

February 12, 2025

Testimony on Senate Bill 365
Department of Commerce – Nonprofit Organizations Navigator - Established
Senate Finance Committee

Position: Favorable

Maryland Nonprofits is a statewide association of nonprofit organizations and institutions of all sizes serving Marylanders and communities across the entire state. We urge you to act favorably on Senate Bill 365 that would create the position of Nonprofit Organizations Navigator within the Department of Commerce.

There are over 40,000 nonprofit organizations in Maryland, that together account for about 13% of all private employment in the state. However the vast majority of these are either all-volunteer or operate with only a handful of professional staff. As in the case of for-profit small businesses, it is often difficult for them to identify or access government programs or grants opportunities that could provide critical assistance in growing or even sustaining their organizations.

Even larger nonprofits that regularly provide important services on behalf of government at all levels often struggle with complexities of the bureaucratic structures that delay approvals of contracts or grant agreements, and even then, delayed payments for services provided.

The position of Nonprofit Navigator established under Senate Bill 365 will help to resolve these issues, by:

- providing technical assistance in accessing and applying for grant programs,
- working with both nonprofits and governmental units to resolve delays and complexities,
- collecting and sharing information on government programs and funding opportunities, and
- representing nonprofits' interests and concerns as a member of the MD Efficient Grants Application ("MEGA") Council.

Like many other small businesses, nonprofits must plan and manage their operations, finances, and recruit, retain and pay their employees. They experienced the same economic hardships and dislocations as others during and recovering from the pandemic. They have also seen declines in support from charitable contributions in recent years. A "Navigator" to assist them in dealing with state or other government agencies would improve their ability to provide services and assistance in communities across the state.

We thank you for your consideration and strongly urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 365.