

## Testimony to Montgomery County Council from Gislene Tasayco re FY25 Operating Budget

1. Buenos Dias, my name is Gislene Tasayco, I am a long-time resident of Montgomery County, a proud member of Identity's Board of Directors, and former employee of Identity. As a formerly undocumented, first-generation Latina from Peru, it was this community that gave my family the opportunity to thrive. Throughout my childhood and adolescence, we were fortunate to have the support of my school educators, counselors, city and county programs, and nonprofit programs.
2. Thank you – on behalf of Identity's client community – Latino and other underserved young people and their families living in poverty in Montgomery County– for investing in our futures. Thank you for partnering with Identity because we all know (and Identity's data bears out) that young people thrive with the right support at the right time.
3. With Montgomery County government's support, we can be there when and where the community needs us, providing trauma-informed social-emotional, academic, workforce and life skills development programs and offering case management and emotional support services.
4. As a Board member of Identity and as a resident of Montgomery County, **I am asking today that the County Council add another 3% inflationary adjustment to the 3% inflationary adjustment that the County Executive included in his FY25 operating budget.** It will enable your nonprofit partners, like Identity, to take important steps to invest in their employees - the employees who, by virtue of their work in workforce development, behavior health, academic support, safety net services and more are investing in the future of Montgomery County. Our people – *your* nonprofit workforce– are key to delivering the high impact essential programs and services you and the community expect.
5. Today, Identity works directly with about 11,000 clients, impacting close to 50,000 county residents every year with about 150 staff, the majority of whom, like me, come from the client community. Like many Identity clients today, I benefited from people who work in mission driven youth serving organizations. My own life was forever changed.
6. Like many of our sister organizations, Identity's salaries have not kept pace with inflation or the marketplace, in large part because our county contracts do not keep pace with inflation or the marketplace. It makes recruitment hard, retention even harder and keeping our most experienced and high potential employees nearly impossible.
  - Based on a recent compensation benchmarking study, about half of Identity's employees earn less than the midpoint of their salary range.
  - More than 75% of employees who left the organization over the past 24 months left to take a higher paying position.

**That's why today, on behalf of your nonprofit partners like Identity, I am asking the County Council to invest in nonprofit workers by adding another 3% inflationary adjustment to the FY25 operating budget.**

Gislene Tasayco

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