



**TO:** House Environment and Transportation Committee  
**FROM:** LeadingAge Maryland  
**SUBJECT:** House Bill 716, Housing and Community Development - Statewide Rental Assistance Voucher Program Eligibility - Alterations  
**DATE:** February 18, 2025  
**POSITION:** Favorable with Amendment

LeadingAge Maryland supports with amendment House Bill 716, Housing and Community Development - Statewide Rental Assistance Voucher Program Eligibility – Alterations.

LeadingAge Maryland is a community of more than 140 not-for-profit aging services organizations serving residents and clients through continuing care retirement communities, affordable senior housing, assisted living, nursing homes and home and community-based services. Members of LeadingAge Maryland provide health care, housing, and services to more than 20,000 older persons each year. Our mission is to be the trusted voice for aging in Maryland, and our vision is that Maryland is a state where older adults have access to the services they need, when they need them, in the place they call home. We partner with consumers, caregivers, researchers, public agencies, faith communities and others who care about aging in Maryland. LeadingAge Maryland represents the vast majority of CCRCs in the state.

LeadingAge Maryland supports the intent of House Bill 716, which aims to improve the Statewide Rental Assistance Voucher Program by expanding eligibility and streamlining the administration process. The bill's provisions to include the Department of Housing and Community Development in the definition of "public housing agency" and to authorize the Department to project-base up to 100% of its authorized voucher units are crucial steps towards addressing the state's affordable housing crisis.

However, LeadingAge Maryland is concerned about the proposed alteration from 30% to 40% of monthly adjusted gross income for rent and utilities that a certain family is expected to pay. This change may inadvertently harm the very individuals and families the program is designed to assist. Increasing the monthly adjusted gross income for qualification may lead to a decrease in the number of eligible participants, as well as an increase in the financial burden on those who are already struggling to make ends meet.

We urge the Committee to consider an amendment that rejects this alteration and maintains the current 30% threshold. Thirty percent is the affordability standard widely used across the country and set forth by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. This amendment will ensure that the program remains accessible to those who need it most and that the financial burden on participants is not exacerbated. We believe that with this amendment, House Bill 716 has the potential to make a positive impact on the lives of low-income households in Maryland.

Amendment

On page 3, line 8, strike “40%” and retain “30%”

On page 3, line 10, after “PROGRAM” insert “EXCEPT AS OTHERWISE PROVIDED FOR BY REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE FEDERAL HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM.”

For these reasons, LeadingAge Maryland respectfully requests a favorable report with amendment on House Bill 716.

For more information, please contact Aaron Greenfield at 410.446.1992 or [aaron@agreenfieldlaw.com](mailto:aaron@agreenfieldlaw.com)