



SB 290– Budget Bill
Senate Budget & Taxation Committee
Position: Support
February 15, 2022

On behalf of the Association of Community Services of Howard County (ACS) and our over 150 member organizations and community advocates, I ask for your strong leadership to support budget provisions that support nonprofits and the people we serve. Within our overarching [advocacy priority](#), ACS is committed to increasing access to financial and non-financial resources from government, foundations, businesses, and the general public for nonprofits.

We are grateful that the budget, as introduced by the Governor, includes more robust funding for the Temporary Disability Assistance Program, the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program, utility assistance, Medicaid, and additional benefit programs. We also appreciate the support in increasing provider rates for various services and to the Department of Housing and Community Development. These allocations will directly support the people many of our members serve and the nonprofit sector itself. That being said, **we ask you to make every effort possible to support nonprofits in the FY 2023 budget and make plans for future budget years to strengthen our sector over the long term.** One-time and short-term funding throughout the pandemic has already run out or is about to run out for many nonprofits and we need more sustainable solutions.

It is a struggle to pay living wages and benefits on nonprofits' budgets – particularly for small nonprofits. You will see in our [Self-Sufficiency Indicators Report](#) that it takes approximately \$75,000 per year, which is about \$36.06 per hour, for families to be self-sufficient and financially stable in Howard County. Too often, nonprofit employees have such low wages that many also qualify for the very same benefits and services we provide for the clients we serve. We face challenges in paying higher wages due to a variety of reasons, including but not limited to: limitations with government-determined reimbursement rates for services (e.g., rates haven't kept up with costs generally and costs cannot be passed on to clients), grants and contracts with insufficient funding for the staffing required, and being required to operate under the presumption of scarcity. Our nonprofit workforce deserves wages that truly values the work we do. Nonprofits feel the impacts of the Great Resignation at all levels -from entry level to executive positions- and we face a very real risk of decreased services and potentially closing our doors, which means our whole community loses out -particularly in Howard County where a vast amount of human services are provided by nonprofits.

Thank you,

Joan Driessen

Joan Driessen
Executive Director