



House Bill 1115

Community Colleges - Workforce Readiness Grant Program - Established

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Appropriations Committee

Date: February 21, 2019

From: Michael Sanderson

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 1115. This bill would enhance the State's commitment to workforce development offerings at each community college campus and create an incentive for outside private funding to extend the program's effect.

Maryland's economic competitiveness hinges in large part on its workforce. Investments in workforce development through multiple offerings typically results in oversized returns in stronger families and communities. HB 1115 advances these important goals, leveraging the physical space and capabilities of our two-year colleges across the state.

The two iterations of funding under the bill ensure each campus would provide new offerings, but also offers a "carrot" in the form of matching funds for outside dollars secured (over the two preceding years) in excess of that per-location floor. State funds, being used to leverage private partnerships and beneficial donor contributions, could amplify the effect of this innovative proposal.

Under this program, a wide range of technology improvements could be expected – from health care equipment to computer-assisted design to small-scale manufacturing technologies. The flexibility in the grant program could spark innovations that match needs of local employers, or harness regional interests from different parts of the state.

HB 1115 advances new outlets for workforce readiness, using community colleges as the cornerstone. MACo urges the Committee to issue a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 1115.