

April 8, 2022

MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL

COUNCIL OFFICE BUILDING, 100 MARYLAND
AVENUE, ROCKVILLE, MD 20850

I am writing today to request funding for the Montgomery County Human Trafficking Prevention Committee (MCHTPC). As a recognized expert on the topic of human trafficking and modern-day slavery, I strongly believe that additional resources are needed to protect Montgomery County citizens and visitors from victimization relating to human trafficking. The County Executive has acknowledged the issue of human trafficking is severe enough to formalize a committee which allows for awareness-building and collaboration. However, the MCHTPC does not have the bandwidth to fully implement impactful initiatives.

Promising work is being done in other parts of Maryland and in the U.S. that could be applicable to Montgomery County. In Baltimore, the [Blue Dot Initiative](#) is helping to ensure victims are being recognized and receiving immediate treatment and services relating to their victimization. The MCHTPC recognizes this program could be beneficial in Montgomery County, where services are limited, and recognition of victims is even more so. However, for a program like this to work, all first responders would need to undergo training. Additional funding could support this widespread training.

Promising initiatives to improve human trafficking survivors' financial stability are happening in other parts of the country. Specifically, a [program](#) addressing survivor banking, credit, and consumer challenges is showing success and could also be a good fit for Montgomery County and neighboring counties. As you may know, one of the reasons it is so difficult for victims of human trafficking to leave their traffickers is due to financial instability. Helping survivors manage their banking and credit can be the difference between returning to a trafficker and living a productive, healthy life. The MCHTPC would be an ideal group to consider how a

program like this could be implemented in Montgomery County. However, it will require resources do this work.

I will conclude by saying that the MCHTPC is a stable committee that has the potential to make an impact on human trafficking in Montgomery County. Victim-centered initiatives are lacking in Montgomery County but critical to reducing trafficking in the county. Please consider providing funding to the MCHTPC so that they can consider and implement promising victim-centered initiatives.

SINCERELY,

WENDY STICKLE, PH.D.
MONTGOMERY COUNTY RESIDENT