

Coalition of Housing and Homeless Organizations (COHHO)

May 1, 2009

Vincent C. Gray, Chairman
Council of the District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW Suite 504
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Chairman Gray:

As providers and strong supporters of homelessness services in the District of Columbia, the undersigned organizations are pleased to submit our joint response to the Proposed Fiscal Year 2010 Budget as it affects homeless residents.

We celebrate the milestone that will be reached by September 2009, when 655 chronically homeless individuals and 80 long-term homeless families will be placed in Permanent Supportive Housing. We appreciate that the Proposed Budget will maintain those individuals and families in housing for FY10. While there are thousands more homeless persons waiting for housing, given the District's budget situation these are positive steps.

At the same time, however, it is necessary for the District to keep conditions from worsening for the thousands of homeless people in the District who have not yet been assisted through the Permanent Supportive Housing initiative. We also have to accommodate the needs of persons who are newly homeless in the current economy and will become homeless in FY10.

Among the issues requiring attention and adequate funding are increased emergency shelter capacity, expanded transitional housing capacity, improvements in shelter conditions, and development of affordable housing for extremely low-income and special-needs residents. For example, an increase of \$2.7M in the Homeless Services budget of the Department of Human Services would enable 200 homeless families in the District's emergency shelters to receive intensified case management and develop the capacity to move into permanent housing. A combination of Local Rent Supplement Program funding for permanent housing and case management for these families would help remove a significant log jam in the emergency shelter system and allow additional homeless families to receive shelter.

Thank you for your attention to our recommendations.

Very truly yours,

COHHO—Coalition of Housing and Homeless Organizations
and

Bread for the City George A. Jones, Executive Director
Central Union Mission David Treadwell, Executive Director
National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty
New Endeavors by Women Wanda Steptoe, Executive Director
SOME, Inc. (So Others Might Eat) Fr. John Adams, President

CC:

The Honorable Adrian M. Fenty
Mayor

The Honorable Jack Evans
Chair Pro Tempore, Ward 2 Councilmember

The Honorable David A. Catania
At-Large Councilmember

The Honorable Phil Mendelson
At-Large Councilmember

The Honorable Kwame R. Brown
At-Large Councilmember

The Honorable Michael A. Brown
At-Large Councilmember

The Honorable Jim Graham
Ward 1 Councilmember

The Honorable Mary M. Cheh
Ward 3 Councilmember

The Honorable Muriel Bowser
Ward 4 Councilmember

The Honorable Harry Thomas, Jr.
Ward 5 Councilmember

The Honorable Tommy Wells
Ward 6 Councilmember

The Honorable Yvette M. Alexander
Ward 7 Councilmember

The Honorable Marion Barry
Ward 8 Councilmember