

Senate Bill 181
Qualifying Nonprofit Organizations - Training and Reentry Services – Funding
Budget and Taxation Committee
January 17, 2024
Support

Catholic Charities of Baltimore strongly supports SB 181, which requires the Governor to include \$1 million in the annual budget bill for fiscal years 2026 through 2028 to provide operating grants to qualifying nonprofit organizations that provide automotive repair training and reentry assistance to incarcerated or formerly incarcerated individuals.

For a century, Catholic Charities has provided care and services to improve the lives of Marylanders in need. We accompany Marylanders as they age with dignity, support their pursuit of employment and career advancement, heal from trauma and addiction, achieve economic independence, prepare for educational success, and welcome immigrant neighbors into Maryland communities. As one of the largest human service providers in Maryland, we address barriers and provide job placement assistance to marginalized and underrepresented communities, exemplified by our collaboration with the National Center for Institutions and Alternatives to create the St. Edwards Automotive Training program. This initiative aims to inspire hope, increase self-sufficiency for people in need, and bridge the gap in rising unemployment throughout the city. With a steadfast commitment to these goals, we strongly support SB 181, and the examples below outline how we see this legislation significantly benefiting those we serve.

Expanding Opportunity for Career Growth

Additional funds would allow us to expand the number of individuals we provide training to each year. With 68% re-arrested within 3 years, our program helps address the cycle of poverty and incarceration.¹ This helps address the labor force participation decline among 25–34-year-olds in Maryland, which is more pronounced than neighboring states.²

Enhance Placement Partnerships

Additional funding would strengthen job placement services and foster partnerships with automotive repair shops, ensuring high employment rates at a median hourly wage of \$23.59 in Maryland for program graduates.³ With the national unemployment rate at 27% for formerly incarcerated individuals, our program plays a vital role in providing essential skills and facilitating job placement.¹

Building Technical Skills and Employability

Investing in additional certification programs and advanced automotive repair training helps make participants more competitive in the job market, with only 25% of the formerly incarcerated individuals having a high school, GED, or college degree at present.¹ Our program builds both hard and soft skills for stable careers.

On behalf of the individuals and families we work with, Catholic Charities of Baltimore appreciates your consideration, and urges the committee to issue a favorable report for SB181.

Submitted By: Madelin Martinez, Assistant Advocacy Director.

1. Prison Policy Initiative. “Recidivism and Reentry.” Prisonpolicy.org, 2019, www.prisonpolicy.org/research/recidivism_and_reentry/.
2. Office of the Comptroller of Maryland 2023 | State of the Economy.
3. U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics. “Maryland - May 2021 OEWS State Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates.” Www.bls.gov, May 2022, www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_md.htm.