

**Robert A. Goldman**  
**MHP President**  
Testimony before Montgomery County Council  
In Support of  
Resolution to Authorize Montgomery County Application for  
Community Development Block Grant Funds for Emergency Rental Assistance  
September 29, 2020

Good Afternoon Council President Katz and members of the Council.

My name is Robert Goldman and I am the President of Montgomery Housing Partnership (MHP). I am testifying in support of the County's Application to the State for CDBG funds for emergency rental assistance.

As you all know, the need for rental assistance in the County far exceeds available resources. The funds that have been committed to rental assistance to date will reach fewer than half of estimated 20,000 tenants behind on rent. For this reason, we need to pursue every available option to provide additional rental assistance to County residents, such as this application to the state for CDBG dollars.

Affordable housing providers like MHP are doing their part to ensure that residents receive the maximum amount of assistance that they are eligible for. In the immediate wake of COVID, MHP made the decision to reposition existing staff to serve on a resident outreach team that would educate and assist residents in applying for a variety of assistance programs, including food, utility, financial and rental assistance. What's more, we have played a similar role with non-MHP residents through the Apartment Assistance Program, which supports small landlords in the County.

This past spring, we also established a resident emergency fund, and have distributed tens of thousands of dollars to residents in rental assistance and direct financial assistance. More recently, we applied on behalf of our residents for rental assistance through a program offered by the state. Thanks to the efforts of our dedicated staff, more than \$220,000 in tenant delinquencies were wiped out, which benefitted hundreds of residents across our portfolio. Despite all of the public and private resources that are available to our residents, many continue to be multiple months behind in their rent and will never be able to pay their back rent if not for outside assistance.

We appreciate the County Executive and County Council pursuing every available option to provide rental assistance to residents, and keeping every resident stably housed during this public health crisis. Thank you in advance for your support of this resolution.