



For more information, contact:

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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>