



# A Two Generation Poverty Strategy

*A Presentation by Uma S. Ahluwalia, Director  
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# Characteristics of poverty in Montgomery County.

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- ▶ Often Families and Individuals of Color
- ▶ Often above federal poverty thresholds but below the Montgomery County Self-Sufficiency Wage
- ▶ Often living in over-crowded conditions
- ▶ Primary struggles for food, shelter and healthcare
- ▶ Often complicated by need for behavioral health services, unemployment, domestic violence, disability and hope
- ▶ Very hard to be poor in a un-affordable community



the **MANY**  
**FACES** of  
**POVERTY**

# Montgomery County At-a-Glance

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Over 1 Million Residents

31% Foreign Born

50.6% Ethnic Minority

17% Growth in our senior population over the next 2-years

54,000 out of 153,000 children in the public school system receives FARMS

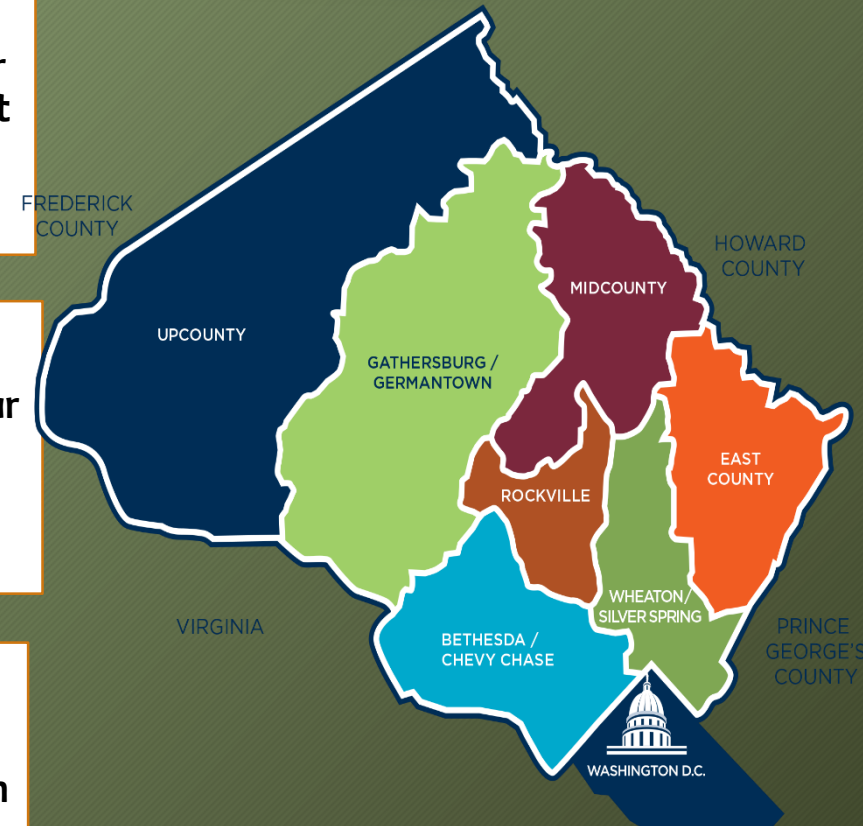
6 Zip Codes of Extreme Need — Poverty on the Rise

Served 70,000 Households in Fiscal Year 2009 and 39,000 used more than two services from Department

A Staff of 1,600 with over 80 Programs

TANF | SNAP, MA and EA Caseload Growing — Application volume grew by almost 42%

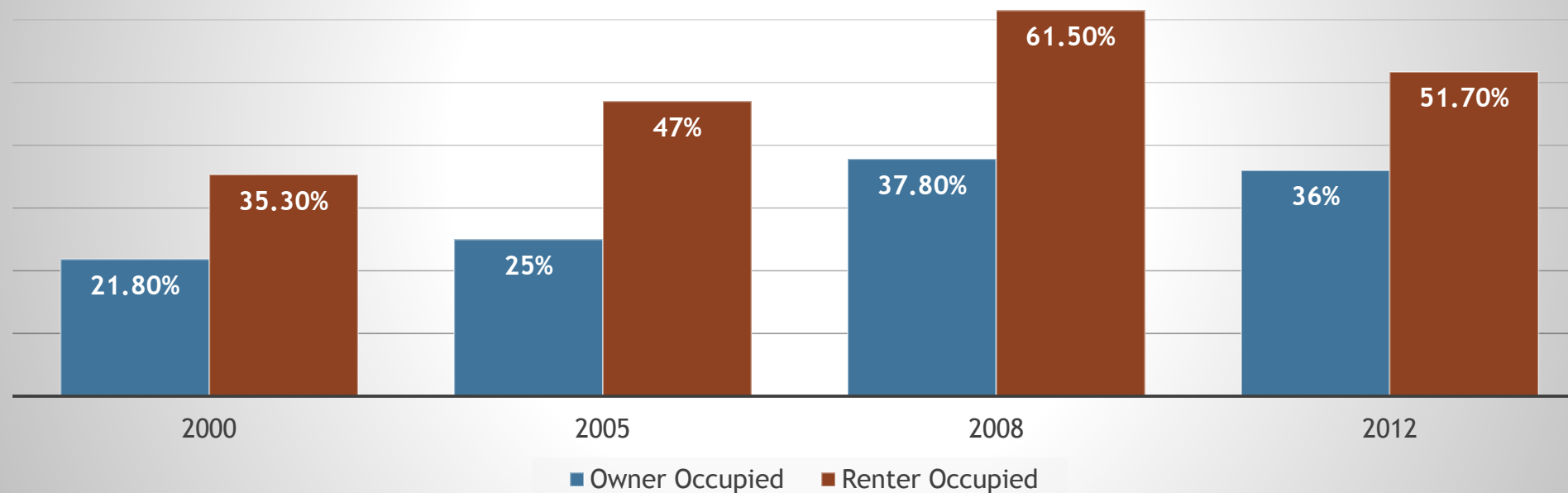
Serving almost 34,000 uninsured adults, children and pregnant women



# Housing Costs.

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Percent of Households Spending More than 30% of Income on Housing Costs



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2000, 2005, 2008, 2012

# Neighborhood Opportunity Network. How it Started.

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- ▶ 2008 - Recession starts to hit our community
- ▶ We were in the middle of Kennedy Cluster discussions
- ▶ Biggest challenge in schools in high poverty areas - turnover of students within MCPS as parents sought better rent deals or faced evictions
- ▶ Mapped our emergency assistance data by zip code — identified 7 zip codes of need: 20901, 20904, 20906, 20910, 20977, 20974, 20850
- ▶ Funding permitted us to start NON sites in 3 of these zip codes with a partial presence in East County -
  - Family Services, Inc. — Gaithersburg
  - McCarrick Center in Catholic Charities — Wheaton|Aspen Hill
  - Tess Center | Mary's Center — Long Branch



- Faith Summit organized by Reverend Warner in 2009



- Call to Action to the Congregations that participated



- Frankie Blackburn, ED of IMPACT Silver Spring, heard the call and responded



- Intriguing Idea – Can we merge traditional service delivery with neighborhood organizing – birthed the NON.



# Shared Outcomes for Success.

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## Residents and Service Professionals are Co-Investors in Neighborhood Opportunity Networks

### Real and Sustainable Access to Services

- More residents of different backgrounds are accessing services.
- Significant increase in residents who report feeling honored, enriched and empowered.
- There is an active web of resident connectors knowledgeable about services who have a sense of trust with an active web of service providers.

### Thriving Neighborhood Centers

- Increase in responsive formal services due to relationships and teams formed at center.
- Centers “owned” as vital anchor institutions in their communities

### Thriving Neighborhood Networks of Mutual Support

- Residents of diverse backgrounds frequently gather and build supportive relationships.
- Increase in number of specific informal supports traded among and between residents.



# Why a Two Generation Approach?

*Not merely rescue  
children or rehab  
parents – focus on  
both!*



# What Does Research Tell Us?



1. Children thrive in families.
2. Parents care deeply about the well-being of their children.
3. Even if they are struggling with poverty, unemployment, behavioral health challenges, domestic violence, homelessness, incarceration, they want what is best for their children.
4. Use a strengths based approach to ensure the safety, self-sufficiency and health and well-being of children and families.
5. Take away stressors by providing resources for housing, health care, child care and income supports so parents can focus on getting a job, staying employed and supporting their goals towards self-sufficiency and strengthen their ability to care for their children adequately.
6. At the same time, support children in high quality and affordable early care and education and support educational and well-being outcomes of children from birth to age 18.
7. Poverty brings its own trauma and a trauma informed approach is critical.

# Opportunities for Engagement

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Young Homeless Families



Pregnant Teenagers

At risk families experiencing unemployment, poverty, domestic violence, health and mental health challenges, incarceration or substance abuse, homelessness

Veterans in Need

Disconnected Youth

Grandparents Raising Grandkids

Refugee and Immigrant Families Living on the Margins

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# Thank you!