



# THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION *of* FREDERICK COUNTY

*For Good. Forever. For Frederick County.*

## **LETTER OF SUPPORT**

### **SB 207 – Unaccompanied Minors in Need of Shelter and Supportive Services**

**Hearing of the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee,  
February 5, 2020  
Testimony of Elizabeth Y. Day, President and CEO, The Community Foundation of  
Frederick County**

The Community Foundation of Frederick County supports the enactment of SB 207, which establishes that unaccompanied minors who are experiencing homelessness have legal capacity to consent to admission to sheltering programs registered with the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development.

The Community Foundation's goal is to provide meaningful grantmaking that is impactful in Frederick County. We commissioned a 2018 Human Needs Assessment report ([www.FrederickCountyGives.org/needsreport](http://www.FrederickCountyGives.org/needsreport)) to determine the most pressing needs in Frederick County, with the information then used to shape our strategic funding and leadership initiatives over the next five to ten years.

The results of the needs assessment highlighted the critical issue of young people who are experiencing homelessness in Frederick County. In our report, Student Homelessness Initiative Partnership (SHIP), a Frederick County program, stated that in the 2016-17 school year, 822 students experienced homelessness, 123 of whom were unaccompanied by a parent or guardian. Our report's findings also state that, "at the lowest end of poverty, there has been an increase in children among the homeless population." One educator quoted in the report said, "[The lack of] Affordable housing is leading to homelessness...have about 700-800 kids in the school system who are couch surfing."

Senate Bill 207 is important to the Community Foundation's work to support organizations that provide services to homeless, unaccompanied youth, such as SHIP. The Community Foundation strongly urges the committee to issue a Favorable Report on SB 207. Please contact Elizabeth Y. Day with any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Y. Day  
President and CEO