



MONTGOMERY COUNTY LIBRARY BOARD

January 19, 2026

County Executive Marc Elrich
Isiah "Ike" Leggett Executive Office Building
101 Monroe Street, 2nd Floor
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear County Executive Elrich:

As per Section 2-47 of the Montgomery County Code, the Montgomery County Library Board would like to provide recommendations as the County prepares its proposed FY 2027 operating budget for submission to Montgomery County Council. **We recommend the MCPL budget include funds to restore staff positions to meet the demand for library services.**

For the past year, we have observed how the library administration has worked exceptionally hard to serve our community. Front line library staff provide myriad services for our residents: fielding information questions; assisting with computer technology; and providing programs for children, teens, adults, and seniors; and checking out books. Front line staff are also responsible for ensuring library customers are in a safe and welcoming environment.

The availability of staff has impacted the level of customer service MCPL provides. Since the pandemic, MCPL staff has decreased from 401 FTEs to 385. Shortage of staff was one reason MCPL needed to cut back services, such as the recent reduction of library branches open for Sunday hours. While a branch is open in each of Montgomery County's regions, **we feel that all residents should have access to high-quality programs and services at their neighborhood branch whenever libraries in the system are open.**

As another example, **staff are needed to meet the high demand for early literacy programs that support your commitment to kindergarten readiness.** The number of infant, toddler, and bilingual storytime sessions that can be offered during the week is limited by the availability of library staff to lead the program and staff the information desk. Some libraries have adopted an online ticketing system for participants to reserve a story time spot. This stopgap measure prevents the meeting spaces from going over capacity, but it does not address the challenge of serving all to meet the demand for early literacy programming.

We believe the resources MCPL offers our residents are going underutilized. MCPL needs the resources to mount an effort to reach out to our increasingly diverse population and let people know that libraries exist and what benefits they can offer to them and their families.

We recommend the MCPL budget include funds to restore staff positions to increase current levels of customer service. As you discuss MCPL's budgetary needs during the coming weeks, we urge you to consider restoring MCPL's staffing so that MCPL's hard working and innovative leadership can more effectively serve county residents and address our shared priorities.

Sincerely,

Grace Manubay
Chair