



Maryland Senior Citizens Action Network

MSCAN

AARP Maryland

Alzheimer's
Association,
Maryland Chapters

Baltimore Jewish
Council

Catholic Charities

Central Maryland
Ecumenical Council

Church of the Brethren

Episcopal Diocese of
Maryland

Housing Opportunities
Commission of
Montgomery County

Jewish Community
Relations Council of
Greater Washington

Lutheran Office on
Public Policy in
Maryland

Maryland Association of
Area Agencies on Aging

Maryland Catholic
Conference

Mental Health
Association of Maryland

Mid-Atlantic LifeSpan

National Association of
Social Workers,
Maryland Chapter

Presbytery of Baltimore

The Coordinating
Center

MSCAN Co-Chairs:
Carol Lienhard
Sarah Mücke
410-542-4850

SB 913

Human Services – Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Heat and Eat Program

Senate Finance Committee
February 18, 2021

Support

MSCAN is a statewide coalition of advocacy groups, service providers, faith-based and mission-driven organizations that supports policies that meet the housing and care needs of Maryland's low and moderate-income senior citizens.

MSCAN supports SB 913, which establishes the Heat and Eat Program in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in the Department of Human Services.

Many of our seniors – especially seniors living with a disability - are on fixed income and struggle with meeting their basic needs. Nearly one in five low-income seniors in Maryland struggles with hunger, resulting in Maryland having the 8th highest food insecurity rate among low-income seniors.ⁱ Low-income seniors rely on Maryland's safety-net programs – like SNAP – to supplement their household budgets and purchase the items they need to live a healthy life. Unfortunately, one in five seniors who apply for SNAP in Maryland receive the minimum benefit, an amount that is woefully inadequate for seniors to access proper nutrition.

SB 913 will reduce hunger among seniors in Maryland by establishing the Heat and Eat Program within the SNAP program. Heat and Eat is an existing federal option – that Maryland has yet to utilize – that provides an enhanced SNAP benefit for households that receive both SNAP and Energy Assistance. In a 2016 analysis of implementing the Heat & Eat Program in Maryland, the Maryland Department of Human Services estimated 32,000 Marylanders would receive an average of \$59 a month of additional SNAP benefits if the program was implemented. By implementing Heat and Eat – like more than a dozen states have done - Maryland could provide millions of dollars of additional SNAP benefits to low-income households, increasing food security across the state for vulnerable populations.

For the reasons stated above, MSCAN urges a favorable report on SB 913.
Thank you for your consideration.

ⁱ Maryland Hunger Solutions. 2019. Senior Hunger in Maryland.
http://mdhungersolutions.org/pdf/Senior_hunger_fact_sheet_OFFICIAL.pdf