



Wes Moore | Governor
Aruna Miller | Lt. Governor
Kevin A. Anderson | Secretary of Commerce
Signe Pringle | Deputy Secretary of Commerce

DATE: February 28, 2024
BILL NO: House Bill 1451
BILL TITLE: Arts Incubator Workgroup - Established
COMMITTEE: House Appropriations
POSITION: Support

The Maryland Department of Commerce (Commerce) supports House Bill 1451 - Arts Incubator Workgroup – Established.

Bill Summary:

House Bill 1451 establishes the Arts Incubator Workgroup. The purpose of the Workgroups is to study how arts and cultural institutions can support local artists. Staffing for the Workgroup will be provided by staff from the Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC). A preliminary report is due to the General Assembly on or before October 1, 2024, and a final report is due in October 2025.

Background:

MSAC has several grant programs and funding opportunities available to independent artists, including the Grants for Artists Program. Despite MSAC’s efforts, there is still a need in the State’s burgeoning arts community for affordable space for artists to create, rehearse, perform, and exhibit their work. Research is needed to uncover potential funding and operational models that could inform Maryland-specific solutions, including making the case for more funding for MSAC programs more prominent.

Rationale:

The needs mentioned above are common concerns MSAC staff hear from artists across the state, in urban, suburban, and rural areas. The costs for space rental and what they can pay as artists fees needs to be addressed in order for MSAC to continue to support organizations. While MSAC operating support to organizations, including county arts agencies, is robust, operational costs and business models of nonprofit arts organizations require them to pass along costs to artists in what they charge for space rental and what they can pay as artist fees. Researching the issue will likely uncover funding and operational models that could inform Maryland-specific solutions and allow our State to continue to lead in our support for the arts and artists.

Commerce respectfully requests a favorable report on House Bill 1451.