

Resolution No.: 16-259  
Introduced: July 10, 2007  
Adopted: July 24, 2007

**COUNTY COUNCIL  
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND**

---

By: Public Safety Committee

---

**SUBJECT:** Special Appropriation to the FY08 Operating Budget  
Montgomery County Government  
Department of Housing and Community Affairs  
Fire Sprinklers for Group Homes; \$250,000  
(Source of Funds: General Fund Reserves)

**Background**

1. Section 308 of the Montgomery County Charter provides that a special appropriation: a) may be made at any time after public notice by news release; b) must state that the special appropriation is necessary to meet an unforeseen disaster or other emergency or to act without delay in the public interest; c) must specify the revenues necessary to finance it; and d) must be approved by no fewer than six members of the Council.
2. The NPFA Life Safety Code, which has been adopted by the State and the County, requires that sleeping areas have a second means of egress of 5.7 square feet (or 5 square feet at grade) or, as an alternative, an automatic sprinkler system. The County includes this standard in its requirements for homes seeking a County group home license.
3. Many group homes are older homes that were built before the egress standard was adopted and are not compliant. Many of these same group homes are operated by non-profit organizations that provide supportive housing for publicly-funded clients with disabilities. These organizations cannot afford the additional cost of installing an automatic sprinkler system or retrofitting a home with larger windows.
4. The Public Safety Committee reviewed this issue and agrees that it is in the public interest to assist group home providers who are serving primarily publicly-funded clients by funding a program to install automatic sprinkler systems in group homes. This program would be available to existing group homes, with primarily publicly-funded clients. The homeowner must commit to using the home as a group home for 3-years after the sprinkler system is installed or repay the County at a pro-rated amount.

5. The Public Safety Committee recommends that the Council begin this program by appropriating \$250,000. This is not an estimate of the full cost of the program but should be sufficient to install sprinklers in 30 to 40 homes and allow the County to gain experience about the costs of retrofitting these homes. The program will be administered by the Department of Housing and Community Affairs with the Department of Health and Human Services and Fire and Rescue Services working together to prioritize eligible homes.
6. Notice of public hearing was given, and a public hearing was held.

**Action**

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

The County Council approves a special appropriation to the FY08 Operating Budget of the Montgomery County Government, Department of Housing and Community Affairs, to fund a program to assist eligible group homes with installing automated fire sprinklers.

<u>Personnel Services</u>	<u>Operating Expenses</u>	<u>Capital Outlay</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Source of Funds</u>
\$0	\$250,000	\$0	\$250,000	General Fund Reserves

This special appropriation is necessary to act without delay and in the public interest.

This is a correct copy of Council action.



Linda M. Lauer, Clerk of the Council