

Chapter 210

(Senate Bill 370)

AN ACT concerning

**Community Schools – Rental Assistance for Community School Families
Program and Fund – Establishment**

FOR the purpose of establishing the Rental Assistance for Community School Families Program to provide rental assistance to eligible student households; requiring ~~the State Department of Education, in consultation with~~ the Department of Housing and Community Development, in consultation with the State Department of Education, to administer the Program; establishing the Rental Assistance for Community School Families Fund as a special, nonlapsing fund; requiring interest earnings of the Fund to be credited to the Fund; and generally relating to the Rental Assistance for Community School Families Program and Fund.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
 Article – Education
 Section 9.9–103 and 9.9–104
 Annotated Code of Maryland
 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

BY adding to
 Article – Education
 Section 9.9–104.1
 Annotated Code of Maryland
 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
 Article – State Finance and Procurement
 Section 6–226(a)(2)(i)
 Annotated Code of Maryland
 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
 Article – State Finance and Procurement
 Section 6–226(a)(2)(ii)189. and 190.
 Annotated Code of Maryland
 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

BY adding to
 Article – State Finance and Procurement
 Section 6–226(a)(2)(ii)191.
 Annotated Code of Maryland
 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Education

9.9–103.

(a) There are community schools in the State.

(b) A community school shall:

(1) Promote active family and community engagement, including educational opportunities for adults and family members of students at the school who live in the neighborhood of the school;

(2) Have a community school coordinator, as described under § 9.9–104 of this title;

(3) Promote expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities provided after school, during weekends, and in the summer that emphasize mastering 21st-century skills through practical learning opportunities and community problem-solving;

(4) Promote collaborative leadership and practices that empower parents, students, teachers, principals, and community partners to build a culture of professional learning, collective trust, and shared responsibility using strategies such as site-based leadership teams and teacher learning communities;

(5) Have a parent teacher organization or a school family council; and

(6) Have a community school leadership team.

(c) (1) There shall be a Director of Community Schools in the Department.

(2) The Director of Community Schools in the Department shall coordinate professional development for community school coordinators at each community school.

(3) **THE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SCHOOLS SHALL ADMINISTER SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RENTAL ASSISTANCE FOR COMMUNITY SCHOOL FAMILIES PROGRAM ESTABLISHED UNDER § 9.9–104.1 OF THIS SUBTITLE OUTREACH AND IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN IN COMMUNITY SCHOOLS.**

(4) In addition to the funding provided for the Director of Community Schools position in the Department, the Governor may include in the annual budget bill an

appropriation of at least \$100,000 to the Department for the Director of Community Schools to provide training and technical assistance to community schools and for additional staff.

9.9–104.

(a) (1) A community school shall have an experienced and qualified community school coordinator who:

(i) Is hired at the appropriate administrative level;

(ii) Understands, respects, and demonstrates a high degree of cultural awareness of and competency in the diversity in the community and in cross-cultural practice with stakeholders; and

(iii) May be employed by the school district.

(2) A community school coordinator may be a social worker.

(b) (1) A community school coordinator shall be responsible for:

(i) Establishing a community school;

(ii) Completing an assessment of the needs of the students in the school for appropriate wraparound services to enhance the success of all students in the school;

(iii) Developing an implementation plan based on the assessment of needs for the community school, in cooperation with other interested stakeholders; ~~and~~

~~(iv) IDENTIFYING STUDENT HOUSEHOLDS ELIGIBLE FOR THE RENTAL ASSISTANCE FOR COMMUNITY SCHOOL FAMILIES PROGRAM ESTABLISHED UNDER § 9.9-104.1 OF THIS SUBTITLE AND AIDING IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROGRAM AT THE COMMUNITY SCHOOL; AND~~

~~[(iv)] (v)~~ Coordinating support programs that address out-of-school learning barriers for students and families, including:

1. Wraparound services; and

2. As appropriate:

A. Tutoring;

B. English language learner courses;

C. Early childhood development and parenting classes;

- D. College and career advising;
- E. Employment opportunities;
- F. Citizenship education;
- G. Food pantries; [and]

H. RENTAL ASSISTANCE, IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 9.9–104.1 OF THIS SUBTITLE; AND

[H.] I. School-based behavioral and physical health services.

(2) The needs assessment completed under this subsection shall:

(i) Be completed in collaboration with:

1. The principal;
2. A school health care practitioner; and
3. A parent teacher organization or a school council;

(ii) Include an assessment of the physical, behavioral, and mental health needs and wraparound service needs of students, their families, and their communities; and

(iii) Be submitted to the Department and the local school system within 1 year of receiving a personnel grant under § 5–223 of this article or within 1 year of becoming a community school.

(3) The implementation plan completed under this subsection shall include:

(i) A strategy for providing wraparound services to address the needs of the students, their families, and their communities, building on and strengthening community resources near the school;

(ii) Inclusion, if possible and practicable, of community partners in geographic proximity to the school that can assist in meeting the needs identified in the assessment;

(iii) Ensure that time is made available to train staff on the supports available, the need for the supports, and how to engage with the community schools coordinator to access these supports; and

(iv) Develop strategies to maximize external non-State or non-local education funding.

(4) (i) The implementation plan shall be submitted to the local school system for approval within 1 year of completion of the needs assessment.

(ii) After the implementation plan is approved by the local school system it shall be submitted to the Department.

9.9-104.1.

(A) (1) IN THIS SECTION THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS INDICATED.

(2) “FUND” MEANS THE RENTAL ASSISTANCE FOR COMMUNITY SCHOOL FAMILIES FUND.

(3) “PROGRAM” MEANS THE RENTAL ASSISTANCE FOR COMMUNITY SCHOOL FAMILIES PROGRAM.

(B) THERE IS A RENTAL ASSISTANCE FOR COMMUNITY SCHOOL FAMILIES PROGRAM.

(C) (1) THE PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM IS TO PROVIDE RENTAL ASSISTANCE TO ELIGIBLE STUDENT HOUSEHOLDS AT COMMUNITY SCHOOLS.

(2) THE PROGRAM SHALL BE ADMINISTERED BY THE ~~DEPARTMENT,~~ IN CONSULTATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT.

(D) TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR RENTAL ASSISTANCE UNDER THE PROGRAM, A COMMUNITY SCHOOL STUDENT MUST BE:

(1) ENROLLED IN A COMMUNITY SCHOOL THAT RECEIVES FUNDING UNDER § 5-223 OF THIS ARTICLE; AND

~~(2) COUNTED UNDER COMPENSATORY EDUCATION ENROLLMENT AS DEFINED UNDER § 5-222 OF THIS ARTICLE; AND~~

~~(3) (2) FROM A HOUSEHOLD ~~THAT;~~~~

(I) THAT IS HOUSED IN A RENTAL PROPERTY, WHERE AT LEAST ONE HOUSEHOLD MEMBER IS AT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS OR HOUSING INSTABILITY, AS EVIDENCED BY PAST DUE RENT OR UTILITY NOTICES, UNSAFE LIVING CONDITIONS, OR OTHER EVIDENCE DETERMINED BY THE ~~COMMUNITY SCHOOLS COORDINATOR~~ DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT; AND OR

(II) WHERE AT LEAST ONE MEMBER QUALIFIES FOR ASSISTANCE UNDER THE FEDERAL MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS ASSISTANCE ACT.

~~**(4) FROM A HOUSEHOLD WHERE AT LEAST ONE MEMBER IS EXPERIENCING FINANCIAL HARDSHIP, AS EVIDENCED BY RECEIPT OF UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS OR OTHER EVIDENCE DETERMINED BY THE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS COORDINATOR.**~~

(E) (1) ~~THE PROGRAM SHALL PROVIDE RENTAL AND UTILITY PAYMENTS ON BEHALF OF ELIGIBLE COMMUNITY SCHOOL STUDENT HOUSEHOLDS DIRECTLY TO A HOUSEHOLD'S LANDLORD OR UTILITY COMPANY TO ASSIST WITH~~ ELIGIBLE USES FOR PAYMENTS UNDER THE PROGRAM INCLUDE:

(I) RENTAL PAYMENTS;

(II) RENTAL ARREARS;

(III) FINES OR FEES ASSOCIATED WITH RENTAL PAYMENTS, INCLUDING A LATE FINE OR FEE;

(IV) UTILITY PAYMENTS;

(V) UTILITY ARREARS; ~~OR~~

(VI) FINES OR FEES ASSOCIATED WITH UTILITY PAYMENTS, INCLUDING A LATE FINE OR FEE; OR

(VII) RELOCATION EXPENSES.

(2) EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH (3) OF THIS SUBSECTION, AN ELIGIBLE STUDENT'S HOUSEHOLD MAY RECEIVE SUPPORT FROM THE PROGRAM FOR UP TO 12 MONTHS.

(3) SUBJECT TO THE AVAILABILITY OF FUNDING, AN ELIGIBLE STUDENT'S HOUSEHOLD MAY RECEIVE ONE 3-MONTH EXTENSION OF SUPPORT IF

THE COMMUNITY SCHOOL STUDENT REMAINS ELIGIBLE UNDER SUBSECTION (D) OF THIS SECTION FOLLOWING 12 MONTHS OF SUPPORT.

~~(F) THE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS COORDINATOR SHALL IDENTIFY ELIGIBLE STUDENT HOUSEHOLDS AND FACILITATE DIRECT PAYMENTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUBSECTION (E) OF THIS SECTION.~~

~~(G)~~ (F) (1) THERE IS A RENTAL ASSISTANCE FOR COMMUNITY SCHOOL FAMILIES FUND.

(2) THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SHALL ADMINISTER THE FUND.

(3) (I) THE FUND IS A SPECIAL, NONLAPSING FUND THAT IS NOT SUBJECT TO § 7-302 OF THE STATE FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT ARTICLE.

(II) THE STATE TREASURER SHALL HOLD THE FUND SEPARATELY, AND THE COMPTROLLER SHALL ACCOUNT FOR THE FUND.

(4) THE FUND CONSISTS OF:

(I) MONEY APPROPRIATED IN THE STATE BUDGET TO THE FUND;

(II) INTEREST EARNINGS; AND

(III) ANY OTHER MONEY FROM ANY OTHER SOURCE ACCEPTED FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE FUND.

(5) THE FUND MAY BE USED ONLY TO:

(I) PROVIDE RENTAL ASSISTANCE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROGRAM; AND

(II) COVER THE COSTS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TO ADMINISTER THE FUND.

~~(6) IN DETERMINING WHICH ELIGIBLE STUDENT HOUSEHOLDS TO SUPPORT UNDER THE PROGRAM, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL GIVE PREFERENCE TO ELIGIBLE STUDENT HOUSEHOLDS FROM COMMUNITY SCHOOLS WITH THE LOWEST PROPORTION OF ELIGIBLE STUDENT HOUSEHOLDS.~~

~~(7) FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026, THE~~ THE GOVERNOR SHALL MAY
INCLUDE IN THE ANNUAL BUDGET BILL AN APPROPRIATION OF \$10,000,000 ~~OF~~
~~\$10,000,000~~ FOR THE FUND.

Article – State Finance and Procurement

6–226.

(a) (2) (i) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, and unless inconsistent with a federal law, grant agreement, or other federal requirement or with the terms of a gift or settlement agreement, net interest on all State money allocated by the State Treasurer under this section to special funds or accounts, and otherwise entitled to receive interest earnings, as accounted for by the Comptroller, shall accrue to the General Fund of the State.

(ii) The provisions of subparagraph (i) of this paragraph do not apply to the following funds:

189. the Teacher Retention and Development Fund; [and]

190. the Protecting Against Hate Crimes Grant Fund; AND

191. THE RENTAL ASSISTANCE FOR COMMUNITY SCHOOL FAMILIES FUND.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July 1, 2024.

Approved by the Governor, April 25, 2024.