



**Testimony SB 387 –
Housing – Community Development Fund Program Act Funding
February 12, 2019
Position: FAVORABLE**

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*Mobilizing people
to invest in
greater Dundalk's
neighborhoods,
economy, and
quality of life.*

Good Afternoon Chairman Guzzone and Members of the Senate Budget & Taxation Committee:

We urge this committee to vote a favorable report for SB 387 – Housing – Community Development Fund Program Act - Funding SB 387 creates a permanent funding source for the Community Development Fund which was created during the 2018 legislative session. The funding will be critical operating dollars to use for community development organizations to apply for affordable housing, neighborhood and commercial revitalization, housing and financial counseling, small business development, community services, and more. The funding source is \$5 million from surplus of the Unclaimed Property Fund.

Dundalk Renaissance is a small community development organization that works to revitalize the greater Dundalk area including some neighborhoods that cross the jurisdictional line between Baltimore City and Baltimore County. We have incubated 4 new permanent businesses in our historic Main Street from pop-up shops, and have assisted many more businesses with façade improvement grants. We work with small developers to renovate houses for sale for homeownership, increasing their appraised value by an average of \$94,000 per house. We offer purchase incentive grants that have so far assisted 110 new home buyers. We help low income older adult homeowners with repairs that enable them to age in place through a workforce development partnership with The Community College of Baltimore County. All of these activities and more require capital dollars. They also require staff to develop, market, and administer the programs, yet operating support is very difficult to find.

With additional operating support, our organization could develop more partnerships, provide housing and financial counseling, recruit more businesses, engage more residents in organizing block by block solutions, and manage volunteers to assist our older adults with yard work and reduce their sense of isolation with home visits. And those are just some of the things we know our community needs, but that we cannot currently provide.

Please vote a favorable report for SB 387

Respectfully Submitted:

Amy Menzer
Executive Director