



April 27, 2021

Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq.
President
Board of Charles County Commissioners
200 Baltimore Street
La Plata, MD 20646

RE: Support for the Charles County Charitable Trust's FY2022 Budget Request

Dear Commissioner President Collins,

On behalf of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington (Catholic Charities), I am writing to express my great appreciation for the work of the Charles County Charitable Trust (Charitable Trust) and offer my **strong support for the Charitable Trust's budget request for Fiscal Year 2022.**

Catholic Charities greatly appreciates the grant awards we have received from the Charitable Trust over the past six years, including funds to support our Angel's Watch emergency shelter in Charles County. **Angel's Watch provides safe, dignified emergency shelter for single women and families experiencing homelessness.** We also offer a comprehensive array of supportive services to empower individuals and families to regain housing stability and increase their self-sufficiency. Grant funding from the Charitable Trust provides critical support for our staff and allows us to provide clients with direct assistance to help them secure permanent housing as quickly as possible.

Within the Tri-County region, homelessness continues to disproportionately affect Charles County residents. In January 2020, the Southern Maryland Local Homeless Coalition found 253 individuals experiencing homelessness in Charles County, compared to 76 individuals in St. Mary's County and 70 individuals in Calvert County. **This total represents a 56% increase from 2019, showing an alarmingly upward trend even before the onset of the pandemic.** Among those 253 individuals were 65 single women and 100 individuals from 27 family households. With the capacity to serve up to 100 adults and children at a time, Angel's Watch plays a critical role in combating homelessness, and funds from the Charitable Trust play a critical role in ensuring Angel's Watch can meet this high demand.

Furthermore, **the Charitable Trust's steadfast partnership has been instrumental as we faced the extraordinary challenges of the pandemic.** We are deeply grateful for the Charitable Trust's facilitation of Charles County's COVID response funding over the past year. Thanks to the Commissioners' generous allocation of COVID funds to the non-profit community, grants from the Charitable Trust helped Catholic Charities' Southern Maryland Food Bank (SMFB) distribute weekly packages of free, nutritious food to children, seniors, and families who were experiencing heightened food insecurity due to the pandemic. In total, these funds allowed the SMFB to provide **over 3,900 free packages of food to vulnerable Charles County residents.**



Additional COVID response grants allowed the SMFB to provide **300 holiday meals to seniors** and distribute **800 holiday grocery packages and pre-made meals** to 17 of our partner pantries throughout the County. This heightened level of outreach and food assistance would not have been possible without the Charitable Trust's advocacy on behalf of the County's non-profit organizations.

Catholic Charities also greatly appreciates the Charitable Trust's work to promote the effectiveness of Charles County's nonprofit sector. From conducting local economic and social impact studies to convening community forums, the Charitable Trust makes a tremendous difference in building the capacity of the County's nonprofit community. Additionally, **the numerous organizations supported by the Charitable Trust's grants program play a critical role in providing a diverse array of high-quality services for marginalized, low-income Charles County residents.**

We are grateful that our communities are beginning to recover but we expect **the economic consequences of the pandemic will have a long-lasting and disproportionate effect on low- and moderate-income households**, especially their ability to maintain stable housing and have consistent access to healthy food. Full funding for the Charitable Trust's grant program in Fiscal Year 2022 will ensure that Charles County's non-profit organizations can continue to provide critical safety net services for Charles County residents in need.

Commissioner President Collins, I respectfully request your support for full funding of the Charitable Trust's proposed budget in Fiscal Year 2022. Should you have any questions regarding Catholic Charities' partnership with the Charitable Trust, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone at 202-772-4369 or by e-mail at john.enzler@cc-dc.org.

Thank you for your consideration and for your commitment to meeting the needs of the most vulnerable members of the Charles County community.

Sincerely,

Monsignor John J. Enzler
President and CEO