

# SENATE BILL 816

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By: **Senator Hayes**

Introduced and read first time: February 6, 2026

Assigned to: Finance

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## A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **West North Avenue Development Authority – Neighborhood Social Connection**  
3 **and Development Program – Establishment**  
4 **(WNADA Neighborhood Social Connection and Development Act)**

5 FOR the purpose of establishing the Neighborhood Social Connection and Development  
6 Program within the West North Avenue Development Authority to provide technical  
7 support and grants to certain organizations to implement programs that foster social  
8 connections and activities in a certain area; and generally relating to the  
9 Neighborhood Social Connection and Development Program in the West North  
10 Avenue Development Authority.

11 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,  
12 Article – Economic Development  
13 Section 12–701  
14 Annotated Code of Maryland  
15 (2024 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

16 BY adding to  
17 Article – Economic Development  
18 Section 12–715  
19 Annotated Code of Maryland  
20 (2024 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

21 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,  
22 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

23 **Article – Economic Development**

24 12–701.

25 (a) In this subtitle the following words have the meanings indicated.

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



(b) “Authority” means the West North Avenue Development Authority.

(c) “Board” means the Board of Directors of the Authority.

(d) “Buffer zone” means the area within 250 yards of the target area.

(e) “Target area” means the portion of West North Avenue in Baltimore City between the 600 block and the 3200 block, inclusive.

(f) “West North Avenue Corridor” includes the geographic area consisting of the target area and the buffer zone.

**12-715.**

**(A) IN THIS SECTION, “PROGRAM” MEANS THE NEIGHBORHOOD SOCIAL CONNECTION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM.**

**(B) THERE IS A NEIGHBORHOOD SOCIAL CONNECTION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM IN THE AUTHORITY.**

**(C) THE PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM IS TO FOSTER SOCIAL CONNECTIONS TO SUPPORT NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE WEST NORTH AVENUE CORRIDOR BY:**

**(1) PROVIDING TECHNICAL SUPPORT TO PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS, INCLUDING COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATIONS, NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS, VOLUNTEER GROUPS, AND NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS; AND**

**(2) AWARDING GRANTS TO IMPLEMENT PROGRAMS THAT FOSTER SOCIAL CONNECTIONS AND ACTIVITIES TAILORED TO SUPPORT NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT.**

**(D) (1) THE AUTHORITY SHALL AWARD GRANTS TO IMPLEMENT THE PROGRAM.**

**(2) THE AUTHORITY MAY SET ASIDE EXISTING FUNDS OF NOT MORE THAN \$500,000 FOR THE PURPOSE OF AWARDING GRANTS UNDER THE PROGRAM.**

**(3) THE AUTHORITY MAY AWARD A GRANT UNDER THIS SECTION ONLY FOR:**

1                   (I) SOCIAL GATHERINGS, INCLUDING BLOCK PARTIES,  
2 CULTURAL FESTIVALS, PARADES, SPEAKER SERIES, AND SERVICE OR  
3 RECREATIONAL EVENTS;

4                   (II) OUTREACH INITIATIVES, INCLUDING NEIGHBORHOOD  
5 NEWSLETTERS, COMMUNITY BULLETINS, OR DIGITAL CONTENT, TO RAISE  
6 AWARENESS OF SOCIAL EVENTS AND CONNECT RESIDENTS WITH AVAILABLE  
7 RESOURCES AND SERVICES;

8                   (III) STIPENDS TO COMPENSATE VOLUNTEERS FOR THE TIME  
9 USED TO ORGANIZE PROJECTS, REFRESHMENTS AT PROGRAM DESIGNATED  
10 EVENTS, RENTAL AND EVENT SPACES, AND MATERIALS FOR PROGRAM EVENTS;

11                   (IV) OPERATING SUPPORT FOR PARTICIPATING  
12 ORGANIZATIONS;

13                   (V) SOCIAL CONNECTION PROJECTS TO CREATE AND MAINTAIN  
14 GREEN SPACES OR OTHER COMMUNITY GATHERING SPACES;

15                   (VI) RESOURCES FOR TRAINING AND HIRING COMMUNITY  
16 ORGANIZERS; AND

17                   (VII) RESOURCES FOR GRANT APPLICATION EFFORTS.

18           (E) PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS SHALL COLLABORATE WITH  
19 RESIDENTS OF THE WEST NORTH AVENUE CORRIDOR IN THE PLANNING AND  
20 IMPLEMENTATION OF EVENTS AND PROJECTS TO ENSURE THAT ACTIVITIES  
21 REFLECT NEIGHBORHOOD PRIORITIES AND, TO THE EXTENT PRACTICABLE, THAT  
22 EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES ARE LED BY RESIDENTS.

23           (F) ON OR BEFORE JULY 1, 2029, THE AUTHORITY SHALL COMPILE  
24 EVALUATIONS AND OUTCOMES OF PROGRAMS TO DEVELOP A TEMPLATE FOR  
25 NEIGHBORHOOD BUILDING AND PROVIDE SCALING RECOMMENDATIONS TO SIMILAR  
26 ORGANIZATIONS IN THE STATE AND ACROSS THE UNITED STATES.

27           (G) ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 1, 2027, AND EACH DECEMBER 1  
28 THEREAFTER, THE AUTHORITY SHALL REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR AND, IN  
29 ACCORDANCE WITH § 2-1257 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE, THE GENERAL  
30 ASSEMBLY ON ITS COMPREHENSIVE GRANT-AWARDING ACTIVITIES.

31           SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
32 October 1, 2026. It shall remain effective until the taking effect of the termination provision  
33 specified in Section 3 of Chapters 215 and 216 of the Acts of the General Assembly of 2025.  
34 If that termination provision takes effect, this Act, with no further action required by the

- 1 General Assembly, shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect. This Act may not
- 2 be interpreted to have any effect on that termination provision.