



2023 MOORE-MILLER TRANSITION REPORT

Recommendations to Transform Maryland

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- 2. Expand clean energy research and commercialize it
- 3. Ensure Maryland generates 100% clean energy by 2035
- 4. Work with organized labor, the state’s university system, and community colleges to support credentialing and training programs to re-skill and re-deploy workers displaced by the transition to clean energy and benefit groups underrepresented in this field
- 5. Expand solar, wind, and battery storage in Maryland

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- 6. Appoint a statewide Chief Sustainability, Mitigation, and Resilience Officer to work across agencies and ensure that climate and environmental targets are being reached
- 7. Employ a whole-of-government approach
- 8. Work to strengthen the state’s regional partnerships, such as the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), and ensure that new revenues from the federal government and those generated from this cap-and-trade system are reinvested in the green economy to help Maryland reach its goals
- 9. Prioritize equity, labor, and justice in all agencies, programs, activities, and initiatives across all branches of government
- 10. Rely on the expertise of climate scientists, experts, and stakeholders

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- 11. Improve the health, quality of life, and economic opportunities for all Marylanders—including overburdened, under-resourced, and underserved communities and populations—by addressing environmental injustice

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- 12. Address the worsening effects of extreme heat including for vulnerable and susceptible populations
- 13. Improve Maryland’s air quality statewide including in disadvantaged and overburdened communities
- 14. Address urban heat islands including impacts on vulnerable communities and populations

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7. Explore options to simplify and rationalize the state’s tax system to make compliance easier, make Maryland more competitive as a place to live and work, and attract and retain businesses

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10. Make Maryland the capital of quantum

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- 2. Expand Maryland’s apprenticeship programs to help underrepresented communities better access high-paying jobs of the future, positioning Maryland to meet the challenges of the tech, nursing, and manufacturing labor shortages

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- 3. Create new pathways to the workforce by expanding access to short-term credentialing programs and other programs that create a career ladder for participants
- 4. Support employers who provide upskilling for workers of color
- 5. Remove barriers to employment

WORKERS' RIGHTS

- 6. Ensure passage of a comprehensive paid family and medical leave program
- 7. Ensure the Department of Labor enforces Maryland's worker misclassification statute
- 8. Strengthen collective bargaining rights
- 9. Accelerate the minimum wage increase to \$15 per hour by the end of 2023
- 10. Protect, support, and empower Maryland's working families

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- 1. Promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in law enforcement agencies
- 2. Support expanded decertification standards for law enforcement officers
- 3. Improve data collection at the state level, and produce reports in a consistent and timely manner
- 4. Improve coordination and collaboration among state, local, and federal law enforcement agencies
- 5. Support localities in the development of police reform plans
- 6. Support mental health resources for law enforcement officers

PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES AND ADDRESSING VIOLENT CRIME

- 7. Rebuild trust and strengthen relationships between law enforcement and the community
- 8. Fund Crisis Intervention Teams (CITs) and additional behavioral health programming in the community
- 9. Reduce and prevent gun violence
- 10. Keep guns out of the hands of people intent on harming themselves or others
- 11. Promote education about firearm safety and safe storage
- 12. Address the large number of sexual assault and domestic violence cases

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- 13. Build capacity within the new Secretary of Emergency Management
- 14. Increase collaboration with local jurisdictions, and improve the state's ability to support local emergencies
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- 16. Improve cross-disciplinary collaboration across federal, state, and local agencies
- 17. Bring greater attention to preparedness to ensure Maryland will be ready to respond in case of an emergency

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QUALITY PUBLIC TRANSIT

- 1. Ensure that efforts to improve mass transit focus on the people who need it most
- 2. Remove the politics from transportation
- 3. Build an interconnected, well-maintained transportation network to affordably and effectively move people from where they live to where they work

TRANSIT HUBS/PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

4. Develop a faster, more frequent, and reliable regional rail network
5. Leverage the influx of federal funds to build generational infrastructure improvements
6. Better leverage the Port of Baltimore
7. Drive growth and expansion of BWI Marshall Airport
8. Ensure holistic infrastructure planning

ROAD AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

9. Expand transit-oriented communities
10. Address the connection between transportation and public health
11. Make Maryland's roads safer

CLEANER MARYLAND TRANSIT

12. Increase the number of electric and other zero-emissions vehicles on the road
13. Convert the state's transit and school bus fleets to zero-emissions technology

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2. Increase diversity on corporate and nonprofit boards for companies and nonprofits incorporated in Maryland
3. Work with the General Assembly to expand the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC) to make them permanent
4. Immediately expand SNAP eligibility to reach more families and increase equitable access to nutritious food options
5. Invest in the future of low-income children from birth
6. Provide support to Marylanders whose credit and economic prospects are disproportionately affected by student loan debt

EQUITABLE FINANCIAL OPPORTUNITY: SUPPORTING MBES

7. Hold vendors and agencies accountable to MBE goals by streamlining and modernizing processes, and ensure procurement agencies reach their goals for investing in MBE contracts
8. Ensure MBE owners know what resources are available to them, and provide MBEs with mentoring and technical assistance
9. Implement procurement reform

HISTORICALLY MARGINALIZED GROUPS

10. Center state government on the needs of all Marylanders, specifically the needs of historically marginalized groups, and build a more equitable future where every Marylander can thrive
11. Prioritize accessible, inclusive government, and actively work to dismantle any barriers that prevent engagement by historically marginalized communities
12. Intentionally and proactively create and improve services and supports for seniors, pursue Maryland as an age-friendly state, and develop a master plan for aging
13. Improve the lives of Maryland's veterans and military families
14. Increase the well-being of LGBTQIA+ Marylanders, and ensure Maryland is a place they can thrive
15. Build a more inclusive Maryland for people with disabilities

16. Increase and improve services and support for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families to live, learn, work, and play alongside Marylanders without disabilities
17. Create fair and equitable pathways to integrate immigrant communities

LEGAL/CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND INCARCERATION/REENTRY

18. Support the legalization of cannabis, address historic racial and social inequities related to enforcement, and ensure the legal market is implemented equitably
19. Ensure revenue generated from the legal cannabis industry helps to address past harms of criminalization
20. Combat the economic consequences of interactions with law enforcement and the criminal justice system
21. Implement probation and parole reform with a focus on successful reentry
22. Expand pretrial service programs across the state
23. Provide for a restorative justice system and reform sentencing laws for juveniles
24. Invest in and improve the reentry process, increase access to employment opportunities upon release from incarceration, and explore effective ways to reduce fee burdens



LETTER FROM THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



Dear Maryland,

Thank you for making the impossible possible. On January 18, 2023, Wes Moore became the 63rd governor of Maryland—and the first Black governor in the state’s history. I am humbled to be your 10th lieutenant governor of Maryland.

In November 2022, Governor-Elect Moore appointed me to serve as Chair of the Transition Team. Between November 2022 and February 2023, believing those closest to the challenges are closest to the solutions, we assembled the most diverse and inclusive team in Maryland’s history, composed of advocates, activists, and experts from across the state. Throughout the process, the Transition Team engaged with the public at large and developed recommendations—from immediate operational efficiencies to transformational initiatives that will take longer to fully realize—to aid the incoming administration in building a Maryland where we leave no one behind.

Governor Moore and I extend our deepest gratitude to everyone who stepped up to serve: the transition co-chairs, steering committee members, and policy committee members who worked tirelessly in dedicating their time and expertise; the public at large for sharing its thoughtful observations and solutions; and Transition Director Cleo Hirsch and her team for their considerable guidance and leadership in crafting this report.

Working toward a better and more just Maryland requires our collective effort. When we build our state together, there is nothing Maryland cannot achieve—not just for some of us, but for all of us.

This is our time, Maryland. Let’s continue to make the impossible possible.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Aruna Miller". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Aruna Miller
Maryland Lieutenant Governor

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Moore-Miller Transition Team is a diverse coalition of leaders from across Maryland, working together to create a comprehensive set of policy recommendations to rebuild state government and accomplish progressive policy priorities. As Governor Wes Moore said in his Inaugural speech, “Maryland is home to spectacular natural beauty, dynamic industries, and people as talented as they are determined. But the truth is: Maryland is asset-rich and strategy-poor. And for too long, we have left too many people behind.” The Transition Team approached its work with a sense of urgency, developing a set of recommendations that will harness this historic moment to begin to realize Maryland’s potential and propel the state toward a bolder, brighter future where no one is left behind.

The team was chaired by Lieutenant Governor Aruna Miller, whose guiding vision was to build the most diverse and inclusive transition in Maryland’s history and ensure a strong start to the Moore-Miller Administration. Co-chairs included Angela Alsobrooks, Prince George’s County Executive; Shelonda Stokes, president of the Downtown Partnership of Baltimore; Mary Tydings, the Moore-Miller Campaign Treasurer; and Ken Ulman, former Howard County Executive. The Steering Committee comprised 29 business, philanthropic, and elected leaders from across the state who provided expert guidance throughout the transition to elevate the voices of all Marylanders.

“ THIS TEAM REFLECTS THE BEST OF THE STATE OF MARYLAND. THEIR RECOMMENDATIONS WILL HELP GUIDE US TO TAKE BOLD ACTIONS THAT WILL BENEFIT GENERATIONS OF MARYLANDERS.”

– Governor Wes Moore

Nine Transition Policy Committees were formed, each with three co-chairs and 20-25 executive members. Members of the Steering Committee were also given the opportunity to join these committees. The Transition Policy Committees included:

- **Climate and the Environment**
- **Education**
- **Growing Maryland Competitiveness**
- **Health Care**
- **Housing**
- **Jobs and Workforce Development**
- **Public Safety**
- **Transportation**
- **Unlocking Opportunity**



Additionally, the Transition Team included an administrative committee: Rebuilding Government. Maryland is the most diverse state on the East Coast, with a majority-minority population. However, despite the diverse needs of the state, there are nearly 10,000 vacancies in state government, including over 6,000 vacancies in the executive branch alone. These vacancies mean that the needs of all Marylanders are not being met. The Rebuilding Government Committee focused on building strong systems and structures to elevate public service as a calling in Maryland, and it focused on recruiting and retaining a diverse, world-class team to lead the state through public service. And Marylanders responded, demonstrating an overwhelming interest in joining the administration and serving the people of Maryland.

“MARYLANDERS WERE NOT ONLY FAST TO OFFER SOLUTIONS BUT EXPRESSED A DEEP DESIRE TO BE PART OF THE SOLUTION... MARYLANDERS ARE READY TO SERVE.”

– Governor Wes Moore, in his first State of the State address

The Transition Team also engaged members of the public at every stage in the process—an unprecedented move that gave all Marylanders the opportunity to contribute their ideas and influence decisions that affect their lives.

TRANSITION BY THE NUMBERS

265	2,833	1,589	2,559	5,000+	1,739
transition team members	people applied to join the administration	people applied to join a board or commission	people signed up to be at-large members	people joined the town hall meetings	policy ideas were submitted

In total, over 5,000 Marylanders participated in the transition process.

The diverse and inclusive Transition Team developed a set of recommendations for the incoming administration that honors policy commitments made during the campaign and promotes continuity of vision and values between the campaign and the incoming administration. As policy committees reviewed the Moore-Miller campaign platform, they mapped out the following information for each policy commitment derived from the campaign:

- **Theory of change:** How will the policy transform the lives of all Marylanders?
- **Policy levers:** What is the mechanism for the change to occur?
- **Key leader(s):** Who are the key departments/agencies/groups responsible for leading the change?
- **Recommended actions:** What are the key actions to implement in the short- and long-terms?
- **Measures of success:** What metrics should be used to track progress?

“THE TRANSITION TEAM’S PROFESSIONAL AND LIVED EXPERIENCES, ALONG WITH ITS FOCUS ON LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND, RESULTED IN COMPREHENSIVE AND COMPASSIONATE RECOMMENDATIONS. ITS EFFORTS LAY THE GROUNDWORK FOR A STRONG POLICY AGENDA THAT WILL ENSURE EVERY MARYLANDER HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO THRIVE.”

–Lt. Governor Aruna Miller

The recommendations outlined by each individual committee in the pages that follow will provide the Moore-Miller Administration with actionable steps to make progress toward campaign promises throughout the first term. The administration should view these recommendations holistically and work in synergy to address critical issues for Marylanders. The nine policy committees shared common themes including:

- **Leave no one behind.**
- **Create safer communities.**
- **End childhood poverty.**
- **Build a world-class education system that includes a service year option and job-training opportunities.**
- **Make Maryland more competitive and strengthen its economy.**
- **Protect the environment.**



Briefly provided below are just a few examples of recommended policies from various workgroups that illustrate ways to address each thematic area. *For a comprehensive list of recommendations outlined by each policy committee, please refer to the Transition Report in its entirety.*



THEME #1: LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND.

The notion of leaving no Marylander behind was a common theme throughout each committee’s work and all public meetings. The **Unlocking Opportunity Committee**, for example, examined how state government can better support historically marginalized groups, promote equitable financial opportunity and support MBEs, and improve the legal and criminal justice system to ensure formerly incarcerated individuals have a fair shot at opportunity. An overarching recommendation of this committee was that state government must center the needs of all Marylanders—and specifically those of historically marginalized groups—in its daily actions and decision-making. The **Housing Committee** looked at expanding affordable housing opportunities for seniors, persons with disabilities, and persons experiencing homelessness, while the **Health Care Committee** examined how the state can care for its seniors and support aging in place. Recommendations of the **Education Committee** included how to provide better services for students with disabilities, and the **Transportation Committee** looked at how the state can ensure that efforts to improve mass transit focus on the people who need it the most.



THEME #2: MAKE COMMUNITIES SAFER.

Public safety was a ubiquitous theme throughout the discussions of the various workgroups, with many committees developing recommendations around policies to make all communities safer. The **Unlocking Opportunity Committee** looked at how to implement probation and parole reform with a focus on successful reentry. Additionally, this committee examined how the state can better protect juveniles by reforming laws and using restorative practices. In its recommendations, the **Climate and the Environment Committee** assessed how to reduce the impact of urban heat islands on vulnerable communities and populations, while the **Education Committee** looked at strategies to combat the school-to-prison pipeline and support intervention and enrichment opportunities inside and outside of school that can keep young people engaged. And, of course, the **Public Safety Committee** advocated for a holistic approach to public safety that includes improving internal police department operations, improving public safety services, addressing violent crime, and strengthening Maryland's emergency management.



THEME #3: END CHILDHOOD POVERTY.

Governor Moore's commitment to young people throughout Maryland was evident at every step of the campaign, and the state's responsibility to support all young people and provide them with the tools and resources they need to become successful adults was a common theme during the transition. The **Education Committee** called for reinstating the Governor's Office of Children as a central, convening force dedicated to building a more cohesive, strategic approach to supporting young people in Maryland. Additionally, it looked at strategies to make child care and preschool more affordable and accessible, and suggested Maryland develop a "Birth to Blueprint" plan to support the state's youngest residents. The **Jobs and Workforce Development Committee** examined how to provide paid family and medical leave to all working Marylanders, ensuring young families can begin their journey into parenthood on sound financial footing. In its recommendations, the **Unlocking Opportunity Committee** assessed how to invest in low-income children from birth, through policies such as expanding and making permanent the Earned Income Tax Credit, the Child Tax Credit, and SNAP. The **Housing Committee** looked at how the state can ensure healthy, safe, and climate-friendly housing is available to all Marylanders, including low-income infants, children, and pregnant women, and the **Health Care Committee** looked at how Maryland can break down disparities in maternal mortality.



THEME #4: BUILD A WORLD-CLASS EDUCATION SYSTEM THAT INCLUDES A SERVICE YEAR OPTION AND JOB-TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES.

Building a world-class education system is key to Maryland's future success, and residents throughout the state expressed the importance of a well-resourced public education system to prepare young people for high-quality jobs. The **Education Committee** looked at strategies to fully fund and successfully implement the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, while also addressing some of the persistent needs that have become evident in the post-COVID education landscape, including teacher shortages and the need to support the social-emotional health of both students and teachers. It also examined strategies to strengthen child care and early childhood education, as well as higher education, and proposed a year-long service year option to create valuable experience and a pathway to college affordability for high school seniors who need a little extra time to develop their college and career plans. The **Jobs and Workforce Development Committee** looked at ways to expand Maryland's apprenticeship programs to help underrepresented communities better access high-paying jobs of the future, positioning Maryland to meet the

challenges of the tech, nursing, and manufacturing labor shortages, while the Agriculture and Rural Development workgroup in the **Growing Maryland's Competitiveness Committee** looked at ways to create and foster an agriculture education pipeline. The **Public Safety Committee** examined ways to promote education about firearm safety and safe storage.



THEME #5: **MAKE MARYLAND MORE COMPETITIVE AND STRENGTHEN ITS ECONOMY.**

All of the ambitious policy initiatives outlined in this report rely on Maryland continuing to grow its economy to make it a world-class destination for businesses and residents alike. Throughout the transition, Marylanders echoed Governor Moore's assertion that Maryland is resource-rich but strategy-poor, and many committees worked on policies to make Maryland more competitive both in the U.S. and globally. The **Jobs and Workforce Development Committee** looked at accelerating the minimum wage increase to \$15 an hour by the end of 2023. The **Unlocking Opportunity Committee** examined how the state could implement procurement reform to better leverage the billions of dollars it spends each year toward a more competitive and equitable economy. In its set of recommendations, the **Housing Committee** proposed renewing the state's commitment to smart and equitable growth policies that shape its approach to housing, transportation, community development, and resource preservation to help Maryland bring its full resources to bear and see communities grow and flourish. The **Climate and the Environment Committee** assessed how the state can expand clean energy research and commercialize it. And, of course, the **Growing Maryland's Competitiveness Committee** looked at an array of strategies to grow the state's competitiveness including strengthening the Department of Commerce, improving the business climate in the state, focusing on the state's regional strengths, and strengthening Maryland's biggest industry—agriculture.



THEME #6: **PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT.**

Lastly, throughout several of the committees, the importance of protecting the environment for present and future generations was a common theme. The **Housing Committee** outlined plans to leverage climate-related federal funds designed for housing to expand access to clean, healthy homes. The **Growing Maryland Competitiveness Committee** recommended strategies to promote sustainable agriculture, aquaculture, and forestry practices, and the **Transportation Committee** outlined the steps that Maryland could take to increase the number of electric vehicles on the road and expand transit-oriented communities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. And, of course, the **Climate and the Environment Committee** looked at an extensive set of policies that would fundamentally change Maryland's approach to climate and the environment. Key themes that emerged from this committee included the need to restore the Chesapeake Bay, strengthen state agencies that oversee climate and environmental programs, and prioritize environmental justice for marginalized communities that are historically and pervasively underserved.

The Moore-Miller Administration is committed to lead on initiatives that will improve the lives of Marylanders and propel Maryland to a position of excellence. This report brings forward challenges as well as opportunities to create a more competitive, inclusive, equitable, and compassionate Maryland.

This report is possible because of the Transition Team. Its hard work, dedication, leadership, and collaboration have culminated in the following set of recommendations to the Moore-Miller Administration, in an effort to make the shared vision to leave no one behind a reality.

MARYLAND'S MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Governor Moore speaks about the importance of being “heart-led and data-driven.” Inspired by this approach, the Moore-Miller Transition Team developed proposed measures for success for each policy outlined in the Transition Report. Additionally, an interdisciplinary team of experts from across all nine policy committees came together to discuss key measures that the administration might track to measure progress toward its overarching goals.

The proposed measures (outlined below) are grouped under five core themes expressed by Marylanders during the transition: (1) Make communities safer; (2) End childhood poverty; (3) Protect the environment; (4) Build a world-class education system that includes a service year option and job-training opportunities; and (5) Make Maryland more competitive and strengthen its economy.



MAKE COMMUNITIES SAFER.

There are many ways that the Moore-Miller Administration could measure public safety. Below are measures that span health, housing, and crime that all reflect key components of building safe communities.

- **Reducing primary care health professional shortage areas (HPSA)**, which are geographic areas designated by the federal government as having a shortage of primary care physicians, would be a strong indicator that more Marylanders have access to the health care they need.
- **Reducing recidivism** will help keep communities safer and provide formerly incarcerated individuals with the tools they need to reintegrate into society.
- **Reducing juvenile homicides and shootings** will keep young people and communities safe.
- **Reducing the percentage of youth under age 6 with elevated lead levels** will be an indicator of effective investments in healthy housing strategies.
- **Reducing the number of preventable deaths**, as measured by the CDC, will serve as an overarching indicator that communities are safer.



END CHILDHOOD POVERTY.

Ending childhood poverty has emerged as an early goal of the Moore-Miller Administration. Below are key measures that will indicate that Maryland is working to end childhood poverty through strategies that include not only economics, but also key areas like housing and health.

- **Reducing the racially targeted appraisal gap** will serve as a measure that families of color have the ability to build generational wealth as compared to white families.
- **Improving maternal and infant health** by reducing maternal mortality, the percent of preterm births, and the number of deaths of babies born underweight will ensure families get off to a healthy start.
- **Reducing the percentage of children under 18 in poverty** will serve as an overarching indicator that Maryland is providing an effective social safety net to families that provides young people the resources they need to thrive and breaks the cycle of generational poverty.



BUILD A WORLD-CLASS EDUCATION SYSTEM THAT INCLUDES A SERVICE YEAR OPTION AND JOB-TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES.

Maryland is poised to make generational change in education and build a world-class system that includes a service year option and job-training opportunities. Below are key measures that would indicate Maryland schools are making strides in the right direction.

- **Increasing third grade reading proficiency** will serve as an indicator that the Blueprint for Maryland's Future is improving Maryland's schools, as third grade reading scores are a critical predictor of future academic success.
- **Increasing math proficiency rates on the eighth grade state assessment** will also serve as a critical indicator that Maryland's public schools are providing students with the foundational tools they need to succeed.
- **Reducing gaps in high school graduation rates for historically underserved student groups** will indicate that Maryland is leaving no student behind, and that all students have opportunities to achieve this important milestone regardless of their background.
- **Increasing the percentage of youth ages 16-24 pursuing education or a job opportunity, or enrolled in a service program**, will indicate that young Marylanders have pathways toward a fulfilling career.



MAKE MARYLAND MORE COMPETITIVE AND STRENGTHEN ITS ECONOMY.

As Governor Moore often says, Maryland is resource-rich and strategy-poor. Below are measures that span economics, infrastructure, and jobs that would be strong indicators that Maryland is strategically maximizing its resources to become a more competitive state.

- **Increasing broadband coverage** will ensure businesses can operate efficiently and residents can access education, jobs, and resources.
- **Improving Maryland's real GDP growth in professional, scientific, and technical services** as compared with the nation will serve as a proxy for Maryland's ability to recruit growth industries and higher-paying jobs.
- **Increasing public transportation access to colleges, universities, and the top 10 employers in the state** will indicate that more Marylanders can access high-quality jobs and education, and that the state is effectively removing barriers that prevent people from accessing work.
- **Increasing net migration** to Maryland will indicate that the state is becoming a more attractive place to live.
- **Improving Maryland's real GDP growth** as compared to the nation will serve as an overarching indicator that Maryland is winning the decade.



PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT.

The state is in a critical phase of climate change where bold action is required to protect its environment for present and future generations. Below are key measures that would indicate Maryland is taking such action to accelerate the state's green economy and protect the environment.

- **Increasing the number of low- and no-emissions vehicles in the state's fleet as well as the number of EV charging stations across the state** will be an early indicator that the state is investing in clean transportation infrastructure.
- **Making progress toward the Chesapeake Bay Program milestones** will be an indicator that Maryland is on track to save the Bay.
- **Improving the air quality index** will be an indicator of how well Maryland is doing in reducing emissions and working with neighboring states to reduce their emissions.
- **Increasing megawatt hours (MWh) of zero-emissions energy produced** will be an indicator of the state's progress toward reaching 100% clean energy by 2035.
- **Increasing the number of LEAD-certified buildings** will be an indicator of how the state is doing to encourage adoption of energy-efficient appliances.
- **Reducing total greenhouse gas emissions and emissions by sector** will indicate Maryland is making progress toward the goal of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045 and reducing emissions by 60% by 2031.

THE MOORE-MILLER TRANSITION TEAM

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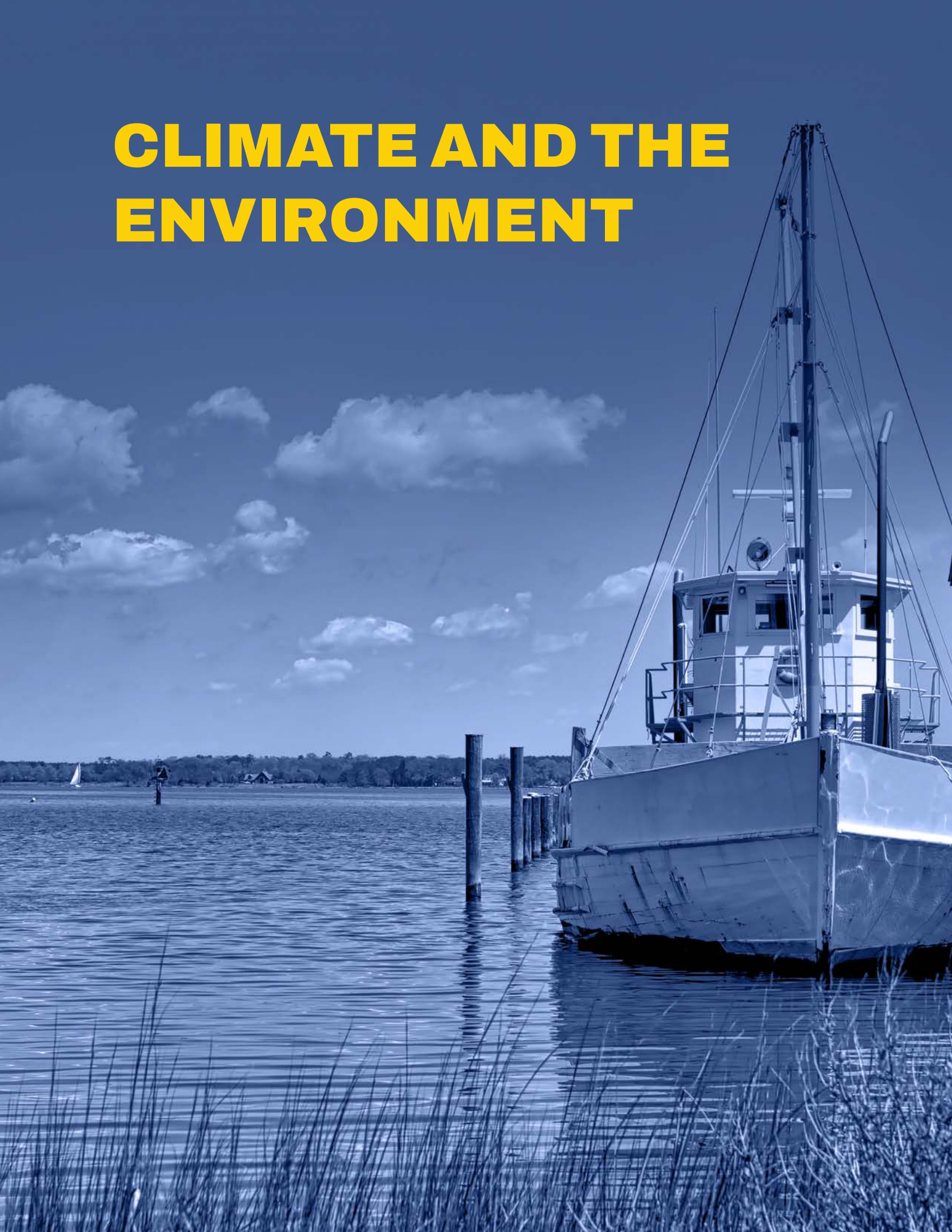
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Isaac Frumkin
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** Committee Chair*



CLIMATE AND THE ENVIRONMENT



The Climate and Environment Committee has worked together for eight weeks to develop clear recommendations to execute the promises that Governor Moore made to Marylanders during the Moore-Miller campaign. This report was compiled through a lens of ensuring that everyone has a seat at the table. The committee's membership demonstrated overwhelming diversity in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, geography, age, and background.

In order to work efficiently, the committee formed three working groups: (1) Clean Energy; (2) Government Leadership; and (3) Air, Heat, and Water. The Air, Heat, and Water working group also looked at the issue of Environmental Justice. Members of the full committee were given the opportunity to rank their preference of which working group they served on, to ensure everyone had the opportunity to put their skills to use.

Maryland has incredible natural resources that make it a great place to live, work, and raise a family. That said, Governor Moore knows that Maryland is behind the curve in combating climate change and protecting the environment. Taking bold, aggressive action to address these complex issues will help grow Maryland's economic future and ensure no one is left behind. The committee acknowledges that there are no quick fixes to these complex problems, but it produced a report that provides a robust set of recommendations around how Governor Moore could make significant progress in these critical areas.

In addition to committee members, Marylanders from all over the state provided input on how to quickly and efficiently safeguard and restore the state's environment and natural resources, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, build resilience to climate risks, and reduce the burden of pollution on underserved and under-resourced communities. The Climate and Environment Committee reviewed nearly 175 policy ideas submitted by Marylanders through Governor Moore's website, and held two public meetings. Throughout the course of this transition, over 500 Marylanders provided input.

Below are several quotes the committee received either in writing or during its meetings. These quotes closely aligned with the committee's discussions and helped provide direction to its work.

"Without the knowledge and help from the people who live in the different areas every day, a proper climate and environment plan cannot be made."

"I want Maryland to be a beacon of Climate and Environment resilience."

"The health of the Chesapeake Bay watershed is important for the health of Maryland's people, our wildlife and our economy."

"We are at a pivotal moment in a decades-long battle to save the Chesapeake Bay and the local communities and wildlife that depend on it."

Significant themes that emerged from the work of the Climate and Environment Committee:

- **A strong Bay Cabinet.** This is needed to restore the Chesapeake Bay.
- **The critical need to strengthen state agencies that oversee climate and environmental programs.** The success of the committee's policy recommendations is directly linked to the strengthening of relevant state agencies, and the administration should begin to prioritize the operational capacity of these agencies.
- **Environmental justice for all.** Environmental justice for marginalized communities, which are historically and pervasively underserved and overburdened, should be prioritized in all state actions that address climate and the environment including funding, permitting, and programs.

Restoring and safeguarding Maryland’s natural resources, air, and water—and combating climate change—are key to eliminating disparities and improving the health and well-being of all residents. It is also essential to securing the state’s economic future. In particular, many communities of color and poor populations in Maryland are overburdened by environmental hazards and industrial pollution sources, making them more vulnerable to climate change and the resulting adverse phenomena including extreme rain, flooding, storms, and rising heat.

The Climate and Environment Committee is proud to have produced the following report and looks forward to the great work the Moore-Miller Administration will do in the climate and environment space.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

CLEAN ENERGY

1. **Achieve a 60% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2031 and net-zero emissions by 2045.**

Immediately adopting and implementing policies and programs that reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from all sectors of Maryland’s economy will make the state a national leader in equitably improving health and economic outcomes, and reducing community impacts from GHG emissions, especially on overburdened and underserved communities. Success requires a whole-of-government approach, utilizing executive actions and orders, agency leadership, and legislative action. Key stakeholders include: agency staff, the Public Service Commission (PSC), local governments, environmental justice community leaders, nongovernmental organizations, businesses, school districts, utilities, builders, realtors, the Maryland Clean Energy Center (MCEC), and Maryland’s congressional delegation.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Express support for, inspire, and empower the Maryland Department of Environment to create an aggressive and bold Climate Solutions Now Act (CSNA) draft plan that promotes adoption of energy-efficient and climate-friendly appliances and technology.
- Appoint PSC commissioners who have the vision, expertise, and experience to achieve the Climate Solutions Now Act goals while still maintaining affordability, reliability, and equity.
- Support allocating funds to school districts that applied for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Zero Emission School Bus Transition grant program but were not selected to support school bus electrification.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Create annual GHG reduction targets to ensure progress is being achieved.
- Provide the Maryland Department of Environment with resources and direct it to issue the State Greenhouse Gas Inventory report on an annual basis and create 10 indicator metrics that could be tracked on a quarterly basis (e.g., elective vehicle sales, solar deployment, buildings electrified, building energy consumption, etc.).
- Support legislation that creates building emissions standards for new buildings and directs the PSC to end the expansion of gas line subsidies.
- Allocate state and federal funds to the Maryland Clean Energy Center, which provides a low-interest revolving loan fund for programs, communities, and individuals to help reduce GHG emissions and provides funds to green banks specifically working in low- to moderate-income communities.

- Explore creating a pre-development loan fund and a direct grant program for low-income communities trying to make applications to the State Revolving Loan Fund. Investigate forming a Maryland Guarantee Pool to help unlock capital for investments by reducing potential risk incurred by investors.
- Explore the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development pursuing a waiver to gain approval from the Department of Energy to use Weatherization Assistance Program funds for appliance fuel switching.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor annual progress toward overarching emission reduction goals, including sectorwide reductions; annual carbon accounting in GHG Inventory report findings; and quarterly indicator metrics.

- 2. Expand clean energy research and commercialize it.** Promoting and supporting research and enabling commercialization of new clean energy technologies will allow Maryland to become a hub for innovation and clean energy deployment that will create jobs, a stronger industrial sector, and greater emissions reductions. Success requires an executive action/order; budget allocations; PSC agency action; and legislative actions in collaboration with state agencies, the PSC, the Maryland Energy Administration (MEA), environmental justice community leaders, universities (especially historically Black colleges and universities), builders, congressional representatives, state legislators, nongovernmental organizations, and utilities.

Recommended short-term action:

- Support legislation creating an incentive for Maryland-based development of new clean energy technologies, including state tax credit for battery storage and consumption of zero-carbon hydrogen in Maryland, especially in historically marginalized communities.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Create a working group with industry, technical nongovernmental organizations, and environmental justice community representatives to explore and assess the costs and benefits to the in-state use and deployment of new clean energy technologies, including zero-carbon hydrogen, small modular reactors (SMRs), and long duration storage.
- Direct the Maryland Energy Administration to conduct a feasibility study of SMRs at retired or soon-to-be-retired fossil fuel sites.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor total investment, including incentives in research and development of clean energy technologies. It should also work with the University of Maryland system and Maryland's historically Black colleges and universities to investigate the feasibility of identifying, developing, and commercializing new technologies (e.g., small modular reactors (SMRs), zero-carbon hydrogen, and energy storage solutions), as well as require recipients of state-funded research and development to submit annual reports on megawatts deployed by clean energy, private funds invested in zero-carbon energy production, jobs, and size and number of projects created.

- 3. Ensure Maryland generates 100% clean energy by 2035.** Adopting policies that generate 100% clean energy by 2035 will enable the state to decrease its use of fossil fuels and add zero-emission energy sources to the grid. This will result in Maryland creating good paying jobs, lowering utility costs, reducing emissions, and having better health and economic outcomes. Success requires executive actions/orders, budget allocations, Public Service Commission action, agency-led policy initiatives, and legislative action, while also working with state agencies to develop policies, as well as with environmental justice community leaders, builders, state legislators, nongovernmental organizations, utilities, and Maryland's congressional representatives.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Support legislation and call on the PSC, the Maryland Department of Environment (MDE), and MEA to work together to provide technical assistance that updates and improves the EmPOWER program.
- Support legislation that reevaluates energy sources that are zero-carbon emissions and ensures that Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) Tier 1 is consistent.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Support legislation that ensures the RPS Alternative Compliance Payments system supports a robust renewable energy market.
- Support the phase-out of Maryland's remaining coal assets.
- Accelerate the appointment of a Chief Procurement Officer and direct that officer to conduct immediate procurement of zero carbon sources of electricity for 100% of state government consumption with consideration of time and location, and diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice goals matched.
- Support legislation to create a 100% clean energy standard by 2035 that includes a time and location matching requirement.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor annual improvement in the amount of clean energy generated, as well as the number of coal plants that are retired and the number of coal plants with existing retirement dates that are closed.

4. **Work with organized labor, the state's university system, and community colleges to support credentialing and training programs to re-skill and re-deploy workers displaced by the transition to clean energy and benefit groups underrepresented in this field.** Implementing and expanding training and mentoring programs through unions, the community colleges and university systems, and the local workforce development organizations specifically targeted for workers who are displaced by the transition to clean energy, as well as groups underrepresented in the clean energy workforce, will put Maryland in a much better position to meet the workforce and engineering demands necessary to meet the Climate Solutions Now Act goals. It will also create more equitable employment opportunities for all Marylanders. Success requires action by the Governor, budget allocation, agency-led policy initiatives, and legislative action. Key stakeholders include labor unions, the Department of Labor (DOL), the Maryland Energy Administration (MEA), community colleges and universities including historically Black colleges and universities, Maryland General Assembly members, and manufacturers.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Ensure the Maryland DOL is prepared to approve industry and registered apprenticeship programs so that industry can apply for federal tax credits.
- Call on the MEA to develop maps that outline energy communities as defined in the Inflation Reduction Act to ensure the state can take full advantage of the funding and facilitate targeted clean energy investments.

Recommended long-term action:

- Call on the DOL and MEA to examine workforce needs including assessing the manufacturing workforce and determining how to transition it for energy manufacturing jobs in the off-shore wind, solar, battery storage, and hydrogen production industries. Additionally, these programs need to target underrepresented communities.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the number of people trained, redeployed, and reskilled annually; the number of new jobs by off-shore wind, solar, battery storage, and hydrogen production industries; and the amount of federal and state funds spent on job training and redeploying workers.

5. **Expand solar, wind, and battery storage in Maryland.** Implementing policies and programs to incentivize and remove barriers to accelerate deployment of solar, wind, and battery storage in a manner that incorporates community input will result in an expansion of these renewable sources of energy and allow the state to more efficiently achieve its Climate Solutions Now Act goals. Success requires an executive action/order, agency-led policy initiatives, and legislative actions. It also requires working with the Department of Energy, PSC, MDE, Environmental Justice communities, the offshore wind industry, the solar industry, utilities, and NGOs.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Issue an executive order that greatly expands Maryland’s offshore wind deployment goal, and send a letter to the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management expressing Maryland’s strong commitment to growing the offshore wind industry in Maryland.
- Support legislation for an analysis and procurement of a comprehensive transmission solution to facilitate expanded Maryland’s offshore wind goals.
- Support legislation to make the community solar program permanent while expanding capacity limits for new community solar projects and ensuring that low-income subscribers continue to benefit from significantly discounted electricity.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Call on the PSC to require electricity suppliers to post hourly Renewable Energy Credit (REC) data on its websites and request from PJM enhanced data for Maryland on hourly generation by fuel type and make data available to all customers.
- Support legislation for statewide permitting standards for wind, solar, and storage to ensure more efficiencies in the permitting process.
- Call on the PSC, with support from DNR’s Power Plant Research Program, to require utilities to publish hosting capacity maps to help developers know the optimal places to build/not build renewables, storage, and/or demand-side resources on the grid.
- Develop regional leadership with organizations such as SMART-POWER, and develop collaboration among mid-Atlantic states to address offshore wind transmission, solar deployment and capacity, battery storage expansion, and exploration of zero-emission hydrogen.
- Support legislation that provides additional incentives for solar development on preferred sites including residential and commercial rooftops, parking lots, abandoned sites, grayfields, and brownfields, and incentivizes the development of new renewable energy sources including geothermal heating and cooling systems.
- Take executive action to assess barriers to solar installation in HUD housing, ensure sufficient funding, and explore how state agencies can leverage Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act funding.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor its executive order stating wind goal issued; the increased quality and transparency of data generated by load-serving entities regarding Renewable Energy Credits and hosting capacity maps; the regional leadership actions implemented; and the RPS goals reached, including enough to offset fossil fuel generation, gigawatts of energy from offshore wind, and megawatts of energy in storage capacity.

GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP

- 6. Appoint a statewide Chief Sustainability, Mitigation, and Resilience Officer to work across agencies and ensure that climate and environmental targets are being reached.** Appointing a Chief Sustainability, Mitigation, and Resilience Officer (CSMRO) who is fully empowered to lead a governmentwide approach across all state agencies will put Maryland in a position to meet the ambitious climate and environment goals and targets set by the state. Success requires executive action, and the Department of Emergency Management should be engaged along with stakeholder groups whose work aligns with the goals of the CSMRO.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Issue an executive order specifying the appointment of and allocation of funds for a CSMRO and CSMRO office. The CSMRO will be located in the Governor's office and report directly to the Governor through the Chief of Staff. The role of the CSMRO would be to:
 - Take primary cross-agency responsibility, and work closely with the Chief Resilience Officer in the Department of Emergency Management, for ensuring that Bay program targets and the state's climate goals are met and tracked through a public dashboard.
 - Undertake a mapping exercise of all Maryland agencies, commissions, and organizations working on climate and environmental issues and post and maintain this information on the state's website.
 - Oversee a Bay and Climate Cabinet consisting of the secretaries of relevant agencies and key departments heads.
 - Develop a communications and outreach plan for informing and hearing from local authorities and citizen groups on local and county mitigation and resilience issues and on federal and state funding opportunities.
 - Fully engage with key environment agency initiatives such as Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) and the Maryland Clean Energy Center's (MCEC) Green Bank and other green banks in the state.
 - Empower the CSMRO with the appropriate resources including staff and budget to implement the state's environmental and climate targets and goals.

Recommended long-term action:

- Monitor the CSMRO's progress on Bay restoration, climate, and other environmental goals, which will be monitored and tracked on the public dashboard.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the status and number of climate and Bay restoration targets and goals met, which will be tracked on the public dashboard.

- 7. Employ a whole-of-government approach.** Employing a whole-of-government approach will allow agencies to prioritize and better coordinate their efforts to reach the state's climate and environmental goals and targets. Success requires executive action, coordination between state agencies and other branches of Maryland's state government, and the following leaders should be engaged: Maryland's attorney general, state agencies such as DNR and MDE, the Board of Public Works, and environmental justice leaders.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Issue an executive directive that each state agency prepares a sustainability plan addressing the state's climate and Bay restoration goals and targets.
- Develop coordination among the Governor, attorney general, DNR, and MDE to ensure alignment of environmental and climate priorities, respective roles, staffing, and policies for enforcement.

- Work with the General Assembly to pass legislation requiring the Board of Public Works to submit an explanation of how sustainability and environmental justice are being considered in the design, construction, and operation of the procurement for major proposals.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Select an environmental justice screening and mapping tool in order to develop a scorecard that tracks agency implementation of Justice 40 investments and benefits.
- Monitor progress on agency sustainability plans and use of screening and mapping tool.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the number of agencies with a sustainability plan being implemented after one year; the number of agencies where leadership is tracking to make sure there is routine use of environmental justice screening and mapping tool; and the number of areas where the Governor, attorney general, and the MDE are working collaboratively to address environmental and climate issues.

8. Work to strengthen the state’s regional partnerships, such as the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), and ensure that new revenues from the federal government and those generated from this cap-and-trade system are reinvested in the green economy to help Maryland reach its goals.

Strengthening regional partnerships and strategically accessing new federal dollars dedicated to climate change will help Maryland achieve a cleaner grid and drive a green economy that benefits all Marylanders. Success requires executive action, establishment of workgroups, and public buy-in from Governor Moore. The following leaders should be engaged: Maryland’s Congressional delegation, Governor Moore’s federal liaison and grant officer, the Maryland Clean Energy Center (MCEC), and representatives of local government entities such as the Maryland Association of Counties Maryland Municipal League.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Order an interagency review of regional partnerships including RGGI, Transportation Climate Initiative, and Chesapeake-related agreements to make sure targets are being met and benefiting all Marylanders, including those in underserved communities. Potential new regional partnerships should also be identified and considered.
- Direct the CSMRO to assemble a work group to identify sources of public and private financing to help local governments with Bay- and climate-related mitigation/resilience efforts. Members should include Maryland Congressional representatives, the Governor’s federal liaison and grant officer, the Maryland Clean Energy Center (MCEC), and representatives of local government entities such as MACO and MML.
- Task the above-mentioned work group with engaging Maryland Green Banks, including the MCEC, to align investment of state funding and resources to better leverage federal and private investment.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Take a leadership position in ensuring that the state is creating, fostering, and supporting important regional partnerships.
- Develop and record best practices and standard operating procedures in relation to obtaining and optimizing the use of public and private financing.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the amount of revenue coming to Maryland from the Inflation Reduction Act, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, and other funding streams and outcomes achieved from these funds; the number of Maryland counties and municipalities receiving the additional revenue from these streams; and the percentage of revenue from these streams going to overburdened or underserved communities.

- 9. Prioritize equity, labor, and justice in all agencies, programs, activities, and initiatives across all branches of government.** Fully incorporating equity, justice, and labor considerations into state policy and agency sustainability plans and monitoring implementation will allow Maryland to address historic inequities and ensure no communities are left behind. Success requires budget allocation, a gap analysis, and legislative action. The following leaders should be engaged: state agencies, private-sector businesses, Maryland universities including HBCUs and community colleges, and local government and industry associations.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Appoint, fund, and oversee an Equity Officer in the CSMRO office who will work with agency officials to develop screening criteria to ensure that all Bay restoration, climate, and agency projects and programs achieve outcomes in an inclusive, equitable, and just manner. These screening criteria should be incorporated in the agency sustainability plans and progress should be monitored.
- Strengthen, empower, and fully staff the Maryland Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities and make sure all seats are promptly appointed with people who have the appropriate expertise and experience.
- Develop effective and meaningful legislation on cumulative impacts, comparable to legislation recently passed in Massachusetts, New Jersey, and New York.

Recommended long-term action:

- Announce a major green jobs initiative to benefit all Marylanders, including those in underserved communities, with suggested participation of agencies, private sector, Maryland universities, HBCUs, community colleges, and local government and industry associations.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the number of agencies that have equity screening criteria in their sustainability plans and are monitoring progress; the increase in percentage of energy and transportation infrastructure dollars going to serve or relieve overburdened and underserved communities; and the number of new jobs and economic benefit resulting from the green jobs initiative.

- 10. Rely on the expertise of climate scientists, experts, and stakeholders.** Engaging the expertise of climate researchers, experts, and stakeholders will help develop more informed policies and strategies to measure, monitor, and address climate change mitigation and adaptation in Maryland. Success requires the establishment of a board and engagement with the Scientific and Technical Working Group of the Maryland Commission on Climate Change. It should be managed by the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science and include top experts from the state's universities, green technology companies, and relevant advocacy organizations.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Appoint and fund a Climate Science and Research Board that includes experts from the state's universities, green technology companies, and relevant research and advocacy organizations.
- Task the board with addressing timely and pressing climate policy questions and ensuring that the public and decision-makers are kept fully informed of results and data from new climate satellite and digital mapping technologies and tools, observing systems, and model projections, including those that assess environmental justice impacts and solutions.
- Task the board with coordinating closely with the Scientific and Technical Working Group of the Maryland Commission on Climate Change.

Recommended long-term action:

- Integrate citizen research, such as local air quality monitoring and water testing initiatives, in its data development and dissemination.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the number of people and groups reached through various new communication vehicles such as newsletters, policy briefings, reports, etc., as well as the number of decision-makers that the board has interacted with to discuss recent research and data pertinent to specific climate policies and policy proposals.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

11. Improve the health, quality of life, and economic opportunities for all Marylanders—including overburdened, under-resourced, and underserved communities and populations—by addressing environmental injustice. Approaching environmental policy as a matter of justice, especially for those who have been overburdened by environmental hazards and pollution and had limited access to good infrastructure and natural amenities for so long, can help protect the state’s natural resources and promote public health both equitably and sustainably. Success requires a governmentwide commitment to direct a minimum of 40% of the benefits and investments of all environmental initiatives to disadvantaged communities and turn environmental policy into environmental justice and health equity. This will need executive and agency action by the Maryland departments of the Environment, Health, Natural Resources, Transportation, Agriculture, Planning, Housing, Labor, and Education, coordinated by the Sustainability, Mitigation, and Resilience Officer.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Issue an executive order that requires all state agencies to have an environmental justice (EJ) plan and comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, and fund and empower the Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities.
- Support legislation requiring that every Maryland resident has equal access to the economic, social, environmental, and health benefits of public transportation without regard to race, color, national origin, income, age, or disability, and especially in urban areas that have suffered from transit inequities.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Direct state agencies to examine the effects of proposed regulations on environmental justice and racial equity.
- Enact legislation that codifies the major tenets of the Justice40 Initiative.
- Leverage funding to expand access to climate resilient infrastructure and assist with a just transition to clean energy and workforce opportunities to address injustice and inequality.
- Codify the use of Maryland’s environmental justice mapping tool by all state and local agencies for tracking hazards, exposures, risks, health impacts, investments, benefits, and accountability.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the increase in air quality, water quality, and soil quality in overburdened and underserved communities across the state of Maryland; the increase in the federal and state investments to advance environmental, climate, energy, housing, transportation, food, and water justice in overburdened and underserved communities in alignment with the Justice40 Initiative; and whether measures of environmental health taken statewide show improvement in at least 40% of overburdened and under-resourced communities within two years.

AIR/HEAT/WATER

12. Address the worsening effects of extreme heat including for vulnerable and susceptible populations.

Taking action on the underlying causes of extreme heat, and building Maryland's resilience to it, will allow for improvements in air quality, habitat, and public health, especially for vulnerable and susceptible populations that experience differential heat exposure. Maryland can lead the nation in addressing climate change and heat issues through action by the Department of the Environment, the Maryland Energy Administration, and the Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health office, to fully implement laws and policies already in place and work with local leaders to develop innovative heat-mitigation strategies for vulnerable and susceptible groups including workers, children, and the elderly.

Recommended short-term action:

- Require state agencies on the adaptation and resiliency workgroup to develop the 10-year next-generation adaptation plan.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Establish strong heat safety standards for all workers especially for outdoor and agricultural workers.
- Require and fund relevant agencies to develop tools to track heat emergencies, morbidity, and mortality, and inform the public, particularly vulnerable populations, of risk through heat advisories.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the number and severity of reported heat-related injuries, with special focus on workplace-related reports, as well as the heat illness morbidity rate in children and elderly populations.

13. Improve Maryland's air quality statewide including in disadvantaged and overburdened communities.

Implementing new initiatives to improve air quality will allow Maryland to see a reduction in air pollution and traffic; an increase in green and open space; and new capacity to address inequities in air pollution exposure for disadvantaged and overburdened communities. The state can transform how it approaches air quality through oversight and enforcement; technological innovation; deliberative transition; and funding allocations by the departments of the Environment, Transportation, Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Housing and Community Development to support state and local government, and partnerships with academia and nonprofits.

Recommended short-term action:

- Issue an executive order to set a "zero waste" by 2040 policy.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Allocate new funding for grants to community-based maintenance programs and future siting of trees and greenspaces.
- Work with the legislature to reduce air toxic emissions caused by major sources of air pollution to meet World Health Organization (WHO) standards by 2030.
- Request that the Maryland Department of the Environment develop strong standards for regulating greenhouse gas emissions particularly methane from industrial sources and landfills.
- Develop a regional "airshed" approach to air quality regulation, monitoring, and enforcement.
- Require the Maryland Department of the Environment, Department of Housing and Community Development, and Maryland Department of Natural Resources to target tree planting in disadvantaged and overburdened communities to achieve green space equity.
- Improve monitoring of pesticide use and exposure including airborne exposures, especially in rural farming communities with high seasonal worker populations.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the reduction in emissions of criteria air pollutants and hazardous air pollutants; the percent increase in electrification of commuter, fleet, and industrial use vehicles; and the increase in funding for community- and nature-based environmental initiatives.

14. Address urban heat islands including impacts on vulnerable communities and populations.

Prioritizing a reduction in the urban heat island effect will reduce carbon emissions and traffic, create more green and open space, reduce impervious cover, improve health, and build a new green economy. Success requires executive action; agency leadership from the departments of the Environment, Health, Housing, Natural Resources, Transportation, and Planning; economic investments; and coordination by the Chief Sustainability, Mitigation, and Resilience Officer among Maryland's jurisdictions and cities.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Issue an executive order that requires the Maryland Department of the Environment to integrate heat island mitigation into the state's air quality implementation plan.
- Identify and allocate state and federal funding to provide incentives to catalyze heat island reduction actions.
- Issue an executive order to expand forest covers across the state of Maryland especially in urban areas.
- Establish Smart Surfaces guidelines to reduce urban heat islands by replacing impervious surfaces with heat-mitigating surfaces.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Provide incentives for utilizing cool (solar, green, and reflective) roofs, greenspace minimums, permeable parking lots, and other heat-mitigating measures in construction.
- Develop a point system for state and local governments to evaluate and reduce climate impacts in procurement.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the percent of trees planted in the 5 million tree initiative planted in urban areas; the percent of new roofs installed or replaced in Maryland that are "cool roofs" (reflective, solar, or green); and the reduction in temperature readings in areas categorized as heat islands.

15. Reduce air pollution to improve health outcomes including for vulnerable and health disparity populations.

Linking new policies that address air pollution with real enforcement will improve health outcomes, economic opportunity, and quality of life for all Marylanders, especially vulnerable and disadvantaged populations. Success requires strong oversight and enforcement by the Department of the Environment, coordination with the Environmental Justice Commission, the Maryland Department of Health, the attorney general, and the legislature to better measure, track, and reduce air pollution including differential exposures, and advance public health.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Collaborate with MDE and the attorney general to prioritize and complete environmental justice-related air quality rulemakings that the agency committed to in June 2022.
- Use executive action to ensure that all state agencies consider available cumulative impact analysis and citizen science in environmental decision-making.
- Task the Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities to provide guidance on permitting, enforcement, and compliance related to sources of air, water, and soil pollution.

- Use executive action to encourage the MDE and other state agencies to use citizen science collected data in regulatory actions.
- Identify and leverage state and federal resources to fund outreach and mitigation strategies that improve air quality and track changes in health impacts, particularly for vulnerable groups.

Recommended long-term action:

- Require MDE to convene a regional air quality task force with neighboring state governors to address air pollution from stationary and mobile sources.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the increase in the number, and success, of inspections, enforcement actions, and fines against violators of Maryland air quality regulations; by 2027, whether the cumulative emissions impact of all new environmental permits granted each year is zero or positive; and the decrease in asthma morbidity and mortality and the decrease in racial/ethnic and socioeconomic-related morbidity and mortality disparities.

- 16. Restore the Chesapeake Bay watershed and the Inner Harbor.** Increasing agency staffing, oversight, enforcement, and funding will allow the state to meet and exceed the goals of restoring a vibrant Chesapeake Bay and Inner Harbor. By reactivating agencies and empowering the Department of Natural Resources alongside an expanded Governor’s Chesapeake Bay and Climate cabinet, Maryland has the power to ensure clean water, healthy fisheries, increased recreational opportunities, and a thriving Bay economy.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Provide funding to increase the number of Natural Resource Police officers.
- Provide budget allocations to increase funding for Maryland’s Chesapeake Bay Restoration and Land Conservation programs.
- Task agency and local leadership to develop strike teams focusing on riparian buffer and wetlands restoration and critical area retention.
- Invest in near-term critical research priorities, including a new blue crab stock assessment and a menhaden biomass survey in the Chesapeake Bay.
- Collaborate with Maryland’s congressional delegation to amend federal policy barriers to invasive blue catfish harvest and processing in Maryland.
- Immediately address the significant backlog of oyster aquaculture lease applications and transfer applications to facilitate industry growth and development.
- Reinstate annual updates of fishery management plans, and enforce existing penalties for late or missing fishing harvest reports.
- Appoint a Fisheries Director with expertise, training, and academic credentials to communicate the administration’s strong support for the sustainable and interstate cooperative management of the state’s fisheries.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Develop a plan based off of the bay bottom survey, monitoring of existing actions and innovative surveying techniques to continue the restoration of oysters by securing sustainable access to shell and alternative substrate, managing the wild fishery, expanding opportunities for aquaculture, and improving sanctuaries.
- Modernize fishery harvest data acquisition through mandatory electronic reporting.
- Develop a plan to restore mussel populations throughout the freshwater region of the state to improve water quality and provide better habitat.
- Issue an executive order that calls on the Maryland Department of the Environment to ensure that Water Quality Certifications include requirements to:

- Protect site specific and downstream water quality from pollution including toxic pollutants, nutrients, and sediment impacts.
- Restore and, when possible, enhance fish passages and aquatic life habitats.
- Sustainably manage water flow.
- Ensure opportunities for meaningful public input throughout the water certification process, including from any underserved and overburdened communities.
- Include protections based on climate impacts to water quality conditions.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor meeting restoration goals for critical habitats, such as buffers and wetlands, while protecting the most critical healthy habitats, such as high value forests, across the state; the increase in the number of blue crabs, oysters, and native rockfish; and the reductions in the populations and slowing the spread of invasive species, focusing on blue catfish, flathead catfish, and snake heads as determined by the Fisheries Director.

17. Reduce water pollution to improve health outcomes across the state. Accelerating and dramatically reducing water pollution by addressing the sources of degradation will hold polluters accountable and allow Marylanders to enjoy clean, healthy, and safe waterways. The state can refocus the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Natural Resources, and the Department of the Environment to provide technical assistance and ensure compliance, build more natural buffers around streams and rivers, enhance funding, and expand environmental education to provide the clean waters that Marylanders deserve.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Better monitor and enforce compliance of publicly operated treatment works, industrial dischargers, and intensive animal agriculture operations, targeting most egregious violators first.
- Develop, support, fund, and expand regional partnerships among landowners, farmers, and producers to increase implementation of best management conservation practices and environmental site design.
- Update the Maryland Stormwater Design Manual Volume I and II by end of year 2023 to reflect current and future stormwater runoff and climate change impacts.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Invest in shared technical assistance to enhance the stormwater design, procurement, and implementation capacities of under-resourced localities.
- Require the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) to support and expand supply chain sustainability initiatives that will reduce climate impacts and improve nutrient management, water quality, forest retention, and conservation.
- Require MDA to provide farmers with technical and cost-share funding so every Maryland farm can conserve and manage nutrients effectively with funds targeted to farms that generate superior environmental outcomes.
- Require MDA, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, and the Maryland Department of the Environment to assess implementation and effectiveness of Critical Areas Law and improve regulations to protect Maryland's shoreline and water quality.
- Complete Maryland's long overdue Triennial Review of Water Quality Standards including update list of Tier II waters that exceed minimum designated use standards and list Tier III waters of exceptional significance.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the total reduction of nutrient runoff from agricultural operations; the reduction in chemical and biological contamination in Maryland waters and the Bay watershed; and the increase in stormwater remediation funding and reduction of stormwater runoff into Maryland waters and the Bay watershed.

- 18. Invest in wastewater management and water treatment systems particularly in underserved and resource-constrained communities.** Leveraging federal funding and investing in building the oversight and technical support capacity of state agencies and local jurisdictions will protect aquatic life and ensure waters are safe for all Marylanders to fish, swim, and enjoy. The state has a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the Maryland Department of the Environment and the Maryland Environmental Service to expand their oversight roles and partner with the Sustainability, Mitigation, and Resilience Officer to advance wastewater management and treatment systems to a level beyond the bare minimums that permits require.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Provide the Maryland Department of the Environment and the Maryland Environmental Service the resources to ensure compliance by wastewater treatment plants and other dischargers with Clean Water Act permits.
- Leverage federal and state funding to address failing wastewater including septic systems and stormwater treatment systems, and create a statewide low-income water and sewer bill assistance program for underserved areas, similar to the state's low-income home energy assistance program.
- Develop an action plan to prioritize identifying and removing lead pipes, especially in disadvantaged neighborhoods and underserved urban and rural areas.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Charge the Department of the Environment to penalize noncompliance with the Clean Water Act and Safe Drinking Water Act, and financially reward compliance to inspire advanced performance.
- Update Guidelines for Land Application/Reuse of Treated Municipal Wastewaters and the Groundwater Discharge Permitting.
- Provide funding via state and federal sources for underserved and resource-constrained communities to improve their public and onsite wastewater treatment (septic systems) and stormwater infrastructure.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor compliance of all publicly operated treatment works and industrial discharges with the Clean Water Act; the percent reduction of lead in sewer and water infrastructure; and the total increase in funding to underserved and resource-constrained communities to improve their wastewater treatment and stormwater infrastructure.

- 19. Take immediate action to mitigate the effects of sea-level rise.** Reorienting government decision-making and dollars around the science of climate change will position Maryland to meet the challenge of sea-level rise. Leadership from the Sustainability, Mitigation, and Resilience Officer (CSMRO) can immediately address sea level rise in Maryland by coordinating the Department of the Environment, the Department of Natural Resources, and the Department of Planning to develop new ways to track success and allocate the funding needed to build the resilience of Maryland's coastline, waterways, and land.

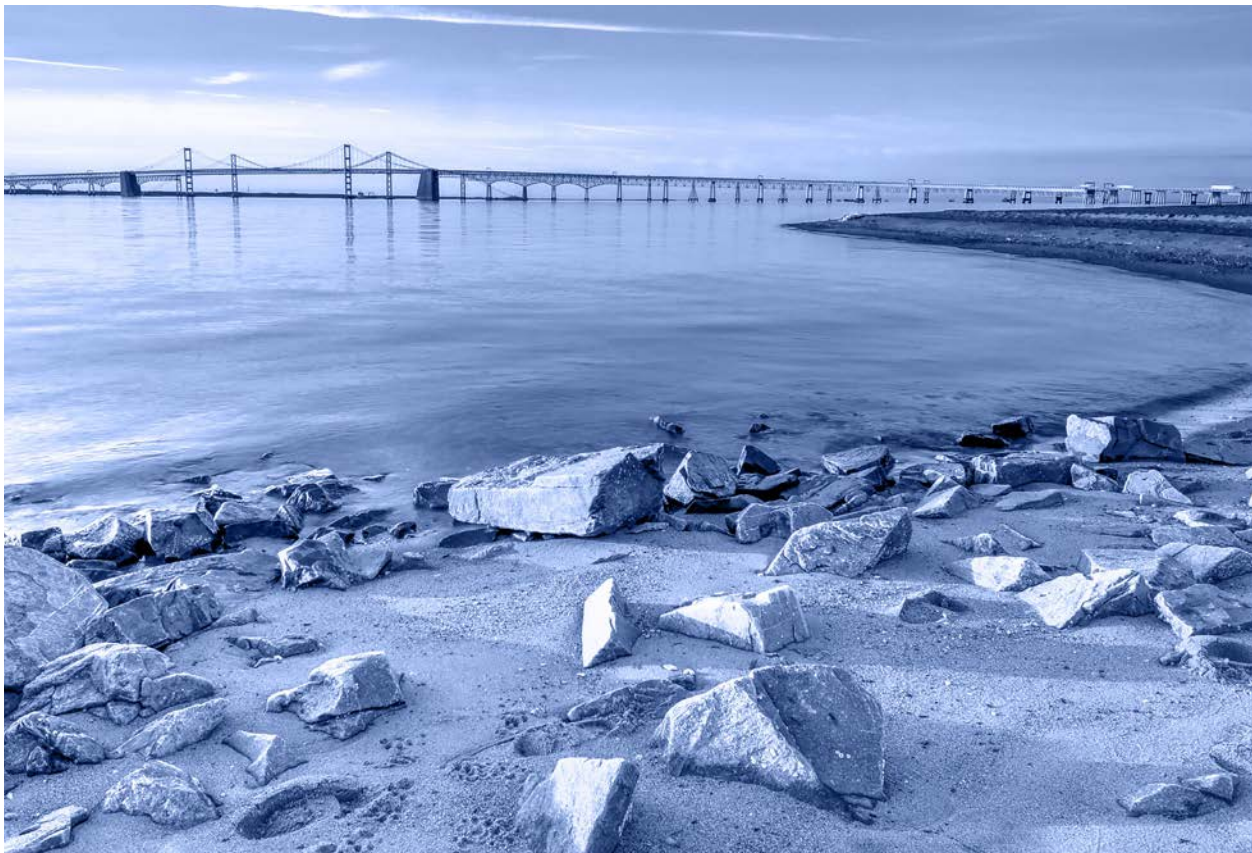
Recommended short-term actions:

- Create a Sea-Level Rise Report Card identifying vulnerabilities and mitigation opportunities, especially in disadvantaged areas.
- Align and empower the Maryland Department of the Environment, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, and the Maryland Department of Planning and relevant commissions to prioritize mitigating the effects of sea-level rise and report to the Governor, the CSMRO, and the Board of Public Works.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Allocate funds for coastline and high-risk flooding areas and infrastructure protection, including the most vulnerable communities.
- Implement interdepartmental policies (Maryland Department of the Environment/Maryland Department of Planning) and provide incentives that minimize impervious surfaces, particularly in Maryland’s Critical Area.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the increase in number of impacted counties tracking actions in a Sea-Level Report Card; the increase in the amount of funds allocated for coastline and high-risk flooding areas and infrastructure protection; the percent of new construction and percent of existing structures in Maryland’s Critical Area; and the percent of new construction and percent of existing structures and noncritical areas transitioned to permeable surfaces.



EDUCATION



The Education Policy Committee was charged with developing a set of recommendations to lay the groundwork for the future of Maryland’s education system. Using the Moore-Miller Administration’s robust campaign literature and policy commitments as a foundation, the committee imagined a more inclusive and highly resourced education system that leaves no child behind. Indeed, with a record investment in K-12 education through the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future, Maryland is well poised to achieve a world class education system. However, it will take collaboration across state agencies, education institutions and associations, private and public partners, and community support to actualize the state’s education goals.

For approximately eight weeks the Education Policy Committee met and discussed implementation strategies within its four working groups: (1) Early Education; (2) K-12 Education; (3) Higher Education; and (4) Government Leadership and Education Operations. Comprised of education experts, elected officials, educators, and advocates, the committee’s diversity strengthened the policy recommendations set forth in this report.

In addition to relying on the expertise of its members in developing this report, the Education Policy Committee engaged with hundreds of Marylanders. Committee members read through the 164 policy ideas submitted on the online portal and listened to the feedback of over 350 at-large members who attended its two public meetings.

Below are several quotes the Education Policy Committee received either in writing or during meetings. These comments, along with other feedback from all Marylanders, helped mold the committee’s final recommendations.

“Public schools need to be built on inclusivity, specifically for students with disabilities. Research has shown that inclusion of students with disabilities benefits students in the general education population as well. There is no better time than now since all students are living with lasting effects from the pandemic.”

“The community schools funding model needs to be assessed to ensure that all students within the Community Schools strategy have access to adequate resources to implement the community school model.”

“If we do not invest in ‘Teacher Support’ we will fail in retaining and training the human capital that is needed to meet the needs of our students. This is the place we are currently in where teachers are choosing not to stay in Maryland and leave education. Great systems and research-based ideas cannot be implemented if we have no staff to implement the ideas. Investing in ‘Teachers’ is investing in the needs of students.”

Significant themes that emerged from the work of the Education Policy Committee:

- **Support the education workforce.** The state cannot create a stable ecosystem of support for its students without first filling vacancies and increasing operational capacity for education institutions. This is true from early childhood through higher education. Working groups recommended incentives such as scholarship programs, tax credits, and benefits packages to stimulate the education workforce.
- **Support students from marginalized communities.** The pandemic has exacerbated existing inequities for students and families. To eliminate disparities, the state must provide extra support for students from historically underinvested communities through funding in-school interventions, out-of-school time programming, special education services, disability services, English to Speakers of Other

Languages (ESOL) instruction, and wraparound services. These supports are critical to Governor Moore's mission to leave no one behind.

- **Support cross-sector collaboration.** Maryland has many of the tools in place to achieve its goals, but better synchronicity and uniformity are critical. The Governor's Office for Children could be a natural home for ensuring cross-sector collaboration to support children and students from cradle to career. Stronger, centralized data systems will also be needed to help monitor and assess progress.
- **Support existing commissions and boards.** The administration has already begun much of this work. There are several boards and committees—like the commissions on Trauma-Informed Care and School-to-Prison Pipeline and Restorative Practice, and the State Early Childhood Advisory Committee—which could help ensure holistic growth and adequate professional development resources for students, teachers, and broader learning communities.

The Education Policy Committee shares the following report with the Moore-Miller Administration.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

EARLY EDUCATION

1. **Deliver preschool (ages 3-4) for all children in need.** Delivering full-day preschool for all children in need through an integrated system will ensure more children are ready for kindergarten with developmentally appropriate social-emotional learning skills, language acquisition, and self-regulation. As a result, communities will benefit through increased literacy rates, increased high school graduation rates, increased college and career readiness, a decreased need for intervention, and ultimately a stronger economy. Success requires strong state-level leadership to implement the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, legislative action to address gaps in the Blueprint, and a strong investment in the early childhood workforce. Key leaders include: the MSDE, the Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB), the executive branch, the General Assembly, educators, and the advocacy community.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Prioritize implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future and examine strategies to expand eligibility for all 3- and 4-year-olds to attend pre-K.
- Conduct an audit of the current gap between seats available and seats required to fulfill requirements set forth in the Blueprint.
- Work on alternative pathways for child care providers to qualify to provide pre-K, including supporting legislation proposed for the 2023 session to promote alternative pathways for child care providers and para-educators.
- Develop curriculum and accompanying professional development for pre-K and early childhood teachers on developmentally appropriate and inclusive practices.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Develop a strategic plan for early childhood educators to achieve parity with public school employees. Explore additional benefits like health care, retirement, substitutes, and paid time off.
- Commission a study to explore the adequacy of the current funding model and the budgetary impacts of expanding per-pupil funding for children enrolled in private early child care programs.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor county-level data on the number of children enrolled in pre-K versus the number of children eligible for pre-K, by county; the number of enrolled students by income eligibility; and the progress toward meeting the goal of diverse delivery and full enrollment in pre-K programs over time through school diverse delivery requests.

- 2. Strengthen and expand high-quality inclusive child care.** Increasing the availability of high-quality child care settings and investing in innovative, inclusive professional development for child care providers will allow more children to be served in high-quality settings. This will result in greater opportunity for prevention/intervention with younger children, and more children will be ready for kindergarten. Success requires the Governor’s Office of Children to work with stakeholders to develop a “Birth to Blueprint” plan, increased funding, technical assistance and support from the MSDE, and private-public partnerships. Key leaders include: the MSDE, child care resource centers, local education agencies (LEAs), infant and early childhood mental health professionals, local infants and toddlers programs, and the General Assembly.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Hire a third-party consultant to perform a Steady State Analysis by County of essential child care data (i.e., the gap between seats available and seats needed to meet need, birth rate, and local child care landscape).
- Assess, strengthen, and improve Maryland child care rating system (EXCELS).
- Create a new grant program that would support each county to develop a “grow your own”-style program for family child care centers that would provide training, coaching, and resources to support those interested in opening a child care business.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Create a task force to leverage findings to develop a “Birth to Blueprint” plan that addresses the interlocking pieces of pre-K expansion and child care affordability with a special focus on increasing supply in child care deserts and preserving, increasing, and funding infant and toddler slots.
- Train child care providers and early childhood educators to include and support children with special needs.
- Reinvigorate the State Early Childhood Advisory Committee to play a coordination and oversight role focused on quality and the development of shared practices/needed resources.
- Expand infant and early childhood mental health services.
- Continue investment in child care resource centers to strengthen the workforce pipeline; ensure high-quality, inclusive service delivery; and support parents seeking child care.
- Draw federal funds for facilities renovation that will fully accommodate the youngest learners and children with special needs.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor kindergarten readiness assessment data; the number of high-quality child care programs enrolled in the MSDE EXCELS program; the number of available early child care seats available throughout Maryland, with a focus on reaching underserved communities and geographies; and the establishment of centralized operational and human resources support structures to support small private providers.

- 3. Support Maryland’s early child care workforce.** Providing fair compensation and benefits, tuition reimbursement, and certification support, along with professional development for the early childhood workforce, will help the state attract and retain more qualified individuals for this industry. Success requires budget allocations, executive and state agency collaboration and leadership, and private-public partnerships. Concerted efforts are needed from MSDE, the Department of Labor, local school systems, boards of education, county commissioners and child care providers, and families and advocacy community/unions.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Engage in listening sessions, town hall meetings, and roundtables on current early child care landscape including current efforts to shift to presumptive eligibility for the child care program.
- Ensure the MSDE Division of Early Childhood is fully staffed.
- Repurpose unspent temporary federal funds allocated to Maryland to offer a temporary aid package to early childhood educators.
- Develop a statewide Plan for Maryland’s Child Care Workforce that includes a strategic plan to recruit and train more early childhood educators and improve compensation and benefits for the early childhood workforce with a focus on parity and equity.
- Invest in tuition reimbursement and certification support for child care workers.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Propose legislation for “express lane” benefits for child care workers, like automatic qualification for Maryland’s Child Care Scholarship.
- Develop an online learning management system and professional registry to track information about the early childhood workforce including qualifications and wages.
- Support collaboration between Department of Labor and MSDE to develop targeted workforce development programs for the early childhood workforce.
- Partner with LEAs to create a Child Development Associate track in career technology education (CTE) programs.
- Align higher education early childhood programs, including the development of stackable credentials for child care (child development associate, associate degree, bachelor’s degree).

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the increase in average wages across all eight licensing regions; the increase in the number of staff with benefits; increased participation in programs that support child care workforce; and the number of child care and preschool educators with credentials that meet Blueprint requirements.

4. Reduce the cost burden of child care, with a special emphasis on infant and toddler care (ages 0-2).

Ensuring child care does not exceed 7% of a family’s annual household income and providing easy-to-access child care subsidies for low-income and working families will allow more women and people of color to participate in the workforce and ensure more children are ready for kindergarten. Success requires resources to expand child care subsidies and a strong communications campaign to ensure families are aware of available support. The Governor’s Office of Children can serve as a leader on this initiative, working with the legislative branch, relevant state agencies, local providers, and families to promote affordability and access.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Expand access to and eligibility for the child care subsidy to more families.
- Develop a statewide communication campaign to increase awareness of Maryland’s Child Care Scholarships (CCS).
- Support legislation that makes ARPA-funded expansion of CCS permanent.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Study CCS reimbursement rate setting, including alternative rate setting and a cost-of-quality study to fully understand the true cost of child care.
- Research the impact of the Blueprint for Maryland’s future pre-K expansion on the solvency of early childhood providers.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the number/percentage of eligible families participating in the CCS program; the number/percentage of child care providers participating in the CCS program; and the average cost of child care by age range and region of the state.

K-12 EDUCATION

- 5. Combat the school-to-prison pipeline.** Supporting educators and administrators to become justice-oriented and culturally competent will help combat the school-to-prison pipeline and give students of color, immigrants, students with disabilities, and LGBTQIA+ students greater opportunities to learn and thrive. Success requires partnering with students, educators, community-based program providers, families/caregivers, restorative practitioners (community-based), conflict resolution experts, MSDE, local education agencies, school police/security, and legislators to develop and implement statewide strategies that reduce disproportionality and promote student well-being.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Reinststate Maryland’s Commission on the School-to-Prison Pipeline and Restorative Practices, and work to implement the Commission’s recommendations.
- Review Maryland Center for School Safety’s (MCSS) specialized curriculum for School Resource Officers and School Security.
- Create recommendations around implementing holistic approaches to student record keeping.
- Work with the legislature to eliminate criminal penalties for “disorderly conduct” in schools, which is an overly broad charge and has the effect of criminalizing adolescent behavior.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Promote and incentivize de-escalation training, anti-bias training, and restorative practices training for teacher candidates, current teachers, and all educators.
- Partner with local school districts, law enforcement, and educators to create a new model Memorandum of Understanding for School Resource Officers (SROs) that removes SROs from school disciplinary decisions.
- Utilize federal funding from the Law Enforcement De-escalation Training Act to provide more training and materials related to de-escalation.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the suspension and expulsion rates, as well as rates of discipline disparity based on the Maryland public schools “Suspensions, Expulsions and Health Related Exclusions” report; the increase in the number of local education agencies and schools utilizing restorative practices; and the reduction in exclusionary punitive disciplinary policies and practices in local education agencies and schools.

- 6. Provide better services for students with disabilities.** Strengthening the pipeline of special education teachers and providing high-quality instruction and services to students with disabilities will enable Maryland to meet the needs of all students and families. Success requires strengthening career pipelines for special educators and increasing state-level support for students with disabilities. The state will need to engage students with disabilities, their families and caregivers, educators, out-of-school time and community-based program providers, the Governor’s Office of Children, local education agencies, MSDE, the Maryland Department of Disability (MDOD), and the Special Education Advisory Committee.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Convene stakeholders from around the state to learn what’s working and what’s not for students with disabilities and their families.
- Strengthen the pipeline of special education teachers by implementing the Blueprint for Maryland Future’s Pillar II pay increases.
- Create new state-level standards to hold local education authorities accountable for provisions of appropriate evidence-based services.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Develop a plan to increase slots in teacher preparation programs focused on special education.
- Provide incentives for students pursuing degrees in special education.
- Ensure all teacher training programs include some training on how to support students with disabilities.
- Ensure the Service Year Option Program includes a special education track, and support other pipeline and internship programs that recruit students to special education-focused internships.
- Create statewide recommended student-teacher ratios based on the diverse needs of students with disabilities.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the increase in the number of people with disabilities who obtain competitive employment; the reduction in disparate discipline rates for students with disabilities; the increase in retention rates of special educators; and reductions in achievement gaps between students with disabilities and general education students.

7. **Prioritize social-emotional learning (SEL).** Prioritizing social-emotional learning will give students the tools they need to integrate their thoughts, emotions, and behavior in positive ways. As a result, students will be more prepared to navigate life’s challenges, and the state will foster healthier school climates where teachers, students, and school personnel can build more meaningful relationships. Success requires MSDE spearheading a statewide strategy to increase SEL in schools as well as increasing investment in school-based behavioral health professionals. Critical partners include LEAs, school leaders, school counselors, psychologists, social workers, foster care leaders, and juvenile justice leaders.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Ensure MDSE has staff members that are focused on creating guidance, training, standards, and best practices around SEL instruction as well as providing resources to districts to support social-emotional learning instruction.
- Encourage LEAs to have dedicated staff focused on SEL and restorative practices in schools.
- Increase pay incentives for behavioral health professionals to work in school settings through Medicaid reimbursements, stipends for work in high-need schools, and National Board Certificate -equivalent stipends for advanced credentials.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Invest in the behavioral health professional pipeline through scholarship programs to ensure that all students have access to focused social-emotional support services.
- Ensure that provider-to-student ratios are consistent with industry standards and recommendations.
- Create a strategic plan for reentry students, supports for students removed from homes, and concentrated areas of group homes.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor whether school districts meet industry standards for counselors, psychologist, social workers, and nurses; whether school climate surveys show an increase in students' self-reported ability to access services; and the decrease in suspensions, expulsions, and other disciplinary data.

- 8. Support intervention and enrichment opportunities inside and outside of school.** Ensuring students can access interventions, enrichment opportunities, and support—both during the day and after school—will give students of color and low-income students opportunities to thrive academically and explore activities they are passionate about. As a result, the state will create a stronger, more productive, and educated community. Success requires the Governor's Office of Children partnering with MSDE, local education agencies, local workforce boards, Maryland Coalition for Community Schools, local management boards, local summer learning and out-of-school time collaboratives, early childhood collaboratives and programs, community-based providers, and students and families to develop a statewide plan to increase investment in intervention and enrichment opportunities, expand the most effective programs, and develop new programs where there are gaps.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Increase funding for in-school interventions such as ESOL courses and tutoring.
- Fully phase in Blueprint Pillar IV funding to ensure schools have the resources they need to provide enrichment and wraparound supports for students.
- Utilize remaining Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Funds (ESSER), American Rescue Plan funds (ARPA), and the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (BSCA) funds to support high-dosage tutoring and summer learning.
- Conduct audits or utilize existing audits of current out-of-school time (OST) services in each county, and identify the gap between current and target seats available.
- Reinstate the Governor's Office for Children with the explicit goal of providing strategic support and funding to jurisdiction to provide a minimum of 40% of youth (ages 0-24) with high-quality after-school and summer programs that focus on historically marginalized communities.
- Create an Out of School Time (OST) Commission comprised of engaged residents across Maryland, representatives from government agencies, and key stakeholder constituencies to support equitable access to high-quality OST programming.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Consider appropriate expansions to the state apprenticeship tax credit and pursue federal funds to encourage more and new apprenticeship opportunities, and create more dual enrollment opportunities for students enrolled in Maryland's public schools.
- Pass legislation that requires all youth-serving state agencies to reserve a percent of their budgets to support summer learning and OST programming.
- Hire a third-party consultant to audit transportation barriers for young people participating in OST programs.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the achievement gap between students of color and white students; increases in OST seats in every county; and whether school attendance, discipline, and graduation rates have improved over time.

- 9. Bolster trauma-informed services in schools.** Bolstering trauma-informed services in schools will allow students with unresolved trauma to experience positive outcomes, including healing and reconciliation, and schools will become safer places. Success requires budget allocations, agency-led policy initiatives, legislative action, and executive leadership. Key leaders include: students from marginalized communities, guidance counselors, therapists, psychiatrists and social workers, local education agencies, MSDE, and caregivers and families.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Declare Maryland’s intention to become a trauma-informed state.
- Train state agency staff on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and trauma-informed care, with a special emphasis on training staff that interacts with children and families.
- Develop a partnership between Maryland’s Commission on Trauma-Informed Care and the MSDE to provide technical assistance to LEAs around integrating trauma-informed practices into the school day. For example, the MSDE could produce sample school schedules that provide time for educators and students to build community and participate in restorative practices.

Recommended long-term action:

- Establish state-funded opportunities for self-defined cultural, economic, and community development in schools with high rates of internal and community-based violence, racial discrimination, sex/gender discrimination, ethnic/linguistic discrimination, and those with high rates of adverse childhood experiences.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor whether schools report lower rates of student conflict and expulsion.

10. Expand community schools. Improving MSDE’s ability to provide state-level strategy, technical assistance, and professional development for community schools while also working with local boards of education to strengthen community school policies at the district level will ensure that Maryland expands and strengthens its community schools, resulting in students and families receiving more support. Success requires budget allocations, agency-led policy initiatives, legislative action, and executive leadership. Key leaders include: individual community schools (students, coordinators, caregivers, school leadership), OST and community-based partners that provide services to the school/in the geographic footprint of the school, and MSDE’s Director of Community Schools and their staff.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Amend community school language in the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) and Blueprint to align with the national Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) pillars best practices.
- Create a team at MSDE focused solely on providing effective, culturally competent support for community schools.
- Prioritize the phase-in of the Concentrations of Poverty Per Pupil Grants created in the Blueprint law to increase financial support for community schools.
- Develop clear guidance for local education agencies (LEAs) on community schools, and provide support to districts implementing community school programs.

Recommended long-term action:

- Develop a statewide data system that utilizes community school needs assessments to track progress toward the goals set forth in Pillar IV of the Blueprint.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the increase in the number of OST programs and services that students and families have access to at community schools; the increase in the number of partnerships between schools and external organizations such as nonprofits, for-profits, and faith-based institutions; and the increase in consistency across the state around the core components of the community school strategy.

11. Invest in 21st century school buildings. Investing in better school infrastructure will improve the teaching and learning environment for school communities, boost morale, reduce operational costs, and ensure that all students can learn and grow in a safe, healthy school environment. Maryland is facing significant challenges with aging and crumbling school infrastructure, and low-income jurisdictions face the greatest challenge when it comes to maintaining and replacing aging school infrastructure. The state must develop a statewide plan to increase the capital budget for school construction and ensure that funds are distributed in an equitable way such that all children, regardless of their socioeconomic status, have access to 21st century learning facilities. Success requires the Governor’s Office for Children partnering with legislators, the Interagency Commission on School Construction, and the Department of Budget and Management to develop a new funding formula for school construction.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Establish a task force that examines Maryland’s school funding formula and identifies best practices from other states to increase the overall quality of school infrastructure and equity across jurisdictions. Develop a set of recommendations for legislative consideration.
- Appoint equity-minded professionals to the Interagency Commission on School Construction.
- Review the Public-School Facilities Educational Sufficiency Standards to ensure that they reflect all components of a 21st century school.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Work with the legislature to revise the Maryland school funding formula based on best practices from around the country to increase focus on providing high-quality school facilities to students living in concentrated poverty.
- Work with the legislature to increase annual funding for school construction.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor whether the state’s facility assessment shows a decrease in the number of schools rated poorly, as well as the increase in the number of students living in communities of concentrated poverty that attend a school rated “good” or “excellent” on state facility assessments.

12. Fully fund and implement the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future. Fully funding and implementing the Blueprint for Maryland’s future will improve the overall quality of education in Maryland and grow a world-renowned education system that eradicates achievement gaps. Success requires prioritizing education in the budget year over year as the Blueprint funding formula continues to phase in. Additionally, the state must be laser-focused on successful implementation of the law so that elected officials, community members, educators, families, and students can see and feel the positive impacts of the Blueprint, resulting in widespread support for continued investment. Critical partnerships among the following must be formed: students, educators, LEAs, community-based providers, the Accountability and Implementation (AIB) Board, MSDE, the Maryland State Education Association, the Maryland Higher Education Commission, HBCUs/minority-serving institutions/Hispanic-serving institutions, the Maryland Department of Health, the Department of Human Services, and the Governor’s Workforce Development Board.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Design a comprehensive communication timeline to ensure the MSDE and AIB provide timely guidance to districts and schools.
- Review the current governance structure set forth in the law and determine if adjustments need to be made to promote successful implementation.

- Conduct an adequacy analysis of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future to determine if the programmatic and funding requirements are aligned given the challenges that have come to light in the post-COVID education landscape. Work with lawmakers to amend the Blueprint to address needed changes including teacher and support staff shortages and student's and teacher's social-emotional needs.
- Ensure that all agencies tasked with implementing the Blueprint have adequate training on equity and cultural competency, and staff are reflective of the diversity of the state.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Build personnel, technological capacity, and competencies of AIB, MSDE, and LEAs.
- Develop a fiscal accountability reporting system that is transparent and accessible.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor progress on meeting the Blueprint's goals.

13. Strengthen and expand career and technical education offerings. Strengthening and expanding career and technical education (CTE) will improve student pre-graduation and post-graduation outcomes, resulting in well-prepared graduates with industry-recognized credentials and certifications in high-demand and high-growth sectors. Success requires the MSDE and AIB working with LEAs, community colleges, local workforce boards, educators, students, and families to fully implement the college and career readiness standards (Pillar III) outlined in the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. The state will also need to invest in community colleges alongside K-12 institutions to achieve the ambitious goals set forth in the law.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Fully fund and implement the Blueprint Pillar III recommendations for college and career readiness (CCR).
- Require state agencies to support work-based learning and internship opportunities outlined in Blueprint CCR activities, including the creation of dedicated youth apprenticeship slots in all state agencies.
- Assess the readiness and capacity of community colleges to equitably support LEAs in the implementation of the CCR requirements in the Blueprint. Produce a report by fall 2023 to inform action in the 2024 legislative session.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Provide emergency aid to community colleges in the highest-poverty counties.
- Create a statewide quality and accountability oversight board for community colleges.
- Partner with the Department of Labor to create new career and technical education tracks, P-TECH, and middle college programs that educate students for emerging occupations.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the increase in percentage of high school graduates with a college or career plan in place by the September after graduation; graduation rates; and the increase in the number of high school graduates who have an industry-recognized credential or certificate in a registered apprenticeship or high-demand sector.

14. Raise teachers' and education support professionals' salaries throughout the state. Properly compensating educators will encourage more students to enter the teaching profession and allow Maryland to begin addressing the statewide teacher shortage. In addition, educators will have greater financial security, teacher retention rates will increase, and students will ultimately have a better school experience due to increased stability of staff. Maryland must prioritize funding for the Blueprint for Maryland's Future and consider expediting the phase-in of funding necessary to

fully implement Pillar 2: High Quality and Diverse Teachers and Leaders. State leaders should also consider amending the legislation to better address educational support professional salaries. Raising educator wages will take a statewide effort that includes the executive branch, the General Assembly, local governments, LEAs, union partners, and educators.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Prioritize the phase-in of the career teacher ladder outlined in the Blueprint, ensuring a baseline teacher salary of \$60,000.
- Explore additional income supports for the education workforce such as housing and rental assistance, child care stipends, tuition reimbursement, and transportation stipends.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Build education support professionals' careers into long-term, stable union jobs with living wages and secure benefits by FY26.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the Maryland State Department of Education Division of Assessment, Accountability and Performance Reporting "Analysis of Professional Salaries Maryland Public Schools" over time to see salary increases; educator retention rates; and the number of students pursuing degrees in education.

- 15. Recruit, prepare, and retain high-quality, diverse educators through increased support, workforce pipelines, and innovative mentorship and career ladders.** Recruiting, preparing, and retaining high-quality and diverse educators that reflect the students they teach will create a strong public education system that allows all students to realize their academic and social potential. As a result, Maryland will become the go-to destination for pre-K-12 educators who share the diverse backgrounds of the state's public school students. Success requires budget allocations, agency-led policy initiatives, public-private partnerships, legislative action, and executive leadership. Key leaders include: teacher preparation programs, LEAs, MSDE, the Maryland Higher Education Commission, the Maryland State Education Association, institutions of higher education, community colleges, and alternative route programs.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Provide incentives to recruit students of color to educator preparation programs, and partner with Maryland HBCUs and MSIs to recruit, prepare, and support diverse teacher candidates.
- In addition to the National Board Certification incentives in Blueprint legislation, provide districts with the flexibility to reward highly effective teachers based on additional performance metrics.
- Expand teacher pipelines by providing funding to expand the Teaching Fellows for Maryland Scholarship, "grow your own" teacher preparation programs, the Student Loan Debt Relief Tax Credit program, and the Teacher Quality and Diversity grant fund.
- Establish a review committee to examine and eliminate prohibitive recruitment and hiring practices.
- Develop statewide strategies that will increase the diversity of the administrator pipeline.
- Partner with external experts to train administrators (across LEAs) in staff retention strategies, staff leadership development, and cultural competency.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Redesign entrance requirements such as licensure exams, as MSDE data indicates that teacher licensure exams do not necessarily predict teacher effectiveness and may be a barrier to teachers of color joining the profession.
- Negotiate salary incentives for educators to serve as mentors.
- Create flexible teaching and leadership opportunities to maximize recruitment of talent into schools.
- Institute para-to-pro programs throughout the state and other "grow your own" programs.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the data on the education workforce and whether it shows a growth of diverse backgrounds across the industry, a decrease in staff turnover, and increased retention rates of educators of color; the increase in student and family satisfaction with the education system; and the decrease in student performance and discipline gap.

16. Support students who identify as LGBTQIA+. Creating an inclusive, supportive, and welcoming public education system will enable all students, including LGBTQIA+ students, to access a quality public education free of prejudice and hate. Governor Moore can lead by example in this arena, declaring Maryland public schools to be welcoming, inclusive environments for LGBTQIA+ students and school community members. Additionally, the LGBTQIA+ Commission can engage with youth from across the state, and LEAs, MSDE, and teacher training programs can provide professional development for educators to ensure they promote inclusive learning environments for LGBTQIA+ students and their families.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Develop and support pipeline initiatives for LGBTQIA+ educators.
- Charge the LGBTQIA+ Commission with identifying LGBTQIA youth leaders from each school district along with a school liaison/representative to develop community initiatives and awareness events across the state.
- Expand health services to support mental and behavioral health for LGBTQIA+ students.
- Train education personnel through job-embedded professional development on how to promote inclusive learning environments for LGBTQIA+ students and their families, including records privacy, name changes, and use of pronouns.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Ensure that trainings and wraparound services in K-12 are sensitive to issues of gender and sexuality.
- Incentivize LEAs to adopt inclusive policies that ensure transgender and gender nonconforming students can use the school facilities and participate on the athletic teams that align with their gender identity.
- Promote partnerships among state LGBTQIA+ centers, students' group, and K-12 schools through community initiatives.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the increase in number of LGTBIA+ youth who feel supported, as well as the decrease in number of LGBTQIA+ youth who are considered "at risk."

HIGHER EDUCATION

17. Increase the number of STEAM graduates by 150,000 by 2027. Providing more scaffolding for high school and college students to pursue science, technology, engineering, arts, and math will increase the number of students who pursue these fields. This will ultimately boost Maryland's economy by attracting new industries and creating more economic opportunity for young people from all backgrounds. Success requires the Governor's Office of Children to serve in a coordinating role, working with LEAs, community colleges, four-year colleges, MHEC, MSDE, and the Department of Labor to bolster STEAM education at every level. Alongside state government, the Maryland Association of Community Colleges, the University System of Maryland, four-year colleges and universities, LEAs, and employers will be critical partners in this work. Additionally, the Longitudinal Center can play an enhanced and crucial role collecting and analyzing data across all higher education institutions on admissions, existing programs of study, graduation rates, and career pipelines. Tracking and assessing this data will be essential to measure progress for the administration's overall higher education goals.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Expand Maryland’s successful P-Tech program—which leverages partnerships among school districts, the business community, and institutions of higher education so that students can obtain a cost-free associate degree in key STEAM fields—to additional public schools.
- Work with LEAs to make sure that diverse groups of students are taking foundational courses (biology, chemistry, computer science, and engineering), expand AP course offerings, and provide scaffolds to students so they can access these courses.
- Create seamless paths from K-12 to community colleges to four-year schools in STEAM areas in alignment with the Transfer with Success Act.
- Work with MHEC to ensure institutions of higher education are providing intervention and scaffolding to support students without a strong foundation to access STEAM majors.
- Increase needs-based scholarships for students pursuing STEAM majors.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Identify longer-term funding needs, and allocate funding that can be invested in the expansion of STEAM programs from K-12 institutions through graduate programs of study.
- Develop public-private partnerships with industry leaders to fund STEAM apprenticeships to ensure students can earn while they learn.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the increase in the number of STEAM programmatic opportunities in K-12 and higher education; the creation of a K-12 to higher education pathway for STEM/STEAM programs; the increased diversity of students engaged in STEM/STEAM programs in K-12 and higher education; and whether there is an increase in the number of businesses and industries settling in Maryland due to a highly skilled workforce.

- 18. Create new pathways to higher education by making the Community College Promise Program more accessible.** Restructuring the Community College Promise Program to support greater accessibility and a broader reach will reduce barriers to postsecondary degrees and credentials, and provide more Marylanders with a path toward upward mobility. Success requires legislative action to amend the program to increase accessibility and additional funding to provide an expanded number of scholarships. Key partners include: MHEC, the Maryland Association of Community Colleges, and the Financial Assistance Advisory Council. Growing this program will strengthen the diversity of the state’s higher education landscape, positively impacting traditional students and adult learners, community colleges, and the entire state of Maryland.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Work with legislators to expand the eligibility criteria for the program by reviewing current high school grade point average requirements and eliminating barriers for full- and part-time students as well as students seeking licenses and career-focused certificates.
- Eliminate deadline and implement a rolling deadline for the scholarship to allow students to access funding at different times of the year. This flexibility will support the full utilization of existing funding.
- Increase advising supports to ensure students know about the scholarship.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Increase state funding for the Community College Promise Program.
- Decentralize and streamline the program through direct implementation by college financial aid offices at each of the community colleges with oversight from the Maryland Higher Education Commission.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the increase in number of students accessing the Community College Promise Program; the increase in number of adult learners accessing the scholarship; and the increase in number of businesses and industries both attracted to and settling in Maryland due to a workforce pool with postsecondary experiences.

- 19. Increase the number of opportunities for dual enrollment and apprenticeships.** Increasing opportunities for dual enrollment and apprenticeships will allow K-12 students to benefit from early access to programs of study that meet their individual interests and prepare them to secure jobs in growing industries. Through the combined efforts of legislative and executive actions to provide incentives to employers and public school students, as well as the expansion of the apprenticeship tax credit, Maryland can bolster its entry-level workforce. Critical partners include: MHEC, the Department of Labor, community colleges, LEAs, employers, workforce investment boards, and students.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Identify the current dual enrollment and apprenticeship program pathways from K-12 to higher education/employment, their overall effectiveness, and funding opportunities to increase capacity.
- Develop and implement an ongoing statewide educational campaign, and connect it to short- and long-term workforce needs and opportunities.
- Increase partnerships between community colleges and LEAs to support dual-enrollment consistent with the Blueprint.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Collaborate with workforce investment boards, chambers of commerce, organized labor, apprenticeship providers, and local employers to build awareness for existing apprenticeship programs.
- Identify funding needs to support building short-term capacities and long-term success.
- Consider appropriate increases and/or expansions to the state apprenticeship tax credit in order to encourage more and new apprenticeship opportunities.
- Provide funding for initial training wages for apprenticeships and consider having MSDE and Maryland's Workforce Development Board create centralized apprenticeship courses.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the increase in the number of dual enrollment students and apprenticeship opportunities; the increase in the diversity of students in dual enrollment and apprenticeship opportunities; and the increase in the percentage of high school students who, prior to graduation, complete the high school level of a registered apprenticeship or an industry-recognized occupational credential.

- 20. Leverage Maryland's world-class HBCUs and public minority-serving institutions (MSIs) as pipelines for opportunity and incubators of business, and support Morgan State to become the first HBCU with R-1 status.** Championing HBCUs and MSIs, as well as predominantly Black institutions (PBIs), as pipelines for opportunity will enable the state to develop diverse talent to support numerous industries across the state. Additionally, supporting Morgan State in becoming Maryland's first HBCU with Research-1 status will position it as a regional and national leader, and demonstrate Maryland's commitment to HBCUs while stimulating the economy and reducing racial disparities. Success requires budget allocations as well as legislative action to further incentivize research and development. Key partnerships include: MHEC, MSDE, HBCUs, MSIs, PBIs, employers, the Department of Labor, and the Governor's Workforce Investment Board. Achieving R1 status will require increased state funding; public-private partnerships; and close collaboration among MHEC, Morgan State University Senior Leadership and Board of Regents, and local government leaders.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Create a statewide task force to identify the current resource needs of HBCUs, MSIs, and PBIs to create capacity in developing new programs or expanding existing programs to meet short- and long-term needs.
- Bolster student support services and disability services at HBCUs, MSIs, and PBIs to ensure all students' needs are met.
- Fund HBCUs, MSIs, and PBIs as hubs of innovation and transformation related to the future of work.
- Identify research and development opportunities, like planning grants, for HBCUs, MSIs, and PBIs to support a diverse workforce inclusive of business creation.
- Use Governor Moore's national reputation to support Morgan State's ability to fundraise and recruit talent in pursuit of R1 status.
- Provide state funding for new research centers at Morgan State; dedicate annual state funding to transform Morgan State's Office of Technology Transfer to the Center for Innovation and Commercialization; and enhance funding for faculty grant support services and development.
- Support Morgan State's efforts to increase tenure track positions across the university, increase the number of highly ranked doctoral programs, and increase funding to recruit and retain competitive research faculty.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Incentivize partnerships that support education campaigns, mentoring, and support services to ensure access and success.
- Secure sustainable funding to support innovation and transformation that attract students, promote college completion, create transformative partnerships, and set students on the path to success.
- Provide state support to Morgan State to grow the Lake Clifton property to include multipurpose venues and a convention center, new research facilities, and a high-tech business incubator.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the increase in the number of graduates from HBCUs and public minority-serving institutions; the increase in the number of total business and entrepreneurship centers and incubators across the state; and whether 50% of the state's HBCUs, MSIs, and PBIs participate in and acquire grants to build capacity to train students for the future.

- 21. Increase state financial aid funding.** Increasing financial aid funding, while also expanding financial support and counseling services to residents with student debt, will increase the number of graduates who are able to access higher education and promote social mobility through education. With MHEC's leadership, the administration can partner with the General Assembly to pass legislation and allocate funding to expand, adjust, and improve existing programs to reach more students.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Improve implementation of the Next Generation Scholarships Program, and ensure counselors and students have the information they need to access the program.
- Increase staff and improve technology in the Office of Student Financial Aid to provide better customer service to students during the busy spring financial aid season.
- Conduct a market study on the creation of a Maryland student debt refinancing authority.
- Implement the Department of Legislative Services' December 2022 recommendations on streamlining the application process for student-based aid so that more qualified students will apply.

- Ensure Maryland State Financial Aid (MSFA) has parity with Federal FAFSA Standards. MSFA should not add additional requirements or barriers for financial aid. This includes eliminating the selective service requirement for MSFA and school transfer applicants, and reducing the number of Guaranteed Access recipients selected for verification Maryland State Financial Aid applicants and FAFSA 2+2 (school transfer) applicants, to create parity with the federal government’s elimination of the selective service requirement.
- Separate the appropriations for the Guaranteed Access (GA) Grant and Education Assistance Grants.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Double the appropriation for the Maryland Student Debt Relief Tax Credit program. Allow eligible applicants to receive awards in consecutive years and dramatically increase marketing and outreach for the program.
- Work with advocates and other stakeholders to reimagine the need-based state aid program and implement a state aid overhaul via legislation.
- Establish a free student debt counseling service to help all Maryland residents with student debt understand the available options for debt relief and to navigate repayment.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the increased number of students who apply for and receive need-based financial aid; the increased college graduation rates for students receiving need-based aid; the increased number of students who apply for and receive student debt relief tax credit; the increased tax credit dollars awarded per eligible applicant; the increased number of borrowers who receive free student debt counseling services; and the increased number of borrowers who pay off or achieve student debt forgiveness.

GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP AND EDUCATION OPERATIONS

22. Develop a statewide Service Year Option Program to create valuable experience and a pathway to college affordability. Creating a statewide Service Year Option Program for students will help build a generation of diverse leaders who can come together across differences to build a stronger Maryland. High school graduates participating in the program will gain skills and experiences that will inform their college and career paths as they gain financial support for college and work together to address key challenges facing Maryland. Success requires creating the Department of Service and Civic Innovation to bring together Maryland Corps and AmeriCorps programs, and launch a new Service Year Option Program. The state will also need legislative partnership to create the new department and allocate funds to launch the program; strong state-level leadership; and robust regional partnerships with existing service programs, community and four-year colleges, philanthropic and nonprofit partners, and local education agencies. Most importantly, success requires engaging with interested youth and their families, and recruiting and supporting participants with diverse geographic, racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Appoint a strong leader for the new Department of Service and Civic Innovation.
- Increase state funding for the Service Year Option Program annually as the program grows.
- Engage stakeholders in the development of a statewide service year plan with incremental implementation phases and measurable goals for each phase.
- Call on and prepare state agencies, nonprofit, and corporate partners in service-oriented fields to create Service Year Option Program positions.
- Develop a recruitment and awareness campaign.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Secure federal and philanthropic funding to enhance state investments.
- Build a network of public/private partnerships to fully execute a Service Year Option for all graduating high school students.
- Connect service year alums and encourage them to continue their service, including in Maryland state and local government.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the number of Maryland youth completing service programs; qualitative data on program satisfaction from program participants and partners; and financial, education, employment, and civic outcomes of students participating in the program.

- 23. Close the digital divide.** Closing the digital divide created by access gaps in connectivity, hardware, and technology education will allow all students and educators to gain access to information, programs, and services for teaching and learning. Success requires working with legislative partners to secure federal rural infrastructure grants, exploring incentives for businesses that invest in community broadband infrastructure, and working with MSDE and local school districts to ensure technology equity in cases of emergency or inclement weather, as well as throughout the school year. As a result, the state will reduce achievement gaps caused by inequities in digital access, improve educational and professional development programming, and boost achievement of students.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Engage the business and utility companies to expand partnerships.
- Develop new implementation timelines for Maryland Broadband Local Jurisdiction Collaboration Workgroup's Digital Equity Act Plan.
- Allocate funding to extend Maryland Emergency Broadband Benefit Program (MEBB) beyond December 2023.
- Develop business incentives for anchor institutions that invest in expansion of broadband within a 50-mile radius of the anchor location.
- Identify and pursue philanthropic and federal grant opportunities (including USDA Rural Development, AmeriCorps, and others) to support "last mile" and other connectivity efforts.
- Staff and fully support the Office of Statewide Broadband.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Secure funding from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act to provide and expand broadband access to communities most in need.
- Utilize existing ESSA Title IV funding, CHIP and Science Act funds and ESSER II and III to run pilot program for LEAs to receive free school supplies, technological devices, subscription services, and broadband for students who are eligible for free and reduced lunch as well as those experiencing homelessness and transiency. The administration should prioritize schools and LEAs in high-need areas (urban, suburban, and rural) for the pilot.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the increased number of schools with technology for students, as well as the decreased number of students without internet access.

- 24. Reinstate Maryland's Governor's Office for Children.** Reinstating the Governor's Office for Children and empowering it with resources and authority will create an organizing body that supports the children and youth of Maryland and drives systemic change. The Office will coordinate efforts across agencies and sectors in order to build a comprehensive and efficient network of supports, programs, and services for children and their families. As a result, Maryland families will find it easier to navigate state benefits, and bureaucratic inefficiencies and inconsistencies will be minimized. To ensure no

child is left behind, the Governor's Office for Children will bring together the state departments of Housing, Education, Health, Human Services, and Juvenile Services; the Department of Service and Civic Innovation; local management boards; local school districts; child care providers; and families.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Appoint a strong leader for the reinstated office, and provide the office with sufficient staffing, resources, and convening and coordinating authority.
- Develop a strategic plan within the first year that outlines the priorities of the office and sets clear metrics to assess progress on improving ease for families in navigating and benefiting from state benefits and programs.
- Require all state agencies participating in the Children's Cabinet to set aside a percent of their budget to support strategic initiatives developed by this coordinating office including in critical areas like out-of-school time and summer programming.
- Spearhead the coordination of all policies and programs targeting child poverty, and develop a governmentwide strategic plan to achieve this goal.
- Work with MSDE toward full staffing, which is critical to the success of the Blueprint implementation and the Governor's education agenda. Leverage the star power of Governor Moore and his team to support recruitment of talented, diverse staff to MSDE.
- Develop a cross-agency shared vision for educator preparation programs preparing high-quality diverse educators, and support the MSDE and MHEC in improving the quality of existing programs to ensure all future educators are trained in research-based, culturally competent approaches to teaching, including the science of reading.
- Identify a lead person within the Governor's Office of Children to develop a 10-year plan for early childhood education.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Invest in meaningful stakeholder feedback to hold the office accountable for achieving outcomes.
- Increase resource and budgetary support for early child care programs.
- Support legislative action that supports early child care programs, including tax incentives, loan funds, operational support, centralized substitute banks, and per child funding formulas, and establish emergency child care centers for non-routine child care needs.
- Create a liaison to secure federal funding and advocate for federal child care solutions.
- Support the MSDE and MHEC in developing multiple pathways to teacher certification that have a track record of successfully recruiting diverse candidates.
- Work with the Department of Disability, MSDE, and MHEC to ensure aligned support for students with special needs from cradle to career.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the health and well-being of Maryland's young people including their educational outcomes, poverty rates, and data on physical and mental health.

GROWING MARYLAND'S COMPETITIVENESS



Throughout the transition process, the Growing Maryland's Competitiveness Committee heard from hundreds of Marylanders who believe the state can and should be one of the most attractive states in the country for businesses and residents alike. Maryland is home to world-class companies powered by one of the most diverse, educated, and talent-filled workforces in the country; world-class universities and research facilities; and natural resources. All of these are assets that should and can produce economic growth in Maryland well above the state's recent performance.

Governor Moore has frequently noted that Maryland is asset-rich and strategy-poor. Marylanders have noted the same, expressing the need for the state to create a more supportive business climate that works with the business community to catalyze growth in every region of the state. Growing competitiveness thus requires articulating a clear and unifying statewide vision that properly aligns state and local regulations. This vision promotes thoughtful economic development strategies that, with adequate resources for implementation, can support the industries of today while strengthening Maryland's position as a leader in emerging industries of the future.

The Growing Maryland's Competitiveness Committee organized into four working groups: (1) Business Climate Nonfinancial Topics (e.g., talent attraction, marketing, and promotion); (2) Business Climate Financial Topics (e.g., taxes, regulations, and incentives); (3) Target Clusters and Regional Support; and (4) Agriculture and Rural Development. It solicited perspectives from dedicated Marylanders, explored opportunities to advance Maryland's economic potential, and developed recommendations for the administration to translate its campaign promise for an inclusive, prosperous Maryland into action.

From a macro perspective, stakeholders pointed to Maryland's poor record of economic growth despite its great wealth and tremendous assets. For example, over the past 10 years the national economy has grown about 23% versus Maryland's growth of 11% in real terms. This 12% cumulative gap represents tens of billions of dollars of lost economic gain, foregone tax revenues, and missed opportunities for job creation.

The committee reviewed more than 80 submissions through the transition website and engaged 100+ at-large members during two town hall forums. The thoughtful recommendations shared by Marylanders were as diverse as the state's residents and economy. From the small-business owners who shared personal perspectives on ways to make Maryland's tax and regulatory environment more supportive to representatives from core sectors like life sciences/biotechnology and agriculture, these external expert perspectives complemented the expertise of the leaders on the Growing Maryland's Competitiveness Committee.

Significant themes that emerged from the work of the Growing Maryland's Competitiveness Committee:

- **Support entrepreneurs of all sizes and from all backgrounds, especially those from underrepresented communities.** The state should ensure awareness of and access to critical state resources from startup to scale up and beyond.
- **Take a customer-centric approach to supporting the business community.** The state should ensure local governments, state departments, and the state legislature work together to deliver a streamlined, efficient, and consistent experience for business owners.
- **Market the state aggressively.** This will help attract businesses to Maryland and promote the state's unique exports to markets around the world.
- **Take a talent-first approach to competitiveness.** The state should develop and implement strategies that emphasize its current world-class talent while investing to continue its advantage in the future.
- **Promote and engage youth and their families.** This can help raise awareness of career pathways into agriculture, aquaculture, and fishing, which will attract and retain the next generation of workers in these critical industries.

- **Ensure the health and vitality of the state's largest economic regions.** This especially includes the city of Baltimore, whose economic reality falls far short of the amazing potential that the city and its residents represent.

In addition to the thoughtful policy suggestions that were gathered, another consistent theme emerged that focused on execution, especially from the state's leading liaison with the business community: the Maryland Department of Commerce. Without strong leadership and disciplined execution, even the best laid strategies will fall short of what Maryland businesses deserve. If the key to growth is implementation of sound strategy, then it is vital to rationalize, centralize, and galvanize implementation within a single agency.

This report addresses both strategic and operational imperatives for this new administration. The external insights, paired with the committee's work throughout the transition process, provided a sense of urgency and helped prioritize potential actions for the administration to execute across the many facets of economic competitiveness.

The Growing Maryland's Competitiveness Committee shares the following report with the Moore-Miller Administration to guide the implementation of priority recommendations that emerged from each working group.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

1. **Establish sound strategy and operating processes to ensure efficient and effective action.** Investing early on in developing a sound strategic plan and operating processes will put the Department of Commerce in a strong position to execute the recommendations outlined in this report. The recommendations that have been developed and refined will require that the Department of Commerce have the focus, capabilities, and resources to help establish Maryland as a leading state for businesses and residents to call home. To build this strong foundation, the incoming Secretary of Commerce should have the support, resources, and mandate to make the Department of Commerce a proactive partner to and catalyst for commerce.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Audit existing economic incentives programs at all levels of government, enhancing high-return programs and eliminating poor performers.
- Audit existing business regulations, identifying prime candidates for elimination and/or streamlining to unshackle economic growth prospects.
- Build a statewide asset map and an associated asset-centered economic development strategy.
- Review each of the 24 counties' economic development branding and strategies to identify ways to amplify their impact with additional state support.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Implement a system to assess, monitor, and inform the public and legislators of proposed legislation's impact on the business community while bills are being debated.
- Create a robust "Ambassador to Business" capability that streamlines and centralizes the state's processes to engage and support prospects making a corporate location decision.
- Establish a Competitiveness Council with leaders from inside and outside the administration who can provide expert strategic and networking resources to bolster Maryland's economic competitiveness.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor state and regional economic and social metrics like gross regional product (GRP), average wages, employment rates, and labor force participation rates. Additionally, the state should continue tracking its economic development project activities (e.g., project announcements, job creation, and capital investment) overall and by region.

BUSINESS CLIMATE – NONFINANCIAL

- 2. Make talent recruitment and recruitment of businesses top priorities.** Developing a media campaign highlighting the benefits of working and living in Maryland, including the deep commitment to inclusive policies, will attract world-class talent and businesses and expand the state’s tax base. Maryland is home to a world-class talent base in industries like life sciences, biotech, and cybersecurity, and its proximity to Washington, D.C., provides a potential magnet for global business and international trade, along with easy access to federal agencies and labs. Success requires developing and executing well-crafted marketing and promotion strategies that showcase Maryland’s assets, high quality of life, and commitment from its elected and private-sector leaders to catalyze inclusive growth. It also requires close coordination among the Executive Office, the Department of Commerce, and leading business organizations like the Maryland Chamber and many others to ensure all Marylanders can be active and impactful business recruiters.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Direct the Department of Commerce and related agencies to identify target population segments, industries, and geographies.
- Develop cohesive marketing strategy and media (traditional, digital, and social) campaigns highlighting Maryland’s assets to both businesses and workers (e.g., competitive business environment, high quality of life, inclusive neighborhoods and policy environment).
- Integrate talking points and messaging on Maryland being a top destination for talent and business into Governor Moore’s media appearances.
- Review and act on high-priority initiatives from previous task force reports analyzing opportunities to improve Maryland’s tax and regulatory environment to make the state more business-friendly.

Recommended long-term action:

- Work with the Maryland General Assembly to ensure adequate funding to sustain Maryland’s marketing message to key target segments and demographics.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor business climate perception rankings that assess states against quantitative and qualitative metrics like tax burdens, talent availability and quality, and economic development project announcements and trends; earned media for Maryland as a top state for business and top state to call home; and migration (i.e., increased inflow of residents moving from other states) and economic development project announcement trends.

- 3. Develop new benefits and ensure superior service in supporting Maryland businesses.** Improving marketing and aligning existing resources that support businesses, and streamlining the process for accessing these resources, will allow Maryland to support its businesses—small and large—in creating and sustaining more high-quality jobs for its residents. Success requires knowing what benefits exist to businesses, developing solutions to fill gaps, and then investing in marketing and outreach to ensure businesses are aware of and can access these resources. The Department of Commerce should take the lead in reviewing the state’s existing suite of business support services and programs, and then coordinate closely with state and local procurement teams to support minority- and women-owned businesses, Maryland’s network of small-business development centers, and nonprofit organizations throughout the state supporting small businesses.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Establish a task force within the government to review the existing landscape of state support and resources for businesses, identify gaps, and oversee development of a strategic plan to improve the reach, efficiency, and effectiveness of the support portfolio.
- Develop comprehensive guidelines and expectations that set the bar for excellent customer services for “customer”-facing support programs and roles (e.g., public, transparent service-level type agreements).
- Identify opportunities and provide accompanying investments (technology, processes, training) to streamline services, and make them more efficient for the end-customer—Maryland businesses.
- Establish ongoing surveys and metrics to track customer service levels by customer-facing support programs and roles.
- Reduce redundancy in business interactions with the state by promoting interdepartmental data sharing, potentially using private-sector customer relationship management as a model.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Explore ways to create a one-stop shop for businesses to find information on benefits availability and how to apply/access those benefits.
- Work with the General Assembly to ensure adequate funding for business support programs and minimal obstacles to accessing critical resources.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor business and community engagement for information and outreach (e.g., downloads, program participation), as well as economic growth outcomes for supported businesses (e.g., rise in business registrations, increase in small-business job creation, increased revenue growth for small businesses).

- 4. Implement a talent development program as part of economic and new business development incentives.** Implementing programs that work directly with businesses to identify and efficiently train workers will make Maryland a more attractive place to do business and help Marylanders get the skills they need. Success requires working both sides of the issue—helping businesses find, attract, and retain talent while also helping Marylanders in every community to access support and resources to build relevant, in-demand skills in a fast-changing environment. As the state’s lead in attracting new companies to the state, the Department of Commerce is best positioned to also take the lead in researching and building such a program. The Governor’s office can and should coordinate among key agencies including the departments of Commerce, Labor, Education, and Assessments/Taxation, to develop state-level talent-focused incentives that connect businesses with public institutions, including high schools and community colleges. The General Assembly will also need to be a supportive partner, advancing funding and raising awareness of these programs among stakeholders.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Direct the Department of Commerce to review existing economic development incentive programs that can be used to support talent strategies, and to recommend more competitive incentives.
- Direct the Department of Commerce to research peer state talent and workforce development incentives, and to recommend how Maryland can build a leading program to compete more effectively in recruiting businesses.
- Establish a task force within the government to study how business, academia, and policymakers can best equip all Marylanders to thrive in an ever-changing labor market.

Recommended long-term action:

- Work with the General Assembly to ensure adequate startup and ongoing funding, as well as minimal hurdles to accessing resources of the talent-focused economic development incentives.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor talent development program outcomes (e.g., businesses supported, candidates screened, workers trained, retention rates of workers); economic development project outcomes (e.g., project announcements and associated jobs, capital investment, and wages); and economic inclusion and opportunity metrics like underemployment, unemployment, and labor force participation rates (and cut by different demographics).

BUSINESS CLIMATE – FINANCIAL**5. Rationalize resources and access to assistance for startups, and micro and small businesses.**

Increasing awareness of and access to assistance programs, resources, and economic incentives for small and micro businesses will allow Maryland business owners and entrepreneurs to become more competitive, resilient, and prosperous, creating better-paying jobs for communities across the state. Success requires centralizing information and resources into well-publicized and easy-to-access locations (digital and in-person) so that businesses of all sizes and capabilities can benefit. The Department of Commerce should lead this effort in identifying, coordinating with, and centralizing information from state and local stakeholders including incubator/accelerator programs, small-business development centers, nonprofits targeting underserved entrepreneur groups, and local economic development organization supporting small businesses and startups.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Empower a state agency (e.g., the Department of Commerce) or department (e.g., Procurement) to lead an effort to compile, synthesize, streamline, and then publicize assistance programs and resources for Maryland businesses.
- Evaluate the landscape of minority- and women-owned business supports against desired outcomes, identifying the effective programs that should be expanded and replacing ineffective ones.
- Direct key state agencies to review and deepen partnerships with local business support networks and organizations to identify ways the state can support and empower those organizations working directly with businesses.
- Develop “buy local” benchmarks and provide marketing and communications resources for local governments and nonprofits to publicize the importance of supporting local businesses.
- Support organizations like TEDCO (Maryland Technology Development Corporation) that work with startup ecosystem leaders at state and local levels, identifying opportunities for the state to support the ecosystem (e.g., startups, investors, entrepreneurial support organizations), and developing and executing programs to fill statewide needs.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Direct key departments to establish ongoing processes to collect and respond to feedback from small and micro businesses on how the state can help.
- Develop outcomes and benchmarking dashboard(s) to track and monitor the administration’s impact on small and micro businesses as well as by key socioeconomic, demographic, and geographic considerations.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor support program and resource engagement metrics (e.g., attendance at events, enrollment in workshops, web visits and downloads of online resources); small- and micro-business growth and resiliency (e.g., improved survival rates); and outcome metrics for minority- and women-owned businesses (e.g., businesses established, employment growth rates, survival rates, state procurement awards).

- 6. Accelerate Maryland's ability to translate research into new business opportunities.** Providing the state's academic and research institutions with support, resources, and focus to translate next-generation research into commercially viable businesses will allow Maryland to establish itself as a global innovation leader and create cutting-edge businesses that shape the future. Success requires investing the time, energy, and resources to develop and execute proven commercialization strategies. A diverse set of stakeholders including higher education institutions, federal research labs, investor community, entities like the Maryland Technology Development Corporation (TEDCO), and entrepreneur and startup ecosystem support organizations must all work together to develop promising technologies and turn them into viable businesses.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Establish a task force consisting of the Department of Commerce, the Maryland Higher Education Commission, and leading universities, among others, to review previous work on commercializing Maryland's research, benchmark the state against top competitors, identify best practices, and develop recommendations to advance this goal.
- Leverage Governor Moore's media presence to highlight key technologies incubated in Maryland institutions and labs that have been commercialized.

Recommended long-term action:

- Empower the Department of Commerce and other agencies to develop a marketing and communications strategy that tells Maryland's innovation and commercialization story, celebrating prominent successes and highlighting promising research.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor research commercialization metrics (e.g., journal articles, patents, university licensing revenues, startups created to commercialize research).

- 7. Explore options to simplify and rationalize the state's tax system to make compliance easier, make Maryland more competitive as a place to live and work, and attract and retain businesses.** Establishing a competitive tax climate that generates the state revenues needed to create opportunity and establish a high quality of life for all Marylanders, while allowing businesses to prosper and reinvest in growth, will allow the state to become the go-to location for both businesses and residents alike. Success requires acting on previous recommendations to update Maryland's tax codes to reflect both the competitive realities of a global economy and the administration's commitment to creating economic opportunity for all Marylanders. This effort will require close partnership between the executive and legislative branches as well as frequent communication with the business community to understand potential impact of proposed changes to the tax code.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Direct the departments of Budget Management and Commerce to work together to review past legislative and administrative studies on how to improve and update Maryland's tax codes and make recommendations on high-priority opportunities.

Recommended long-term action:

- Partner with an academic research center and/or think tank to develop different impact scenarios for tax code updates; leverage these insights in conversations with legislators, industry, and community leaders. Also look at other states for best practices.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor state business climate rankings, especially those focused on tax competitiveness, as well as business executive perception scores (e.g., survey results).

TARGET CLUSTERS AND REGIONAL SUPPORT

- 8. Establish redevelopment communities in urban and rural areas where remote workers can earn incentives to locate.** Strategically investing time and resources to market how key areas meet the needs and preferences of today's skilled yet mobile workers will ensure regions throughout the state can recruit skilled workers and entrepreneurs to power growth. Success requires first understanding the needs of remote, skilled, and high-demand workers, and then mapping those needs against the assets available in target redevelopment communities. Communities also need the resources and technical support to market to and engage prospective workers, entrepreneurs, and businesses.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Sign an executive order to review and consolidate information on the landscape of place-based economic development programs in Maryland (e.g., Opportunity Zones, Enterprise Zones, Empowerment Zones, broadband access expansion priority areas).
- Direct the Department of Commerce to identify ways to leverage existing programs for the attraction of remote, skilled workers and entrepreneurs in target communities.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Explore ongoing funding opportunities and programming to support local economic development efforts, including efforts to attract and retain remote workers.
- Explore legislative opportunities to improve the tax code to make Maryland an attractive destination for remote workers and businesses that hire remote workers.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor socioeconomic growth outcomes in target communities (e.g., population growth, establishment growth, increased startup activity), as well as activity and growth outcomes (e.g., businesses established, job creation, per capita income levels) by demographic groups to ensure equitable outcomes and impact.

- 9. Focus on the state's regional strengths.** Ensuring all regions have the knowledge, support, and resources to capitalize on their strengths will allow Maryland to attract and develop the talent, innovation, and businesses it needs to thrive. Some communities need more support than others to close the gap between economic reality and potential. For example, Baltimore is a city that can and should be the economic engine not just for Maryland but for the mid-Atlantic region. As Governor Moore has noted, the success of Maryland as a thriving economy and inclusive community relies heavily on how well the state supports communities like Baltimore in reaching their potential. Success requires starting at the regional and local levels and making resources and technical support available to local leaders to ensure they can build on and execute their strengths-based economic development strategic plans.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Identify federal and state agencies and resources that can be leveraged to support the development and execution of regional economic development plans based on existing strengths and near-term potential for each region such as colleges and universities; cultural institutions; centers of excellence for life sciences and health services; and natural resources like the Chesapeake Bay and waterways, mountains, and farming communities.
- Ensure the state works with local leaders to identify, prioritize, and respond to the billions of dollars available from major federal competitive grant programs through federal agencies like the Department of Commerce and National Science Foundation.
- Direct the Department of Commerce to help local governments develop a strategic focus on transforming their local relationships with federal facilities in their area to that of strategic partners (e.g., identifying ways to enable achievement of broader national objectives supporting economic development, minority- and women-owned business procurement, and more).
- Establish strategic and collaborative partnerships with key federal and local agencies and departments to ensure efficient information sharing of the needs and opportunities in each region.
- Direct the Department of Commerce to review its processes and infrastructure to support local officials in developing policies that support sustainable economic growth.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Develop strategies to build thriving communities surrounding military bases, thereby catalyzing job creation, attracting needed investment, and building strong workforce development pipelines for youth interested in military and non-military career opportunities on the bases.
- Explore budget and legislative actions to establish funding that can help improve regional competitiveness and spur economic growth.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor economic growth outcomes for each region (e.g., jobs, output, wages).

10. Make Maryland the capital of quantum. Directing critical investment into quantum research and commercialization efforts, as well as the broader ecosystem that is advancing this promising technology, will enable Maryland to become the go-to destination for a technology that could revolutionize its economy and increase the number of good-paying jobs in industries of the future. Success requires coordinated action that targets support for quantum-based startups and the creation of a quantum-based ecosystem that expands and deepens linkages among academia, existing businesses, startups, research agencies, and related stakeholders.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Establish a task force staffed with a diverse set of leaders from our universities, quantum centers of excellence, federal agencies, and state and local government to provide recommendations on how the state can best support the emerging industry.
- Identify ways to support existing assets like the Quantum Startup Foundry to expand its impact and geographic reach to unlock Maryland's full potential in the field.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Build and invest in strategies to build the manufacturing facilities and capabilities necessary to support ongoing research and innovation.
- Explore budget and legislative action to provide meaningful, ongoing support to help deepen Maryland's leadership in the space.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor quantum ecosystem activity (e.g., research dollars dedicated to quantum, research papers published, federal grants won, startups created, venture capital investments).

AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

11. Promote sustainable agriculture, aquaculture, and forestry practices. Ensuring Maryland farmers, fishers, and foresters have the knowledge, tools, and resources to understand and implement sustainable practices will allow these leading industries to become more resilient and productive while ensuring the state’s natural resources remain plentiful for generations to come. Success requires investing in education and capabilities programs that support and uplift workers in the industry, while helping them to overcome possible skepticism and access resources to adopt practices that pay dividends in the long run. With the onset of global climate impacts, issues regarding bay health, and rising overall distribution and production costs, there is a need to define, incentivize, and promote sustainable agriculture. Collaboration among multiple departments at all levels of government is needed, starting with the Maryland Department of Agriculture and including the Department of Commerce, the Department of Education, and local government agencies.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Develop consistent and publicized definitions of—and best practices related to—sustainable farming, fishing, and forestry.
- Create a self-assessment scorecard to help industries understand where they stand relative to best practices.
- Create toolkits and resource guides for local economic development workers and industry advocates to use in promoting and assisting sustainable practices.
- Advocate for and secure funding (e.g., grants, low-interest financing) from the federal government to support the adoption of sustainable practices.
- Develop and publicize an inventory of resources and technical assistance targeting specific segments (e.g., small-plot farmers, Spanish-speakers).

Recommended long-term actions:

- Seek funding through legislative initiatives to hire a high-ranking, state-level ombudsman, as well as fund ombudsman at the local jurisdictional levels.
- Review existing policies and funding programs to identify ways to create more flexibility to meet the needs of farmers, foresters, and aquaculture leaders.
- Support, fund, and invest in ongoing solutions-oriented research like the Climate Vulnerability Assessment conducted in 2021.
- Continue advocating and lobbying for more federal resources to support agriculture, aquaculture, and forestry industries.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor engagement with state resources (e.g., attendance at training events, resource guide downloads); funding levels dedicated to sustainable practices; and adoption of and improvement in “sustainable practices” scorecards.

12. Support industrial and rural site development investment. Providing Maryland’s rural communities with the technical support and resources to invest in needed infrastructure like broadband and better leverage assets like developable land for growth will help connect rural residents and entrepreneurs to the global economy and communities, and position them to attract economic development projects that can create good-paying jobs. Success requires taking an aggressive approach in securing federal dollars for critical infrastructure (e.g., broadband) while assisting localities through

grants, loans, and other creative financing mechanisms to invest in their productive assets. The Department of Commerce will likely serve as the lead state department overseeing these programs, but it should collaborate closely with local economic development and other government officials.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Direct relevant state agencies to assess, identify, and maximize funding opportunities that could be used for rural broadband projects.
- Review existing support programs and legislation that could assist localities in investing in industrial sites and buildings.
- Partner with leading rural organizations to identify top economic development priorities and opportunities.
- Ensure representation of laborers in agricultural policy and operational decisions.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Enhance efforts to expand transportation access and improve reliability to ensure all Marylanders have affordable and efficient ways to get to work.
- Identify programs and funding streams to help employers support newly immigrated workers with housing and transportation issues, among other needs.
- Develop lobbying and advocacy strategy to ensure Maryland gets fair share of federal dollars devoted to rural growth.
- Enhance existing and/or develop new programs to support rural communities to invest in their assets.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor funding for rural economic development efforts, including broadband and industrial sites, as well as broadband access and adoption rates.

- 13. Create and foster an agriculture education pipeline.** Raising awareness of the importance of agriculture and the diverse career pathways within the field—and providing hands-on learning experiences for students of all ages—will result in more young people entering the field and more people overall becoming aware of the benefits of having a thriving agriculture industry. Ultimately, this will put Maryland’s largest industry in a stronger, more competitive position. Success requires addressing talent pipeline gaps with urgency, and drawing talent through greater outreach and intention from all walks of life, including those from minority, women, and veteran backgrounds. It also requires committed action and coordination across multiple agencies to build a stronger, more resilient industry with a workforce capable of feeding Marylanders—and the world—for generations to come. Leaders on this front should include the Maryland State Department of Education and the Department of Agriculture at the state level, and local school boards and districts across the state.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Engage key industry, education, and elected leaders at the state and local levels to build support for the development of an agriculture education pipeline strategy.
- Host a “first moves” industry summit to raise awareness of and build momentum for the effort.
- Establish a Maryland Environmental and Agriculture Education Task Force with representation from the Maryland Higher Education Commission and the secretaries of Agriculture, Education, and Environment to build the strategy for K-12 and beyond.
- Identify opportunities to support and/or fund educator externships so that more educators better understand and can communicate opportunities in agriculture to their students.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Secure funding for the strategic effort, including resources for curriculum design, support for local school districts to adopt the curriculum, and marketing resources to engage parents and students.
- Incentivize curricula at local community colleges that prepare students for positions at local and state departments and organizations addressing agriculture and nature conservation efforts (e.g., Soil Conservation Districts, Natural Resource Conservation Service).

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor adoption of agriculture education curriculum; surveys showing increased awareness of and interest in agriculture fields; and increased numbers of young people entering agriculture.

- 14. Promote Maryland as an international leader in agriculture.** Ensuring Maryland’s trade promotion services and other state support for agribusiness are more widely known will allow the state’s agribusiness, especially small and medium-sized producers, to have the support, resources, and network to expand to international markets thereby creating more resilient businesses and jobs for Marylanders. Success requires ensuring agribusinesses, especially small and medium-sized growers, are aware of and have access to the supportive services that can unlock transformational growth for businesses. The Governor, his office, the Department of Commerce, the Department of Agriculture, the Maryland Chamber, and many more will need to work closely together to develop and execute a sound and inclusive promotion strategy.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Host an industry summit on the intersection of Maryland agriculture and international trade to identify priorities and opportunities for state support.
- Develop and fund a marketing campaign promoting Maryland agricultural goods nationally and internationally.
- Promote and remove barriers for agritourism like adjusting current agritourism policy to be consistent among jurisdictions.
- Sign an executive order directing state agencies to review and support Maryland’s agritourism industry.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Explore legislative action to support farmers’ abilities to diversify their crop production and grow with minimal regulatory constraints.
- Identify opportunities to enhance Buy Local programs at state and local levels.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor growth in international exports of Maryland agricultural products, as well as engagement and usage of Maryland export promotion services.

- 15. Support policies that alleviate labor issues in agriculture.** Ensuring state and local governments work collaboratively with industry to tackle critical labor issues in agriculture will allow Maryland’s agriculture sector (and all sectors) to find, attract, retain, and promote talented residents to help its businesses compete and thrive. Success requires working closely with industry leaders to prioritize the issues that can be affected by state and local government policy, and then working efficiently and strategically across government levels, agencies, and branches to improve those conditions. The following will need to work closely to tackle these complex, multifaceted issues: the departments of Agriculture, Labor, and Commerce; the General Assembly; and the Maryland Chamber and business leaders across the state, among many other stakeholders.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Engage key industry and state and local leaders to prioritize labor issues by criticality, ability to impact, costs, and potential benefits.
- Ensure the Department of Agriculture (and/or representatives from agriculture, fishing, and forestry) has representation on task forces devoted to key areas like workforce, opportunity, and education.
- Direct the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Labor to study the issue of labor issues in agriculture and develop recommendations for near- and long-term action.
- Enhance the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs’ work with federal partners to promote policies at the federal level to alleviate challenges.
- Strengthen existing programs for inmate transition and re-entry into communities through stable full-time programs.
- Ensure representation of laborers in agricultural policy and operational decisions.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Engage the General Assembly to review existing regulations that negatively impact agribusinesses’ abilities to find, hire, and retain the talent they need.
- Explore subsidies or tax credits to support funding for employee retention and/or re-skilling programs.
- Provide programs and funding for English as a second language to better connect employers and often-overlooked communities.
- Explore a path to citizenship and then on to farm ownership with federal and state agencies.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor improved confidence in agribusinesses’ ability to hire and retain talent measured through occasional “business confidence” surveys, as well as employment growth.



HEALTH CARE



The Health Care Committee was charged with reviewing policy commitments made during the Moore-Miller campaign and developing plans to operationalize and implement them. The policies within this report are intended to ensure state and local government agencies, as well as private and nonprofit partners, work hand-in-hand to better serve residents and improve the health and wellness of all Marylanders.

The Health Care Committee met between November 2022 and January 2023. To complete its work, the committee formed five working groups: (1) Access to Care; (2) Health Equity; (3) Health Workforce; (4) Mental Health and Substance Use; and (5) Strengthening Health Care and Public Health. Members largely determined which policy area they would contribute to based on their individual expertise and interests, with efforts taken to balance groups to ensure diversity consistent with the Governor and Lieutenant Governor's commitment to ensuring that all policies and actions are reflective of Maryland's diverse residents.

During the transition, the Health Care Committee met with the Maryland Department of Health, the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange, the Health Services Cost Review Commission, the Prescription Drug Affordability Board, the Maryland Health Care Commission, the Maryland Insurance Administration, the Maryland Board of Nursing, and the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems (MIEMSS). These experts helped the Health Care Committee identify early steps to demonstrate the Moore-Miller Administration's commitment to advancing health and equity to benefit all Marylanders.

Additionally, the committee received written input from over 200 Marylanders who took the time to share their thoughts, concerns, expertise, and experiences regarding health care policy in Maryland. The range of ideas was broad, but overarching aspirations centered around the need for effective and accessible care for all Marylanders, particularly the most vulnerable and in need. Many shared personal stories of their own struggles and obstacles they faced or the experiences of others they care for.

Here is a sampling of the written feedback the committee received through the transition's online portal:

["To ensure 988, the national suicide helpline, is a free accessible resource, funding is needed in FY 2024 to support call centers."](#)

["Investigate strategies based on the Maryland Mortality Report to decrease Black Maternal Mortality disparities."](#)

["I am deeply concerned about mental health services available to Marylanders, young and old. I have an older sister who has a mental illness. \[...\] I would appreciate it if you are able to budget and provide dollar incentives for nursing homes to recruit, train and pay staff to help people with mental illness in nursing homes and also in schools."](#)

The committee held two at-large public engagement meetings with hundreds of direct participants, with hundreds more observing. Participants included both industry experts and impacted citizens, sharing recommendations and arguing to prioritize matters impacting them. The Health Care Committee's leadership gathered these ideas and experiences, and considered them when crafting policies around support for Marylanders with serious mental illness or substance use issues, reproductive rights, workforce issues, access to care, and so many other topics that were the subject of community input.

Significant themes that emerged from the work of the Health Care Committee:

- **Increase access to affordable health coverage.** This will ensure quality health care services for all Maryland residents.
- **Create a Health in All Policies Council.** This will help advance health and well-being through the broad range of state policies.
- **Provide more support for aging in place.** This includes expanding access to home and community-based services for Maryland's older adults.
- **Address the state's crisis in mental health and addiction.** This requires effective policy, enhanced training, and greater access to needed services.
- **Create a vision for the next revision of Maryland's Total Cost of Care waiver based on equity.** This should include goals for health care delivery and outcomes, with input from diverse communities across the state.
- **Support Maryland's health care workforce.** This should include a dedicated agenda of training, recruitment, and retention.

The Health Care Committee is proud to share the following report with the Moore-Miller Administration to guide the implementation of these policies.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

ACCESS TO CARE

1. **Ensure equitable access to health coverage for all.** Ensuring that all Maryland residents, regardless of their immigration status, are eligible for and able to access comprehensive, affordable health coverage will improve health outcomes and overall well-being for everyone throughout the state. Success requires developing a statewide strategy (i.e., legislation, funding, and agency action) that ensures all Marylanders have access to affordable health coverage; ensuring that those who are currently eligible for programs are enrolled; and addressing the value of health care as well as out-of-pocket expenditures for everyone. The state should partner with the General Assembly; the Office of the Comptroller; state health agencies including the Maryland Department of Health, the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange, and the Maryland Insurance Administration; and a number of other stakeholders, including health care providers, health care payers, advocates, and communities.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Review gaps in insurance coverage and develop a roadmap to ensure all Marylanders, regardless of immigration status, have access to health coverage.
- Develop a comprehensive statewide strategy for community-based outreach and empowerment for those eligible for Medicaid and subsidized coverage so individuals are better informed of their options.
- Work with the Maryland Department of Health and Office of Comptroller to make Medicaid eligibility easier and, to the extent possible, automatic.
- Extend the state subsidy that provides additional assistance for young adults ages 18-34 under 400% of the federal poverty level—the most likely to be uninsured.
- Convene a workgroup with community members and health plans to address deductibles/cost sharing, plan design, and impact on patients/community.
- Require health plans to address and lower (or eliminate) cost sharing for specified high-value, high-need services.

Recommended long-term action:

- Implement a “roadmap to coverage” in partnership with the General Assembly.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor several factors stratified by race, ethnicity, language, socioeconomic status, and geography. They include the uninsured rate as measured by the U.S. Census Bureau, the uncompensated care rates due to the uninsured, and health care debt as a percentage of income.

2. **Provide better health care access in rural and underserved areas.** Ensuring that the health care system delivery and community infrastructure meet the needs of rural and underserved communities will enable Marylanders living in those communities to access timely, quality care when and where they need it. As a result, communities will be empowered to access the care they need to reduce health disparities, improve health outcomes, and build healthier, more sustainable communities. Success requires developing a comprehensive state strategy, driven by community input, to address health system delivery in rural and underserved areas. Maryland must also address key workforce challenges in rural and underserved areas. The state should partner with communities and community advocates; state agencies such as the Maryland Department of Health, the Health Services Cost Review Commission, and the Maryland Health Care Commission; and health care providers and stakeholders. Where appropriate, the state should also partner with agencies and stakeholders involved in addressing the social determinants of health in rural and underserved areas, such as affordable housing, transportation, and access to broadband.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Launch the development of a comprehensive state strategy, with input from stakeholders across the health care system and in the public, to address health care system delivery in rural and underserved areas, informed and driven by community input and desired outcomes. The strategy should explore the role of telehealth in providing quality services in an equitable manner, and incentives to bring providers to rural and underserved areas.
- Develop proposals for loan assistance and financial support to students who choose to practice in rural and underserved areas after they graduate.
- Maintain and increase funding for existing state loan repayment programs.
- Require in-state schools with degree programs for health professionals to include curriculum training, or if applicable, a clinical rotation in rural and/or underserved areas.
- Expand recognition of health care provider licenses obtained in other states to address workforce challenges in rural and underserved areas, and conduct outreach in the provider community on current flexibilities for health care provider licensure.
- Support community-based organizations doing population health work, both by state and through the Total Cost of Care waiver.
- Ensure that Maryland’s Total Cost of Care waiver is responsive to the needs of the community; require meaningful community input into hospital waiver population health goals; and include community stakeholders in the decision-making process for the waiver.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the following: community input and presence in health planning in rural and underserved areas; geographic access measures within time/distance to independent practice providers; workforce per capita in rural and underserved areas, and alignment of providers with need; and quality measures such as diabetes comprehensive care and baseline safety measures.

- 3. Lower prescription drug costs.** Lowering the cost of prescription drugs will allow Maryland residents to have more affordable coverage and be better able to afford health care treatment when they need it, producing better health outcomes. Success requires allocating funds to allow the Maryland Prescription Drug Affordability Board to fulfill its mission, convening workgroups and studies on state levers to lower prescription drug costs, and educating patients and providers about options as well as establishing consistent standards for evidence-based medicine. The state should partner with the General Assembly, the Prescription Drug Affordability Board, the Maryland Federal Delegation, the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, communities, advocates, and health care stakeholders.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Allocate budget to allow the Prescription Drug Affordability Board to fulfill its mission.
- Ask the Prescription Drug Affordability Board to develop specific proposals to advance evidence-based medicine; reduce co-payments; and suggest options to achieve lower prescription drug prices for Marylanders and improve health outcomes, including leveraging policies developed under the federal Inflation Reduction Act, if appropriate.
- Bring together a workgroup to examine options for group purchasing in state, particularly for specialty drugs, with communities and patients included in the discussion.
- Establish consistent standards for evidence-based medicine statewide, including health educators, communities, and patients.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the annual rate of growth of the cost of specialty drugs, as reported by the Maryland Prescription Drug Advisory Board based on an analysis of fully insured and Medicaid claims in the Maryland All Payer Claims Database.

HEALTH EQUITY

- 4. Implement a Health in All Policies strategy.** Assessing the impact that all current and future state policies have on health inequities and social determinants of health will help identify the limitations, problems, and opportunities associated with both new and existing laws, programs, and services, and improve the health and well-being for all Marylanders. Success requires implementing a Health in All Policies approach across agencies and convening stakeholders. The state should work with local elected officials and health advocates to support the consideration of health in all policies.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Identify proposals that should be assessed through a “health lens” to support decision-making that promotes health benefits and minimizes unintended harms to health and equip representatives in each agency with tools such as health checklists, rapid health impact assessments, and health notes to assess the potential health impacts of proposals.
- Encourage applicants for funding procurements to include a HiAP framework in their funding proposals.
- Encourage Maryland localities to consult the HiAP toolkit and Reference Guide during the Comprehensive Planning and Zoning regulations development process.
- Convene stakeholders to explore reimbursement for SDOH evaluation and referral; conduct strategic planning to develop a plan for data integration; centralize data sources; create a data management system to allow communication among those who are referring, those who are providing, and those who are receiving the services; and establish data-sharing agreements to facilitate access to data required for assessing potential health and equity impacts as part of making health-promoting decisions across sectors.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor any reductions in food insecurity, housing insecurity, and transportation challenges.

- 5. Break down disparities in maternal mortality.** Addressing explicit and implicit provider biases and improving continuum of care for Black women—including preconception, prenatal, pregnancy, and postpartum care—will help better identify and address the clinical and social needs related to maternal health, and reduce maternal mortality and morbidity for Black women, resulting in a reduction in race disparity. In particular, Maryland must focus on Black women because their maternal mortality rate is higher than white non-Hispanic, Hispanic, and Asian women. Success requires allocation of funds for county health departments, diversifying the maternal health care workforce, improving culturally sensitive care for expectant mothers, and providing support for expectant and new mothers. The state should also adopt accountability measures at all levels.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Require professional boards to make gender/race/ethnicity specific implicit bias training a permanent requirement of health professionals' licensure.
- Use greater data transparency and incentives to support alignment of the health care system to the statewide goal of reducing maternal mortality and morbidity.
- Ensure that all county health departments have support to specifically address this Statewide Integrated Health Improvement Strategy measure.
- Implement a Hear Her Campaign in the counties with the highest maternal mortality rates. Campaigns should be implemented by the Maryland Department of Health and local health departments along with community partners.
- Report on the early implementation of the 72M Maternal of Child Health Initiative established in 2021, and conduct a secretary-level review of implementation and possible expansion to other insurance.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Increase beds for child-birthing in counties with the highest mortality.
- Increase access to prenatal and perinatal services.
- Increase the number of doulas, as well as access and affordability of doulas.
- Improve diversity of maternal health care workforce (i.e., physicians, nurses, midwives, doulas, and others).
- Increase support for training in relevant medical fields in HBCUs, community colleges, and the University of Maryland systems to improve diversity of the health care workforce.
- Partner with K-12 institutions to increase diversity of students entering health care fields through the Blueprint for Maryland's Future College and Career Pathways.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the disparity between Black NH women and other women in terms of the rate of maternal death for Black women. This includes the PRAMS survey, which asks mothers about their experience during pregnancy and post-birth.

- 6. Protect reproductive rights.** Recognizing and protecting the right to abortion and investing in Maryland's reproductive health care delivery system will allow all people who need it access to reproductive health care services. As a result, the state will see a decline in unintended and unwanted pregnancies, and an improvement in maternal and infant health outcomes. Success requires allocating the necessary funding. The state should work with the legislature, the Attorney General's office, and other states to make Maryland a leader in facilitating access to over-the-counter contraceptives.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Release funds allocated for training reproductive health care providers.
- Support efforts to recognize the right to abortion and other reproductive health care in the state constitution.
- Develop a strategic plan to provide access to reproductive health care in underserved areas of the state, and to anticipate a surge in demand in Maryland due to recently imposed restrictions in neighboring states.
- Protect reproductive health care providers in the state from prosecution for serving residents in other states.
- Develop a family planning strategy that includes additional funding to support the growing population choosing long-acting contraceptive options; prevent and treat sexually transmitted infections; and increase training opportunities for providers in family planning.
- Expand home-visiting programs to provide wraparound supports and education.
- Implement legislation requiring Maryland's Medicaid program to provide one year of postpartum coverage to new mothers.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Ensure over-the-counter coverage can be operationalized through a convening of relevant stakeholders.
- Improve diversity in the reproductive health care field to ensure all Marylanders feel comfortable accessing reproductive health care.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the increase in the number of reproductive health care providers in the state, particularly in regions with provider shortages.

HEALTH WORKFORCE

- 7. Support Maryland's health care workers.** Building a robust health care pipeline and ensuring quality work conditions and compensation will allow more workers to enter and remain in the field, making health care a more viable career choice and improving access to care, quality of care, and health outcomes for Marylanders. Success requires increasing funding for providers and providing support services to foster the growth of the health care workforce. The state should partner with the General Assembly, health care providers, health care advocates, and law enforcement.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Examine the need for additional funding for Medicaid providers so staff can be paid appropriately.
- Address barriers that prevent qualified applicants to work in Maryland.
- Enable relevant agencies to make regulatory changes, as necessary, to facilitate the participation of more veterans in the health care system.
- Launch a consortium on violence in health care settings to provide training/support to law enforcement and health care providers, and recommend policy changes and implement the workplace violence intervention awareness campaign.

Recommended long-term action:

- Create incentives to grow the health care workforce, such as loan forgiveness, increased educational opportunities, and subsidized transportation and child care.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the increase in skilled workforce/decrease in shortage areas; the adequacy of Medicaid payment rates to support adequate staffing/wages; the greater state investment in health care workers; and the efficiency of state licensing boards.

- 8. Provide better care for our seniors and support aging in place.** Providing better care in congregate settings and increasing scrutiny of care and resources for seniors still at home will result in seniors receiving improved care in facilities, while allowing those who remain at home to enjoy a greater quality of life. Success requires changing current regulations on residential support, performing a needs assessment, and providing adequate funding for high-quality services. The state should partner with the legislature, federal delegations, labor and health advocates, and the provider community.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Expand home and community-based services for Maryland’s seniors, such as home health, medical day cares, respite care, and remote patient-monitoring services.
- Fund senior care at adequate levels (i.e., Medicaid and other state grants).
- Develop a plan to shorten delays in accessing home and community-based services.
- Develop a plan to prevent and respond quickly to abuse of older adults, including reporting, rules, oversight, and training.
- Require all congregate living settings to meet standards for high quality care (i.e., ensuring that home health agencies and assisted-living facilities are meeting standards for high quality care).

Recommended long-term actions:

- Increase the availability of qualified patient advocates.
- Invest in increasing broadband in rural and vulnerable communities, and make permanent telehealth via audio-only modalities as appropriate for the type of clinical care (Preserve Telehealth Access Act).

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the increase in Medicaid capacity for home and community-based services, and the increase in the number of caregivers that support long-term care in all settings.

MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE

- 9. Improve access to mental health treatment and advance well-being.** Creating a system of care that begins with culturally competent crisis services, addresses ongoing mental health needs, and supports individuals reentering communities will allow Maryland to increase the number of individuals receiving care when and where they need it most. This will result in increased investment in the system; reduced overall costs; and measurable improvements in individual, family and community well-being. Success requires expanding the mental health workforce and aligning incentives across payors. The state should partner with mental health and primary care providers.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Increase the use and adoption of telehealth services.
- Expand the use of CRISP, Maryland’s Health Information Exchange, by behavioral health care providers statewide to promote increased coordination of care across health care settings.
- Establish provider-based incentives and quality metrics to continue expansion of clinical integration models, such as Collaborative Care and co-location of services.
- Equip primary care physicians with training to identify and treat mental illness.
- Explore adding mental health services into Medicaid managed care plans.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Expand Medicaid coverage for interventions that respond to the social, emotional, and mental health needs of young children and their caregivers.
- Expand the range of outpatient services for youth.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor hospital utilization and cost for treatment of mental health patients, as well as the overall cost of care for patients with mental health conditions.

- 10. Support Marylanders with serious mental illness.** Bringing together diverse stakeholders—representing public agencies, providers, advocates, family members, caregivers, and those with lived experience—to develop policies and plans that repair Maryland’s broken system of care will allow the state to respond to the need for expanded community-based services and supports, trauma-informed crisis and emergency services, and more highly trained mental health professionals and peers. The result will be improved health and quality of life for those suffering from serious mental illness at a reduced cost. Success requires allocating the necessary funding. The state should work with providers, law enforcement, and the legislature.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Fully activate, expand, and fund crisis response centers and mobile crisis teams.
- Develop a statewide suicide prevention strategy.
- Develop recommendations to support Marylanders with serious mental illness, including recommendations on assisted outpatient treatment.
- Establish a cross-agency vehicle including MDH, the Department of Human Resources, the Developmental Disabilities Administration, the Department of Juvenile Services, and the Department of Public Safety to establish a plan to address system gaps and barriers, especially for children and youth in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.
- Increase funding for youth with severe mental illness, including for evidence-based models of preventive treatment and supports, as well as for psychiatric hospitalization and residential treatment where needed.
- Establish regulatory requirements to guide the safe care of foster youth with mental health conditions, especially those who are hospitalized.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the number of youth receiving mental health treatment, the suicide rate, days awaiting placement from hospital to treatment for youth, and incarceration rates for individuals with serious mental health illness.

- 11. Prevent and address trauma.** Understanding the impact of trauma and eliminating policies that are punitive, while promoting those that support prevention and healing, will help minimize harm and create a workforce that is compassionate and better able to serve Maryland’s diverse communities. As a result, the state will reduce community violence and improve behavioral health outcomes for its children and families. Success requires coordinating across the government, allocating the necessary funding, and working with local coalitions around state and care teams, trainers of trauma-informed care, school system personnel, law enforcement, and survivors of trauma and their families.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Explore strategies for requiring trauma-informed training in licensed care, schools, and academic training programs, as well as making it part of professional licensure or renewal.
- Consider a Medicaid requirement for evidence-based Adverse Childhood Experiences screening for children, youth, and adults.
- Expand maternal home visiting programs, such as Healthy Families or the Nurse Family Partnership.
- Expand state cross-agency family preservation programs to prevent out-of-home placement, such as Family Connections.
- Reimburse integrated models of prevention such as Healthy Steps.
- Address grief and trauma as a public health issue by expanding successful programs (e.g., Roberta’s House).

Recommended long-term actions:

- Incorporate restorative and trauma-informed practices into the state’s approach to education so it can address the specific needs of each student.
- Expand two-generation models of care, especially for adolescent parents.
- Support evidence-based parenting programs.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the number of individuals receiving trauma-informed training, the number of children in the child welfare system due to abuse or neglect, and the number of families receiving maternal home visiting services and parenting interventions.

- 12. Treat the substance use crisis as a public health crisis.** Supporting policies that foster a data-driven, cross-agency, and community-engaged “no wrong door” approach to the substance use crisis can help reduce barriers to care and expand services and supports to meet the comprehensive whole-health needs of individuals and communities most in need. As a result, Maryland will see a reduction in overdoses and health care costs, and improvements in health outcomes. Success requires providing necessary funding for peer services. The state should partner with health providers, first responders, hospitals, and people in recovery.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Conduct a landscape analysis of state and local public agency services to identify opportunities and gaps, and develop a comprehensive and coordinated cross-agency strategy for overdose prevention and response.
- Expand funding to community-based organizations for peer services.
- Establish new licensure and other requirements to promote adoption of a harm-reduction approach/practices in substance use disorder (SUD) treatment programs and other settings.
- Conduct a study on the decriminalization of drug paraphernalia and other harm reduction policies.
- Expand SUD treatment and peer support for the incarcerated and those released who are at high risk of overdose.
- Expand team models of EMT and peer response, and consider expanding the naloxone leave-behind program.
- Require training for all first responders on SUD.

Recommended long-term action:

- Explore funding strategies to support leveraged grants or expanded reimbursement for recovery support services, such as housing and workforce development.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the overdose mortality rates.

- 13. Promote the health and well-being of Maryland’s veterans.** Promoting policies that ensure the state’s veterans have access to timely, high-quality, comprehensive care that is community-based and breaks down stigmas will increase the number of veterans receiving vital care. As a result, more veterans will be able to receive the support they need, especially for behavioral health concerns. Success requires conducting a gap analysis, providing adequate resources, and educating those in a position to deliver support. The state should partner with the VA system, the private sector, specialty treatment providers, behavioral health experts, and the veteran community.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Examine current veteran-specific mental health services and opportunities for improvement.
- Develop an educational campaign promoting behavioral health support to destigmatize mental health specifically targeting veterans.
- Integrate a “whole health” approach to mental health care for veterans.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Expand access to care through partnerships between the VA system and private-sector partners.
- Educate family and caregivers on the types of support that veterans need as well as what is available for veterans and their dependents.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the number of veterans receiving mental health treatment and suicide rates among veterans.

- 14. Treat substance use disorders as a health care issue.** Promoting policies that treat substance use disorders as chronic health conditions, rather than as crimes or moral failings, will address medical and social determinants of health across the health care and community-based service continuum. This will result in reduced stigma and decreases in morbidity and mortality. Success requires increasing access to evidence-based and culturally responsive prevention, harm-reduction, treatment, and recovery supports. The state should partner with hospital systems, providers, specialty treatment providers, and those in recovery.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Activate and expand Medicaid reimbursement for peer recovery specialists across health care settings, including hospitals, health departments, criminal justice settings, and nontraditional sites.
- Establish quality metrics to build accountability for payers and providers to treat substance use disorders as a chronic disease.
- Consider requirements across health care settings for use of medications for the treatment of opiate use disorders as the standard of care.
- Continue scaling Screening Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) in the Maryland Primary Care Program and other community primary care settings to identify individuals with moderate to high risk of alcohol or drug use issues, and integrate behavioral assistance into primary care.
- Establish ways to incentivize or hold accountable primary care practices for the delivery of SBIRT.
- Support reimbursement for models that integrate substance use disorders and co-occurring mental health disorders.
- Expand reimbursement for integrated whole health models such as health homes and community behavioral health centers.
- Enforce the federal Parity Act to require insurance companies to treat mental health and substance use disorders as they do medical issues.

Recommended long-term action:

- Explore carving substance use disorder treatment back into Medicaid managed care plans.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor overdose mortality rates, the number of suboxone prescriptions, and retention in substance use treatment.

STRENGTHENING HEALTH CARE AND PUBLIC HEALTH

15. Promote the health and well-being of Maryland's youth. Addressing the unique and evolving challenges and adverse childhood experiences that Maryland children and youth are experiencing will provide the support and empathy they need to thrive and allow them to take advantage of opportunities for a healthy, vibrant future. Success requires engaging youth, listening to their ideas for change, increasing access to school-based health services, expanding after-school activities, and improving collaboration with the educational system. The state should partner with young people in Maryland and their caretakers, legislators, the educational system, pediatric providers and behavioral health clinicians, and youth-focused community-based organizations, among others.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Make a commitment to seek youth input on major youth initiatives, including by integrating youth into existing advisory committees on related issues.
- Fund collective action programs like B'more for Healthy Babies, and ensure successful programs like these do not lose funding and momentum.
- Develop a strategy using grant funding, Medicaid reimbursement, and technical support to support the expansion of school-based health centers.
- Support innovative models of care for children and families through the Maryland total cost of care model.

Recommended long-term action:

- Develop a health-education partnership to reduce chronic absenteeism.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the number of state advisory committees with youth members; the number of youth (ages 16-24) not connected to school or work; the number of students in schools with school-based health centers; the number of students chronically absent or on track to be chronically absent; and the number of students participating in after-school programs.

16. Rebuild and reform for a pandemic-changed world. Reimagining, reforming, and reinvesting in public health and health care—and creating accountability for addressing historic health care inequities—will allow for a more integrated, effective, transparent, and efficient system. As a result, Maryland will advance equity, be better prepared, and improve health for all. Success requires establishing a vision for health care in Maryland, modernizing public health, improving the sustainability of health care, more effectively sharing data, and enhancing trust. The state should partner with the Health Services Cost Review Commission, legislators, local health departments, hospitals and health systems, city and county officials, health care providers including Med Chi, the CDC and other federal agencies, insurers, and the public.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Support the establishment of a commission to examine and make recommendations on reinvestments and reform public health in Maryland.
- Launch a public-private partnership with coordinated messaging and outreach around trusted sources of health information to combat misinformation.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Develop a strategic plan to reduce the environmental footprint of the health care system.
- Craft legislation to support and streamline data sharing for youth across health and community programs, consistent with federal law and privacy protections.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the trust in and access to high-quality information via a Maryland health survey, the utilization of CRISP, and the number of accredited health departments in Maryland.

- 17. Seek opportunities to advance equity through the waiver (total cost of care model).** Prioritizing equity and population health goals in the implementation of the Maryland waiver will align health care with broader goals of ending inequities, provide new opportunities to support needed partnerships and collaborations across the state, and allow the state to lead the nation in closing gaps that unfairly keep individuals and communities from reaching their potential. Success requires developing an equity agenda, aligning the Maryland total cost of care model to equity, supporting social determinants of health, and increasing equity in health care. The state should partner with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the Health Services Cost Review Commission, local health departments, hospitals and health systems, medical professional associations, other health care providers, and the public.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Announce intent to work with the Health Services Cost Review Commission (HSCRC), Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, community organizations, and the public to plan for the next phase of the Maryland model with a focus on advancing equity.
- Ensure that Maryland's Total Cost of Care waiver is responsive to the needs of the community, and require meaningful community input into hospital waiver population goals.
- Work with other state programs and private funders to align funding and programs for success once the equity agenda is in place.
- Pursue Medicaid waivers for housing to align with equity goals, building on the current supportive housing waiver.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Develop a coordinated state plan for supporting social determinants of health, including common data system and opportunities for Medicaid support.
- Work with experts, hospitals, and the public to develop a systematic approach to build on financial incentives for improving equity in readmissions to create a comprehensive framework of incentives for enhancing equity across complications, follow-up, and other indicators of quality care.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor gaps by race and ethnicity in life expectancy, infant mortality, and maternal health; disparities in readmissions and other key metrics for health care equity established by Health Services Cost Review Commission (HSCRC) (e.g., recommended cancer screenings, blood pressure); and the number of people who receive access to food, housing, transportation, and other key social needs through the Medicaid program.

- 18. Strengthen primary care.** Closing the gap between the needs of Maryland residents for high-quality primary care and the currently strained workforce and inadequate resources will allow the state to embrace coordinated primary health care that effectively delivers prevention and care management. The result will be improved health outcomes and lower costs of health care. Success requires creating an integrated approach to primary care across the Maryland Model (including Medicaid), developing a human resources strategy for primary care, training more primary care clinicians, and enhancing services like vaccination in primary care. The state should partner with legislators, primary care clinicians, payers (e.g., Medicaid), medical and nursing professional associations, hospitals, the MD PCP program, the Health Services Cost Review Commission, medical educators, the Maryland Higher Education Commission, and the public.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Expand the focus and update the membership of the existing task force to look at urban and rural primary care, focusing on recruitment, retention, state loan repayment, and reimbursement.
- Bring together Medicaid primary care and Maryland Model primary care efforts under one umbrella, aligning metrics where possible.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Set goals for graduate medical education in the state.
- Invest in expanding access to primary care in areas of primary care shortage.
- Increase vaccination at primary care sites, including reimbursement.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the number of primary care clinicians per capita (overall and in shortage areas); the percentage of Marylanders who have primary care clinicians (based on Maryland survey); and the percentage of health care dollars spent on primary care.



HOUSING



The Housing Committee was charged with reviewing policy commitments made during the Moore-Miller campaign and developing plans to operationalize and implement them. The policies within this report are intended to ensure state and local government agencies, as well as private and nonprofit partners, work hand-in-hand to better serve Maryland residents and improve the safety of the state's diverse communities.

To complete its work, the Housing Committee formed four working groups: (1) Affordable Housing; (2) Climate and Healthy Housing; (3) Removing Barriers; and (4) Smart Growth and Community Development. Members largely determined which policy area they would contribute to, based on their individual expertise and interests, with effort taken to balance groups to ensure diversity consistent with the Governor and Lieutenant Governor's commitment to ensuring that all policies and actions are reflective of Maryland's diverse residents.

The committee met between December 2022 and January 2023, and received input from many Marylanders across the state who offered a variety of views, with the dominant concern being affordability of housing, especially with regard to renters. The committee also held two at-large public engagement meetings with hundreds of direct participants and at-large members sharing recommendations on ways to facilitate equitable economic development, support seniors and people with disabilities, hold landlords accountable for serious conditions of disrepair, and stop illegally operating landlords from using eviction courts. In addition, both meetings were livestreamed, with nearly a thousand viewers watching the first meeting and hundreds more watching the second. Participants included both industry experts and impacted citizens, sharing recommendations and arguing to prioritize matters impacting them.

The Housing Committee's leadership considered these thoughts and experiences when crafting its policy recommendations, which include, among others, protecting renters; renewing the state's commitment to smart, equitable growth; promoting healthy, climate-friendly housing; and expanding affordable housing for seniors, persons with disabilities, and persons experiencing homelessness. Below is a sampling of the written input the committee received through the transition's online portal.

"Housing inflation and interest has become a serious matter; most Marylanders consist of average Joe's trying to support not only themselves but their children. Paying a mortgage of \$2200+ is hard and has become even tougher with the interest rates on credit cards having increased the way they did. It's an uphill battle."

"As a full-time library worker and only breadwinner for my husband and I living on the Eastern Shore, we cannot find affordable housing. A key part of growing Maryland's competitiveness and leaving no one behind is housing its workforce. Building luxury homes is not the answer. We need housing between \$110,000 and \$160,000."

"In 2018 I was evicted from my apartment... where I lived for 19 years... An eviction is traumatic: Not only do you lose your home and access to your possessions, you are disconnected from your community!"

Significant themes that emerged from the work of the Housing Committee:

- **Commit adequate resources to the Department of Housing and Community Development.** These resources can help implement innovative and equitable affordable housing and community development programs across Maryland.
- **Build capacity among Maryland's network of nonprofit and community development organizations.** This will allow them to be effective partners in comprehensive revitalization strategies.

- **Address and overcome barriers to ensuring quality housing options.** This includes unsustainable rents or the appraisal gap, and other factors that prevent otherwise qualified Maryland renters or homebuyers from renting or buying a home.
- **Create the necessary infrastructure and technology to increase efficiency.** This will allow for a better response to federal funding opportunities to support state programs that increase the supply of affordable, healthy, and energy-efficient housing, and for community revitalization efforts overall.
- **Support cross-sector integration of housing, energy, health, environment, and transportation resources.** This will improve access to affordable healthy homes and communities.
- **Return Maryland to its historic place as a national leader in smart growth policies.** This should include a fresh focus on equitable development.

The Housing Committee is proud to share the following report with the Moore-Miller Administration to guide the implementation of these policies.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

1. **Expand affordable housing opportunities for seniors, persons with disabilities, and persons experiencing homelessness.** Dedicating substantial additional resources to the production of affordable housing with supportive services and removal of existing regulatory impediments will reduce the number of persons experiencing homelessness and/or housing instability, and provide people with a greater ability to choose how and where they will live regardless of their income. This will result in stronger communities and a better quality of life for all Marylanders. Success requires partnering with the legislature and state agencies to significantly increase funding for the Department of Housing and Community Development's (DHCD) affordable rental housing production programs, modifying existing state programs, and introducing innovative new programs modeled after successful initiatives in other jurisdictions.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Increase funding allocated to DHCD for affordable rental housing production programs via a supplemental budget appropriation.
- Provide deeper subsidies to finance affordable housing units to make them financially feasible for project owners over the long term.
- Change the Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP) scoring criteria to make senior housing a priority so that these types of projects are more competitive and better able to receive Low-Income Housing Tax Credit allocations.
- Use the QAP to further incentivize developers to provide additional accessible units for seniors and persons with disabilities through the use of optional incentive points.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Make the Medicaid Community Options Waiver a viable source of funding to allow it to provide services for vulnerable populations such as the elderly, persons with disabilities, and the homeless.
- Replicate the successful Baltimore Housing Upgrades to Benefit Seniors (HUBS) program housing intervention services model for low-income seniors by developing HUBS programs in regions across Maryland.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the number and share of affordable housing units developed for seniors, persons with disabilities, and persons experiencing homelessness using DHCD financing resources; the number of Medicaid Community Options Waiver requests received and granted; the percentage of cost reimbursements under the waiver on a year-over-year basis; and the number of seniors participating in the HUBS program.

- 2. Expand Maryland's Affordable Housing Trust Fund, and create a dedicated source of revenue for organizations to build and maintain affordable housing units.** Expanding the scope of and substantially increasing funding for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund will provide a more impactful and reliable resource for a broader range of organizations and enable the preservation and production of more affordable housing units across Maryland. As a result, the state will make progress in addressing its shortfall of affordable homes, which is estimated to be at least 85,000 units. Success requires establishing a new dedicated funding source as well as working with agencies and the legislature to identify potential new funding sources and with DHCD to establish the parameters for a new Trust Fund program.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Establish a new program within the Trust, with a new dedicated funding source, to accomplish the Administration's goal of closing the gap on the state's affordable housing unit shortfall.
- Identify potential dedicated funding sources for the Trust Fund to ensure an adequate, permanent funding stream is available to support large-scale affordable housing production and preservation projects.

Recommended long-term action:

- Develop systems to prioritize awarding funds from the Trust fairly and equitably across the state.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the number of affordable housing units created or preserved using the new trust fund resources.

- 3. Ensure the preservation and production of Maryland's affordable housing inventory.** Substantially increasing state investment into the production and preservation of new affordable housing units, addressing the existing regulatory barriers, developing bold housing policies, and improving DHCD's efficiency will increase the number of new affordable housing units in the state and preserve the existing affordable housing units. As a result, more Marylanders will be stably housed, reducing the shortfall of affordable homes and building stronger communities with improved quality of life for all residents regardless of their incomes. Success requires investing more resources into the state's affordable housing production programs and working with local governments to reduce or eliminate barriers and promote policies and incentives that support affordable housing. Partnerships among DHCD, the Department of Planning, local governments, and the legislature will be critical to success.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Increase annual appropriations for DHCD's affordable rental housing production/preservation loan programs to maximize private investment in affordable housing development starting with a supplemental budget appropriation.
- Review current DHCD staffing levels in proportion to the current and projected development pipeline given the expected increase in funding to determine if additional positions are needed.
- Re-invest all DHCD loan proceeds back into the Department to fund the development of additional housing units.
- Expand DHCD's current homeownership assistance and mortgage financing programs to serve a broader range of households and offer better incentives to lenders to increase participation.

- Review DHCD’s IT infrastructure and determine how to update processes and efficiencies. All funding applications should include an electronic submission option.
- Establish a task force that includes stakeholders to review current application/underwriting/closing processes, and make recommendations on how to improve the underwriting and closing process to better align with other lenders and funders and get construction of much-needed affordable units started more quickly.
- Determine which multifamily properties across Maryland are most at risk of losing affordability, and prioritize them for DHCD funding to recapitalize and maintain affordability.
- Increase the affordability period for DHCD financed properties from the current 40 years to 60 years to extend the length of time the housing units must remain affordable as a condition for financing.
- Provide incentives for jurisdictions proactively working to create and support affordable housing.
- Support local governments’ Housing Trust Funds to further local efforts to preserve and/or produce affordable housing units.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Reduce regulatory barriers and/or provide incentives to local governments to promote the construction of all housing types that are more affordable.
- Incentivize local governments to implement policies to support meaningful production and preservation of housing that is affordable to citizens at a variety of income levels.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the number of affordable rental housing units that are created or preserved using DHCD financing; the number of participants using the state’s Down Payment and Closing Cost Assistance Program and Maryland Mortgage Program; and the annual increase in the number of projects closed by the Community Development Administration multifamily division.

CLIMATE AND HEALTHY HOUSING

- 4. Leverage climate-related federal funds designated for housing.** Developing programs and scaling funding statewide to improve the resiliency of Maryland homes and communities that are most vulnerable to climate change will dramatically improve the health, economic, and social outcomes for historically disadvantaged communities throughout Maryland. Success requires creating an interagency climate strategy that prioritizes community resilience, environmental justice, health, and economic stability by maximizing federal and private-sector funding opportunities. The following agencies and leaders should be engaged: the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), the Maryland Department of Health, the Maryland Energy Association (MEA), the Maryland Department of Labor, historically disinvested communities, residents, federal agencies, elected leaders at all levels of government, the real estate industry, community-based organizations, unions, and philanthropy.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Support legislation to establish an annual energy savings goal for low-income households, and increase the proportion of EmPOWER funds that are invested in improving energy efficiency in low-income residential housing.
- Conduct an asset and gap analysis of DHCD’s past performance, and increase DHCD’s equity data measurements and tracking mechanisms to ensure an equitable distribution of energy efficiency and housing repair funding to historically disinvested communities.
- Establish an Interagency Work Group on Climate and Housing by and among DHCD, MEA, and Environment and Health departments.
- Release a coordinated implementation plan among DHCD, MEA, and MDE for the Climate Solutions Now Act.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Launch a 10-year plan to decarbonize low-income housing to better leverage existing housing resources and dedicate new resources to improving the energy-efficiency standards and the electrification of low-income housing across the state.
- Improve coordination of Office of Home Energy Programs with DHCD and MEA programs to better link low-income households to energy-efficiency services.
- Reopen Maryland's only public Weatherization Training Center, the center at the Baltimore Community College, to scale up an upskilled and certified green and healthy workforce focused on building BIPOC economic opportunity.
- Explore the utilization of Medicaid/Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) funding for the payment of service to reduce carbon emissions in homes of asthma-diagnosed occupants.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the number of homes receiving climate-related retrofits in disinvested communities; the number of residents trained and hired to perform climate-related retrofits from low-income communities; the reduction of energy costs and consumption in homes receiving funding; the number of homes opting for decarbonization/electrification; and the percentage of homes meeting the standard of full electrification.

- 5. Ensure healthy, safe, and climate-friendly housing is available to all Marylanders.** Implementing and scaling a cross-sector "whole house" approach to holistically address healthy, safe, and climate-friendly housing will address disproportionate energy burdens, social determinants of health, opportunity, and equity in a tangible and transformational way. This will result in reductions in health disparities, energy burdens, and housing instability in disadvantaged communities of color in Maryland. Success requires leveraging existing federal and state funding sources, attracting new investments, ensuring that historically marginalized communities receive their equitable share of energy-efficiency and housing intervention services, and addressing DHCD's staffing capacity deficit by updating job descriptions and aligning pay and benefits packages to make them competitive for recruitment and retention necessary to operate at full capacity. It also requires increasing funding and scaling programs to ensure every Maryland family has access to a healthy, safe, and climate-friendly home. The state will need to partner with property owners in historically disinvested communities, community-based organizations, and the private sector.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Establish a Whole House Division at DHCD, including through legislation and appropriations, to make moving from a fractured system to a holistic home repair approach a permanent function of the agency.
- Ensure DHCD has the personnel and strategy necessary to pursue new cross-sector housing funding initiatives, with an emphasis on addressing historic redlining and racial disparities.
- Pursue support for integrated housing delivery systems from the federal government, from philanthropy, health care, and the private sector, including impact investing.
- Allocate sufficient staff and resources to ensure equal access and inclusion of community organizations, local governments, and residents in DHCD programs and resources.
- Revise DHCD protocols to permit nonprofit organizations to recruit and assist client applicants to increase client enrollments and scale services.
- Remove unnecessary loan requirements from residential housing intervention programs to increase resident participation and foster fair housing practices.
- Expand CHIP/Medicaid investments in lead hazard remediation to eradicate the toxic legacy of lead poisoning through an expansion of the Healthy Homes for Healthy Kids program statewide.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Create a replenishable Maryland Lead Safe Housing Fund to scale federal, private-sector (health care), and philanthropic investment as part of an eight-year plan to eradicate lead in Maryland housing.
- Convene DHCD, the Maryland Energy Administration, Maryland Department of the Environment, Maryland Department of Health, and Maryland Department of Human Resources to align eligibility protocols and establish, where possible, better-aligned income eligibility standards across programs.
- Create a Rapid Response Pilot Program in Baltimore City to triage housing resources in the homes of low-income infants, children, and pregnant women to ensure children are born into and grow up in safe and healthy homes.
- Adopt the use of a comprehensive health, housing, and energy assessment process in publicly supported housing and for state-funded programs.

Measures of success: The state will need to create and monitor a public dashboard that tracks key health and equity home outcomes; funding distributions to ensure support for historically disinvestment communities; the number of homes made energy efficient and lead-safe, and where asthma triggers and safety hazards have been mitigated; the number of BIPOC families, children, and seniors receiving funding; and the number of homes fully electrified.

REMOVING BARRIERS

- 6. Equip Black families in Maryland with the same tools and resources that others have to buy and keep a home.** Prioritizing homeownership and rental housing supports and financial resources as a vehicle for racial and economic equity will result in more resource allocation parity among neighborhoods as well as more economic equality. Examining the adequacy of current funding for down-payment assistance and adequately funding programs that support Black Marylanders is critical to success. The state will need to partner with the General Assembly, local elected officials, certain local community development corporations, mortgage/housing counseling entities, minority-owned developers, jurisdictional community development agencies, and community development arms of local banks.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Conduct an analysis on equity in assessment and appraisal processes in Maryland, and provide recommendations for acting on the findings.
- Recalibrate existing first-time homebuyer down-payment and closing cost assistance programs to target aid to areas of greatest need.
- Fund the Live Near Your School program, and create a program to empower young people to purchase a home in the neighborhood they grew up in.
- Increase efforts to provide homebuyer information to diverse communities by offering free online and modular homebuyer education courses along with promotion through social media, a national night out presence, and community organization partnerships.
- Ensure that information on homeownership, rental assistance, and other housing programs are part of community college orientation.
- Utilize the existing community partnership pipeline to educate communities on homeownership and distribute information, potentially tied to funds to local/municipal government for local outreach.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the decrease in the number of subprime mortgages to Black households (as a function of total subprime mortgages); the decrease in foreclosures for Black families (as a function of total foreclosures); the increase in prime loan originations as a function of total originations; and the increase in the down payment and settlement expense grants to Black families as a function of total DHCD settlement grants.

- 7. Combat redlining and racial discrimination in appraisal values.** Examining the appraisal profession and the impact of discrimination while promoting affordable housing production in areas that have been disinvested or previously redlined will allow individuals, families, and communities subjected to harm to have greater parity in receiving loans and valuations. Success requires taking executive action to evaluate the appraisal practice in Maryland and the impacts of discrimination and disparate treatment in home appraisals, auditing appraisals at scale across the state, examining enforcement, and ensuring the federal Community Reinvestment Act is applied effectively at the state level. The state will need to partner with the General Assembly, the Office of the Commissioner of Financial Regulations, policy advocates, trade organizations, and state and federal regulators.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Implement already-passed legislation establishing the Appraisal Gap From Historic Redlining Financial Assistance Program in DHCD.
- Identify a predictable funding source for the Appraisal Gap From Historic Redlining Financial Assistance Program.
- Convene a task force on licensing/evaluation/testing of the appraisal profession and examining impacts of discrimination.
- Commission an appraisal disparity study to investigate the disparity in housing prices and appraisals relative to community income and race.
- Instruct the Office of the Commissioner of Financial Regulations to assess the banking industry's effectiveness in meeting its Community Reinvestment Act requirements, and conduct a state-level evaluation to hold the industry accountable.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Establish and fund a housing production program prioritizing income-integrated investment in disinvested areas and affordable housing opportunities.
- Create a more diverse pipeline within the appraisal profession.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor investments targeted in areas that have historically been redlined by creating a single-family subsidy program, as well as appraisal gaps across economic and racial lines to see whether a rise in value in Black neighborhoods is comparable to other neighborhoods at similar/same income levels.

- 8. Build protections for renters.** Taking immediate action to protect Marylander renters from the ongoing eviction crisis, while also building protections for renters' rights and addressing the rising cost of rent, will ensure that Maryland families can enjoy greater security and build stronger ties in their communities, producing a stronger and more prosperous state. Success requires protecting and preserving affordable rental housing and protecting renters by robustly funding rental assistance and taking other actions in service of tenants' rights. The state will need to partner with the legislature and community stakeholders.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Immediately convene a task force to address the need for sustaining emergency rental assistance, funding long-term rental assistance programs, and addressing the rising cost of rent.
- Robustly fund emergency rental assistance and long-term rental assistance programs.
- Support legislation to stop illegally operating landlords from using the state's court system for eviction.
- Fund Right to Counsel legal services and support a network of statewide nonprofit organizations to perform renter outreach, education, organizing, casework, and advocacy.
- Establish a statewide standard that affords all renters the ability to more easily break their leases,

confront harassment, defend themselves in court, recover their security deposits, be advised of tenants' rights, avoid permanent displacement from housing, organize with their neighbors into tenants' associations, and receive effective legal representation.

- Provide increased housing counseling so local renters can improve credit, savings, and income, and have access to new home-buying opportunities.
- Implement a public information program dedicated to targeting renter communities and landlords to educate them about current laws and best practices.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the decrease in overall eviction filings; the decrease in chronic homelessness as measured through the point-in-time count exceeding national average; the equitable issuance of renter's insurance policies across geographies (both coverage and cost); and the decrease in the number of households that experience housing cost burdens across jurisdictions.

SMART GROWTH AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

9. **Renew the state's commitment to smart and equitable growth policies that shape its approach to housing, transportation, community development, and resource preservation.** Recommitting to an integrated approach to housing, transportation, community development, land use, and resource preservation—and demanding a cooperative approach from all state agencies and enterprises—will enable the state to work holistically to address the comprehensive needs of existing Maryland communities. As a result, the state will be able to bring its full resources to bear and see communities grow and flourish as neighborhoods of choice for Marylanders of all incomes. Success requires applying a smart and equitable growth lens to government and agency decision-making, authorizing additional smart and equitable growth incentives for eligible initiatives and projects, having agencies assess how their portfolios can and should further smart growth, and engaging the private sector in ways to incentivize smart growth projects. The state will need to partner with the General Assembly, local governments, community leaders and advocates, and the development community.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Commit the state and its agencies to equitable smart growth-oriented decision-making via executive order.
- Ensure interagency coordination via active use of the Smart Growth Subcabinet and Coordinating Committee, including appointment of one or more cross-agency liaisons to ensure success.
- Convene stakeholders, including for-profit and nonprofit developers, to evaluate what market forces already exist, and design state incentives, requirements, and financing tools to accelerate smart and equitable infill, redevelopment, and revitalization.
- Evaluate and enhance incentives to encourage smart and equitable growth projects throughout the state, including Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) that creates compact, mixed-use communities near transit, with a focus on equity.
- Create and/or better deploy financing tools, such as a state infrastructure fund, smart growth investment fund, tax-increment financing, and New Markets Tax Credits, with maximum flexibility.
- Accelerate Transit-Oriented Development efforts by strengthening the benefits associated with state TOD "designation."
- Modify the state's TOD designation process to align with goals around equity, and to better include bus-based transit corridors in addition to those along rail.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Develop initiatives to accelerate small business development within targeted revitalization areas.
- Identify and address existing regulations and policies that impede smart growth development.

- Streamline administrative barriers to achieving TOD projects, and jumpstart the TOD market at key stations through various forms of state assistance, from technical to financial.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor significant budget increases for smart and equitable growth programs, against historic and current funding baselines; the increase in the number of residents, including income-restricted residents, living within a 15-minute walk/bike of essential services and high-frequency transit; the number of building permits issued by category of use and specific location information; and the increase in TOD designations, along with the increase in the benefits accompanying such designation.

10. Expand and accelerate community redevelopment and neighborhood revitalization programs.

Significantly increasing funding for the state’s community development and neighborhood revitalization programs, while prioritizing and targeting investment in underserved communities, will stabilize and sustain those communities, and result in more diverse, mixed-income communities throughout the state. This will result in an increased standard of living and quality of life for all residents. Success requires increased budget allocations, evaluating and enhancing existing programs, assessing the criteria used for funding decisions, convening stakeholders to identify best practices, and determining how to form public-private partnerships to accelerate revitalization. The state will need to work with the General Assembly, community leaders and advocates, business leaders, the real estate industry, and end users of programs.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Significantly increase the state budget for existing DHCD Neighborhood Revitalization programs.
- Provide funding to reduce “appraisal gaps” in targeted areas where the rehabilitation of homes for homeownership costs much more than sales prices support, through “soft second” mortgages that can be forgiven over time of homeowner occupancy.
- Build nonprofit leadership and program capacity in targeted revitalization areas via new multi-year funding streams for capacity-building in community-based organizations statewide, especially including critical operating support.
- Create and fund a Maryland Community Leadership Center within DHCD to build capacity of community-based nonprofits to create and implement comprehensive revitalization strategies.
- Review DHCD and other agency scoring systems for competitive funding, focusing on community development priorities such as senior housing, accessible housing, and equitable development.
- Evaluate and revise fee structure for developers of state-funded community development and neighborhood revitalization projects to motivate and incentivize construction of additional affordable units.
- Ensure that fees are sufficient and that nonprofit, community-based development partners can earn a meaningful fee that compensates them for their value-add and contributes to their ongoing activities.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Develop state funding programs specifically to address vacant property removal and/or rehabilitation.
- Develop a state role in funding of inclusionary housing programs that incentivize market-rate projects to include units for families of lower incomes.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor funding for community development and neighborhood revitalization programs; the reduction in number of vacant properties statewide and by jurisdiction, by type of property (commercial/residential); the increase in number and capacity of community-based development entities statewide, tracking by jurisdiction; and the population and small-business growth in targeted revitalization areas.

JOBS AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



The Jobs and Workforce Development Committee was made up of a diverse team of workforce development experts and workers' rights advocates from around the state. The committee met weekly from late November 2022 through January 2023 and was charged with reviewing the policy commitments made during the campaign and developing plans to operationalize and implement them. The policies within this report are intended to ensure Maryland state agencies, education institutions, and private and nonprofit partners work together to identify opportunities to advance Maryland's workforce to meet the jobs of the future, and that proper policies and controls are in place to protect workers' rights.

The committee formed three workgroups: (1) Skills Acquisition; (2) Career Pathways; and (3) Workers' Rights. Members of the full committee were assigned to workgroups in a manner that ensured diversity of thought, experience, and professional background, consistent with the Governor and Lieutenant Governor's commitment to ensuring that all policies and actions will be reflective of Maryland's diverse residents.

Maryland has many strong institutions of higher education, as well as innovative and successful apprenticeship, internship, and job training programs, and it has laid the groundwork for strong K-12 career and technical training through the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. However, many Marylanders still face barriers to employment, and there are many workers who do not have the support and protections they need to remain in the workforce and/or obtain family-sustaining wages. The Jobs and Workforce Development Committee and respective workgroups recognize that many of the policies and suggested action steps recommended here will take many years and significant resources to implement. However, committee members strongly believe that investing in these strategies will build a stronger, more equitable Maryland economy that works better for businesses and workers alike.

The committee engaged with hundreds of Marylanders through town hall meetings and by reviewing policy proposals submitted to the Transition Team. Below are several quotes the committee received either in writing or during its meetings.

"It is really important to align our educational institutions with the actual needs of our business community... Having a forum to discuss this with businesses in depth would be important."

"As a youth practitioner who works year-round with young creatives throughout the DMV, I am hoping this administration will make more resources available for young Black and brown creative youth to fulfill their aspirations within the creative (or other) industries through substantive workforce development workshops and experiences, paid internships, mentoring, and career-launching initiatives..."

"I am a big believer in the knowledge-based economy which is led by information and related technology. I believe Maryland can do far better when the state focuses on job creation, workforce development, and industry innovation. The state needs to be technology-driven and encourage more investments and businesses through smart policies. We need green jobs, advanced manufacturing, and precision agriculture."

Significant themes that emerged from the work of the Jobs and Workforce Development Committee:

- **Increase opportunities for Marylanders.** Increasing access to internships, apprenticeships, education, and on-the-job training will help all residents advance their careers and obtain family-sustaining wages.
- **Elevate the state's role in the workforce development space.** The state should do this by creating and funding the most impactful programs and facilitating strategic coordination and partnerships among all stakeholders.

- **Strengthen career and technical education for K-12 students.** This includes creating new opportunities for students to participate in dual-enrollment programs and apprenticeships.
- **Remove barriers to employment.** These most notably include access to child care and family and medical leave, which disproportionately push women and populations of color out of the workforce.
- **Strengthen workers' rights.** The state should increase the minimum wage, expand paid family and medical leave, strengthen collective bargaining, and support working families.

The Jobs and Workforce Development Committee is proud to share the following report with the Moore-Miller Administration.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

SKILLS ACQUISITION

1. **Increase funding for apprenticeships, internships, and education opportunities in growing industries including clean energy.** Increasing funding for internships and apprenticeships while leveraging industry investment will give Maryland residents the opportunity to join high-growth sectors and obtain jobs of the future. As a result, more people will have access to family-advancing/-supporting wages, and the state will have more revenue and create a talent pool that encourages employers to locate here. Success requires working with state agency leadership to establish public-private partnerships with the business sector, and engaging stakeholders including the Maryland State Department of Education, the Maryland State Teachers Association, the Maryland Higher Education Commission, the Maryland Department of Labor, the Maryland Department of the Environment, county/city boards of education, unions, trade associations, and the Maryland Association of Community Colleges.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Create a strategic plan for collaboration among the Department of Commerce, the Department of Labor, business and industry, and unions to better leverage workforce development programs.
- Leverage federal funding from the Small Business Administration and the U.S. Department of Labor for programs and incentives that could benefit Maryland businesses.
- Engage industry sectors to determine occupational needs for the future and capacity to scale employment opportunities.
- Encourage existing career technical education programs to expand their scope to the jobs of the future through outreach to business and industry.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Partner with the Department of Education to create new career and technical education tracks such as P-TECH and middle college programs (dual high school and community college enrollment) that educate students for emerging occupations.
- Align middle college programs with industry needs, and ensure middle/community colleges are meeting workforce needs.
- Formalize partnerships with trade schools, community colleges, and vocational programs to make stipends available for the early stages of training, tools and materials, and transportation.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor increases in the number of apprenticeships; increased participation in and completion of professional certification programs; and the number of apprenticeships and paid internships in industries of the future.

- 2. Expand Maryland's apprenticeship programs to help underrepresented communities better access high-paying jobs of the future, positioning Maryland to meet the challenges of the tech, nursing, and manufacturing labor shortages.** Developing and implementing a robust pipeline for historically disadvantaged communities to access paid apprenticeship programs in key areas will help connect individuals to areas of growth. As a result, underrepresented communities will have access to job opportunities with family-sustaining wages for years to come, and the state will attract employers in high-growth industries. The Department of Labor should serve as a leader in this effort and should convene a task force composed of nonprofit representatives, community colleges, economic development organizations, local workforce development organizations, unions, trade associations, businesses, and representatives from relevant state agencies to develop a statewide strategy for apprenticeships.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Create a cross-sector, geographically diverse task force to examine the barriers that underrepresented communities face in obtaining jobs in growing fields, and develop recommendations to strengthen existing apprenticeship programs or create new ones where there are gaps.
- Direct the Secretary of Labor to conduct a review of currently licensed and funded apprenticeship opportunities, and determine how underrepresented communities are benefiting or not benefiting from the current programs.
- Work with employers to post jobs with family-advancing/-supporting wages and apprenticeship opportunities on Open Maryland.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Create and implement an outreach program to reach marginalized job seekers.
- Staff schools, community centers, and workforce development agencies and organizations with liaisons who can directly connect individuals with open apprenticeship opportunities.
- Require project labor agreements (PLAs) that give preference to bids that provide jobs to underrepresented communities for all major construction projects receiving state funding.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor increases in the number of participants from historically marginalized groups in apprenticeship programs, as well as decreases in unemployment rates for historically marginalized groups.

CAREER PATHWAYS

- 3. Create new pathways to the workforce by expanding access to short-term credentialing programs and other programs that create a career ladder for participants.** Creating new pathways to the workforce by expanding access to short-term credentialing programs will give Maryland a more robust pipeline of prepared workers in demand-sector industries earning livable wages. Existing state grant programs—such as the One Step Away grant program, the Maryland Child Care Credential program, and the Career Pathways grant program—demonstrate that short-term credentialing programs are needed for manufacturing, construction, IT, health care, hospitality, logistics, energy, education, agriculture, biotech, and life sciences. Success requires expanding funding opportunities for current high-performing state grant-funded programs and grantees; partnering with local school districts to ensure high school students are graduating with industry-recognized occupational credentials in particular fields; and partnering with community colleges and other nonprofits that provide training/programs for stackable short-term credentials. The state should build strong partnerships with local, state, and national public and private organizations; local school districts; business leaders; and community colleges.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Convene a task force made up of public/private stakeholders focused on expanding access to short-term credentialing programs throughout Maryland.
- Invest in programs with a proven track record (e.g., the Career Pathway Connections for Adult Learners program, the EARN grant program, and the New Start grant program).

Recommended long-term actions:

- Align funding, services, and supports within workforce systems to determine the most cost-effective approaches.
- Analyze the return on investment of state-funded programs by collecting disaggregated data on job placement and retention rates.
- Implement a partnership with the departments of Education and Labor to integrate new credentialing programs into P-TECH, middle college, and workforce development programs that train students for emerging occupations.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the impact of expanded Department of Labor grant programs (i.e., the number of underemployed or unemployed participants who complete training; the number of participants placed in employment; the number of incumbent workers trained; the number of new employees; the number of credentials received; wage data; and the number of participants who obtained an identifiable skill, a new employment position, or a title or wage promotion) as well as the percentage of high school graduates not attending college who complete an apprenticeship or an industry-recognized occupational credential.

4. **Support employers who provide upskilling for workers of color.** Expanding incentives for employers that provide upskilling programs with a focus on expanding opportunities for workers of color will result in more employers participating in upskilling programs, ultimately benefiting Maryland workers with opportunities to obtain an identifiable skill, a new employment position, or a title or wage promotion. Success requires targeting current employer incentives more precisely to ensure they reach communities of color, incentivizing new upskilling programs, and simplifying and streamlining the employer process to access incentives for upskilling programs. The Department of Labor must be a strategic leader in this space, creating new incentives and building out connections among employers, HBCUs, training providers, and nonprofit training partners that can provide education/soft skills programs for their employees.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Create an employer toolkit to help promote upskilling programs.
- Expand incentives for employers that provide upskilling programs and opportunities for underserved communities including workers of color.
- Facilitate partnership among nonprofit training providers, Maryland HBCUs, and employers to create a pipeline of talent for in-demand sector industries.

Recommended long-term action:

- Simplify the cumbersome employer process to understand and access incentives for upskilling programs/incumbent worker training.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the amount of tax credits utilized by employers for upskill programs, as well as the number of workers representing an underserved community, including workers of color, who obtain an identifiable skill, a new employment position, or a title or wage promotion.

- 5. Remove barriers to employment.** Focusing on removing barriers experienced by job seekers to employment will lessen the challenges faced by unemployed and underemployed residents when trying to obtain jobs with a living wage. Success requires providing additional funding and resources to organizations that work with underserved communities and hard-to-serve populations, and ensuring residents who are experiencing unemployment have access to barrier-removing services (i.e., child support payments, transportation, targeted programs for formerly incarcerated individuals, and mental health supports). The state should expand partnerships with organizations statewide that provide barrier-removal services, and increase educational and job-training support for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Outsource barrier-removal services through a state-issued RFP, to specialized organizations that have targeted expertise on removing specific barriers.
- Ensure that every worker has access to high-quality legal services to eliminate barriers to employment such as immigration status, housing insecurity, employment discrimination, and other root causes of insecurity.
- Increase the number of incarcerated persons enrolled in correctional education.
- Ensure—through partnerships among the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, the MVA, and nongovernmental organizations—that all incarcerated persons have access to essential documents upon release.
- Partner with the business community to improve access to job training for formerly incarcerated individuals, and provide subsidized public transportation to individuals post-release.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Improve systemwide capacity to provide specialized and innovative services to address barriers to work.
- Implement adult education programs that accelerate pathways to passing the GED exam and attaining a high school diploma.
- Add testing and initiative requirements that increase reading and math levels to soft skills and pre-apprenticeship training programs.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the number of incarcerated persons enrolled in correctional education, the number of organizations partnering with the state on the removal of barriers to employment, the number of persons enrolled with organizations that provide barrier removal, and the number of persons who obtain employment after barrier removal services are provided.

WORKERS' RIGHTS

- 6. Ensure passage of a comprehensive paid family and medical leave program.** Expediting implementation of the Time to Care Act will ensure every individual is entitled to paid family and medical leave, regardless of employment or immigration status. This will result in all Marylanders leading healthier, more prosperous lives. Success requires collaborating with legislators and coordinating staff to effectively structure, fund, and implement this program, and partnering with employers and community organizations and advocates to effectively educate all parties. A phased approach to implementation will ensure that, over time, every worker in Maryland has access to paid family leave.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Conduct an analysis of current access to paid family and medical leave across the state; assess the gaps; and identify both strong and weak sectors in this space.
- Develop measures around financial health and security of families to establish a baseline before the new legislation goes into effect.
- Formalize a process for implementation of claims/benefits processes, information sharing, outreach, and education to include businesses, community groups, and other stakeholders.
- Ensure appropriation of funding necessary for the implementation and staffing dedicated to the new policy rollout.
- Develop a strategic plan to work toward full coverage for all people working in Maryland.

Recommended long-term action:

- Establish a long-term framework to monitor implementation of the paid family and medical leave program for greatest accountability and increase coverage over time.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor decreases in the number of workers dropping out of the workforce due to family obligations, as well as increases in the rate of women entering the workforce.

7. **Ensure the Department of Labor enforces Maryland’s worker misclassification statute.** Proper classification will ensure protection of workers’ rights, increased wages, and greater financial stability. Success requires increased oversight, training, and dedicated staffing at the Department of Labor, as well as partnerships among the Secretary of Labor, the attorney general, the comptroller, leaders from organized labor unions, community-based legal and worker organizations, employment lawyers, impacted workers, industry associations, and employers.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Invest in increased staffing at the Department of Labor to conduct critical, consistent enforcement.
- Partner with nonprofits, labor, and private industry on a multilingual, culturally proficient educational “Know Your Rights” campaign targeting the most impacted industries. This campaign will educate workers on the statute and reduce barriers in submitting complaints.
- Establish a task force to evaluate and make recommendations on effectiveness of prevention, enforcement, and penalty practices, and ensure there is proper oversight and coordination with the attorney general’s office and staff in the comptroller’s office.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Train and grow a pool of inspectors with industry-area expertise to investigate allegations of labor violations.
- Identify high-violation industries and develop strategic plans to partner with worker centers, unions, legal advocacy organizations, and other community-based organizations (CBOs) embedded in low-wage worker communities in high-violation sectors to root out bad actors and prevent misclassification.
- Develop partnerships among the Maryland Department of Labor, CBOs, the Small Business Administration, and Maryland Small Business Development Centers to ensure those who unknowingly commit violations have access to resources and support. This is a critical equity requirement to prevent small business employers from unknowingly engaging in misclassification (and wage theft) practices due to a lack of knowledge of requirements and limited access to capital and resources.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor reductions in the number of violations, dollar value of violations, and investigations performed.

- 8. Strengthen collective bargaining rights.** Ensuring access to collective bargaining rights will give Marylanders the right to join together to advocate for better pay, benefits, protections, a greater voice, and a higher quality of life. Stronger collective bargaining rights will help Maryland become a more competitive state where workers are a priority, employers respect the dignity of work, and both employees and employers want to live and work. Success requires leaders from labor unions, nonprofit organizations, the General Assembly, and small businesses working together on bold legislation. The administration can also support this effort by ensuring state procurement, sourcing, subcontracting, and staffing are aligned with its collective bargaining priorities.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Propose legislation that protects collective bargaining, Project Labor Agreements (PLAs), and Labor Peace legislation for workers across the state.
- Align collective bargaining priorities with the pro-collective bargaining standards and federal guidelines of the Biden-Harris Administration.
- Assemble key stakeholders in labor, private industry, public sector, and the legal field to recommend best practices and strategies on strengthening and expanding the use of binding arbitration in dispute resolution.

Recommended long-term action:

- Examine the impact of including Project Labor Agreements for major public works projects, and other projects financed by the state.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor increases in the number of union members, and increased usage of apprenticeships on public works projects.

- 9. Accelerate the minimum wage increase to \$15 per hour by the end of 2023.** When all workers in Maryland earn a living wage, Maryland families will be able to live with dignity and afford the basic necessities of life. Success requires support from the legislature to amend the minimum wage law, with agencies then working diligently to accelerate rollout and administer oversight of the new minimum wage.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Amend current minimum wage legislation to accelerate full phase-in of the \$15 minimum wage in 2023, include mandated annual increases tied to inflation, and include tipped workers (i.e., tips added to \$15 minimum hourly wage).
- Ensure that the Department of Labor and other relevant agencies are resourced to comply with state minimum wage laws.

Recommended long-term action:

- Establish sustainable partnerships with relevant nonprofits, workers, employers, and other trusted community stakeholders to strategically engage industries—including the restaurant and retail industries—on the benefits of the \$15 wage, relying on data, best practices, and the experience of other jurisdictions.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the number or percentage of organizations in compliance with new wage laws.

10. Protect, support, and empower Maryland's working families. Scaling workforce development programs and ensuring families have affordable access to child care and other supports necessary to access the workforce, and restructuring social safety net programs to better support working families, will ensure every Marylander has the chance to achieve economic security and build wealth. Success requires increased investments in workforce development programs and child care, and partnering with the Department of Labor, the Maryland State Department of Education, the Department of Service and Civic Innovation, and the Department of Human Services to better support working families.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Expand funding for and access to the EARN MD program.
- Restructure social safety net systems so that low-wage workers do not lose benefits as their wages increase, and they pursue a position that pays family-sustaining wages, eliminating the benefits cliff.
- Work with the Maryland Department of Labor to help secure deferred action for workers under the new federal guidelines.
- Develop a statewide service-year program to create valuable experience and a pathway to college affordability.
- Support industry-led certification and training programs that offer career pathways to progressive wages and benefits, opportunity for advancement, and the ability to retire with dignity.
- Identify and evaluate existing training programs to increase efficiency and capacity to connect historically underemployed and unemployed workers to career-connected employment opportunities.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Appoint new members to the Governor's Workforce Development Board to reflect the new administration's priorities and build a performance management function into its mission.
- Increase state support to local workforce agencies so that they can better provide workforce support and wraparound services to clients.
- Apply for federal waiver programs to gain additional flexibility for income-based benefits and program restrictions. (Note: Several states have made changes to benefits programs with the explicit intention of reducing the benefits cliff.)
- Define a self-sufficiency standard to understand what families must earn to transition away from benefits altogether.
- Create and implement a benefits calculator tool to help caseworkers, career coaches, and families identify how wage increases may reduce benefits on an individual or family level.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor increases in the number of people placed in jobs following participation in workforce training programs, increases in the number of incumbent workers trained, increases in successful completion of workforce training and apprenticeship programs, and whether there are fewer families living below state and federal poverty levels.

PUBLIC SAFETY



The Public Safety Committee was charged with reviewing the policy commitments made during the Moore-Miller campaign and developing plans to operationalize and implement the policies. The policy recommendations within this report are intended to ensure state and local government agencies, as well as private and nonprofit partners, work hand-in-hand to better serve residents and improve the safety of Maryland's diverse communities. The committee's membership represented tremendous diversity and included perspectives relevant to all aspects of Maryland's public safety and criminal justice systems.

To complete its work, the Public Safety Committee formed three working groups: (1) Internal Police Department; (2) Public Safety Services and Addressing Violent Crime; and (3) All Hazards Emergency Response. Members of the full committee were assigned to working groups in a manner that ensured diversity of thought, experience, profession, and residency, and was consistent with the Governor and Lieutenant Governor's commitment to ensuring that all policies and actions will be reflective of Maryland's diverse residents.

As it relates to public safety, Maryland has made tremendous progress toward improving relationships between law enforcement and communities, preventing gun violence, and responding to a variety of emergency situations. However, much work remains to be done. The committee and respective working groups recognize that not every complex problem can be solved in the first year, or even several years of this administration, but the Public Safety Committee members strongly believe this report will lay the groundwork for progress.

In addition to relying on the expertise of its members in developing this report, the Public Safety Committee had the distinct privilege of engaging with hundreds of Marylanders. It reviewed 135 policy ideas submitted through the online portal, and held two public meetings with its at-large committee members, engaging with over 300 Marylanders.

Below are several quotes the Public Safety Committee received either in writing or during meetings. These ideas aligned well with its discussions and helped to provide important context to its work.

"A strong Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services (GOCPYVS) equates to a strong safety net for victims of crime including domestic violence, sexual violence, and human trafficking. Whomever is appointed to lead must be ready to overhaul a broken system or build a new one in close partnership with the service providers who have been that safety net for decades."

"Improve the identification of people with behavioral health needs in the criminal justice system. Ensure that a range of behavioral health treatment and service options are available within jails and prisons and in the community for people in the criminal justice system. Increase the effectiveness of treatment and support services to improve public safety and health outcomes."

"Find a way to make DPSCS run smoother. Implement new ideas and hire new staff to help it run smoother. Now that we are in a virtual way of doing things, create more classes and training for those that are in the criminal justice system."

Significant themes that emerged from the work of the Public Safety Committee:

- **Engage with communities as Maryland pursues new, or strengthens existing, policies.** The state can only be effective if it engages with members of communities served, and adapts its processes to best meet their needs. The new administration has consistently demonstrated its commitment to engaging with community members, and that commitment must remain firm.

- **Recommit to serving Marylanders through exceptional customer service and leadership.** Governor Moore has always said, “If you want different, do different.” A common theme throughout the Public Safety Committee’s work surrounded the need to appoint strong leaders to run agencies, especially the Governor’s Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services (GOCPYVS).
- **Evaluate existing services, assess gaps, and direct resources to address them.** In almost every committee and working group meeting, members discussed the importance of evaluating existing resources (state and federal), policies, and practices to ensure the state is leveraging all resources and understands where additional resources are needed.
- **Improve technology.** The need to invest in and improve technology across agencies was a very common theme. The Public Safety Committee recognizes that technology is key to best serving communities, and the state must improve existing technology to achieve its goals.
- **Set forth a clear direction within the emergency management sphere.** In recent years, Maryland has taken important steps to elevate the importance of emergency management through the appointment of a Secretary of Emergency Management. In the early days and first year of the administration, it will need to provide clear direction across agencies and communicate with local governments so that the state’s ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies is improved.

The Public Safety Committee shares the following report with the Moore-Miller Administration to guide the implementation of policies surrounding public safety.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

INTERNAL POLICE DEPARTMENT

1. **Promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in law enforcement agencies.** Investing in statewide innovative initiatives focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) will increase legitimacy and trust with communities and allow for the recruitment of diverse talent to the profession. Success requires establishing a task force, supporting new budget allocations, taking legislative action, engaging in agency-led policy initiatives, and engaging public-private partnerships. The following leaders should be engaged: the Governor; the Maryland Fraternal Order of Police (FOP); the state point-of-contact on diversity, equity, and inclusion; the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (MDPSCS); the Governor’s Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victims Services (GOCPYVS); the Maryland Police and Correctional Training Commission (MPCTC); the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS); the Maryland Office of the Public Defender (MOPD); health services; the statewide education coalition; and the community coalition of involved citizens.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Appoint a statewide leader to oversee DEI efforts for all agencies, including public safety-related agencies.
- Direct every state agency to identify a DEI lead and develop a DEI statement.
- Establish a statewide task force to manage progress and ensure state and local efforts complement each other instead of encouraging further competition among agencies.
- Create new incentives, like scholarship or apprenticeship programs, in high schools to encourage students to become law enforcement officers.
- Increase funding for professional development opportunities for current officers.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Evaluate how to engage high schoolers and promote a service-year option to create a pipeline from the service-year option to the police academy.
- Develop uniform standards for hiring and disciplinary processes, and establish a commission to oversee progress.
- Ensure every state agency develops a DEI strategy with metrics and regular reporting requirements.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the creation of a statewide position and positions within state agencies to oversee DEI work; the completion of state model/framework as well as the number of completed policies and their impact; the collection of data on diversity to measure against baseline (hiring, promotion, etc.); the number of educational institutions engaged, including in historically marginalized communities; the volume of incentives allotted; and the number of students who enter service-year option programs with a law enforcement focus and/or enter police academies.

- 2. Support expanded decertification standards for law enforcement officers.** Supporting the implementation of expanded decertification standards will ensure that neither unprofessional nor dangerous law enforcement representatives are allowed into the ranks. As a result, professionalism, morale, and public trust in law enforcement will increase. Success requires new budget allocations, legislation, and agency-led policy initiatives. The following leaders should be engaged: the Governor's Chief Legislative Officer (CLO), the Maryland General Assembly, MPCTC, DPSCS, the Maryland Chiefs of Police Association, the Maryland Sheriffs' Association, FOP, community leaders, state's attorneys, public defenders, and the Maryland Department of Information Technology (MDIT).

Recommended short-term actions:

- Conduct a technology audit to assess capacity and identify gaps, and then support an infusion of new resources to address the gaps.
- Commission a gap analysis of the MPCTC to understand how current standards need to be updated and how communication could be improved across agencies.
- Direct the MPCTC to ensure uniformity in the internal and external discipline matrix, and establish clear communications and information-sharing protocols across agencies.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Select a technology solution that allows departments to immediately upload and access information related to officer standing.
- Consider developing and implementing a policy governing if and when officers should be able to apply for recertification.
- Consider legislation making MPCTC a regulatory body, and strengthen its reporting structure.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the number of applications requested by agencies; the timeframe for reporting decertifications; the number of terminations, resignations in lieu of terminations, and resignations that could have resulted in a termination; the development of an implementation plan based on audit of findings; and the implementation of a technology solution that brings greater transparency and expeditious communication.

- 3. Improve data collection at the state level, and produce reports in a consistent and timely manner.** Investing in a statewide strategic plan around collecting data across the criminal justice system that allows for comprehensive, uniform data collection will produce quality, timely reports that help law enforcement and communities understand patterns and trends related to crime and criminal justice

reform. This will eventually result in better opportunities for collective problem-solving, leading to reduced violence and victimization, and increased public trust and legitimacy. Success requires new budget allocations, agency-led policy initiatives, and public-private partnerships. The following leaders should be engaged: the Governor's CLO, MDIT, Maryland Coordination and Analysis Center (MCAC), MDPSCS, GOCPYVS, the Maryland Chiefs of Police Association, the Maryland Sheriffs' Association, DJS, state's attorneys, public defenders, and coalitions of community members.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Catalog existing reporting requirements across state agencies and determine whether any reports should be eliminated, consolidated, or otherwise streamlined.
- Identify and/or appoint a responsible party within the administration to establish protocols for data collection and governance across agencies and jurisdictions.
- Evaluate how data is being collected and communicated across jurisdictions and state agencies, with an eye toward efficiency and transparency.
- Streamline reporting to the public of discipline data collected.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Implement new protocols for data collection and governance across agencies.
- Provide funding and technical assistance to improve data analysis.
- Leverage data analysis to produce meaningful insights for public safety professionals and communities.
- Create meaningful opportunities for engagement with communities around data, including through the creation of a data portal, and how their communities are impacted.
- Engage stakeholders around the usefulness and accessibility of data collection, analysis, and reporting efforts.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the level of confidence reported by agencies and communities about the data collected and produced, as well as its impact on decision-making; the number of state employees with a dedicated data collection and analysis role; and increased accountability for lack of data collection.

4. Improve coordination and collaboration among state, local, and federal law enforcement agencies.

Creating, maintaining, and supporting systems that encourage or mandate better collection and sharing of intelligence across state, local, and federal law enforcement agencies will allow for increased capacity, access to high-quality and timely intelligence, and better relationships across agencies. This will create safer communities, as law enforcement agencies will have an increased ability to operate strategically and solve crimes. Success requires executive leadership, agency-led policy decisions, and legislative action. The following leaders should be engaged: the Governor; the Federal Bureau of Investigation's local special agent in charge (SAIC); the Maryland Coordination and Analysis Center (MCAC); the Maryland State Police (MSP); the Maryland Chiefs of Police Association; the Maryland Sheriffs' Association; MDIT; the attorney general; the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF); the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA); the United States attorneys; state's attorneys; and public defenders.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Conduct outreach to all agencies and determine the status and effectiveness of meetings and coordinated communication.
- Appoint or identify someone to coordinate more frequent intergovernmental meetings, establish goals for meetings, and improve communication.
- Convene agencies at least quarterly.

Recommended long-term action:

- Strengthen legislation that compels the MCAC to include enforcement or other accountability mechanisms to ensure timely reporting of information and intelligence.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the number of coordinated meetings among state, local, and federal law enforcement agencies annually; quarterly gatherings at the state level; and the creation of a meeting model, including goals for each meeting.

- 5. Support localities in the development of police reform plans.** Creating a system where local law enforcement agencies are supported through technical assistance and budget allocations to develop and implement reform plans will ensure better uniformity, transparency, performance management, morale, and internal procedural justice. This will result in better-performing departments that feel supported, and also provide higher-quality constitutional and community-centered policing service. Success requires supporting new budget allocations and engaging in agency-led policy initiatives. The following leaders should be engaged: GOCPYVS, the Governor's CLO, the Maryland Chiefs of Police Association, the Maryland Sheriffs' Association, external police reform experts, state's attorneys, public defenders, and community organizations.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Immediately request a briefing from the Governor's CLO, GOCPYVS, and police reform advocates on the status of police reform legislation, including whether departments are struggling to comply, and what still needs to be addressed.
- Identify funding sources that could be leveraged to support technical assistance to localities.
- Establish technical assistance criteria to guide funding decisions.
- Evaluate where jurisdictions are lacking resources and determine their progress in standing up their Police Accountability Board and Administrative Charging Committee.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Allocate funding to support sustained programming, including a full-time subject matter expert.
- Develop a process to select and begin working with localities to develop and implement reform plans within their departments.
- Establish an oversight process at the state level to ensure accountability to reform plans.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the amount of funding allocated for technical assistance, as well as support related to reform; the strength of local police departments; the trust in local law enforcement following implementation of reform plans; and oversight and accountability within departments.

- 6. Support mental health resources for law enforcement officers.** Intentionally focusing on creating a system of support for law enforcement mental health through high-quality technical assistance grounded in evidence-based best practices and budget allocations will help create a culture where officers are more likely to obtain treatment. This will improve officer well-being and decrease negative interactions with the community, thereby improving overall community safety. Success requires statewide leadership, budget allocations, agency-led policy decisions, and public-private partnerships. The following leaders should be engaged: the Governor, the Governor's CLO, the Maryland Chiefs of Police Association, the Maryland Sheriffs' Association, FOP, the National Alliance on Mental Illness of Maryland and other statewide mental health organizations, the Maryland Behavioral Health Administration (BHA), and licensed mental health professionals.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Make meaningful public statements about the importance of officer well-being as it relates to their own safety and the safety of communities.
- Facilitate a briefing from the GOCPYVS, and solicit input from grantees and program participants to determine availability of funding, project plans for coming years, and opportunities to affect change.
- Review funding cycles and program schedules to ensure alignment and efficiency.
- Host regional listening sessions to hear from law enforcement and family members who have experienced work-related trauma or lost a loved one to suicide.
- Establish policies encouraging officers to seek help and reduce stigma for those who do seek help.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Encourage the use of psychological exams to screen for temperament and bias.
- Implement training for law enforcement officers to identify trauma triggers and leverage healthy coping mechanisms.
- Create a statewide mental health hotline for law enforcement officers.
- Ensure dedicated funding for mental health support addressing addiction, financial, family crisis, etc.
- Fund legislation from 2017-2018, which required regular mental health screenings for officers.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the inventory of services available as well as a system for tracking how people are using them and whether they are effective; improved trauma programming within police departments; and the availability of technical assistance to local agencies to improve standards and increase the frequency and depth of mental health supports.

PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES AND ADDRESSING VIOLENT CRIME

7. Rebuild trust and strengthen relationships between law enforcement and the community.

Implementing programs, improving diversity, and investing in training will enhance trust and cooperation between law enforcement and the community, and create safer, more resilient communities. Success requires a focus on recruiting diverse law enforcement, budget allocations for training and youth programming, and public-private partnerships. The following leaders should be engaged: the Governor, the Governor's CLO, the Governor's Counsel, the Maryland Chiefs of Police Association, the Maryland Sheriffs' Association, FOP, and MPCTC.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Recruit diverse law enforcement officers at the state level who reflect the communities they serve.
- Invest in training for behavioral health and de-escalation.
- Increase funding for youth programs that assist children with hands-on mentoring.
- Encourage engagement among law enforcement and community members, groups, organizations, and other government entities.
- Expand partnerships with community providers, partners, and other government entities to assist those in need.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Establish a task force to bring best practices to the surface, and then build partnerships to replicate effective programs and practices.
- Implement a statewide trauma response intervention plan to activate following incidents of community violence.
- Provide funding and technical support to programs working to change the culture of law enforcement.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the public opinion survey of law enforcement; clearance rates of reported crimes, which will help to understand whether community members and law enforcement are working cooperatively; reporting rates of crimes, which will help to understand whether victims feel comfortable coming forward; the diversity of law enforcement; and budget allocation focused on funding programs to rebuild trust between communities and law enforcement.

- 8. Fund Crisis Intervention Teams (CITs) and additional behavioral health programming in the community.** Promoting the complete partnership and integration between law enforcement and behavioral health programs focused on addressing the well-being of both officers and community members will allow for 911 and 988 responses to be more appropriate to community needs. This will result in communities being better served. Success requires budget allocations, agency-led policy decisions, and public-private partnerships. The following leaders should be engaged: the Maryland Chiefs of Police Association, the Maryland Sheriffs' Association, the Public Safety Answering Points (PSAP) directors, the Maryland 911 board, 988 call centers, GOCPYVS, local health departments, and the BHA.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Develop metrics to determine which existing community mental health or CIT programs are performing well.
- Prioritize current funding available to the GOCPYVS, and identify additional federal funds available to support training or programs.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Allocate new funds to improve existing, or create new, CIT or mental health programs.
- Provide technical assistance and funding to expand and replicate best practices from other jurisdictions (in state or out of state).

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor funding levels; the number of CIT-trained officers, as well as the number of incidents responded to; and the number of CIT-trained first responders and police officers available per shift, per jurisdiction.

- 9. Reduce and prevent gun violence.** Implementing trauma-informed community violence intervention programs will equip community members with healthier strategies to resolve conflict, build more connected communities, and reduce the number of gun deaths and injuries. Success requires budget allocations, legislation, agency-led policy decisions, and public-private partnerships. The following leaders should be engaged: local health departments, state's attorneys, public defenders, gun violence prevention advocates, education leaders, the Maryland Chiefs of Police Association, the Maryland Sheriffs' Association, and the DPSCS.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Declare gun violence a public health crisis.
- Identify best practices that could be replicated within relevant agencies to combat gun violence.
- Sponsor legislation expanding the database at the MSP to capture information about firearms surrendered to law enforcement regarding Extreme Risk Protective Orders (ERPOs) or protective orders.
- Increase or establish funding for community providers and relevant agencies to implement gun violence-reduction best practices.
- Conduct an analysis of statutory provisions around the nation related to handguns, and identify opportunities to strengthen Maryland's laws.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Provide technical assistance to implement or strengthen gun violence prevention efforts at the state and local levels.
- Allocate funding for an education campaign to bring public awareness to gun violence.
- Develop age-appropriate curriculum about the dangers of gun violence and conflict management training, mediation, and restorative practices for school-aged children.
- Develop a Strategic Crisis Action Plan to guide trauma responses to violence in communities and improve conflict resolution skills.
- Create a task force to review data and research around causes and potential solutions.
- Establish a trauma-informed engagement strategy with individuals who have been convicted of a gun charge to connect them to services and break dangerous cycles of violence.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the number of gun-related deaths, shootings, and crimes; recidivism rates for individuals receiving positive interventions compared to those receiving negative or no interventions; and the number of arrests for firearm possession.

- 10. Keep guns out of the hands of people intent on harming themselves or others.** Utilizing Maryland's Extreme Risk Protective Orders (ERPO) law and training law enforcement, courts, and the public on its purpose and how to pursue an ERPO will result in separating firearms from people at risk of causing harm, thereby reducing gun-related deaths, injuries, and criminal charges or convictions. Success requires a statewide education campaign, new budget allocations, and agency-led policy initiatives. The following leaders should be engaged: MPCTC, GOCOPYVS, state's attorneys, public defenders, the Maryland Chiefs of Police Association, the Maryland Sheriffs' Association, 988 centers, local community violence intervention programs, local health departments, and behavioral health leaders.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Begin educating the public and law enforcement about ERPOs and encourage people to seek them when appropriate.
- Educate communities about emergency petitions with the goal of establishing long-term consistency in their use.
- Educate communities about the new 988 function.
- Educate law enforcement of the benefits of behavioral health interventions for individuals in crisis.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Provide funding to jurisdictions to develop and implement an ERPO Operations Plan.
- Invest in community resources to support individuals subject to ERPOs.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the number of ERPO applications by jurisdiction; the number of ERPOs issued by jurisdiction; the number of laws passed to help (protective orders, ERPO, registered firearms returned); and the reductions in gun-related deaths, suicides, injuries, and criminal charges or convictions.

- 11. Promote education about firearm safety and safe storage.** Supporting community-based organizations that provide safe storage tools and mandating ongoing firearm education programs for gun owners will prevent children from accessing unsecured firearms and reduce the number of firearm-related deaths and injuries. Success requires budget allocations, legislation, agency-led policy decisions, and public-private partnerships. The following leaders should be engaged: gun violence prevention advocates, local health departments, MSP, and the Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Support Jalyn’s law, which ensures that when a person is the respondent of a protective order and they are living in a house with firearms, those firearms must be securely stored.
- Partner with local organizations to educate the public about the risks associated with having firearms in the home in a culturally competent way, ensuring information reaches underserved communities.
- Consider opportunities to reach gun owners with new educational information at the time of registration or through periodic communications, including providing updates on new laws.

Recommended long-term action:

- Partner with private organizations (health department, education, the Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, nonprofits) to bring awareness to these issues and distribute gun locks.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the number of laws passed governing safe storage; funding available for safe storage equipment and education; the number of gun-related deaths and injuries; and the cost to health systems.

12. Address the large number of sexual assault and domestic violence cases. Increasing and mobilizing resources for prevention and response to sexual assault and domestic violence will provide survivors with access to vital services. This will lead to safer, healthier, and more resilient families and communities that experience less sexual and domestic violence. Success requires budget allocations, legislation, and agency-led policy decisions. The following leaders should be engaged: the Governor, GOCPYVS, Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault, Attorney General’s Office, and the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Make a strong appointment to lead the GOCPYVS.
- Assess funding levels and begin developing a framework to increase funding streams, and ensure they are predictable and distributed in a timely manner.
- Support legislation to end marriage as a defense for sexual assault and domestic violence.
- Prioritize reproductive justice for survivors by improving communication with local health agencies; ensure survivors are able to access Plan B or other abortion care.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Advance legislation to establish a statewide dashboard to track service of protective orders.
- Allocate permanent funding to address Sexual Assault Evidence Kits (SAEKs) backlog and prevent future backlog.
- Improve the process for survivors looking to access information about their SAEKs.
- Develop a long-term housing plan for individuals displaced because of intimate partner violence or sexual assault.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the establishment of a dashboard to track statewide protective orders; funding levels for sexual assault and domestic violence programs; a highly qualified appointment to lead GOCPYVS; legislation to support services for domestic violence and sexual assault survivors; the number of SAEKs tested annually; and death and injury rates related to domestic violence and sexual assault.

ALL-HAZARDS EMERGENCY RESPONSE

13. Build capacity within the new Secretary of Emergency Management. Conducting an organizational assessment of the current structure of state government and emergency response will position the Secretary of Emergency Management as the main convening party during emergencies. This will result in Maryland being better prepared and better organized to respond to all hazard emergencies affecting the people of Maryland. Success requires an executive order and the engagement of the following leaders: the Governor, the Chief of Staff, the Secretary of Emergency Management (SEM), and the Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM).

Recommended short-term actions:

- Sign an executive order to clearly delineate the line of authority in advance of local or statewide emergency.
- Review funding gaps to determine which positions are funded but not filled, and identify positions that should be funded with state dollars.

Recommended long-term action:

- Fully staff all funded positions and convert grant-funded positions to state-funded positions.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the existence of executive order or directive addressing line of authority for the SEM as well as the number of budgeted positions in the department.

14. Increase collaboration with local jurisdictions, and improve the state's ability to support local emergencies. Evaluating information systems, ensuring coordinated training, and establishing communication protocols between state and local agencies will streamline efficiency and ensure complete resource availability and allocation. This will ensure a more efficient and effective state response, and improve community safety. Success requires a task force and public private partnerships. The following leaders should be engaged: the Governor, the Chief of Staff, the SEM, the Maryland General Assembly, local emergency managers, the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), and nonprofits.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Establish a task force with the goal of determining best practices to expedite requests for assistance from local municipalities and jurisdictions to the state in the most efficient manner.
- Assess whether contracts are needed with private and nonprofit partners to ensure Maryland is prepared to respond to various emergencies.

Recommended long-term action:

- Enter into, and maintain, contracts with private and nonprofit partners, as well as identify and fill in gaps for services or supplies needed in advance of emergency situations.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor WebEOC requests tracked for timely fulfillment, and establish a schedule for review of contracts on a quarterly basis.

15. Build capacity within and collaboration among state agencies to provide support during emergencies. Measuring, assessing, and identifying gaps in current emergency management capacity from each state agency can help establish a baseline of available resources. This will also ensure that the Office of the Governor is better prepared to direct state agencies to respond to emergencies efficiently and effectively, which would reduce loss of life or property in an emergency

incident. Success requires an executive order, budget allocations, and public-private partnerships. The following leaders should be engaged: the Governor, the Chief of Staff team, the SEM, secretaries of all involved state agencies, as well as private and nonprofit leadership partners.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Sign an executive order or take executive action to identify gaps in procurement to allow for better preparedness.
- Leverage public, private, and nonprofit partnerships to ensure advance contracts and partnerships are in place for logistical supply prior to an emergency.
- Utilize results of gap analysis to inform budget allocations that will improve preparedness.

Recommended long-term action:

- Maintain contracts where needed with private and nonprofit partners, and ensure appropriate funding is allocated.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor its executive order or action, and routinely schedule a review of contracts.

16. Improve cross-disciplinary collaboration across federal, state, and local agencies. Establishing the SEM as the convening entity for emergency management and identifying a liaison between emergency management and other disciplines will ensure all agencies involved in mitigating the impacts of an event will be able to provide a coordinated and efficient response. This will in turn lower the unnecessary duplication of information collection activities and the deployment of required resources, and build a more resilient Maryland. Success requires an executive order and agency-led policy decisions. The following leaders should be engaged: the Governor, the Chief of Staff, the SEM, the Maryland General Assembly, local emergency managers, the DBM, and nonprofits.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Sign an executive order to establish the SEM as the convening authority for emergency management.
- Direct collaboration among various state agencies to improve cross-disciplinary collaboration, and open dialogue and communication to address goals of streamlining and consolidation.
- Conduct an initial tabletop exercise with cabinet-level officials within the first 100 days.

Recommended long-term action:

- Facilitate cabinet-level emergency management drills at least twice a year.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the existence of an executive order or directive addressing line of authority for the SEM, and establish and maintain routine meetings among stakeholders to identify areas for improvement in collaboration.

17. Bring greater attention to preparedness to ensure Maryland will be ready to respond in case of an emergency. Aligning Homeland Security and MDEM under the SEM can help better assess overall preparedness as a state and any gaps. This will put Maryland in a better position to evaluate needs and distribute resources, which will ensure the state is better prepared and organized to respond to all-hazard emergencies affecting the people of Maryland. Success requires an executive order, legislation, and budget allocations. The following leaders should be engaged: the Governor, the SEM, MDEM, local emergency managers, and all state agency leaders.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Sign an executive order establishing the SEM as the top line of authority for emergency management.
- Educate all state agencies on the lines of authority, and ensure agency leaders understand their roles in emergency management.
- Establish a task force charged with developing preparedness plans that achieve synergy among state, local, and municipal officials to ensure they do not conflict.
- Allocate funding and realign resources across new emergency management structure, and determine whether additional funding is needed.

Recommended long-term action:

- Ensure uniform adoption of preparedness plans.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the solicitation of feedback from local jurisdictions, as well as private and nonprofit partners, to identify areas of preparedness that are operating efficiently and those that could use improvement, and establish routine meetings to review and update preparedness plans.



TRANSPORTATION



FREDERICK DOUGLASS TUNNEL

BIPARTISAN
INFRASTRUCTURE
LAW

The Transportation Policy Committee was charged with developing bold yet pragmatic recommendations and goals for the Moore-Miller Administration to consider in achieving the priorities that Governor Moore ran on during the campaign. The committee worked diligently between December 2022 and January 2023, and was comprised of over 20 members from various locations throughout the state, with diverse backgrounds, demographics, and lived experiences.

To work efficiently and effectively, the Committee divided into four working groups: (1) Quality Public Transit; (2) Transit Hubs/Physical Infrastructure; (3) Road and Pedestrian Safety; and (4) Cleaner Maryland Transit. Members of the full committee were able to choose which working group they wanted to be a part of.

The committee also hosted two virtual at-large engagement meetings with overwhelming participation. It received input and feedback from over 500 Marylanders on improving the state's transportation network, to make it efficient, safer, and cleaner—and more equitable—all while growing the economy. This feedback from individuals and stakeholder groups was integral to the development of this final report. Below are several quotes the committee received either in writing or during its meetings.

“Electrifying our vehicles is a critical strategy to reduce climate and air pollution and must be accompanied by a strong public transit system which encourages smart growth.”

“Federal funding is currently underutilized by MDOT and could help Maryland reduce vehicle miles traveled by building transit, pedestrian, and bicycling infrastructure and funding programs.”

“Many Marylanders don't have reliable transportation to access affordable housing, jobs, food, healthcare, and amenities.”

“The lack of adequate transportation investments has disproportionately impacted Black and Brown communities, low-income communities, and people with disabilities.”

Significant themes that emerged from the work of the Transportation Policy Committee:

- **Merit-based transportation projects.** Much of what the committee heard from Marylanders was the desire for transportation projects to be selected based on merit rather than be politically driven.
- **Affordable and reliable transportation.** Marylanders are hungry for affordable, reliable multi-modal transportation options that are available to everyone, from rural to urban areas and for disadvantaged and underserved communities.
- **Cleaner transportation.** Marylanders are concerned about the environment, and an overwhelming amount of feedback was about the need to take bold steps to quickly and dramatically reduce the harm that transportation is inflicting on the environment.

The Transportation Policy Committee recognized that the administration will have to make challenging decisions around prioritizing and sequencing the proposals outlined in this report. However, the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) offers Maryland a once-in-a-generation vital resource to plan and implement equitable transportation access. As priorities are determined, the Transportation Policy Committee encourages the state to leverage federal funding to maximize its ability to implement this ambitious agenda and improve the lives of all Marylanders.

The Transportation Policy Committee is proud to present this report and encourages the Moore-Miller Administration, as it makes policy decisions, to return to the common theme echoed throughout the transition: Marylanders want a transportation system that makes travel across the state accessible and safe for all, including pedestrians, cyclists, public transit riders, and motorists.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

QUALITY PUBLIC TRANSIT

- 1. Ensure that efforts to improve mass transit focus on the people who need it most.** Focusing transit service on the people who need it most will ensure all Marylanders have access to frequent, reliable, all-day service. This will allow residents to climb the ladder of opportunity while giving employers access to a larger talent pool. Success requires increasing Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) Maryland Transit Administration (MTA)'s capital and operating budgets to run safe and better service, prioritizing transit operator hiring and retention, and providing seamless integration across all of the state's transit operations. The state will need strong partnerships with the General Assembly, the Maryland Congressional Delegation, labor unions, local elected officials, regional planning organizations, business leaders, and Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA).

Recommended short-term actions:

- Increase MTA's operating budget to measurably enhance existing and establish new service.
- Increase funding for MTA's capital budget to ensure the system is safe and reliable.
- Prioritize operator retention and streamline hiring timelines.
- Remove the 2013 inflationary metric for MDOT MTA fare increases.
- Study the costs and benefits of removing bus fares for MDOT MTA core bus, locally operated transit, and WMATA's bus service in Montgomery and Prince George's counties.
- Improve the quality, accuracy, and accessibility of real-time transit data for MTA transit services.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Establish frequent bus service along at least half of the Central Maryland Regional Transit Plan's corridors by 2030, including key employment centers that lack service today, including Fort Meade.
- Establish an MDOT MTA, Purple Line, WMATA, and local transit schedule, station stop, and ticket integration program to create seamless regional service.
- Consider offering free or reduced fares to riders.
- Implement a program to improve access to dignified waiting areas at transit stops throughout the state, including Maryland Area Regional Commuter (MARC) stations.
- Ensure all MARC stations are ADA compliant and accessible for people with disabilities.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor access to jobs within one hour by transit, the MTA operator job vacancy rate, ridership, and on-time performance for all scheduled transit service.

- 2. Remove the politics from transportation.** Enhancing outdated infrastructure planning processes will allow them to be more transparent, equitable, and inclusive. This will result in new opportunities that physically connect residents to jobs, an education, and rich cultural amenities, while achieving other key goals such as reducing greenhouse gases, creating quality jobs, and leaving no Marylander behind. Success requires reforming the capital budgeting process, enhancing transparency for programs and projects, and reforming the Transportation Commission. The state will need strong partnerships with the General Assembly, local elected officials, transportation trade organizations, unions, business leaders, and regional planning organizations.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Create an advisory group to make recommendations to reform the state's transportation project-based scoring system to ensure the state's investments are guided by fiscal prudence, safety for all, equity, environment, and inclusive economic growth, and require that project scores be a core factor to guide the development of the Consolidated Transportation Program.
- Require that the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program and regional Transportation Improvement Programs conduct an equity and cost-benefit analysis for all projects included, as well as an equity analysis of the entire plan's impact on low-income and minority communities.
- Increase the number, size, and percentage of historically underutilized businesses growing to prime contractors, or participating in joint ventures or as equity participants.
- Amend the Consolidated Transportation Program process to require that MDOT formally consider regional priorities.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Create a statewide project dashboard that informs the public on how its dollars are being deployed.
- Establish a state-led technical assistance program to help local jurisdictions plan, develop, and execute large infrastructure projects that often exceed their resources, such as the Highway to Nowhere project.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor reform of the existing project selection process to ensure transparency, and equitable distribution of funding across modes and regions of the state.

- 3. Build an interconnected, well-maintained transportation network to affordably and effectively move people from where they live to where they work.** Building a seamless, interconnected transportation network will connect residents of all incomes to important destinations throughout the state and increase economic productivity, recognizing that transportation is one of the single greatest impediments to economic mobility. Success requires increasing MDOT MTA's capital and operating budgets to run safe and better service, prioritizing transit operator hiring and retention, and providing seamless integration across all of the state's transit operations. The state will need strong partnerships with the General Assembly, the Maryland Federal Delegation, labor unions, local elected officials, regional planning organizations, business leaders, and WMATA.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Expedite completion of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process for the Southern Maryland Rapid Transit (SMRT) Project and secure a record of decision.
- Accelerate the completion of the Purple Line, and work to ensure schedules and ticketing are integrated into Washington Metro and MARC trains.
- Establish a funding program to accelerate Bus Rapid Transit planning, design, and construction, including expansion of Montgomery County's FLASH.
- Reinvigorate the Maryland Commuter Choice program by increasing incentives and planning support for the state's employers.
- Conduct a feasibility study throughout the Eastern Shore to understand where investments should be made to improve and expand existing bus service.
- Lead regional discussion with the District of Columbia and Virginia to provide sustainable, independent funding to support WMATA's operating and capital needs to assure WMATA's ability to provide long-term safe and reliable rail and bus service at affordable fares.
- Create a 10-Year Transit Capital Vision for Greater Baltimore and WMATA service.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Launch and expedite completion of the Southern Maryland Rapid Transit's federal environmental planning and review process.
- Rapidly advance the Red Line light rail project and ensure it is connected to other forms of transit such as bus rapid transit.
- Create an MDOT and local jurisdiction transit prioritization program that focuses on prioritizing the movement of buses along roadways, improving pedestrian and bike connections and infrastructure between regional job centers and transit stations, and enhancing employer-sponsored commuter programs.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the percentage of Marylanders who can access key destinations including jobs, an education, and healthy food outlets within an hour's trip by car and transit, and the percentage of disadvantaged Marylanders who can access key destinations including jobs, an education, and healthy food outlets within an hour's trip by car and transit.

TRANSIT HUBS/PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

- 4. Develop a faster, more frequent, and reliable regional rail network.** Prioritizing regional rail will better connect population centers and regional economies, enhance economic productivity, increase access to moderate and affordable housing options, create tens of thousands of quality jobs, and increase equitable access for many underserved and under-resourced communities to jobs and opportunity. Success requires actions to show renewed commitment, strategic planning, and investments in the state's current and future rail network. The state will need strong partnerships with the General Assembly, the Maryland Federal Delegation, the Federal Railroad Administration, Amtrak, CSX, Norfolk Southern, rail labor unions, local elected officials, regional planning organizations, and business leaders.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Execute MOUs with Virginia, Delaware, and other key stakeholders, to connect MARC with VRE (Virginia Railway Express) and SEPTA (the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority).
- Study the efficacy of a regional rail authority with the professional experience needed to plan, develop, finance, and manage the state's regional rail system.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Develop and implement MARC Brunswick and Camden Lines Service Enhancement Capital Programs, including expansion of transit service to Western Maryland.
- Conduct a feasibility and market study for new rail service corridors that could host intra- and interstate services, as well as new technologies.
- Explore the benefits of constructing a fourth track between Odenton and Halethorpe on the MARC Penn Line.
- Commit to establishing 30 minutes or less MARC express trips between Baltimore and Washington, D.C.
- Finish the Frederick Douglass Tunnel by securing a funding, workforce, and community impact agreement with Amtrak.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor ridership, frequency, reliability, and vehicle miles traveled per capita.

- 5. Leverage the influx of federal funds to build generational infrastructure improvements.** Better leveraging federal resources and increasing the effectiveness to deploy successful public-private partnerships will improve the current system and rapidly advance plans through to construction

within the next four years. Success requires appointing key personnel to lead the development, statewide engagement, and execution of federal infrastructure strategy. The state will need strong partnerships with the General Assembly, the Maryland Federal Delegation, the Biden Administration, labor unions, local elected officials, regional planning organizations, business leaders, and transportation trade organizations.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Appoint or assign a senior member at MDOT the responsibilities to lead federal transportation activities across modal agencies and with local jurisdictions and private partners to inform, collaborate, and secure additional federal resources.
- Create a federal transportation priority project strategy, including opportunities for public-private partnerships.
- Create a federal congressionally directed infrastructure spending strategy in partnership with local jurisdictions and regional planning organizations.

Recommended long-term action:

- Establish a program to identify and provide technical assistance and funding for locally sponsored federal discretionary grants.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the share of federal discretionary grant applications that receive awards, the total amount of discretionary grant funding won, the increase in federal funding received to support Maryland's infrastructure, and the number of partners that support grant applications (e.g., local governments, nonprofit, private partners, etc.).

- 6. Better leverage the Port of Baltimore.** Fully unlocking the potential of the Port of Baltimore and Tradepoint Atlantic will increase the state's economic productivity; tax revenues; and quality, good-paying jobs. Success requires delivering the Howard Street Tunnel project, modernizing the dredging program, increasing access to employment at the Port, and enhancing freight corridors to the Port and Inland Ports. The state will need strong partnerships with the General Assembly, the Maryland Federal Delegation, Tradepoint Atlantic, the Baltimore Port Alliance, the Baltimore Industrial Group, shippers, labor unions, local elected leaders, CSX, Norfolk Southern, Amtrak, and the General Assembly.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Prioritize the Howard Street Tunnel Project and associated projects in Maryland in coordination with Delaware and Pennsylvania to ensure the project is on time and within the budget.
- Increase transit and high-occupancy vehicle options to connect communities to jobs at the Port and adjacent industrial facilities.
- Identify, protect, and enhance commercial freight corridors in and around the Port to allow for smooth flow of cargo while limiting impact to neighboring communities.
- Promote the growth of public and private terminals within the Port of Baltimore.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Modernize the Port's dredging regulatory structure around disposition of dredge material to increase the ability for the state to more efficiently maintain its 50-foot-deep channels.
- Establish a workforce development program to create an employment pipeline to Port-related public- and private-sector jobs.
- Develop and execute an inland Port development strategy to maximize economic opportunity and investment in Western and Northeastern Maryland.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the completion of the Howard Street Tunnel project (2025 target), the Port throughput, dredging costs and beneficial reuse environmental benefits, and the number of working-age adults who can access the Port within 45 minutes by car and one hour by transit.

- 7. Drive growth and expansion of BWI Marshall Airport.** Targeting the capacity investments at BWI Marshall Airport—terminal, airfield, and supporting air freight facilities—will expand the airport’s more than \$9 billion economic impact for the state and increase its importance as a domestic and global entry for visitors, residents, and goods. Success requires updating the airport’s master plan, committing to projects that are underway, leveraging federal and private resources, and increasing access to nearby job sites and destinations. The state will need strong partnerships with the General Assembly, the Maryland Federal Delegation, labor unions, local elected leaders, community stakeholders from surrounding communities, cargo companies, commercial airlines, and Amtrak.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Update BWI Airport’s Master Plan to allow commercial and cargo expansion that positions the airport as a hub for the state, including a go-forward strategy for airfield and terminal improvements to grow capacity and improve safety while also accounting for surrounding communities’ quality of life.
- Ensure the Master Plan development process includes robust and inclusive engagement with airport and community stakeholders.
- Commit to rapidly advance new tower, hotel, and terminal expansion.
- Charge the Department of Commerce with securing growth of international connections at BWI.
- Prioritize and commit to shovel-worthy projects identified in the Master Plan to leverage federal funding that increases terminal access and airfield capacity, including better service to the airport for regional rail, light rail, bus, and key destinations.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Create a world-class, workforce-centered shuttle operation that connects employees to jobs at all hours of the day.
- Re-establish WMATA bus connection between the airport and Metrorail.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor completion and approval of the Master Plan and an established list of prioritized projects, the number of passengers, landed cargo weight, and the number of working-age adults who can access the airport within 45 minutes by car and one hour by transit.

- 8. Ensure holistic infrastructure planning.** Modernizing and enhancing broadband and water infrastructure systems will ensure all Marylanders have access to fast and affordable internet, critical to full participation in today’s society, as well as safe, clean water. Success requires committing to closing the digital divide and providing every Marylander with universal broadband access; delivering clean, safe drinking water; and improving the health of the state’s rivers and streams, and the Chesapeake Bay. The state will need strong partnerships with the General Assembly, the Maryland federal delegation, local elected officials, internet service providers, water utilities, and nonprofits and advocacy partners.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Leverage unprecedented state and federal infrastructure funding for broadband and lead pipe removal to close the digital divide and provide every Marylander universal broadband access and clean drinking water.

- Launch statewide broadband planning process to address all dimensions of the digital divide, including digital inclusion and network deployment.
- Launch an equitable planning process, in partnership with historically underinvested and disadvantaged community leaders throughout the state, to leverage historic federal water investments directed to disadvantaged communities to improve community health, create jobs, and mitigate impacts from climate change.

Recommended long-term action:

- Create partnerships with for- and nonprofit internet providers and organizations to expand access to affordable high-speed internet, support digital literacy, and increase access to computing devices for households with school children, low-income households, and Black and Latinx households.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the percentage of disadvantaged Marylanders without access to broadband, and the average cost for high-speed, reliable internet service for disadvantaged Marylanders.

ROAD AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

9. **Expand transit-oriented communities.** Expanding transit-oriented communities will affect economic growth and transit ridership in a way that will expand housing options and affordability, increase inclusive economic growth, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Success requires executive actions to leverage the state’s resources, including its land, and collaboration with the General Assembly, local elected officials, and the development community to enhance and implement the state’s transit-oriented community programs. The state will need strong partnerships with private and nonprofit developers, transit and environmental advocates, local governments, WMATA, and the General Assembly.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Establish a task force to study the effectiveness of Vision Zero, Priority Funding Areas (PFAs), and designated Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) areas, and explore other financing tools to move forward and address impediments to TOD. Establish and fund a transit-oriented development fund to support planning, zoning adjustments, infrastructure upgrades, and gap financing for state designated transit-oriented development areas.
- Improve the technical assistance framework for local jurisdictions with TOD designation.
- Modify the Transit Oriented Development designation process by creating an objective, criteria-based selection process; amending Transit Oriented Development designation language to support corridor-based Transit Oriented Development strategies, including bus corridors; specifying the Smart Growth Subcabinet as the Transit Oriented Development-designating entity; and establishing a five-year designation period, with sunset, to prioritize active projects.
- Lead public-private TOD agreements for the Odenton Station area and State Center.

Recommended long-term action:

- Act as a first mover to help jumpstart the transit-oriented development market at key stations with untapped potential through land acquisition, siting decisions for state agencies and lease renewals, and partnerships with local jurisdictions.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the approved square feet within a quarter mile of rail and light rail stations, the number of new jobs created within a quarter mile of rail and light rail stations, and the percentage of residents—particularly those living in income-restricted homes—living within a half mile of transit stations.

10. Address the connection between transportation and public health. Addressing the connection between transportation and public health will result in more investment in sustainable and active transportation projects, especially in historically disadvantaged communities. This will lead to longer lifespans, lower greenhouse gas emissions, and more equitable health outcomes. Success requires executive orders, agency leadership, and budget allocations. The state will need strong partnerships with the federal delegation and federal agencies, local governments, and public health stakeholders.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Direct MDOT to prioritize public health as a consideration in planning and investment decisions.
- Deploy flexible federal funding to support investments to improve public health outcomes.
- Model air pollution impacts of proposed transportation projects, and make results easily accessible and digestible for the public.
- Increase the number of air monitoring stations that measure levels of criteria pollutants.
- Ensure that initiatives are benefiting all Marylanders, including disadvantaged communities.

Recommended long-term action:

- Explore programs to address health disparities and mitigate air pollution's impacts in communities disrupted by highway construction and in high air pollution areas, including by pursuing funding opportunities in the federal Reconnecting Communities Grant program.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor greenhouse gas emissions from commercial vehicles; the air quality in the state at large, regionally, and in historically disadvantaged communities; the number of air monitoring stations; and the number and intensity of air pollution hotspots.

11. Make Maryland's roads safer. Making the state's roads safer will result in more sustainable transportation, an increase in active transportation users, and safer driving, which will lead to fewer traffic deaths and fatalities, and lower greenhouse gas emissions. Success requires General Assembly actions, executive orders, agency leadership, task forces, and budget allocations. The state will need strong partnerships with law enforcement, local governments, and the General Assembly.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Encourage local governments to direct revenues from automated traffic enforcement fines to maintain and build complete streets and Vision Zero infrastructure to ensure safe access for pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders to cross streets, walk to retail areas, and travel to work.
- Prioritize projects that reduce the likelihood of fatalities on the road.
- Provide technical assistance to local governments to implement complete streets infrastructure, which are designed and operated to allow for safe and comfortable use by all users, by flexing federal Transportation Alternative Program funds.
- Enforce distracted driving laws and improve citation process for offenders.
- Require the State Highway Administration to conduct safety assessments and create action plans for the most dangerous state highway corridors.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Streamline state permitting processes for bike/pedestrian projects.
- Hire bike/pedestrian planners at each of the state's highway district offices, as well as at the state DOT headquarters.
- Revise SHA Context Driven guidelines, which offer planning and design resources to practitioners centered on establishing safe and effective transportation, to incorporate Vision Zero goals, and make 25 mph the maximum speed limit for urban centers.

- Support federal efforts to require vehicle manufacturers to include technologies to reduce safety risks to other vehicles and vulnerable road users.
- Enable local jurisdictions to expand automated enforcement for speed and distracted and negligent driving, license suspension or revocation for significant repeat violations, and income-based fines.
- Establish policy that requires complete streets and Vision Zero implementation for state-funded transportation investments.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor traffic fatalities and serious injuries in the state at large, regionally, and in historically disadvantaged communities; pedestrian and cyclist fatalities and serious injuries; and distracted driving citations.

CLEANER MARYLAND TRANSIT

12. Increase the number of electric and other zero-emissions vehicles on the road. Accelerating the adoption of zero-emissions vehicles through expedited construction of vehicle-charging networks and strong tax incentives will greatly increase the likelihood of meeting Maryland’s climate change goals, and build a more equitable foundation for future economic growth. Success requires a whole-of-government approach, and the utilization of policy, investments, and partnerships with public- and private-sector partners. The state will need strong partnerships with the General Assembly, the federal delegation, local government, private and nonprofit developers, and utilities.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Expand the existing tax incentive rebate program to complement the federal zero-emissions tax policies, and establish a state e-bike incentive program.
- Establish a workforce development/training program for registered apprenticeships and organized labor in areas supportive of zero-emissions vehicle deployment in coordination with community colleges and the Department of Labor.
- Coordinate with utilities on expedited approval processes for fleet and individual charging facilities, and incentivize where appropriate.
- Encourage adoption of local building codes that require charging facilities at commercial or multi-family residential properties.
- Create a uniform state charging signage program.
- Propose regulations for a low carbon fuel standard to help reduce emissions from internal combustion light-, medium-, and heavy-duty vehicles, which will be on the road for decades.
- Establish a state plan for public charging locations and financing, while also encouraging localities to partner by region (i.e., Southern Maryland).

Recommended long-term actions:

- Leverage private equity for charging infrastructure build-outs.
- Establish a plan for public-private partnerships.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor zero-emissions vehicle sales, vehicle emissions-reduction rates, and greenhouse gas emissions from single occupancy vehicles.

13. Convert the state’s transit and school bus fleets to zero-emissions technology. Accelerating the electrification of the state and local public transit and school bus fleets will enable Maryland to lead by example and provide a template for private fleets while protecting the health of the state’s most vulnerable populations. Success requires strategies to maximize returns on federal investments and

reform of the state's procurement programs. The state will need strong partnerships with the federal delegation, local governments and local education agencies, and transit agencies.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Establish a new pooled procurement program and strategy for mass purchases of zero-emissions public fleet and transit vehicles.
- Establish a statewide transition plan that facilitates successful state and local government applications for federal grants, including the low-/no-emissions grant program.
- Facilitate statewide pooled procurement for zero-emissions school buses in partnership with local education agencies.
- Prioritize zero-emissions transit and school bus conversion in health-impacted communities.
- Enhance competitiveness of state and local government applications to federal grants by utilizing state resources to match federal dollars.

Recommended long-term action:

- Create a program to subsidize the remaining value on publicly owned buses that could be retired early and traded for new zero-emissions vehicles.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the percentage of fossil fuel vehicles in public transit and school bus fleets; the total number and overall percentage of publicly funded zero-emissions vehicles on the road, including school buses; and the local budget outlays for zero-emissions transit fleet turnover.



UNLOCKING OPPORTUNITY



The Unlocking Opportunity Committee was charged with addressing the challenges faced by Marylanders who struggle to meet their most basic needs and those for whom traditional social and economic structures put them at a disadvantage. It divided into four working groups: (1) Equitable Financial Opportunity; (2) Supporting MBEs; (3) Historically Marginalized Groups; and (4) Legal/Criminal Justice and Incarceration/Reentry.

The Unlocking Opportunity Committee met regularly from late November through January and heard from hundreds of policy experts and residents from around the state. Stakeholder feedback aligned well with the discussions within the committee and helped to provide important context to its work. It is grateful for everyone's participation in its town hall meetings and the submission of policy ideas on the transition's website. Below are just a few illustrative quotes that came from engaged stakeholders.

"Keep your feet on the ground! Visit communities on a regular basis. Listen to the unheard, with an ear to serve. Govern with a mind to assist Marylanders who are willing to contribute in efforts to improve their quality of life."

"Please support small and minority business owners, so that we have a chance to compete for state contracts and grow our businesses."

"I applaud Governor-elect Moore's proposal to create a Baby Bonds program for children from low-wealth households in Maryland."

Significant themes that emerged from the work of the Unlocking Opportunity Committee:

- **Center historically marginalized communities in all decision-making, and proactively and regularly reach out to listen to and learn from these communities.** As Governor Moore often says, the people closest to the problems are closest to the solutions. Unlocking opportunity for Marylanders trapped in a cycle of poverty will require a collaborative effort across state agencies and the nonprofit and private sectors. However, amid this sweeping statewide effort, the state will not achieve the ambitious goal of leaving no Marylander behind unless it uplifts and centers the voices of those most impacted by this work.
- **Examine systems and structures and proactively adjust them to ensure that all Marylanders are supported by the state.** The state must reevaluate the systems and structures in place to better support historically marginalized groups, such as formerly incarcerated individuals, immigrant communities, people with disabilities, and low-income families.

The Unlocking Opportunity Committee was thrilled to see that Governor Moore has set forth a plan to make the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit permanent. Both were recommendations highlighted by the committee to the administration as a critical first move toward ending child poverty in Maryland.

The ideas outlined in the report below, as well the ideas set forth in the other policy reports, have the power to come together to shape a comprehensive plan to address the many barriers facing residents who have traditionally been left behind.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

EQUITABLE FINANCIAL OPPORTUNITY: SUPPORTING MARYLAND FAMILIES

- 1. Use state grants and tax credits to help scale and market alternative financing options for communities of color.** Increasing access to state and federal grants, and conducting outreach activities in targeted communities of color, will allow more communities of color to apply for and receive grants and tax credits. The result will be improved financial health for Maryland communities of color. The Governor's Grants Office and the Office of Minority Affairs should partner to develop programming that increases access and provides training to communities of color. Success requires private-public partnerships and engagement with nonprofit organizations led by people of color.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Evaluate current programs and rates of access across sectors, and identify barriers that prevent communities of color from accessing key programs.
- Develop a statewide strategic plan around how the state government can assist communities of color in accessing and maintaining available grants and tax credits.
- Develop training and technical assistance programs focused on helping communities of color access grants and tax credit programs.
- Leverage technology (i.e., websites, common applications, online submissions, streamlined approval processes) to make it easier to research, apply for, and receive grants and tax credits.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the number of applications made by people of color for state grants; the number of grants approved for people of color; website traffic (independent IP addresses by zip code) for state web-based resources targeting communities of color; and the number of targeted outreach efforts.

- 2. Increase diversity on corporate and nonprofit boards for companies and nonprofits incorporated in Maryland.** Tracking and financially incentivizing corporations and nonprofits to diversify their boards will allow diverse candidates to be selected, giving board members a wider range of lived experiences, knowledge, and skills. As a result, businesses and nonprofits will experience greater success and implement more equitable policies and practices that drive just outcomes for their employees and the people they serve. To be successful, Maryland should study effective state policies to promote board diversity, examine procurement policy, and partner with the legislature to pass new laws and partner with the Comptroller's office, the Secretary of State, and the Secretary of Commerce on this initiative.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Review the current Maryland available funding incentives (i.e., tax credits, grants, loans, loan guarantees, venture capital, training services, etc.) for small, minority, and women-owned businesses and offer additional incentives if they also meet board diversity requirements.
- Develop an education campaign that provides organizational leaders access to training resources focused on perpetuating diversity, equity, and inclusion as well as conditions for belonging on diverse boards.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Create a state-level corporate certification program (similar to the federal Small Business Administration 8(a) certification) that provides financial and procurement incentives in the form of tax credits, set-asides, and sole-source contracts to corporations whose boards or ownership have a majority of individuals from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

- Create a nonprofit certification program that provides financial incentives in the form of grants to nonprofit organizations whose boards have a majority of individuals from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the percentage of corporations and nonprofits with a majority of board members coming from socially or economically disadvantaged backgrounds and the number of set-asides and sole-source contracts to corporations certified as meeting diversity goals.

3. **Work with the General Assembly to expand the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC) to make them permanent.** Making the EITC and CTC permanent, and increasing outreach efforts to ensure all eligible families receive the benefit, will allow more low- to moderate-income individuals and families to achieve economic security. Today around 20% of EITC-eligible Marylanders do not claim the credit. These households are missing out on funds that could lift them out of poverty. By making these benefits permanent and improving outreach, more families will have the resources they need to thrive. Success requires partnership with the General Assembly to ensure pertinent legislation passes and budgetary resources are allocated to fund these initiatives. The state must also work with federal partners to maximize federal investment in children in Maryland and partner with the Comptroller and grassroots community and advocacy groups to ensure all eligible families are able to access these benefits.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Support legislation to make the 2021 expansions of Maryland’s EITC permanent. Legislation should provide a 100% match of the federal credit for single filers unable to claim dependents; eliminate the cap on benefits for single filers without children; and provide a 45% match of the federal credit for filers claiming dependents.
- Make Maryland’s CTC permanent and expand the credit so it reaches more families. Legislation should, at a minimum, extend eligibility to all children under 6 years old; increase income eligibility to \$15,000 or less; eliminate the requirement that a taxpayer reduce the value of the credit by the amount of the federal CTC claimed; and make the credit permanent.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Support EITC and CTC outreach to ensure every eligible individual and family receives these benefits.
- Create a stronger Child Tax Credit to ensure that very low-income families that previously received no credit or a small partial credit are eligible for the full credit. Adjustments should include making the credit available for families with income under \$25,000, up from the currently proposed \$15,000 and the previous \$6,000 limit; increase age limits and remove reductions based on other available credits.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the number of families receiving the child tax credit; the number of children living in poverty; and Maryland’s EITC participation rate.

4. **Immediately expand SNAP eligibility to reach more families and increase equitable access to nutritious food options.** Working with the Secretary of Human Services and other state and federal partners to expand eligibility guidelines for SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) will give more Marylanders secure access to food benefits and decrease food insecurity. Also, developing incentives, programs, and strategies to eliminate food deserts—and ensuring all communities have access to and can afford healthy, fresh food near where they live—will improve the health and well-being of families, reduce food loss and waste, reduce hunger, and decrease carbon emissions.

Success requires legislative action, budgetary allocations, public-private partnerships with companies and nonprofits, and robust incentive programs. The Department of Human Services will have to work with federal partners, the Secretary of Budget and Management, and leaders of grassroots organizations based in communities in need to successfully expand access to nutritious food.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Expand the definition of “low income” family.
- Look at the families impacted by benefits fraud and develop mechanisms to reimburse families.
- Conduct a statewide assessment to identify communities that have limited access to nutritious food as well as a comprehensive map of existing food programs including suppliers and distributors. Develop an awareness campaign to increase access to existing resources.
- Create a comprehensive assessment of the effectiveness of existing food distribution programs, and develop mechanisms for sharing lessons learned from the most impactful initiatives from across the state.
- Financially incentivize grocery stores and urban farms to establish themselves in food deserts.
- Allow SNAP beneficiaries to use their benefits to purchase fresh food at farmers markets.
- Connect with benefit recipients and advocacy groups to learn more about how services can be improved.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Expand the Department of Human Services’ Restaurant Meals Program to allow more elderly, homeless, and disabled SNAP recipients to use their benefits for prepared or hot food from more restaurants and delis.
- Launch a statewide campaign to increase awareness of all nutritional support programs.
- Create a coalition of food rescue operations to source food from local farms, groceries, restaurants, and food distributors, and systematize donations to food banks and other distribution centers to reduce hunger and food waste.
- Provide incentives to modernize the local delivery fleet for suppliers and distributors for the express purpose of delivering food into targeted areas.
- Provide additional financial incentives for Black-owned food sources.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the number of households eligible for SNAP benefits; the number of restaurants offering food services to individuals with limited mobility; the percentage of Marylanders who are food insecure; the number of food deserts; and the amount of food loss and food waste.

5. **Invest in the future of low-income children from birth.** Expanding WIC program eligibility, making child care more affordable, providing free preschool for all children in need, making the EITC and the CTC permanent, and starting a savings bond program for low-income children will allow low-income children and their families to have the support they need to thrive. As a result, babies will be born healthier; children will be better prepared when they enter school; and they will have resources to better themselves once they turn 18. The newly created Governor’s Office for Children can be a leader and coalition builder in this space, working with the Department of Health, the Maryland State Department of Education, the Department of Human Services, the Department of Management and Budget, the General Assembly, local government partners, and grassroots organizations toward a common goal of ending child poverty in Maryland.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Declare a gubernatorial goal of ending child poverty.
- Make the EITC extension permanent and expand the CTC to reach more families.
- Increase funding for the Maryland Program on Temporary Cash Assistance for families.
- Expand early child care programs, and expand the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit to allow more families flexibility in how they return to work.
- Explore strategies to maximize state resources available to support investment in low-income children from birth including baby bonds.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Expand the Blueprint for Maryland's Future pre-K program for every 3- and 4-year-old in need.
- Enable state agencies to share data and cross-enroll to support a no-wrong-door approach to benefits.
- Develop a universal application process for low-income families eligible for multiple benefits.
- Expand WIC eligibility to reach more pregnant women, and expand the types of food available to include nutritious food for those who suffer from food allergies.
- Expand inclusive, high-quality child care that is affordable.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor childhood poverty rates; the percentage of students enrolled in high-quality childcare and pre-K; and SNAP, EITC, and WIC eligibility rates.

- 6. Provide support to Marylanders whose credit and economic prospects are disproportionately affected by student loan debt.** Exploring a variety of methods to support individuals who are being negatively impacted by student loan debt, and developing strategies to prevent future generations from taking on too much debt, will reduce Marylander's student loan debt and increase people's capacity to build appreciable assets. The Governor's team should partner with the Department of Budget and Management, the Maryland Higher Education Commission, the Comptroller's office, and the legislature to pass legislation, allocate funds, and dedicate staff to implement solutions to these challenging issues.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Expand Maryland's Student Loan Debt Relief Tax Credit Program.
- Explore the creation of a State Student Loan Refinancing Authority to allow the state to issue loans and refinance high-interest private debt.
- Provide access to free, professional student loan debt counseling.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Develop homeownership pathways that provide a standard interest rate at a reduced down payment for individuals with certain student debt-to-income ratios.
- Create a statewide student loan forgiveness program for those in public service sectors such as education, health care, and public safety, as well as low-income families.
- Provide a service year option to ensure young people have alternative paths to college and career and can earn financial support for their college or career training.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the percentage of Marylanders who successfully consolidated their student loan debt through the state; the percentage of qualifying Marylanders who purchase a home utilizing the reduced down payment plan program; and participation rates in the student loan forgiveness program.

EQUITABLE FINANCIAL OPPORTUNITY: SUPPORTING MBES

7. **Hold vendors and agencies accountable to MBE goals by streamlining and modernizing processes, and ensure procurement agencies reach their goals for investing in MBE contracts.** Developing an effective method for tracking Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) spend, and incentivizing agencies to reach MBE goals while holding them accountable if they fail to reach such goals, will create more opportunities for MBE-certified companies to obtain contracting opportunities. This will result in greater MBE investment and increases in MBEs' qualifications, financial wherewithal, and competitiveness. These actions can be accomplished through executive action, agency-led decisions, and public and private partnerships.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Work with the Comptroller to require each agency to post information on their MBE spend versus actual goal and update this publicly available information every 45 days.
- Require each agency to publish a business plan for increasing opportunities for both disadvantaged communities and MBE spend.
- Properly staff the Governor's Office of Small, Minority, and Women Business Affairs to ensure implementation of statutory and regulatory requirements of the state's MBE program.
- Require agencies and associated departments to meet regularly with MBE-owned businesses to discuss present or pipeline opportunities for potential partnership.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Develop a uniform contract scoring system that rewards contract awardees that have previously met MBE goals and reduces scores for awardees that previously failed to meet MBE goals.
- Hold agencies accountable by creating budgetary consequences for agencies that failed to meet annual MBE spends without an executive waiver.
- Ensure all MBE waiver requests are subject to strict scrutiny, and that documented proof of underlying efforts are provided before waivers are granted.
- Require each agency/department to include a clawback provision in any state-awarded contract that mandates the named awardee to return a percentage of contract award if that awardee fails to satisfy MBE goals in the contract.
- Create a statute that requires significant specific investments through government contracts/awards in historically marginalized communities.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the state percentage of compliance for each reporting obligation and agencies spend on MBEs as compared to their goals. It will also need to quantify both dollars recovered from contractual noncompliance and the number of MBE waivers (the lower the better).

8. **Ensure MBE owners know what resources are available to them, and provide MBEs with mentoring and technical assistance.** Investing in Minority Business Enterprises (MBEs), both financially and through education and technical support, will increase their capability to obtain state awards and become more competitive. With a strategic investment in MBEs, Maryland will be more capable of reaching its 29% set-aside goal and build a more equitable economy. Success requires allocating additional funds toward these educational initiatives and targeted programs, providing clear executive guidance to agencies, and working with agencies to shift their policies and practices to support MBEs.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Translate and publish in Spanish all SBE- and MBE-related information.
- Invest in programs that train, mentor, and create networking opportunities for MBEs.

- Require agencies to hold monthly (or at least quarterly) meetings/forums promoting MBE certification and mentoring programs.
- Increase staff to act as case workers to recruit and assist new/targeted MBEs.
- Promote the statewide registry for mission-driven banks like Community Development Financial Institutions and Minority Depository Institutions to amplify access to capital.
- Create/empower the Governor's Office of Small Minority and Women Business Affairs with oversight authority. This department would be responsible for managing a diversity taskforce, reviewing and reporting on diversity compliance for each agency and department, and overseeing the MBE certification process.
- Ensure MBEs have a fair shot at contracts by cracking down on the use of MBE program waivers.
- Create a matchmaking program for procurement opportunities.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Require MDOT to create an app that allows prospective MBE to understand and initiate the certification process, and that allows prospective contractors looking for MBEs to readily identify certified MBEs by trade and code qualifications.
- Reduce the time it takes for small-business contracts to get paid by accounts-receivable services.
- Create incentives for legacy contractors to mentor and/or subcontract with MBEs.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the number of new MBEs; whether there is an increase in MBE registration, participation, and spend; the total dollar value of incentives and grants; the number of participating programs and agencies; and the total contract values arising from matchmaking.

9. **Implement procurement reform.** Improving the state's procurement process in a manner that focuses on reaching its desired MBE spending goal—or legislatively changing that goal to a legally enforceable, mandatory requirement—will unlock opportunities for MBEs to participate meaningfully in the state's multi-billion-dollar annual procurement spend. This will result in the creation of larger, more viable MBEs, decreasing subsidies and increasing revenues for the state. Success requires a blended approach that includes executive orders, agency-led policy decisions, budgetary allocations, public and private partnerships, and legislative changes.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Conduct a survey of MBE/WBEs to understand pain points in current procurement processes and benchmark current metrics.
- Require agencies/departments to meet regularly with MBE-owned businesses to discuss present or pipeline opportunities for potential partnership.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Provide startup capital, bonding, and contract awards to increase financial MBEs' access to opportunity.
- Require that specific DBE/MBE participation goals be included in state requests for quotes/requests for proposals, be part of any final score, and be part of a contract award.
- Unbundle any state award exceeding \$20 million so that MBEs can compete in the RFQ/RFP process.
- Enact facially neutral legislation that requires opportunities for historically marginalized communities.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor new partnerships, capital created, and participating agencies.

HISTORICALLY MARGINALIZED GROUPS

10. Center state government on the needs of all Marylanders, specifically the needs of historically marginalized groups, and build a more equitable future where every Marylander can thrive.

Intentionally and proactively implementing, adjusting, and refining policies that impact historically marginalized communities will provide all Marylanders more opportunities to succeed and truly create a state that leaves no one behind. To achieve this, the Governor's office, state agencies, and all policymakers must take bold action to create a coordinated approach that ensures all programs, policies, and practices reflect and support historically marginalized groups. The state must bring an equity and justice lens, and focus on systemic changes to state agencies and offices.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Establish a cabinet-level Department of Inclusion and Engagement and corresponding budget, responsible for better coordination and collaboration among and within state agencies. Include the Office of Community Initiatives within this department. This department will be responsible for spearheading the “leave no one behind” agenda to ensure statewide leadership addresses the needs of marginalized communities.
- Conduct a gap analysis and develop a strategic plan to improve agency standards for collecting data about program use and outcomes, disaggregated by race and ethnicity, age, disability status, gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation.
- Require each state agency to develop a framework and performance measures that address equity for all marginalized communities in conjunction with stakeholders. Develop a framework similar to “state stat” where this data is collected, reported, and acted upon.
- Develop governmentwide standards for data collection including the use of tools that are nationally recognized or peer reviewed.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Publicly report data and hold agencies accountable.
- Support and fund the Department of Legislative Services to write more Racial Equity Impact Notes for all legislation, not just related to criminal justice.
- Require equity impact analysis of all state agency policies.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the implementation of annual reports on progress; agency reports at the end of 2023 on metrics and measures, how they were developed, and if they are nationally recognized or peer reviewed; implementation of the Department of Coordination and Engagement and the hiring of a Secretary; and the percentage of people from historically marginalized communities who are engaged with policy development.

11. Prioritize accessible, inclusive government, and actively work to dismantle any barriers that prevent engagement by historically marginalized communities.

Prioritizing accessible, inclusive state government, and actively working to dismantle any barriers that prevent engagement by historically marginalized communities, will enable all Marylanders to access what state agencies offer. This will allow state agencies to better understand and respond in a culturally and linguistically competent way. To make Maryland a more equitable and inclusive place where people are empowered to help shape laws, policies, and programs that affect them, the state must ensure historically marginalized communities feel supported, and have the opportunity for real engagement and access to information and resources. Success requires strong partnerships with local agencies, community-based organizations, legislative caucuses, accessibility and plain language experts, and other subject matter experts.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Declare the importance of accessible, inclusive government, and announce plans to do an assessment of the state’s capacity, needs, and resources to implement best practices, and make all state websites and written documents truly accessible, including the use of plain language standards.
- Direct state agencies and offices to proactively engage with marginalized communities, and develop an equity and intersectionality framework and accountability measures with stakeholders and under the direction of the new Department of Inclusion and Engagement.
- Direct agencies to develop program and policy enhancements that partner with the Office of Minority Affairs, boards and commissions, and stakeholders for historically marginalized groups.
- Pilot training for state agency leaders and staff about the needs of historically marginalized communities, diversity, cultural and linguistic competency (cultural humility), and trauma-informed policies and practices.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Require all state agencies and state offices to use a translation line, and offer applications for services and supports in multiple languages.
- Propose a rule or legislation that implements the actions needed to make all state websites and materials accessible, requires all state websites and materials in plain language and different languages, and ensure accessibility compliance.
- Add a stipend for participation on state boards and commissions.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor that all state websites and materials are in plain language, other languages, and accessible; whether more Marylanders, especially those from historically marginalized communities, report having the information they need and want from the state government; and whether all administration leadership, state agency secretaries, other cabinet level leadership, and agency heads are receiving training on the needs of historically marginalized communities, diversity, cultural and linguistic competency (cultural humility), and trauma-informed policies and practices.

12. Intentionally and proactively create and improve services and supports for seniors, pursue Maryland as an age-friendly state, and develop a master plan for aging. Intentionally and proactively creating and improving services and support for seniors will allow them to age comfortably and with dignity. Maryland must act swiftly to offer seniors the support they need to age in place, and to make the state an age-friendly place to live. Success requires partnerships with the Departments of Health and Aging, AARP-Maryland, local commissions on aging, legislators, advocacy organizations, home health care providers, state associations, and senior citizens.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Establish an Age-Friendly Governor’s Council for coordination and implementation and declare Maryland to be an age-friendly state.
- Announce that the Secretary of the Department of Aging will work with stakeholders to develop a Master Plan for Aging.
- Direct the Department of Aging to expend all ARPA funds and the Department of Health to implement the legislation that reduces wait lists for home and community-based services for seniors.
- Increase reimbursement rates, and continue to focus on improving the long-term care workforce.

Recommended long-term action:

- Address elder abuse by developing partnerships for training and outreach with private and public entities.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor increases in services and supports accessed by seniors; new programs developed to train individuals who work with older Marylanders to recognize elder abuse; the number of financial advisors and the law enforcement communities trained every year; and the number of new partnerships for training and outreach developed annually.

- 13. Improve the lives of Maryland's veterans and military families.** Improving access to care, increasing support, and providing more opportunities to veterans, especially those from historically marginalized communities, will make Maryland a desirable location for veterans to live and thrive. To achieve this, Maryland must invest in creative ways to meet the department's current mission and expand access to benefits by focusing efforts on better coordination and outreach, creating more incentives for veterans, and providing better financial support to veterans and their families. Additionally, Maryland must elevate veterans as drivers of economic activity here in the state of Maryland and address challenges for military families. Success requires developing and strengthening critical partnerships with state agencies, county executives, the federal Department of Veteran Affairs, the Maryland Association of Counties, the National Association of County Veterans Service Officers, legislators, military coalitions, and veterans.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Enhance and fund the Department of Veterans Affairs to build services, expand the workforce, and hire more veteran service officers throughout Maryland.
- Establish County Veteran Service Officers.
- Appoint someone to coordinate veteran services among state agencies.
- Create and fund an Office of Diversity within the Department of Veteran Affairs with program directors/navigators for each marginalized group of veterans, and staff the Office of Outreach to travel throughout Maryland and conduct outreach.
- Create an Assistant Secretary or Director of Intergovernmental Affairs and Strategic Partnerships to strengthen relationships with federal government, as well as legislative and nonprofit partners, to identify new resources for Maryland veterans and their families.
- Eliminate tax on military pensions.
- Develop policies, procedures, and funding so that the Veterans Trust Fund helps those with qualifying hardships.
- Enable veteran spouses to be buried in Maryland veteran cemeteries at no cost.
- Identify ways to support the 50,000 veteran-owned small businesses that exist in the state, making it easier for them to enter into contracts with the state, and building pathways for veterans to assume roles in both Maryland state government and the private sector.
- Develop a strategic plan to support military families with a particular focus on spouses, who play a vital role in supporting service members and veterans.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Build additional veterans' homes, with dedicated mental health services in each region of the state.
- Leverage and align with the federal initiative to end veteran homelessness.
- Expand the property tax exemption for veterans with service-connected disabilities by lowering the percentage from 100% service-connected disability to 80% or 90%.
- Enhance and leverage vocational rehab programs.

- Expand education opportunities for dependents of 100% connected veterans so they can go to state schools for free.
- Improve license portability and reciprocity for military spouses with critical skills (e.g., nursing) and fast track licensing for transitioning service members with valuable skills (e.g., corpsman, nurses, truck drivers) to ease the burden for veterans and military families.
- Increase the number of veteran-owned business enterprises (VBEs) in the state, increase their share of Maryland state contracts, and highlight and increase veteran and military spouse hiring by private employers across the state.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the number of claims processed a year; the number of veterans that have access to, and received, the benefits they earned; and whether there have been decreases in barriers and inefficiencies in serving veterans, resulting in an increase in the number of veterans who get the services and support they need (attainment of Maryland state contract goal of 1% for VBEs).

14. Increase the well-being of LGBTQIA+ Marylanders, and ensure Maryland is a place they can thrive.

Implementing policies, programs, and laws that promote the well-being of and advance the rights of Maryland's LGBTQIA+ community will allow the LGBTQIA+ community to have more opportunity to prosper and thrive. To achieve this, the state should proactively and intentionally engage the LGBTQIA+ community in the process, and stand as a brick wall against any anti-LGBTQIA+ legislation or policies. In particular, Maryland should expand laws, practices, and funding that increase access to health care and other services, abolish laws that disproportionately affect the community, and build relationships with organizations that represent the Maryland LGBTQIA+ community. To make sure people receive adequate and appropriate services and are not disproportionately criminalized, Maryland must partner with the LGBTQIA+ community, the Department of Health, providers who specialize in transgender health care, advocates, and other community-based organizations led by members of the LGBTQIA+ community.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Support and help pass legislation that expands and modernizes policy about gender-affirming treatment and brings Maryland into compliance with federal Medicaid guidelines, such as the Trans Health Equity Act.
- Create a fund for the Department of Health to pay qualified health care organizations with specialized knowledge of gender-affirmative health care to train other providers.
- Introduce an Executive Order to guarantee the safety of trans people, their families, and providers. Create public-private partnerships with community-led organizations to help schools across Maryland implement the Inclusive Schools Act.
- Expand and fund more staff to support and implement the recommendations of the LGBTQ+ Commission.
- Support and help pass legislation that requires a new birth certificate be issued when someone wants to change their gender designation.
- Bring Vital Records policy in line with ID policy for gender markers at the Motor Vehicle Administration and federal policy.
- Abolish the laws that disproportionately criminalize HIV transmission.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Welcome families, businesses, and medical and mental health care providers from states enacting homophobic and transphobic social agendas.
- Establish working relationships with Maryland LGBTQIA+ organizations, including those led by LGBTQIA+ Marylanders.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor whether people with HIV are less stigmatized and better supported; whether transgender people are getting the medically necessary gender-affirmative treatments they need and want; whether there is an increase in accessible clinics that offer medically necessary gender-affirmative care; whether there is an increase in the number of partnerships with LGBTQIA+ organizations; whether there is an increase in the number of providers who receive training by community-based organizations on how to respectfully support transgender patients through policies and practices; and whether schools are in compliance with the Inclusive Schools Act.

- 15. Build a more inclusive Maryland for people with disabilities.** Investing in inclusive, accessible housing, improving and expanding transportation options, and increasing employment opportunities for people with disabilities will help promote economic mobility for all Marylanders, including people with disabilities. To address the disproportionately high unemployment rates for people with disabilities, the state should be a model employer and increase individualized, competitive, integrated employment. To better support people with disabilities, the Governor’s office should partner with the Departments of Disabilities, Housing and Community Development, the Maryland Department of Transportation, the Division of Rehabilitation Services, the Maryland Inclusive Housing Corporation, community organizations and providers, businesses, people with disabilities, and other key stakeholders.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Build the capacity of the Division of Rehabilitation Services.
- Fund more inclusive, accessible housing and home modifications.
- Create mechanisms to make Maryland a model employer, and increase hiring of state employees with disabilities.
- Conduct a comprehensive analysis of the state’s hiring process, contracts, and procurement preferences.
- Direct MDOT to create policy and funds to address the specific issues faced by people who rely on Paratransit (e.g., service disruption), and build capacity of the Paratransit system and promote better operations so people get where they need to go in a timely fashion.
- Work with the Maryland Department of Housing and local partners to address the lack of inclusive, affordable, accessible housing.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Make recommendations on how to improve individualized, integrated, and competitive employment in state government for people with disabilities.
- Replicate the model that Maryland establishes for employment of people with disabilities, including training and support, to meet the needs of businesses.
- Invest in housing along with services and supports that people need to live and thrive in their communities.
- Improve transportation options by expanding Maryland’s MobilityLink/Paratransit services and making sure transit reaches more places.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor hiring data showing the number of people with disabilities employed by the state, best practices implemented by the state, the number of partnerships with businesses that hire people with disabilities, and transportation and housing options for people with disabilities.

16. Increase and improve services and support for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families to live, learn, work, and play alongside Marylanders without disabilities.

Focusing on what people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families need to live, learn, work, and play in their communities will create a more equitable and inclusive Maryland where everyone can thrive. All Marylanders deserve high-quality services and support; therefore, the state should take bold steps to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Department of Health, the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA), as well as other state agencies and offices that provide services and support to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). To make this happen, Maryland must improve communication and engagement with people with IDD, their families, and major advocacy organizations, and support the community provider agencies that support people with IDD at home, in the community, and at work. Successful implementation requires better partnerships with Maryland's disability rights and advocacy organizations, the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Coalition, people with IDD, their families, and providers.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Direct DDA leadership to effectively collaborate with community partners; enhance communication efforts; and develop and implement more effective, efficient, and flexible state processes.
- Fund and secure additional waiver slots.
- Finalize the rate-setting process, and support full funding of the rates for DDA services.
- Reevaluate half-completed initiatives currently underway, prioritize the most important, and focus on those in order to reach a positive completed outcome.
- Develop and implement a plan to close all current institutions for people with IDD so everyone has the opportunity to live in the community.
- Address the lack of nursing services to support people who live in the community.

Recommended long-term action:

- Address the direct support professional workforce crisis to provide high-quality support for people who currently use services and those who are waiting for services.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor provider rates and wages for the direct support workforce, as well as the growth in the direct support professional workforce and the number of people with IDD getting the services and support they need.

17. Create fair and equitable pathways to integrate immigrant communities. Developing and implementing policies and practices that ensure immigrant families are treated with dignity and respect, receive the health care they need, and have access to all the services and supports that the state offers will keep immigrant families intact and ensure they thrive in Maryland. Success requires strong partnerships with legislators, legislative caucuses, state agencies, local government executives, advocates, community organizations, health care providers, and hospitals.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Staff and fund programming for the Office of Immigrant Affairs.
- Develop a strategic plan focused on how the state government can better support immigrants. This plan should address a variety of issues including environmental issues impacting the health of immigrant communities, the lack of services and support for immigrants who get bused into Maryland, the coordination of services and supports across agencies, and intersectionality with other marginalized communities.
- Increase the number of certified translators and the number of Spanish-speaking health care providers and personnel in hospitals.

- Require all state agencies to make applications for eligibility programs available in Spanish and other languages.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Require language access plans by state agencies and offices, as well as public health providers.
- Create a centralized hotline or reporting system for complaints about language access.
- Pilot a program with funding to local jurisdictions to report and remedy language access issues.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the strategic plan developed and implemented by the Office of Immigrant Affairs, and track the economic well-being of immigrant families.

LEGAL/CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND INCARCERATION/REENTRY

18. Support the legalization of cannabis, address historic racial and social inequities related to enforcement, and ensure the legal market is implemented equitably. Prioritizing equal opportunity and equitable resources in support of cannabis legalization will create a fair and equitable cannabis industry that benefits all Marylanders. As a result, Marylanders will have access to a thriving cannabis industry that unlocks opportunities for entrepreneurship and job creation, while also promoting restorative justice for communities disproportionately affected by the criminalization of cannabis. This includes taking actions to address historic racial and social inequities related to enforcement and ensuring equity in the implementation of the legal market. Success requires strong partnerships with the Attorney General, the General Assembly, the Maryland Congressional Delegation, local elected officials, community members, and the established cannabis industry.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Advocate for “Day 1 Equity” by supporting legislation that includes equal opportunities and equitable resources for all qualified equity operators/licensees.
- Pardon cannabis-only possession and possession with the intent to distribute (PWID) convictions.
- Make filing for expungement a part of the pardon process.
- Fully fund a standalone Cannabis Commission that oversees medical and adult-use cannabis programs and point equity-focused commission members and an executive director.
- Monitor rollout to ensure fairness and equity.
- Adjust policies to permit state employees, including first responders, to consume cannabis in accordance with state laws without facing disciplinary action.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Monitor and evaluate the impact of cannabis legalization and regulation on marginalized communities, and make adjustments as necessary to ensure that equity is being promoted and maintained.
- Ensure Maryland is prepared for interstate commerce and/or federal legalization.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor equitable participation in the industry (i.e., licensing, ownership, and employment rates broken out by demographics); the percentage of revenue invested into communities disproportionately impacted by cannabis criminalization; and whether cannabis businesses are evenly distributed across different neighborhoods and communities.

19. Ensure revenue generated from the legal cannabis industry helps to address past harms of criminalization. Prioritizing the use of revenue from the legal cannabis industry for restorative justice efforts for communities disproportionately affected by prohibition will address past harms of cannabis criminalization and mitigate the negative impacts of targeted policing and the destruction of families and communities by mass incarceration. By redirecting revenue toward these efforts, the state can address the systemic inequalities and injustices that have been perpetuated by targeted policing practices, particularly those related to cannabis criminalization. Strong partnerships will be needed with key stakeholders such as the General Assembly, the State Treasurer and Comptroller, local elected officials, community members, and established cannabis industry leaders.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Establish a “community benefits agreement” framework that requires larger cannabis businesses to invest a percentage of their revenue into community reinvestment initiatives.
- Collaborate with community organizations and advocacy groups to increase civic engagement and participation in the cannabis industry by residents from communities disproportionately impacted by criminalization.
- Establishing a “community reinvestment board” made up of representatives from impacted communities to oversee the distribution and use of cannabis tax revenue for community reinvestment initiatives.
- Direct a percentage of revenue to Historically Black Colleges and Universities to create programs that provide training to the next generations of cannabis entrepreneurs and workforce.
- Create a Qualified Equity Operator Fund (Social Equity Fund).
- Fund additional substance abuse disorder treatment and prevention centers in communities most harmed by the war on drugs.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Study the feasibility of direct payments to individuals personally impacted by subjective enforcement.
- Invest in community-led land trusts and community ownership models.
- Use revenue to provide resources and support to fund job training and workforce development programs, expungement clinics, development of community-owned cannabis businesses, and cooperatives in communities that have been historically affected by discriminatory cannabis enforcement.
- Develop and implement an “impact assessment” framework to track and measure the effectiveness of community reinvestment initiatives over time.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the percentage of cannabis tax revenue allocated to community reinvestment programs and initiatives and the number of individuals and businesses from disproportionately impacted communities that receive licenses and/or financial assistance through these programs.

20. Combat the economic consequences of interactions with law enforcement and the criminal justice system. Combating the economic consequences of interactions with law enforcement and the criminal justice system will allow individuals who have been impacted by these interactions to have increased economic stability and opportunities. This, in turn, will lead to reduced recidivism and improved overall community well-being. Success requires strong partnerships with the Attorney General and other criminal justice system stakeholders, the General Assembly, community-based organizations, advocacy groups, employers, and most importantly, individuals and families impacted by interactions with law enforcement and the criminal justice system.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Create a financial assistance program to help individuals and families cover the costs of bail, fines, and legal fees.
- Increase funding for public defender’s offices and legal aid clinics to ensure that low-income individuals have access to legal representation.
- Implement a “Fair Chance Hiring” initiative that provides incentives to employers who hire individuals with criminal records.
- Develop a community-based restorative justice program to provide mediation and other forms of alternative dispute resolution.
- Invest in a program to provide mental health and substance abuse treatment to individuals affected by the criminal justice system.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Create a community-driven process for creating “community-based restorative justice programs” that provide alternatives to traditional criminal justice system punishment.
- Create a fund to provide financial compensation for those who have been wrongfully convicted and/or experienced police misconduct.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the percentage of individuals with past criminal convictions who are able to secure employment after the policy is implemented; the income levels of individuals with past criminal convictions; and the poverty rate of individuals with past criminal convictions before and after the policy is implemented.

21. Implement probation and parole reform with a focus on successful reentry. Evaluating and improving existing risk assessment tools, focusing parole and probation officers on the highest-risk individuals, and increasing the resources available to the Division of Parole and Probation will allow a dramatic reduction in recidivism rates. This will result in all Marylanders, especially those affected by generational and systemic inequalities, being able to live free of the fear of violent crime. Success requires strong partnerships among the executive branch, the General Assembly, community-based organizations, and the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Issue amnesty on fees and charges for probation and parole administered by the Department of Parole and Probation through an executive order.
- Pilot a co-location strategy for parole and probation officers within a community-based organization or program.
- Focus parole and probation officers’ time on the highest risk individuals and those most likely to reoffend.
- Increase access to gender-specific programs including fully funding a community-based women’s pre-release center and programming.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Create a community repair and reinvestment fund to invest in communities impacted by mass incarceration.
- Incentivize probation officers to live within the jurisdiction they serve.
- Ensure each vacancy in the Department of Parole and Probation is filled, and officers have the training and resources needed to effectively assist individuals within their caseload.

22. Expand pretrial service programs across the state. Expanding pretrial service programs will allow individuals who are presumed innocent and identified as a low risk to their community to no longer be exposed to the long-term negative effects of incarceration. This will result in historically marginalized, low-resourced communities experiencing greater stability and less trauma. Further, if low-risk offenders are no longer detained while awaiting trial, the state will incur less costs associated with their detention, and these savings can be invested in community-based interventions that serve the reentry population. Success requires increased funding, legislative changes to better protect those accused of a crime, and a strategic plan to reinvest the resources saved by reform back into the community.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Increase funding for the Maryland Office of Public Defender (OPD) to ensure that Marylanders have adequate access and representation in pretrial service programs.
- Refocus pretrial detention on violent offenders only.
- Fund and resource pretrial programs to ensure that once low-risk individuals are released into the community, their risk of re-offense is minimized, and the likelihood of their appearing in court is maximized.

Recommended long-term action:

- Increase technological resources to connect individuals to pretrial services.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor recidivism rates and the pretrial jail population.

23. Provide for a restorative justice system and reform sentencing laws for juveniles. Providing a restorative justice system and reforming sentencing laws for juveniles will protect them from situations in which they make poor decisions with long-term consequences they are unable to fully understand at their developmental age. This will result in limiting juveniles' exposure to the criminal justice system, reducing disparities between Black and white youth, and ultimately reducing criminality in the adult population. Success requires working with legislators to pass laws that reform juvenile sentencing, building capacity of juvenile diversion programs in the state, and strengthening the ability of the juvenile services department to embed restorative justice approaches in all of its work.

Recommended short-term actions:

- End automatic charging of youths as adults.
- Increase access to juvenile diversion programs such as the program run by the National Guard.
- Support the passage of, and then implement, a new law to make sure any person, especially a minor, is not charged as a criminal when forced into prostitution by human traffickers.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Invest in wraparound services in schools and out-of-school time programs, and increase access to intervention programs.
- Expand the opportunities for restorative services recommended by the Juvenile Justice Reform Council of Maryland, including providing evidenced-based treatment and support services for youth and families, and trauma-informed care for victims and juvenile justice-involved youth.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the rates of recidivism, criminality in the adult population, juvenile involvement with Criminal Justice System and Juvenile Justice System, probation and parole violations that result in reincarceration, average caseload for parole and probation officers, and the number of parole and probation officers.

24. Invest in and improve the reentry process, increase access to employment opportunities upon release from incarceration, and explore effective ways to reduce fee burdens. Implementing fully funded universal reentry services for individuals incarcerated for longer than six months, expanding educational and job-training programs, legislating more impactful expungement reform, and lessening fee burdens for those already suffering from economic inequality will help returning citizens successfully navigate reentry. To ensure success, the state needs strong partnerships among the executive branch, the General Assembly, the Department of Public Safety and Corrections, the Maryland Department of Labor, the Maryland Department of Transportation, the Maryland Department of Health, the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, community-based nonprofits, and the business community.

Recommended short-term actions:

- Legislate more impactful expungement reform to ensure minor nonviolent crimes can be expunged, outreach and engagement are happening, and legal resources are accessible.
- Mandate pre- and post-release educational programming and job-training services.
- Partner with the business community to improve access to job training.
- Provide subsidized public transportation to individuals post-release.
- Dedicate funds to increase access to mental health and substance disorder treatment for returning citizens.
- Ensure individuals who are set to be released from prison have a plan in place at least 60-90 days prior to assist them in identifying stable housing, necessary personal identification(s), the terms of their parole/probation, and access to mental health services.
- Increase set-aside program vouchers for housing, child care, etc.
- Identify which results and recommendations from the Workgroup on Home Detention Monitoring (as revised in SB704 - 2022) are ready for implementation and which need further study.

Recommended long-term actions:

- Reduce the maximum allowable amount of restitution fees.
- Issue a directive that prohibits the Department of Labor from denying access to a professional license solely based on a criminal background.
- Modernize the Maryland Judicial Case Search website to help streamline the expungement process and make updates easily identifiable.
- Sufficiently fund reentry programs.
- Increase coordination between the Department of Public Safety and Corrections and state and local reentry programs to facilitate standardized screening, teach best practices, and implement universal reentry services for all people who are incarcerated for greater than six months.
- Invest 50% of savings from the decrease in jail and prison bed use in community-based organizations that provide mental health and substance disorder treatment and workforce development services.
- Reduce the maximum allowable amount of restitution fees.
- Consolidate home monitoring into a centralized program that oversees statewide administration.
- Support legislation that dictates individuals who are a low risk to their community should be released on recognizance as opposed to being placed on home detention.

Measures of success: The state will need to monitor the percentage of inmates receiving job training prior to release; the percentage of individuals who qualify for a professional state license but are unable to hold one due to a criminal background; the annual number of criminal record expungements; the rate of recidivism, jail/prison bed use; the percentage of home monitoring services consolidated into a centralized program by the end of year two; and the percentage of low-risk individuals released on recognizance by the end of year one.

