



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

THE Y IN CENTRAL MARYLAND
ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY • BALTIMORE CITY • BALTIMORE COUNTY • CARROLL COUNTY • HARFORD COUNTY • HOWARD COUNTY

Senate Bill 0370

Community School- Rental Assistance for Community School Families Program and Fund Establishment Budget and Taxation Committee

Testimony from the Y in Central Maryland

The Y in Central Maryland is pleased to submit this written testimony in favor of Senator Shelly Hettleman's Senate Bill 0370, which proposes the establishment of the Rental Assistance for Community School Families Program. This initiative aims to provide crucial rental assistance to eligible households to address housing insecurity among families in Maryland.

According to the 2020 report by the Maryland State Department of Education, 1.7% of the student population (15,548 students) experienced homelessness, highlighting the urgent need for action. For 20 plus years, the Y has implemented the New Horizon's II program, which provides college and career readiness support to students in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Howard County who are experiencing homelessness. The program now supports 135 students each year.

As the Lead Agency for 27 Baltimore City Public Schools and a provider of technical support for 54 Baltimore County Public Schools and 4 Howard County Public Schools, The Y is deeply committed to the well-being and success of our communities. We witness firsthand the challenges faced by families striving to secure stable housing, which directly influences their children's educational opportunities and outcomes. To address these adverse outcomes, the Y has leveraged more than \$10 million to support the 27 schools where it serves as the lead agency, along with almost 15,000 volunteer hours this school year.

**A charitable, cause-driven organization working for community well-being.
The Y.™ For a better us.**

The Community Schools Strategy, which aims to address the six domains of the social determinants of health, recognizes housing as one of these crucial domains. The proposed Rental Assistance for Community School Families Program establishes the Rental Assistance for Community School Families Fund and allocates \$10,000,000 annually. This program encompasses an innovative and strategic approach to tackling housing instability.

The Y firmly believes that stable housing is fundamental to the well-being and academic achievement of students. Families can prioritize their children's education and overall stability by easing the financial strain of rent and fostering a more equitable and supportive learning environment.

In conclusion, The Y in Central Maryland urges the esteemed members of the Maryland Senate to support Senate Bill 0370. By investing in the Rental Assistance for Community School Families Program, we affirm our commitment to empowering families and strengthening communities across our great state. We express our gratitude for considering our testimony and for your dedication to the welfare of all Marylanders.