

SENATE BILL 953
Housing – Community Development Fund Program Act - Funding
February 28, 2024
Position: FAVORABLE

Dear Chairman Guzzone and Members of the Senate:

Habitat for Humanity Metro Maryland urges this committee to vote a favorable report for **SB953 – Housing – Community Development Fund Program Act - Funding**

SB 953 creates a permanent funding source for the Community Development Fund which was created in 2018. The Community Development Fund would provide critical operating dollars for community-based organizations providing affordable housing, neighborhood and commercial revitalization, housing and financial counseling, small business development, community services, and more.

We are seeking \$5 million from the Unclaimed Property Fund after usual disbursements have been made.

Habitat for Humanity Metro Maryland is a nonprofit serving Montgomery and Prince George's Counties focused on affordable homeownership. Habitat builds and rehabilitates homes that it sells to income-qualified buyers, providing an affordable mortgage financed by the organization. Habitat also offers a home preservation program that helps lower income homeowners make necessary health, safety, accessibility, and climate resiliency improvements in their homes. Since its founding in 1982, Habitat has completed more than 885 projects, serving more than 1,700 Marylanders.

The pandemic only increased the need for services provided by nonprofit organizations including affordable housing nonprofits. Our organization alone has more than 4,000 people on the interest in home purchase email list and more than 2,300 households on the home preservation inquiry list. While we've been able to identify additional capital funding sources, although not nearly enough to meet the need, it is significantly more difficult to find operating dollars.

In order to meet the needs of more Marylanders, nonprofits like ours need additional operating funds to build staffing capacity. It's critical for nonprofits to remain competitive in the labor market and maintain the ability to attract and retain talented employees.

Please provide a favorable report for SB953.

Sincerely,

*Sarah Reddinger, Vice President of Community Development
Habitat for Humanity Metro Maryland, Inc.
8380 Colesville Road, Suite 700, Silver Spring, MD 20910
(301)332-4391
Sarah.Reddinger@HabitatMM.org*