

Gloria Brown Burnett
Director

Department of Human Services
Prince George's County Department of Social Services

SUPPORT - HB 1026: Human Services- Two Generation Family Economic Security Commission- Membership and Compensation

Hearing of the Appropriations Committee, March 15, 2022

Testimony of Gloria L. Brown Burnett, Director of the Prince George's County Department of Social Services

The Prince George's County Department of Social Services is the second largest local department in the State of Maryland. The Department provides a cadre of income support, well-being and self-sufficiency programs and services. As a member of the Two Generation Family Economic Security Commission, I can attest to the importance of having participation and voice from people who have lived experience in our various systems and economic stabilization programs. I am the director of the Prince George's County Department of Social Services and, while I do have lived experience, it was over thirty years ago. My lived experience helps me view our work through a lens of equity and dignity. I know that it is imperative and critical to improving the services provided to hear from the people we serve. Prince George's County has embraced this concept for several years and hosts the Prince George's County Youth Action Board, a body of young people with lived experience within the homeless system.

I know that to deliver quality and effective services, it is important to have people at the table who have recent experiences with the impact of decisions around programs, procedures, and practices. These voices give us real-time feedback on challenges and opportunities around well-intentioned strategies to lift and support our residents and will help us to continually improve what and how we deliver valuable resources and services.

I would also add that I fully support providing a monetary stipend for this person. If we want true participation, we should be willing to fairly compensate these lived-experience experts for their time and energy.

The Department strongly supports HB 1026 and urges the Committee to issue a FAVORABLE REPORT. Please contact me directly on 301-909-7077 or at GloriaL.Brown@Maryland.Gov with any questions.