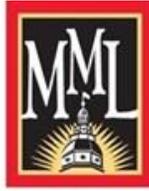


**SB 666 - MML - FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Angelica Bailey Thupari

Position: FAV



Maryland Municipal League  
*The Association of Maryland's Cities and Towns*

## TESTIMONY

February 18, 2025

**Committee:** Senate Budget & Taxation

**Bill:** SB 666 - Maryland Community Action Agencies - Funding

**Position:** Favorable

**Reason for Position:**

The Maryland Municipal League (MML) supports Senate Bill 666, which requires an appropriation in the annual budget to the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to use to support Community Action Agencies (CAAs).

CAAs are non-profit organizations that work to reduce poverty and increase economic stability within communities. They provide a variety of services to low-income individuals and families, aiming to improve their quality of life. These services might include assistance with housing, employment, healthcare, education, nutrition, financial stability, and more.

Municipalities often work with CAAs to address local economic and social issues through joint initiatives, leading to a more comprehensive and responsive local infrastructure. CAAs are essential partners for Maryland municipalities, helping our members provide targeted support to reduce poverty, improve living conditions, and build stronger, more resilient communities.

For these reasons, the League respectfully requests that the committee provide Senate Bill 666 with a favorable report. For more information, please contact Angelica Bailey Thupari, Director of Advocacy and Public Affairs, at [angelicab@mdmunicipal.org](mailto:angelicab@mdmunicipal.org) or (443) 756-0071. Thank you for your consideration.

*The Maryland Municipal League uses its collective voice to advocate, empower and protect the interests of our 160 local governments members and elevates local leadership, delivers impactful solutions for our communities, and builds an inclusive culture for the 2 million Marylanders we serve.*

# **SB 666 GOC Community Action Agencies**

Uploaded by: Angelica Bailey Thupari

Position: FAV

February 14, 2025

The Honorable Guy Guzzone  
Chair, Budget and Taxation Committee  
3 West Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Chairman Guzzone, Vice Chairman Rosapepe, and the Honorable members of the Budget and Taxation Committee.

On behalf of the Governor's Office for Children, thank you for the opportunity to submit this letter of information regarding Senate Bill 666 - Maryland Community Action Agencies - Funding.

**Summary of Bill:** SB0666 establishes a new general fund mandate under the Department of Housing and Community Development for operating grants to community action agencies in the State for the purpose of assisting local efforts to alleviate poverty. The mandate includes \$500,000 in FY 2027 and FY 2028, \$1M in FY 2029, \$3M in FY 2030, \$5M in FY 2031, and \$7M in FY 2032

**Explanation:** This funding initiative aligns with the Governor's Office of Children's mission to create poverty-fighting opportunities and the Governor's shared commitment to strengthening community-based poverty reduction efforts. In 2024, The Maryland General Assembly passed the ENOUGH Act and Maryland launched the Engaging Neighborhoods, Organizations, Unions, Governments and Households (ENOUGH) Initiative, a first-of-its-kind state-led, place-based strategy to create poverty fighting opportunities driven by communities' lived experience and expertise, data and cross-sector partnerships. ENOUGH is surging resources into neighborhoods that have been disproportionately impacted by systems and policies that limit wealth creation and economic mobility. Community Action Agencies, whose mission is to provide quality services and opportunities that empower individuals and families to achieve economic security, are aligned with the ENOUGH Initiative and eligible to apply for and receive funding from the ENOUGH Act. In fact, two Community Action Agencies received ENOUGH Grants in FY25 and another two CAAs are members of ENOUGH community partnership tables. Given significant uncertainty regarding the federal budget and potential policy changes, Community Action Agencies could engage in the ENOUGH initiative to further their mission and help maintain program stability.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this letter, and the Governor's Office for Children appreciates your consideration of this information as you deliberate Senate Bill 666.

Sincerely,

**Carmel Martin**

**Special Secretary, Governor's Office for Children & Senior Advisor to the Governor, Economic Mobility**

# **SB666 MCAC Funding Letter of Support.pdf**

Uploaded by: Chris Mullett

Position: FAV



February 13, 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 Garrett County Community Action Committee (GCCAC), I urge you to support SB0666 – Maryland Community Action Agencies Funding.

- GCCAC provides homeless services, community development assistance for the 8 towns in Garrett County , HeadStart for nearly 200 children, Meals on Wheels for 200 seniors, public transportation to over 1000 individuals, subsidized housing for over 700 families, budgeting classes, first-time homebuyers loans, energy, rent, and utility assistance, and a dozen other programs to fight poverty and create sustainable families in Garrett Co.

GCCAC supports SB0666 because of the impact it will have on the work we do each day to serve our community. **Two of our agency’s Vice Presidents are women who benefitted from our services, giving them the help they needed to overcome adversity and succeed. Last month I walked into a medical office for the first time, and when they learned that I worked at GCCAC three of them told me about the help they have received and credited our programs for being where they are in life. Two of them had children currently enrolled in HeadStart. I wept.**

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.

**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 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 any time by cell at 304-669-0175 or [cmullett@garrettcac.org](mailto:cmullett@garrettcac.org).

Hope!

Christopher P. Mullett, President and CEO – 23101 Royale Lane SW, Barton, MD 21521

**SB0666-BT\_MACo\_SUP.pdf**

Uploaded by: Dominic Butchko

Position: FAV



## **Senate Bill 666**

### *Maryland Community Action Agencies - Funding*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Budget and Taxation Committee

Date: February 18, 2025

From: Dominic J. Butchko

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 666. This bill would provide a additional resources and predictable funding to Maryland’s Community Action Agencies, who often partner with counties to deliver critical anti-poverty public services.

Maryland Community Action Agencies (CAAs) are nonprofit organizations that provide services to low-income individuals and families to help them achieve economic stability and self-sufficiency. They offer programs such as housing assistance, energy assistance, job training, early childhood education, and financial literacy. Funded by federal, state, and local sources, these agencies operate throughout the state, addressing poverty through community-based solutions.

Years of inflation and the impacts of climate change, coupled with the current challenges around energy and housing, have left some organizations and the communities they serve reeling. Counties applaud the intent of SB 666, as it buttresses a critical pillar of local communities at a time when many more are in need. As the front line for anti-poverty services in many areas, CAAs are the main actor helping families and constituents when they may be at their lowest.

SB 666 is good, practical legislation, that can have an immediate and direct benefit to our mutual constituents. For this reason, MACo **SUPPORTS** SB 666 and urges a **FAVORABLE** report.

# Montgomery County Community Action Board Testimony

Uploaded by: Leslie Frey

Position: FAV



**Montgomery County Community Action Board Testimony  
SB666 - Maryland Community Action Agencies - Funding  
February 18, 2025  
SUPPORT**

TO: The Honorable Guy Guzzone, Chair; The Honorable Jim Rosapepe, Vice Chair; and Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee

FROM: Dr. Jeffery Johnson, Chair, Montgomery County Community Action Board

The Montgomery County Community Action Board, the County's local, state, and federally designated anti-poverty group, is in full support of SB666 and asks the Committee for a favorable report. This bill would require the Governor to include funding for Maryland Community Action Agencies in the state budget. The funding would be allocated to the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development and would be issued to Community Action Agencies (CAAs) statewide in the form of grants.

Sixty years after its inception, Community Action, which was established to implement the Economic Opportunity Act (EOA) of 1964, includes thousands of local agencies that support millions of residents impacted by poverty. Throughout the country, Community Action Agencies aid people in need with a myriad of services. In Maryland alone, approximately 129,480 residents received support in housing and utility education from CAAs, while over 18,900 families benefited from children's and adults' education services in 2023. In 2023, Maryland CAAs provided life-altering services to 207,365 individuals in 96,518 households. Additional and sustained funding for CAAs will help agencies continue to combat poverty and reduce disparities.

State organizations like the Maryland Community Action Partnership work tirelessly with the state's 17 CAAs to reduce poverty and help families move towards self-sufficiency. CAAs continue to provide housing and utility assistance, financial counseling and tax preparation, education and job readiness training, nutritional services, case management, and other critical services.

Our own agency, the Montgomery County Community Action Agency, supports residents with critical services every day. The agency's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program provides free tax help to low-to-moderate income households, completing 2,246 returns in FY24, with a free tax impact of \$8.6 million. The agency's Navigation Team and Takoma-East Silver Spring (TESS) Community Action Center each serve an average of 200 residents each month, linking households with critical services while utilizing a whole-family, two-generation model. Our own Board's free advocacy training program, the Community Advocacy Institute, provides free advocacy training to County residents with modest incomes. Now in its ninth year, the CAI includes 140 graduates, many of whom now serve on advisory boards, non-profit boards, and are actively engaged in community-level advocacy.

The ever-rising cost of living across the state and particularly in Montgomery County, makes additional financial support for CAAs even more critical. For example, the Montgomery County Self-Sufficiency Standard for a household with two working adults, one preschooler, and one school-age child is \$122,943 annually, over four times the federal poverty level.<sup>1</sup> Community Action Agencies are committed to helping families obtain critical supports and move towards the Self-Sufficiency Standard.

The Montgomery County Community Action Board strongly supports SB666 and asks for the Committee's favorable report.

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<sup>1</sup>[https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/MDMontCo2023\\_SSS.pdf](https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/MDMontCo2023_SSS.pdf)

**SENATE BILL 666 WRITTEN TESTIMONY - DCS, INC. SUBM**

Uploaded by: Michelle Nichols

Position: FAV

# DELMARVA COMMUNITY ACTION CENTER

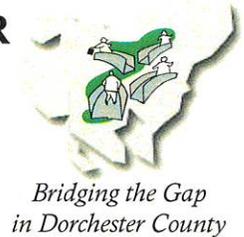
*a division of*

**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](mailto:michelle@dcsdet.org).

Sincerely,



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

**Home: 6315 Arrowhead Drive Hurlock, Maryland 21643**  
**Cell Phone: (410)463-1719**

# **Senate Bill 666 Maryland Community Action Agencies**

Uploaded by: Wendolyn Mckenzie

Position: FAV



125 Virginia Avenue  
Cumberland, Maryland 21502  
www.alleganyhrdc.org

# ALLEGANY COUNTY HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION, INC.

301-777-5970  
Fax: 301-722-0937  
TDD: 1-800-735-2258

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
Wendolyn Mckenzie

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 Allegany County Human Resources Development Commission (HRDC), I urge you to support SB0666 – Maryland Community Action Agencies Funding.

The Allegany County Human Resources Development Commission, Inc. (HRDC) is the designated Community Action Agency (CAA) and Area Agency on Aging for Allegany County, Maryland. The mission of HRDC is to strive to eliminate social and economic barriers to promote individual and community stability through services, advocacy, and collaboration. In 2024, HRDC celebrated its 59<sup>th</sup> year of continuous operation for the non-profit organization. HRDC currently operates thirty-two (32) programs from 16 different sites located throughout the County and is the sponsoring agency for community programs geared towards empowering low-income individuals, seniors & families.

Allegany County HRDC supports SB0666 because of the impact it will have on the individuals served through our agency. The services provided by HRDC touch 1 in every 3 residents of Allegany County and are critical to ensuring the well-being and safety of our most vulnerable residents.

I would like to share a few success stories submitted by staff as a result of the services provided by our agency.

On October 21, 2024, I met with a couple who was seeking pre purchase counseling. He is 60 and she is 49. After speaking with both of them awhile I found out neither have ever owned anything in their life.

They always rented. She had some credit score but very limited and he had no credit score at all. They both have lived using cash for everything and only buying what they need. They both are on disability and have anxieties and depression. She has a brother who has more severe disabilities and a mother who is a living assistance home. The dream is to own a home and have both the mother and brother live with them. They wasn't sure if just having four disability checks a month if it would ever be realistic. I explained to them with education and understanding we were going to make this dream come true. They just needed the right tools and money management concepts to make it happen.

We had three sessions totaling fourteen hours of education. Now some of this time was them opening up to me on some private life events but the other time was spent making sure they understood the whole process from renting to owning, credit, property, realtor relations and what to expect with lenders. There were times I felt they were overwhelmed, I would stop and tell them to breathe. There was no time limit. I wanted them to know I was there for them. I wanted them to believe in themselves as much as I believed in them. I would be there for them through the whole process regardless how small or big the question. We built trust and with that came acceptance and confidence. On December 2, 2024 I received a message that they had put a contract on a home. He was so appreciative of everything and stated they could not have done this without my patience. I cannot explain to you the happiness that filled my heart. I later found out from the lender that they would be closing on the home on January 14, 2024. The lender was able to provide them with three programs to assist with cost. Knowing that four



months ago they were renting a two bedroom apartment with no yard on a main street to being able to purchase a home for their whole family is the most rewarding feeling.

Family Z; parents M and B have been residing with grandma and step-grandpa; making multiple family members living in one house. Over the course of 2022/2023 home based school year, both parents have gotten stable jobs since B has returned from the US Army. B is now working as a prison guard for the Federal prison. M is also able to work part time with home respite care. They are now able to save money and over the course of a few months have been able to fix up a house 2 doors down completely and now as we speak, are planning to move in to in ASAP. The family had gone from residing with family to working parents with a newly remodeled house of their own. They are excited to move into the home with the children and be more independent.

Parent C is a very involved parent with Early Head Start. She and her son, J, transferred to Allegany County Early Head Start from Washington County Early Head Start. Parent C values education and she is pursuing classes towards her LPN. J has good attendance and parent remains very involved with the Early Head Start program by having daily interaction with staff, attending parent meetings, and attending socials. Parent has also been working on improving discipline techniques with her child and has noticed an improvement in his behavior since he started the school year. Parent C has stated on numerous occasions how she values the family involvement within the program and how helpful all staff are to her and her child. Parent C is doing very well with her course work in college and plans to achieve her goal of becoming a nurse.

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.

**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 [contact information].

Sincerely,  
Wendolyn Mckenzie  
10 Saint Peter's Place  
Lonaconing, MD 21539

## **SB 666 Info**

Uploaded by: Dana Phillips

Position: INFO



**Maryland**

DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET  
AND MANAGEMENT

WES MOORE  
*Governor*

ARUNA MILLER  
*Lieutenant Governor*

HELENE GRADY  
*Secretary*

MARC L. NICOLE  
*Deputy Secretary*

## **SENATE BILL 666 Maryland Community Action Agencies - Funding**

### **STATEMENT OF INFORMATION**

**DATE: February 18th, 2025**

**COMMITTEE: Budget and Taxation Committee**

**SUMMARY OF BILL:** SB 666 establishes a new general fund mandate under the Department of Housing and Community Development for operating grants to community action agencies in the State for the purpose of assisting local efforts to alleviate poverty. The mandate includes \$500,000 in FY 2027 and FY 2028, \$1M in FY 2029, \$3M in FY 2030, \$5M in FY 2031, and \$7M in FY 2032.

**EXPLANATION:** This funding initiative aligns with the Governor's Office of Children's mission to create poverty-fighting opportunities and the Governor's shared commitment to strengthening community-based poverty reduction efforts. In 2024, The Maryland General Assembly passed the ENOUGH Act and Maryland launched the the Engaging Neighborhoods, Organizations, Unions, Governments and Households (ENOUGH) Initiative, a first-of-its-kind state-led, place-based strategy to create poverty fighting opportunities driven by communities' lived experience and expertise, data and cross-sector partnerships. ENOUGH is surging resources into neighborhoods that have been disproportionately impacted by systems and policies that limit wealth creation and economic mobility. Community Action Agencies, whose mission is to provide quality services and opportunities that empower individuals and families to achieve economic security, are aligned with the ENOUGH Initiative and eligible to apply for and receive funding from the ENOUGH Act. In fact, two Community Action Agencies received ENOUGH Grants in FY25 and another two CAAs are members of ENOUGH community partnership tables. Given significant uncertainty regarding the federal budget and potential policy changes, as an alternative to a separate appropriation, Community Action Agencies could continue to engage through the ENOUGH initiative to further their mission and help maintain program stability.

**For additional information, contact Dana Phillips at  
(410) 260-6068 or [dana.phillips@maryland.gov](mailto:dana.phillips@maryland.gov)**

45 Calvert Street • Annapolis, MD 21401-1907

Tel: 410-260-7041 • Fax: 410-974-2585 • Toll Free: 1-800-705-3493 • TTY Users: Call via Maryland Relay

<http://dbm.maryland.gov>