



Cancer Support Foundation, Inc.
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Economic Matters

HB323

Support

February 16, 2023

Cindy Carter
Cancer Support Foundation, Inc

Good afternoon, Chair Wilson and Committee,

I am Cindy Carter Co-Founder of the Critical Medical Needs Program and Executive Director of Cancer Support Foundation. I am speaking in favor of HB323.

For 18 years now I have been working with the state agencies that provide grants for services. We have been working with some of the most vulnerable residents in the state.

Our clients are rarely in need of just one service, but usually require many such as food, medical assistance or energy assistance to name just three. To get the help they need they are required to work with multiple agencies each having their own application. The applications ask for the same basic information require working with one poor customer service experience after another.

So, to get the services they require they need to find where to go, understand the application and successfully get through the process. Each one of these journeys have the client work with different agencies who lack customer service leaving the customer on their own and have pretty much created a closed door to getting the services.



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To compound a bad situation, rarely are our clients even referred to other grants like the Energy Assistance. All of these grants have been operated in silos and clients are unable to get through each system to get another service.

Some of our clients have been able to get food stamps, since there are groups that are working with families to get them into food stamps. They are not even told about the Energy Assistance grant or have tried themselves and not been successful in getting through the process. Only about 23% of the total number of eligible residents are able to get into the Energy Assistance Program in Maryland.

The system does not work well and has not for all the years I have been working with them. Our clients are fighting for their lives and do not have the energy to yet try to get through another closed door to services that they need to survive. Try doing the online application or call an office for assistance and you will understand why the denial rate is so high for this grant

The four areas of assistance that this bill lists as pathways into Energy Assistance just make common sense. As a former accountant I can only imagine the administrative costs savings of this data sharing to issue multiple grants that the client is eligible for and in great need of to survive.

I have been down here for many years now about the issues with getting Energy Assistance Grants. The situation is not better. This law seems to be a very effective solution that respects the need for proper documentation and verification of the client's situation.

I am asking for a favorable report on HB323 to provide categorical eligibility for Energy Assistance Grants.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cindy Carter". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cindy Carter
Executive Director
Cancer Support Foundation, Inc.