



HB 541 - Department of Commerce – Nonprofit Organizations Navigator - Established  
House Health & Government Operations Committee  
February 18, 2025

SUPPORT

Chair Pena-Melnyk, Vice-Chair, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 541.

The CASH Campaign of Maryland is a nonprofit that promotes economic advancement for low-to-moderate income individuals and families in Baltimore and across Maryland. CASH accomplishes its mission through operating a portfolio of direct service programs, building organizational and field capacity, and leading policy and advocacy initiatives to strengthen family economic stability. CASH and its partners across the state achieve this by providing free tax preparation services through the IRS program 'VITA', offering free financial education and coaching, and engaging in policy research and advocacy.

**Almost 4,000 of CASH's tax preparation clients earn less than \$10,000 annually. More than half earn less than \$20,000.**

CASH is one of over 40,000 nonprofit organizations in Maryland, which together account for about 13% of all private employment in the state. Many nonprofits are either all-volunteer or operate with only a handful of staff. It is difficult to identify or access government programs or grants opportunities that could provide critical assistance in growing or even sustaining nonprofit 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, payments for services provided.

The position of Nonprofit Navigator established under House Bill 541 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.

CASH receives federal and state funding that flows through state agencies, academic institutions, and non-profit intermediaries. After an initial invoice, payments can take anywhere from thirty days to six months. Unfortunately, the payments can be inconsistent with invoice amounts due to undisclosed offset liabilities. Like many other small businesses, nonprofits must plan and manage their operations, finances, and recruit, retain and pay their employees. We've experienced the same economic hardships and dislocations as others during and after the pandemic. A "Navigator" to assist us in dealing with state or other government agencies would improve our ability to provide services and assistance in communities across the state.



**Thus, we encourage you to return a favorable report for SB 365.**