

**Testimony HB 472 –
Housing – Community Development Fund Program Act Funding
February 11, 2019
Position: FAVORABLE**

Chairman Barve and Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee:

We urge this committee to vote a favorable report for HB 472 – Housing – Community Development Fund Program Act – Funding. HB 472 creates a permanent funding source for the Community Development Fund which was created during the 2018 legislative session. The funding will be critical operating dollars to use for community development organizations to apply for affordable housing, neighborhood and commercial revitalization, housing and financial counseling, small business development, community services, and more. The funding source is \$5 million from surplus of the Unclaimed Property Fund.

Maryland Nonprofits is a statewide association of more than 1100 nonprofit organizations and institutions. There is a pressing need in Maryland to improve access to affordable housing in clean, safe and supportive neighborhoods. The State’s existing investment in affordable housing lags far behind what is adequate.

Too many poor or working-class families must spend exorbitant portions of their family resources for any housing at all. Without adequate housing, or with exorbitant housing costs, far too many aspects of family life, including health, education, recreation, and employment come under pressure, and often result in increased service demands on nonprofits with limited resources, or already limited state or local support programs.

The Community Development Program Fund would begin to address that problem, as well as be a resource to meet many other needs in our communities for additional supports, like housing counseling and small business investment/development.

We urge you to support House Bill 472 and give it a favorable report.