



FAMILIES COUNT – MARYLAND

FAMILIES COUNT – MARYLAND celebrates extraordinary organizations that improve the odds for our state’s most vulnerable children by giving them what they need most — strong, capable and economically successful families. From western Maryland to central Baltimore, in communities on the Eastern Shore and near our nation’s capital, these organizations partner with families struggling to create a better future for their children.

FAMILIES COUNT – MARYLAND embraces a simple but powerful principle: **Children do well when their families do well, and families do better when they live in supportive communities.** The seven organizations honored through the program provide the opportunities, services and supports families need to succeed at home and in the workplace.

Thousands of low-income families in our state continue to find it extremely difficult to get by and get ahead, even as they work harder and longer than ever before. Their communities too often lack the most basic elements that allow parents to fulfill their family aspirations: good schools, safe streets, affordable housing, accessible health care and decent recreational facilities. The absence of family-supporting job opportunities and reliable transportation to work in other neighborhoods makes it still harder for these families to move out of poverty.

These families are not without hope because they are not without champions. Their champions are the people and organizations working side by side with them every day. FAMILIES COUNT – MARYLAND brings attention to the effectiveness these organizations achieve when they put families at the center. It also rewards their work and ensures their durability by making an unrestricted award of \$500,000, paid over five or more years.

FAMILIES COUNT – MARYLAND helps us mark the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s tenth anniversary in Maryland. We can think of no better way to celebrate this occasion than to recognize the outstanding work already being done every day by these and countless other organizations throughout the state to improve the odds for our most vulnerable children. The continuing challenge for all of us is less about know-how than it is about will — the willingness to care enough and do enough so that all families can realize their dreams for their children.