



Maryland Community Action Anti-Poverty Fund

Talking Points 2023

INTRODUCTION

1. About MCAP

- a. History: Community Action Agencies are nonprofit organizations and governmental agencies created by President Lyndon B. Johnson’s signing of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. This Act embodies the philosophy that low-income individuals can best identify the problems their community face and also develop solutions that will resolve the issues. Currently, 1,100 community action agencies in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and the Trust Territories provide direct human services to 95 percent of the nation’s counties.
- b. Maryland Community Action Partnership (“MCAP”) was established in July 1986. MCAP is a non-profit, multi-regional association with 19 member agencies, called Community Action Agencies (CAA’s). Community Action Agencies address the causes and conditions of poverty across the state by revitalizing the communities and developing pathways for vulnerable populations to reach economic security.
- c. MCAP is the Federal- and state-designated authority for poverty serving over 1.6 million people across the states of MD, DC, DE. Together, we serve individuals and families in poverty who reside in Maryland, Delaware and the District of Columbia to provide localized services to lift people out of poverty and develop strategies for economic mobility and resilience. Our network advocates on behalf of underprivileged communities to ensure their voices are heard at the local, state and national levels.

2. Purposes of MCAP Network of Member Agencies

- a. Serving low-income individuals and families with critical needs, including:
 - children’s services
 - senior services
 - affordable housing and homelessness
 - energy and emergency assistance
 - food and nutrition
 - employment and education services
 - health services
 - transportation
 - tax and financial planning
- b. MCAP members are committed to building strategic pathways tailored for each family and the unique needs of each community by applying four stages: Readiness, Response, Recovery and Resilience.

MCAP members 2 Gen approach

- c. We work in collaboration with a variety of public and private organizations to develop and implement strategic programs based on a two-generational approach or “2Gen” to address the needs of both parents and children in low-income families. Bridging the gaps in education, training and job placement, for example, elevates the whole family for long-term resilience.

- d. We team across government, business, philanthropy, non-profit organizations and citizens to achieve significant, positive and lasting social change for vulnerable populations.

3. MCAP Members in Action During COVID 19

- a. CAAs were essential to assisting and supporting those who were economically adversely impacted
- b. They were a critical partner in working with the state and their counties to prevent evictions by distributing emergency rental assistance.
 - Agencies also secured and leveraged other funding sources, including foundations, to prevent evictions.
- c. They provided food to families in need through their various food pantries
 - They also delivered food
- d. Their shelters continued to stay open and they moved people to hotels and provided staffing and meals to offsite locations in order to decrease the risk of spreading COVID 19.
- e. CAA Employees, unlike others, had to physically work out of their buildings in order to deliver the types of services they provide
 - They put themselves at risk in order to do the essential work needed to support our community
 - However, many of these employees do not make a living wage and pre-pandemic and during the pandemic many of them were in a position where they have a need for the resources they provide for their clients.
- f. Much of the COVID relief related funding for CAAs to continue these services will run out soon but these services need to continue, and these employees need to continue their work
- g. This is why we are advocating for the Maryland Community Action Anti-Poverty Fund.

ADVOCACY AND COMMUNITY ACTION NETWORK SUPPORT

Legislative talking points

MCAP ask:

- **Support for a permanent source of funding to continue 2-Gen statewide approach,**
- **Funding to address the increased demand for services and maintain the CAA infrastructure and capacity by establishing a Maryland Community Action Anti-Poverty fund to match the federal CSBG investment (\$9,194,967 in FY '23).**

Points to make:

1. Ensure Continuity of 2-Generation/Whole Family Funding to Support Comprehensive Services for Children and Families

Thanks to prior years funding in the DHS budget our Whole family approaches to moving children and families toward economic security are being implemented across the state. This proven, holistic approach to moving children and families out of poverty, is helping children and families across Maryland develop pathways to achieve their aspirations and goals. MCAP seeks a permanent source of funding to continue the work of moving children and families out of poverty.

Community Action Agencies across the state have implemented 2-G strategies and begun working with families to develop pathways leading to economic security. A loss of this funding would disrupt progress for low-income families and reduce the Agency's capacity to achieve outcomes for the entire family.

2. **Maryland Community Action Anti-Poverty Fund and Alignment to Today's Priorities**

Between 2018 and 2021 the demand for services to stabilize families increased by 84% according to CSBG Annual reporting by MCAP agencies. Since the onset of the pandemic years supplemental funding provided critical support to keep families safe and stable. This funding has gone away, but the demand for services remains. Hence, the Maryland Community Action Partnership proposes the creation of a Maryland Community Action Anti-Poverty Fund, totaling the amount to match the federal Community Services Block Grant (\$9,194,967 million in FY '23), which was created to address the causes and conditions of poverty. Funding for the Community Action Anti-Poverty Fund will further invest in programs that work and move children and families toward economic security, and will allow the Community Action network to continue meet the existing demands.

CSBG is the federal funding received by the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development and then distributed by formula to the 17 Community Action Agencies in Maryland. This funding was intended as seed money to address the causes and conditions of poverty not the sum of funding needed. Agencies are tasked with leveraging funds to address the community's needs. MCAP's alignment for advocacy and funding has been met with bi-partisan support for decades because CAA resources result in locally responsive programs that provide positive outcomes for families.

\$1 million was recommended in the budget by the former administration however this amount was not recommended in Governor Moore's FY '24 budget. MCAP seeks to restore this funding and add additional funding to respond to the increased current demand.

- a. Funding would strengthen the capabilities of Maryland CAAs to be responsive to the local needs and conditions in the community.
- b. Funding would allow CAA's to aggressively assist with Governor Moore's stated goal of ending child poverty by organizing of a range of services related to the needs of low-income families and individuals, so that these services may have a measurable and potentially major impact on the causes of poverty in the community and may help the families and individuals to achieve self-sufficiency.
- c. Funding would be used to revitalize low-income communities, and the empower low-income families and individuals in rural and urban areas throughout the State to become fully self-sufficient

3. **MCAP's Presence of Community Action in Every Corner of the State**

- a. MCAP is committed to ending poverty strategically and tactically. Our agencies are involved at the grass roots level every day to provide to support to individuals and families across MD, DE and DC.
- b. Our agencies are spread across the state. We are the eyes and ears on the ground for community needs and on the front lines of addressing them.
 - i. MCAP Agency Map: <https://maryland-cap.org/find-your-agency/>

4. Data-proven Record of Results

- a. There are historical records of MCAP's collective impact through CSBG data, state reporting and numerous positive impact stories from our communities to align with the current mission of the Moore administration.
 - i. Impact Dashboard:
https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/maryland.community.action.partnership/viz/MDCCommunityActionPartnership_16656064095900/MDCAPHowWeHelped-Large
- b. CSBG data has been tracked and analyzed and applied to MCAP's members work to identify needs, areas of change and unique needs of each geographical area. MCAP has teamed with national partners to survey, collect and report upon the cost of living and standardize ways to determine need by self-sufficiency calculators and other tools.
 - i. Self-sufficiency tool: <https://maryland-cap.org/the-maryland-2023-self-sufficiency-standard-calculator/>

5. MCAP supports the combined network by providing services, such as:

- Advocacy (state/regional/federal)
- Full-scale state lobbying and legislative representation services
- Legislation tracking (state and federal)
- Information dissemination and sharing
- Annual Human Services Conference
- Customized training and technical assistance services
- Strength-based Family Worker Certification Program
- Training Scholarships
- College Internship Program
- Legal Services via CAPLAW
- Regional events and information
- Networking
- Strategic planning

OTHER LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

6. Housing Stabilization

Without swift action, many families will face eviction in 2023. Essential workers in Maryland struggle to fully recover from the pandemic, high inflation, and soaring rents. We support the Maryland Emergency Rental Assistance Coalition request for Funding to Sustain Emergency Rental Assistance in Maryland to assist an estimated 17,000 households who would otherwise face imminent eviction in your proposed FY 2024 budget.

7. Lifting Families Out of Poverty

Reducing poverty by encouraging work. MCAP supports legislation that empower clients to overcome barriers and represent their own interest, helping them increase control of their own lives.