

Testimony in Support of Special Appropriation for Public Service Support to Assist Residents
and Nonprofit Organizations Impacted by the Federal Government Shutdown
Before the Montgomery County Council
Presented by Alyssa Sanders, Advocacy Director, EveryMind
November 18, 2025

Good afternoon, Council President, Councilmembers, and members of the public.

My name is Alyssa Sanders, and I serve as the Advocacy Director at EveryMind, a nonprofit that has supported Montgomery County residents for more than sixty-five years through mental health programs, housing stability services, and community connection.

I'm here today to express strong support for the Council's proposed \$7.75 million appropriation to assist residents and nonprofits affected by the recent Federal Government shutdown.

Montgomery County is home to more than seventy-seven thousand federal employees, and thousands more who work for federal contractors. Even a brief shutdown sends shockwaves through our community. Families lose income. Businesses lose customers. And nonprofits that form the local safety net are asked to fill even greater gaps, often while their own federal funding is delayed.

At EveryMind, we're already feeling that impact. Our Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox Grant Program, which provides mental health support and peer navigation for veterans and their families, experienced significant delays due to the shutdown. While our Year Four renewal has now been approved, that approval came after weeks of uncertainty, and the administrative backlog means veterans could still face service disruptions in future shutdowns or federal delays. This episode underscored how vulnerable critical programs can be when even a short lapse at the federal level stalls the systems we rely on.

We are also deeply concerned about the imminent federal shift in homelessness policy that will have major local effects. HUD's planned dramatic overhaul would slash long-term housing support and redirect over \$3.5 billion from proven permanent housing programs into short-term initiatives that impose work requirements, mandate treatment, and increase enforcement. National experts warn this could put up to 170,000 formerly homeless people at risk of returning to the streets. In a high-cost region like ours, that would almost certainly increase housing instability and homelessness.

We are already seeing the warning signs here in Montgomery County. This year's Point-in-Time survey shows a 32% increase in residents experiencing homelessness, with 356 more people counted, and over the past five years, the number of families experiencing homelessness has risen by 634%. Shelters are consistently exceeding capacity, and motel-based placements are over budget. These pressures will only deepen if federal support diminishes.

We appreciate this special appropriation while recognizing it as a starting point. Continued investment in direct service, nonprofit infrastructure, and coordination is vital at this moment. As federal uncertainty grows, Montgomery County's ability to strengthen and sustain its community-based providers will determine how effectively we can protect residents from cascading crises.

Montgomery County has always demonstrated proactive, compassionate leadership in times of uncertainty. This resolution continues that tradition.

On behalf of EveryMind and the thousands of residents we serve, thank you for your leadership and for recognizing that strong nonprofits mean a stronger community.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.