

House Appropriations Committee

February 24, 2026

HB 231 - Higher Education - Guaranteed Access Grant Program - Applicability

Position: Favorable

The Maryland Association of Community Colleges (MACC), representing Maryland's 16 community colleges, supports **HB 231**. This legislation delays the decentralization of the Guaranteed Access Grant Program until the 2029–2030 academic year, providing important stability as the State continues implementing recent changes to Maryland's financial aid programs.

Maryland's community colleges enroll a significant number of students with the highest levels of financial need. While the Guaranteed Access Grant remains an important resource for many Maryland students, community college students more frequently rely on Educational Assistance Grants and other need-based financial aid to support access and completion. As the State considers changes to the administration and delivery of financial aid programs, it is important that policies reflect how students across all segments of higher education access and rely on these resources. Delaying implementation of additional structural changes provides valuable time for the State and higher education partners to evaluate financial aid distribution more holistically and ensure that programs equitably support students across all institution types, including community colleges.

HB 231 also allows the Maryland Higher Education Commission and institutions to continue administering the Guaranteed Access Grant centrally during this transition period, helping to ensure consistency in award notification and minimizing administrative burden on institutions while broader financial aid policies are evaluated. This thoughtful pause will help maintain continuity for students and provide an opportunity for the State to consider long-term improvements to financial aid policy that better align with student enrollment patterns and financial need. Accordingly, MACC urges the Committee to issue a **FAVORABLE** report on **HB 231**.

Please contact Brad Phillips (bphillips@mdacc.org) or Drew Jabin (djabin@mdacc.org) with questions.