



MARYLAND  
CATHOLIC  
CONFERENCE

March 3, 2025

**House Bill 1121**

**Child Care Scholarship Program - Youth Transitioning From Foster Placement to Successful Adulthood Pilot Program – Establishment  
House Ways and Means Committee**

**Position: Favorable**

The Maryland Catholic Conference (MCC) is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals, and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

**House Bill 1121** establishes the Youth Transitioning From Foster Placement to Successful Adulthood Pilot Program in the Child Care Scholarship Program to assist foster youth in applying for and accessing subsidies in the Program; establishing that the duration of the program is from January 1, 2026, until December 31, 2028; and requiring the State Department of Education to report on the status and an evaluation of the Pilot Program's goals to the General Assembly on or before December 1 each year of the Pilot Program.

The Child Care Scholarship Program (CCSP) in Maryland provides financial assistance to eligible families, helping them afford high-quality childcare and early education programs.<sup>1</sup> For foster youth, guardians receive CCSP funds to support their care. However, once these young individuals age out of the foster system, they may face barriers in accessing financial assistance programs that could help them navigate life independently. This legislation seeks to identify and address these gaps, ensuring that youth aging out of the system are not left without essential support. The proposed pilot program would assess and remove obstacles that prevent former foster youth from receiving extended financial assistance through CCSP.

Young adults aging out of foster care face a heightened risk of chronic poverty. By age 18—or 21 in some jurisdictions—these individuals lose the structured support of the state, often without a reliable safety net to guide them into adulthood. Of the 20,000 young adults who exit

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<sup>1</sup> <https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/child-care-providers/child-care-scholarship-program>

foster care each year, an estimated 97% immediately experience chronic poverty.<sup>2</sup> The instability of transitioning out of foster care, coupled with economic hardships, increases their vulnerability to financial insecurity.

The principles of subsidiarity and solidarity call for upholding fundamental human rights, including access to food, housing, medical care, and essential social services.<sup>3</sup> This pilot program would help bridge the gap in services for youth transitioning to adulthood, ensuring they are not left behind due to a sudden loss of resources. By providing continued support, this legislation would empower them to become self-sufficient, contributing members of their communities.

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference asks for a favorable report on **HB 1121**.

Thank you for your consideration.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.forothers.com/freedom-from-chronic-poverty/#:~:text=For%20young%20adults%20aging%20out,stability%20provided%20by%20the%20state.>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.usccb.org/news/2023/world-day-poor-be-poor-those-you-serve-pope-says>