

## 2012 Public Policy Priorities

*Maryland Nonprofits has adopted the following priorities for our public policy efforts in the coming year and we urge our members and the nonprofit community as a whole to support these important issues.*

### **Protect important state programs and services by adopting reasonable new revenue measures – a “Balanced Approach”**

- Last year’s increase in the tax on alcoholic beverages will provide about \$85 million in additional funds for FY 2013. Even with these funds, and despite the fact that legislation in recent years has reduced normal formula increases in many programs, the state faces a projected structural deficit for FY 2013 of more than \$1 billion.
- Recent state budgets have established new lower baselines for many programs, and even when revenues do normalize any real ‘catch up’ in funding is unlikely. The Maryland Budget and Tax Policy Institute has identified numerous options to increase revenue. Almost any combination of these can be prevented from having major regressive impacts on vulnerable populations by including improvements in the state Earned Income Tax Credit program.
- Nonprofits must join other advocates and call on elected leaders **to balance years of cuts and cutbacks by adopting reasonable revenue measures** to deal with the structural shortfalls remaining in our revenue system.

### **Make Maryland’s health care exchange an effective system for access to quality affordable health care for all Marylanders**

- In 2011 legislation established a framework for the Maryland’s health care exchange as a semi-public entity, but deferred decisions on the degree of its powers and authority relative to the insurance industry, as well as funding and other issues, pending studies during the past legislative interim.
- **We will support and work with those advocates fighting to assure that the exchange has sufficient power to assure all Marylanders access to quality care at reasonable cost.** We will also continue to monitor and protect the interests of nonprofits as employers regarding development of the exchange or health insurance incentives.

**Assure Reform of State Procurement Practices**

- The Task Force to Study Procurement of Health, Social and Education Services by State Agencies – created by Maryland Nonprofit’s legislative initiative in 2008 – has recommended changes or reforms that address most if not all of the problems with state agency contracting practices our members have complained of in recent years.
- Along with streamlining and standardizing documents and practices as much as possible, ***the Task Force has recommended and we will support creation of a new entity to oversee the implementation of its recommendations*** and to serve as an ongoing monitor of procurement of these services. They recommended that this include representatives of both state agencies and the provider community.

**Allow Fair Access to Housing**

- Working with a broad coalition of organizations and advocates we will continue to support the “HOME Act” (“MARYLAND HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES MADE EQUAL ACT”) ***to ban discrimination in housing based on the renter’s or purchaser’s source of income***. In Maryland today, in many cases people receiving benefits as veterans, for disabilities, or simply government or private rental assistance are denied equal housing opportunities.

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*We will continue to review and comment on other legislative issues based on our past positions and our Principles for Public Policy Action. We urge all nonprofits to recognize or endorse these principles in their advocacy efforts.*

**Maryland Nonprofits’ Principles for Public Policy Action**

- ***Advocate for Sufficient Public Investment in Our Communities***
- ***Strengthen the Role and Participation of the People in the Direction of Their Government***
- ***Broaden the Involvement and Increase the Effectiveness of Nonprofit Organizations as Advocates for the People and Communities They Serve***
- ***Promote and Strengthen the Nonprofit Sector’s Relationship With Government***
- ***Increase Philanthropy and Volunteerism in Maryland***

To get involved with our public policy efforts please contact Henry Bogdan, Director of Public Policy, at [hbogdan@mdnonprofit.org](mailto:hbogdan@mdnonprofit.org) or 410-727-6367