



## House Bill 902

### *Prekindergarten - Ulysses Currie Head Start Program - Eligibility for State Funds*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Appropriations Committee

Date: February 28, 2024

From: Brianna January and Michael Sanderson

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 902. This bill authorizes providers under the Ulysses Currie Head Start Programs to receive state funding to support public pre-K expansion as imagined by the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. Counties see this as an additional tool to address the need for more providers and facilities to implement this aspect of the Blueprint.

By expanding State-supported pre-K programs to include providers under Ulysses Currie Head Start Programs, HB 902 helps address the State's current challenges of not having enough providers and facilities to expand pre-K services as required under the Blueprint. While the capacity and situation vary between counties, these are near-universal issues facing every corner of the state.

Furthermore, the providers who receive Ulysses Currie Head Start Program grants serve Maryland's underprivileged families. Allowing a fuller range of providers to fully participate in the State's public pre-K program will directly impact some of the most vulnerable communities in the state and some of the Maryland families with the greatest need, including those in rural areas.

Counties strongly support making Ulysses Currie Head Start Program providers eligible to be pre-K providers and receive state funding to ensure the successful expansion of early childhood education to serve all Maryland's three- and four-year-olds. For these reasons, MACo **SUPPORTS HB 902** and urges a **FAVORABLE** report.