

Chairman Jeffrey McKay  
Fairfax County Board of Supervisors  
12000 Government Center Pkwy  
Fairfax, VA 222035

June 12, 2022

CC: Fairfax County Clerk to the Board of Supervisors

Dear Chairman McKay and Members of the Board,

On behalf of the Young Adults Advisory Committee, I want to thank you for your due diligence in making up the County's FY 2023 Budget. We recognize that our County and nation is entering a new realm and that many priorities are present for our elected officials. Below you will find the Council's comments on the County's Budget, our hopes for future investments and proposals for future programs.

### **Housing:**

We appreciate and condone the Board's efforts to add an additional 5,000 homes affordable inventory and \$10 million investment in expanding the availability of affordable housing in the County. Lack of affordable housing cuts cross several identities and highly resonates with the young adult population.

Additionally, while the pandemic has impacted all of Fairfax County, young adults attempting to live and work in Fairfax County have been significantly affected. The housing market specifically has seen a huge spike in this area, making the already difficult dream of homeownership even more unattainable. Purchasing a home is the first step in building generational wealth; in 2017, the [U.S. Census Bureau](#) found that a homeowner's median wealth was **89 times larger** than the median wealth of renters.

Because of this disparity, the YAA Council encourages the Board to consider allocating excess funds towards first-time homeowner programs. This can be through an expansion of existing program, grants or funding for down payments, or additional educational resources. These programs should be expanded beyond the current AMI limitations, as there are many young individuals and families who exceed the AMI maximums but are still unable to afford standard mortgages and down payments due to the exorbitant cost of living in this area. Another possible focus of additional funding towards rental assistance programs for young adults (35 years old and younger) in the County. Providing funding to help supplement renters' monthly payments can also help them save towards a down payment for their first home.

Creating a pathway to home ownership is integral to attracting and retaining young talent in the County.

### **Education and Workforce Training:**

The Council recognizes that the Board of Supervisors allocates over 50% of its budget to the School Board for school-related operations. We understand the strength and future of our County lies with our students and youth.

As the Board continues its work of expanding the skills sets, abilities and strength of Fairfax County, the Council asks for the Board to work in tandem with the School Board to create and expand work-based

learning experiences (i.e., pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, CTE, internships, etc.) for our K-12 population, in addition to our adult learners. The current job and skill market of Northern Virginia isn't meeting the skills of the population. We advise the Board of Supervisors and School Board to use its existing infrastructure to provide our current and future worker population with the skills, trainings, certifications and experience needed to, if desired, directly enter the workforce.

We ask the Board to work closely with the Economic Development Authority, Members of the Young Adults Advisory Council, local partners, regional partners and the Chamber to discover ways for work-based learning and garner best practices and insights.

### **Mental Health and Community Health Services:**

The Young Adults Advisory Council condemns the Board's investment of \$825,000 in additional dollars for contract rate increases for direct service providers in health and human services. The Council recognizes that our health sector was greatly impacted during the pandemic and that additional funds will be essential to retaining and increasing a pool of talented providers. Yet, we also recognize that the reality and pervasiveness of mental health issues have been magnified over the past two years. Folks, especially those who are within the Young Adults age range, are struggling to find affordable and/or accessible practitioners of psychological services

We ask the Board of Supervisors to consider investing more heavily in community services, especially those focused on community and mental health. The Young Adults Advisory Council wishes to see outreach events that allows for communal healing and growth.

### **Future Projections:**

Finally, in the future, the Council asks that the Board of Supervisors consider supporting the below programs.

- Post-COVID 19 Council/Taskforce: Our nation is entering a new, post COVID-19 world. We ask the Board to Consider creating an internal or external taskforce charged with planning for the future of Fairfax County and how we can use government resources to respond evolving concerns, such as job stability, economic prosperity, housing, retaining talent and more.
- Continued Investment in the Environment: We ask the Board of Supervisors to continue investments in environmental justice. The Council wants to see the County to become of the municipalities leading in eco-friendly programs and investments.

Thank you for your consideration and time. Please let me know if the Young Adults Advisory Council can provide any further comment or insight.

In Solidarity,



Denver Supinger, Chair  
Young Adults Advisory Council