



MONTGOMERY COUNTY LIBRARY BOARD

April 7, 2026

Council President Fani-Gonzalez, members of the County Council, and staff –

Good evening. I am Grace Manubay, chair of the Montgomery County Library Board. The Library Board has fourteen members appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the County Council. We make recommendations to the County Executive and Library Director on matters affecting the public library system, and serve as liaisons with 22 Library Advisory Committees, groups of community members who share with us concerns related to their local libraries.

The Library Board understands this is a hard budget year and tough fiscal decisions will be made. MCPL's budget request reflects careful consideration of the entire system's needs. We know that many residents are unhappy with the decision to close half of the branches on Sundays. However, simply restoring the funding for positions recommended for abolishment is not enough to bring back full implementation of Sunday service at all branches. Restored funding must exceed the \$624,864 proposed for removal to deliver the exemplary service that all visitors of all libraries should receive.

I would like to highlight two of MCPL's proposed budget enhancements. The request of \$207,690 designates funding for security, offsetting the operating funds MCPL has been using to provide these services at the Brigadier General Charles E. McGhee, Gaithersburg, Germantown, Rockville Memorial, and Quince Orchard branches. Residents have also been waiting many years for the renovation of the Noyes Library for Young Children, and the request of \$275,500 supports the purchase of collection materials and supplies. These enhancement requests directly align with the County's priorities of public safety and early childhood education.

On behalf of the Library Board, I respectfully request that Council approves the County Executive's proposed fiscal year 2027 budget. Please consider reducing MCPL's lapse rate, to allow the department to have a small bit of flexibility to operate within its budget allocation. We ask that you demonstrate the commitment you all have made to ensure Montgomery County is a safe place to learn, work, and live by providing MCPL with sufficient funds needed to serve residents effectively.

This year, Montgomery County Public Libraries is celebrating its 75th anniversary. Libraries look different today than they did in 1951. Gone are the card catalogs and the frequent shushing from library staff, but the commitment to providing a safe, community space open to all with free access to information remains the same. We invite you to attend a celebratory event in your district, so you can see firsthand how MCPL branches are vibrant cornerstones of our communities. With everything happening in the world around us, we need funding for libraries now more than ever.