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HB1458 – State Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Refugees and Asylees – Establishment

Position: Support

The Maryland Community Action Partnership (MCAP) supports House Bill 1458. This legislation recognizes a practical reality faced by many families arriving in Maryland as refugees or asylees, the period immediately following resettlement is often marked by significant financial and logistical instability. While many individuals quickly move toward employment and self-sufficiency, the first months in a new country can present real challenges related to housing, language access, employment placement, and navigating public benefit systems.

Community Action Agencies (CAAs) across Maryland work directly with households experiencing food insecurity every day. Our local agencies regularly encounter families who are doing everything right, seeking work, enrolling children in school, and working to become stable members of their communities, yet still struggle to meet basic needs during this early transition period. Ensuring access to adequate nutrition during this time is one of the most important steps the State can take to support stability and long term success.

Food security is foundational to family stability. When households lack consistent access to food, the consequences ripple across every aspect of daily life. Children struggle in school, adults face greater barriers to employment, and families are forced to rely more heavily on emergency services and charitable food networks. Programs that provide targeted support during periods of transition help prevent deeper crises and reduce strain on local service providers.

Community Action Agencies are on the front lines of Maryland's anti-poverty and anti-hunger efforts. Through energy assistance, food programs, housing supports, and workforce development services, our agencies help families move toward long term economic stability. Policies that strengthen access to basic necessities during times of vulnerability directly support that mission.

House Bill 1458 reflects Maryland's longstanding commitment to ensuring that all residents have the opportunity to live with dignity, stability, and access to basic necessities. By addressing temporary gaps in food access for refugees and asylees during their transition into Maryland communities, this legislation helps families focus on employment, education, and long term self-sufficiency. For these reasons, the Maryland Community Action Partnership respectfully urges a favorable report on House Bill 1458.

Submitted on behalf of MCAP by Carrington & Associates, LLC. Please contact Executive Director, Angela Martin, at amartin@maryland-cap.org for additional information.