



Shepherd's Table FY 2025 Budget Toolkit

At Shepherd's Table, our mission is to improve quality of life, create a pathway towards self-sufficiency and inspire hope for the most vulnerable experiencing food and housing insecurity.

As part of fulfilling this mission, it is essential to advocate for a better world where our community can find safe, stable, affordable housing, and other vital services and support mechanisms when they might be in need.

Our FY2025 budget advocacy focuses on funding **behavioral health access** and bettering the **shelter & housing opportunities** in this county.

Hearing Location:

County Council Building
100 Maryland Ave, Rockville, MD
April 8 & 9
1:30 PM and 7PM

Sign up for oral or written testimony
at
tinyurl.com/24m56h9f

Testimony Tips

- Quickly introduce yourself with your name, where you live, and how you are connected to the community.
- Use personal experiences to frame your priorities during the Q&A portion to show why an issue matters/affects you specifically. Quick anecdotes are good!
- If testifying live, prepare a three-minute testimony in advance to make sure you are getting to the heart of the issue.

Shepherd's Table Budget Priorities

- **Three Peer Support Specialists for Interfaith Works, \$207,950.** This will help address the growing behavioral health crisis and increase engagement with unsheltered guests at Progress Place. Peer support specialists are an effective way to engage and help people navigate the journey into housing.
- **Adding Two Mobile Crisis Outreach Teams, \$1.5 million.** This will help address the growing behavioral health crisis with trauma-informed care and relief for the police department when responding to mental health calls.
- **Increasing shelter capacity, \$2.9 million.** The Point in Time Count shows an increase in homelessness that will likely continue into the next few years. We must increase shelter capacity to ensure that everyone in our county has shelter while they are on their journey into housing.
- **Continue overflow motel shelter, \$2.6 million.** Sheltering in motels is especially important when there is insufficient shelter capacity. With the end of Emergency Rental Assistance, we are anticipating more evictions for families, so funding the motel overflow program is essential to keeping our families safe while they are experiencing homelessness.
- **Increase psychiatric care in shelters by \$2.5 million.** Currently, a psychiatrist visits Progress Place twice monthly. This is not enough to address the many diverse mental health needs that people face, and expanding access to care in shelters is deeply needed.
- **Fund rental stabilization implementation.** Rent stabilization prevents evictions and homelessness. Ensuring effective implementation is extremely important for the stability of renters in this county.
- **Prevention Team, \$841,966.** With the loss of Emergency Rental Assistance, preventing evictions and homelessness will become increasingly difficult, so it is very important to ensure this staffing.
- **Increase the PSH budget and increase Rental Assistance Programs.** The decrease in Permanent Supportive Housing and Rental Assistance funding is troubling. These programs need increased funding to bring additional units online and keep residents in their homes.
- **Continue to build and preserve affordable housing.** A lack of affordable housing causes homelessness. Building and preserving Montgomery County's affordable housing prevents homelessness.

Written Testimony Template

Dear Council President Friedson and Councilmembers:

My name is [NAME], and I am a resident of [County Council District]. [Include your profession or position in the county, such as your relationship to Progress Place or any reason you may care about the subject matter. Personalize it!]

The 2023 Point in Time Count showed significant increases in people experiencing homelessness across the country, putting further strains on the shelter, behavioral health, and food security systems. With a 54% increase in homelessness in Montgomery County from 2022-2023, we must fund both short-term and long-term solutions with programs that work.

My priority for this budget is to fund **three peer support specialists at Progress Place** to help address the increase in people seeking food, shelter, and other services. This program would help meet people where they are while experiencing homelessness and help engage and connect people with life-saving services. Many individuals face co-occurring conditions such as disabilities and mental health struggles and need additional support from professionals that understand the extreme hardships they are facing.

I also support fully funding **two additional Mobile Crisis Teams, increasing shelter capacity, bringing more psychiatrists to shelters, and continuing overflow sheltering in motels.** These are essential items that significantly impact the quality of life of people experiencing homelessness, and it is important to me that we continue funding them with the end goal of permanently ending homelessness in our county.

While we work on solutions that will affect people daily, we must also fund long-term solutions, such as **preserving and protecting affordable housing, fully funding the implementation of rent stabilization and eviction prevention, and bringing more permanent supportive housing units online.** [Remember to add any personal experiences or reasons for supporting each item- that is the most impactful!]

I want to thank the County Council for this opportunity.
Sincerely,

[NAME][Contact Information]