

DELMARVA COMMUNITY ACTION CENTER

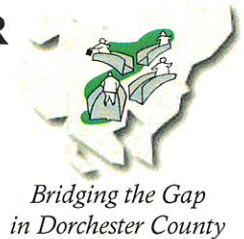
a division of

Delmarva Community Services, Inc.

108 Chesapeake Street ~ P.O. Box 637

Cambridge, Maryland 21613

410-901-2991/2996(Telephone) 410-901-2998 (Fax)



February 14, 2025

Re: In Support of Senate Bill 666: Maryland Community Action Agencies Funding

Dear Honorable Chair Guzzone, Vice-Chair Rosapepe, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Delmarva Community Services, Inc., I urge you to support SB0666 – Maryland Community Action Agencies Funding.

For more than 50 years, Delmarva Community Services, Inc.(DCS) has provided services and opportunities for individuals and families to live an independent and meaningful life in Dorchester County and beyond. As the designated Community Action Agency of Dorchester County for almost 20 years, we have a keen sense of the struggles low and moderate-income families face each day and are committed to providing sustainable solutions to strengthen and empower the whole family for success and reduce the instances of homelessness while simultaneously reducing poverty in our community.

Delmarva Community Services, Inc. fully supports SB0666 because of the impact it will have on the individuals and families we serve every day. From Senior Citizens to people with developmental disabilities, to the homeless and families with children, this bill will make a difference in the lives of some of the most vulnerable citizens of Dorchester County. Families like Ms. W, a homeless single Mom with one school-aged child, escaping a domestic violence situation who sought assistance at DCS through our partnership with the Salvation Army Shelter. The DCS Homeless Coordinator conducted an initial intake assessment and DCS placed Mom and her son in our family shelter. DCS's 2GEN Coordinator followed up and completed a full assessment and assisted Mom in developing her independence plan which included coordination with the local board of education to ensure transportation to and from school was arranged. The 2GEN Coordinator worked with Mom to address her health problems at a local medical facility while simultaneously working on permanent affordable housing solutions. Due to the domestic violence situation, Mom lacked appropriate identification and had been unsuccessful in obtaining housing. DCS partnered with another agency to assist Mom in obtaining her ID and birth certificate to remove that barrier. One-on-one rental counseling services were provided to assist in preparing rental applications. After nine months of intensive interactions with our 2GEN Coordinator and Homeless Coordinator, Mom secured an apartment and successfully transitioned to subsidized housing. The 2GEN coordinator continues to provide follow-up and works with Mom to assist her in addressing lingering medical issues and to ensure the son is meeting developmental milestones and receiving the necessary support in and out of school.

SB0666 is a landmark bill that ensures sustained funding for CAAs, reinforcing our collective mission to combat poverty and uplift Maryland's families and communities.



Connecting Families & Resources.....Building a Stronger Community



If passed, the bill would:

- Mandate the Governor to allocate essential appropriations to the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to provide operating grants to Community Action Agencies across the state.
- The structured funding plan phases in from FY 2027 to FY 2032 and allows these funds to enhance the capacity of CAAs to provide critical anti-poverty services.
- The Community Action Fund supports the work of Community Action Agencies across Maryland to offer competitive wages, meet the rising demand for services, and revitalize communities through housing and community development.

Your partnership and advocacy play a crucial role in making these necessary investments a reality. With your dedication, we are making significant strides towards creating pathways to economic mobility.

We truly appreciate your leadership and collaboration in championing this cause. Your efforts make a meaningful difference, and we look forward to continuing our work together to see SB0666 pass and be successfully signed into law. If there is any additional information that I can provide as you consider this bill, I would be happy to help. You can contact me at 410-221-1939 or via email at michelle@dcsdet.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michelle Nichols". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M".

Michelle L. Nichols
Delmarva Community Services, Inc.
Community Action Program Director

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