

House Appropriations Committee

February 25, 2025

HB 609 - Legislative Scholarship Programs - Eligibility and Use - Real Estate Appraisal Program

Position: Favorable

The Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC), representing Maryland's 16 community colleges, strongly supports **HB 609**, which expands eligibility for legislative scholarships to students pursuing the Practical Applications of Real Estate Appraisal Program. Ensuring that more students have access to financial assistance is critical to strengthening Maryland's workforce and increasing access to high-quality education and training programs.

Community colleges serve as Maryland's most affordable and accessible higher education institutions, providing education and workforce training to a broad range of students, including recent high school graduates, working adults, career changers, and those seeking specialized credentials. Many students come to community colleges to gain industry-recognized certifications and licenses that lead directly to employment in high-demand fields. Expanding financial assistance to include real estate appraisal certification aligns with the mission of community colleges by providing students with a clear, supported pathway into a stable and essential career field.

Additionally, community colleges are deeply connected to local workforce needs, partnering with industries and employers to ensure that students receive relevant training that leads to high-quality jobs. The real estate industry, like many others, benefits from a skilled and well-trained workforce, and HB 609 helps to create a stronger pipeline of professionals by reducing financial barriers to education. Expanding financial assistance opportunities ensures that more Marylanders can gain the skills necessary for in-demand jobs, support economic growth, and enter stable career pathways without taking on significant financial burdens. Community colleges are dedicated to equitable access to education and workforce training, and HB 609 aligns with that mission by making it easier for students to obtain the support they need to complete their programs. Accordingly, MACC urges the Committee to issue a **FAVORABLE** vote on **HB 609**.

Please contact Brad Phillips (bphillips@mdacc.org) or Drew Jabin (djabin@mdacc.org) with questions.