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MAYOR BOWSER’S NEW BUDGET ADDS MORE SUPPORT FOR THE HOMELESS BUT LEAVES CRUCIAL GAPS IN FUNDING

This new budget provides expanded support for Washington, D.C.’s homeless population, but still doesn’t meet asks from local advocacy groups.

Washington, D.C. (May 28, 2021) – Mayor Bowser’s budget, released on Thursday, will end chronic homelessness for up to 758 individuals and 347 families. Leveraging both federal and local funds, this is the mayor’s largest single-year increase in permanent housing vouchers for single adults. Despite expanded funding, the new budget leaves a large disparity between current resources and the asks from local homeless advocacy initiative, The Way Home Campaign, that is calling for $100 million to end chronic homelessness for 3,100 households. The Way Home Campaign, comprised of 107 organizations and 6,000 voters is led by the Miriam’s Kitchen.

Leaders from local nonprofit Miriam’s Kitchen – which offers comprehensive support for homeless citizens in D.C. – express significant concern that 2,000 households will continue to experience chronic homelessness for at least another year because of the new budget’s critical funding gaps. Currently, Mayor Bowser’s proposed budget meets just 28% of the urgent housing needs for single adults experiencing long-term homelessness. Miriam’s Kitchen Senior Manager of Policy and Advocacy Jesse Rabinowitz says the need for more housing is particularly acute for single adults. “Thousands of our neighbors continue to live outside, in tents, and in crowded shelters even during a pandemic. This underinvestment continues a troubling pattern of underinvesting in single adults, and thus, undermines D.C.’s plan to end homelessness, Homeward DC 2.0, and Mayor Bowser’s commitment to ending chronic homelessness by 2017.

While we are grateful to see the influx of vouchers, largely due to federal funding, we have much work to do to as thousands of our neighbors continue to go without housing,” Rabinowitz states. Advocates caution that the mayor’s budget may not accurately reflect D.C.’s allotment of federal housing vouchers, and they insist that any gap in vouchers between the federal allocation and the mayor’s commitment be closed with local funding.

Miriam’s Kitchen encourages advocates across D.C. to join The Way Home Campaign to stay up-to-date with key initiatives dedicated to ending chronic homelessness.
About Miriam’s Kitchen

Founded in 1983 as a soup kitchen, Miriam’s Kitchen has evolved over the years to provide more than meals. Today, Miriam’s Kitchen is a critical player in the fight to end chronic homelessness in D.C. On the direct services level, we serve more than 3,000 men and women experiencing homelessness—helping them to improve their health, increase their income and obtain housing through a range of programs and partnerships. And at the systems level, we work with leaders across the city to make instances of homelessness rare, brief and non-recurring.

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