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**TO:** Appropriations Committee  
**FROM:** LeadingAge Maryland  
**SUBJECT:** House Bill 255, Department of Aging - Grants for Aging-in-Place Programs - Funding  
**DATE:** January 19, 2021  
**POSITION:** **Favorable**

LeadingAge Maryland supports House Bill 255, Department of Aging - Grants for Aging-in-Place Programs - Funding

LeadingAge Maryland is a community of not-for-profit aging services organizations serving residents and clients through continuing care retirement communities, affordable senior housing, assisted living, nursing homes and home and community-based services. We represent more than 120 not-for-profit organizations, including the vast majority of CCRCs in Maryland. Our mission is to expand the world of possibilities for aging in Maryland. We partner with consumers, caregivers, researchers, faith communities and others who care about aging in Maryland.

House Bill 255 defines “aging-in-place program” as a program or service that enables an individual to live in the individual’s own home and participate in a community safely, independently, and comfortably, regardless of age, income, or ability level. also defines “senior village” as a local, member-driven, nonprofit organization that supports community members who choose to age in place by fostering social connections through activities and events and coordinating volunteer help at home using a neighbor-helping-neighbor model and is exempt from taxation under section 501(c)(3) of 10 the internal revenue code. The bill requires that for each fiscal year, the Governor shall include in the annual budget bill an appropriation of at least \$100,000 for the purpose of making the state grants under this section. At least 20% of the funding appropriated shall be used to support senior villages.

Affordable Senior Communities: House Bill 255 is essential in ensuring adequate safe, affordable housing with supports to enable seniors to remain independent and engaged in

community. Affordable senior apartment communities are ideal living situations for older adults, given the subsidized rents, well-maintained units and supportive services; however there are not enough units available and there is not enough capital accessible to support building new properties to meet the need. All properties have significant wait lists and all funding rounds are highly competitive.

Support Services: Services to support aging in community are helpful strategies to extend the number of adults in a community who are living in well-maintained and supportive environments. There are many older adults who prefer to remain at home – aging in community combined with apartment communities provides a more holistic approach to support an area’s seniors. There may be opportunities to leverage the services in affordable housing properties for extension to neighbors aging in their homes in the surrounding neighborhoods

Social Connections: Senior villages connect neighbors to one another to offer mutual support to aging in place. Village members connect with one another regularly, creating social programming and caring communities. This support has been especially critical to combat isolation during the pandemic. Villages design their own programs and support services to be tailored to the specific needs/desires of the members (which can organically evolve as needs evolve).

Home Repair Programs: Senior home repair programs are an effective way to help senior homeowners age in place safely while maintaining their homes. These programs focus on fall prevention measures; falls are a leading cause of seniors having to move out of their homes and into higher levels of care. These programs help prevent contractor fraud and other in home dangers by using trusted sources for home repairs

For these reasons, LeadingAge Maryland respectfully requests a favorable report for House Bill 255.

**For more information, please contact Aaron J. Greenfield, Greenfield Law, LLC,  
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