



BRANDON M. SCOTT
MAYOR

*Office of Government Relations
88 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401*

HB 0079

January 31, 2023

TO: Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee
FROM: Nina Themelis, Interim Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations
RE: House Bill 79 – Housing and Community Development - Whole-Home Repairs Act of 2023
POSITION: **Support**

Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill (HB) 79.

HB 79 would establish the Whole-Home Repairs Program in the Department of Housing and Community Development to provide grants to certain local administering agencies for the purposes of ensuring that owner-occupied and rental units are free of habitability concerns, improving coordination across home repairs programs, and increasing retention in workforce development programs; and establishing the Whole-Home Repairs Fund as a special, non-lapsing fund.

HB 79 would enhance our ability to support and retain tenants, homeowners and future homeowners in Baltimore City by providing additional fiscal support for programs that we currently administer such as the Weatherization Assistance Program, Community Development Block Grants, Lead Hazard Reduction Grants and support of the Maryland Housing Rehabilitation Program and other neighborhood revitalization programs.

Baltimore City currently administers programs to address habitability concerns, improve energy efficiency and make units accessible for individuals with disabilities. Should HB 79 be enacted it would increase our staffing needs due to the anticipated increased program participation however the administrative framework is already in place to effectively deliver these programs and services and may be able to help address a significant back log.

HB79 would also be beneficial in that small landlords have often sought assistance that we presently have no ability to provide. This Bill is reflective of the needs that have been expressed from the landlord, tenant and homeowner communities.

Currently Baltimore City's LIGHT Intake & Assessment Unit is responsible for the application processing on these cases. There would need to be additional staff in place to handle the increased volume of applications. In addition, both the field teams of the Weatherization and Rehabilitation Services Staff would need to be increased to complete the grant agreements as well as to complete the scopes of work. Additional staffing would be required including Construction Building Inspector II's, a Construction Project Supervisor for the Team and a Social Services Coordinator Supervisor.

In a typical, non-COVID year, Baltimore City's staff of 13 serves about 211 constituents using approximately \$2.2m in combined Federal, State and City capital funding. A typical case load for a Rehabilitation Technician (project manager/field staff) is approximately 30-45 cases at any given time at different stages in our case matriculation process. Baltimore City DHCD has 6 Rehabilitation Technicians and one supervisor that directly address constituent housing repairs.

A typical case load for an underwriter is approximately 25-35 cases at any given time. Baltimore City DHCD has 2 underwriters on staff.

Fiscal Impact based on and average grant of \$25,000

Administration-Parking Stickers	\$ 525.00
Administration-Housing Building Inspector III	\$ 81,000.00
Administration-Housing Building Inspector II	\$ 73,000.00
Administration-Housing Building Inspector II	\$ 73,000.00
Administration-Real Estate Agent II	\$ 121,000.00
Administration- Sr. Social Services Coordinator Supervisor	\$ 121,000.00
Administration- Sr. Social Services Coordinator	\$ 70,000.00
Administration-Energy Technician II	\$ 64,000.00
Administration-Office Support Specialist III	\$ 57,000.00
Administration--Construction Project Supervisor I	\$ 127,000.00
Administration-Laptops	\$ 10,000.00
Administration-iPads	\$ 3,000.00
Administration-cellphones	\$ 3,600.00
Administration-Database License	\$ 5,600.00
Administration-Payments to Contractors	\$ 2,500,000.00
Total Estimate	\$3,309,725.00

The passage of HB 79 would have an impact on Baltimore City operations but increases our ability to serve landlord, tenant and homeowner communities. Should Baltimore City choose to apply for these grants the administration would work towards addressing the operational impact.

For these reasons, the BCA respectfully request a **favorable** report on HB 79 which would protect the health and safety of renters and homeowners in Baltimore City and incentivize landlords to address outstanding repairs.