



June 15, 2021

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Council of the District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
John A. Wilson Building
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Councilmembers:

As you vote on the budget for the next fiscal year, we urge you to invest in ending chronic homelessness. We have seen the growth of unsheltered people living in the Dupont Circle area during this pandemic. While the encampments are so visible to us all, they are a symptom of greater issues of inequality and all too limited resources that need to be addressed.

We ask you to invest more in permanent supportive housing which has been shown to end homelessness. Improvements in shelters and rapid rehousing are great but they are temporary. If we want to make homelessness rare, brief and non-recurring, then we have to provide more permanent supportive housing than the mayor's budget plus federal funding streams provide. We want to see a significant decrease in 2022 compared with the 2021 PIT count of 3,871 homeless individuals.

We also ask that you fully fund the Prevention and Diversion Services that prevent people from falling into homelessness. We need to stop more people from falling into homelessness where any mental or physical issues will be exacerbated, ultimately costing more in both human misery and city revenue.

Finally, we join you in celebrating when a new building coming from the Housing Production Trust Fund provides housing for more people and in recognizing each person that the street outreach teams move into a real home. But DC lacks transparency in relating these developments to the overall problem of homelessness -- we are told about all the trees, but we don't know what that means for the forest. So, we would like to urge the new director of the Interagency Council on Homelessness to create a dashboard that enables the public to monitor whether budgetary commitments are sufficient and directed appropriately to achieve DC's objectives. We want to see real change in the numbers that matter.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Volman
President, DCCA

- and -

Joanne Garlow
Homelessness Committee Chair

Cc: Historic Dupont Circle Main Streets
Dupont Circle BID