

Montgomery County Community Action Board Testimony

Uploaded by: Leslie Frey

Position: FAV



Montgomery County Community Action Board Testimony
SB562 - Maryland Small Food Banks Grant Program – Establishment
March 10, 2023
SUPPORT

TO: The Honorable Melony Griffith, Chair; The Honorable Katherine Klausmeier, Vice Chair; and Members of the Finance Committee

FROM: Dr. Jeffery Johnson, Chair, Montgomery County Community Action Board

The Montgomery County Community Action Board (CAB), the County’s local, state, and federally designated anti-poverty group, is in full support of SB562 and asks the Committee for a favorable report. This bill would establish a grant program for small food banks in the state, many of which are struggling to meet the needs of residents. Food banks provide critical support to individuals and families when other benefits like SNAP are insufficient or unavailable. Now that the increased SNAP benefits put in place during the pandemic have ended, assistance from food banks will be even more important. We also know that many people struggling with food insecurity do not qualify for SNAP in the first place. Feeding America reports that 41% of food insecure residents here in Montgomery County are not eligible for SNAP.¹ Food banks help to fill this gap for households struggling to meet their basic needs.

Support for food and nutrition programs has been a longstanding priority for our board because food insecurity remains a serious challenge here in Montgomery County and across the state. The food insecurity rate in Maryland is 9%, meaning that 543,650 residents struggle with *a lack of consistent access to enough food for every person in a household to live an active, healthy life.*² Community Action Agencies in Maryland, many of which are nonprofit organizations that host food banks and would likely qualify for the proposed grant program, are on the front lines combatting food insecurity. Our own staff, through the Department’s new Navigation Program and the Takoma-East Silver Spring (TESS) Community Action Center, work directly with clients who are experiencing food insecurity on a daily basis, linking them to services and programs. Added support for food banks would benefit these residents, providing additional resources to meet their needs. The Montgomery County Community Action Agency also partners with several local nonprofits, monitoring contracts for the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services. Many of these partners would be eligible for the grant program proposed in SB562 and could really use the added financial support to meet growing needs.

¹ <https://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2018/overall/Maryland>

² <https://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2020/overall/maryland>

It is important to note that food insecurity is compounded in areas like Montgomery County and so many parts of the state, where the cost of living is extremely high, and wages have not kept up. According to the Maryland Community Action Partnership's most recent report, the Montgomery County Self-Sufficiency Standard for a household with two working adults, one preschooler, and one school-age child is now \$122,943, over four times the federal poverty level.³ This same family is estimated to need \$1,207 each month just to pay for food. Building capacity for small food banks, as SB562 would do, is one important opportunity to help meet the needs of residents struggling to pay for their basic necessities.

We ask the Committee for a favorable report and ask that you consider other policies and funding opportunities to provide critical support to food distributors and other service providers.

³<https://maryland-cap.org/the-maryland-2023-self-sufficiency-standard-calculator/>

SB562 - Maryland Small Food Banks Grant Program_CA

Uploaded by: Mitchell Posner

Position: FAV



For more information, contact:

Mitchell Posner, CAN Chief Executive Officer
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**SB 562 - Maryland Small Food Banks Grant Program - Establishment
March 10, 2023**

SUPPORT

To: the Honorable Melony Griffith, Chair; the Honorable Katherine Klausmeier, Vice Chair; and Members of the Finance Committee

Community Assistance Network (CAN) is in full support of SB562 and asks the Committee for a favorable report. This bill would establish a grant program for small food banks to address food insecurity and support the influx of neighbors in need throughout Maryland.

CAN is the designated anti-poverty Community Action Agency serving Baltimore County and part of the statewide Maryland Community Action Partnership network of 17 such agencies across the State dedicated to alleviating the effects of poverty for those who are most vulnerable. CAN's mission is to work in partnership with the community to develop, operate, and support programs that reduce the vulnerability and empower personal growth, dignity, stability, and self-sufficiency among people in Baltimore County experiencing economic challenges. Throughout our nearly 60-year history, CAN has been dedicated to providing resources to meet people's basic, emergency needs so that they can take concrete steps along a path to self-sufficiency and personal growth.

Each year, CAN serves thousands of neighbors in need in Baltimore County, focusing on areas of housing, food, and economic insecurity. In our recently renovated Community Choice Pantry and Resource Center, we provide one week of supplemental food to qualifying individuals experiencing food insecurity. In FY22, CAN served 2,538 individuals in its Community Choice Pantry. Many families that we support do not qualify for SNAP benefits. Feeding America reports that 37% of food insecure residents in Baltimore County are not eligible for SNAP.¹ There is an insatiable need in Baltimore County that is only growing now that SNAP benefits are returning to pre-pandemic levels. Food banks can help fill the gap in SNAP eligibility for households struggling to meet their basic needs.

It is likely that CAN and other organizations like ours would qualify for the proposed grant program. Additional funding to support our Community Choice Pantry would reduce food insecurity among our neighbors in need in Baltimore County. Our staff work diligently every day to serve the needs of food insecure families, and ultimately eradicate hunger through direct service to the populations we serve.

For these reasons, we encourage support for SB 562.

1. <https://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2018/overall/maryland/county/baltimore>

Anne Arundel County _FAV_SB 562.pdf

Uploaded by: Peter Baron

Position: FAV



March 10, 2023

Senate Bill 562

Maryland Small Food Banks Grant Program - Establishment

Senate Finance Committee

Position: FAVORABLE

Anne Arundel County **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 562 - Maryland Small Food Banks Grant Program - Establishment. This bill will establish the Maryland Small Food Banks Grant Program in the Department of Human Services and mandate a \$3 million funding level for the program.

Anne Arundel County residents are already struggling with the termination of the enhanced Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits provided by the federal government during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our food banks are seeing high levels of demand and have already communicated that they have expended existing resources. Food security is important always, but especially at this time when all of us are struggling to accommodate rising costs in our family budgets. The fiscal cliff created by the sudden expiration of SNAP benefits creates an additional burden for our most vulnerable populations.

Although this bill will not entirely solve the demand for food resources, these funds are desperately needed by our food bank partners. For all of these reasons, I respectfully request a **FAVORABLE** report on Senate Bill 562.

Bill Response - SB562.pdf

Uploaded by: Stacey Benn

Position: FAV



Office of the President

**Morgan State University Testimony
Dr. David Wilson, President**

Senate Bill 562 (*Senator Guzzone*)
Maryland Small Food Banks Grant Program – Establishment
Committee: Finance Committee
March 10, 2023

Favorable

Chair Griffith, Vice Chair Klausmeier, and members of the Finance Committee. We, at Morgan, thank you for the opportunity to share our position on Senate Bill 562. The summary of the Bill states the following: *Establishing the Maryland Small Food Banks Grant Program in the Department of Human Services; requiring the Department to give priority to nonprofit entities in the State that conduct assessments, with ongoing data collection to track success, and can demonstrate strong community involvement and partnerships, consistent stakeholder engagement, sustainability with diverse funding streams, innovation, and a focus on underserved communities; and authorizing the Governor to include in the annual budget bill up to \$3,000,000 for the Program.*

Morgan State University is the premier public urban research university in Maryland, known for its excellence in teaching, intensive research, effective public service and community engagement. Morgan prepares diverse and competitive graduates for success in a global interdependent society.

Morgan State supports Senate Bill 562.

A Morgan survey conducted by the Office of Student Affairs in 2017 revealed that a significant percentage of Morgan's students were already affected by food and/or housing insecurities prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In response to these insecurities, Morgan launched The Food Resource Center (FRC) in 2018 and—through food collection distribution and education—began supporting students who were struggling with basic needs.

At Morgan, we value the ability to form strong internal and external partnerships in
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providing food support. Such partnerships allow us to provide vital resources to our students and the community as we continue to demonstrate that we are a community that cares.

With this stated, we support Senate Bill 562, which will allow food supports around the state to move forward this important work for Marylanders.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David K. Wilson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "D" and a long, sweeping underline.

Dr. David K. Wilson
President, Morgan State University