



**Testimony Concerning SB 829 “Department of Human Services - Family Investment Program - Contract and Program Review”
Submitted to the Senate Finance Committee
March 10, 2022**

Position: **SUPPORT**

Maryland Family Network (MFN) supports SB 829 which would require the Department of Human Services to hire an outside consultant to conduct a thorough review of the Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) Program to ensure the program is employing best practices that will achieve meaningful outcomes for family economic stability.

MFN has worked since 1945 to improve the availability and quality of child care and other supports for children and families in Maryland. We have been active in state and federal debates on welfare reform and are strongly committed to ensuring that low- and moderate-income families -- and indeed, all families -- have the supports they need to care for their children and to be economically self-sufficient.

According to DHS caseload data, over 22,000 Maryland families rely on TCA to meet their basic needs, and more than 70% of TCA recipients are children. In order to comply with federal rules, TCA recipients must participate in federally defined work activities for a certain number of hours each week. If the TCA recipient is a single parent and has a child under the age of six, they only need to complete 20 hours per week. In 2018, half (49.5%) of work-eligible recipients were single parents with a child under the age of six according to data published by University of Maryland School of Social Work Ruth Young Center for Families & Children ([*“Participation in Federally Defined Work Activities across Maryland” September 2019*](#)).

Unfortunately, TCA’s work programs rarely lead parents to jobs that provide economic stability. A review, and possible redesign, of Maryland’s work program could help parents gain the education, skills, and work experience that would allow them to find and maintain quality jobs that can lift their families above the poverty line. This would benefit children greatly. For this reason, MFN urges your favorable consideration of SB 829.