

Written Testimony in Support of House Bill 256: *Maryland Nonprofit Development Center Program – Nonprofit, Interest-Free, 3 Micro Bridge Loan (NIMBL) Account – Funding*
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Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify. My name is Franca Brilliant and I am the Advocacy and Development Director for Nonprofit Montgomery. We support our nearly 200-member nonprofit organizations with technical assistance, training and resources, and advocacy on issues of importance to the nonprofit sector—such as the one you are considering today.

Nonprofit Montgomery supports House bill 256, which would increase the funding of the NIMBL Account, allowing more Maryland nonprofits to take advantage of this interest free, micro bridge loan. As you all know, nonprofits are essential partners to government, providing provide food, shelter, mental and physical health support, recreation, arts, academic enrichment, and a thousand other services to all of Maryland's residents. The past two years of the pandemic have underlined the importance of the role they play—without the support of these organizations, Marylanders would have suffered far more than they did. During this crisis, government agencies—from the Federal level right down to municipalities--worked hard to move money quickly into the hands of their nonprofit partners to ensure that they could respond to critical community needs. It was an impressive act of coordination and flexibility, and a marked contrast to what nonprofits usually experience.

I have worked with nonprofit organizations for over 30 years and have seen so many examples of nonprofits struggling to start programs while contracts were stuck in various stages of procurement that I have lost track. In my own direct experience, I have seen federal contracts that took over a year to deliver funds, and reimbursable county contracts that couldn't provide any funding for months after work began. Most nonprofits don't have the financial reserves to float a major project with their own funds while waiting for their money to come through. The burden falls especially heavily on the organizations that most need this support—small community-based organizations, many of which are led by people of color.

This is why expanding the NIMBL loan fund is so important. The original legislation has been understood as making funding discretionary, which was not meant to be the case. The fund has also been capped at \$187,500; that is a very small amount compared to the 32,000 nonprofits that serve Maryland. This bill would restore funding to 5% of state proceeds from video lottery terminals dedicated to the Small, Minority, and Women-Owned Businesses Account, not to exceed \$1,000,000.

In its current state, with very limited funds, the NIMBL fund is a good program but with increased funding it could be a great one.

Please support HB 256. Thank you.