

**House Bill 1043  
Family Investment Program – Eligibility, Work Experience, Community Service, and Reports -  
Alternations**

House Appropriations Committee  
March 10, 2022

**Support**

**Catholic Charities of Baltimore strongly supports HB 1043**, which adds federally-allowed flexibilities to the Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) program including streamlining work verification paperwork, codifying the minimum standard work week for adults on TCA, allowing parents on TCA time to care for a new infant, and re-envisioning the Work Experience (WEX) program so that TCA recipients have more choice in their placement so that they can gain marketable skills that lead to quality employment opportunities.

Inspired by the gospel to love, serve and teach, Catholic Charities provides care and services to improve the lives of Marylanders in need. As the largest human service provider in Maryland working with tens of thousands of youth and families each year, we recognize the important role Maryland's safety-net programs play in helping children and their caretakers make ends meet and build economic security. Moreover, we recognize the dignity of the worker and part of that is ensuring parents are given serious opportunities to gain meaningful employment so that they can carve their own pathways off of TCA and out of poverty.

**HB 1043 begins the critical process of improving the Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) program – especially the work requirement – so that families have more options for building economic security.** In order to receive TCA, adults in the household are required to participate in federally defined work activities. Although the original intent for the work requirement might have been for recipients to obtain employment after a short spell of benefits, numerous studies show the workforce component of cash assistance does not result in long-term, stable employment.<sup>1</sup> In Maryland, TCA recipients are disproportionately placed into temporary, unpaid work experience activities with little opportunity for employment. Of all of the types of work activities TCA recipients can be referred to, recipients in these unpaid work experience (WEX) placements have the most difficulty securing employment after TCA, and overall make the lowest earnings post-TCA.<sup>2</sup>

**HB 1043 recognizes that TCA participants have a wide range of personal experiences, history in the workforce, and family structures that are ill-served by a one-size-fits all work program.** Rather than offering the labor of TCA recipients to the lowest WEX contract bidder, HB 1043 encourages the state to partner with innovative educational, training and skill-building programs that provide tangible opportunities for TCA families to locate employment in high-wage, growing industries. Furthermore, HB 1043 enacts a series of changes permissible under federal law, which allow families to have more choice and flexibility to meet the work requirements. These flexibilities are trauma-informed practices, allowing families time to stabilize after a new baby or a major life crisis before transitioning into work programs.

**On behalf of the individuals and families we work with, Catholic Charities of Baltimore appreciates your consideration, and urges the committee to issue a favorable report for HB 1043.**

Submitted By: Regan K. Vaughan, Director of Advocacy

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<sup>1</sup> Ideas 42. Work Requirements Don't Work. 2019. <http://www.ideas42.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/ideas42-Work-Requirements-Paper.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> University of Maryland School of Social Work. *Work Activities and Short-Term Employment & Earnings Among TANF Recipients*. 2016. <https://www.ssw.umaryland.edu/media/ssw/fwrtg/welfare-research/work-supports-and-initiatives/workactivities.pdf?&>