State Disabilities Plan
Annual Progress Analysis
2020

Secretary, Carol A. Beatty

Deputy Secretary, Christian J. Miele

Carol A. Beatty, Secretary
Christian J. Miele, Deputy Secretary

Larry Hogan, Governor
Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor

Maryland
DEPARTMENT OF DISABILITIES

January 19, 2021

The Honorable Lawrence J. Hogan
State House 100 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

The Honorable Bill Ferguson
President
Senate of Maryland
State House, H-107
Annapolis MD 21401

The Honorable Adrienne A. Jones
Speaker
Maryland House of Delegates
State House, H-101
Annapolis MD 21401

Re: Report required by Human Services Article 7-113(f) HB128/Ch.211, 2017 (MSAR # 11200)

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Pursuant to Human Services Article §7-113(f) HB128/Ch.211, 2017, the Secretary of the Department of Disabilities shall submit an annual analysis of the State's Progress in implementing the State Disabilities Plan and related performance objectives to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, to the General Assembly on or before December 1 of each year. MDOD has experienced an unanticipated delay collecting the service data needed to complete the Annual Progress Analysis and is providing the report on Tuesday, January 19, 2021.

 If further information is required, please do not hesitate to contact Elizabeth Hall, Director of Interagency Affairs. She may be reached at (410) 767-3652 or elizabeth.hall2@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

Carol A. Beatty

Carol A. Beatty

cc: Sarah Albert, Department of Legislative Services (5 copies)

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Introduction

Pursuant to Human Services Article § 7-113 (f) HB 128/Ch. 211, 2017 The Secretary of the Department of Disabilities shall submit an annual analysis of the State's progress in implementing the State Disabilities Plan and related performance objectives to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2-1257 of the State Government Article, to the General Assembly on or before December 1st of each year.

The Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD) is the voice within Maryland's government for people with disabilities. Created in 2004, it is the only department in the United States that represents people with all disabilities at the cabinet level of State government.

MDOD works in partnership with many other agencies to create a State Disabilities Plan in order to ensure that government services used by people with disabilities meet their needs and promote long-term independence and inclusion in the community.

The State Disabilities Plan provides for the coordination of those State services and policies that ensure compliance with State and federal civil rights laws and provide community-based supports, emergency preparedness, housing, transportation, employment, health care, accessible technology, education, and family supports to Marylanders with disabilities. The Plan provides a framework for delivering, monitoring, and striving for improvement in these services. Progress is measured annually by the Department of Disabilities in the Annual Progress Analysis.

Goals, Outcomes, Strategies, and Activities

The goals listed in this annual progress analysis are the long-term changes that Maryland's State agencies are working to achieve. These goals are interconnected and the approach to achieving them must be interdisciplinary and holistic.

State Disabilities Plan Goals

The plan is based on four main goals: Self-Direction, Financial Well-Being, Maximizing Resources and Accessible Communication. Each goal is described in detail below.

Self-Direction

- Individuals with disabilities will determine how they wish to live.

- People with disabilities should have the ability to participate in the design of their personal support systems, and the ability to live and participate fully in the community.

- Self-direction is essential to the processes and the outcomes of all services.

  - This section focuses in particular on ensuring that people have choice in their support services and housing, and have the ability to travel in their community – all foundations for leading a self-directed, independent life.

Financial Well-Being

- Individuals with disabilities will have equal opportunity to improve their financial well-being.

- Financial well-being, which is critical to people with disabilities' ability to live independently in the community, can be supported

through access to employment, education, work incentives counseling and financial management or savings programs.

- Disability services should be designed with financial independence as a central goal and employment as one of the first options considered.

  o This section focuses on common paths to financial independence, including employment, education and financial management.

Maximizing Resources

- Maryland state agencies and key stakeholders will utilize resources responsibly. Maryland state agencies will continue to identify ways to improve the efficiency of service delivery and, where appropriate, find ways to expand or develop programs.

- Maryland is committed to increasing resources by utilizing technology, building private-public partnerships, and seeking grant opportunities.

  o This section focuses on maximizing resources in health and behavioral health care and family supports, but also tracks efforts to improve and expand resource capacity and delivery across all services.

Accessible Communication

- Maryland state agencies will be accessible, provide effective communication, and promote quality service delivery for individuals with disabilities.

- Accessible communication, critical to seamless service delivery, includes: ensuring that eligibility criteria and application processes are clear and accessible;

● Current and new rules and policies are communicated to service providers and recipients; and coordination among agencies, particularly those serving overlapping constituents, is consistent.

   o One area that was identified for particular focus was ensuring that systems designed to convey and receive emergency information are accessible to everyone. In addition, the State Disabilities Plan will track efforts to make all government communications accessible and transparent.

Outcomes

● The outcomes listed in this annual progress analysis describe in more detail what steps need to be made to achieve the goals and outcomes listed in the State Disabilities Plan.

Strategies

● The strategies in this document guide the priority areas that fall within the purview of State agencies

● They ensure that action steps are those most likely to,

   ○ Have a widespread positive impact on stakeholders;

   ○ Contribute to the accomplishment of outcomes;

   ○ Are achievable and measurable;

   ○ Work together to reinforce each other.

Action Steps

● A mixture of specific short- and long- term actions which will support the strategies.

Domains

● Within the four goals, the outcomes, strategies and action steps are grouped under nine domains; Community Living, Housing, Transportation, Employment and Training, Behavioral Health, Technology, Education, Family and/or Peer Support, and Criminal Justice

2020 Annual Progress Analysis

Self-Direction

- Individuals with disabilities will determine how they wish to live,

- People with disabilities should have the ability to participate in the design of their personal support systems, and the ability to live and participate fully in the community.

- Self-direction is essential to the processes and the outcomes of all services.

    - This section focuses in particular on ensuring that people have choice in their support services and housing, and have the ability to travel in their community – all foundations for leading a self-directed, independent life.

Community Living

Outcome 1

Expanded opportunities for self-directed supports and services

Strategies

- ***Strategy 1.1: Expand access to home and community-based programs and services***
    - **Participation in Medicaid-funded Service**
        - For FY20:

            - 116 individuals were served in the Brain Injury Waiver

            - 14,929 individuals with disabilities are participating in the Community First Choice program

            - 5,076 individuals with disabilities are enrolled in the Community Options waiver

            - 15,672 individuals with developmental disabilities are enrolled in the Community Pathways waiver

                - 1,211 children were enrolled in the autism waiver.

- **Attendant Care Program, In-Home Aides Program, and the Social Services to Adults (SSTA) program**

- MDOD and the Department of Human Services (DHS) administer programs which financially assist or give access to daily living supports to remain in their own home or in the community.

  - The Attendant Care Program provides financial reimbursement to assist individuals with severe chronic or permanent physical disabilities who require attendant care services to direct their own care and select their own service providers

    - In FY 2020, 192 individuals with severe, chronic, or permanent physical disabilities were provided with financial reimbursement for attendant care services to direct their own care and select their own service providers by MDOD's Attendant Care Program

  - In-Home Aides Service Program (IHAS) offers aide services (personal care, chores, other activities of daily living) in the consumer's homes which allows an adult with a disability to continue living at home and to avoid unnecessary or premature moves to nursing homes or other out-of-home placements.

    - For FY20 1,701 adults received in home supports through DHS's In-Home Aides Service Program

  - The Social Services to Adults (SSTA) program is the Department of Human Services core case management program for vulnerable adults. It builds on the strengths of the adult's community and family support system rather than replace them. SSTA provides assistance to adults with limited capacities seeking to remain or become self-supporting and self-sufficient.

    - In FY20 2,563 people received case management services.

- *Maryland Access Point Information and Assistance*

  - Maryland Access Point (MAP) is the gateway to long term services and supports in Maryland. Managed by the Maryland Department of Aging, MAP specialists work with caregivers, professionals, and all individuals with long term care needs to plan, identify, connect, and assist with accessing private and public resources for long term services and supports.

  - Long term services and supports include information on health, transportation, income, and financial aid, senior and community

centers and clubs, nutrition and meals, pharmacy assistance, housing, volunteer opportunities,

○ MAP also offers Options Counseling, a service through which all individuals and their caregivers, plan and make informed decisions regarding their long term care. Trained, professional Options Counselors use a person-centered approach and support individuals with matching their needs, preferences, and values with services in their community, developing a personalized action plan, getting connected to resources, making referrals to appropriate agencies and planning for current and/or future needs. Options Counseling is a statewide program delivered by staff at the 20 local Maryland Access Point (MAP) sites.

■ During FY2020 MAP provided a total of 17,418 units of application assistance related to LTSS services. Additionally, in SFY2020 MAP conducted 7,395 Level One Screens to refer individuals to the CO Waiver registry. A total of 9,740 in depth interviews for LTSS were conducted, 7,978 (82%) of which included a written action plan for LTSS.

■ The MAP network served a total of 91,186 clients in FFY2020. This population consisted of 80,934 persons (89%) age 60 and over, 7,307 persons (8%) ages 21-59, and 584 (0.64%) persons ages 20 and below.

■ Statewide I&R referrals at the MAP sites as it relates to LTSS: 17,418

■ In-depth interviews as it relates to LTSS: 9,740

■ Total unduplicated clients served statewide by age: ages 60 and over: 80, 934; ages 21-59: 7,307; ages 20 and below: 584

Strategy 1.2: Maximize choice and self-direction within supports programs

● **Expand participation in the self-directed option under the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) Community Pathways Waiver**

○ As of July 2017 the DDA provides Self-Direction Options to all participants in all of the DDA three (3) approved waivers by CMS.

■ The three (3) waivers are Community Pathways, Family Supports and Community Supports waiver.

- For the Community Pathways waiver for FY20: 1,251

  - DDA currently has a total of 1,443 people who are self-directing their services.

  ○ A participant handbook has been developed outlining the roles and responsibilities of the Participant, Coordinator of Community Services, Support Broker, and Financial Management Services provider. The manual was distributed by January 2020 and highlighted person-centered planning, developing a self-directed budget, hiring and managing staff.

  ○ The DDA will finalize brochures, fact sheets/at-a-glance, and PowerPoint presentations to educate persons in self-directed services and tools for Coordinators to inform persons on their caseloads about the self-direction service option and what it offers. The DDA continues to partner with internal and external stakeholders on engagement. Most recently, the DDA participated in the Policy in Partners initiative with the Arc of the Central Chesapeake region. Other engagement activities include one-on-one technical assistance, video conference, and phone conferencing with the CCS, families. Bi-monthly, the DDA participates in conference calls with the FMS providers to discuss updates and planning efforts.

  ○ The DDA is currently developing policies, standard operating procedures, and a quality framework to educate internal and external stakeholders. Training, education, and a communication strategy for participants, case managers, families, and stakeholders are essential components of the quality framework strategy.

- ***Use the Supports Intensity Scale (SIS) assessment tool to improve the person-centered planning process for people in the DDA Community Pathways waiver***

  ○ Telligent has been awarded the Level of Need contract for the State of Maryland. Effective October 2017. Telligent is responsible for conducting Supports Intensity Scale (SIS) assessments on all persons in service. Over the course of the next five years.

  ○ Nov 2019-Nov 2020:

    ■ CMRO- 600

    ■ ESRO- 212

- SMRO- 322

- WMRO-441

Strategy 1.3: Ensure that services are being delivered in the most integrated, least restrictive setting possible

- ***Ensure that adults with disabilities (Medicaid, developmental disabilities, and behavioral health) are being served in community-based settings as much as possible***

    ○ In FY2020, Medicaid provided services to 55,049 people in any setting

        ■ 35,063 (64%) of these individuals were in home and community-based settings

    ○ Almost all of DDA's enrollees are served in home or community-based settings:

        ○ Of the 25,198 individuals who received DDA services in FY20,

        ■ 25,077 (99%) lived in the community.

- ***Using the MDS 3.0 Section Q assessment tool, evaluate nursing facility residents for readiness to transition into community living***

        ○ 26 nursing facility residents were referred for Options Counseling based on the MDS 3.0 Section Q assessment tool in FY20.

- ***Through the Money Follows the Person Demonstration Project, provide options counseling for nursing facility residents who are considering moving into the community***

        ○ 4,029 Options Counseling referrals were made for nursing facility residents who are considering moving into the community.

- ***Through the Money Follows the Person Demonstration Project, provide ongoing peer support for nursing facility residents who are in the process of moving into the community***

        ○ 664 ongoing peer support for nursing facility residents who are in the process of moving into the community.

- ***Transition eligible individuals residing in nursing facilities and state psychiatric hospitals to the community through the Money Follows the Person Demonstration Project***

○ 112 total individuals transitioned from qualified institutions, including nursing facilities, state residential centers, state psychiatric hospitals, and chronic hospitals to the community through the Money Follows the Person Demonstration in FY20

- ***Use the Level 1 screen, which assesses a person's risk for having to enter a nursing facility, to gather information about the long term care needs of Maryland's population***

○ 7,133 individuals received a Level 1 screen in FY 20

Housing

Outcome 2

Increased availability of integrated, affordable, and accessible housing options

Strategies

Strategy 2.1: Improve quantity of and access to integrated, affordable, and accessible rental housing in Maryland

- ***Ensure that housing is being developed that is affordable for people with disabilities with SSI/SSDI-level incomes***

○ In FY 2020, MDOD's Secretary continued to serve as the Chair of the Interagency Council on Homelessness (IAC) and remained engaged in making suggestions to the IAC regarding disability-related issues and escalating departmental objectives to the group. MDOD's Director of Housing Policy and Programs (DHPP) continued to serve in an advisory position with the IAC, focusing on the expansion of individuals with lived experience on the IAC through co-chairing the Lived Experience Workgroup.

○ The Program officer overseeing the Homeless Solutions Program (HSP) at DHCD requested that MDOD's DHPP join the board of DHCD's newly formed Balance of State Continuum of Care (Coca). The DHPP has been advising DHCD regarding inclusive and accessible policies that can be integrated into the Coca's practices and procedures.

○ MDOD tracks the number of persons who transition from homelessness to housing under its Section 811 and Weinberg housing programs and shares this information with DHCD and the IAC.

- ○ MDOD partners with DHCD to determine how funding can be leveraged to produce additional subsidies for existing units. This has included conversations about the use of National Housing Trust Funds (NHTF) to help make units identified for PWDs in the last tax credit round more affordable.

- **_Improve communication and coordination among housing activities targeted intended to address homelessness among persons with disabilities_**

  - ○ MDOD continues to work with DHCD and MDH to implement the Section 811 Project Rental Assistance, Weinberg Apartments, and the MFP Bridge Subsidy programs. These three programs create housing affordable to people with disabilities with SSI/SSDI level incomes. The agencies meet monthly and to date 327 Section 811 units have been identified, exceeding the anticipated unit count of 300. For the Section 811 program, we currently have 205 units occupied, leasing in process for 17 units, and 70 units in construction. DHCD received an award in 2020 from the Weinberg Foundation of $3 million to fund additional affordable units for people with disabilities. MDOD is working with DHCD to identify properties that might be well-positioned to receive this funding. 27 people live in Weinberg Apartments, with another 6 in construction, and 46 have been housed using the MFP Bridge Subsidy program.

  - ○ MDOD and HOC's Community Choice Homes (CCH) program has successfully identified 18 units since its inception. Most recently, MDOD started leasing The Lindley, a new building at Chevy Chase Lake and Southbridge Apartments, a rehabilitated property in Takoma Park, which is leasing 2 bedroom units. 11 individuals are residing in CCH units currently.

Strategy 2.2: Support opportunities for homeownership for people and families with disabilities

- **_Support homeownership through the HomeAbility program_**

  - ○ HomeAbility program is aligned with CDA Single Family Homeownership. It is originated by the 70+ Approved Lenders under Maryland Mortgage.

  - ○ HomeAbility is a statewide lending program offered by DHCD to people with disabilities or caretakers of people with disabilities.

  - o In FY2020,

§ Number of loans: 33

Housing and Technology

Outcome 2

Increased availability of integrated, affordable, and accessible housing options

Strategy

Strategy 2.3: Improve access to and knowledge of home modifications and assistive technology that help people remain in their homes

- ***Lend people temporary ramps through the Christopher Reeves grant***

  ○ Maryland Technology Assistance Program MDTAP received a grant from the Christopher Reeve foundation in 2016 to establish the Statewide Portable Ramp Loan Project which provides temporary ramp loans to people who need help accessing their homes.

    ■ In FY20 MDTAP facilitated 23 portable ramp loans through partnership with six Centers for Independent Living.

- ***Provide financial assistance for home modifications through the Assistive Technology Loan Program***

  ○ **Home Modifications.** MDOD's Assistive Technology Loan Program (ATLP) offers financial loans that allow people with disabilities to borrow money to make modifications for their homes.

    ■ **In FY20:**

    ■ Number of loans - 4

    ■ Dollar amount of loans - $45,235

Transportation

Outcome 3

Improved access to reliable transportation options

Strategies

Strategy 3.2: Increase public transportation ridership among people with disabilities

- ***Provide paratransit rides to people with disabilities***

    - Totaling 1,706,128 paratransit rides (MTA) and 799,577 (MTA) Call-a-Ride trips in FY20

    - Totaling 1,182,208 Number of paratransit rides provided to Maryland residents (WMATA)

Strategy 3.2: Increase public transportation ridership among people with disabilities

- ***Ensure that riders with disabilities are using fixed route.***

    - 32,462 riders were certified under the Maryland Transit Authority (MTA)

    - 21,995 Maryland residents with disabilities certified for paratransit by Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)

Financial Well-Being

- Individuals with disabilities will have equal opportunity to improve their financial well-being
- Financial well-being, which is critical to people with disabilities' ability to live independently in the community, can be supported through access to employment, education, work incentives counseling and financial management or savings programs.

- Disability services should be designed with financial independence as a central goal and employment as one of the first options considered.

    - This section focuses on common paths to financial independence, including employment, education, and financial management.

Employment and Training

Outcome 4

Increased opportunities for competitive, integrated employment

Strategies

Strategy 4.1: Ensure that youth and adults with disabilities are given appropriate services, training and supports needed to enter and remain in the workforce

- ***Assist jobseekers with disabilities gain the skills they need to obtain competitive, integrated employment***
  - People receiving employment services from the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS)
    - FY 20: 21,337 served.
  - People receiving services from DORS who obtain integrated, competitive employment:
    - FY 20: 1,145 individuals obtained competitive, integrated employment

- ***Increase number of youth served through Pre-Employment Transition Services***
  - Students with disabilities received Pre-Employment Transition Services.
    - FY 20: 6,134 students with disabilities received Pre-Employment Transition Services.

- ***Expand employment opportunities through Evidence-Based Supported Employment (EBSE) for persons with significant mental illness.***
  - 29 Evidence-Based Practice Supported Employment programs served 2,831 individuals in FY20, based on claims paid. This does not include individuals who were served in traditional supported employment.

- ***Assist jobseekers with developmental disabilities gain the skills they need to obtain competitive, integrated employment***
  - People receiving day or employment services from DDA: 14,007
  - Number of people in integrated and competitive jobs: 2,580

- ***Implement Maryland PROMISE***
  - Maryland was one of six recipients of a national research grant from the U.S. Department of Education. Additional federal partners include the Social Security Administration, Department of Labor and Department of Health and Human Services.

- - Maryland was awarded $31 million for the five year grant in 2013.

  - Over 2,000 youth on Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and their families were recruited,

  - 997 of whom were randomly assigned to receive intensive interventions to increase the educational and employment outcomes of both the youth and their families.

- Key interventions include coordinated, assertive community-based case management, benefits counseling and financial education, and unpaid and paid work experiences for the youth.

- The direct service interventions to youth and families ended in September 2018, with a final total of 724 Maryland PROMISE youth participating in paid employment experiences during the course of the grant. PROMISE staff also supported 806 youth to access one or more unpaid work experiences.

  - Two non-cost extensions were approved, from September 2018-2020 for research, dissemination, and systems changes activities.

  - During this final year of Maryland PROMISE, MDOD along with staff from the University of Maryland, College Park (UMCP) has focused on analysis data, disseminating findings, and focused on data analysis and building capacity to improve systems and the delivery of services to youth SSI recipients as a result of lessons learned.

  - In collaboration with UMCP, MDOD has worked on development of three manuscripts for a special edition of the Journal of Rehabilitation and one manuscript for Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals journals. In addition, PROMISE data and lessons learned have been disseminated through fast fact and evaluation briefs, webinars, and state and national conferences. Products can be found at: https://education.umd.edu/research/centers/ctci and www.mdtransitions.org

Strategy 4.2: Ensure that all public vocational and career services programs are accessible to people with disabilities

- ***Increase the number of people with disabilities served through America's Job Centers***

  - Number of Individuals with a Disability served by staff - 7,124

- ***Increase the number of people with disabilities obtaining employment***

    - Job-seekers with disabilities obtaining competitive employment – 2,558

Strategy 4.3: Support new employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for workers with disabilities

- ***Increase number of Quality, Understanding, Excellence, Success and Training (QUEST) interns***

    - The QUEST Internship Program, a partnership of DORS, the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), and participating State agencies, affords State agencies the opportunity to provide mentoring services for persons with disabilities through unpaid part-time or full-time internships. In the past year, 23 individuals (8 of whom were ages 14-24) have participated in the QUEST Internship Program.

Outcome 6

Improved opportunities for financial independence and stability

Strategies

Strategy 6.1: Expand access to work incentives and benefits counseling and programs for people with disabilities who receive public benefits and would like to work

- ***Support peoples' access to ABLE program***

    - Maryland 529 launched Maryland ABLE, an innovative and landmark investment program that offers individuals with disabilities the opportunity to save money without jeopardizing access to federal and state means-tested benefits. The Stephen Beck, Jr., Achieving a Better Life Experience Act of 2014 ("ABLE") is a federal law which allows states to establish and maintain these accounts. The Maryland ABLE Act was signed into law by Governor Larry Hogan on April 12, 2016.

        - Established in partnership with the State of Oregon and Sumday Administration, LLC, Maryland ABLE accepts online enrollment to its diverse financial investment options available through an accessible, easy-to-use website with access to online account customization, account management, online recordkeeping, and a specialized customer service team.

        - Maryland ABLE account features include:

- ○ Saving up to $100,000 in your ABLE account before impacting SSI limits for cash benefits

- ○ Saving money in your ABLE account without jeopardizing state and federal means-tested benefits such as Medicaid, food, or housing assistance

    - ■ $2,500 state income tax deduction per filer and up to $5,000 for joint filers

    - ■ $14,000 annual contribution limit

    - ■ $350,000 lifetime contribution limit

- ● Since the beginning of 2017, Maryland ABLE has expanded outreach to Marylanders with disabilities, family members, and agencies and organizations. Through presentations and expos, the program has connected with over 30,000 Marylanders. In addition, Maryland ABLE established an active social media presence on Facebook & Twitter, expanded their email marketing list to over 17,000 contacts. At the end of FY20 Maryland ABLE has over 2,300 beneficiaries, over $17 million in total assets, and 97% of account holders are Marylanders.

- ● Learn more at https://www.marylandable.org/

- ● ***Increase participation in Employed Individuals with Disabilities Program***

    - ○ The Employed Individuals with Disabilities (EID) Program, administered by MDH provides Medical Assistance to working Marylanders with disabilities who meet disability and income requirements. The program covers most medical services for individuals who have no other health insurance and serves as a wraparound service to those who have health insurance that is limited. The EID program saves participants $1,000 - $12,000 a year.

        - ■ In FY20, an average of 877 individuals were enrolled in this program.

- ● ***Number of people who receive work incentives counseling through DORS***

    - ○ DORS and its contractors provide benefits counseling to jobseekers with disabilities who were interested in working while maintaining access to benefits

    - ○ In FY2020, DORS provided benefits counseling services for 1,730 individuals.

- ***Provide people in the Public Behavioral Health System with benefits counseling through SOAR***

    - BHA provides benefits counseling and assistance through its SSI/SSDI2, Outreach, Access and Recovery (SOAR) program

    - In FY 2020, 195 out of 226 individuals (86%) were approved for SSI/SSDI through SOAR, compared with a national SOAR approval rate of around 65%

Technology

Outcome 6

Improved opportunities for financial independence and stability

Strategies

Strategy 6.2: Expand knowledge of and engagement in financial management programs

- ***Provide people with financial loans that help them build credit and purchase assistive technology***

    - In FY2020, MDTAP's Assistive Technology Loan Program made 20 new loans totaling $634,641 to people with disabilities who needed financial assistance to purchase assistive technology for education, employment, and independent living.

- ***Help people save money on assistive technology purchases through recycling and cooperative buying options***

    - In FY2020, MDTAP supported a cooperative buying program that provided reduced-cost buying to 136 Maryland clients, providing access to 2,438 devices valuing $54,972 in savings.

    - MDTAP helped 79 Marylanders with disabilities save $118,173 on assistive technology by providing access to a device exchange platform, recycled devices, and long-term assistive technology loans at no- or low-cost.

- ***Help people with disabilities make informed assistive technology purchasing decisions***

- In FY 2020, MDTAP made 120 short-term assistive technology device loans to 83 Marylanders with disabilities and their families.

- In FY2020, MDTAP provided 42 assistive technology demonstrations to 67 participants

Maximizing Resources

- Maryland state agencies and key stakeholders will utilize resources responsibly. Maryland state agencies will continue to identify ways to improve the efficiency of service delivery and, where appropriate, find ways to expand or develop programs.
- Maryland is committed to increasing resource capacity by utilizing technology, building private-public partnerships, and seeking grant opportunities.
  - This section focuses on maximizing resources in health and behavioral health care and family supports, but also tracks efforts to improve and expand resource capacity and delivery across all services

Community Living

Outcome 1

Expanded opportunities for self-directed supports and services

Strategies

Strategy 1.4: Seek innovative methods for expanding the capacity of agencies and providers to support people with disabilities living in the community

- ***Streamline the DDA provider licensing approval process in a way that is efficient and transparent***

  - The DDA continues to work with OHCQ on the licensing approval process to ensure that it is efficient and transparent. DDA applicants are given information as to the reasons that they are not approved to provide services if they are denied.

- ***Increase DDA provider capacity and quality***

  - DDA has temporary suspended review of new provider applications until January 2021. In January 2021, DDA will begin reviewing new applications in the order in which they were received. We will be unable to provide you with application status updates at that time, but will contact

you upon completion of our review. Applicants must complete the Medicaid application and go through the Medicaid approval process, including verification with the Medicaid exclusions list and a site visit. DDA also requires completion of the DDA contract and business associates agreement prior to approval for service provision.

- For the most up-to-date information, visit DDA's dedicated Provider webpage that provides information related to provider requirements and application requirements: https://dda.health.maryland.gov/Pages/providers.aspx

- *__Increase waiver options__*
  - **Family Supports Waiver**

    - The Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) Family Support Waiver was approved November 21, 2017 by the federal oversight agency, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). The program provided individual and family supports for children birth to 21 with developmental disabilities on the DDA Waiting List.

      - The goals for the Family Support Waiver include providing:

        - Innovative service options aimed at providing supports that build on the Support Families Community of Practice

        - Individual and family self-direction opportunities

        - Flexibility for individuals and families to move dollar amounts among line items within their approved person-centered plan to meet the emerging and cyclical needs of the youth and family

        - Short term exceptions to the overall budget caps based on exceptional needs (for example, family caregiver support needs, post hospitalization, short term care needs)

  - **Community Supports Waiver**

- ○ Provides individual and family supports for persons with developmental disabilities on the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) Waiting List.

  - ■ The goals of this program include providing:
    - ● Innovative service options that support DDA's Community of Practices for Employment and Supporting Families
    - ● Community-based service options offered under the current Community Pathways Waiver (e.g. Supported Employment, Employment Discovery & Customization, Personal Supports, Respite, Assistive Technology, Behavioral Supports, etc.) with the exception of residential services
    - ● Self-direction opportunities
    - ● Flexibility to move dollar amounts among line items within the approved person-centered plan to meet emerging and changing needs; and (5) Short-term exceptions to the overall budget caps of $25,000 based on exceptional needs.

- ● ***Expand availability of training for case managers and service providers to improve their capacity to support community living***
  - ○ 12 trainings were held in FY20 for case managers and supports planners related to supporting individuals with disabilities in housing.

Outcome 11

Equal opportunity for participation in State government

Strategies

Strategy 11.3: Ensure that people with disabilities understand and can access civil rights protections

- ● ***MDOD will work with stakeholder groups to identify and monitor voter access issues during elections***
  - ○ Disability Rights Maryland (DRM) and other stakeholders had a Voters Rights hotline open starting on the first day of early voting in Maryland. DRM acted as the disability ombudsman relaying disability/accessibility

concerns of Maryland voters to the state and the respective local board of elections.

- ○ An issue which came up was the height of the ballot drop boxes for wheelchair users. DRM mediated these concerns and is following up on uniform accessibility guidance for drop boxes going forward

- ● ***MDOD will work with stakeholder groups and the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights to track civil rights complaints.***

- ○ The most recent report on the civil rights of people with disabilities is the annual Maryland Commission on Civil Rights report for FY19. There were 48 complaints of unlawful public accommodation discrimination received in FY19. Across those complaints, 64 bases were selected. 28 (44%) of those bases were lodged by a person or persons with a disability.

- ○ MDOD will continue to partner with MCCR and provide technical assistance as needed

Transportation

Outcome 3

Improved access to reliable transportation options

Strategies

Strategy 3.1: Improve effectiveness of paratransit services

- ● ***Improve on-time performance for paratransit services***

- ○ For FY20, the on-time performance for both MTA and for WMATA was 90%

Employment and Training

Outcome 4

Increased opportunities for competitive, integrated employment

Strategies

Strategy 4.1: Ensure that youth and adults with disabilities are given appropriate services, training and supports needed to enter and remain in the workforce

- ***Ensure rates paid to DDA providers incentivize individualized, integrated employment outcomes***

    ○ The DDA continues working with its stakeholders, especially the rate setting work group, to ensure we have a fair and equitable rate system to render services that promote DDA's Employment First initiative.

    ○ DDA will be exploring the use of Value Based Payments (VBP) as a way to fund certain employment outcomes to better incentivize quality competitive integrated employment outcomes.

    ○ This is based on the recommendations of Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) as well as emerging best practices

- ***Implement Employment First Strategic Plan***

    ○ DDA continues to collaborate with a wide variety of stakeholders and state partners related DDA's Employment First systems transformation efforts.

    ○ DDA continues to support capacity building efforts by providing technical assistance and support to provider organizations, families, and regional office staff.

    ○ DDA uses data collected through the Employment Data Initiative to develop policy and track progress of strategic goals.

    ○ DDA keeps stakeholders aware of Employment First updates through dissemination of a monthly Employment First newsletter and recorded webinars.

    ○ DDA encourages regular stakeholder engagement through the collection of feedback on waiver renewals, and throughout the development of policies and guidance.

- ***Implement Equal Employment Opportunity Act legislation***.

    ○ In May 2016, Maryland passed the Equal Employment Opportunity Act (HB420), an advocate-driven law that phases out the use of "14(c) certificates," which are certificates that allow sheltered workshops to pay workers with disabilities less than federal minimum wage ("subminimum wage").

- Under HB420, over time, the 14(c) certificates authorizing this practice will no longer be issued, and sheltered workshops will not receive reimbursements from the DDA for supported employment services provided to workers making subminimum wage.

- DDA and MDOD, in consultation with other agencies and stakeholders, submitted an Implementation Plan in October 2017 that includes plans for transitioning workers into competitive, integrated employment and other meaningful activities. Once this law has been fully implemented, youth with disabilities who are leaving high school will now be directed first towards competitive, integrated employment opportunities.

- Due to COVID-19 a number of data points used in the 2017-2019 EEA legislative reports were not available at the time of the typical data collection. DDA typically tracks individual employment outcome data, including wages, hours worked and types of employment in May of each year.

- In May 2020, this level of data was not tracked due to COVID-19. Instead, aggregate-level data was collected related to individuals and their employment status in June of 2020. The individual level employment data will be collected next in October 2020 and will provide a more accurate picture of the current employment outcomes for people supported in DDA services.

- This year, Maryland has successfully phased – out subminimum wage for people with disabilities and has met all benchmarks. The benchmarks are as follows:

    - The reduction in total number of Maryland 14c certificates is the remaining 14c Certificates from 2019 and 2020: 10

    - The number of Maryland 14c certificates by October 1st, 2020:0

    - The number of Maryland 14c certificates expired: 10

*Note, due to COVID -19 it is not possible to calculate an average. The following is based on the data from October 2019.

- The last data available from October 2019, shows that average wages across all categories of employment increased since the 2019 report. Of note, the wage increase for the

Facility Based/Shelter Job increased 16% from the 2019 report from $6.64 to $8.05. Overall the Facility Based/Shelter Job wage increased 63% since October 2016 from $4.93 to $8.05. The Individual Competitive Job increased 13.7% from $10.38 to $11.80. Individual Contracted Job increased 24.3% from $9.82 to $12.21 and Group Integrated Job increased 25.1 % from $8.63 to $10.80.

- The last data available from October 2019, shows that numbers of people in Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) increased since the 2019 report.

- All other categories of employment (Individual Contracted, Group Integrated and Facility-based/Sheltered Jobs) decreased since the 2019 report.

- Data over the past four years shows an increase in the percentage of people taking part in competitive integrated employment, 20.1 % in October 2016 to 22.8% in October 2019.

- The percentage of people taking part in sheltered work continued to decrease from 20.5 % in October 2016 to 7.1 % in October 2019.

- In the non-work activities graph and table, facility-based non-work has continued to decrease from 55.5% in May 2019 to 52.6% in October 2019.

Strategy 4.2: Ensure that all public vocational and career services programs are accessible to people with disabilities

- ***Implement Combined State Plan for Workforce Investment Opportunities Act***

  - TheWorkforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was signed into law on July 22, 2014. The law establishes a vision for a workforce system that is fully accessible to adults and youth with disabilities. In support of this vision, WIOA requires local

workforce development boards and partner organizations in local workforce systems to ensure that American Job Centers (AJCs) are physically accessible and able to provide accommodations that allow individuals with disabilities to achieve effective, meaningful participation in services.

○ Below are highlights of Maryland's implementation of WIOA that are creating new opportunities for people with disabilities:

- *Benchmarks of Success for Maryland's Workforce System – The Benchmarks* are a stakeholder-driven initiative built on a commitment to excellence shared by the core WIOA partners, including (in addition to the Maryland Department of Labor (MD Labor)), the Maryland State Department of Education's Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) and the Department of Human Services. *The Benchmarks* initiative seeks to increase the earnings capacity of Marylanders by developing a system that is responsive to the needs of Maryland job seekers and businesses.

- Disability Employment Initiative –MD Labor and other workforce system partners were awarded a $2.5 million grant to increase the number of individuals with disabilities entering competitive integrated employment via services within AJCs. The grant fosters increased inclusion of partner agencies at both the state and local level through two distinct program elements: Integrated Resource Teams (IRT) and the State and Local Cohesive Resource Committee (CRC). These groups help ensure that individuals are receiving adequate support to obtain and maintain employment. The CRCs work to resolve system level barriers to providing support to individuals with disabilities in the workforce system and recommend competency-increasing training and technical assistance for the AJC staff. IRTs coordinate with other service providers to ensure that individuals have the supports and resources needed to maintain employment placement.

- Non-Discrimination Plan – MD Labor and Local Workforce Development Areas are partnering with the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) at MSDE to equip the American Job Centers with assistive technology and provide staff training to enhance services for jobseekers with disabilities.

Education

Outcome 5

Improved opportunities for children, youth, and life-long learners to access education

Strategies

Strategy 5.1 Ensure early intervention programs are equipped to address needs of infants, toddlers, and young children with disabilities

- _**Number of students receiving services through Infants and Toddlers**_

    - 15,526, children and families received educational services through the Maryland Infants and Toddlers Program (MITP).

- _**Children will receive IFTP services in as integrated a setting as possible**_

    - 83% of children were receiving the majority of their services in "natural environments" (environments with typically developing children).

- _**Children with disabilities will enter kindergarten ready to learn**_

    - 50% general education vs. 19% special education

Strategy 5.3: Improve coordination and outcomes for students' transition from school to post-school education, employment, and training.

- _**Implement the Interagency Transition Council for Youth with Disabilities (IATC) Interagency State Plan**_

    - The IATC plan is being implemented, the annual report was submitted on September 30, 2020.

- _**Support events organized by local school system to educate students with disabilities and their families about the transition process**_

    - IATC funded five local transition events in Calvert and Carroll County. The local transition events focused on families of transitioning youth, educating the local business community on transitioning youth with disabilities, and post-secondary education for youth with disabilities.

Education and Technology

Outcome 5

Improved opportunities for children, youth, and life-long learners to access education

Strategy

Strategy 5.2: Ensure that students with disabilities have access to appropriate supports and assistive technology in any educational setting

- *Number of students receiving special education services in K-12*

  - According to the Maryland Special Education/Early Intervention Services Census Data Tables (October 1, 2019), 98,185 of students age 6-21 received special education services.

- *Students with disabilities will receive special education services in the most integrated setting possible*

  - According to the Maryland Special Education/Early Intervention Services Census Data Tables (October 1, 2019), 68,962 of the 98,185, or 70.24% of students receiving IEP services receive them in general education setting 80% or more of the time.

- *Reduce the drop-out rate of students with disabilities*

  - Non-completion rates of students with IEPs (Dropping Out)- 4.21% (1,282/30,423 students)

  - Non-completion rates of students without IEPs (Dropping Out)- 2.57% (6,301/24,4961 students)

- *Support as many students with disabilities to leave school with a diploma*

  - Students exiting between July 1, 2017-June 30, 2019:

  - Diploma - 4,670 (43.9%)

  - Certificate of Program Completion - 797 (7.5%)

- *Work with Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) to collect data on rates of students with disabilities using rates*

of students with disabilities using Disability Supports Services offices on Maryland's public and independent college and university campuses

Data from February 2018 Report

- ○ Data collected from Maryland's colleges and universities show that students are seeking services for their disabilities. The rates of students registered with disability services that are reported by the four-year institutions and community colleges are lower than the national estimates reported earlier in this report (11.1% of undergraduates and 5.2% of graduate students nationwide). One reason for this may be that the Maryland survey captures students registered with the disability services office, whereas the national figure uses estimates based on the number of disabled students in elementary and secondary education.

- ○ Another finding is that those students attending Maryland's four-year institutions who were identified in the survey as registering for disability services had second-year retention rates that were comparable to the overall cohort. This suggests that students who seek additional services are obtaining the support and accommodations they need to successfully persist. Their accommodations may help to level the playing field so that they can perform academically as well as their peers.

Second Year Report Updates

- ○ The second year of data collection has been completed for state and state-aided independent institutions.

- ○ MHEC is collecting data on student retention; completion data (transfer and graduation at the community colleges; graduation at the four-year institutions) will be reported in the future as those data become available.

- ○ The report framework will allow MHEC to capture short- and long-term outcomes such as second-year retention, four-year transfer, and six-year graduation.

- Analysis will allow comparison of these rates to all students in the future.

- The second report will be distributed in winter 2019.

Data from February 2019 Report

- Data collected from Maryland's colleges and universities indicate that students are seeking services for their disabilities. The rates of students registered with disability services that are reported by the four-year institutions and community colleges are lower than the national estimates reported earlier in this report (19.4% of undergraduates and 11.9% of graduate students nationwide). One reason for this may be that the Maryland survey captures students registered with the disability services office, whereas the national figure uses estimates based on the number of students with disabilities in elementary and secondary education.

- Findings also show that students attending public four-year institutions and identified in the survey as registering for disability services had second-year retention rates at 1.6 percentage points higher than their peers. However, in general, students attending Maryland's four-year institutions (both public and independent) who were identified in the survey as registering for disability services had second-year retention rates that were comparable to the overall cohort. This suggests that students who seek additional services are obtaining the support and accommodations they need to successfully persist. Their accommodations may help to level the playing field so that they can perform as well as their peers academically. In coming years, the data collected by MHEC will allow for additional outcome measures to be analyzed, including six-year graduation rates for students enrolled in the state's four-year institutions, and retention, graduation, and transfer rates for community college students. With these additional measures, Maryland's colleges and universities will be able to track the success of their students seeking disability services and Maryland will be able to report on statewide results. The information may give institutions greater insight into how these students compare to the larger student body and identify ways to ensure they have the support needed to succeed.

Third Year updates

- The third year of data collection has been completed for state and state-aided independent institutions.

- MHEC is collecting data on student retention; completion data (transfer and graduation at the community colleges; graduation at the four-year institutions) will be collected in future as those data become available.

- The report framework will allow MHEC to capture short- and long-term outcomes such as second-year retention, four-year transfer, and six-year graduation.

- Analysis will allow comparison of these rates to all students in the future.

- The third report will be distributed in winter 2020.

Fourth Year updates

- The fourth report will be distributed late winter 2021

- The fourth year of data collection was completed for state and state-aided independent institutions

- Findings from the previous year's reports show that students attending Maryland's four-year institutions (both public and state-aided independent) who were identified as registering for disability services had second-year retention rates that were comparable to the overall cohort. This suggests that students who seek disability services are obtaining the support and accommodations they need to successfully persist.

- The report allows for second year retention rate comparisons and future iterations will provide four- and six-year outcomes data for students at Maryland's public and state-aided institutions

- The data from the institutions are collected each March; MHEC may alter the due date for the 2021 collection to accommodate disruptions that may be caused by the COVID-19 pandemic but there has been no alteration of the due date at this time.

- ***Expand postsecondary options for students with intellectual disabilities***

  Grants to Expand Inclusive Higher Education Options in Maryland

  - Since May of 2018, $500,000 has been allocated to the Maryland Department of Health's Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) for grants designed to create an inclusive higher education program for students with developmental disabilities. Two institutions of higher education have been awarded grants to develop and implement inclusive higher education opportunities.

  - "This grant further helps us meet our goal to enhance the lives of people with developmental disabilities—starting at a younger age—to provide much needed tools and knowledge so they can live active, full lives and to ultimately become working and living members in the communities of their choice," said Bernard Simons, Deputy Secretary for the DDA.

  Coppin State University

  - The first round of grant funding was awarded to Coppin State University (CSU), who has worked to develop and expand upon inclusive higher education options available for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities on their campus. Through Coppin's Comprehensive Transition Program (CTP), students are able to increase independence, improve social and communication skills, explore career interests, participate in college classes and develop relationships with peers.

  - Coppin's first cohort of 9 students started in the fall of 2018 by attending orientation and getting acclimated to campus life. In the spring 2019 semester, the students began their academic classes as well as individualized exploration and taking part in campus life. Two of the students are living on campus.

  - Students that are part of this initial cohort include students from Baltimore City, Howard County, Baltimore County, and one student from New Jersey. Students have expressed interest in Art, Math, Technology, Child Care Services, Music, Theater, and Fitness Training.

  - Each student is paired up with a graduate intern who serves as a mentor to students with disabilities. The mentors assist their fellow students to navigate campus life both academically and socially.

Students are supported to identify their own academic and career path, including earning a degree and support with job placement.

Harford Community College

- ○ In July 2019, Harford Community College (HCC) was awarded the second round of grant funding from DDA. HCC will be developing a College & Career Experience for Self Sufficiency (ACCESS) Program to provide inclusive higher education opportunities for adults with intellectual disabilities. The ACCESS Program will provide person-centered planning, individualized supports, and services for the academic and social inclusion of students in the program leading to certificates and employment in: customer service, applied culinary arts, hospitality, and building maintenance, as well as opportunities to earn additional stackable credentials through credit and noncredit programs.

- ○ HCC's ACCESS Program will offer inclusive experiences focusing on academic enrichment and extracurricular activities, socialization, independent living skills, self-advocacy skills as well as integrated work experience and career development services. Students will have access to all College facilities and support services.

- ● ***DORS will support students in career oriented postsecondary settings***

  - ○ **Postsecondary Supports.**

    - ■ DORS supported 417 students ages 14-22 in postsecondary education:

      - ● 163 in College/University

      - ● 161 in Vocational and Occupational Skills Training

      - ● 93 in Workforce Technology Center trainings

Education and Family Support

Outcome 8

Expanded access to family supports

Strategy

Strategy 8.4: Ensure that parents of children with disabilities are provided with the information and tools they need to effectively advocate for their child's needs within the educational system

> Improve parents' sense that they have been engaged in the IFTP or IEP progress

Preschool Survey and School-Age Survey

Preschool Survey

> Percent of parents with a child receiving special education services who report that schools facilitated parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for children with disabilities.
>
> > State Results: 82%
> >
> > State Target: 85%
>
> School Age Survey
>
> > Percent of parents with a child receiving special education services who report that schools facilitated parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for children with disabilities.
> >
> > State Results: 69%
> >
> > State Target: 72%

Ensure that parents are given the opportunity to provide meaningful input or consent in the IEP process

- MSDE continues to provide technical assistance to local school systems, public agencies, and special education professionals, including its family support staff. MSDE has focused on federal and State rights and responsibilities that support meaningful input in the IEP process. Also, MSDE continues to provide technical assistance to support the development of an understanding of the Dispute Resolution process and the collaborative skills necessary to resolve disputes informally.

Behavioral Health

Outcome 7

Increased access to physical and behavioral health care

Strategies

Strategy 7.1: Increase statewide access to culturally competent, accessible wellness and preventive health care services

- ***Ensure that individuals administering information and referral hotlines are knowledgeable***
  - ***Each of the current five 211 Press 1 crisis hotline call centers are audited by BHA twice annually. These site reviews include verification of the following information.***
  - All five of our current crisis response call centers for 211 Press 1 Maryland are accredited by a nationally recognized accreditation body. They are all accredited by the American Association of Suicidology (AAS).
  - All five of our current crisis response call centers for 211 Press 1 Maryland follow all applicable legislative mandates, accreditation standards, and State regulations and policies related to providing phone, text, and chat crisis services.
  - Currently, 211 Maryland, Inc. (in partnership with our five crisis call centers) maintains a database of behavioral health resources for use in referring callers to the most local and appropriate resource. 211 Maryland, Inc., has expanded this database to include resources provided by BHA and updates each of these resources in compliance with AIRS standards.
  - The database is being maintained and updated on a continual basis. 211 Maryland, Inc. was recently provided additional funding that allowed them to hire additional full-time staff whose sole responsibility is AIRS compliance. This now allows them to meet the database resource updating requirements.
  - All call center specialists have immediate access to a licensed mental health clinician.
  - Call center specialists use evidence-based/evidence informed screening tools specific to each caller's needs.
  - Call center specialists provide naloxone information to callers that disclose an opioid use related concern.
  - All call specialist trainees complete a training program as required by their agencies accrediting body and are supervised a minimum of 15 hours before being allowed to work independently**.**

Develop a strategic plan for delivering culturally and linguistically competent behavioral health services
- The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) Behavioral Health Administration's (BHA) FY 2019-2020 Cultural and Linguistic Competency Strategic Plan (CLCSP) is a result of collaborative efforts among various stakeholders. These include members of the Behavioral Health Advisory Council's Cultural and Linguistic Committee. Members of this Committee include representatives from the Governor's Office of the

Deaf and Hard of Hearing, the Department of Housing and Community Development, MDH's Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities, local public behavioral health systems managers and various stakeholders.

- o The following key goals are addressed in the CLCSP:
    - ■ Establish and maintain culturally and linguistically competent behavioral health services.
    - ■ Eliminate cultural and linguistic barriers to access of behavioral health services.
    - ■ Create a system of data driven decision making processes that result in the formation of culturally and linguistically competent policies and practices.
    - ■ Support the usage of evidence-based practices to address the unique needs of individuals served in Maryland's Public Behavioral Health Services (PBHS).
    - ■ Advocate for and institute ongoing workforce development programs in cultural and linguistic competence reflective of Maryland's diverse population.
    - ■ During FY 2019-2020, BHA in collaboration with the University of Maryland Training Center, provided a series of in-person trainings on the use of the CLCSP and the National Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) Standards to our state partners, local public behavioral health systems managers and providers working in the Maryland Public Behavioral Health System.
- o BHA also provided technical assistance to local public behavioral health systems managers in setting CLC strategies to achieve the five goals set in the CLCSP as part of their FY 2021 local behavioral health plans. Furthermore, the above mentioned in-person training sessions were turned into the following e-learning modules to help public behavioral health entities and providers conduct community and self CLAS assessments and set CLC strategic plans to address behavioral health disparities.
    - ■ *Cultural and Linguistic Competence: Assessment and Strategic Planning* explains the importance of cultural and linguistic competency when delivering services and provides an overview of the key components of strategic planning.
    - ■ *Data-Driven Approaches to Addressing Disparities and Disproportionality in Behavioral Health* defines disparity, disproportionality, and equity in the context of service delivery, and walks course participants through the steps involved in creating evidence-based programs that benefit underserved communities.
        - ● Additionally, a course with three consecutive series of e-learning modules has also been developed. These e-learning modules discuss the three major concepts

that form the framework for achieving cultural competency as part of service delivery:

- *Standing Up to Bias: Yours, Mine, and Ours* explains the influence of implicit bias on service delivery and walks participants through exercises designed to help them examine their own implicit biases.
- *Addressing Health and Health Equity: An Imperative* underscores the importance of equity in service delivery and explores what it will take to achieve true health equity in behavioral health care.
- *Another Ouch: The Anatomy of Micro aggressions and the 'isms* defines and provides examples of micro aggressions and 'isms — sexism, racism, ageism, heterosexism, etc.— and breaks down how they can create barriers to effective service delivery.

- The Maryland behavioral health workforce, community stakeholders, and anyone interested can take these free online courses at their own pace and time using the following links: https://app.mdbehavioralhealth.com/register?redirectUrl=https://app.md [behavioralhealth.com/survey/addressingdisparities](https://app.mdbehavioralhealth.com/survey/addressingdisparities) and https://app.mdbehavioralhealth.com/course?endpoint=clc.

Strategy 7.2: Increase statewide access to crisis and acute services

Implement Center of Excellence in Crisis and Early Intervention Services

- The Maryland Early Intervention Program (EIP) is a specialized program with expertise in the early identification, evaluation, and comprehensive psychiatric treatment of adolescents and young adults with psychotic disorders.

- The EIP is comprised of three components:

  - (1) Outreach and Education Services;

  - (2) Clinical Services; and

  - (3) Training and Implementation Support.

- Research is integrated into each of these components and focuses on the development of objective methods for early detection and prediction of disease emergence, progress or recovery; and intervention development to enhance efficacy and effectiveness.

- All EIP activities are guided by a multi-disciplinary Advisory Council, including youth, family, and consumer advocacy

- In FY20, Outreach and education activities were conducted at 16 events reaching 1,583 attendees. Services were provided to approximately 552 individuals (duplicated) and 171 consultations were provided

Strategy 7.3: Streamline the coordination of care for people with disabilities with complex or transitional health care needs

- ***Identify partnerships between behavioral health and somatic health care practitioners***

  Progress update

  o 102 providers approved as Health Homes:

  o 343 Psychiatric Rehabilitation Providers

  o 30 Mobile Treatment/Assertive Community Treatment Teams and

  o 62 Opioid Treatment Programs

Family and/or Peer Support

Outcome

Expanded access to family supports

Strategies

Strategy 8.1: Expand supports and protections for families with disabilities across the lifespan

- ***Establish Community of Practice framework to support families of persons with intellectual disabilities across the lifespan.***

  o In FY 2019 the MD CoP for Supporting Families, hosted the *MD Family and Advocate Leadership Summit*. The DDA and the DDC co-sponsored the summit and the University of Missouri Kansas City National CoP Leadership Team facilitated it. The purpose was threefold; 1) to enhance the knowledge and skills of family and advocate leadership, 2) to develop vision for Advocates and Families in Maryland, and 3) to strengthen the foundation of stakeholder competence and confidence in implementing the Charting the LifeCourse (CtLC) to further the work initiated through the state's participation in the National Community of Practice for Supporting Families.

§ During the summit, three focus areas for enhancement were identified and prioritized based on stakeholder feedback, as well as the ability of CtLC Ambassadors to implement policy, practice, and procedure changes in these areas. The focus areas include:

· Infants/Toddlers (Early Childhood);

· Transition to Adulthood;

· Providers/LTSS.

o Following the Summit, two *Visioning and Planning* sessions, facilitated by UMKC IHD, were scheduled in February 2020 to brainstorm and further refine the focuses of each of the priority areas to prepare for specific action planning to effect system change. Extensive work was completed to develop a vision for each area, associated challenges, next steps, strategies and partners.

o In March of 2020 COVID-19 struck, greatly hampering the work of the state's CoP and delaying its Annual Meeting. Normally scheduled for June, and attended in person, it instead took place virtually over the course of three months in July, August, and September. During this time, the CoP reorganized its structure to better include members of local CoPs to further benefit and include stakeholders and effect systems change to enhance the lives of people with developmental disabilities and their families across the lifespan. It reframed its vision for supporting families to serve as an advisory resource for a variety of systems, councils, tasks forces and the broader community; to be a clearing house of information and activity related to CoP and CtLC; and to provide support (education, training opportunities, and technical assistance) to early adopters of CtLC (i.e. community organizations, families, and self-advocates, etc.) to build on the critical work it has already done, and further systems change.

o Consequently, the members of the state CoP have increased awareness and advanced consensus on CtLC as a framework for supporting individuals with I/DD and their families. And, they have initiated and or furthered systems change within their respective organizations and communities.

· Highlights 2019-20

o The MD CoP Leadership Team expanded its membership from 18 to 20, welcoming representatives from the *Ethiopian Eritrean Special Needs Community, and The One World Center for Autism*

o MD local CoP held 32 meetings throughout the state, with a total of 318 attendees, of which 224 were families, 13 self-advocates, and 81 other stakeholders.

o 9 new CtLC Ambassadors were certified, bringing the state total to 22

· Leadership Team members utilized CtLC to initiate and further system change within their respective organizations.

o *The DDA* employed the principles of CtLC to:

§ Communicate more effectively with individuals with DD, their families and other stakeholders regarding policy updates and changes, COVID -19, Appendix - K, Electronic Visit Verification, services, and waiver amendments etc.   Appendix K includes unique flexibilities aimed at supporting families, i.e. residential services may be provided in the family home, with family members working as staff; the amount of peer supports and education provided to families has been increased; and the purchasing of technology has been made easier allowing people and families to remain connected while staying safe at home.

§ Develop and release over 25 easy to read one-page At-A-Glance documents describing the various flexibilities within Appendix K that have been compiled into a manual for families and people with Developmental Disabilities in our service delivery system.

§ Host a series of interactive webcasts designed to increase family engagement, where people receiving services and their families can speak directly to the DDA leadership about their experiences and ideas. We have been fortunate to have an epidemiologist who provided educational information about COVID-19, assisted the DDA in creating a toolkit, resources and, developed guidance to assist with the delivery of community-based services in response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak

§ Launch the MD CoP for Supporting Families bi-weekly webinar series to address concerns families were and continue to face during this pandemic. CtLC principles and tools are utilized in each webinar to assist people and family's problem solve and plan during this challenging time. Examples of topics addressed include, Remaining Connected, Trauma Informed Care, Q&A with DDA and, Transition from school, as well as reopening of meaningful day services, etc.

§ Develop a survey for people in services and their families, providing them with an opportunity to share their experiences during the pandemic and their hopes and ideas for systems change, moving forward.

o *The MD Developmental Disabilities Council* provided and continues to fund several projects which includes but are not limited to; *Expectations Matter: "My Life, My Plan, My Choice," Assistive Technology Supports for Students, Addressing the Technology Needs of People with Developmental Disabilities, Partners in Policymaking*, and *Serving on Groups That Make Decisions: A Guide for Families*.

o *The MD State Department of Education* has introduced and provided training on CtLC to staff manning their Family Resource Centers, and to Transition Coordinators

o *People on the Go is using CtLC* to reframe its internal structures and self-advocacy curriculum.

o *The Parents' Place of MD* incorporates the principles and tools of CtLC within its training on Transition

o *SEEC* utilizes CtLC to support their staff and their development, enabling them better support and work with families. In addition, it is utilizing CtLC to evaluate its current policies, programs and practices to better support people and families

o *Towson University –*

§ The Department of Special Education hosted a CtLC workshop for undergraduate and graduate students, current faculty, and community members.

§ Received a grant from MSDE to capture and evaluate data related to the inclusion of CtLC in its Transition curriculum.

§ Will be presenting at the *2021 Conference Council for Exceptional Children*, an international organization, to specifically address approaches to improve collaboration between educators and families from a variety of backgrounds. The goal is to highlight how person centered approaches, such as Charting the Life Course and other frames, can be used to aid in the visioning process and support the development of transition plans and individualized education programs for students with autism and intellectual disabilities.

o In spite of COVID-19, the MD CoP for Supporting Families identified, initiated, engaged, and supported a multitude of activities, transformational in nature, taking place in Maryland to affect systems change, to enhance the lives of people with developmental disabilities and their families across the lifespan.

Criminal Justice
Outcome

Appropriate interactions with law enforcement and public safety services
Strategies

Strategy 9.1: Expand advocate-driven awareness within the criminal justice, law enforcement and public safety systems

- **Through the Ethan Saylor Alliance, train people with intellectual disabilities to provide community inclusion trainings to law enforcement**

  ○ MDOD has an established contract with Loyola University of Maryland to prepare and support a cohort of self-advocates to serve as trainers alongside law enforcement.

    ■ 12 Self-Advocates were trained

    ■ 4 training sessions in FY20.

    ■ 90 law enforcement professionals trained

Strategy 9.2: Ensure that people with disabilities involved with the juvenile or criminal justice system receive appropriate supports and services

- *Collect data on the number of people who have been court-ordered to psychiatric facilities*

  ○ Number of individuals admitted in FY 2020 with a Forensic Admission Status:

    ■ State Psychiatric Facilities: 817

    ■ RTC/RICAs: 22

Accessible Communication

- State agencies will be accessible, provide effective communication, and promote quality service delivery for individuals with disabilities.

- Accessible communication, critical to seamless service delivery, includes ensuring that eligibility criteria and application processes are clear and accessible.

- Current and new rules and policies are communicated to service providers and recipients; and coordination among agencies, particularly those serving overlapping constituents, is consistent.

One area that was identified for particular focus was ensuring that systems designed to convey and receive emergency information are accessible to everyone. In addition, the State Disabilities Plan will track efforts to ensure that all government communications are accessible and transparent.

Emergency Preparedness

Outcome

Appropriate, accessible communication during emergencies

Strategies

Strategy 10.1: Ensure that print and auditory emergency broadcasts and resources provided at shelters and recover centers are in accessible formats

- *__Work with the State and local emergency managers to ensure that the communications shared during emergencies are accessible__*

    - MDOD ensures that people with disabilities have communication supports at state sponsored COVID-19 test sites and alternate care facilities.

    - MDOD has invested in assistive technology and communication devices to ensure equal access to communication. These investments include remote video interpreters on demand, handheld devices, and the required internet capabilities.

    - MDOD has invested in large screen electronic message signage to provide critical information in large print, reverse contrast, and multiple languages for individuals in mass care/emergency shelters, disaster recovery centers, and repatriation operations

○ MDOD is a voting member of NG911 Commission

● ***Develop a training on providing accessible communications during emergencies for State and local emergency managers***

  ○ MDOD has trained several emergency managers and public information officers on how to make web products, critical alerts/information and social media accessible to individuals who use assistive technology

  ○ MDOD had embedded a communications specialist with the COVID-19 Communications team to ensure videos and other products are accessible.

  ○ MDOD has a team of accessibility specialists conducting accessibility testing and analysis of state sponsored COVID-19 web pages and digital products.

Strategy 10.2: Ensure that the needs of the disability community are included in emergency management plans

● ***Work with MEMA to develop an executive summary for FEMA Region III detailing progress on programs and initiatives for emergency preparedness and response for people with disabilities***

  ○ MDOD's Director of Emergency Preparedness continues to review the Emergency Operations Plans of local jurisdictions, upon request.

  ○ MDOD is the State Coordinating Function (SCF) lead for Whole Community preparedness, response, and recovery in the State Emergency Operations Plan

● ***Working with MEMA to develop a curriculum to train emergency managers on how to provide emergency shelter people with disabilities***

- ○ MDOD Director of Emergency Preparedness continues to train state and local entities on the Disabilities, Access and Functional Needs toolkit for emergency managers.

- ● ***Represent the needs of people with disabilities and serve as a subject matter expert at the State Emergency Operation Center to provide disability resources during emergencies***
  - ○ MDOD is a member of MEMA's State Hazard Mitigation Plan steering committee
  - ○ MDOD's Director of Emergency Preparedness participated in several state activations and periods of enhanced monitoring in 2019
  - ○ 2 Activations
  - ○ Ongoing activation for COVID-19 Response
  - ○ 9 Periods of Enhanced Monitoring for Tropical Storms (7)
  - ○ Hurricane (1)

Access Maryland

Outcome 11

Equal opportunity for participation in State government

Strategy 11.1: Ensure that government buildings and programs are accessible to all people with disabilities

- ● **Provide funding to State agencies to make ADA improvements to State buildings**
  - ○ At the close of FY20 there were:
    - ■ 12 projects awarded with FY20 funds
    - ■ 16 active projects
    - ■ 7 completed projects

■ 8 State facilities with increased access due to the completion of these projects

Technology

Outcome 11

Equal opportunity for participation in State government

Strategy

Strategy 11.2: Ensure that government websites and other communications are accessible

- ***MDOD will continue to work with State agencies to promote awareness of website and document accessibility***
  - MDOD has fully incorporated the two designated positions within the MD Technology Assistance Program (MDTAP) and the positions fulfill all prior requirements listed in the 2019 Joint Chairman's Report such as:
    - Conducting regular accessibility reviews of state agency websites
    - Providing accessible training to state agencies
    - Providing technical assistance to state agency website developers.
  - The IT Accessibility Graduate Internship was implemented with University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC) supporting the IT Access team in evaluating State websites for accessibility and other related services of the IT Accessibility Initiative team.

FY 20 Updates
  - The program development of the Statewide IT Accessibility Initiative has been a multiyear project.
  - FY20 is the first year where the accessibility team includes two full-time staff and the foundational interagency partnerships were established with DoIT and DGS.

- The Maryland Department of Disabilities Information Technology (IT) Accessibility Initiative supports state agencies to meet Maryland's Non-Visual Access standards.

- The IT Accessibility Initiative's purposes are to improve policies and practices in state IT procurement and ensure equal access to state agency information technology for citizens with disabilities.

- The IT Accessibility Initiative staff provide the following supports and services:

    - Evaluations of technology platforms

    - Consultation

    - Technical assistance

    - Information technology accessibility training

State Website Reviews

- Within the MDOD and DoIT partnership, MDOD has conducted ongoing accessibility testing on all state websites managed by DoIT, and provides continuous technical assistance on these websites.

Online Website Accessibility Notification Form

- MDOD established an online Information Technology Accessibility Concern Form for state employees and Maryland constituents to report accessibility issues regarding website access, online document accessibility issues, and other IT access issues.

- This form is located on the MDOD IT Accessibility Initiative webpage and was shared widely with all Maryland State agencies for incorporation on their websites. MDOD monitors and evaluates submitted reports and provides technical assistance and training to agencies.

COVID-19

- Starting in March 2020 and the COVID-19 State of Emergency, there was and continues to be an urgent need for increasing IT accessibility with an often quick turnaround.

- To ensure an expedited review of COVID-19 content issued by any state agency, MDOD established a process to prioritize state agency requests for evaluation of COVID-19 website content, documents, and applications for accessibility.

  - ➢ The team continues to be on-call for any COVID-19 website accessibility technical assistance ensuring critical up-to-date COVID-19 information is accessible.

Outcome 12

Increased transparent and timely information about government services

Strategies

Strategy 12.1: Utilize technology to streamline communication about services among agencies, providers, and individuals with disabilities

Work with rural regions to improve internet connection to underserved regions of the State

- The 2020 [POWER (Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization)](#) Initiative supported several broadband projects that reinforced economic diversification in the Region's coal impacted communities in Appalachia. POWER is a congressionally funded initiative that targets federal resources to help communities and regions that have been affected by job losses in coal mining, coal power plant operations, and coal-related supply chain industries due to the changing economics of America's energy production. More than half of the 51 approved projects, $43.3 million in total investment, will be used to support recovery to work efforts or strengthen the Region's broadband infrastructure needs. However, there were no broadband infrastructure projects submitted in our region of Appalachia.

- The FY21 Energy and Water Development Appropriations Bill, which contains ARC's funding for the coming fiscal year, was approved in July. The bill contained $175 million for ARC, the same as FY20. The report that accompanied the bill provided the guidance on how the Commission should allocate some of the funds, those items are listed below.

  - o $65 million is for POWER (an increase over this year's $45 million shown above)

- o $10 million for projects focused on workforce reentry strategies for people who have achieved long-term recovery from a substance abuse disorder

- o $10 million to continue a program of high-speed broadband deployment in distressed counties within Central Appalachia

- o $15 million to support economic development, manufacturing, and entrepreneurship in Northern Appalachia

Strategy 12.3: Engage in trainings and outreach activities designed to share information and solicit stakeholder feedback

Outreach and public awareness events about assistive technology

- In FY20, MDTAP provided direct information and assistance to 714 constituents; conducted over 135 public awareness events across the state of Maryland, and provided assistive technology training to 353 participants.

Customer Service
Outcome 12

Increased transparent and timely information about government services

Strategy

Strategy 12.2: Reduce response time and ensure ongoing communication with people seeking information about services and eligibility determinations

Develop plans to track customer service data

- All State agencies were required to develop and implement customer services strategies which include tracking customer service data for FY19. These reports are published to each agency's website. Each agency is required to continue customer service plan implementation with a new annual report due for FY20 in October 2020.

- Highlights of the FY20Report

Social Media Usage to Improve the Customer Experience

- MDOD uses social media platforms to inform and engage with our constituents about important issues and events.
  - For the coming fiscal year, MDOD plans to add more interactive features to MDOD's pages as well as increase the number of videos. MDOD is also planning a podcast series to increase the public's understanding about disability issues and how our department operates.
    - Facebook
      - Followers: 4,698
      - Daily Post Reach: 129,273
      - Daily Page Engagement: 11,546

    - Twitter
      - Followers: 2,805
      - New followers: (average per month) 11
      - Mentions: (average per month) 9
      - Impressions: (average per month) 398

- The Maryland Department of Disabilities tracks customer service data in response to all constituent requests for assistance or complaints. This information is reported to the full department monthly via aggregate data regarding county of caller and issue type.
- The most important aspect of the customer experience with our department is efficient, accurate, and accessible information. For most calls, our constituents are frustrated and confused by complicated service delivery systems provided by other agencies or private entities. We strive to provide answers and clear instructions, recognizing that when constituents call out of desperation, listening empathically cannot be replaced. The two highest scoring categories continue to be on our Customer Service Surveys (at 93% satisfaction rating) were "Truthful and Transparent" and "Made it Easy to Handle". As a department focused on policy, we do not have direct control over the services provided by other entities. Our customer service department works diligently with other state and local agencies to resolve issues with constituents.
- We continue to recognize outstanding customer service performers during our staff meetings and provide ongoing training for all staff in customer service. A three question Customer Experience Survey is available on our website for citizens and businesses to provide feedback. Results are used to make improvements to services.
- Another top goal is to provide resources and support so all government communication is accessible for those with varying

communication needs. Our department strives to ensure all communications (website, documents, social media, etc.) are in accessible formats.

Develop plans to improve communications with people waiting for determination of eligibility for services

● Per the Maryland Department of Disabilities FY20 Customer Service Plan, MDOD has analyzed processes and implemented changes to the Attendant Care Program (ACP) to improve processes for eligibility and recertification. Online service delivery continues to be a goal.
● MDOD staff met with the Department of Information Technology (DoIT) staff to discuss development of an online portal for ACP participants and applicants. The pandemic has increased the urgency with which the department would like to move to an online format.
● All State agencies were required to develop and implement customer service strategies which include increasing online customer service and response time. The plans have been published on each agency website and the decreased response time goal must be met for FY21.