



## Written Support

### Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee *Senate Bill 789 (Washington) Higher Education – Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program - Alterations*

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On behalf of Maryland's independent colleges and universities and the 55,000 students we serve, thank you for the opportunity to provide a letter of support regarding ***Senate Bill 789 (Washington) Higher Education – Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program - Alterations***. The Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program was established at a critical time when many students who experienced food insecurities were exacerbated due to the coronavirus pandemic. While this new grant program is available to Maryland public two-year and four-year institutions, students enrolled at private four-year institutions would greatly benefit. Hunger is a growing problem on college and university campuses; some figures estimate that up to half of college students will face food insecurities at some point while pursuing their degree. SB 789 expands the program by increasing the appropriated funds from \$150,000 to \$250,000. This expansion allows for a meaningful impact on current and new programs that address students with food insecurities.

This legislation grants MICUA institutions eligibility to be designated as a hunger-free campus and thus supports activities and initiatives already occurring on campuses that address student and community food insecurities. Some examples include, but are not limited to:

- Launched in 2016, **Stevenson University** has a campus food pantry run by student coordinators and volunteers. It holds regular hours and is in a central location on campus proximate to other student services. It holds food drives, disseminates public service announcements, and has a Facebook page.
- **Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA)** recently established a campus food pantry to serve its students, recognizing the importance of addressing food insecurities to promote both individual wellbeing and educational attainment. MICA also held a food drive in November as part of its annual campus-wide Unity Fest activities.
- The Frederick Food Security Network is a community gardening program through the **Hood College** Center for Coastal and Watershed Studies. It has established a network of community gardens to improve food security for residents of local food deserts, reduce local water pollution by diverting rooftop runoff for use as irrigation, and promote better eating habits and environmental stewardship.
- **Loyola University Maryland's** FreshCrate Program makes affordable and fresh produce available all year long in local stores along Baltimore's York Road corridor. It is part of the University's York

Road Initiative, which focuses on strengthening the community in areas including education, food access, and commercial revitalization.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this letter of support for Senate Bill 789 on behalf of our member institutions. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact Irnande Altema, Associate Vice President for Government and Business Affairs, [ialtema@micua.org](mailto:ialtema@micua.org).

***For all of these reasons, MICUA requests a favorable Committee report for Senate Bill 789.***