

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

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



March 25, 2022

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 § 2-1257 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 March 25, 2022

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](mailto:elizabeth.hall2@maryland.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carol A. Beatty". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Carol A. Beatty

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



# **Maryland Department of Disabilities**

## **Annual Progress Analysis**

**2021**

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## **Maryland Department of Disabilities**

### **Overview**

- The Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD) is charged with coordinating and improving the delivery of services to individuals with disabilities in the state of Maryland.
- MDOD, working collaboratively with all State government agencies, provides advocacy and guidance to ensure that State entities deliver services in the most integrated settings possible, develop consistent policies affecting those with disabilities, and consider the diverse needs of all when making decisions which impact Marylanders.
- MDOD focuses on independence and full community membership through its programs which address community living, accessible housing, transportation, employment, education, financial well-being, family support, civil rights, technology assistance and accessible communication.

### **Mission**

Changing Maryland for the better by promoting equality of opportunity, access, and choice for Marylanders with disabilities.

### **Vision**

The Department of Disabilities is committed to the promise of a Maryland in which all people with disabilities have the knowledge and influence to make a difference in their lives and the lives of others.

## Legal Authority

**Human Services Article §7-132 outlines the requirements for the State Disabilities Plan, which is reported on annually in the Department of Disabilities Annual Progress Analysis:**

**(a) Coordination of support services.** The State Disabilities Plan shall provide for the coordination of support services that:

- (1) ensure compliance with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act and other relevant federal and State provisions intended to protect the civil rights of individuals with disabilities;
- (2) are necessary for individuals with disabilities to achieve maximum participation in the mainstream of the community in the most integrated setting possible; and
- (3) address, on a statewide basis, the improvement of:
  - (i) the capacity of communities to support individuals with disabilities with personal attendant care and other long-term care options that are self-directed;
  - (ii) the availability of accessible, integrated, and affordable housing options;
  - (iii) reliable transportation options;
  - (iv) employment and training options, including self-employment and non-congregant competitive opportunities available in an integrated environment in which there are individuals with and without disabilities;
  - (v) somatic and behavioral health options;
  - (vi) accessible and universally designed technology;
  - (vii) support services for children, youth, and their families to enable them to achieve successful learning;
  - (viii) family support services, including respite care; and
  - (ix) crime control, public safety, and correctional services that appropriately take into account the needs and rights of individuals with disabilities

# 2020-2023 State Disabilities Plan and Annual Progress Analysis

## Framework

The Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD) is charged with coordinating and improving the delivery of services to individuals with disabilities in the State of Maryland. MDOD's vision for the next four years is: A Maryland in which all people with disabilities have the knowledge, opportunity, and influence to make a difference in their lives and the lives of others.

By working collaboratively with all State government agencies, the Department of Disabilities provides advocacy and guidance to ensure that State entities deliver services in the most integrated settings possible and develop consistent policies affecting those with disabilities. The current State Disabilities Plan is founded on five guiding principles: Self-Direction, Financial Well-Being, Health and Wellness, Maximizing Resources, and Accessible Communication. These principles are interwoven and integral to each outcome and activity under the current plan.



### **Guiding Principles**

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



### **Outcomes**

The outcomes listed in this plan describe in more detail what progress needs to be made to achieve the guiding principles. These outcomes can and will be measured.



### **Strategies**

The strategies in this document guide the activities that are those most likely to have a widespread, positive impact on stakeholders, contribute to the accomplishment of outcomes, are achievable and measurable, and work together to reinforce each other.



### **Activities**

Activities listed in this document are the broad data collection tools used to measure general, statewide progress towards achieving outcomes 2020-2023 State Disabilities Plan and Annual Progress Analysis

## **Guiding Principles**

### **Self-Direction**

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

- People with disabilities will have the ability to participate in the design of their personal support systems, and the opportunity to live and participate fully in the community in non-congregant settings.
  - This Guiding Principle focuses on ensuring that people have a choice in their support services and housing and maintaining 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.*

- People with disabilities will achieve financial well-being through equal access to education, employment, work incentives and benefits counseling, financial management, and savings programs.
  - This Guiding Principle focuses on common paths to financial independence, including education, employment, and sound financial management.

### **Health and Well-Being**

*Individuals with disabilities will have access to resources and services that promote health and wellness.*

- People with disabilities will improve their quality of life through multidisciplinary and integrative services and supports.
  - This Guiding Principle focuses on developing resources and building capacity in health, behavioral health care, family and peer supports, and improving access to recreational/wellness activities.

### **Maximizing Resources**

*Maryland state agencies and key stakeholders will maximize resources effectively.*

- Maryland state agencies and key stakeholders will refine processes and infrastructure.
  - This Guiding Principle focuses on organizational capacity building and infrastructure development between state and non-state partners to better serve people with disabilities and their families.

### **Accessible Communication**

*Maryland state agencies will be accessible, and communicate information effectively, equitably, and in an accessible format.*

- People with disabilities will have equal access to all state agency communications, programs, and services.
  - This Guiding Principle focuses on ensuring all government communications are accessible, promoting quality service delivery, and acquiring accessible communication services and products for individuals with disabilities.

## 2020-2023 State Disabilities Plan and Annual Progress Analysis

### Outcomes

The outcomes listed below are detailed descriptions of progress that must be made within Maryland's state agencies in order to achieve and reach our measurable goals. These thirteen outcomes directly impact the five main guiding principles – or long-term changes – that are listed above in this plan. These outcomes play an integral role in each of the principles in the following ways:

#### Outcome One

Improved self-directed supports and services for people with disabilities and their families

#### Outcome Seven

Improved physical and behavioral health care for people with disabilities and their families

#### Outcome Two

Improved availability of integrated, affordable, and accessible housing options for people with disabilities and their household

#### Outcome Eight

Improved family and peer support services for people with disabilities and their families

#### Outcome Three

Improved reliable transportation options for people with disabilities

#### Outcome Nine

Improved crime control, public safety, and correctional services emphasizing the needs and rights of people with disabilities

#### Outcome Four

Improved employment and training options, including self-employment and non-congregant competitive opportunities available in an integrated environment in which there are individuals with and without disabilities

#### Outcome Ten

Improved accessible and universally designed communication and technology

#### Outcome Five

Improved educational support services for children, youth, and life-long learners with disabilities

#### Outcome Eleven

Improved disability equity, transparency, and efficiency in state government services

#### Outcome Six

Improved financial stability and independence for people with disabilities and their families

#### Outcome Twelve

Improved access to recreational and wellness activities for people with disabilities and their families

#### Outcome Thirteen

Improved capacity, infrastructure, and coordinated policy implementation in response to and recovery from public health emergencies



## **Self-Direction**

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

People with disabilities will have the ability to participate in the design of their personal support systems, and the opportunity to live and participate fully in the community in non-congregant settings.



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

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### **Applicable Outcomes**

**Outcome One** - Improved self-directed supports and services for people with disabilities and their families

**Outcome Two** - Improved availability of integrated, affordable, and accessible housing options for people with disabilities and their households

**Outcome Three** - Improved reliable transportation options for people with disabilities

**Outcome Thirteen** - Improved capacity, infrastructure, and coordinated policy implementation in response to and recovery from public health emergencies

## **Self-Direction – Outcome One**

### **Improved self-directed supports and services for people with disabilities and their families**

#### **Strategy One**

Improve home and community-based services and programs

**Activity:** Annually collect qualitative and quantitative data and report on improvement in home and community-based services and programs

#### **Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services**

Home and community-based services (HCBS) provide opportunities to receive services in the home or community rather than institutions or other isolated settings.

These programs serve a variety of targeted populations groups, such as people with intellectual or developmental disabilities, physical disabilities, and/or behavioral health.

##### **1. Autism Waiver**

Maryland’s Home and Community Based Services Waiver for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder allows eligible children with autism spectrum disorder to receive specific waiver services and certain Medicaid services to support them in their homes and communities.

Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) annual enrollment numbers

Annual Updates – 2021

- 2021 Enrollment
  - 1,338 eligible children with autism spectrum disorder received specific waiver services and certain Medicaid services to support them in their homes and communities
    - As of June 30, 2021, 5,992 names were on the Autism Waiver Registry

##### **2. Brain Injury Waiver**

Maryland’s Home and Community-Based Services Waiver for Individuals with Brain injury provides specialized community based services to adults with brain injuries who meet program eligibility.

Covered services include: Residential habilitation, Day habilitation, Supported employment, Individual Support Services, Case management, and Medical Day Care.

Eligible individuals must be between the ages of 22 and 64, have sustained a brain injury after the age of 17, require a nursing facility or chronic hospital level of care and reside in a state owned and operated nursing facility, a CARF accredited chronic hospital, or a state psychiatric hospital. An individual’s income and assets are reviewed to determine financial eligibility for Medical Assistance.

Behavioral Health Administration’s annual enrollment numbers

Annual Updates – 2021

- 2021 Enrollment
  - 119 Individuals were enrolled in the Waiver for Individuals with Brain Injury waiver (BI Waiver) in FY21. 118 individuals have been enrolled in the BI Waiver so far in FY22.
- Demand and Capacity
  - The BI Waiver was renewed in FY21 for five additional years. There are 135 available waiver slots in FY22.
  - The BI Waiver renewal included a projected increase of 10 slots each fiscal year. FY22 135 slots, FY23 145 slots, FY24 155 slots, FY25 165 slots, and FY26 175 slots.
  - The renewal also included a change in the individual support service definition, per CMS guidance, and approval to provide this service virtually. COMAR regulations are being modified to reflect these service changes.

**3. Community First Choice**

- 2020 Enrollment
  - 14,929 14,929 individuals with disabilities are participating in the Community First Choice program.

<b>DDA Waivers</b>		
<b><u>Community Supports</u></b>	<b><u>Family Supports</u></b>	<b><u>Community Pathways</u></b>
The Community Supports Waiver helps participants to live more independently in their homes and communities. The program provides a variety of Meaningful Day and Support Services that promote community living, including a self-directed service model and traditional, agency-based service model.	The Family Supports Waiver helps participants to live more independently in their homes and communities. The program provides a variety of Support Services that promote community living, including a self-directed service model and traditional, agency-based service model.	The Community Pathways Waiver helps participants to live more independently in their homes and communities. The program provides a variety of Meaningful Day, Support, and Residential Services that promote community living, including a self-directed service model and traditional, agency-based service model
<b>2021 Annual Enrollment</b>		
1,357 Community Support participants	309 Family Support Participants	15,499 Community Pathways participants

**Social Services to Adults (SSTA )**

MDOD and the Department of Human Services (DHS) administer state programs which financially assist or give access to daily living supports to

remain in their own home or in the community.

## 1. Attendant Care Program (In-home aide supports)

The Attendant Care Program (ACP) 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.

Annual Updates – 2021

- 2021 Enrollment
  - Annual participant enrollment: 165
    - Annual number/percentage at risk of nursing home
      - 96 participants (58%)
    - Annual number/percentage school, looking for work and working 69 participants (42%)
- Information on the demand and capacity for the program (data can be qualitative and/or quantitative)
  - Annual number of applicants on waitlist: 69
  - Annual number of participants on the registry: 58
    - Per COMAR, the ACP must maintain a waiting list of eligible applicants.
    - The Program has developed a registry, separate from the waiting list allowing people to express interest in participating in the program by self-reporting information about their medical and financial eligibility.
      - This ensures a limited time frame from when a person completes the application, submits supporting documentation, and is enrolled in the program and can start receiving benefits.)
  - From historical enrollment numbers and with the current maximum reimbursement allowed under the program, it is estimated that 180 people can be enrolled at any given time
- Annual discussion on agency's target goals (targets for % of nursing home, student, looking for work) and plan for next year's target goals
  - The Program's priority is to enroll more people who meet the criteria of working/looking for work/enrolled in postsecondary education. The regulations stipulate that at least 50% must meet this eligibility category. Targeting and enrolling people in this category will continue to be the Program's top priority in this year and subsequent ones.
  - The Department seeks to target programs, organizations, and agencies that support this demographic and will create revised materials to be distributed.

## 2. In-Home Aides Service Program (In-home supports)

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.

### **3. Maryland Access Point (information and referrals for independent living services)**

- Maryland Access Point (MAP) was established as the single-entry point for individuals seeking long term support services and a range of community supports.
- Maryland's 20 local MAP sites aim to assist consumers to navigate the complex system of services through individual, person-centered counseling.
- 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.

#### Annual Updates - 2021

- During FY2021 (October 1 - Sept. 30, 2021) Maryland Access Point (MAP) provided a total of 16,742 units of application assistance related to LTSS services.
- Additionally, in FY2021 MAP conducted 8,861 Level One Screens to refer individuals to the CO Waiver registry.
- A total of 16,448 in depth interviews for LTSS were conducted, 8,752 (53.2%) of which included a written action plan for LTSS.

- The MAP network served a total of 49,469 clients in FFY2021.
  - This population consisted of 41,786 persons (84.4%) age 60 and over, 6,360 persons (12.8%) ages 21-59, and 553 (0.01%) persons ages 20 and below.
  - Statewide I&R referrals at the MAP sites as it relates to LTSS: 159,125
  - In-depth interviews as it relates to LTSS: 8,861

## Strategy Two

Improve choice and self-direction within supports programs

**Activity:** Annually collect qualitative and quantitative data and report on improvement in choice and self-direction within supports programs.

1. **DDA Self-Direction Option under Medicaid Waivers (Family Supports Waiver, Community Supports Waiver, Community Pathways Waiver)**

Annual enrollment numbers from DDA

- FY21 Enrollment
  - 1,773 participants utilizing the self-directed service delivery model in one of the DDA operated Medicaid Waiver programs (i.e., Community Pathways, Family Supports, and Community Supports)

• **Methods to improve person-centered planning process for people in the DDA Community Pathways waiver (e.g. Supports Intensity Scale and/or other assessment tool and/or other methods)**

Annual Updates - 2021

- The DDA continues to work with Telligon, the contractor that was awarded the Level of Need contract. Telligon is responsible for conducting Supports Intensity Scale (SIS) assessments on all persons entering service. The contract was paused from 2/1/21-4/22/21 due to contract modification and approval process.
- Nov 2020-Nov 2021:
  - Central Maryland Regional Office - 1,677
  - Eastern Shore Regional Office- 126
  - Southern Maryland Regional Office- 921
  - Western Maryland Regional Office-251

## Strategy Three

Improve delivery of services in the most integrated and least-restrictive setting possible

**Activity:** Annually collect qualitative and quantitative data and report on improvement in services being delivered in the most integrated, least-restrictive setting possible

- **Medicaid Community-Based Setting/Any Setting**

Annual 2021 Updates

- Medicaid provided services to 48,989 people in any setting
  - (56%) 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 24,401 individuals who received DDA services in FY21,
  - 24,297 (99%) lived in the community.

- **DDA Community-Based Setting/Any Setting**

Annual Updates - 2021

- The majority of DDA's enrollees are served in home or community-based settings:
  - Of the 24,401 individuals who received DDA services in FY21,
    - 24,297 (99%) lived in the community.

- **BHA Community-Based Setting/Any Setting**

BHA's annual numbers of adults with disabilities being served in any settings and community-based settings

Annual Updates - 2021

- Number of people being served by BHA in any setting: 285,764
- Number of people being served in community-based setting: 283,947

- **Nursing facility residents' readiness to transition into community living using the MDS 3.0 Section Q assessment tool**

Number of assessments administered by MDH

Annual Updates - 2021

- 7473 Level One Screens completed
- 35 Options Counselling referrals that were triggered by the MDS 3.0 Section Q assessment tool
- 70 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
- 24 trainings related to supporting individuals with disabilities in housing

- **Money Follows the Person Demonstration Project, and community transition eligible individuals residing in nursing facilities and state psychiatric hospitals**

- Number of nursing facilities and state psychiatric hospitals transitions into home and community-based waivers (broken down by waiver

Annual Updates - 2021

- 2021 Numbers
  - Community Options Waiver: 144
  - Brain Injury: 8
  - DDA: 1
    - Total: 153
- Next Year's Goals
  - MDH has a goal of 333 transitions for next year
    - Community Options Waiver: 303
    - Brain Injury: 10
    - DDA: 20
  - The COVID pandemic caused a disruption in the number of transitions and the state was waiting for MFP to be reauthorized by Congress resulting in a period of time where efforts were further halted.

- **Money Follows the Person Demonstration Project, Options Counseling and service to nursing facility residents who are considering moving into the community**

Annual Updates - 2021

- 2021 Number of options counseling referrals, MDOD/Medicaid



- 2032 referrals for Options Counseling were made for nursing facility residents who expressed an interest in community transitions

- Referrals were significantly impacted during the pandemic as a result of limited nursing facility access.

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

- Annual Updates - 2021

- 2021 Number of ongoing peer support referrals.
      - 263 referrals were made for Ongoing Peer Support
    - Information on the demand for the peer support
      - Efforts have been made to standardize the provision of Ongoing Peer Support Services across contractors.
      - Enhanced training opportunities are being discussed among MDH and MDOD for the contractors and strategies are being explored to improve collaboration with the Supports Planning Agencies.

## **Self - Direction - Outcome Two**

### **Improved availability of integrated, affordable, and accessible housing options for people with disabilities and their households**

#### **Strategy One**

Improve quantity of and access to integrated, affordable, and accessible rental housing in Maryland.

**Activity:** Annually collect qualitative and quantitative data and report on improvement of availability and access to integrated, affordable, and accessible rental housing in Maryland

#### **1. Section 811 program**

Annual Updates - 2021

- To date 327 Section 811 units have been identified, exceeding the anticipated unit count of 300.
  - For FY21, the Section 811 program, there are ntl 232 units occupied, leasing in process for 6 and 7 in construction.

#### **2. Weinberg Apartments**

Annual Updates - 2021

- 27 households are in the Weinberg Apartments with 1 unit in construction. 1 participant passed away
- DHCD received an award in 2020 from the Weinberg Foundation of \$3 million to fund additional affordable units for people with disabilities.
- MDOD has identified units in Ellicott Gardens II and Artist Flats to participate in the new round of funding. MDOD has done outreach to the new priority populations, with targeted outreach to DHS Foster Care case managers.

#### **3. Interagency Bridge Subsidy housing programs**

Annual Updates - 2021

- 63 individuals have been housed using the MFP Bridge Subsidy program and 38 individuals currently residing in units.

#### **4. Housing activities targeted to address homelessness among persons with disabilities through the Continuum of Care Program**

##### Annual Updates - 2021

- In FY 2021, MDOD's Secretary continued to serve as the Chair of the Interagency Council on Homelessness (IAC) but the group's meetings were suspended by staff within the Homeless Solutions Program (HSP) at DHCD, who were tasked with obligating funds for emergency rental assistance and housing vouchers, allocated by the US Treasury and HUD to states.
- MDOD's Director of Housing Policy and Programs (DHPP) has continued attending the Balance of State Continuum of Care (CoC) board meetings, serving on the performance review committee most recently for the CoC Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) released by HUD. Several projects from Local Homelessness Coalitions (LHCs) were reviewed and ranked, scored for their alignment with the goals and policy priorities of the NOFA.
- 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 conversation about the use of Mainstream Vouchers in DHCD's Eastern Shore and Western Maryland jurisdictions, which have been historically underutilized, and ways that this program can be better targeted to the appropriate population.

### **Strategy Two**

Improve homeownership for people and households with disabilities

**Activity:** Annually collect qualitative and quantitative data and report on improvement in homeownership for people and households with disabilities

#### 1. 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.

##### Annual Updates - 2021

- o FY21
  - o Number of loans: 25

## Strategy Three

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

**Activity:** Annually collect qualitative and quantitative data and report on improvement in home- modification and assistive technology that help people remain in their homes

### 1. Christopher Reeves Temporary Ramp Loan Program

Annual Updates - 2021

- MDOD's FY21 number of ramps loaned and returned
  - 12 ramps were actively loaned through the statewide portable ramp program
  - 15 ramps were returned during this period
- Information on the demand for the Christopher Reeves grant (data can be qualitative and/or quantitative) –
  - In FY21, the data indicates that consumers are using these ramps when the ramp can accommodate their needs while maintaining adherence to ADA compliance.
  - Every region in the state has conducted ramp loans during FY21 and facilitated the return of ramps actively on loan.
  - MDOD can also identify consumers borrow the ramps for anywhere between 120 to 180 days before returning the ramps with an identified long-term solution in place.
- Annual discussion on agency's target goals and plan for next year's target goals –
  - As COVID restrictions ease and people continue to return to active engagements in the community and as constituents return home from nursing facilities, MDOD expects a continued, steady use of the portable ramps.

### 2. Home modifications through the Assistive Technology Loan Program

- MDOD's annual number of loans
  - FY21- 10 home modification loan requests
- Dollar amount of loans  
\$75,324
- Number of applications processed
  - 10 of the 10 home modification loans were processed
- Number of loans approved
  - 4 home modification loans approved
    - 2 approved and closed, 1 approved & closing is pending, 1 closed without needing loan guarantee,

- The remaining 6 either were either withdrawn or declined
- Number of loans issued to purchase technology
  - The number of home modification loans that closed/issued was 2
- Number of open loans managed
  - Collectively, the number of all loans managed by the ATLP is 203.
- Information on the demand for the Assistive Technology Loan Program
  - The ATLP has been seeing a slight uptick in the number of home modification loan requests.
- Annual discussion on agency's target goals and plan for next year's target goals
  - The loan programs target goals for home modification loans is to increase the number by 6 loans.

## **Self-Direction - Outcome Three**

### **Improved reliable transportation options for people with disabilities**

#### **Strategy One**

Improve effectiveness of paratransit services

**Activity:** Annually collect qualitative and quantitative data and report on improvement in the effectiveness of paratransit services

#### **1. Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) and Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Paratransit Rides**

MTA and WMATA's annual number of paratransit rides given to Maryland residents with disabilities

##### 2021 Updates

- MTA annual number of paratransit rides
  - Annual number of paratransit rides provided, excluding Call-a-Ride
    - 1,040,23
  - Annual number of paratransit Call-a-Ride trips provided
    - 537,544
- WMATA
  - Annual number of paratransit rides provided to Maryland residents
    - 633,042

#### **2. Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) and Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) On-time performance**

##### 2021 Updates

- MTA On-time performance
  - In 2021 MTA provided paratransit provided on time service (excluding Call-a-Ride) 89% of the time
  - WMATA On-time performance
    - In 2021 WMATA provided paratransit provided on time service system wide 96% of the time

## Strategy Two

Improve public transportation ridership among people with disabilities

**Activity:** Annually collect qualitative and quantitative data and report on improvement of public transportation ridership among people with disabilities

1. Monitor the utilization of fixed routes for riders with disabilities
  - MTA and WMATA annual number of disability passes used on fixed route transportation
    - MTA: 34,002
    - WMATA:26,607

## Strategy Three

Improve coordinated cross-jurisdictional transportation options for riders with disabilities

**Activity:** Increase state disability transportation representation

1. Transportation entities which currently have disability representation (boards/commissions/taskforces)

### Annual Updates - 2021

- MDOD is engaged with MTA staff and the Citizens Advisory Committee for Accessible Transportation (CACAT)
  - The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) is committed to providing the highest possible level of reliable, affordable, convenient and accessible service to all its customers. In order to establish and maintain consistent and responsive communications between the MTA and its customers, improve the quality of service from a customer's point of view, provide for direct input to management about customer perception of service, and to facilitate inclusion of customer observations into service monitoring and modification, the MTA has established a volunteer Citizens Advisory Committee for Accessible Transportation (CACAT).

## Strategy Four

Improve private transportation for people with disabilities (transportation provided by self, family, friends, providers, ride sharing apps)

**Activity:** Annually collect qualitative and quantitative data and report on improvement in private transportation for people with disabilities (transportation provided by self, family, friends, providers, ride sharing apps)

### 1. Vehicle Adaptation Costs

#### 2021 Updates

- MDTAP assistive technology loan vehicle adaptations statistics
  - Annual number of adapted vehicle loans: 19
  - Annual amount for adapted vehicle loans: \$606,278.31.
  - Types of vehicle adaptations utilized: Wheelchair accessible vehicles, hand controls.
  - Average Vehicle Adaptation Costs:
    - Average Cost: \$31,909.28.
  - Annual discussion on agency's target goals and plan for next year's target goals:
    - The loan programs target goals for adapted vehicles loans is to increase the number by 10 loans



## Self-Direction - Outcome Thirteen

### **Improved capacity, infrastructure, and coordinated policy implementation in response to and recovery from public health emergencies**

#### **Strategy One – Response**

Improve self-direction capacity, infrastructure, and coordinated policy implementation in response to public health emergencies

**Activity:** Annually collect qualitative and quantitative data and report on improvement in self-direction capacity, infrastructure, and coordinated policy implementation in response to public health emergencies

#### Response

##### 2020

- **Improved state self-direction capacity in Maryland's COVID-19 response by:**
  - Facilitating PPE grants for providers
  - Facilitating discussions with community stakeholders about federal CARES ACT funding allocation
  - Providing COVID-19 safe alternative drive-thru recognition events for direct support professionals.
  
- **Improved state self-direction infrastructure in Maryland's COVID-19 response by:**
  - Having MDOD staff detailed to Maryland Emergency Management Administration (MEMA) and collaborating with state partners for whole community preparedness and response for people with disabilities
  - Collaborating with state partners to provide more COVID-19 supports and supplies to congregant living settings
  - Collaborating with state partners to provide more COVID-19 supports and supplies to participants who self-direct services
  - Collaborating with state partners on the COVID 19 needs of transitioning students
  
- **Improved state self - direction policy coordination in Maryland's COVID-19 response by:**
  - Developing and implementing Medicaid emergency waivers (ex: Appendix K)
  - Expanding state guidance on what is an essential business to include

- organizations serving people with intellectual/ developmental disabilities
- Assisting in the development of the Governor's Executive Order designating paid community caregivers (direct support professionals) as essential healthcare workers
  - Developing and implementing Medicaid emergency waivers (ex: Appendix K)
- Modifying housing tenant trainings obligations to be completed remotely via phone call or virtual meeting
- Collaborating with state partners to develop
  - Hospital visitation guidance for Access to Support for Patients with Disabilities in Hospital Settings and a subsequent FAQ
  - Face coverings and face shields guidance and a subsequent FAQ

## **Strategy Two -- Recovery**

Improved self-direction capacity, infrastructure, and coordinated policy implementation in recovery from public health emergencies

**Activity:** Annually collect qualitative and quantitative data and report on improvement in self- direction capacity, infrastructure, and coordinated policy implementation in recovery from public health emergencies

### Recovery

2021

- **Improved state self-direction capacity in Maryland's COVID-19 recovery by:**
  - Collaborating with state partners in the Maryland vaccine rollout to include ADA reasonable accommodations, vaccine priority groups, and creating disability-specific vaccination sites partnering with non-profits and pharmacies.
  - Collaborating with state partners in the Maryland Nonprofit Recovery Initiative, providing grant assistance to nonprofits specifically targeting the BHA/DDA community.
- **Improved state self-direction infrastructure in Maryland's COVID-19 recovery by:**
  - Providing assistive technology equipment, training, and technical assistance for vaccine sites throughout Maryland

including customized disability clinics

- **Improved state self-direction policy coordination in Maryland's COVID-19 recovery by:**
  - Collaborating with state and non-state partners on reopening efforts and Appendix K

## **Financial Well-Being**

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

People with disabilities will achieve financial well-being through equal access to education, employment, work incentives and benefits counseling, financial management, and savings programs.



This **Guiding Principle** focuses on common paths to financial independence, including education, employment, and sound financial management.

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### **Applicable Outcomes**

**Outcome Four** - Improved employment and training options, including self-employment and non-congregant competitive opportunities available in an integrated environment in which there are individuals with and without disabilities

**Outcome Five** - Improved educational support services for children, youth, and life-long learners with disabilities

**Outcome Six** - Improved financial stability and independence for people with disabilities and their families.

**Outcome Thirteen** - Improved capacity, infrastructure, and coordinated policy implementation in response to and recovery from public health emergencies

## **Financial Well-Being - Outcome Four**

**Improved employment and training options, including self-employment and non- congregant competitive opportunities available in an integrated environment in which there are individuals with and without disabilities**

### **Strategy One**

Improve employment services, training, and supports for youth and adults with disabilities

**Activity:** Annually collect qualitative and quantitative data and report on improvement in employment services, training, and supports for youth and adults with disabilities

#### **1. Pre-Employment Transition Services (DORS)**

##### 2021 Updates

- Annual number of youths served through Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)
  - 5,917 youth served through Pre-ETS

#### **2. Competitive, integrated employment (DORS)**

##### 2021 Updates

- Annual number of people receiving employment services from DORS
  - 19,124 receiving employment services from DORS
  - 847 individuals obtained competitive integrated employment

#### **3. Employment Services (Developmental Disabilities Administration)**

##### 2021 Updates

- Annual number of people receiving employment services from DDA
  - 13,426 people received day or employment services
  - 2,605 people and integrated and competitive jobs

#### **4. Supported employment (Behavioral Health Administration)**

Annual number of people receiving supported employment services

##### 2021 Updates

- 2,722 people receiving supported employment services from the Behavioral Health Administration

- **Mental Health, Evidence- Based and Traditional Supported Employment (DORS)**

Annual number of people in Mental Health, Evidence- Based and Traditional Supported Employment supported employment

- FY21:
  - Mental Health Supported Employment: 517
  - People in Evidence-Based Supported Employment: 2,219
  - People in Traditional Supported Employment: 984
    - Total Supported Employment: 3,702

## **Strategy Two**

Improve participation of people with disabilities in public vocational and career services programs

**Activity:** Annually collect qualitative and quantitative data and report on improvement in participation of people with disabilities in public vocational and career services programs

### **1. Maryland Department of Labor**

Annual 2021 Updates

- Annual number of people with disabilities served through America’s Job Center
  - 6,878
- Number of people with disabilities obtaining employment:
  - 2,401
- Labor’s annual Number of jobseekers with disabilities in MWE who obtain employment
  - 408

## **Strategy Three**

Improve state employment and state internship opportunities for people with disabilities

**Activity:** Annually collect qualitative and quantitative data and report on improvement in state employment and state internship opportunities

### **1. State Employment Opportunities**

Annual Updates – 2021

- 158 employees were hired who checked on their application that they had a disability and received the additional five points in their score

## 2. State Internship Opportunities

### 3. Annual Updates - 2021

- The QUEST Internship Program, a partnership of DORS, 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, no individuals participated in the QUEST Internship Program due to the COVID-19 State of Emergency.

## **Financial Well-Being - Outcome Five**

### **Improved educational support services for children, youth, and life-long learners with disabilities**

#### **Strategy Three**

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

**Activity:** Annually collect qualitative and quantitative data and report on improvement in coordination and outcomes for students' transition from school to post-school education, employment, and training

#### **1. Support as many students with disabilities to leave school with a diploma \**

Annual Updates - 2021

MD Special Education/Early Intervention Services Census Data & Related Tables, on October 1, 2020, of the total number of students ages 14-21 with disabilities

- 4,954 (47.8%) students ages 14-21 with disabilities exiting with a diploma
- 745 (7.2%) students ages 14-21 with disabilities exiting school with a certificate of program completion.

#### **2. DORS will support students in postsecondary training**

Annual Updates - 2021

DORS supported 518 students ages 14-22 in post-secondary education:

- 235 in College/University,
- 264 in Vocational and Occupational Skills Training; and
- 19 in Workforce Technology Center training programs

#### **3. Rates of students with disabilities using Disability Supports Services offices on Maryland's public college campuses**

Annual Updates - 2021

##### **Trends and data**

- From FY 16 to FY 19, overall more students (graduate and undergraduate students) sought services from the office disability services each year
- Undergraduate 2nd year retention rates stayed relatively the same for students registered with disability services over time. The rates of undergraduate 2<sup>nd</sup> year retention are comparable to all undergraduate students and hover between 83% and 86%



- For the first time, the 2021 report provides completion data for community college and four-year institution undergraduate students . While "successful persister" rates are comparable (students registered with disability services versus all students), four-year graduation rates differ.

#### **Updates of past bullets**

- The fifth report will be distributed late winter 2022
- The fifth year of data collection was completed for state (four-year institutions and community colleges) and state-aided independent institutions
  - Findings from the previous 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 as well as four-year outcomes, and future iterations will provide six-year outcomes data for students at Maryland's public and state-aided institutions

#### **4. Post-Secondary Opportunities for Students with Disabilities**

##### **Annual Updates - 2021**

- **DORS Pathways Program Expansion.** The DORS Pathways Program, an educational support program for students in post-secondary education with an Autism Spectrum Disorder diagnosis, is available at all three Community College of Baltimore County sites, Howard Community College, Anne Arundel Community College and Montgomery College. 20 individuals ages 14-22 participated from 7/1/20 to 6/30/21.
- **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 Developmental Disabilities Administration.

In 2021, The Developmental Disabilities Administration continued to explore and expand partnerships with three higher education institutions, two of which are summarized below. The DDA will be releasing information on the third partnership later this year.

### **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.

### **University of Maryland - Maryland Hub for Inclusive Higher Education**

- Terps EXCEED - Experiencing College for Education & Employment Discovery (TerpsEXCEED) is a new two-year pilot certificate program at the University of Maryland College Park for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities who would not be able to apply and attend University of Maryland - College Park through a traditional pathway.
- This is a non-degree program that culminates in a University of Maryland (UMD) certificate which includes a transcript of all students' academic coursework that is aligned with students' career interests.
  - Students will participate in career development activities, work experiences, internships and paid jobs.
  - TerpsEXCEED students will be UMD students, like typical incoming freshman - with student IDs and email accounts, access to UMD facilities, activities, and student organizations, and the choice to live on campus in dorms.
  - Extra supports will be provided by TerpsEXCEED staff and a network of trained student Peer Mentors

## **Financial Well-Being - Outcome Six**

### **Improved financial stability and independence for people with disabilities and their families**

#### **Strategy One**

Improve access to work incentives and/or benefits counseling and programs for people with disabilities

**Activity:** Annually collect qualitative and quantitative data and report on improvement in work incentives and/or public benefits counseling and programs

#### **1. Improve participation in Employed Individuals with Disabilities (EID) Program**

Annual Updates - 2021

- Participation in the EID program ranged from 912 - 963 participants with an average of 938 participants

#### **2. Work Incentives Counseling (DORS)**

Annual Updates - 2021

- DORS provided benefits counseling services for 1,730 individuals

#### **3. SOAR assistance and benefits counseling**

- Annual Updates - 2021

- In FY 2021, 164 out of 192 individuals (85%) were approved for SSI/SSDI through SOAR, compared with a national SOAR approval rate of around 60%.

#### **Strategy Two**

Improve knowledge of and participation in financial management programs

**Activity:** Annually collect qualitative and quantitative data and report on improvement in knowledge of and participation in financial management programs

#### **1. Provide people with financial loans to purchase assistive technology and build credit**

Annual Updates - 2021

- MDOD's annual number of loans:
  - 10 home modification loan requests during this period.
- Dollar amount of loan:
  - The total dollar amount for the home modifications requests was \$75,324.
- Number of applications processed:
  - 10 of the 10 home modification loans were processed.

- Number of loans approved:
  - There were 7 home modification loans that were approved (2 approved and closed, 1 approved & closing is pending, 1 closed without guarantee, 2 were declined, 3 were approved and w/d after board review, and 1 was withdrawn before review).
- Number of loans issued to purchase technology.
  - The number of home modification loans that closed/issued was 2.
- Number of open loans managed.
  - Collectively, the number of all loans managed by the ATLP is 203.
- Information on the demand for the Assistive Technology Loan Program (data can be qualitative and/or quantitative): The ATLP has been seeing a slight uptick in the number of home modification loan requests.
- Annual discussion on agency's target goals and plan for next year's target goal: The loan programs target goals for home modification loans is to increase the number by 6 loans.

## **2. ABLE program**

Governor Hogan signed the Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act ([HB431](#)) on April 12, 2016 enabling Maryland to begin building an ABLE program. The Maryland ABLE program is implemented by Maryland 529 and officially launched in November 2017. Maryland ABLE is pursuing a state-partnership to make available tax-advantaged savings accounts for Marylanders with disabilities, allowing individuals to save money for qualified disability expenses without jeopardizing state and federal means-tested benefits.

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
- Annual Updates - 2021

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 36,940 Marylanders. In addition, Maryland ABLE established an active social media presence on Facebook & Twitter, expanded their email marketing list to a total of 28,237 contacts. At the end of FY21 Maryland ABLE had 3,490 beneficiaries, thirty-five million dollars in total assets and 97% of account holders were Marylanders.

## **Financial Well-Being - Outcome Thirteen**

### **Improved capacity, infrastructure, and coordinated policy implementation in response to and recovery from public health emergencies**

#### **Strategy Three**

Improve financial well-being capacity, infrastructure, and coordinated policy implementation in response to public health emergencies

**Activity:** Annually collect qualitative and quantitative data and report on improvement in financial well-being capacity, infrastructure, and coordinated policy implementation for public health emergencies

#### **Response**

##### **2020**

- **Improved state financial well-being capacity in Maryland's COVID-19 response by:**
  - Facilitating PPE grants for providers
  - Facilitating discussions with community stakeholders about federal CARES ACT funding allocation
  
- **Improved state financial well-being infrastructure in Maryland's COVID-19 response by:**
  - Having MDOD staff detailed to Maryland Emergency Management Administration (MEMA) and collaborating with state partners for whole community preparedness and response for people with disabilities
  - Collaborating with state partners on the COVID 19 needs of transitioning students
  
- **Improved state financial well-being policy coordination in Maryland's COVID-19 response by:**
  - Expanding state guidance on what is an essential business to include organizations serving people with intellectual/ developmental disabilities
  - Facilitating logistical solutions people with disabilities receiving state financial benefits (example: MDOD and DHS partnering to reduce food insecurity to SNAP recipients with disabilities beginning in March 2020)
  - Collaborating with state partners to facilitate distribution of employment guidance for people with disabilities

## Strategy Four

Improve financial well-being capacity, infrastructure, and coordinated policy implementation in recovery from public health emergencies

**Activity:** Annually collect qualitative and quantitative data and report on improvement in financial well-being capacity, infrastructure, and coordinated policy implementation for public health emergencies

### Recovery

#### 2021

- **Improved state financial well-being capacity in Maryland's COVID-19 recovery by:**
  - Collaborating with state partners to facilitate crosswalk between unemployed workers and needed essential positions with the BHA/DDA providers.
- **Improved state financial well-being infrastructure in Maryland's COVID-19 recovery by:**
  - Collaborating with state partners to highlight the employment of people with disabilities as essential workers.
- **Improved state financial well-being policy coordination in Maryland's COVID-19 recovery by:**
  - Collaborating with state partners to include people with disabilities in the vaccination advertising campaigns.

## **Health & Wellness**

*Individuals with disabilities will have access to resources and services that promote health and wellness.*

People with disabilities will improve their quality of life through multidisciplinary and integrative services and supports.



This **Guiding Principle** focuses on developing resources and building capacity in health, behavioral health care, family and peer supports, and improving access to recreational/ wellness activities.

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### **Applicable Outcomes**

**Outcome Seven** - Improved physical and behavioral health care for people with disabilities and their families

**Outcome Eight** - Improved family and peer support services for people with disabilities and their families

**Outcome Twelve** - Improved access to recreational and wellness activities for people with disabilities and their families

**Outcome Thirteen** - Improved capacity, infrastructure, and coordinated policy implementation in response to and recovery from public health emergencies



## **Health and Wellness - Outcome Seven**

### **Improved physical and behavioral health care for people with disabilities and their families**

#### **Strategy One**

Improve accessibility to culturally competent, accessible wellness and preventive health care services

**Activity:** Annually collect qualitative and quantitative data and report on improvement in competent, accessible wellness and preventive health care services

1. **Ensure that people 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.

## **2. 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.
  - 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.
  - 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

## **Health and Wellness – Outcome Eight**

### **Improved family and peer support services for people with disabilities and their families**

#### **Strategy One**

Improve family disability supports across the lifespan

**Activity:** Annually collect qualitative and quantitative data and report on improving supports and protections for families with disabilities across the lifespan

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

##### **Overview**

In 2021 The MD CoP for Supporting Families Statewide Leadership Team restructured the format, focus and frequency of its meetings. Leadership Team meetings focus on the extensive work associated with the challenges and strategic planning to affect systems change, while the activities of Charting the Life Course (CtLC), completed by individual team members, to enhance their organization's/agency's support and services for people and families are shared and discussed during the new CtLC-In-Action Group meetings.

Leadership Team meetings moved from a bi-monthly to a quarterly schedule. Transition to Adulthood, based on stakeholder feedback as well as the ability of CtLC Ambassadors to implement policy, practice and procedure changes is the team's primary focus. The Transition Sub-committee was established in June. It is currently working with community and statewide partners to expand the use of CtLC before, during and after the transition process to facilitate planning. CtLC-In-Action meetings take place bi-monthly. They are open to MD CoP Leadership Team members, MD CtLC Ambassadors and early adopters. The purpose is to share how CtLC is being used to enhance the lives of people with developmental disabilities and families within agencies /organizations and the community, as well as the challenges. In addition, it's an opportunity to receive feedback, build knowledge and skills, and connect with one another.

##### **Highlights 2021**

##### **MD CoP for Supporting Families**

*MD CoP for Supporting Families Webpage*

MD CoP has a new webpage located on the National Community of Practice for Supporting Families website located at <http://supportstofamilies.org/teams/maryland/>

- MD CoP for Supporting Families Webinar Series
  - The DDA and the MD CoP hosted and continue to host a webinar series for Supporting Families. The purpose is to bring people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, families and others together in order to share information and ideas in hope of building knowledge, skills and resiliency within ourselves and the community. Topics, concerns and challenges that people and families face in everyday life are addressed with the help of invited guests and subject matter experts and always through the lens of CtLC Framework.
  - In 2021, twenty webinars took place with over 3000 families, self - advocates, Coordinators of Community Services and others attending. Topics included but were not limited to; Building Partnerships Between Families and Providers, Reopening, Transition, Person Centered Planning, CtLC Integrated Star, Behavioral Supports and Services, Housing, Using CtLC with Teachers & Families, MD ABLE, Self-Employment and MD Caregiver Resources, Support & Services
- Leadership Team Members, Agencies/Organizations
  - Team members implemented CtLC within their respective agencies and organizations to establish policies and practices to better support people with I/DD **and families across the lifespan. Examples include:**

### **The Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA)**

- Person Centered Plan
  - Contracted with the University of Missouri Kansas City Institute for Human Development to complete and environmental scan of the DDA's person-centered planning process, identifying strengths and gaps at each "touchpoint" of the system, resulting in recommendations and a plan to enhance DDA's Person Centered Planning process that will result in supports and services that better meet the needs of individuals served.
- DDA Interactive Webcasts
  - Continues to 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.

### **The MD Developmental Disabilities Council**

- Annual Updates - 2021

- 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 etc.
- Renewed its collaboration with DDA to facilitate the work of the MD CoP for Supporting Families

### **Towson University / Department of Special Education**

- Annual Updates - 2021
- Continues to incorporate components of Charting the LifeCourse into undergrad and graduate courses that already placed an emphasis on a person-centered approach to supporting families and individuals with autism and intellectual and developmental disabilities as the encounter transitions across the lifespan.
- Towson University/Special Education is piloting the use of person-centered approaches within their undergraduate pre-service curriculum and methods of instruction course for teachers intending to work with middle and secondary students with disabilities.
- Pre-service teachers receive exposure to national, state and local data on transition outcomes of youth with disabilities and receive brief tutorials on the use of CtLC tools,
- Submitted a proposal for a Research Impact Award through the Towson University Undergraduate Research & Creative Inquiry (URCI) program for an undergraduate research award to conduct a small pilot qualitative study that includes interviews of individuals who participated in CtLC workshops, ambassador series, or person centered planning meetings to determine the ongoing use of the tools and principles.

### **State Agencies Transition Collaborative of Maryland (SATC MD)**

- SATC-MD is working statewide through regional and local levels to ensure all students with disabilities have a post school pathway and exit school connected to that path. Its members, see below, have agreed to promote CtLC throughout its systems.
  - Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA)
  - Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) - Division of Early Intervention & Special Education Services
  - Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS)

- Parents Place of Maryland (PPMD)
- Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD)
- Maryland Department of Labor
- Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education (MCIE)
- University of Maryland (UMD) College Park
- Center for Transition and Career Innovation (CTCI)
- Behavioral Health Administration (BHA)

### **Advocacy Entities**

- People on the Go continues to use CtLC in its self-advocacy curriculum.
- The Parents' Place of MD continues to incorporate the principles and tools of CtLC within its training on Transition
- SEEC continues to utilize 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
  - Developed a Moving Out Guide and hosted a pilot for adults with developmental disabilities and their families to assist them in developing a vision for where and how they want to live, identify associated challenges, find solutions using integrated support and services.

## **Strategy Two**

Improve peer and family support networks

**Activity:** Annually collect qualitative and quantitative data and report on improvement in improving peer and family support networks

1. **Recruit and train peer volunteers and employees in the Public Behavioral Health System peer network**

Annual Updates - 2021

- In FY21, BHA held 53 training events during which 1203 peer volunteers and employees attended.

2. *Explore Medicaid reimbursement of peer supports in the Public Behavioral Health System.*

Annual Updates - 2021

- BHA is currently hosting internal discussions around costs and impacts of reimbursement for Peer Recovery Specialist services within specific settings and for specific service interventions.



## Strategy Three

Improve in-home assistance and respite care resources

**Activity:** Annually collect qualitative and quantitative data and report on improvement in in-home assistance and respite care resources

### 1. Develop alternative models to support families through improved respite capacity and leveraging community partnerships

In February 2021, the National Academy for State Health Policy invited the State of Maryland to participate in its State Medicaid Policy Institute on Family Caregiving. The Institute will engage up to five teams of state leaders for one year (3/21-2/22) to develop and/or strengthen health policies and strategies that support family caregivers, with a particular focus on home and community-based approaches for older adults.

Maryland received \$40,000 plus technical support.

The State Medicaid Policy Institute on Family Caregiving provided state leaders with opportunities for peer-to-peer discussion, targeted support on their state policy goals, and access to national expertise.

Representatives from the Departments of Aging, Health, and Human Services are participating in this initiative. In September 2020, the Administration for Community Living awarded the Lifespan Respite Enhancement Grant to Maryland Department of Human Services. This three-year grant will be used to provide emergency respite services, conduct info-socials (caregiver education programming), and deliver caregiver training. The MCC and its partners continue to support the work of this grant.

### Increase access to and available funding for emergency respite services to families across the lifespan

- During the most recent 12-month period for which data are available (9/1/2018 to 8/31/2019), the Emergency Respite grant has served over 150 families.
- The most common reasons for caregivers using the grant are to attend to a caregiver's own medical need and to attend a funeral.
- Caregivers across all 24 jurisdictions have used the grant.
- The grant has been accessed by caregivers across the lifespan:
  - 33% of the care recipients have been children,
  - 36% adults 18 to 64, and
  - 51% of the care recipients have been 65 and older.
- Multiple outreach activities have been conducted to increase awareness of the Emergency Respite grant.
- These outreach efforts include:
  - Conference calls with sister department such as the MDOA, MDOD, local departments of social services, and organizations serving

caregivers and their families such as hospitals, the VA, and advocacy groups

- Participation at caregiver events and expos
- Face-to-face meetings with caregiver serving organizations

## **Strategy Four**

Improve educational advocacy support for parents of children with disabilities

**Activity:** Annually collect qualitative and quantitative data and report on improvement in engagement of parents of children with disabilities

### **1. IFTP and IEP Parent engagement survey**

Preschool Survey – completed by the parents/guardians of children who received special education services in preschool during the 2020-21 school year and were between the ages of three and five as of September 30, 2020.

Annual Updates - 2021

- For the 2020-21 school year, 82 percent of parents had measures that exceeded the cut point measure of 60%. Therefore, the value of OSEP Indicator 8 for parents of preschool students during the 2020- 21 school year is 82 percent. This means that on average 82 percent of parents, Statewide, agree that their A Preschool Survey – completed by the parents/guardians of children who received special education services in preschool during the 2020-21 school year and were between the ages of three and five as of September 30, 2020. from 80 to 83 percent.
- ### **2. Parent feedback on meaningful input or consent in the IEP process**
3. School-Age Survey – completed by the parents/guardians of children who received special education services in kindergarten or above during the 2020-21 school year and were at least six years of age as of September 30, 2020
- Annual MSDE quantitative and qualitative data on improving engagement
  - Annual discussion on agency’s target goals and plan for next year’s target goals

## **Health and Wellness – Outcome Twelve**

### **Improved access to recreational and wellness activities for people with disabilities and their families**

#### **Strategy One**

Improve access to recreational activities for people with disabilities and their families

**Activity:** Annually collect qualitative and quantitative data and report on improvement in recreational activities for people with disabilities and their families

#### **1. Recreation**

##### **Accessible Playgrounds**

- MDOD visited and attended ribbon cutting ceremonies for the following opening of accessible playgrounds or additions of accessible playground components to existing playgrounds
  - Harford County
    - April 2018
      - The Lieutenant Governor attended the Harford County accessible playground opening, which included many features for children with sensory disorders and physical disabilities
  - Howard County
    - October 2020
      - There are communication boards added to school playgrounds and Parks/Rec playgrounds in partnership with Howard County Schools, Howard County Parks and Recreation and the Howard County Autism Society
  - City of Mount Airy
    - April 2021
      - City of Mount Airy created accessible playground in partnership with Ava's T 21 foundation.
  - Benedictine School in Caroline County
    - October 2021
      - Opened an accessible playground

##### **Beach Access**

- Ocean City, Maryland
  - April 2019
    - Ocean City MD has installed beach mats to allow for easier wheelchair access to the beach in and beach wheelchairs
    - Department of Natural Resources

##### **Accessible Fishing Pier**

- Unicorn Lake, Queen Anne's County
  - November 2018

- The Department of Natural Resources worked with the Maryland Department of Disabilities and the Department of General Services to create a fully-accessible freshwater fishing pier on state land.
- The 448-square-foot floating pier, located next to the boat launch, has enough space to accommodate multiple anglers.
- The aluminum gangway to the pier is adjacent to a newly constructed parking space and portable bathroom.

## Strategy Two

Improve access to wellness activities for people with disabilities and their families

**Activity:** Annually collect qualitative and quantitative data and report on improvement in wellness activities for people with disabilities and their families

### 1. Wellness

#### Annual Updates - 2021

- Disability Culture and Achievements Month
  - July 26th 2021
    - Commemorating the 31st anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Governor Larry Hogan enacted an [executive order](#) declaring that the State of Maryland will annually celebrate July as **Disability Culture and Achievements Month**. Throughout July, the state will celebrate the societal achievements and cultural contributions of Marylanders with disabilities.
- Museums (
  - 2020
    - MDOD toured Harriet Tubman Museum in and highlighted the accessibility features
  - 2021
    - MDOD toured and held ADA celebration at Waters Edge with students in 2021
- Gaming (Accessible Gaming Nights, Free adaptive switches, events)
  - 2019-2021
    - MDTAP distributed free adaptive gaming switches,
    - Hosted accessible gaming fun nights, tournaments and webinars on accessible gaming
- Ravens Stadium sensory room addition

- M&T Bank Stadium has included a sensory room and sensory supplies with the help of Pathfinders for Autism to assist guests who need accommodations like headphones, quiet space, etc.

### **Annual Events**

- **Mental Health Film Festival**
  - Each year MDOD promotes and attends the Horizon Foundation Mental Health Film Festival, Sprout film festival
- **Children's Mental Health Art Contest/Show**
  - Co-sponsor the Children'd Mental Health Art Show Art Show with the First Lady Yumi Hogan
- **We're Better Together**
  - Co-sponsor the school art contest with Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council, Arc Maryland and TFL for Together We're Better Art contest (inclusion focused)
- **BRAVE in the Attempt Speakers Series**
  - TED Talk style event with 8 speakers with IDD to promote community inclusion

## **Health and Wellness - Outcome Thirteen**

### **Improved capacity, infrastructure, and coordinated policy implementation in response to and recovery from public health emergencies**

#### **Strategy Five**

Improve health and wellness capacity, infrastructure, and coordinated policy implementation in response to public health emergencies

**Activity:** Annually collect qualitative and quantitative data and report on improvement in health and wellness capacity, infrastructure, and coordinated policy implementation in response to public health emergencies

#### **Response**

##### **2020**

- **Improved health and wellness capacity COVID-19 response by**
  - Facilitating PPE grants for providers
  - Facilitating discussions with community stakeholders about federal CARES ACT funding allocation
  - Partnering with BHA to extend telehealth opportunities to DSPs of community programs
  - Strike teams available for outbreaks in congregate settings???
- **Improved state health and wellness infrastructure in Maryland's COVID-19 response by:**
  - Having MDOD staff detailed to Maryland Emergency Management Administration (MEMA) and collaborating with state partners for whole community preparedness and response for people with disabilities.
  - Collaborating with state partners to provide more COVID-19 supports and supplies to congregant living settings and to people who self-direct services.
  - Modifying annual events to be done virtually like Children's Mental Health Art Show and BRAVE in the Attempt.
- **Improved state health and well-being policy coordination in Maryland's COVID-19 response by:**
  - Developing and implementing Medicaid emergency waivers (ex: Appendix K)

- Expanding state guidance on what is an essential business to include organizations serving people with intellectual/developmental disabilities
- Assisting in the development of the Governor's Executive Order designating paid community caregivers (direct support professionals) as essential healthcare workers
- Modifying housing tenant trainings obligations to be completed remotely via phone call or virtual meeting
- Modifying ACP policies to allow for payment processes
- Collaborating with state partners to develop:
  - hospital visitation guidance for Access to Support for Patients with Disabilities in Hospital Settings and a subsequent FAQ
  - face coverings and face shields guidance and a subsequent FAQ

### Strategy Six

Improved health and wellness capacity, infrastructure, and coordinated policy implementation in recovery from public health emergencies

**Activity:** Annually collect qualitative and quantitative data and report on improvement in health and wellness capacity, infrastructure, and coordinated policy implementation in recovery from public health emergencies

### Recovery

#### 2021

- **Improved state health and well-being capacity in Maryland's COVID-19 recovery by:**
  - Collaborating with state partners in the Maryland vaccine rollout to include ADA reasonable accommodations, vaccine priority groups, and creating disability-specific vaccination sites partnering with non-profits and pharmacies.
  - Providing assistive technology equipment, training, and technical assistance in vaccine sites throughout Maryland
- **Improved state health and well-being infrastructure in Maryland's COVID-19 recovery by:**
  - Collaborating with state partners to provide grant opportunities to BHA/DDA providers
  - Collaborating with state partners to provide vaccination site information in accessible ways
- **Improved state health and well-being policy in Maryland's COVID-19 recovery by:**
  - Developing and implementing Medicaid emergency waivers (ex:

Appendix K)

- Collaborating with state partners to implement waiver policy on purchasing limits for BHA/DDA providers for congregate settings.



## **Maximizing Resources**

*Maryland state agencies and key stakeholders will maximize resources effectively.*

Maryland state agencies and key stakeholders will refine processes and infrastructure.

This **Guiding Principle** focuses on organizational capacity building and infrastructure development between state and non-state partners to better serve people with disabilities and their families.

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## **Applicable Outcomes**

**Outcome One** - Improved self-directed supports and services for people with disabilities and their families

**Outcome Three - Improved** reliable transportation options for people with disabilities

**Outcome Four:** Improved employment and training options, including self-employment and non-congregant competitive opportunities available in an integrated environment in which there are individuals with and without disabilities

**Outcome Five:** Improved educational support services for children, youth, and life-long learners with disabilities

**Outcome Nine:** Improved crime control, public safety, and correctional services emphasizing the needs and rights of people with disabilities

**Outcome Ten:** Improved accessible and universally designed communication and technology

**Outcome Eleven:** Improved disability equity, transparency, and efficiency in state government services

**Outcome Thirteen** - Improved capacity, infrastructure, and coordinated policy implementation in response to and recovery from public health emergencies

## **Maximizing Resources – Outcome One**

### **Improved self-directed supports and services for people with disabilities and their families**

#### **Strategy Four**

Improve the capacity of agencies and providers to support people with disabilities living in the community

**Activity:** Track qualitative data related to the capacity of agencies and providers to support people with disabilities living in the community

#### **1. DDA provider licensing approval process**

Annual 2021 Updates

- DDA continues to work with The Office of Health Care Quality (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.

#### **2. DDA provider capacity and quality**

Annual Updates - 2021

- DDA had temporarily suspended review of new provider applications until January 2021 due to the pandemic.
- In January 2021 DDA began reviewing new applications in the order in which they were received.
- 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
- Since resuming application review, and during the reporting period, DDA has gained the following number of new providers rendering the noted services:
  - Total new providers:17
    - Services Rendered:
      - Employment (2)
      - Community Development Services (3)
      - Respite (6)
      - Transportation (10)
      - Assistive Technology (1)
      - Live-in Caregiver (1)
      - Transition Services (1)
      - Remote Supports (1)
      - Targeted Case Management (1)
      - Day Habilitation (1)
      - Housing Supports (2)
      - Shared Living (1)

- Nursing Support Services (13)
- Personal Supports (14)
- Supported living (3)
- Behavior Support Services (1)
- Family and Peer Mentoring (1)
- Family Caregiver and Empowerment (1)
- Community Living Group Home (12)
- Community Living Group Home-Enhanced (1)
- DDA updated the dedicated Provider webpage that provides information related to provider requirements and application requirements.

**3. Improve the capacity to support community living by training case managers and service providers**

Annual Updates - 2021

- In 2021 there were 24 related to supporting individuals with disabilities in housing

## **Maximizing Resources – Outcome Three**

### **Improved reliable transportation options for people with disabilities**

#### **Strategy Two**

Improve public transportation ridership among people with disabilities

**Activity:** Annually collect qualitative and quantitative data and report on improvement of public transportation ridership among people with disabilities

#### **1. Accessible transportation and safety**

Annual Updates 2021

#### **Safety Concerns from the disabled and older age communities.**

- Blind and Low Vision Pedestrians are concerned for their safety while crossing on to a floating bus stop.
  - Most (Island) style bus stops intersect with a pedestrian bicycle lane.
  - Depending on the construction of the (Island) Style Bus Stop, wheelchair users could potentially have a safety concern from the end of the bus platform to the edge of the bus stop platform if they are not able to make a 45 degree turn, either left or right.
  - Although bicycle lanes are specifically for those who bicycle, unless prompted by visual signage or audible signals, bicyclists have a safety risk of running into pedestrians at crosswalks.

#### **Possible Solutions**

- Have open forum/ discussions/ public safety meetings to address safety concerns from the disabled and older age communities along with any other stakeholders involved.
- Possible installation of audible and beacon devices along with visual signage and both longitudinal and latitudinal tactile strips for the blind.
- Adding tactile strips for the blind at both the end of the sidewalk cutaway and the beginning of the bus stop cutaway.
- Adding side railings so that busses have a specific stopping point to let wheelchair passengers off and on the bus to prevent potential safety concerns.
- Install speed reducing tactics to slow down bicyclists at bus stops and crosswalk intersections

## Strategy Four

Improve private transportation for people with disabilities (transportation provided by self, family, friends, providers, ride sharing apps)

**Activity:** Annually collect qualitative and quantitative data and report on improvement in private transportation for people with disabilities (transportation provided by self, family, friends, providers, ride sharing apps)

1. **People with disabilities using private transportation who do not need vehicle adaptations**

Annual 2021 Updates

- MDOD's Transportation Policy Director is currently developing an outreach plan for studying this population and their needs.

## **Maximizing Resources – Outcome Four**

**Improved employment and training options, including self-employment and non- congregant competitive opportunities available in an integrated environment in which there are individuals with and without disabilities**

### **Strategy Four**

Improve interagency disability employment strategic planning and legislation implementation for youth and adults with disabilities

**Activity:** Annually collect qualitative and quantitative data and report on improvement in data related to improving interagency disability employment strategic planning and legislation implementation for youth and adults with disabilities

#### **1. Implement Combined State Plan for Workforce Investment Opportunities Act Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act.**

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was signed into law on July 22, 2014. The new 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 are 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 State's 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.

#### **2. Increase opportunities for cross-training to state agencies in providing competitive, integrated employment options**

§ Non-Discrimination Plan – MD Labor and Local Workforce Development Areas are partner 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.

§ Maryland WIOA partners established the Maryland Apprenticeship Think Tank in January of 2018. The Think Tank is a network of professional organizations committed to expanding apprenticeship opportunities to individuals with disabilities. Through a diverse array of initiatives – research, education, public engagement, and on-the-ground innovation and practice – the Think Tank shares information on emerging trends and opportunities, best practices in apprenticeship and highlights how apprenticeship can break into new industry sectors and serve a more diverse population of VR individuals. Think Tank members consist of a variety of leaders from DORS, including leadership from DORS’ Workforce Training Center, along with MD Labor, Maryland Department of Disabilities, the Community College of Baltimore County, and community program providers such as, the ARC, who are collaborating to secure lasting change in the area of Youth, Pre-Apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship at the State and local level

**3. Increase and improve data agreements among partners to measure effectiveness and improve quality outcomes**

§ State Agencies’ Transition Collaborative-Maryland (SATC-MD). In partnering with leadership from MSDE, DORS, MDOD, DDA, BHA, UMD, and training and information center *Parent’s Place*, this collaborative has engaged in implementing systems change strategies to improve the education and employment outcomes of youth with disabilities that are transitioning from the education system to postsecondary and employment settings.

In order to create a continued shared investment in the work of the group, a SUPER MOU was adopted by all of the agencies. MD Labor’s continued engagement is to ensure that the state agencies understand Labor’s role in the provision of WIOA Title I services across the state and to support communication to local providers of WIOA Youth Services, DORS Counselors, and MSDE Transition Coordinators.

The goal is to ensure that all students exiting the school system are connected to employment, postsecondary, and/or community resources.

**4. Increase/enhance the effectiveness and innovation of State agencies (including Education) to provide training and competitive integrated employment**

§ EARN Maryland- In 2018, the "Highway to a Healthcare Career" Strategic Industry Partnership received EARN Maryland funding to pilot a project to train persons with disabilities for careers in healthcare. Prince George’s County Residential service agencies have continually expressed how difficult it is to find qualified employees. This, paired with the fact that the unemployment rate of people with disabilities is disproportionately high, was the impetus for the Highway to a Healthcare Career Partnership. Led by Independence Now, this partnership worked closely with the Maryland State Department of Education’s Division of Rehabilitation Services, Employ Prince George’s, and Prince George’s

Community College. Students were prepared to earn their CNA/GNA certifications. Nine students enrolled in training, with six completing and earning their CNA certification. Five students obtained employment at an average wage of nearly \$14 per hour. While the partnership did not request additional EARN funds, there were several lessons learned and best practices gleaned from the pilot.



## **Maximizing Resources – Outcome Five**

### **Improved educational support services for children, youth, and life-long learners with disabilities**

#### **Strategy One**

Improve early intervention programs and services for infants, toddlers, and young children with disabilities and their families

**Activity:** Annually collect qualitative and quantitative data and report on improvement in educational statistics for children with disabilities in early intervention programs

1. **MSDE statistics on children receiving services through Infants and Toddler**

Annual Updates - 2021

17,760 children and families received services through the MITP.

99.67 % of children were receiving the majority of their services in "natural environments" (environments with typically developing children).

#### **Strategy Two**

Improve educational supports in all settings

**Activity:** Annually collect qualitative and quantitative data and report on improvement in access to appropriate supports in any educational setting and services for infants, toddlers, and young children with disabilities

1. **Annual number of students receiving special education services in K-12**

Annual Updates 2021

- October 2020 - 101, 161 students received special education services in K-12

2. **Provide cross-training to educational staff and partners to provide opportunities for self-advocacy instruction and career planning for students with IEPs beginning in middle school**

Annual Updates - 2021

Irene Bal, lecturer in the Educational Technology Program, and Kelly Keane, Ed.D., senior lecturer and director of the Educational Technology Program at Loyola University Maryland, have been

awarded a \$100,000 grant from the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), Division of Early Intervention/Special Education Services.

The grant will assist with the design, development, and pilot testing of four to five fully online micro-credential courses to address Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings and support IEP chairpersons in Maryland public schools. The support from this grant is focused on narrowing the gap for children and youth with disabilities and their families by focusing on access, equity, and progress through a credentialing system for IEP chairs.

“Through competency-based learning, we are creating systems to ensure IEP chairperson who go through this program can demonstrate the skills needed to communicate, collaborate, and facilitate IEPs in both in-person and online environments,” said Keane.

These micro-credentials for Maryland Special Education Services Chairs will support special education school leaders in navigating the legal requirements for IEPs, quality components of IEPs, and the communication, facilitation, coaching and information dissemination of the IEP process through the lens of their local school system in Maryland.

Bal and Keane will partner with the MSDE, Division of Early Intervention/Special Education Services, and the Maryland Coalition of Inclusive Education to develop and launch this new series of courses. The courses will be designed through the spring and summer of 2021 with a pilot test including 50 Maryland IEP chairpersons beginning in fall 2021. The grant, “Micro-Credentials for Maryland Special Education Services Chairs - Addressing Best Practices for Leading IEP Meetings,” will run through February 2022.

“We are excited to work with our partners to support Maryland students and families for equitable access to learning,” said Bal. “Through this partnership, we will create courses that focus on the legal components of IEPs and support IEP chairpersons in the communication and collaboration skills needed in this socially distanced learning environment.”

## Maximizing Resources – Outcome Nine

### **Improved crime control, public safety, and correctional services emphasizing the needs and rights of people with disabilities and their families**

#### **Strategy One**

Improve disability-related training within crime control, public safety, and correctional services

**Activity:** Annually collect qualitative and quantitative data and report on improvement related to disability-related training within crime control, public safety, and correctional services

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

#### **2021 Annual Updates**

- Annual number of people with I/DD who become trainers through the Ethan Saylor Alliance
  - Contract with Loyola University MD ran from Oct. 2019-June 202
  - 12 additional self-advocate educators were trained in the second cohort;
    - 10 from the previous contract period
  - Total of 22 self-advocate educators who were trained in the LEAD Model
  - 2 self-advocates were trained as co-trainers using the revised model I/DD curriculum
- Annual number of law enforcement trainings conducted
  - 19 Trainings were held: 6 were face to face and 13 were held in an online, synchronous format using Zoom; 398 first responders trained: 226 law enforcement personnel (209 entry-level, 17 in-service), 172 fire and rescue personnel
    - The Steering Committee, with input from other key stakeholders, is discussing strategies to promote the work of the Alliance.
    - spearheaded by Special Olympics MD A coalition is in the process of developing a curriculum that can be delivered virtually which would equip people with I/DD with the necessary skills to serve in training roles.
    - This curriculum, once developed and vetted by the Steering Committee and other partners, can be piloted and tested for efficacy.

## Strategy Two

Improved disability-related supports and services within crime control, public safety, and correctional services

**Activity:** Annually collect qualitative and quantitative data and report on improvement in supports and services within crime control, public safety, and correctional services

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

Annual Updates - 2021

- In FY21 there were 1603 people court-ordered to psychiatric facilities and receiving forensic services in Maryland.

## **Maximizing Resources – Outcome Ten**

### **Improved accessible and universally designed communication and technology**

#### **Strategy One**

Improve the accessibility of emergency information by making it available in a variety of accessible formats (e.g. braille, large print, ASL) for emergency broadcasts and emergency resources provided at shelters and recovery centers

**Activity:** Annually collect qualitative and quantitative data and report on improvement in accessible formats for emergency broadcasts and resources

1. **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

2. **Develop a training on providing accessible communications and accessible information technology 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 Four

Improved awareness of availability of Maryland Relay services amongst various stakeholder groups

**Activity:** Annually collect qualitative and quantitative data and report on improvement in awareness of availability of Maryland Relay services amongst various stakeholder groups

### 1. TAM Advertisements

- Annual Number of TAM advertisements in newsletters and other media distributed by community organizations whose membership includes users of TAM, Deaf or Hard of Hearing, older adults, mobility or cognitive impairments.
  - 2021 Updates
    - 30 TAM advertisements in newsletters and other media distributed by community organizations whose membership includes users of TAM
    - 18 outreach events involving community organizations whose membership includes users of TAM that are Deaf or hard of hearing
    - 289 events focused on community organizations whose membership includes users of TAM that are older adults
    - 7 events focused on community organizations whose membership includes users of TAM that are DeafBlind
    - 21 events focused on community organizations whose membership includes users of TAM that have mobility or cognitive impairments

## Maximizing Resources – Outcome Eleven

### Improved disability equity, transparency, and efficiency in state government services

#### Strategy One

Improve accessibility of government buildings and programs to all people with disabilities

**Activity:** Annually collect qualitative and quantitative data and report on improvement of disability equity, transparency, and efficiency in state government services

#### 1. Provide funding to State agencies and universities to make ADA architectural improvements to State buildings

Maryland Access is a state-funded resource where state agencies and universities can apply for assistance in making ADA architectural improvements to state buildings.

##### Annual Updates - 2021

Annual amount of money awarded for projects and an estimate for next year

- \$1,851,000.00 (FY21)
- \$1,825,000.00 (FY22)

Annual number of open projects

- Open Projects (FY21) 35
- Estimated Open Projects for Next Year- (FY22) twenty-five

Annual number of projects in design or construction

- Number of Projects in design or construction phase (FY21) 35
- Estimated Projects in design or construction phase next year (FY22) 25

Annual number of Active Projects

- Number of Active Projects during the year (FY21) 35
- Estimated number of active projects next year (FY22) 25

Annual number of projects completed

- Number of projects completed (FY21) 1
- Estimated number of projects completed next year (FY22) 10

Annual number of State facilities, buildings, or parks with increased access as a result of projects completed during the year-

- Number of State facilities, buildings, or parks with increased access as a result of projects completed during the year- 1
- Estimated number of State facilities, buildings, or parks with increased access as a result of projects completed next year- 7

### Increased Access Vignette

The Tawes State Office Building located in Annapolis was the Maryland Access project completed this year. Below is a vignette detailing how the project resulted in increased access.

The Tawes State Office Building houses the Administrative Offices of the Department of Natural Resources Headquarters and Annapolis Day Care Center.

The walkway to the building's main entrance was a wide sidewalk covered by pavers with a poured concrete curb cut, added some time after the initial construction. In the middle of the walkway there was a concrete roadway raised to the level of the pavers.

The current surface was worn and slippery, especially in wet and icy weather. The slope was challenging for users with limited mobility. Shifting ground loosened the pavers and caused gaps, irregularities, and unevenness.

This project improved accessibility to the building's facilities for all users, but particularly for members of the public and state employees with limited mobility. The project included replacement of the entry walkway leading to the main entrance of the Tawes State Office Building, in order to maintain compliance with the American with Disabilities Act.

The project area included the main entrance to the building (Area 1) and the entrance to the parking lot across from the building (Area 2), separated by the Herberd Sacks Boulevard. In Area 1, the existing walkway and concrete roadway were replaced with concrete slab with embedded electric snow melting system. The concrete slab now has a slope compliant with ADA 2010 requirements. In Area 2, the entrance to the parking lot was resurfaced with asphalt.

The project was an in-kind replacement of the existing sidewalk, which continues to provide increased access as a result of funding from Access Maryland

## **2. Create and implement an online ADA Facility Accessibility Notification Form to track and monitor access issues within state buildings**

Annual Updates - 2021

- The Facility Accessibility Notification went live in Jan of 2020.
  - The form tracks the following information: Agency/ Facility visited, location/ type of inaccessibility (counter space, restroom,



entryway), a description of the inaccessibility, whether they notified anyone on-site (who and via what method). The issue is then forwarded to the appropriate ADA Coordinator to reach out to the constituent.

- The goal of implementing this form is to collect and evaluate information related to the physical access of State facilities. This information can also assist us in marketing the Access MD program to State agencies/ facilities who may not have applied for funding in the past.

### Strategy Three

Improve understanding and accessibility of civil rights for people with disabilities and their families

**Activity:** Annually collect qualitative and quantitative data and report on improvement in civil rights for people with disabilities and their families

#### **Maryland Commission on Civil Rights.**

The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights (MCCR) is an independent state agency serving individuals, businesses, and communities throughout Maryland.

MCCR is governed by a nine-member Commission appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Maryland State Senate to serve six-year terms.

The Commission meets once a month to set policy and review programmatic initiatives. MCCR's mandate is to ensure equal opportunity through enforcement of Title 20 of the State Government Article and Title 19 of the State Finance & Procurement Article (the state's Commercial Non-Discrimination Policy), Annotated Code of Maryland.

Since 1968, the Commission has had authority to administer and enforce the Maryland Public Accommodations Law, the Discrimination in Housing Law and the Fair Employment Practices Law. To achieve this, MCCR has a deferral relationship and funding provided by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the U. S. Department of Housing & Urban Development.

#### 2020 Disability Cases

- Employment
  - For the first time in 2020 disability replaced race as the #1 protected class among individuals filing discrimination complaints with MCCR, followed by race.
    - 233 disability employment discrimination complaints
- Housing
  - Consistent with historic trends, disability complaints related to accessibility remained the #1 type of complaint this year, followed by race.
    - 109 disability housing complaints

- Public Accommodation
  - Consistent with history, disability remained the #1 reported protected class for public accommodation complaints in 2020.
    - 30 public accommodations complaints

**1. Voting Rights to identify and monitor voter access issues during elections**

The State Disabilities Plan includes the monitoring of voting every year. Maryland has its four-year state election for the Maryland General Assembly and Governor in the national midterm year. 2022 will be the next state election year. For this year, below is a summary of last year’s activities during the national election and a related bill during the 2021 General Assembly.

**Disability Voting 2020 Election Summary**

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.

**2021 Maryland General Assembly Disability Voting New Law**

SB0683/HB1048 - Election Law - Voting - Permanent Absentee Ballot List, Ballot Drop Boxes, and Reports

Senator Kramer/Delegate Wilkins

- Requiring a local board of elections to designate the locations of ballot drop boxes;
- Requiring each local board to submit proposed ballot drop box locations to the State Administrator of Elections
- Requiring a local board to ensure the security of ballot drop boxes
- Requiring that certain guidelines for absentee voting established by the State Board provide for a permanent absentee ballot list
- Prohibiting canvassing, electioneering, or posting campaign material on a ballot drop box; etc.
- This bill became effective June 1st 2021

## **Strategy Six**

Improve trainings and outreach activities designed to share information and solicit stakeholder feedback

**Activity:** Annually collect qualitative and quantitative data and report on improvement in trainings and outreach activities

### **Annual Updates - 2021**

In 2021 MDTAP had 78 unique public awareness events, 570 direct information and assistance on AT topics; 851 training participants at 31 unique training events.

## Maximizing Resources – Outcome Thirteen

### **Improved capacity, infrastructure, and coordinated policy implementation in response to and recovery from public health emergencies**

#### **Strategy Seven**

Improve maximizing resources capacity, infrastructure, and coordinated policy implementation in response to public health emergencies

**Activity:** Annually collect qualitative and quantitative data and report on improvement in maximized resources capacity, infrastructure, and coordinated policy implementation in response to public health emergencies

#### Response

##### 2020

- **Maximized state capacity resources in Maryland's COVID-19 response by:**
  - Facilitating PPE grants for providers
  - Facilitating discussions with community stakeholders about federal CARES ACT funding allocation
  - Partnering with BHA to extend telehealth opportunities to DSPs of community programs
  
- **Maximized state infrastructure resources in Maryland's COVID-19 response by:**
  - Having MDOD staff detailed to Maryland Emergency Management Administration (MEMA) and collaborating with state partners for whole community preparedness and response for people with disabilities
  - Embedding state disability leadership in overall state COVID-19 communications planning and implementation
  - state agencies facilitating solutions to the early COVID-19 Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) shortage for eye and face protection, hand protection, body protection, respiratory protection example ( masks, sanitizer, disposable gloves etc. )
  - Increasing state social media resources such as COVID-19 specific social media posts, newsletter with information and resources,

additional COVID-19 specific webpage on MDOD's website

- Providing technical assistance to ensure the accessibility of state COVID -19 websites
- MDOD's Information Technology accessibility team training Governors staff on accessibility of websites and PDFs
- Streamlining reasonable accommodation requests for testing sites
- **Maximized state policy coordination resources in Maryland's COVID-19 response by:**
  - Ongoing participation in national policy COVID - 19 calls
  - MDOD and ODHH collaboration on two sets of guidance for COVID-19 Testing (mobile testing sites and medical staff).
  - Assisting in the development of the Governor's Executive Order designating paid community caregivers (direct support professionals) as essential healthcare workers.
  - developing and implementing Medicaid emergency waivers (ex: Appendix K

## Strategy Eight

Improved maximizing resources capacity, infrastructure, and coordinated policy implementation in recovery from public health emergencies

**Activity:** Annually collect qualitative and quantitative data and report on improvement in maximizing resources capacity, infrastructure, and coordinated policy implementation in recovery from public health emergencies

### Recovery

2021

#### Recovery

- **Maximized state capacity resources in Maryland's COVID-19 recovery by:**
  - Having multiple MDOD staff detailed to the vaccine response
  
- **Maximized state infrastructure resources in Maryland's COVID-19 recovery by:**
  - Providing assistive technology equipment and technical assistance for vaccine sites throughout Maryland
  - Streamlining vaccine sites reasonable accommodation requests
  
- **Maximized state policy coordination resources in Maryland's COVID-19 recovery by:**
  - Developing vaccine priority guidance for people with disabilities
  - Collaborating with state and non-state partners on reopening efforts and Appendix K

## **Accessible Communications**

*Maryland state agencies will be accessible, and communicate information effectively, equitably, and in an accessible format.*

People with disabilities will have equal access to all state agency communications, programs, and services.



This **Guiding Principle** focuses on ensuring all government communications are accessible, promoting quality service delivery, and acquiring accessible communication services and products for individuals with disabilities.

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### **Applicable Outcomes**

**Outcome Ten** - Improved accessible and universally designed communication and technology

**Outcome Eleven** - Improved disability equity, transparency, and efficiency in state government services

**Outcome Thirteen** - Improved capacity, infrastructure, and coordinated policy implementation in response to and recovery from public health emergencies

## **Accessible Communications - Outcome Ten**

### **Improved accessible and universally designed communication and technology**

#### **Strategy One**

Improve the accessibility of emergency information by making it available in a variety of accessible formats (e.g. braille, large print, ASL) for emergency broadcasts and emergency resources provided at shelters and recovery centers

**Activity:** Annually collect qualitative and quantitative data and report on improvement in accessible formats for emergency broadcasts and resources

1. **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
2. **Develop a training on providing accessible communications and accessible information technology 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 Two

Improve the integration of the needs of the disability community and emergency management plans

**Activity:** Annually collect qualitative and quantitative data and report on improvement in integration of the needs of the disability community and emergency management plans

1. **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
2. **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.
3. **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

## Strategy Three

Improved telecommunications accessibility services for people with difficulty using a traditional telephone

**Activity:** Annually collect qualitative and quantitative data and report on improvement in telecommunications accessibility services for people with difficulty using a traditional telephone

1. **RCC**

Annual Updates -2021

- Annual Number of RCC minutes
  - 80,970 minutes

## 2. MAT Utilization

Annual Updates -2021

- Annual Number of people applying for accessible telecommunication equipment from MAT
  - 241
- Annual Number of people receiving equipment from MAT
  - 387

## **Accessible Communications – Outcome Eleven**

**Improved disability equity, transparency, and efficiency in state government services**

### **Strategy Two**

Improve accessibility of government websites and other forms of communication

**Activity:** Annually collect qualitative and quantitative data and report on improvement in accessibility of websites and other communications

#### 1. **MDOD will work with State agencies to promote awareness of website and document accessibility**

- Number of State agencies requesting accessibility remediation services during the year
  - 27
- Number of State agencies resolving accessibility incidents during the year
  - 19
- Number of IT Accessibility trainings during the year
  - 16
- Number of Procurement Accessibility trainings during the year
  - 7

## 2. Work to improve internet connection to underserved regions of the State

### Annual Updates - 2021

- Office of Statewide Broadband
  - Created by Governor Hogan via Executive Order in 2018 as Governor's Office of "Rural Broadband". Digital Connectivity Act of 2021 reestablished the Office as Office of Statewide Broadband (OSB) at the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD).
    - Mission: To ensure that every Marylander has access to broadband services, regardless of their zip code. Through partnerships with local jurisdictions and the private sector, OSB offers direct funding and technical assistance to help entities applying for federal funding opportunities.
- Major Funding Programs:
  - Broadband Network Infrastructure Grant Program -
    - Offers grants between \$1 Million - \$3 Million to ISP's in partnership with Local Jurisdictions for up to 50% of the construction costs for new broadband networks to service unserved areas. •
  - Expansion of Existing Broadband Networks Grant Program -
    - Offers grants of up to \$200,000 to Local Jurisdictions for up to 50% of the construction costs related to an ISP extending service to unserved neighborhoods.
  - Federal Funding Application Assistance - Offers 100% grants to Local Jurisdictions and their ISP partners for the costs associated with Federal Funding Applications.
  - Maryland Emergency Broadband Benefit Program (Service Subsidy & Device Subsidy)

### **Strategy Five**

Improve customer service and communication with people seeking information about services and eligibility determination

**Activity:** Annually collect qualitative and quantitative data and report on improvement customer service

Develop plans to track customer service data

#### **Annual Updates - 2021**

- MDOD and MDTAP newsletters continue to serve as a proactive method of communication with direct links to news and valuable topics
- MDOD published a weekly newsletter to include updated COVID response and recovery information.
- MDOD added COVID-19 Resources page to the state agency website. MDOD has also reinstated the MDTAP blog "Where It's AT".

- Customer Inquiry Response Times and Overall Time-to-Resolution  
Timeliness of Responding to Customer Inquiries  
Customer inquiry calls are responded to within 24 hours. Due to the complex nature of the situations many of MDOD's callers it may take 2-3 days to reach resolution. MDOD lets callers know that it may take time to find the best resource to meet their complicated needs. MDOD strives to provide each caller with a name and a phone number. Finding the best resource to refer them to in their community often requires research MDOD staff. MDOD's Director of Constituent Services has built relationships throughout the state and with individual county offices.
- MDOD social media sites are also monitored and messages have responses within 24 hours including weekends and holidays.
- MDOD telephone lines are monitored hourly during emergencies like hurricanes, floods, and other disasters to provide any assistance to constituents with disabilities.
- MDOD continued to answer and respond to customer inquiries in a timely manner.
- MDOD's Director of Constituent Services regularly checks back with constituents to ensure they received a response from outside agency and partners.

## Accessible Communications - Outcome Thirteen

### **Improved capacity, infrastructure, and coordinated policy implementation in response to and recovery from public health emergencies**

#### **Strategy Nine**

Improve accessible communications capacity, infrastructure, and coordinated policy implementation in response to public health emergencies

**Activity:** Annually collect qualitative and quantitative data and report on improvement in accessible communications capacity, infrastructure, and coordinated policy implementation in response to public health emergencies

#### Response

##### 2020

- **Improved state accessible communications capacity in Maryland's COVID-19 response by:**
  - Facilitating PPE grants for providers
  - Facilitating discussions with community stakeholders about federal CARES ACT funding allocation
  - Partnering with BHA to extend telehealth opportunities to DSPs of community programs
  - Providing assistive technology equipment and technical assistance in testing sites throughout Maryland
  - MDOD's Information Technology accessibility team training Governors staff on creating accessible documents
  
- **Improved state accessible communications infrastructure in Maryland's COVID-19 response by:**
  - Having MDOD staff detailed to Maryland Emergency Management Administration (MEMA) and collaborating with state partners for whole community preparedness and response for people with disabilities.
  - Increasing state social media resources such as COVID-19 specific social media posts, newsletter with information and resources, additional COVID-19 specific webpage on MDOD's website
  - Providing technical assistance to ensure the accessibility of state COVID -19 websites

**Improved state accessible communications policy coordination in Maryland's COVID-19 response by:**

- MDOD and ODHH collaborate on two sets of guidance for COVID-19 Testing (mobile testing sites and medical staff).
- Multiagency accessibility coordination response for surge hospitals
- Collaborating with state partners to develop
  - Hospital visitation guidance for Access to Support for Patients with Disabilities in Hospital Settings and a subsequent FAQ
  - Face coverings and face shields guidance and a subsequent FAQ

**Strategy Ten**

Improved accessible communications capacity, infrastructure, and coordinated policy implementation in recovery from public health emergencies

**Activity:** Annually collect qualitative and quantitative data and report on improvement in accessible communication capacity, infrastructure, and coordinated policy implementation in recovery from public health emergency

**Recovery**

**2021**

- **Improved state accessible communications capacity in Maryland's COVID-19 recovery by:**
  - Collaborating with state partners in the Maryland vaccine rollout to include ADA reasonable accommodations, vaccine priority groups, and creating disability-specific vaccination sites partnering with non-profits and pharmacies.
  - Providing assistive technology equipment, training, and technical assistance in vaccine sites throughout Maryland
- **Improved state accessible communications infrastructure in Maryland's COVID-19 recovery by:**
  - Streamlining reasonable accommodation requests for vaccine sites
  - Collaborating with state partners to provide accessible vaccination site lists on state websites
- **Improved state accessible communications policy coordination in Maryland's COVID-19 recovery by:**
  - Developing accessible vaccine operations protocol