

Securing Maryland's Housing Stability

Senate Bill 154 / House Bill 103

Access to Counsel in Evictions – Task Force Termination and Special Fund

An eviction crisis: More than 50% of Maryland renters are cost-burdened, paying 30% or more of their wages on housing-related costs. Eviction rates have returned to nearly as high as pre-pandemic levels, destabilizing families, disrupting communities, and straining public resources through increased demand for emergency shelters, health care, and social services.

The Issue



Access to Justice: Approximately 96% of landlords are represented in court, while only 1% of tenants are. Overall, 92% of low-income Marylanders with civil legal issues can't find the legal help they need.

The ACE Program

The Maryland Access to Counsel in Evictions Program (ACE) provides free attorneys to tenants in eviction cases, preventing disruptive displacement, enhancing judicial efficiency and saving the state millions of dollars.

The Impact

Fiscal Savings: For every \$1 invested in ACE, Maryland realizes a return of \$3.50–\$4.80 in fiscal and economic benefits, amounting to an estimated \$46.7 million in FY2024.



Reducing Costs: Legal representation through ACE costs approximately \$1,100 per case, significantly lower than the estimated \$9,700 per household for homelessness interventions.

Preventing Evictions: Of the tenants who wished to remain in their homes, an outstanding 88% were able to do so at the conclusion of their case with ACE representation.



Preserving Housing Stability: Prevented eviction in 3,018 cases, secured additional time to transition housing in 2,559 cases, and closed 8,894 cases statewide, benefitting over 14,000 people directly.

Improving Outcomes: Tenants avoid homelessness, retain employment, and maintain stability, reducing the fiscal impact on social services and criminal justice systems.



Cost Avoidance: Legal services avoided over \$6 million in direct costs for Maryland residents.

Permanent funding is essential for ACE to continue providing life-changing benefits to Maryland's most vulnerable residents.

Invest in Maryland's Future:

The ASK

Maryland can't afford to stop funding ACE.
Support Senate Bill 154/ House Bill 103 to allocate

\$14 million in permanent funding, ensuring the continuation of the ACE Program.

Support ACE. Support Maryland.

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