignated Reserves

3. This increase is needed to support the ongoing unanticipated influx of migrant families and unaccompanied youth and to build a system to provide the necessary structure and emergency assistance for newcomers who plan to remain in Montgomery County. As work continues with the newcomers, it is evident that there is a need for an investment in strategic planning, expanded multilingual and multicultural case management, increased in-home and community based behavioral health and crisis stabilization services, emergency assistance, and food security. This request addresses the immediate needs of newcomers and helps to strategically develop long-term processes and align resources to support newly arriving migrant youth and families.
4. The County Executive recommends a supplemental appropriation to the FY23 Operating Budget in the amount of \$1,593,442 for the Department of Health and Human Services and specifies the source of the funds will be General Fund: Undesignated Reserves.
5. Notice of public hearing was given, and a public hearing was held.

Action

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland, approves the following action:

1. A special appropriation to the FY23 Operating Budget for the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is approved as follows:

<u>Personnel Services</u>	<u>Operating Expenses</u>	<u>Capital Outlay</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Source of Funds</u>
\$0	\$1,593,442	\$0	\$1,593,442	General Fund: Undesignated Reserves

2. The County Council declares that this action is necessary to act without delay in the public interest, and that this appropriation is needed to meet the emergency.

This is a correct copy of Council action.

Judy Rupp
Clerk of the Council



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND**

**COUNCILMEMBER NANCY NAVARRO
DISTRICT 4**

**CHAIR, GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND
FISCAL POLICY COMMITTEE**

EDUCATION AND CULTURE COMMITTEE

MEMORANDUM

November 3, 2022

TO: Members of the Health and Human Services Committee

FROM: Nancy Navarro, Chair, Government Operations & Fiscal Policy Committee

SUBJECT: Additional Funding for the Newcomers Enhancements and Assistance Supports

I am writing regarding Special Appropriation #23-17 to the FY23 Operating Budget for the County's Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in the amount of \$1,593,442 that was introduced by the Council President at the request of the County Executive this past Tuesday. I am proposing funding an additional \$200,000 to be disseminated through a competitive application process through the Office of Grants Management to strengthen our response to the ongoing humanitarian refugee crisis we are experiencing in our County.

The relocation of migrants by border states has caused an unprecedented challenge to jurisdictions around the region and country. As you may be aware, in July 2022, the Metropolitan Council of Governments (COG) Region Forward Coalition¹ recommended that the Board of Directors, where I serve as a Board member, adopt a resolution supporting federal funding for this cause and directed COG's Human Services Policy Committee to explore opportunities for partnerships and regional collaboration. This Committee held this session this past September² and discussed the needs and challenges facing jurisdictions when it comes to adequately responding to this crisis.

On Monday, October 24, I held a meeting with a broad coalition of organizations, that included faith-based (Iglesia Punto de Vida), local, and regional partners (MCPS, Identity, Vision Diaspora, Humanitarian Action, Greater Washington Hispanic Chamber of Commerce), County Executive staff

¹ [July 22, 2022, COG's Region Forward Coalition virtual meeting](#)

² [September 9, 2022, COG's Human Services Policy Committee virtual session](#)

(Chief Dira Treadvance and Special Assistant Sonia Mora), as well as representatives from Council President Albornoz, Council Vice President Glass, and Councilmember Jawando's offices. An emerging theme was the critical need to bolster our response and facilitate access to services given the increasingly strained capacity to properly offer this assistance.

In a recent article by the Washington Post³, this latest wave of refugees, mostly from Venezuela, is described as among "the world's largest," with the devastating difference that this crisis has been severely underfunded when compared to displacements of similar proportions. While we cannot wait for the Federal and State governments to do their fair share, funding this additional request would support a vulnerable population that has been through unimaginable trauma and is in desperate need to relief.

We should all be proud of the groundbreaking work we have collectively been doing to assist the different waves of refugees and migrants arriving in our County for the last decade and more. As you recall, we worked closely with the then Leggett administration to set up comprehensive critical response plans and initiatives tailored to the specific needs of a particular community. Building this type of infrastructure requires partnering and collaborating with organizations that have been boots-on-the-ground taking care of a community's unique needs, which involve possessing cultural and linguistic proficiency, and an understanding of the specific challenges, strengths and needs that the groups bring.

As part of the introduction memo, County Executive Elrich explains that this funding is necessary "to support the ongoing unanticipated influx of migrant families and unaccompanied youth, and to build a system to provide the necessary structure and emergency assistance for newcomers who plan to remain in Montgomery County." My proposal of increasing his request by the proposed amount is strategically aligned with these goals. Furthermore, I envision that this \$200,000 competitive grant funding would support the delivery of services to new migrant populations by organizations that have a track record of delivering culturally and proficiently services to this population; integrate services within larger system of newcomer/immigrant/migrant services already in place; and provide training and technical assistance on serving the new immigrant populations to newcomer/immigrant/migrant service network.

In closing, I would like to express my deep appreciation to Council President Albornoz and Councilmember Jawando, who have been leading these discussions and advocating on behalf of our most vulnerable not only locally, but regionally in their capacity as COG representatives.

I look forward to discussing this proposal during next week's HHS Committee session.

Copy to:

Members of HHS and Councilmembers

Confidential Aides

Sonia Mora, Special Assistant to County Executive Elrich

Dira Treadvance, Division Chief, Children Youth and Family Services, HHS

Vivian Yao, Legislative Analyst, County Council

³ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/09/04/venezuela-refugee-crisis-ukraine-syria/>

**Response to County Council Questions:
Nov 10th HHS Work session - Spec Appropriation 23-17 \$1.5m for Newcomers**

- **Please provide trend/utilization data for FY21, FY22 and FY23 July – Oct 2022. If possible, please separate out the emergency assistance trends vs newcomers who are staying in the county.**

In the past two years, we continue to see a rise in migrant and asylum-seeking children and families arriving in Montgomery County, albeit with a disruption in school enrollment in FY21 due to the pandemic. As shared in prior Council briefings, there is no formal mechanism in place to track how many migrant and asylum-seeking children enter the county with a parent or adult caregiver, nor to track children and youth who may have arrived unaccompanied but not detained at the border and processed by the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). Below are the only figures available to us from ORR, MCPS' Office of International Admissions and Enrollment, and *Bienvenidos* partners delivering services to newcomers.

	FY21	FY22	FY23 <i>thru Sept</i>
Unaccompanied Children Released to Montgomery County by ORR	666	1,484* <i>(Includes July & August 2022)</i>	111* <i>(Sept 2022 only)</i>
International Students enrolled by MCPS	1,086	4,068	2,051
International Students enrolled by MCPS presenting paperwork from ORR	58	1,482	659
Newcomers Served by <i>Bienvenidos</i> Community Partners	N/A***	5,667	1,700

**ORR federal fiscal year reporting does not include monthly breakdown from Dec 2021-Aug 2022*

***Children and adults in households with one or more migrant/asylum-seeking members that arrived in Montgomery County since Jan 2021*

****Bienvenidos was initially funded in FY22*

Emergency Assistance Trends:

In April 2022, Texas began sending individual adults and families who had come across the southern border seeking asylum to Washington, DC on buses. In May, Arizona followed suit sending primarily families. Over 9,500 individuals have arrived on these buses to date, most of whom received assistance to proceed to destinations outside the DC metropolitan area. Of these, 329 individuals, including children, were referred to *Bienvenidos* with necessities as reflected below:

		Bus Passengers Served
Shelter & Food	Temporary Hotel Lodging	283
	Quarantine Hotel	19
	Emergency shelter <i>(HHS overnight respite- pre SAMU)</i>	27
Sub-Total		329
Transportation	Emergency local transportation	297
	Non-local transportation	54
Sub-Total		351

Additionally, *Bienvenidos* has provided emergency navigation or case management services to 153 (out of 329) newcomers from buses to date; 111 of which are currently being serviced via intensive case management – assisting them with obtaining IDs, school enrollment, medical and health care, food security, and other basic needs while prioritizing comprehensive searches for scarce opportunities for stable housing.

- **Please provide a brief update on the following action areas identified in the transmittal**
 - **Communication, Navigation and Case Management, Legal Services, Education and School-Based services, Positive Youth Development and Recreation**

Committee/ Focus Area	Update
Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created logo, promotional materials (flyers, posters), 5 PSAs (in Spanish and Mayan languages). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Youth Leadership Summit participants took part in a poll to select the final design for <i>Bienvenidos – ¡Aqui para Ti!</i> • Promoted <i>Bienvenidos</i> via area Spanish-language radio stations and MCPS Español • Distributed flyers and posters at community events and via social media
Navigation & Case Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Served more than 6,800 individuals (including children) from over 2,800 households since inception of <i>Bienvenidos</i> (across FY22 and FY23; from September 2021 through September 2022). • Providers meet monthly with health and mental health provider to share resources and best practices and engage in collective consultation of complex cases needing additional support. • Another important aspect to this team is their sharing of creative best-practices to ensure expanded capacity and provision of mental health services for newcomers via Linkages to Learning, School and Community Youth Services, and Care and Connections contracts. The demand for mental health supports among this population is great due to exposure to trauma before settling in Montgomery County.
Legal Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four providers were selected to receive funding to expand several legal services including representation for newcomer students and their families and/or sponsors. Three of four contracts were finalized as of September 2022. <i>Bienvenidos</i> has been receiving requests for referrals to legal services from newcomers arrived in the County since the January 2021. • Legal Services Coordinator was hired to increase outreach for and culturally competent access to legal services. Coordinator works in partnership with the Gilchrist Immigrant Resource Center (GIRC) and MCPS to attend public events at which these and other GIRC services and resources are also made available. To ensure increased, culturally competent access to Legal and other <i>Bienvenidos</i> services, the Coordinator also provides a legal orientation featured at <i>Bienvenidos</i> Resource Fairs. These events are coordinated with partners and the County’s Regional Services Centers to provide access to families and

	<p>clients in their neighborhoods. In FY23, these Resource Fairs will also be coordinated with MCPS for parents to access thru their local schools. The coordinator also provides access to services at events such as COVID clinics and at the MCPS International Admissions and Enrollment (IAE) office.</p>
Education & School-Based Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implemented an updated and more efficient enrollment process at the IAE Office that enables families to enroll their children online, expediting the enrollment process. • EML Therapeutic Counselors (ETCs) conducted over 250 mental health intake interviews of all elementary and middle school newcomer students. Urgent cases were referred to community partners for more intensive support. • Parent Community Coordinators (PCCs) conducted comprehensive orientations with newcomer families to help them navigate the school system, provide support with FARMs enrollment, transportation, and connect families to <i>Bienvenidos</i> and other community resources. • Ensured older students that needed to establish contact with Montgomery College for English and Workforce Development educational opportunities had a “warm hand-off” from IAE. This hand-off was established primarily for students identified as already having the equivalence of a Maryland High School Diploma. • Established a direct contact with Identity for newcomers over 21 years of age that expressed a desire to continue their studies to obtain their GED, ESL, or embark on a vocational career track.
Positive Youth Development & Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hosted two Youth Leadership Summits targeting newcomers – with over 155 students in attendance. • 300 total students participated in <i>Óyeme</i> with Imagination Stage; 261 were newcomers. This theater program was implemented in six schools, and the new film <i>Linda y Libre</i> was created. • Provided Family Reunification Services to 50 newcomers • Hired two Newcomer Outreach Workers to support the newcomer students with in-school and after-school activities and support. • 401 youth participated in expanded Soccer4Change; 90% were immigrants, 30% arrived since January 2021. Soccer for Change serviced 14 high schools and 7 middle schools, hosting a fall tournament and a winter County Cup Futsal Tournament.

• **What type of emergency assistance will be supported with the additional funding?**

The supplemental funds will support families arriving from Texas and Arizona with essential services including:

- Temporary Lodging
- Local transportation – especially for critical immigration appointments, as families do not know the area. While they are being oriented and supported in using public transportation, these appointments are set for the Baltimore Immigration Court, and they are unable to reliably travel such a distance on their own.

- Increased in-home and community-based behavioral health and crisis stabilization services - Most, if not all the families are exposed to traumatic events (such as sexual assault, kidnapping, extortion, etc.) on their journey to the U.S. and require intensive mental health support.
 - Food security - *Bienvenidos* partners with the Interfaith Works to provide weekly food deliveries and case managers provide food resources as well – however these families need complete coverage of food security needs for some time. This request for supplemental food will also ensure the families receive the combination of foods (produce and meats) required for healthy well-being.
- **Portions of this funding will support “strategic planning to develop long-term processes.” Please detail what the strategic planning process will entail.**

Since the inception of the *Bienvenidos* initiative there have been significant shifts in the social/ political landscape that have magnified the needs of migrant and asylum-seeking populations across the board. For Montgomery County to remain a migrant friendly county, it is of paramount importance that we adapt the current *Bienvenidos* model to better support the broad spectrum of needs of all migrants. As such, we would like to work with a skilled consultant to inform what an expanded model of *Bienvenidos* would look like. The consultant will:

- Have expertise in the field to provide tailored advice and a fresh perspective, help re-frame the initiative’s broader mission/vision/goals
 - Guide and advise development of long-term planning for *Bienvenidos* as it expands and serves a larger newcomer population
 - Help strategize best practices and implementation
 - Assist with data collection and evaluation framework and implementation
- **Will these funds be added to an existing or new contract (e.g. SAMU First Response, Catholic Charities, etc.)?**

Funds will be added to existing contracts and/or procurements that are currently providing intensive case management and mental health services, but also be utilized for new contracts needed – such as for food security.

- **What is the County’s current role assisting with migrants transported from other states and is it expanding?**
 - **Is FEMA continuing to support SAMU?**

SAMU continues to successfully operate and manage the Montgomery County Respite Center. The County provides supports related to the maintenance of the facility and SAMU utilizes FEMA and other funding sources to cover costs associated with the operations of the center. The Respite Center continues to render services 24/7. During their 3-5 day stay, guests receive basic supports and resources including transportation to their final destination. Since its opening in early June 2022 through September 30, 2022, the Center has served 1,268 migrants.

Migrants who chose to remain in Montgomery County are referred by SAMU to the *Bienvenidos Initiative*. Once referred to the initiative they are assigned to a case manager associate with one

of our community partners. Case managers work with individuals and families to stabilize, and access needed services and supports in the County.

Volunteer support is an essential component of the work, so Bienvenidos staff and SAMU attend the Montgomery County monthly Resettlement Committee meeting where information is shared with faith-based institutions and other entities, and collaborations are forged.

The flow of migrants arriving to the region ebbs and flows and is primarily dependent on the policies allowing entries at the border. We continue to plan for all contingencies given the unpredictable nature of migration throughout the country and in particular from border states

- **Is there a need to identify alternative or additional capacity for respite and/or overnight shelter space?**

Given the need for increased capacity for respite services, both Executive staff and Councilmembers are currently working in close coordination with Prince George's County and the District of Columbia to expand services in alternate jurisdictions, utilizing the Montgomery County model of respite and integration for migrants. Longer term affordable and accessible housing remains an urgent issue throughout the region and we continue along with community partners to develop alternative paths to assist migrants.

- **Will this funding be adequate to sustain the program through the end of the FY?**

Current projections will sustain our work till the end of FY23. However, additional resources might be needed if the numbers of new arrivals increases beyond the current levels.

- **Is the intent for this funding to go to specific community organizations or DHHS?
If supporting community organizations, please describe the process for identifying recipients**

Both. DHHS is directly purchasing the temporary lodging accommodations and increasing contract staff by the minimum needed to sustain the emergency response operations related to the bus passengers arriving in the area, while all other services will be provided by our partners in the community.



OFFICE OF RACIAL EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE


Marc Elrich
County Executive

Tiffany Ward
Director and Chief Equity Officer

MEMORANDUM

November 2, 2022

To: Jennifer Bryant, Director
Office of Management and Budget

From: Tiffany Ward, Director
Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice 

Re: Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA) for Supplemental Appropriation (SA) #23-17
Newcomer Enhancements and Assistance

- I. **FINDING:** The Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ) finds that Supplemental Appropriation #23-17 *Newcomer Enhancements and Assistance* is likely to advance racial equity and social justice in the County, as it addresses the acute needs of recently arrived migrant families (many of whom are seeking asylum) and supports strategic planning for ongoing response coordination. Taking these steps will ensure that County residents already burdened by health and other inequities do not face additional challenges caused by extra stress on the county's systems.
- II. **BACKGROUND:** The purpose of Supplemental Appropriation #23-17 is to fund a number of activities that support the County's response to migrant families and youth arriving from Texas and Arizona. Activities outlined in an August 2022 memo from the County Executive to Council include:
 - investment in strategic planning;
 - expanded multilingual and multicultural case management;
 - increased in-home and community-based behavioral health and crisis stabilization services;
 - emergency assistance; and,
 - food security.

The exact number of migrant families arriving in the Washington Metropolitan region is unclear. According to a report from NY-1 Spectrum News, as of October 5th, more than 8,200

migrants on nearly 200 buses have been sent to Washington, DC from Texas¹. For comparison, as of June 30, 2022, Montgomery County had received 1077 unaccompanied children. It is estimated that 10-15% of newly arrived migrants arriving from Texas and Arizona plan to remain in the region as they do not have connections elsewhere in the US². According to information that accompanied this request, newcomers arriving to the region have an increased level of need compared to other newcomer residents such as unaccompanied children living with sponsors in Montgomery County.

In August 2021 and in February 2022, ORESJ conducted racial equity impact assessments related to the funding of Newcomer Enhancements (Supplemental Appropriation [#22-7](#) and [#22-64](#)). In both cases, ORESJ found that the supplemental appropriations were likely to advance racial equity and social justice as they addressed the unique challenges facing newcomer families and children:

- Uncertainties in immigration status and complex systems of obtaining legal representation and status after release from federal custody;
- Financial insecurity and indebtedness related to the migration journey, resulting in difficult decisions about school and work, often leaving newcomers vulnerable to further exploitation and abuse; and,
- Traumatic experiences and inadequate healthcare before, during, and after release from federal custody leading to high rates of negative physical and mental health outcomes.

In the case of Supplemental Appropriation #23-17 it is unclear what specific activities may be expanded or changed considering the circumstances surrounding the more recent arrival of migrant families (many of whom are seeking asylum):

“...the process normally happens organically, quietly, and gradually. The buses have instead brought migrants to these cities in an orchestrated, visible, and deliberately disorderly way, generating challenges for cities trying to meet the newcomers’ humanitarian needs and raising the visibility of any failures to do so.”³

Presuming supplemental appropriation #23-17 continues and builds upon infrastructure described in previous supplemental appropriation requests, the needs of newly arrived families are likely to be met while also ensuring the continuity of service for existing county residents.

It’s important to note that recent migrant bussing is not the first time in US history that bussing has been used to make racist political statements by dehumanizing entire groups of people based on race. In 1962, southern segregationists paid to send Black Americans from the South to northern destinations like Cape Cod. This forced migration of about 200 Black Americans came to be known as the Reverse Freedom Rides. A February 2020 article called

¹ <https://www.ny1.com/nyc/all-boroughs/politics/2022/10/05/-they-re-my-family-now--maryland-woman-houses-migrants-lured-to-dc-by-texas-gov->

² This information was provided to ORESJ in its REIA racial equity and social justice template. These percentages could not be independently verified through research.

³ <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/migrant-asylum-seeker-busing>

Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA) for Supplemental Appropriation (SA) #23-17 Newcomer
Enhancements and Assistance

November 2, 2022

Page 3 of 3

“The Cruel Story Behind The 'Reverse Freedom Rides'” described the short and long-term consequences of these racist acts on families and entire communities⁴. As the county responds to the immediate needs of newly arrived families, it should also collaborate with regional and national partners to investigate these acts and bring legal challenges against perpetrating states when necessary. Further, investments in the county’s humanitarian response systems will become increasingly important as migration and asylum cases are unlikely to recede given ongoing political instability and climate change disruptions across the US (and globally).

cc: Ken Hartman, Director, Office of Strategic Partnership, Office of the County Executive
Dr. Raymond Crowell, Director, Department of Health and Human Services

⁴ <https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2020/02/29/809740346/the-cruel-story-behind-the-reverse-freedom-rides>