

# Maryland's Comprehensive State Crime Control and Prevention Plan 2022 Annual Update

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## Message from the Executive Director

As Executive Director of the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services, I am pleased to present *Maryland's Comprehensive State Crime Control and Prevention Plan 2022 Annual Update*.



This plan reflects our commitment to the citizens of Maryland to reduce and prevent crime. The plan supports the development and implementation of evidence-based and results-driven policies, practices, and programs to make Maryland safer. We recognize that our work is crucial to the quality of life of our communities and must include input from our partners who provide essential direct services to the citizens of Maryland and understand their needs. To this end, we will continue to work with, and take guidance from, our public safety partners and organizations that work with victims of crime, as well as Maryland's children, youth, and families.

We remain committed to supporting the criminal justice system in order to improve public safety, protect our communities, improve the well-being of children and families, and restore the rights of victims, while maintaining fiscal responsibility and holding programs and practices accountable for the results our citizens deserve.

Our plan focuses on making Maryland a safer place to live, work, and raise a family by reducing crime and promoting a safe, fair, and efficient criminal justice system across the State. This plan is intended to be a roadmap for the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services as we work with our federal, state, local, and community partners to make Maryland safer. By continuing to partner with entities across disciplines, we can and will achieve a safer Maryland, and I look forward to working with each and every one of you as we make this happen.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kunle Adeyemo', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Kunle Adeyemo, Esq.

Executive Director

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

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# Office Summary

## Vision

A safer Maryland.

## Mission

To serve as a coordinating office that advises the Governor on criminal justice strategies. The office plans, promotes, and funds efforts with government entities, private organizations, and the community to advance public policy, enhance public safety, reduce crime and juvenile delinquency, and serve victims.

## Responsibility

The Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services (Office) is the designated State Administering Agency for Maryland. The Governor appointed the Office to this role in accordance with federal statute, making the Office responsible for comprehensive criminal justice planning and policy development within the State. As the State Administering Agency, the Office allocates resources statewide and acts to distribute, monitor, and report on spending under many state and federal programs.

The Office is the executive branch agency designated to accept, plan, and distribute criminal justice funds, and seeks to leverage State and federal grant dollars to address the needs of statewide and local criminal justice systems. The Office also serves as the primary coordinating body for State and local public safety issue identification, system collaboration, policy development, and system planning and implementation.



# Objectives

The Office works closely with a multidisciplinary team of state and local entities to achieve the following objectives:

- Develop criminal justice strategies that are coordinated at the local, State, and federal level.
- Improve victim services for Maryland residents.
- Improve the well-being for all Maryland children and youth.
- Maximize the public safety returns on Maryland's corrections spending.
- Increase the availability of data to support data-driven approaches to criminal justice issues in Maryland.

The Office also uses data management to develop, implement, and measure outcomes for initiatives intended to increase public safety in Maryland. In an effort to better understand threats, develop policy, and provide pertinent information to the Governor and his administration, the Office continues to develop a data sharing system across the State. The Office also works to establish clear memorandums of understanding with agencies regarding the sharing and use of information, and policies to ensure proper storage and dissemination of information in accordance with existing memorandums of understanding and industry best practices.

The Office places a significant emphasis on instituting strategic planning to align priorities at the State and local levels, to ensure it remains ahead of threats that impact the State, and to continue to be good stewards of the funds administered. Implementing evidence-based practices and data-driven decisions ensures the Office allocates resources to issues and jurisdictions in a way that will produce measurable outcomes, and assists in developing outcome-based performance measures for grant recipients. In doing this, the Office ensures the best use of resources and a better understanding of how programs increase the safety, and improve the quality of life, for Maryland citizens and visitors.

# Strategies

The Office continues to build upon its comprehensive crime reduction strategy, which is based on a three-pronged approach to support and enhance law enforcement, children and youth, and victim services. This approach includes strategies for supporting collaborative enforcement efforts that target gangs, drugs, firearms, and human trafficking organizations, prioritizing a system that reduces adverse childhood experiences in our youth population, and building a robust support system for victims of crime within the State of Maryland. The following pages describe the three focus areas in greater detail, as well as the collaborative efforts to achieve its [objectives](#) for a safer Maryland.

## Enforcement

The Criminal Justice Programs Division facilitates federal, State, and local level coordination across disciplines to effectively and efficiently reduce and prevent crime in Maryland. This is accomplished through public safety, justice reinvestment, the center of excellence, police accountability, and enhancing community relations (*as described below*).

## Public Safety

***Objective: Develop criminal justice strategies that are coordinated at the local, State, and federal level.***

Federal, state, and local level coordination across disciplines is necessary to effectively and efficiently reduce and prevent crime in Maryland. A primary tactic for reducing violent crime is focusing resources on identifying, disrupting, and dismantling gangs and violent criminal networks. Criminals involved in the trafficking and use of firearms in crimes of violence, human trafficking, distribution of illegal drugs, and other inherently violent criminal enterprises will continue to be targeted through shared enforcement, prevention, and intervention strategies to include coordinated efforts with community and youth programs that are evidence-based.

## Maryland Criminal Intelligence Network

The Maryland Criminal Intelligence Network (MCIN) is a criminal justice strategy that is coordinated at the local, State, and federal levels to target gangs, drugs, firearms, and human trafficking. MCIN focuses on those criminal networks that are impacting multiple jurisdictions and accomplishes this by sharing information across borders. It is a key element of Maryland's public safety strategy and provides the basis for data-driven decision making, both operationally and for policy development.



Based on strategic performance indicators and ongoing evaluations to expand and create MCIN sites, the Maryland Department of State Police added Somerset and Worcester Counties to Dorchester's existing MCIN operation to create a new Lower Eastern Shore coalition. This expansion will strengthen allied law enforcement capacity to target criminal operations within the Delmarva peninsula, which contribute to increased drug trafficking on the Lower Eastern Shore and along the East Coast. Howard County also established an MCIN site given its critical role in collaborating with six surrounding MCIN coalitions to disrupt criminal activity along Interstate 95 and Route 1 corridors. Given the new expansions, MCIN is currently operating in 16 of Maryland's 23 counties, including Baltimore City, which will increase the collaborative efforts and sharing of comprehensive data to collectively dismantle gang-led criminal organizations within each jurisdiction, and throughout the State.

The Office will continue to provide oversight of MCIN and, based on available funding, allocate grant awards to sites to continue to break down jurisdictional barriers and enable law enforcement and prosecutors to target entire criminal enterprises. The Office will also work with sites to expand data sharing capabilities to minimize gaps in information sharing.

### **Governor's Special Operations Group**

The Governor's Special Operations Group (GSOG), which was formed by the Governor's Council on Gangs, and Violent Criminal Networks, combines resources from law enforcement and prosecutors to target violent criminals, gangs, and criminal organizations. Under the leadership of the Senior Law Enforcement Coordinator (SLEC), the GSOG continues to provide analytical support to combat criminal enterprises - both gangs and violent criminal networks - that cross multi-jurisdictional boundaries in the State with ties to Baltimore City. The GSOG will continue to partner with MCIN sites to increase collaboration and data sharing to ensure the integration of tactics, resources, and intelligence to effectively target criminal networks and gangs.

### **Law Enforcement Coordinating Council & Regional Law Enforcement Council**

In 2021, [Senate Bill 907, 2020/Chapter 19, 2021](#) established the Law Enforcement Coordinating Council within the Maryland Department of State Police. The council is chaired by the Superintendent of the Maryland Department of State Police and consists of state officials, the primary law enforcement executive in each county, and the City of Baltimore. The council meets twice a year to ensure interagency intelligence sharing and to coordinate resources to combat crime throughout the State.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Casetext. [Section 01.01.2012.03 - State Law Enforcement Coordinating Council](#). It is important to note that, in 2012, Executive Order 01.01.2012.03 created a similar council, the State Law Enforcement Coordinating Council, to coordinate among its members agencies to further the safety and security of State residents and to improve the administration and enforcement of the laws of Maryland by ensuring that police resources are deployed across the

The Act also required the Maryland Department of State Police to establish a Regional Law Enforcement Council within each region. The four regional sub-councils consist of state officials and local law enforcement agencies who meet on a quarterly basis to share intelligence related to crime trends and strategize resource deployments to prevent and respond to regional crime, particularly violent crime.

Given the recent enactment of Senate Bill 907, 2020/Chapter 19, 2021, the Office compared the roles and responsibilities of these councils with the Governor's Council on Gangs and Violent Criminal Networks to determine if these efforts are duplicative. Specifically, the Office compared the legal charge of each, and found the efforts of the councils to be the same, if not more, than that of the Governor's Council on Gangs and Violent Criminal Networks. The most notable differences consisted of the staffing agency, and the review of outstanding warrants in the region which is required of the Regional Law Enforcement Council, only. For this reason, the Office believes that the efforts of the councils are duplicative of the Governor's Council on Gangs and Violent Criminal Networks. Although there are some differences between the two bodies, for the most part, they are similar. In light of this, consideration must be given as to whether both bodies should continue to exist.

### **Maryland Department of State Police Strike Force 7**

This special operations unit works in coordination with MCIN sites to successfully identify, investigate, and prosecute criminals and their organizations. In coordination with public safety partners, the special operations unit serves as one of seven investigative/enforcement groups under the federal Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force program to ultimately disrupt and dismantle violent gangs and drug trafficking organizations in Baltimore City. The special operations unit will continue to work with MCIN sites to increase collaboration and data sharing efforts.

### **P.R.O.T.E.C.T. (Public Resources Organizing to End Crime Together) Program**

[Senate Bill 929, 2020/Chapter 20 of 2021](#) established the P.R.O.T.E.C.T. Program which serves to maximize the use of State, local, and community resources to combat neighborhood decline throughout the State, support comprehensive strategies to reduce crime and fear in those communities, and ensure that local law enforcement is utilized in direct public safety roles. Based on a strategic analysis of violent crime data, covering a five-year period, the Office identified 10 high-crime micro-zones: Anne Arundel County, Allegany County, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Cecil County, Dorchester County, Frederick County, Prince George's County, Washington County, and Wicomico County. The Office is currently in the process of hiring P.R.O.T.E.C.T. Coordinators to ensure utilization of all existing crime prevention programs and

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State to address statewide crime trends, regional and local crime, maintain homeland security, respond to any threats to homeland security, and to address emergencies either natural or man-made.

grants; coordinate community and youth programs; assist with community mobilization and activities to reclaim public space; assist with rapid response to public nuisances; and coordinate community engagement with the local law enforcement agency with jurisdiction in the high-crime micro-zone.

### **Maryland Crime Research and Innovations Center**

Established by the Office and the University of Maryland, the Center utilizes resources from the University System of Maryland to help the state's crime control and prevention efforts align with the Office's three focus areas. The Center conducts interdisciplinary research and assists state policies and programs. MCRIC has established connections with agencies and departments across the State, from Western Maryland to the Eastern Shore, to support MCIN sites with embedded data analysts, interns, and collaborative research programs. MCRIC researchers are also supporting statewide crime and criminal justice data analyses and the development of Maryland's Behavioral Health and Public Safety Center for Excellence.

### **Justice Reinvestment**

*Objective: Maximize the public safety returns on Maryland's corrections spending.*

The Criminal Justice Division oversees the implementation of the Justice Reinvestment Act (JRA) in Maryland and directs reinvestment funding to the Justice Reinvestment Initiative (JRI) priorities throughout the State through the Performance Incentive Grant Fund.

In addition, and in collaboration with the Opioid Operational Command Center (O OCC), the division coordinates with criminal justice partners to prevent, treat, and reduce heroin and opioid abuse in Maryland; promote a coordinated law enforcement and investigative strategy to battle the epidemic through cooperation and data sharing; and streamline reporting efforts on the implementation and progress of medication-assisted treatment programs in correctional facilities.

### **Justice Reinvestment Initiative**

JRI is a nationwide data-driven approach to improve public safety, reduce corrections spending, and reinvest savings in strategies and programming that reduce crime as well as recidivism. It emphasizes treatment for those struggling with addiction; provides an opportunity to elevate the voice of victims; focuses prison beds on serious, repeat offenders; and strengthens community supervision through evidence-based practices.

The Office staffs and coordinates the following three boards:

- The Justice Reinvestment Oversight Board continues to monitor the implementation of JRA, grant funding provided through JRI, and address any challenges that resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic.

- The Local Government Justice Reinvestment Commission continues to recommend and investigate evidence-based programming, identify gaps in services at the local level, develop performance measures, and monitor the progress of JRA reinvestment-funded grantees.
- The Justice Reinvestment Advisory Board continues to investigate data collection.

Through JRA’s data-driven approach, Maryland has seen a decrease in the state prison population, and in return, a reduction in corrections spending. The Office remains committed to developing more opportunities to share data between criminal justice and behavioral health entities, as well as better tracking outcomes of patient treatment visits. The Office also seeks to build an infrastructure to allow Maryland agencies to collect, analyze, and report relevant datasets that measure reentry success.

### **Heroin Coordinator Program**

In partnership with the Washington/Baltimore High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) and the OOCC, this program combines law enforcement and investigative strategies to battle the heroin epidemic through cross-jurisdictional cooperation and data sharing to produce actionable information for both public health and public safety. The Office continues to refine the process of referring individuals to public health resources and examine the data collection process and data usage. Since January 2018, the program has been responsible for over 14,000 treatment referrals. With 22 heroin coordinators placed in various locations throughout the State, the Office continues to strengthen collaboration efforts with the OOCC to explore the potential expansion of the program to ensure its continued success.

### **Center of Excellence**

***Objective: Increase the availability of data to support data-driven approaches to criminal justice issues in Maryland.***

The Maryland General Assembly established the Crisis Intervention Team Center of Excellence and the Maryland Behavioral Health and Public Safety Center of Excellence within the Office’s Criminal Justice Division. Collectively known as the Center of Excellence, it advises the Office on efforts that support Maryland communities in improving the criminal justice response to, and treatment of, individuals with mental health illness, reducing the incarceration of individuals with behavioral health needs, and providing linkages to treatment. In its role as a statewide clearinghouse for behavioral health-related treatment and diversion programs, the Center of Excellence develops strategic plans to increase treatment and reduce detention for those with behavioral health disorders in the judicial system, provides technical support for localities, advances crisis intervention programming, and coordinates with State agencies to measure program effectiveness.

### **Crisis Intervention Team Center of Excellence**

[Senate Bill 305 \(2020\)](#) established the Crisis Intervention Team Center of Excellence to provide technical support to local governments, law enforcement, public safety agencies, behavioral health agencies, and crisis service providers; and develop and implement a “crisis intervention model program.” It also established a Collaborative Planning and Implementation Committee for the center to review services and training provided by the center; develop outcome measures for and evaluation of the center; develop recommendations for the full implementation of the crisis intervention model program at the municipal, county, and state level; and provide general oversight of the center.

Since its enactment on October 1, 2020, the Office has approved all positions required for the Collaborative Planning and Implementation Committee, and held formal meetings and informal training sessions with forward progress while staff is onboarded. The Office has also hired staff for the center to work towards the goals set forth by legislation.

### **Maryland Behavioral Health and Public Safety Center of Excellence**

[Senate Bill 857/House Bill 1280](#) (2021) established the Maryland Behavioral Health and Public Safety Center of Excellence to develop: a statewide model for law enforcement-assisted diversion; recommendations for pretrial services; procedures for sharing deflection and diversion statistics between relevant State agencies; recommendations for statewide implementation of law enforcement-assisted diversion programs; and a statewide model for community crisis intervention services other than law enforcement. It also requires the center to host one State Sequential Intercept Model (SIM) Summit each year, and produce and update a statewide strategic plan.

In addition, the bills express the intent of the General Assembly that the center apply to the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) for grant funding to hold subsequent annual State Sequential Intercept Model Summits and identify opportunities to fund (1) behavioral health crisis grants; (2) training for 9-1-1 operators; (3) peer support services; (4) behavioral health screenings; (5) scholarships for students who attend a Maryland HBCU to study behavioral health-, public safety-, or criminal justice-related issues; and (6) behavioral health initiatives in rural communities.

In 2022, the Office successfully partnered with SAMHSA to train 17 statewide SIM facilitators. These facilitators will be available, upon request, to assist with the development of the SIM mapping for jurisdictions across the State.

The Office also entered into partnership with the University of Maryland, MCRIC, to develop the Statewide Strategic Plan for Crisis Response.

The Office, with assistance from the Maryland Department of Health and the Mental Health Association of Maryland, will evaluate the role and define the responsibilities of staff as they integrate into the Centers of Excellence: Crisis Intervention Team Center of Excellence and Maryland Behavioral Health and Public Safety Center of Excellence.

### **Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion Program**

The Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion Program (LEAD) is a police-led diversion initiative that connects police directly to service providers who respond immediately to assist individuals identified by police. In partnership with the Maryland Department of Health and the Opioid Operational Command Center, the Office provides technical assistance and resources for the development of new partnerships to address substance use disorders and diversion programs. The Office also supports and coordinates crisis intervention training for law enforcement officers with the necessary expertise in de-escalation of individuals with behavioral health issues. This effort entails ongoing training across Maryland for law enforcement and public health professionals, and the Office prioritizes funding for such programs. In 2019, the Office received a \$6.5 million federal grant to support police-led diversion and detention-based referrals across nine communities in Maryland over three years, with the goal of reducing opioid overdose deaths while increasing access to care and treatment through police and detention-based referrals. The Office recently received a one-year federal grant extension to continue the efforts of these programs.

The Office will continue to partner with State and local stakeholders such as the Maryland Department of Health, the Behavioral Health Administration, the Office of the Public Defender, and multiple agencies from nine local partner jurisdictions. In addition, the Maryland Statistical Analysis Center, which is housed in the Office, will be engaged in this project to support action-oriented research, performance management, and evaluation of all selected sites.

### **Police Accountability and Enhancing Community Relations**

***Objective: Develop criminal justice strategies that are coordinated at the local, State and federal level.***

The Criminal Justice Programs Division supports law enforcement agencies across the State of Maryland with the development of effective accountability procedures to achieve their goals of lawfulness and legitimacy while ensuring community relations and transparency.

### **Police Accountability and Community Transparency**

The Police Accountability and Community Transparency (PACT) is a three-year strategic program aimed at assisting law enforcement with the development of effective accountability procedures to achieve their goals of lawfulness and legitimacy while enhancing community relations and transparency. This program supports the Office's goals of increasing safety and

training for law enforcement, and promoting safe communities and community engagement. The program also seeks to enhance the relationship between law enforcement and the community by: developing criminal justice reform measures at the local and State level; implementing training that fosters relationships between law enforcement, communities, and businesses; providing technology that builds trust coupled with transparency between law enforcement and the citizens it serves; and maximizing best practices in law enforcement to make a safer Maryland. An Assistant Director of Police Accountability and Community Engagement will study emerging trends and strategies in the upcoming program years to ensure program effectiveness.

## **Children and Youth**

The overall goal of the Children and Youth Division is to improve the well-being of Maryland's children and youth. This is accomplished by preventing and mitigating Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), promoting trauma-informed practices, decreasing juvenile delinquency through diversion efforts, reducing out-of-home placements, and decreasing child abuse and neglect.

### **Adverse Childhood Experiences**

*Objective: Improve the well-being for all Maryland children and youth.*

Research shows a strong relationship between stressful or traumatic events, or ACEs, including: child abuse (emotional, physical, and/or sexual), household challenges (domestic violence, substance abuse, mental illness, parental separation or divorce, and/or incarcerated family member), and neglect (emotional and/or physical). The Office envisions a comprehensive trauma-informed approach to address the root causes of juvenile delinquency, criminality, and victimization.

### **Handle with Care Maryland**

The Handle with Care Maryland initiative is designed to help children who are exposed to traumatic events through seamless and careful communication and collaboration between law enforcement, schools, and community organizations. Through this cornerstone program, the Office provides training for law enforcement on various types of trauma which prompts them to connect with schools when they feel that a child has witnessed or experienced something traumatic. The schools then provide the child with support if they need it. Handle with Care Maryland is currently being implemented in more than 700 schools in 19 of the 24 jurisdictions in Maryland. The Office seeks to implement the program in all 24 jurisdictions by the end of 2022.



## Trauma-Informed Practices

***Objective: Improve the well-being for all Maryland children and youth.***

The Children and Youth Division seek to promote trauma-informed practices throughout the State to improve the well-being of children and youth.

### Commission on Trauma-Informed Care

[Chapter 722 of 2021](#) established the Commission on Trauma-Informed Care to coordinate a statewide initiative to prioritize the trauma-responsive and trauma-informed delivery of State services that affect children, youth, families, and older adults. The Commission held its first meeting on November 18, 2021 and continues to meet on a monthly basis to identify workgroups and processes to meet the goals of the Commission. During the September 15, 2022 meeting, the Commission adopted “The Maryland Way: Trauma-Informed, Resilience-Oriented, Equitable/Care and Culture (TIROE).”<sup>2</sup> This framework provides a common understanding of trauma and trauma-informed care in Maryland. This shared understanding will guide the Commission’s work to develop and provide training to State agencies and stakeholders with the goal of building a unified language for agencies and systems to talk about and understand trauma and to guide the State to become trauma-informed.

Additionally, the Commission on Trauma-Informed Care, in consultation with the Maryland Department of Health, the Department of Human Services, and the Maryland Health Care Commission, must study developing a process and framework for implementing an ACEs Aware program in Maryland and implement the program. The purpose of the program is to screen for adverse childhood experiences and toxic stress to provide targeted evidence-based interventions to support individual and family health, in order to improve individual and family well-being and reduce health care costs. Additional findings are available in the [FY 2022 Commission on Trauma-Informed Care: Findings and Recommendations on the Development and Implementation of the Adverse Childhood Experiences \(ACEs\) Aware Program.](#)

## Juvenile Delinquency

***Objective: Improve the well-being for all Maryland children and youth.***

The Children and Youth Division partners with the child serving agencies to decrease juvenile delinquency through various initiatives and diversion efforts.

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<sup>2</sup> Adapted from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). (2014). *SAMHSA’s Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach*. Retrieved from <https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/d7/priv/sma14-4884.pdf>.



## **State Advisory Group**

The State Advisory Group assists the Office in the development of a juvenile justice and delinquency prevention three-year plan as well as reviewing grant applications and making funding recommendations. For the [2021-2023 Three-Year Plan](#), the group identified the following priority areas of focus: programs for positive youth development; diversion; community-based alternatives (including home-based alternatives) to incarceration and institutionalization; and community-based programs and services.

## **Boys & Girls Clubs**

The Office supports youth prevention and intervention initiatives that engage youth within their communities, schools, organizations, and peer groups in a manner that is productive and recognizes and enhances the youth's strengths. These programs, such as the Boys & Girls Clubs, promote positive outcomes for young people by providing opportunities, fostering positive relationships, and providing the support and encouragement needed to build the youth's leadership skills. To date, grant funding through the Office has supported Boys & Girls Club programming in the following areas: Annapolis, Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, Cecil County, Harford County, Frederick County, Westminster, Washington County, and Greater Washington (Prince George's County). A total of 28 sites have implemented such programming in Maryland and will continue to expand with the reach of Project Bounce Back through 2023.

## **Out-of-Home Placements**

***Objective: Improve the well-being for all Maryland children and youth.***

The Children and Youth Division partners with Maryland's Children's Cabinet agencies to strengthen the system of care for children and youth at the local level through a coordinated approach to interagency case management. The goal of this coordinated approach is to return or divert children and youth from preventable out-of-home, out-of-State, and hospital and other overstay placements through the provision of community-based services.

## **Maryland's Children's Cabinet**

Chaired by the Executive Director of the Office, and represented by key stakeholders, the Children's Cabinet coordinates the child and family-focused service delivery system by emphasizing prevention, early intervention, and community-based services for all children and families. The Office, through the Children and Youth Division, works to coordinate and facilitate the Children's Cabinet, and the Local Management Boards that they fund, to continue addressing the following priorities:

- Reduce the impact of parental incarceration on children, youth, families, and communities.

- Reduce youth homelessness.
- Improve outcomes for disconnected/opportunity youth.
- Reduce childhood hunger.
- Increase community-based programs and services (including but not limited to juvenile justice diversion programs).
- Reduce out-of-home placements.

### **Local Management Boards**

Local Management Boards use the Results-Based Accountability framework to identify, evaluate, and develop the programs and strategies needed to address local community needs and provide resources for children and families in their jurisdiction. Boards bring together local child-serving agencies, child providers, youth, families, and communities to make decisions about priorities and how resources are deployed to address local needs.

### **Community-based Programs and Services**

The Office supports community-based programs and services to reduce the number of juveniles entering the juvenile justice system and/or out-of-home placements by providing supportive services within the youth’s community.

### **Local Care Teams**

Local Care Teams serve as the point of access to services for children and youth. As of January 1, 2018, the Local Management Boards are the administrative home for the Local Care Teams. Parents, family members, or agencies make referrals directly to the Local Care Teams to seek assistance with accessing services, to develop plans of care for community-based services, and to coordinate services from multiple agencies. Families and children at-risk of out-of-home or out-of-State placement with complex needs and/or who are in crisis are identified as priorities for the Local Care Teams.

## **Child Abuse and Neglect**

***Objective: Improve the well-being for all Maryland children and youth.***

The Children and Youth Division partners with child serving agencies, to include the Children’s Justice Act Committee members and child advocacy centers, to decrease child abuse and neglect in Maryland.

### **Children’s Justice Act Committee**

The Children’s Justice Act Committee reviews and evaluates the state’s investigative, administrative, and judicial handling of child abuse, neglect, and maltreatment, specifically child sexual abuse and exploitation per the federal Child Abuse and Prevention Treatment Act (CAPTA). The committee is responsible for reviewing grant applications and making funding

recommendations to the Office. These recommendations are then used to inform funding decisions in which the Office provides support to programs that improve the administrative, judicial, and investigative response to child abuse and neglect. The Office's goals for the Children's Justice Act program are developed in partnership with the federally-mandated Children's Justice Act Committee to:

- Enhance the ability of law enforcement to appropriately recognize, assess, and investigate child abuse and/or neglect, and to identify threats to a child's safety during police responses to suspected child abuse and/or neglect cases.
- Strengthen the skills of Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), lawyers who represent children (i.e., Children In Need of Assistance (CINA) cases, dependency cases, etc.), and judges in handling child maltreatment cases and enhancing court sensitivity to child victims and witnesses while improving the courts' handling of cases that involve children of a very young age.
- Increase responses to child abuse and neglect in public and privately operated institutional juvenile facilities, including but not limited to: group homes, residential facilities for youth, and foster homes.
- Enhance interventions for child abuse or neglect victims who have physical, mental, and/or behavioral disabilities, cognitive impairments, or other serious health conditions, including but not limited to: autism and autism spectrum disorder; fetal alcohol spectrum disorders; attention deficit hyperactivity disorder; attention deficit disorder; and language, hearing, and speech impairments.
- Improve the recognition, assessment, screening, response, referral, and joint investigative process for suspected child abuse and/or neglect cases, including but not limited to: victims of child human trafficking, LGBTQ youth, and families with limited English proficiency.

### **Child Advocacy Centers**

- The Office continues to bolster and support the use of multi-disciplinary teams within accredited Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs). Accredited CACs serve children in a youth-friendly environment where law enforcement, state's attorneys, and child protective services work together to promptly investigate alleged incidents of abuse or neglect. The children and their families also receive specialized mental health services to help cope with the trauma they have endured. Specifically, trained forensic interviewers also collect necessary information to successfully investigate and prosecute the cases.

### **Victim Services**

The Victim Services Unit is a centralized State level resource for crime victims which is comprised of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, the Sexual Assault Reimbursement

Unit, and subject matter experts to address policy change to improve victim services across the State. The unit was created, within the Office, to promote services and policies that provide victims of crime: the right to be safe in their homes and in their communities; the right to have increased access to services; the right to possess the requisite tools to become self-sufficient in the aftermath of criminal activity; and the indispensable right to receive restitution. The Office conducts victims' needs assessments, strategic planning workgroup sessions, and administers surveys to assist the Victim Services Unit's strategic mission to align with the core principles listed above. The Office achieves these goals by continuing to align strategic goals with its Notices of Funding Availability (NOFA), and incorporating these goals into all funding decisions while utilizing best and promising practices.

The Office envisions an overall trauma-responsive approach to victim services to address the unique needs of each victim utilizing research-based knowledge, such as the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) studies, to promote effective strategies.

## **Victim Services Policy and Programs**

***Objective: Improve victim services for Maryland residents.***

The Victim Services Unit partners with subject matter experts to address policy change to improve victim services for Maryland residents.

### **Restitution**

The Victim Services Unit focuses on coordinating and improving the collection of restitution, and works with stakeholders to ensure victims have the services they need to be safe and self-sufficient. The Office has reconvened the Restitution Workgroup to focus on both short- and long-term goals to improve restitution collection statewide. The current priorities include researching an electronic payment system, better utilization of the Central Collections Unit, exploring the creation of a pilot restitution court, and many other overall improvements.

### **Regional Navigator Pilot Program**

The regional navigator program is administered through the Office as required by the [Child Sex Trafficking Screening and Services Act of 2019](#). The Act requires law enforcement and local Departments of Social Services, with reason to believe a child is a victim of sex trafficking, to notify a regional navigator in their jurisdiction to offer support and connect the child to appropriate services. The Office launched a pilot program on November 1, 2019, in three pilot jurisdictions to evaluate program development, performance measures, and data. In November 2020, seven additional jurisdictions joined the three existing sites, expanding services to Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Cecil County, Frederick County, Harford County, Howard County, Montgomery County, Prince George's County, and Washington County. Despite the challenges created by the restricted use of VOCA funds to allow for the mandated

statewide expansion of the program, the Office released a NOFA in late summer and is working to expand these critical services statewide by the end of the calendar year.

### **Evidence-based Programs**

The Office works to improve victim safety, assist victims in achieving self-sufficiency, and ensure victims and the community are aware of resources available. In doing this, the Office funds evidence-based programs that achieve positive outcomes for victims of crime, and connects victims of crime with accessible resources.

### **Victims' Rights and Accessibility to Resources**

The Office coordinates the Maryland State Board of Victim Services and the Governor's Family Violence Council, and collaborates with those boards and other stakeholders in the victim services community, to further the strategic efforts that support victims' rights and increase access and availability of services. In doing this, and based on the identified needs of crime victims, the Office allocates funds to provide a positive impact that can be measured for success.

### **Increase Knowledge of Victims' Rights in the Community**

The main vehicle for this initiative is the Annual Maryland Crime Victims' Rights Conference, hosted in partnership with the Maryland State Board of Victim Services. The conference provides information on emerging and best practices for serving crime victims. The Maryland State Board of Victim Services is mandated to develop and distribute several brochures and forms in order for crime victims to be aware of their rights and guide them through the complex criminal justice process. The brochures and forms can be found at <http://gocep.maryland.gov/victims/rights-resources/brochures-forms/>. The Office continues to collaborate with stakeholders to conduct outreach campaigns for victims' rights. These efforts include expanded use of social media, public service announcements, and other public platforms to promote availability of services and awareness of issues impacting victims of crime.

### **Leverage Resources to Address Underserved Populations**

The Office works with federal, State, and local stakeholders to increase the safety, self-sufficiency, and awareness of resources for victims of crime to foster our vision for a safer Maryland. This includes leveraging resources across state and local agencies to comprehensively address underserved populations.

### **Sexual Assault and Human Trafficking Services**

The Victim Services Unit represents the Office on many statewide and local task forces, boards, committees, subcommittees, and workgroups to address all aspects of sexual assault and human trafficking. It is imperative for the Office to remain knowledgeable of both positive and negative trends in these communities to best address the needs of these vulnerable victim populations.

## **Direct Victim Services**

*Objective: Improve victim services for Maryland residents.*

The Victim Services Unit provides direct services through the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board and the Sexual Assault Reimbursement Unit.

### **Criminal Injuries Compensation Board**

The Criminal Injuries Compensation Board operates under Title 11, Subtitle 8 of the Criminal Procedure Article as a remedial body designed to provide aid and assistance to victims of crime in Maryland. The board's statutory authority shall be construed in all circumstances to remedy the harm to the victim and in favor of eligibility for the victim or claimant.

### **Sexual Assault Reimbursement Unit**

The Sexual Assault Reimbursement Unit operates under the Code of Maryland Regulations 10.12.02, Rape and Sexual Offenses - Physician and Hospital Charges, to provide reimbursement for the physical examination, collection of evidence, and emergency treatment of individuals for injuries resulting from alleged rape, sexual assault, or child sexual assault. The unit aims to prevent individuals and their families from re-victimization by easing the reimbursement process associated with medical-forensic claims processing.

## **Conclusion**

Interagency cooperation, information sharing, and accountability are vital to ensuring the success of this plan, and play a large role in the development of new innovative strategies and policies.

The Office is committed to allocating resources in a way that maximizes efficiency and impact. The Office will continue to work with its community, local, State, and federal partners to identify new funding sources for the State, fund projects and initiatives that align with its objectives and strategies, and promote best and promising practices for a safer Maryland.