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**GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF
CRIME PREVENTION, YOUTH,
AND VICTIM SERVICES**

**Maryland Children's Cabinet Three-Year Plan
2022 Annual Update**

Executive Order 01.01.2020.01 IV C

Larry Hogan
Governor

Boyd K. Rutherford
Lt. Governor

Kunle Adeyemo, Esq.
Executive Director

Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services

Submitted by:
Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services

Contact: Jennifer Krabill
410-697-9241 | Jennifer.Krabill@maryland.gov

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Maryland's Children's Cabinet

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Executive Director
Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services

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Mohammed Choudhury
State Superintendent of Schools

Children's Cabinet Implementation Team

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Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services

Kara Aaenson
Department of Juvenile Services

Denise Conway
Department of Human Services

Dr. Sylvia Lawson
Department of Education

Christian Miele
Department of Disabilities

Dr. Maria Rodowski-Stanco
Department of Health

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Executive Summary

This *Maryland Children's Cabinet Three-Year Plan 2022 Annual Update* (Plan) identifies the priorities that will continue to be advanced by the Children's Cabinet, with support from the Children's Cabinet Interagency Fund, and in collaboration with its member agencies, and other State agencies and community stakeholders to link resources, develop policies, and coordinate service delivery. In coordination with child-serving agencies and community stakeholders, the Children's Cabinet will continue to increase the well-being of Maryland's families to achieve a safer Maryland. Pursuant to Executive Order 01.01.2020.01 IV C, this Plan provides a follow-up to several reports, available on the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services website at <http://gocep.maryland.gov/reports-and-publications/>, to include the [Maryland Children's Cabinet Three-Year Plan 2021 – 2023](#) and the [Maryland Children's Cabinet Three-Year Plan 2021 Annual Update](#) that were submitted in March 2021 and December 2021, respectively.

Maryland's Children's Cabinet

In 1987, the Children's Cabinet was created as the Subcabinet for Children and Youth. It became the Subcabinet for Children, Youth, and Families in 1990. Established by statute in 1993, the Subcabinet worked to improve the structure and organization of State services to children, youth, and families (Chapter 556, Acts of 1993). Authorization for the Subcabinet expired June 30, 2005, and in its place, Governor Ehrlich authorized the Children's Cabinet in June 2005 by [Executive Order 01.01.2005.34](#).¹ The Executive Director of the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services chairs and the office staffs the Children's Cabinet, in accordance with [Executive Order 01.01.2020.01](#).

In its publication, [A Governor's Guide to Children's Cabinets](#), the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices cited the following reasons to create a Children's Cabinet:²

- Develop and implement a shared vision across agencies for improving child and family outcomes.
- Improve the state's economy and prospects for competition in the global marketplace by investing in the education and skills of children, the state's future workforce.
- Foster public awareness of major children's issues.
- Engage new partners in public efforts to serve children and their families.
- Build a long-term commitment to children's issues in the state.

¹ Maryland State Archives. (2020). [Advisory Council to the Children's Cabinet](https://msa.maryland.gov/msa/mdmanual/08conoff/cabinet/html/child.html). Retrieved from <https://msa.maryland.gov/msa/mdmanual/08conoff/cabinet/html/child.html>.

² National Governors Association, Center for Best Practices. (2019). [A Governor's Guide to Children's Cabinets](https://nwi.pdx.edu/pdf/ChildrensCabinet-NatGovernorsAssoc.pdf). Retrieved from <https://nwi.pdx.edu/pdf/ChildrensCabinet-NatGovernorsAssoc.pdf>.

- Foster coordination among stakeholders at the state and local level and empower local decision-makers.
- Produce cost-savings, increase efficiency, and improve service delivery and effectiveness.

One of the primary functions of the Children’s Cabinet is to coordinate the child and family-focused service delivery system by emphasizing prevention, early intervention, and community-based services for all children and families.

Three-Year Plans

In 2015, the Children’s Cabinet outlined its initial plan³ to address issues that threaten economic stability among Maryland’s most vulnerable children, youth, and families. That strategic direction laid the groundwork for a three-year plan⁴ issued in March 2017, that outlined short- and medium-term objectives for programs and services to advance the Children’s Cabinet’s four strategic goals designed to support Governor Hogan’s agenda of economic recovery. In 2019, the Children’s Cabinet included specific priorities in its three-year plan to address cross-agency needs. In its 2021 - 2023 Plan, the Children’s Cabinet identified efforts to address the entire spectrum of child well-being through eight targeted child well-being Results.

Building on the 2021 - 2023 Plan, this annual update continues to support a framework of linking resources, research, and an action plan to develop policies and coordinate service delivery for children and youth to increase child well-being. A key theme for this annual update is to continue to advance efforts that reduce racial and ethnic disparities, mitigate childhood trauma and adverse childhood experiences, and promote strengths-based models with intentionality. Each agency represented in the Children’s Cabinet plays a corresponding role in implementing the strategies necessary to advance the 2021 - 2023 Plan, and is fully-committed to a unified approach to advance the well-being of Maryland’s children, youth, and families.

Framework

For nearly 20 years, the Children’s Cabinet has utilized the Results-Based Accountability™ framework⁵ to focus planning, decision-making, and budgeting on desired Results and Indicators. Through an extensive process involving partnering State agencies and other stakeholders, Maryland chose to focus on eight Results that describe the general well-being of children and families. Those eight Results and the corresponding Indicators have been reviewed over time to ensure relevancy. The most recent review that began in 2019 and concluded in early

³ Governor’s Office for Children. (2013). *Children’s Cabinet 2015 Strategic Direction and Implementation Plan*. Retrieved from https://goc.maryland.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2013/11/CC_Strategic_Plan_FINAL.pdf.

⁴ Governor’s Office for Children. (2015). *Maryland Children’s Cabinet Three-Year Plan - Vision for Cross-Agency Collaboration to Benefit Maryland’s Children, Youth and Families*. Retrieved from <https://goc.maryland.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2015/09/Childrens-Cabinet-Three-Year-Plan-2017-FINAL.pdf>.

⁵ Friedman, Mark. (2005). *Trying Hard is Not Good Enough*. Trafford Publishing, Victoria B.C., Canada.

2020 confirmed the following Results that were ratified by the Children’s Cabinet (*as illustrated below*):

Maryland’s Child Well-Being Results
What We Strive to Achieve

Babies Born Healthy
Healthy Children
Children Enter School Ready to Learn
Children are Successful in School
Youth will Complete School
Youth have Opportunities for Employment or Career Readiness
Families are Economically Stable
Communities are Safe for Children, Youth, and Families

Progress toward these Results is measured by tracking quantifiable proxies for success called Indicators. Currently, the Children’s Cabinet tracks 42 Indicators at the State and jurisdictional level. Indicators are tracked through the Child Well-Being Scorecard, a web-based application that is updated in real-time and available to both decision-makers and the public at large. The Scorecard includes State-level Indicators, as well as performance measures for each program and Local Management Boards funded by the Children’s Cabinet.

In January 2022, the workgroup reconvened to conduct a review of Indicators to ensure viability for demonstrating outcomes for children and youth. Each Indicator was reviewed to determine if data remained accessible for the year in light of the pandemic, which affected data availability, and other issues such as agency staff shortages and website outages due to a ransomware attack at the Maryland Department of Health. Additionally, the workgroup prioritized three potential Indicators of which one, *Substance Exposed Newborns*, was presented to the Children’s Cabinet for a vote and then added under the “Babies Born Healthy” Result area. Factors that were taken into consideration when selecting the Indicator was the availability of data by jurisdiction and if the data could be disaggregated by race and ethnicity. Data for the new Indicator will be available from the Maryland Department of Health’s Maternal Health Division.

In addition, Clear Impact, a consultant for the Children’s Cabinet, is tasked with entering the most recent Indicator data into the Scorecard, including disaggregated data by race/ethnicity. The task, which includes data entry at the state and jurisdiction level, is expected to be completed by December 2022.

The workgroup also established an annual review of the Results and Indicators for data accessibility and viability as well as continuing to explore future data development agendas. A list of the current Results and Indicators can be found online at:

<http://goccp.maryland.gov/score-card-overview/>.

Incorporating the Results-Based Accountability™ framework, the Children’s Cabinet uses the shared language of Results and Indicators to drive decisions about policies, programs, practices, and investments. The process begins with the Results, or conditions of well-being, that the community aspires to achieve. From there, a thoughtful consideration of the Indicator data and the context surrounding them⁶ reveals gaps in services, strengths that can be built on, and opportunities for deeper collaboration among partners, both existing and new. Partners brainstorm what works to address the contributing factors behind these Indicators – both within individual agencies and collectively through the Children’s Cabinet Implementation Team - and to develop a three-year plan. Over the next year, the partners will continue to review changes in Indicator data and adapt as necessary.

Children’s Cabinet Priorities

In 2022, the Children’s Cabinet focused on the following priorities to respond to prevailing cross-agency needs:

- Reducing the impact of parental incarceration on children, youth, families, and communities;
- Reducing youth homelessness;
- Improving outcomes for disconnected/opportunity youth;
- Reducing childhood hunger;
- Increasing opportunities for community-based programs and services for youth (including diversion); and/or
- Preventing out-of-State placements.

The Children’s Cabinet also approved a revision to the *FY 2022 Community Partnership Agreement Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA)* that included three themes or “lenses” to support its collective work regarding: racial and ethnic disparities (R/ED); Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and trauma-informed practices; and research-based practices.⁷ These themes or “lenses” were required of all programs/strategies funded through the Children’s Cabinet Interagency Fund (CCIF) for the fiscal 2022 funding year. Additionally, the juvenile justice diversion priority area was broadened to “increasing opportunities for community-based programs and services” (including but not limited to juvenile justice diversion). This was intended to divert low-risk youth from formal processing into the justice system and/or out-of-home placements.

Although some success has occurred in serving these priority populations, the Children’s Cabinet believes there is an ongoing need to focus on these priorities to ensure long-term well-being for

⁶ For more information, please refer to Clear Impact’s [Turn the Curve Thinking](#) and *Results-Based Accountability Guide*.

⁷ Governor’s Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services. [Children’s Cabinet Interagency Fund \(CCIF\)](#).

Maryland’s children, youth, and families. Below is a discussion of the priorities and the corresponding data that supports the continued focus.

Reduce the Impact of Incarceration on Children, Families, and Communities

According to several studies, parental incarceration is a particularly stigmatizing Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE), disproportionately impacting children of color and children in poverty.⁸ According to Kids Count, the number and percent of Maryland children who had a parent or guardian serve time in jail increased from 45,510 (3%) in 2016 - 2017, to 64,266 (5%) in 2017 - 2018.⁹ This increase is concerning as children of incarcerated parents are more likely to demonstrate anti-social behaviors, particularly in school, and younger children are less likely to be kindergarten-ready. Children of incarcerated parents have higher rates of anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder and can regress verbally.¹⁰ According to Eric Martin, author of the *Hidden Consequences: The Impact of Incarceration on Dependent Children* journal, “children of incarcerated parents face profound and complex threats to their emotional, physical, educational, and financial well-being.”¹¹ He further states that “family members of incarcerated individuals are often referred to as ‘hidden victims’ — victims of the criminal justice system who are neither acknowledged nor given a platform to be heard. These hidden victims receive little personal support and do not benefit from the systemic societal mechanisms generally available to direct crime victims, despite their prevalence and their similarities to direct crime victims.”¹²

The Children’s Cabinet is supportive of interventions that contribute to children and families’ economic and socio-emotional well-being, address barriers to children maintaining a relationship with their parents, family instability, loss of family income and difficulty finding work following release, and trauma.

In State FY 2022, the Children’s Cabinet funded 14 projects with an exclusive focus on reducing the impact of incarceration on children, families, and communities in 10 jurisdictions, totaling \$1.36 million or 12% of the total programmatic funding.

⁸ Andrew Axelson, Samantha Boch. (2019). *A Hidden Epidemic: Parental Incarceration and What To Do When It Affects Your Patients*.

⁹ The Annie E. Casey Foundation, Kids Count Data Center. (2020). [Children Who Had a Parent Who Was Ever Incarcerated in Maryland](#). Retrieved from Kids Count Data Center on October 16, 2020.

¹⁰ Urban Institute. (2008). *Broken Bonds: Understanding and Addressing the Needs of Children with Incarcerated Parents*.

¹¹ Martin, Eric. (2017). [Hidden Consequences: The Impact of Incarceration on Dependent Children](#). NIJ Journal 278.

¹² Raeder, Myrna. (2012). *Making a Better World for Children of Incarcerated Parents*. Family Court Review 50 no. 1: 23-35.

Priority-focused Programs by Jurisdiction:

1. Allegany: HOMEBUILDERS®, Detention Center Program
2. Anne Arundel: Youth Empowerment Services (YES), Behavioral and Emotional Support and Training 2.0 (B.E.S.T.), Black Wall Street, Healing Circles, Brooklyn Park Community of Hope, Systems of Care, Strengthening Families
3. Cecil: Children of Incarcerated Parents
4. Dorchester: Connecting for Success
5. Frederick: Families Impacted by Incarceration Program
6. Harford: Parenting Inside Out, Project SEEK
7. Queen Anne's: Healthy Families, Family Navigation, Achievement Mentoring
8. Somerset: Parenting Skills Development
9. Washington: Family Strong Program
10. Worcester: Building Bridges to Stable Families

Program Highlight: Family Strong Program (Washington County)

This program serves youth and their caregivers with at least one parent currently incarcerated. Services provided to participants include family assessment, case management, referrals to resources and services, quarterly parenting/caregiver classes, and educational workshops that include school readiness and success resources. Partners include Washington County Detention Center, Washington County Day Reporting Center, Washington County Public Schools, Department of Social Services, Bester Community of Hope, and Beacon House. The program has received Children's Cabinet funding since State FY 2018. In State FY 2022, 45 families were served with 97 youth. As a result of this program:

- 87% of school age children participating in the program had increased school attendance since entering the Family Strong Program.
- 68% of participants that were served reported an improved attitude/outlook for communications, family stability, or resources available during/post incarceration.
- 95% of participants that were served reported increased communication, family stability, maintenance of familial connections, or support in reunification.

Improve Outcomes for Disconnected/Opportunity Youth

Disconnected Youth are teenagers and young adults between the ages of 16 and 24 who are neither working nor in school. These youth are also referred to as "opportunity youth" because reconnecting them to work and school has a positive economic and civic impact.

Education and employment are two leading indicators of overall well-being. In 2019, approximately 57,000 youth aged 18-24 in Maryland were not attending school, not working,

and with no degree beyond high school.¹³ In Maryland, both the high school program completion rate and the youth employment rate have remained relatively flat from 2009 to 2017. High school completion has decreased to 74% in 2017, from a period high of 80.4% in 2013. During the same time, the youth employment rate remained consistent in 2017 (56.9%) and in 2013 (56.9%); however, it decreased in 2014 (55.8%) and 2015 (55.7%), and then increased in 2016 (56.8%). For more information, please refer to the [High School Completion](#) and the [Youth Employment: % of 16-24 Year Olds in the Labor Force](#) visuals on Clear Impact’s website at <https://embed.clearimpact.com/Indicator/Embed/42678> and <https://embed.clearimpact.com/Indicator/Embed/42695>, respectively.

The Children’s Cabinet is supportive of interventions that focus on reconnecting the out-of-work/school population to work or school, or preventing youth from becoming disconnected in the future. Adoption of “collective impact” approaches, where a variety of partners are convened to work together to provide programming, remove barriers, and support long-term goals, with each partner playing a distinct but complementary role are strongly encouraged as a best practice.

In State FY 2022, the Children’s Cabinet funded 30 projects with an exclusive focus on improving outcomes for disconnected/opportunity youth in 16 jurisdictions, totaling approximately \$3.6 million or 31% of all programmatic funding.

Priority-focused Programs by Jurisdiction:

1. Baltimore City: Home Visiting, Community-Based Supports for Opportunity Youth
2. Baltimore County: MST - Emerging Adults
3. Calvert: WIOA Outreach and Enrollment
4. Carroll: Connecting Youth in Carroll County
5. Cecil: The Legacy Program
6. Charles: Youth Interventions and Engagement
7. Frederick: Youth Connections
8. Garrett: Youth Employment Initiative, Apprenticeship Program
9. Howard: Summer Scholars
10. Montgomery: Mo-Co Reconnect LAYC, Mo-Co Reconnect SMYAL
11. Prince George’s: Knowledge Equals Youth Success (KEYS), Opportunity Youth Empowered Toward Success, Greenbelt Cares GED Preparation Class, Bowie Disconnected Youth Program, Disconnected Youth in Foster Care
12. Queen Anne’s: CommUNITY Mentoring, Transportation Voucher
13. St. Mary’s: Reconnection of Opportunity Youth, Interagency Liaison
14. Talbot: Healthy Families Mid-Shore, Reengagement Coordinator, Career Pathways

¹³ The Annie E. Casey Foundation, Kids Count Data Center. (2022). [Persons Age 18 to 24 Not Attending School, Not Working, and No Degree Beyond High School in Maryland](#). Retrieved from Kids Count Data Center on November 18, 2022.

15. Washington: Family Centered Support Services, True Opportunities, Western Maryland Consortium Disconnected Youth Services
16. Wicomico: Youth Skills and Workforce Development

Program Highlight: Connecting Youth Program (Carroll County)

This program targets youth ages 16-24 who are not in school, not working, and/or who may be homeless. The program has received Children’s Cabinet funding since State FY 2018. At that time, the Local Management Board selected the priority area of Disconnected Youth based on the approximately 1,500 disconnected youth living in Carroll County. These youth have a high school diploma but are unable to successfully remain employed or in a higher education setting due to untreated mental health issues and/or substance use disorder and often do not engage in treatment. Barriers to treatment include a long waiting list, a shortage of psychiatric services, and a lack of reliable and/or affordable transportation to providers. Without proper mental health and substance use treatment, youth are not able to remain successfully employed.

The primary goals of the program are to reduce the number of disconnected youth and youth homelessness by assisting youth to obtain and maintain meaningful employment and/or education. Strategies for achieving this goal include the employment of two full-time Engagement Managers, and a Clinical Case Manager (LCSW). The case manager provides barrier screening for each youth and develops an individualized case plan aimed at reducing these barriers.

Program partners include the Business Employment Resource Center (BERC), the Carroll County Youth Service Bureau (CCYSB), the Human Services Program (HSP), and the Bureau of Housing (Carroll County Department of Citizen Service) and Carroll County Public Schools. In collaboration with its partners, the program formed a Connecting Youth Coordinating Council to facilitate a coordinated countywide approach to re-engage opportunity youth by increasing referrals, collaboration, and resource sharing. The Coordinating Council also includes youth with lived experience who are able to provide authentic youth voice.

In State FY 2022, 80 youth were served. As a result of this program:

- 93% of youth served were actively engaged in reducing their identified barriers to employment
- 63% of youth served obtained employment or enrolled in an education program

Reduce Childhood Hunger

Data from the United States Department of Agriculture noted that 11.1% of all Maryland households were food insecure in 2018, meaning they experienced limited or uncertain access to

safe, nutritious food at some point during the year.¹⁴ For more information, please refer to the [Household-Level Food Insecurity](#) visual on Clear Impact’s website at <https://embed.clearimpact.com/Indicator/Embed/42975>.

On August 25, 2020, Maryland’s No Kid Hungry report, which is based on data from the most recent Maryland Youth Risk Behavior Survey/Youth Tobacco Survey (YRBS/YTS), showed “troubling rates of food insecurity among Maryland’s middle and high school students.¹⁵ Overall, about one in every four students lack consistent access to the healthy food they need.”¹⁶ In addition, the risk of experiencing food insecurity is significantly higher for Black students and Hispanic/Latino students, compared to White students. “Racial disparities also vary by county with some students of color experiencing food insecurity rates that are up to four times higher.”¹⁷

Beyond connecting children and their families to food assistance programs, the Children’s Cabinet recognizes the importance of building sustainable strategies to reduce the incidence of hunger among Maryland’s children. The Children’s Cabinet is supportive of activities that encourage family self-sufficiency and shift the focus to long-term impact, rather than those that are focused only on alleviating immediate hunger.

In State FY 2022, the Children’s Cabinet funded 18 projects with an exclusive focus on reducing childhood hunger in 11 jurisdictions, totaling approximately \$1.76 million or 15% of the total awards.

Priority-focused Programs by Jurisdiction:

1. Baltimore City: Cherry Hill Community Food Strategy
2. Caroline: After School Program
3. Frederick: Getting Ahead
4. Garrett: Early Care Healthy Families, Learning Beyond the Classroom, Partners Afterschool
5. Harford: Reducing Childhood Hunger
6. Howard: Roving Radish
7. Prince George’s: Know Better, Live Better Health and Nutrition, Weaving Hope, Project Wellness, Pathway to a Healthy Lifestyle, Healthy Heights
8. Somerset: Sustainable Somerset
9. St. Mary’s: Healthy Families, Afterschool Program at Greenview Knolls

¹⁴ No Kid Hungry. *Maryland: 11.1% of All Maryland Households Are Food Insecure*. Retrieved from https://state.nokidhungry.org/maryland/karmic_hungerfact/17-9/.

¹⁵ The YRBS is a survey done bi-annually by the Department of Health. Due to COVID, a limited version was completed in 2020 which did not provide updated statistics for this section.

¹⁶ No Kid Hungry. (2020). *New Report. “Food Insecurity Among Middle and High School Students in Maryland.” Reveals a Disturbing Reality for 1 in 4 Secondary School Students*. Retrieved from <https://state.nokidhungry.org/maryland/2020/08/25/new-report-food-insecurity-among-middle-and-high-school-students-in-maryland-reveals-a-disturbing-reality-for-1-in-4-secondary-school-students/>.

¹⁷ Ibid.

10. Talbot: Healthy Habits
11. Wicomico: Mobile Meals

Program Highlight: Reducing Childhood Hunger (Harford County)

This program provides case management and food advocacy services. The goal of the program is to help families become more self-sufficient, have more predictable food security, and make strides toward economic stability. Services are provided to low-income families with a special emphasis in the communities of Edgewood, Abingdon, Aberdeen, Belcamp, Havre de Grace, and Joppa. The case management component provides clients with one-on-one time to address individual needs and develop strategies for financial management, discuss access to other government benefits, and formulate a plan for job searching if applicable. The food advocacy coordinator developed a curriculum for a six-week program under the guidance of No Kid Hungry's Cooking Matters program. Adults attend a course to learn the basic skills of budgeting, shopping for food, making healthy choices, planning menus, and cooking nutritious meals for their families.

Partners include a licensed dietician from Shoprite grocery store who worked with clients on individualized health needs, Harford County Department of Social Services collaborated by bringing youth in foster care (18 and older) to participate in the program, Havre de Grace Middle School, and Grace Church in Aberdeen.

In State FY 2022, 42 participants received case management and 35 participated in the six-week food advocacy course. As a result of this program:

- 83% of participants reported they learned to better plan financially to increase their family's access to healthier food
- 83% of participants reported they learned at least one process through which they can improve their family's consumption of nutrient-rich food

Reduce Youth Homelessness

Homelessness among enrolled public school students has decreased approximately 33.9% from school year 2017 to school year 2021 (as shown in the [*% of Public School Children Homeless on September 30 of School Year*](#) visual on Clear Impact's website at <https://embed.clearimpact.com/Indicator/Embed/42664>). The Department of Education reported that 11,825 students were homeless in 2021 compared to State year 2017 when 17,892 were known to be homeless.¹⁸

The Children's Cabinet remains committed to interventions that focus on the vulnerable population of homeless youth who are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian and

¹⁸ Maryland State Department of Education. [Maryland Homeless Education Trend Data 2017-2021](https://marylandpublicschools.org/about/Documents/DSFSS/Homeless/HomelessEducationTrendData2017-2021.pdf). Retrieved from <https://marylandpublicschools.org/about/Documents/DSFSS/Homeless/HomelessEducationTrendData2017-2021.pdf> on November 18, 2022.

who are under the age of 25, a population known as unaccompanied homeless youth. Due to age, developmental stage, and past traumatic experiences, unaccompanied homeless youth have unique needs that cannot be addressed by the same housing and supportive services offered to adults. They are at high risk of becoming disconnected and socially disengaged, at risk of physical and sexual abuse, and report higher rates of mental, behavioral, and physical health issues than their peers.

The Children's Cabinet is supportive of activities that have been successful for unaccompanied homeless youth, including developing solutions for stable housing, street outreach and promotion of strong and stable relationships with peers and other adults, and options for individuals whose behavioral health issues prevent them from accessing traditional shelters and services.

In State FY 2022, the Children's Cabinet funded four projects with an exclusive focus on reducing youth homelessness in three jurisdictions, totaling approximately \$435,000 or 4% of the total programmatic funds.

Priority-focused Programs by Jurisdiction:

1. Baltimore: Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Outreach Services
2. Frederick: New Horizons
3. Wicomico: Navigation / Local Access Mechanism, Homeless Youth Drop-In

Program Highlight: New Horizons (Frederick County)

New Horizons works with Frederick County high school students experiencing homelessness to provide guidance and all the resources needed for these students to succeed in school and graduate. Students are connected to the program via self-referral or referrals from Frederick County Public School personnel.

In the four years of operation, youth enrolled in New Horizons are graduating at a rate 32% higher than students experiencing homelessness who are not enrolled in the program. Program partners include the following: the Frederick Community Action Agency provides health services, food, and rapid re-housing; the Family Partnership offers GED training and childcare; the Tech Frederick provides laptops and technology; the Frederick Community College coordinates the enrollment process for youth who are enrolling in FCC; the Mental Health Association of Frederick County provides walk-in services to youth who are experiencing mental health crisis and those who are uninsured; and the Student Homeless Initiative Partnership (SHIP) and THRIVE Host Home Network offers youth housing, financial support, and additional case management. The new community partnerships and additional financial resources significantly contribute to the program exceeding the numbers served and doubling the number of participants on track to graduate and those who graduated compared to the same period last year.

In State FY 2022, the program served 53 participants, exceeding their annual goal of 50 participants. Of those served, 26 students graduated high school and 21 moved to the next grade. The program also reported the following outcomes and accomplishments:

- 87% of participants are on track to graduate on time
- 79% of participants achieved at least one goal in the areas of education, employment/soft skills development, and/or housing
- 98% of participants reported improved housing stability
- 45% of participants provided with services to obtain housing stability
- Phillips Foundation funding provided drivers education for 10 students that paid for permit fees, practice hours, and car rentals for road tests.
- The New Horizons Summer Academy was able to secure funding for three paid interns, as Youth Peer Mentors, who were able to run a food, health, and hygiene program.
- The Tech Frederick organization accepted a proposal from New Horizons to build a platform for communication and collaboration. This platform won an award for the “Most Impactful” project at the Tech Frederick Hack-a-thon.
- Heartfield Assisted Living collaborated with New Horizons and provided “grab n’ go” meals for students who were enrolled in the Summer Academy.
- Aldi Grocery “Product Rescue” program sponsored the New Horizons Summer Academy and provided daily snacks and other grocery needs for 75 students over the course of the program.
- The United States Military Recruiting Office of Frederick County collaborated to bring health and wellness activities to youth who participated in the Summer Academy.

Community-Based Programs and Services

Research has shown positive outcomes when a family-centered network of community-based services designed to promote the healthy development and well-being of these children and their families is prioritized. Contact with the juvenile justice system has lifelong impacts on a young person, even into adulthood. Youth who are arrested and become involved in the juvenile justice system are more likely to be arrested for a future offense, drop out of school, and struggle to find gainful employment. For that reason, the Children’s Cabinet seeks to increase community-based services with the goal of reducing out-of-home placements.

The Children’s Cabinet is supportive of programs and strategies that work directly with and collaborate with local law enforcement, state’s attorney’s offices, and other partners including, but not limited to, the Department of Juvenile Services’ Regional Office representatives, the local Racial and Ethnic Disparities (RED) Coordinator (where applicable), community association groups, youth advocate groups, mental health practitioners, and the juvenile court magistrates or judges to develop or enhance community outreach and programming to divert low-risk youth away from formal processing in the juvenile justice system, including those involved in school-based offenses. Best practices for this priority include, but are not limited to:

pro-social activities, connections to services and supports for youth and families, employment readiness and career development training and team mentoring, and/or supervision in the community; and outreach/programming for youth at risk of being recruited by gangs (even if the youth has not had previous law enforcement contact) by working with local partners to focus on communities with high gang membership and activity.

In State FY 2022, the Children’s Cabinet funded 24 projects with an exclusive focus on increasing utilization of community-based services (including but not limited to juvenile justice diversion) in 13 jurisdictions, totaling approximately \$2.01 million or 17% of the total programmatic funds.

Priority-focused Programs by Jurisdiction:

1. Allegany: Project AIM, Youth Services Coalition Planning Grant
2. Baltimore City: Thriving Youth Strategy
3. Baltimore County: Healthy Families America – Home Visiting, Youth Services Bureau – Lighthouse
4. Caroline: Teen Court, YMCA Mentoring Program, Men for Change Mentoring Program, TAY Life Skills Program, Caroline County Behavioral Health School-based Program
5. Carroll: Suicide Intervention and Prevention Services, Wraparound Family Service
6. Cecil: Prevention & Overdose Response and Trauma Support (PORTS), County Neighborhood Youth Panel, Inc.
7. Charles: Youth Mentoring
8. Dorchester: Poverty Reduction Lab, Poverty Reduction Team
9. Kent: Trojan Influence After School Program
10. St. Mary’s: Mentoring, After-School at GWCES & RES
11. Somerset: Somerset CARES
12. Wicomico: Family Education, Youth Truancy/Absenteeism Strategy
13. Worcester: Worcester Navigation, Worcester Connects

Program Highlight: Worcester Connects (Worcester County)

Worcester Connects provides youth, grades 6-12, with a supportive and positive mentor/role model. The mentor service is designed to be a hybrid of 1:1 mentoring services as well as group mentoring to allow mentees to engender a sense of membership with their peers. This program will be based upon the Check and Connect mentoring program which promotes increased self-esteem, confidence and improves overall health and wellness. Since its inception in State FY 2020, the number of youth mentored in the program has nearly doubled. The target population includes youth identified as high-risk for some type of juvenile justice interaction. More specifically, the program serves youth that are truant, bullied, have special needs (learning, developmental, behavioral), and/or youth that are living in poverty.

In State FY 2022, the program showed a tremendous growth and opportunity for its participants, based on the following reported outcomes and accomplishments:

- The number of 1:1 monthly meetings with mentors increased from 13 in State FY 2021 to 146 in State FY 2022.
- The number of monthly group meetings that occurred between mentors and participants increased from four in State FY 2021 to 20 in State FY 2022.

Preventing Out-of-State Placements

The Children’s Cabinet continues its priority to lower the number of children placed out-of-State for several reasons: out-of-State placements are usually more disruptive to the child and his/her family which can hinder treatment; distance puts a significant barrier to a family’s ability to participate in their child’s treatment and to have contact with their child; distance interferes with the ability of the case manager to participate in the treatment planning and follow the child’s progress; and out-of-State programs are often significantly more expensive than in-State programs.

Data below shows a positive trend for the State in advancing its goal to keep Maryland youth close to home.¹⁹ Maryland witnessed a decrease in youth hospitalized out-of-State and a decrease in the overall number of youth in family homes.

Maryland Out-of-State Placements Trends (FY 2019 - FY 2021)				
	1/1/2020	1/1/2021	1/1/2022	1-Year Change
BHA				
Non Community Based Placement	2	2	0	-100.0%
DHS				
Community Based Placement	17	22	22	0.0%
Family Home	75	71	62	-12.7%
Hospitalization	17	11	10	-9.1%
Non Community Based Placement	6	5	4	-20.0%
Unknown	3	8	4	-50.0%
DJS				
Community Based Treatment	2	0	0	0.0%
Non Community Based Placement	74	6	18	200.0%
MSDE				
Residential IEP Placement	5	7	8	14.3%
Grand Total	201	128	128	0.0%

¹⁹ The Children’s Cabinet data for out-of-home placement trends that include State FY 2022 will be available in the *State of Maryland Out-of-Home Placement and Family Preservation Resource Plan*. The data reported herein is based on available agency reporting.

The Children's Cabinet continues to prioritize resource development for youth with complex behavioral health needs that often lead to out-of-State placements. Efforts are underway to develop high-level residential programming within Maryland that will target youth with dual diagnoses and other identified service needs. Identification of those needs is occurring through data collection and data sharing within the Children's Cabinet agencies to ensure that the collaborative and comprehensive work continues.

The Interagency Team is also focused on developing a robust mobile-crisis and stabilization service that will allow youth and families to address their needs before the situation elevates to a level that requires residential intervention. These evidenced-based programs and trauma-informed practices are a priority as the program development continues. Developing a program that includes residential and community-based programming is key to ensure that children with intensive needs continue to be served in the least restrictive setting that is appropriate to meet their individual needs.

The Children's Cabinet is supportive of programs/strategies that support children and families at-risk for out-of-State placement that employ a multi-disciplinary approach utilizing State and non-state partners, and focus on youth with multiple risk factors (e.g., multiple disabilities [physical, mental, developmental, intellectual, learning, etc.], behavioral issues, substance use/abuse, education needs, juvenile justice involvement, foster care, etc.).

Partners

The Children's Cabinet's priorities are too large and complex to be addressed by any single agency, program, or strategy. True partners, working in concert to plan, share information, fill gaps, and implement strategies, are critical to carrying out the action plan, promoting efficiency, and avoiding duplication. Each partner plays a necessary and complementary role in achieving desired outcomes. The Children's Cabinet has identified the following implementation partners: Children's Cabinet Implementation Team, Local Management Boards, and Local Agencies (*as described below*).

Children's Cabinet Implementation Team

The Implementation Team operationalizes the policies of the Children's Cabinet by developing a plan, identifying and addressing barriers to success, assisting local programs and agencies, supporting ongoing evaluation of performance and results, and communicating on a regular basis to refine tactics and resolve interagency obstacles. The Implementation Team is composed of the Deputies or Chiefs of Staff from the Children's Cabinet agencies, and is chaired by the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services.

Local Management Boards

Local Management Boards are designated by the local government in each of Maryland's 24 jurisdictions to serve as hubs for local planning, coordination, and influencing allocation of State resources for children, youth, and families. They collaborate with the Children's Cabinet to fulfill State priorities, convene local stakeholders to identify and address needs in their jurisdictions, and coordinate services to fill gaps and avoid duplication.

Local Agencies

Several Children's Cabinet agencies include local departments and administrations. The Maryland Department of Health (through the Behavioral Health Administration), the Department of Human Services, and the Maryland State Department of Education serve children and families through their 24 local counterparts within each of the State's local jurisdictions – the local Core Service Agencies,²⁰ the local Substance Use Councils, the local Departments of Social Services, and the local school systems, respectively. The Department of Juvenile Services and the Developmental Disabilities Administration have regional offices which, in turn, have local offices. For administrative purposes, the Department of Juvenile Services has six designated regions, and the Developmental Disabilities Administration has four. Support from these local partners is critical to achieving Statewide goals.

State Coordinating Council

On February 1, 2022, the Children's Cabinet established the Youth Resource Coordinating Council (YRCC) to serve as the State Coordinating Council. The YRCC was developed to replace the Interagency Placement Committee and recommit the focus on resource development for residential and community-based youth services throughout the State. The YRCC is charged with:

- Promoting policy that develops a continuum of quality educational, treatment, and residential services in Maryland which will enable children with intensive needs to be served in the least restrictive setting appropriate to their individual needs;
- Interagency data monitoring and tracking of metrics specified by the Children's Cabinet;
- Providing training and technical assistance to State and local partners; and
- Conducting case reviews of all youth referred to non-family home out-of-State placement or other requests from State or local partners involving youth with intensive needs.

²⁰ It is important to note that one Core Service Agency is located on the Eastern Shore and serves five local jurisdictions.

Conclusion

The Children's Cabinet will continue to focus on efforts to improve and enhance prevention strategies, promote a service delivery model to prevent and/or mitigate the impacts of childhood trauma and adverse childhood experiences, address racial and ethnic disparities with intentionality, and promote research-based programs and services while also encouraging innovation. The Children's Cabinet remains committed to ever-increasing collaboration with State and local partners, including families, youth, and community members, as they work to improve the well-being of Maryland's children and families.