



February 28, 2024

**House Bill 694- Engaging Neighborhoods, Organizations, Unions, Governments, and Households (ENOUGH) Grant Program
House Appropriations Committee**

Position: SUPPORT

The Maryland Association of Resources for Families and Youth (MARFY) is an association of private child caring organizations providing foster care, group homes, and other services through more than 200 programs across Maryland. The members of MARFY represent providers who serve Maryland's most vulnerable children who are in out of home placements due to abuse, neglect or severe mental health, and medical needs. We operate group homes, treatment foster care programs and independent living programs, primarily serving the foster care population as well as a juvenile services population.

MARFY writes to support House Bill 694, pivotal legislation, under stewardship of the Governor's Office for Children and the Special Secretary of the Governor's Office for Children, which represents a significant step forward in our collective efforts to combat child poverty through comprehensive, community-driven strategies. The program is designed to enable family-sustaining income and offer robust support for children with disabilities, child welfare, and justice-involved and young adults.

Furthermore, this legislation outlines a clear framework for the ENOUGH Grant Program, which includes neighborhood and regional implementation grants, as well as planning grants to build local organizational capacity. This tiered approach ensures that communities most in need— those with over 20% of children living in poverty—are prioritized and that grants are awarded in a manner that reflects the geographic diversity of our state. The level of transparency in accountability within this legislation is crucial for the continuous improvement of the program and for ensuring that funds are used effectively to make a tangible difference in the lives of Maryland's children.

Overall, investing in our children is an investment in the future of our state. The ENOUGH Act of 2024 is a bold and necessary step towards breaking the cycle of poverty and building a stronger, more equitable Maryland for all. **It is for these reasons we politely ask for a favorable report on House Bill 694.**

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Maryland Association of
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