

Date: February 2, 2023

Bill number: SB0026

Committee: Senate Finance Committee

Bill title: **Maryland Medical Assistance Program, Maryland Children’s Health Program, and Social Services Programs – Eligibility and Enrollment**

DHS Position: **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS**

The Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) thanks the Committee for the opportunity to provide written support and recommendation for amendment to Senate Bill 26 (SB 26).

The Department supports the intent of Senate Bill 26 as it would streamline eligibility for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Office of Home Energy Program (OHEP) applications. This piece of legislation will impact two processes. First, it will make the application process for all applicants faster, streamlined, and uniform. Second, it seeks to enroll approximately 32,000 additional prospective households for the energy assistance program based on information DHS has learned from the SNAP’s caseload of households and individuals currently claiming a utility expense.

Senate Bill 26 addresses the income eligibility requirements for the Electric Universal Service Program (EUSP). The legislation would serve the citizens of Maryland in need of assistance by providing a waiver to customers in the State. It would enhance the client’s experience, cut down on processing times and administrative burdens, and extend benefits to people eligible, but not currently receiving OHEP or SNAP benefits. This piece of legislation would allow DHS to reach a broader segment across the State of Maryland.

The Department of Human Services recommends amending the language on page 4, line 19 as follows:

(II) The OFFICE SHALL ENROLL IN ANY FUEL AND UTILITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM ANY **HOUSEHOLD WITH AN** INDIVIDUAL WHO MEETS THE FINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS ESTABLISHED BY THE DEPARTMENT FOR A RECIPIENT OF:

The Department supports Senate Bill 26 if amendments are included in the Committee’s report as recommended above. The Department is grateful to offer our support and collaboration on SB 26 and requests a favorable with amendments report.

