
BILL NO:	House Bill 1226
TITLE:	Economic Development - Nonprofit Sustainability Fund - Establishment
COMMITTEE:	Appropriations
HEARING DATE:	March 9, 2023
POSITION:	SUPPORT

The Women's Law Center of Maryland (WLC) is a non-profit legal services and advocacy organization dedicated to ensuring the physical safety, economic security, and bodily autonomy of women in Maryland. We strive towards that goal through direct legal representation of survivors of intimate partner violence; information and referral services through our Family Law and Employment Law Hotlines; and via advocacy both at the state level and through various local and legal initiatives. Our services are offered free of charge and with a focus on trauma-informed, client and victim-centered advocacy.

The WLC supports HB1226 as it will support the nonprofits that are part of the fabric of our communities, offering services that neither the private sector nor government can sufficiently provide. Specifically, this bill imposes a mandated appropriation in the annual State Budget Bill, establishing the Nonprofit Sustainability Fund in the Department of Commerce to provide general operating support to nonprofit organizations in the State. The grant fund would support an estimated 2,100 small and medium-sized organizations annually, with an emphasis on human services organizations, culturally specific organizations serving historically underserved and underrepresented communities, and small nonprofits located outside metro areas.

Sustainable small and midsized nonprofit organizations in every county in the state foster community vitality and resiliency, while representing the needs and interests of Maryland's diverse communities. HB 1226 will ensure communities in Maryland are able to receive high-quality programs and services from local, trusted nonprofit organizations.

For the aforementioned reasons, the WLC strongly urges a favorable report on HB 1226. For further information, please contact Michelle Siri at msiri@wlcmd.org.

The Women's Law Center of Maryland is a private, non-profit, legal services organization that serves as a leading voice for justice and fairness for women. It advocates for the rights of women through legal assistance to individuals and strategic initiatives to achieve systemic change, working to ensure physical safety, economic security, and bodily autonomy for women in Maryland.