



*ACS supports Howard County nonprofits in the achievement of their missions
because strong nonprofits improve the quality of life for all*

1st FY 2023 Resident's Budget Hearing Testimony

December 13, 2021

On behalf of the Association of Community Services and our over 150 member organizations and community advocates, I am offering this testimony to advocate for a budget that more fully supports Howard County nonprofits.

Our nonprofit sector has repeatedly demonstrated how effectively it can leverage County money together with outside grants, donations, and the support of volunteers to address urgent needs in our community. Howard County nonprofits reliably ensure residents have access to food, stay housed, can sign up for benefits, get mental health support, and so much more. However as the needs continue to rise, many nonprofits are struggling to stay fully staffed and have enough resources to support our community. We ask that your FY2023 budget provide greater financial support for nonprofits in the FY 2023 budget, otherwise, the County risks having to find other entities to maintain services or losing critical services altogether.

For far too long, nonprofits have had to operate under a presumption of scarcity being asked to do more and serve more people with very limited funds. Factors such as government-determined reimbursement rates for services that are too low and grants and contracts providing insufficient funding for the staffing required have kept us inadequately resourced. Our nonprofit workforce deserves wages and benefits that truly value the work we do, and our community needs fully staffed and well-resourced organizations. Our three key asks are:

- 1. Dedicate American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for operational and program support for nonprofits (in line with federal spending regulations) without onerous application and reporting requirements.**
- 2. Increase funding for the Community Service Partnership grants and one-time grants, particularly since they have been level funded for many years.**
- 3. Use our current surplus in conjunction with additional Federal and State dollars to meet our nonprofit infrastructure needs.**

Thank you for the opportunity to represent Howard County nonprofits. As always, we are prepared to work with County government to ensure that our residents have equitable access to the services they need to thrive.

Sincerely,
Joan Driessen, Executive Director