



## **Community Action Board's Testimony to the Montgomery County Delegation**

### **Joint House and Senate Priorities Hearing**

November 17, 2025

Good evening. My name is Timothy Robinson and I am the Vice Chair of the Montgomery County Community Action Board. Our Board advocates on behalf of the County's economically disadvantaged community members and serves as the governing body for the Community Action Agency, the County's federally-designated anti-poverty agency, and the County's Head Start program. Thank you for the opportunity to share our Board's priorities with you this evening.

I want to start by thanking the delegation for your ongoing support of programs and policies that help County residents move towards the Self-Sufficiency Standard. We are very fortunate to have so many champions in Annapolis, working tirelessly to support marginalized members of our community. We also want to thank Delegates Wilkins, Moon, and Palakovich-Carr, who joined us for site visits at the Takoma-East Silver Spring (TESS) Community Action Agency over the summer. We appreciated the opportunity to share about our agency's programs and look forward to connecting with the full delegation throughout the year.

### **Community Action Anti-Poverty Fund**

Our first priority is the expansion of the Community Action Fund. Our Board was thrilled to see the passage this past session of legislation creating a Community Action Fund. We thank the delegation for your support of this bill. We join our state association, the Maryland Community Action Partnership, and the seventeen Maryland Community Action Agencies that MCAP

includes, in requesting that the Fund remain a line item in the state budget and that additional funding be added. Expansion of the Fund is especially important at this time, when our federal Community Services Block Grant faces uncertainty. Expansion of the Fund will allow Community Action Agencies, many of which are the only direct service providers in their areas, to reach more people, reduce waiting lists, and support staffing.

According to the 2023 MCAP Factsheet, which is included with this testimony, Community Action Agencies served 207,365 individuals, connecting Marylanders with housing, food and nutrition programs, and other critical services. Our own Montgomery County Community Action Agency supports County residents in a variety of ways. The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program served 2,397 households, with a free tax impact of \$7.7 million last year. The Takoma-East Silver Spring (TESS) Community Action Center, a walk-in Center in the Long Branch community, connects about 200 residents with critical services each month. Our Navigation Team, which serves 200 – 300 residents each month at seven sites, connects residents who may be “stuck” accessing services. Our agency also monitors contracts and grants at 24 non-profit organizations. Lastly, our own Board oversees a successful advocacy training program, the Community Advocacy Institute, and I want to thank Delegate Jheanelle Wilkins for participating in our first workshop earlier this month.

All of this work, along with the critical services offered at Community Action Agencies across Maryland, will greatly benefit from additional state-level support. Community Action has been serving Maryland residents for decades and is in an excellent position to step in during these uncertain times. We therefore ask for your support for the expansion of the Community Action Fund.

### **The Needs of Our Immigrant Community**

The next priority we want to highlight for you is the needs of our immigrant neighbors. During the 2025 legislative session, our Board supported several bills that aimed to protect immigrants seeking services and residents’ personal information. We were pleased to see that some of these bills passed, but we also realize that more must be done to strengthen protections for our

neighbors. We continue to hear from Community Action staff, from agency partners we visited over the summer, and directly from participants in the CAI, that many in our immigrant community are living in fear. They are opting out of services, scared to take their children to school, choosing to stay home entirely, and in some cases, not seeking necessary medical attention - all due to fear of immigration enforcement. In one family that recently came to TESS Center, the father is too scared to leave the family's apartment for fear of being stopped by ICE, resulting in the mother becoming the primary earner in the family. Their reduced income means that the family is struggling to pay for necessities. These financial challenges are in addition to the stress and anxiety that the family members (adults and children) are facing. Their story is not unique. This is why we ask the Delegation to do everything in your power to pass legislation that protects members of the immigrant community and helps people feel more comfortable accessing services they need.

### **Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit**

Our next priority, which is a longstanding priority for our Board, is expansion of the state Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit. Community Action's VITA program, which connects residents to valuable tax credits and oversees the County's EITC outreach efforts, sees firsthand just how impactful tax credits are for residents with modest incomes. One resident served by our VITA program during the tax season was overjoyed to see that their tax refund, including credits, was equal to two months of their wages. Their refund allowed them to pay some overdue bills and put some money into savings. Research consistently shows the tremendous positive impacts of tax credits well beyond the financial realm. With Montgomery County's Working Families Income Supplement matching a portion of the Maryland EITC, expansion of the credit can go even further here. It is also important to note that such credits can make a significant difference for economically disadvantaged residents here in Montgomery County where the cost of living is so high. The Self-Sufficiency Standard for a family of three with one adult, one school-age child, and one preschooler is \$116,864 - over four times the Federal Poverty Guidelines.<sup>1</sup> Expanded tax credits can go a long way to help more households move towards the Self-Sufficiency Standard. We ask the Delegation for your

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<sup>1</sup> [Selfsufficiencystandard.org](http://Selfsufficiencystandard.org)

continued support to both increase the Maryland EITC and Child Tax Credit, and expand eligibility for both critical tax credits.

### **Federal Budget Cuts**

Finally, we must acknowledge the looming federal budget cuts that will deeply impact so many in our community. Approximately 175,000 Marylanders are set to lose their Medicaid coverage entirely.<sup>2</sup> Cuts may also drastically impact health services such as mental health programs and dental services. With regard to SNAP, “57,000 people in Maryland [are] at immediate risk of losing some of their SNAP benefits, including parents with children ages 14 and older, older workers, veterans, those experiencing homelessness, and youth aging out of foster care.”<sup>3</sup> Funding cuts for HUD services will also have a tremendous impact in the County, with the proposed 70% reduction for Continuum of Care services resulting in a \$17 million loss in rental assistance over three years.<sup>4</sup> These cuts at the federal level will stretch service providers very thin and will increase the necessity for other forms of supports, such as free health clinics, community food distribution programs, and non-profit emergency assistance programs. We ask the delegation to support additional funding that can support these programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our board’s priorities. We look forward to working with the delegation throughout the legislative session.

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<sup>2</sup> [https://health.maryland.gov/mmcp/Documents/OBBBA%20One-Pager\\_7.11.25.pdf](https://health.maryland.gov/mmcp/Documents/OBBBA%20One-Pager_7.11.25.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2025/08/OBBBAfamilies-MD.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> [https://montgomerycountymd.granicus.com/Viewer.php?view\\_id=169&clip\\_id=18391&meta\\_id=207113](https://montgomerycountymd.granicus.com/Viewer.php?view_id=169&clip_id=18391&meta_id=207113)

# FFY 2023 STATE CSBG FACTSHEET

From Maryland's FFY 2023 Community Services Block Grant Annual Report

# MARYLAND

## WHAT IS CSBG?

The Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) provides critical funding to Community Action Agencies (CAAs) and other neighborhood based organizations to support services and activities for individuals and families with low incomes that alleviate the causes and conditions of poverty in communities.

## WHO WE SERVED IN FFY 2023



There were **17 CAAs**, serving **207,365 people** with low incomes who were living in **96,518 families**.

CAAs served 23,927 people who lacked healthcare, 30,217 people who reported having a disability, 26,873 senior citizens, 62,972 children living in poverty, and 13,591 veterans and active military persons.

**Maryland's Community Action Agencies** are centrally located to serve their communities. For maximum impact, they partnered with:

**512**  
non-profits

**976**  
for-profits

**454**  
faith-based organizations

**38**  
school districts



There were **216,366 hours** of volunteer time donated to CAAs in Maryland.

## MARYLAND LEVERAGED FUNDING

For every **\$1 of CSBG**, Maryland's CAAs leveraged **\$20.05** from federal, state, local, and private sources, including the value of volunteer hours.

**\$9,676,312.00** allocated CSBG funds

**\$194,038,282.90** total available including leveraged funds\*

**\$12.44**

Federal

**\$2.84**

State

**\$2.51**

Local

**\$2.10**

Private

**\$0.16**

Volunteer Hours\*

\*Value of Volunteer Hours calculated using federal minimum wage.  
\*\* Values may not equal total due to rounding.



**9 CAAs**

operate the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)



**5 CAAs**

operate the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP)



**7 CAAs**

operate a Head Start Program



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR STATE COMMUNITY SERVICES PROGRAM

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## FFY 2023 DOMAINS

Community Action Agencies utilize CSBG funds to **address specific local needs** through services and programs that address one or more of the core domains in which we work: employment; education and cognitive development; income, infrastructure and asset building; housing; health and social behavioral development; and civic engagement and community involvement.

### EMPLOYMENT



**2,261 outcomes**

were obtained in the employment domain, including obtaining and maintaining a job, increasing income, and obtaining benefits.

### HOUSING



**27,564 outcomes**

were obtained in the housing domain, including obtaining and maintaining housing, avoiding eviction or foreclosure, and reducing energy burden.

### EDUCATION



**12,993 outcomes**

were obtained in the education and cognitive development domain, including improved literacy skills, school readiness, and obtaining additional education and diplomas.

### HEALTH



**15,874 outcomes**

were obtained in the health and social/behavioral development domain. This includes outcomes such as increasing nutrition skills, improving physical or mental health, and living independently.

### INCOME & ASSETS



**7,200 outcomes**

were obtained in the income and asset building domain, including maintaining a budget, opening a savings account, increasing assets and net worth, and improving financial well-being.

### CIVIC ENGAGEMENT



**2,689 outcomes**

were obtained in the civic engagement and community involvement domain, including increasing leadership skills, and improving social networks.

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