



House Bill 498

Department of Aging – Grants for Aging-in-Place Programs - Funding

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**
WITH AMENDMENTS

To: Appropriations Committee

Date: February 11, 2020

From: Natasha Mehu

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS HB 498 WITH AMENDMENTS**. The bill boosts funding for local aging efforts but also sets requirements that limit its use. HB 498 would require the Governor to appropriate at least \$1 million annually for state grants to support aging-in-place programs. It also requires that 10% of the annual appropriation be used to support senior villages – a restriction counties argue is unwarranted.

Counties appreciate the increased funding as Local Area Agencies on Aging serve an important role planning and coordinating services for the State's senior residents through various programs, including those that support aging in place. These programs help those older residents stay in their homes as they age, maintaining their independence and security in a cost-efficient way.

It is important that the funding be used to target local needs such as ensuring that lower income residents are also afforded the opportunity to benefit from aging-in-place programs. Counties are concerned the funding allotted for Senior Villages could be diverted to support programs focused on high-income seniors who are not in need of the additional governmental support rather than providing aid to those who are lower income and in greater need of assistance.

To address these concerns, MACo proposes amendments that would provide flexibility to the grant funds by authorizing rather than requiring a portion of the funding be used for senior villages. This would help ensure that grants awarded to county agencies are able to address the unique aging populations and needs in each county.

For these reasons, MACo urges a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report on HB 498.

MACo Amendment:

On page 3, strike lines 12-14, and replace with “**(2) THE FUNDING APPROPRIATED UNDER PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS SUBTITLE MAY BE USED TO SUPPORT SENIOR VILLAGES AT LOCAL DISCRETION.**”