



Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2A

“Serving the Foggy Bottom and West End communities of Washington, D.C.”

August 1, 2022

Mayor Muriel Bowser
Mayor
Government of the District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20004
muriel.bowser@dc.gov

Ms. Dionne Bussey-Reeder
Chairperson, Board of Commissioners
District of Columbia Housing Authority
1133 North Capitol Street NE
Washington, DC 20002
amcnair@dchousing.org

Mr. Wayne Turnage
Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services
Office of the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 223
Washington, DC 20004
wayne.turnage@dc.gov

RE: Slow Process for Distributing Housing Vouchers

Dear Mayor Bowser, Chairperson Bussey-Reeder, and Deputy Mayor Turnage,

At its regular meeting on July 20, 2022, Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2A (“ANC 2A” or “**Commission**”) considered the above-referenced matter. With seven of seven commissioners present, a quorum at a duly-noticed public meeting, the Commission voted unanimously (7-0-0), after a motion made by Commissioner Omictin and seconded by Commissioner Patel, to adopt the following resolution:

The Mayor and DC Council approved a historic \$96 million investment in permanent supportive housing vouchers for FY 2022, or around 2,300 vouchers for single individuals experiencing homelessness. In the same budget, the Department of Human Services (DHS) received a moderate increase in full-time equivalents (FTEs) to accommodate the added resources. Despite these extremely positive developments, public numbers as of April 2022 show that residents have only been able to use 5% of the available vouchers, meaning 157 individuals have used these vouchers to move into housing. The Way Home Campaign estimates that at the current lease-up rate, it would take ten years to spend the FY 2022 voucher allocation.

Meanwhile, ANCs, community members, and even unhoused folks themselves are unfamiliar with the process by which unhoused people receive and use vouchers. Neighbors have blamed government agencies like DHS and the District of Columbia Housing Authority (DCHA), as well as trusted community partners like Miriam’s Kitchen and Pathways to Housing, for taking years to connect folks to housing, a sentiment echoed by encampment residents as well. ANC 2A believes that with more information about the voucher distribution process, which the ANC knows is lengthy and difficult, we can try to assuage their trepidations. At the same



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time, the ANC is very concerned at the particularly slow disbursement of vouchers. The ANC continues to have one of the highest concentrations of unhoused people and encampments in the city, and helping these neighbors move into homes quickly has been one of the most pressing goals of this ANC. Many have found housing thanks to the combined efforts of service providers, DC agencies, and fellow neighbors, and the ANC wants to make sure that progress is continued and expedited. Summer is a dangerous season to be living on the streets and individuals have passed away in their tents from heat-related conditions in our neighborhood.

ANC 2A writes this letter to request three pieces of information from your agencies:

1. A detailed explanation of the process by which individuals are selected for and use vouchers so that this process may be made transparent to the community,
2. Regularly published data regarding the disbursement of vouchers to help us understand progress on housing the homeless in real time,
3. A summary of the causes of the slowdown in voucher usage, identifying any barriers that your agencies will clear away to speed up the voucher process, and
4. A timeline for when your agencies believe they will use all the allocated vouchers in FY 2022.

ANC 2A would also welcome representatives from DHS, DCHA, and/or the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services (DMHHS) to one of the ANC’s future public meetings to discuss this topic with our community. We all approach this work from a place of compassion for those with the least among us and hope that we can effectively mobilize resources to bring the unhoused back into stable housing. Thank you for your leadership and work toward ending homelessness, and the ANC looks forward to hearing your response and our future collaboration.

Commissioners Yannik Omictin (2A01@anc.dc.gov) and Joel Causey (2A02@anc.dc.gov) are the Commission’s representatives in this matter.

ON BEHALF OF THE COMMISSION.

Sincerely,

Joel Causey
Chairperson