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Environment and Transportation
Committee

Chair

Land Use and Ethics Subcommittee

Joint Committee on Administrative,
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Joint Committee on Ending
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony in Support of HB 127 Maryland Arts & Culture Capital Program

Testimony of Delegate Brooke Lierman
Hearing January 29, 2020 at 1:00 PM
Appropriations Committee

What this bill does

This bill creates the Maryland Arts & Culture Capital Program (MACC), a competitive grant program for arts and cultural institutions in Maryland administered by the Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC). It will ensure a more meritocratic process for awarding increasingly scarce capital dollars to these important institutions in our state.

This bill will allocate \$10 million to the program every year from FY2022 - FY2027. Large and small arts organizations can be awarded up to \$1,000,000 for a project that would expand, renovate, or repair their facilities. Large organizations with operating budgets of \$3 million or more will have to match at least 50% of the award. Organizations with smaller budgets that participate will have to match at least 25% of the award. MSAC will work with the Division of Neighborhood Revitalization in the Department of Housing and Community Development to create a grant process.

Why this bill matters

The Maryland arts sector is a robust community of arts organizations and independent artists that invest their time, energy and money in all corners of the state. Maryland arts organizations contribute over \$1.5 billion to the local and state economy, engage over 8 million arts visitors a year and provide over \$60 million towards local and state tax revenues.

Arts organizations provide safe, engaging, and welcoming spaces within communities throughout the state. They serve a broad range of Marylanders from toddlers to advanced ages and do so within buildings that are, many times, in dire need of capital improvements.

Many arts organizations lack the resources and ability to divert money towards expensive capital improvements. Instead, these organizations make the choice to spend on programming and community engagement - ensuring that dollars are invested on behalf of the arts and their communities without sacrificing opportunities and important community engagement initiatives.

As a consequence, these organizations desperately need access to capital funds through a fair and transparent process. Arts organizations should not have to sacrifice quality arts programming for all Marylanders due to lack of access to capital money.

Why should you vote for this bill

We face increasingly tight capital budgets and our institutions are competing for fewer and fewer capital dollars. We should ensure that there is a significant amount of money set aside each year and that can be appropriated based on capacity, need, and merit. HB 127 provides an equitable path and process for the over 300 arts and culture organizations with critical access to capital funds. In every region of Maryland we see vibrant arts communities - with dedicated capital arts investment, we can continue to be a leader in the nation for arts and culture and ensure that the next generation of Marylanders is afforded the same incredible access that we enjoy today.