



MARTIN O'MALLEY  
*Governor*  
ANTHONY G. BROWN  
*Lt. Governor*  
RAYMOND A. SKINNER  
*Secretary*  
CLARENCE J. SNUGGS  
*Deputy Secretary*

April 5, 2012

Mr. Frank J. Principi  
Chairman, COG Board of Directors  
777 North Capitol Street, NE, Ste. 300  
Washington, D.C. 20002

Dear Chairman Principi:

Thank you for your email to Governor Martin O'Malley regarding the allocation of Maryland's share of the national Attorneys General Settlement Funds, including your support for nonprofit housing counseling. The Governor has received your email and asked that I respond on his behalf.


The O'Malley/Brown Administration recognizes the key role of nonprofit housing counselors in helping Maryland families stay in their homes. We know first-hand that housing counseling works. Since launching the Maryland HOPE initiative in 2007, we have developed partnerships with thirty-five housing counseling agencies and seven legal-services providers. Our nonprofit legal partners have recruited more than 1,250 pro bono lawyers as a complimentary and critical resource for consumers.

In 2010, the Mediation Act was passed which included the creation of the Maryland Housing Counseling Fund, a dedicated fund for the support of counseling, legal and mediation services. The O'Malley/Brown Administration has invested more than \$10 million in housing counseling since 2007, assisting more than 70,000 consumers.

The national settlement gives Maryland an important opportunity to expand our efforts on behalf of the many Maryland families and neighborhoods that have been hurt by foreclosure crisis. Representatives from the Governor's Office, the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, and the Department of Housing and Community Development are working closely with the Maryland Attorney General's Office and other stakeholders to recommend a strategic plan for use of settlement funds, one that builds upon the existing assets that we have in place.

Thank you once again for your valuable advice. The Governor appreciates hearing from you. If I may be of further assistance on this or any other matter, please do not hesitate to contact me or Ms. Carol Gilbert, Assistant Secretary, at 410-514-7229 or via email at [gilbert@mdhousing.org](mailto:gilbert@mdhousing.org).

Sincerely,

  
Raymond A. Skinner  
Secretary

cc: Ms. Carol Gilbert, Assistant Secretary, DHCD

RAS/cg

